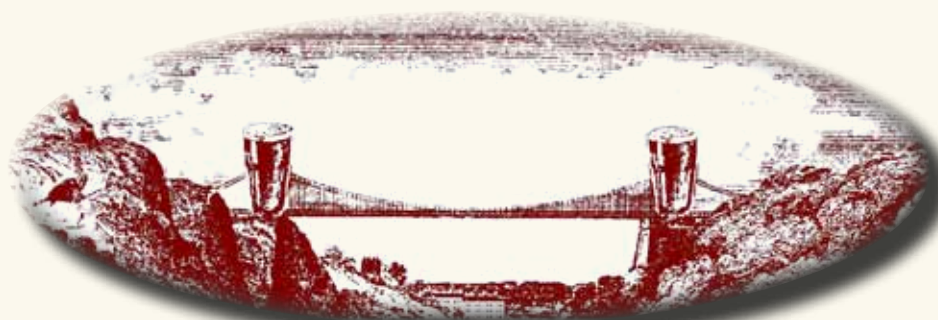




CAMPAIGN
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REAL ALE

PINTS WEST

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

Bristol Beer Festival 2013

How to get your tickets ~ see page 3

The Queen's Head
Last chance for the old girl?



Looking forward with the Queen's Head



One of the prime functions of a public house is to offer a meeting place for people to enjoy themselves and unwind both with familiar company as well as meeting new friends. Some have boisterous chat in the main bar, others enjoy a game of pool or cards in the side room, while a third group may spread themselves around the old fireplace in the quiet back room while the dog enjoys a peaceful break from the energetic country walk that just concluded.



“Phew Candice-Marie, I hope the pub at the bottom of this hill is open...” *(with apologies to Mike Leigh's classic drama 'Nuts in May')*

In the summer many people will while away an afternoon in the sunshine, an opportunity afforded by a pleasant enclosed pub garden. Hopefully many customers may indulge themselves in all of the aforementioned possibilities offered by the community pub. This activity is, of course, happening in part in many pubs. But what of this apparent three-roomed pub with a pleasant garden – “I don't recall many of that type” I hear you ask?



“...All that smoke and steam has parched me, let's get a pint and a game of darts...”

Well you're right, there aren't too many multi-roomed pubs about these days, but I know of a little gem.

A charming pub in a charming location, right on busy countryside walkways but close to dense housing, opposite a nature reserve and yards away from a steam railway family attraction (Avon Valley railway). The Queen's Head at Willsbridge has sadly been closed for a couple of years, and its freehold is now offered for sale at £155,000 by Christie & Co. Willsbridge has no other pub but I think that Willsbridge deserves one that is open and it can call its own.



“...Great Crested Newt, Dipper, Foxglove – all we need now is a decent bar snack!...”

A bit of TLC, good honest basic bar food, consistent drinks offerings and good service could make this into a well used pub that could attract customers from noon until late every day of the week, but particularly at weekends, due to its proximity to its neighbouring facilities. Then there



“...Oh no! The Queen's Head is closed and FOR SALE!”

is the first floor where a meeting room could be arranged for community and special interest groups, and there is a car park as well, less than 50 meters along the road, next to Siston Brook.

If you're reading this and think that you would like to purchase a pub freehold and enjoy all of the benefits of trading free of tie in a pleasant community then please take a look at the Queen's Head. It's far too good to lose.

Mike Jackson

Bristol Beer Festival 2013

The sixteenth annual CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival will run from Thursday 14th to Saturday 16th March 2013 and will once again be at Brunel's Old Station, Temple Meads, Bristol.

People can expect an excellent range of over 130 different real ales from near and far to be on sale over the course of the festival. There will also be an increased cider and perry order, as we actually managed to sell out of this shortly before the end of the 2012 event. A range of food will be available at all sessions.

The session times and ticket prices will be unchanged for 2013, including the Thursday evening session that was added for 2012. Please bring the correct cash to the ticket sales sessions as we will not be able to accept cheques or credit cards. The details are shown in the table below.

Tickets will go on sale to CAMRA members on Sunday 3rd February at the OLD FISH MARKET in Baldwin Street, Bristol from 12 noon until 2pm.

Tickets will only be sold to card-carrying CAMRA members at this session. A maximum of four tickets **in total** may be purchased for each valid card presented. For the Friday evening and Saturday lunchtime sessions a maximum of two tickets may be purchased. To give an example, a card-carrying CAMRA member could purchase four tickets for Thursday evening **or** two tickets for Thursday evening and two tickets for Friday evening but **not** four tickets for Friday evening. Anyone who signs up to join CAMRA on Sunday 3rd February will also be able to purchase festival tickets.

On Sunday 17th February tickets will go on sale at the COMMERCIAL ROOMS in Corn Street, Bristol from 12 noon until 2pm.

All remaining tickets will be on sale to everyone (including CAMRA members) up to a maximum of four tickets per person, regardless of which session of the festival they are for.

Simultaneous ticket sales will take place with the same rules at OFF THE RAILS at Weston-super-Mare train station on both 3rd and 17th February.

Tickets will not be held back, so once they have sold out they really are all gone. If there are any tickets remaining after these sessions they will be put on general sale at the **SEVEN STARS** in Thomas Lane, Bristol from **Wednesday 20th February**.

Online ticket sales

As we had unsold Thursday evening tickets for the 2012 festival we trialled selling them online. For 2013 we are going to expand this as follows:

If there are Thursday evening tickets remaining after the first CAMRA member ticket sales session then some of these will be available to purchase online from Monday 4th February.

All ticket prices include £5 worth of beer festival tokens, which customers will receive on entry enabling them to go straight to the bar. Also included is a festival programme and a commemorative pint glass, marked for third and half-pint measures.

We strongly advise keeping an eye on our website at www.camrabristol.org.uk as this will feature further information including updates about ticket availability (including any online sales) and the beer and cider lists as they become available.

Richard Brooks

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FEBRUARY OR DURING FESTIVAL SET-UP



Date	Session	Time	Cost	3rd Feb ticket limit
Thursday 14 March	Evening	7pm - 11pm	£10 (incl £5 of tokens)	4
Friday 15 March	Lunchtime	11:30am - 4pm	£10 (incl £5 of tokens)	4
Friday 15 March	Evening	7pm - 11pm	£10 (incl £5 of tokens)	2
Saturday 16 March	Lunchtime	11:30am - 4pm	£10 (incl £5 of tokens)	2
Saturday 16 March	Evening	7pm - 11pm	£9 (incl £5 of tokens)	4

WYE'S WORDS No. 12

**“ PINT OF BUTTY AT NIGHT, ”
DRINKER'S DELIGHT**

Butty Bach is a Welsh term for *little friend* – and this smooth and satisfying premium ale has certainly made a few friends in its time. Brewed using locally grown Fuggles, Goldings and Bramling Cross hops, Butty continues to delight new fans and old followers in equal measure. **4.5% ABV**
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WYE VALLEY BREWERY

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News from Cheddar Ales

In the six years since its founding, Cheddar Ales has gone from strength to strength, largely based on the simple philosophy of their managing director and head brewer, Jem Ham, which is: *"To make beers as good as we can with a key emphasis on flavour but also to try and improve everything a little bit every single day."* This ensures no skimping on use of hops and a consistency to the beers that has been the cornerstone of the brewery's success so far.

They use mainly hops from Herefordshire and Worcestershire with some Kentish hops on occasion. However the global hop market has been explored gently with US hops found in Bitter Bully and Slovenian Styrian Goldings in Potholer.

Malts used in this brewery tend to be blends of Maris Otter, Pale Ale, Crystal Malt and Wheat Malt depending on type of ale being brewed.

In addition to their ever-popular, award-winning regulars **Potholer** (4.3%), **Gorge Best** (4%), **Bitter Bully** (3.8%) and the dark delicious **Totty Pot** (4.5%), they also produce interesting seasonal ales. Starting from 1st November their latest offering went on sale called **Festive Totty**. I was lucky enough to be able to buy an advance case of this bottle-conditioned ale during my last trip to the brewery, located on the outskirts of Cheddar, and was most impressed. This porter, with subtle hint of added ruby port, gives this Christmas ale depth of flavour and it is well worth looking out for it, especially in its draught form, and it clocks in at 4.7% which should keep us warm on these dark cold evenings.

The previous seasonal ale this year was the much enjoyed **Crown & Glory** (4.5%) in celebration of the Diamond Jubilee and Olympics. This used a huge blend of Simcoe, Cascade, Bramling Cross and Savinjski Golding hops from the US and UK which more than satisfied my hophead tastes. Great beer, terrific Jubilee and awesome Olympics but lousy wet summer!

Other beers produced from this 20-barrel brewery also include a mild ale at 3.6% called **Mild Cheddar**. This is a great session beer brewed using Maris Otter, wheat and dark malts and hopped with a blend of English whole hops. However this is less popular in our local area so it is hard to find locally but worth looking out for next spring.



Goat's Leap IPA is also available permanently in bottle-conditioned form and is a most enjoyable tippie when weather prevents you tripping down to your favourite pub. It is also available in cask as a seasonal during the autumn and winter months but supplies tend to run out fast.

Output is split approximately 85% cask and 15% bottle-conditioned ale, with a regular output of around 40 barrels a week, and capacity to step up to meet a maximum demand of 80 barrels per week. This is all achieved with a staff of four including Jem. Demand has meant they have recently taken on a trainee apprentice brewer, Richard Norman, currently also studying to take his brewing exams, to augment their highly experienced team.

A new bottling line (pictured above, with Jem on the left) was installed in early 2012 giving the brewery the capability of bottling 1,200 bottles per hour of bottle-conditioned beer. Some 75,000 bottles are now produced annually with scope for future increases in place. Cheddar Ales are committed to the bottle-conditioned route, firmly believing that the methods used give the beer a more natural carbonation and far better authenticity than many of the mass-produced products on the market.

Cheddar Ales personally deliver across a wide area as far afield as north Bristol, Yeovil, Taunton, Trowbridge and North Dorset. Internationally their ales have been distributed as far as Finland. Cheddar Ales have been found in 450 outlets in the region and are on regular sale in 80 or so pubs.

Bob Reynolds

The Bridge Inn

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

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

Open: 11.30am - 3pm then 5pm - 11pm
All day Saturday, Sunday and bank holidays

News from Butcombe Brewery

Brewery open-day

On Saturday September the 29th the West Country's fastest growing brewery was open to the public. This also coincided with the beginning of National Cask Ale Week. The Butcombe brewery open-day had free beer, Ashton Press cider, conducted brewery tours and the Mendip Morris Men.

Rare Breed ale collaborator, TV presenter and Cotswold farmer, Adam Henson joined Guy Newell, Butcombe's managing director, in welcoming visitors and they even took a turn with the Mendip Morris Dancers. Sunny weather, over 600 visitors, and 1,500 pints with many generous charity donations to the Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance, all went to make this the best open-day ever! There was no need to drive to get to Wrington; Bakers Dolphin now run a bus service 121 from Bristol to Weston-super-mare via Wrington, Winscombe and Banwell.

Plans are underway for an bigger event in 2013.

Butcombe Oktoberfestivals

Butcombe held Oktoberfest beer festivals in four locations in October. These were at the **Grand Pier** in Weston-super-Mare; the Imperial in South Parade, also Weston-super-Mare; the **Colston Yard** in Bristol; and the **Pig and Fiddle** in Bath.

A wide range of ales was offered which was a fitting end to Cask Ale Week.

Butcombe brewery short-listed for awards

Butcombe brewery was recently a finalist in the prestigious *IGD Grocery Awards* in London. They were up against Kraft, Marks & Spencer, Boots and Tesco. Although they didn't win, they did well against the competition!

The brewery was also a finalist in *Made in South West Food and Drink Awards* in Bristol on the 8th of November; they just lost out to Thatcher's, although this could almost be classed as a win because they make Butcombe's Ashton Press cider!

Beers

Butcombe Bitter is reportedly back in the South West's top volume spot – ahead of Doom Bar and Tribute (*CGA data: 8 weeks to end of May 2012*).

In addition to Butcombe's all-year-round beers, **Bitter**, **Gold** and **Rare Breed**, the seasonal **Christmas Steps** (Butcombe's fabulous ruby red Christmas beer) is already available this year.

The new seasonal calendar for 2013 offers the following beers:

- **Old Vic Porter** (4.7%) January / February.
- **Mendip Spring** (3.8%) March / April / May.
- **Great Grey Owl** (3.6%) June / July / August. This is a brand new American Pale Ale, using only American hops.
- **Silver Fern** (4.5%) September / October / November. This is another new beer, using New Zealand hops.
- **Christmas Steps** (4.2%) December.

More information

Butcombe *Twitter* and *Facebook* followers are up to nearly 4,000, so get connected! Check out butcombe.com for more information.

Finally for Christmas shopping the brewery shop in Wrington (BS40 5PA) is going to open extended hours until 3pm for the two Saturdays before Christmas (15th and 22nd December).

Nigel Morris

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BUTCOMBE BLOND

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www.butcombe.com
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News from Towles' Fine Ales

Despite issues arising from the collapse of Waverley TBS shortly after supplying them with a very large order of beer, Towles' Fine Ales are going from strength to strength. The support of their Bristol customers has meant they are able to continue onward and upward!

They have been busy bottling beer (now available at Brewers Droop on Gloucester Road and via the brewery shop, plus soon to be stocked at Corks of Clifton), running a stall at Ashton Court Producers Market (giving out free samples of their **Old Smiler** and **Topsy Turvy** and selling bottles) and hosting brewery tours ('A perfect night out' according to one extremely happy customer!).

A new beer was launched in September via Beeses Beer Festival and the Seven Stars. **Copper Leaf** (4.2%) has been very well received and was released under the Berrow brand (Towles acquired the brand and the brewing equipment when the owner of the Berrow brewery retired).

Plans for the immediate future include new beers under the Towles' Fine Ales brand and lots more tours! Follow them on Facebook and Twitter (@towlesfineales) to keep up to date with everything they are getting up to.

Vince Murray

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
bristolpubsgroup@yahoo.co.uk



Pub News

Checking out the last three months of pub developments on the “Bristol Pubs Group” web-site I note that changes persist. Regulars of our community pubs will be lucky if they have not had to fear for the loss of their pub, but lose it they may. There is no rhyme nor reason but your pub may be the target of someone who may seek to exploit its development potential. The 170-year-old **Star** in Frampton Cotterell with its little changed cosy interior with stone faced walls, roaring fire and community games such as pool and a place in the local darts league is not without its existence problems. Part of the ex-County Estates Management estate which went bankrupt a few years back, it has been offered for sale by Christie & Co. Subsequently it is “Under Offer” and rumour has it that a property developer is the potential buyer. The Star sits on a large plot with a sizable garden. But the Star is a going concern, and is trading with customers. I live locally and I know about the contribution that the local pubs make to our community. The Star is essential. It is a genuine drinking house that has a pool table, darts league fixtures, and licence for live music. It is also comfortable and rather snug. This is a proper village boozer. With South Gloucestershire Council’s requirement to provide additional housing it would be easy for them to grant permissions for housing on the site at the expense of the Star, but hang on, the village has had many housing developments recently but its provision of facilities has not kept up, and the loss of the Star would not complement the trend. The Bristol Pubs Group await a planning application and we will respond with vigour.

I’ll start other goings on in South Gloucestershire with a couple of freeholds that are for sale. In Stoke Gifford the Marston’s pub the **Parkway Tavern** is for sale, as is the **Chequers** in Hanham. The Enterprise-owned **Crown** at Hambrook is now open under new management and is serving a couple of real ales. The **Bridge** at Shortwood is continuing

where it left off following a change of ownership, and so is the **Live and Let Live** in Frampton Cotterell that has a new tenant now that Bath Ales have elected not to renew their tenancy. Right in the north of our region the **Buthay** at Wickwar is due to re-open on December 1st following 18 months of closure. Ian Goodman is the new tenant and he has also recently taken on the **Old Pier** at Burnham-on-Sea which has had a tidy makeover and is selling four handpumped real ales including offerings from St. Austell. The charming **Queen’s Head** at Willsbridge remains on the market with Christie & Co and deserves consideration – please take a look. The owner of the **Highwayman** in Kingswood has applied again to demolish the pub and build nine dwellings in planning application PK12/3531/F. Once again the Bristol Pubs Group will be fighting to keep the Highwayman which has been and could again be a very viable pub.

In North Somerset the **Bristol House** in Weston-super-Mare could continue as a pub following Tesco’s decision to withdraw their interest when a planning application favourable to supermarket use was rejected by the local council. But Tesco don’t stop there. They have submitted a planning application for additional parking spaces at the **Royal Oak** in Portishead which would result in the pub becoming a store if it is passed. Near the marina in Portishead, Hall and Woodhouse have built a brand new super-pub which will be called the **Hall and Woodhouse**. Expect extensive dining as well as Badger beers in this large two-floor pub-restaurant. The locals at the **Friendship** at Nailsea have been told that owners, Punch, are planning to sell. Watch this space. Other pubs in Somerset that are for sale start with the **Faulkland Inn** at Faulkland, not to be confused with the Tucker’s Grave at Faulkland, and the **Bell** at Banwell which is advertised with “other use scope”. Thirdly the **Pioneer** at Keynsham is also for sale.

A visit to some less publicised pubs in East Bristol

On a very rain-sodden evening in early October, five hardy members of Bristol Pubs Group gathered at the **Trooper** on Bryants Hill in St George. This spacious, popular local is known for its carvery and Sunday roasts. On our visit it boasted four real ales on handpump: Sharp’s Doom Bar, Courage Best, Marston’s Pedigree and Jennings Cumberland Bitter.

After a while the group moved on along the A431 towards Bristol, stopping at the **Horse and Jockey** on Nag’s Head Hill, a small but lively suburban pub with a successful darts team. Here the regular real ale is “mirror box” Bass and the hand-pulled guest beer was Wickwar BOB. A traditional hand-pumped cider was also on sale.

The next port of call was the **Lord Raglan** a few yards nearer to Bristol on the other side of the road. This is another small but busy suburban pub which has occasional live music; when we were there recorded music was playing on a big TV screen. Hand-pulled beers were Wickwar BOB and Cotswold Way, while a third pump appeared to be in use but was not serving beer that night. A feature of this pub is the home-made chilli and garlic pickle on the bar for customers to

eat with the free crisps provided. Freshly made rolls were also on sale in a chiller cabinet behind the bar.

Moving on along the A420 towards Bristol, we enquired at the **Air Balloon Tavern**, but on finding no real ale or cider on sale decided not to stay. A shame because it is a very attractive pub building and did not have many customers that night.

Next up was the **Pied Horse**, a big building with pool in the back room and live trad jazz in the front room on Thursdays. This was proving very popular. Hand-pumped real ales on sale were Wadworth’s Henry’s IPA and Box Steam’s Ghost Train.

We had all had enough of walking in damp conditions by now, so caught the bus to our final stop, the **Old Stillage** on Church Road, Redfield. This Arbor Ales pub has a mainly younger clientele and trades consistently well. Five real ales were on sale, including a guest beer from a different brewery which, alas, I neglected to write down.

Overall this was a successful evening, with real ale in good condition on sale in every pub we visited except one, and some very convivial surroundings to drink in.

If you would like to join us on the next of these friendly and informal social events, in January 2013 in St. Werburgh’s, see the diary or Bristol CAMRA’s website for details.

Norman Spalding

Before I get into the city of Bristol, other news around the periphery of the city is that the Wadworth-owned **Crown** at Tolldown, on the A46, has closed for a refurbishment but should be opening soon, if not already – please check before you travel.

Straight into the city centre, Scottish brewer and pub chain Brew Dog have opened their ninth UK pub in Baldwin Street, simply named **BrewDog Bristol**. Described as a ‘craft ale bar’ it is selling Brew Dog’s well known ‘craft’ beers as well as a range from other brewers. Brew Dog’s ludicrously strong bottled beers are also offered sensibly in small 25cl shots at prices that should keep the “park bench” brigade away. Nearby the **Rummer** in High Street could re-open soon (not to be confused with its other half in All Saints Lane) following a closure of at least ten years. We wish this venture well. The **Bunch of Grapes** in Denmark Street has changed name – to **Smoke and Mirrors**. A couple of real ales are on sale, and hopefully the pub can capitalise on its position juxtaposed to the Hippodrome and many other “happening” bars around the city centre. In Old Market the **Seven Ways** has finally been demolished after standing idle for seven years. Not only is this a significant pub loss but a landmark of the source and convergence of seven ancient routes that once went onto Bristol, Gloucester and London. Thankfully two doors away the **Volunteer Tavern** in New Street is continuing to become “discovered” as a very worthy community pub. The people behind the Volunteer have acquired the **Swan** in Barton Hill which is now open. I for one very much look forward to seeking it out. Unfortunately the **Stapleton Road Tavern** in St. Judes/Easton which has also been closed for many years is set to be converted into flats. The unfortunate **Plume of Feathers** in Hotwells looks increasingly unlikely to ever re-open as a pub as it is undergoing conversion into other uses whilst the nearby **Spring Garden** could soon suffer similarly unless resistance to conversion is successfully stepped up. In St. Paul’s the **Bristol Cider House** in Surrey Street is under new management and opens Monday to Saturday offering bar meals as well as a range of drinks.

Away from the city centre the **Cotham Porter Stores** is closed but is rumoured to be re-opening soon, and the former **Hobgoblin** on Gloucester Road (Bishopston) is due to re-open in December, maybe with a new name.

Around the Clifton area the **Alma Tavern** re-opened in September and is continuing with the successful “pub-with-upstairs-theatre” theme – who says pubs can’t diversify? The **Coach and Horses** in Highland

Square off of Blackboy Hill is up for lease from Enterprise. St. Austell brewery and pub chain have taken over the **Albion** in Clifton and are continuing to market it as “one of Bristol’s premier dining establishments while retaining all the elements you would expect to find in a well-appointed village pub” according to their web site. This is their first pub in the city of Bristol so good luck to them with this exciting venture. North of the centre the **Greenbank** in Easton is closed and we have every reason to be suspicious of what may happen here, which leads on to the nearby **White Lion** in Eastville which continues to be mauled over for ideas for its development. The freehold of the **Star** on Fishponds Road is for sale and the **Cross Keys** on the same road has recently been auctioned, as has the **Old Fox** in St Philips but we have had no feedback on their fate so far. St Philips can ill afford another pub loss, having lost a dozen in the past couple of decades. Long live the Old Fox.

Good news in the south of Bristol. Landmark pub the **London Inn** in Bedminster re-opened in October courtesy of the Holden family (Three Tuns, Velindra, Apple Tree) who have turned it around to give it another chance. And Greene King has been granted a planning application to build a new **Hungry Horse** in Brislington at the old tram works site. Sadly the good news doesn’t last as the **Harriers** in Hartcliffe has its freehold for sale with Christie and Co as does the **Long Cross** in Lawrence Weston. These two pubs are some of the last in their respective communities. The **Bull** at Crew’s Hole is ‘to let’ free of tie with James A Baker and the **Prince Albert** in St George has been sold.

The **Lamplighters** site in Shirehampton is subject to ongoing concerns. While housing may be built on part of the site the pub is earmarked for retrieval but so far no leasee has been attracted so no commitment has been made to when, and how? Are there any takers out there for this fine pub in an ideal riverside location?

Morrisons supermarket are reportedly “at it”. Having failed to venture forward with the **Farriers Arms** in Fishponds their intentions for the **Greyhound** in Fishponds, the **Chequers** in Kingswood and the **Bush** in Totterdown have been passed to the Bristol Pubs Group. Having passed by five Tesco Express and two Tesco Extra stores on a short trip from Stoke Gifford to Yate today I suspect the worse from this opposing supermarket chain in order to keep up.

Keep pubbing, and arrange your Christmas parties in the pub – enjoy!

Mike Jackson

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Pubs in Peril in Hotwells

If you have passed through Hotwell Road recently, you may have noticed work on two pubs which have been closed for some time, the **Plume of Feathers** and the **Spring Garden**. Alas, this is not for the better, if you're a consumer of beers (or should I say a British taxpayer!?).

The Plume of Feathers was sold in November 2011 for a stated price of £195,000 (source: www.landregistry.gov.uk). Work has been taking place on the upper floors for some months, starting last winter. The owner intends converting the pub into flats. As work progressed, an enforcement was put on the work. No planning permission had been requested. An application (ref 12/03579/F) has since been submitted, and a number of parties have aired their views. Bristol Pubs Group has sent an objection.

The application is for two flats on the ground floor and "lower ground floor", with four bedrooms in the beer cellar. (No mention has been made of any 'nightcaps for residents' in those.) There appears to be no application for the upper floors. Now, beer cellars are usually very shallow in

depth, as you probably know. Excavation work has been taking place to make the height from the floor level of these flats habitable. This has caused some disturbance to neighbours, which may account for the enforcement order.

An interesting point Bristol Pubs Group highlighted was about the bedrooms at the front of the beer cellar. The plans indicated windows, but a drawing of the proposed front elevation of the building did not. The Planning Department of Bristol City Council has asked for this to be clarified, with concern over a lack of natural light into these living areas. The ap-

plication for this conversion is still pending decision at the time of writing this. There is also concern over possible changes to the front of the pub. The Planning Department may be reluctant to allow external changes to this due to its traditional looks as a pub. It is in a conservation area, as is the Spring Garden.

As for the Spring Garden, this is a different story. You may be aware, from previous editions of Pints West, a planning application to convert the pub into nine flats had been submitted. An extension right across the beer garden to nearly roof level was part of this. This caused a lot of upset to local people for various reasons. They wanted a local community facility. Bristol Pubs Group, with this in mind, felt the pub itself should be saved for this purpose. (Pubs are classed as a form of community facility, as far as planning goes.) The Group therefore objected. The application was rejected due to the loss of a community facility, failing to safeguard the character and appearance of the existing building, failing to meet relevant space standards and effects on neighbouring properties, amongst other reasons.

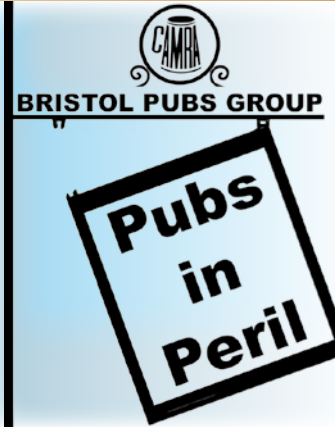
The Planning Department more recently raised an enforcement enquiry. Work had been noticed to be taking place in the beer garden. Their enquiry found internal work to be taking place to make this a shop. No planning permission is required for this. You may wonder why not.

Different type of use of buildings, e.g. retailers, betting shops, drinking establishments, finance houses, houses, etc, come under various types of classification. Planning permission may be required for changing from one to another. Others do not. This can lead to one change being made with no planning permission, but to reverse this does! CAMRA is campaigning to have pubs protected from changes without planning permission. Pubs are very vulnerable to conversion to supermarkets. Unfortunately, it is national Government which has to make this change, and have

it nationwide.

One small piece of protection is the building itself cannot have external changes made without planning permission.

An interesting point on this is a future planning policy which has been proposed by the Planning Department. This is known as 'DM5', and was put out for public consultation a few months ago, which Bristol Pubs Group participated in. What becomes of this remains to be seen, but matters over the retention of a building's recognition former use as a pub was one issue, after a change of use. CAMRA's viability test to prove a pub not being viable was another, along with adequate marketing of the pub having to be proved.



It looks as though the Spring Garden has been lost as a pub. What the outcome will be with the Plume of Feathers remains to be seen, but things don't look good there either, in my eyes.

Tim Belsten

Tim Rogers RIP

Tim Rogers, landlord of the Crown Inn at Churchill, passed away on October 25 at the age of 65. His loss will be mourned by anyone who enjoyed a pint at one of the West Country's most idiosyncratic pubs. Married to his wife Judith for 27 years, Tim signed a deal to buy the Crown on his wedding day – just three hours after the couple had tied the knot.

Tucked away up a muddy lane and with no pub sign outside, the Crown excelled at being exactly what it was, which was essentially an unspoiled old cottage that sold drink and food. With the support of his staff and a distinctive management style, Tim ran one of the most traditional yet quirky country pubs in the region. Log fires, excellent pub grub and up to nine cask ales made it a hostelry that was always high on the CAMRA list.

When Tim was behind the bar, he played the role of mine host and would always ask how you were. Tim had a passion for Austin Healey cars and won his class at Brands Hatch, qualifying him to race at Le Mans. He used to attend Le Mans with a group from the pub, taking with him English beers and roast beef – typifying the image of an English eccentric abroad. One local once visited the Crown and asked for a glass of Rioja. "Would you like Spanish Rioja?" Tim enquired, to the amusement of all.

On the Sunday before Christmas, the pub – currently being run by manager Russell on behalf of Judith – holds a sloe gin contest and this year a cup will be awarded in Tim's memory. He is survived by Judith, his daughter Amy, step-children Andrew and Sally and grandchildren Sophie, Daisy, Liam, Matty and Lexie. A service of celebration was held at St Mary's Church, Wedmore on November 8th and was understandably packed out.

Jon Line

The Cask (Ale) Report

into

Britain's National Drink

According to *The Cask Report 2012-2013*, published at the end of September 2012, production of cask ale (real ale to you and me) increased by 1.6% between 2010 and 2011. This is the first annual increase in 20 years. About 2.2 million barrels of cask, or 633 million pints, were sold last year. Cask also overtook keg as a percentage of draught ale.

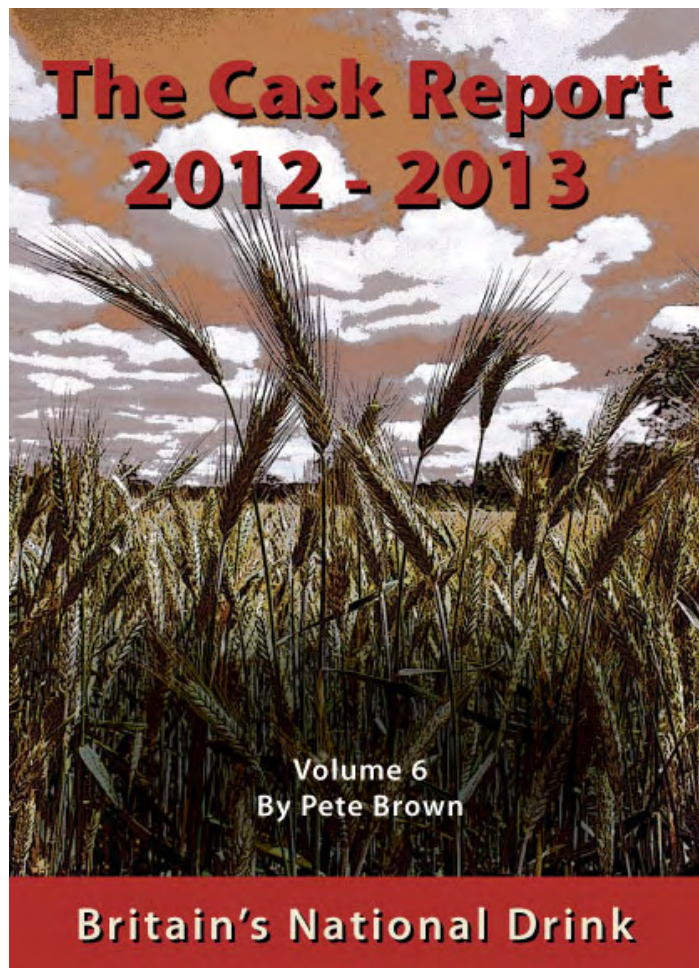
This is the sixth edition of *The Cask Report*, and its author Pete Brown says, "While cask has been outperforming the beer market for most of [this time], this is the first full year of actual growth. Sales growth during a recession is an impressive achievement, doubly so against a background of declining overall beer volumes and a shrinking number of pubs. Pubs that sell cask are less likely to close than non-cask stockists – as witness cask's increasing share of the declining pub market."

This year's report was published at the start of Cask Ale Week (28 September to 7 October).

Importance of beer range

So-called "wet-led" community pubs are the mainstay of cask ale consumption. However its popularity also increased in café bars and town centre circuit venues, which suggests that it is attracting younger drinkers more.

Bars with a combination of familiar and unfamiliar beers sell more cask ale overall than those which concentrate only on well-known brands. Standard ales (4.1% ABV or less) are the category that has shown



most consistent growth in the period. This might be because of their generally lower price or a preference for moderate consumption of alcohol.

Among pubs that sell cask ale at all the average number of hand-pumps on the bar is 3.1, compared with 4 for 'cask champions' – licences for whom cask ale forms the core element of their business. Cask champion pubs rotate at least one of their ales weekly, and most of them have two or more changing "guest ales" each week. They are usually keen stockists of beers from microbreweries.

By contrast, in mainstream managed pubs drinkers look for more permanency in the range of cask beers; too many unfamiliar names on the bar, rotated too often, can reduce cask sales.

Taste and variety

Research undertaken by CAMRA nationally and quoted in *The Cask Report* shows that "the majority of cask ale drinkers prefer cask ale to other beers because it has greater variety and flavour". Preferences for different styles vary: 45% say they want beer to be "easy drinking", and 27% want it "lightly flavoured" but 20% want it "strongly flavoured". Meanwhile 36% want it to be "full of character".

There is certainly plenty of variety available nowadays; the number of breweries in the UK exceeded 1,000 this year for the first time in 70 years, while the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) estimates that its members brew 3,000 beers between them.

Who drinks cask ale?

Drinkers of cask ale remain mostly male and upmarket; however among younger and female drinkers it is holding its own after increasing popularity in recent years. 58% of cask ale drinkers say they first tried it when aged 18 to 24.

Half of all pub-goers agree that the availability of good quality cask ale is an important reason for visiting the pub.

Over 50% of cask drinkers choose it because it has "more variety and flavour than other mainstream beers". Heritage, natural ingredients and local provenance are also described as strong influences.

In summary, there are over 7 million cask ale drinkers in the UK, but 47% of adults have never tried real ale. If you are one of them, what are you waiting for?

Norman Spalding

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Rescuing the Swan

The Swan in Barton Hill has recently been taken over in another joint venture by Martin Hughes and Martin Gibson, following on from their relaunch of the previously run-down (and for a while closed) Volunteer Tavern in St Judes last year.

The pub is situated just under five minutes' walk from Lawrence Hill railway station in a side street off Church Road.

Martin Hughes (who also has the Hope & Anchor in Jacobs Wells Road), gave us the background story:

"The freehold of the Swan is owned by Mrs Roo Bentley, a very old friend of Martin Gibson, who currently lives down in Watchet. She was somewhat at her wits end over the manner in which her pub was being run by the previous incumbent and she asked Martin G if he thought that we could be of any help in replacing the tenant and, also, in turning the pub around.

"Well, we love community pubs and the Swan ticks all the boxes for us. It has a proven history of having been a popular, and successful, community pub. Sadly, mismanagement and a blatant disregard for any number of laws led to a very sharp decline in the fortunes of the Swan.

"Prior to the previous tenant's departure, one of the things that I enquired of him was why (when there were four hand pumps on the bar) he did not have any real ale on. The response? – 'We tried it but it didn't really go.' Incredible!"

The Swan is now being run by the very capable, young and enthusiastic Will Price. Will once ran the Hare On The Hill and also worked at the Hope & Anchor as



Martin Gibson, Will Price and Martin Hughes in the Swan

a duty manager. Martin Hughes says that he is absolutely a great front man to lead this pub back to greatness once again. And despite the fact that real ale "doesn't really go", there are now four ales on the bar. And what's more, it appears, "It doesn't just go, it flies!"

Unlike its sister pub, the Volunteer, the Swan is very much a work in progress. Martin H says: "It will take blood, sweat and beers to make it into the kind of pub we really want to see but the will (and the Will) is there to do it. There rest hinges entirely upon the support of the pub-loving community.

"I would urge everyone who loves pubs to switch their televisions off ('I'm a CAMRA member, Get me out of here!') and get out there. Not just to the Swan but to their locals in general. (But, yeah, the Swan mostly.) Seriously, it does make a difference to your locals. Get out there; drink beer and, whatever you do, Don't Spill A Drop!"

Well said, Martin.

SP

WARNING

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VOLUNTEER
BAR AND KITCHEN TAVERN

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News from the Bristol Beer Factory



The Bristol Beer Factory seem to have had a very productive year, having invested in a new bottling line and increased brewing capacity and holding what they report as a very successful 'Factoberfest' in September. The Bristol Beer Factory is also instrumental in pushing forward the Bristol Brewers Collaboration Brew which they hope to make an annual event. This beer is to be released ready for our own CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival in March 2013.

Following what they describe as the "unprecedented success" of their Twelve Stouts of Christmas last year, their main focus now seems to be the launch of the 2012 version for the forthcoming festive season. The team at Bristol Beer Factory say they set the wheels in motion to make the whole project bigger and better for 2012. A number of favourites have been kept whilst a number of alternative variations and completely new flavours have been created.

On Saturday 1st December the team will be celebrating the launch of the Twelve Stouts with an open day (11am to 6pm) at the brewery, with beers to sample, brewery tours and goodies to buy for Christmas.



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

Beers available from
www.bristolbeerfactory.co.uk
 - The Brewery Shop, North St
 - The Brewery, Durnford St

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

The cases of Twelve Stouts will be available to pick up, for those who have ordered them, or to buy if you haven't. The open day is free entry and a great opportunity to meet the team and enjoy some of the BBF's products whilst also picking up some Christmas presents for those beer lovers that you know.

The Twelve Stouts vary in strength from 4.5% to 10.5% and the full list is: Smoked Chilli Chipotle, Blackcurrants & Liquorice, Port Stout, Milk Stout, Ultimate Stout 6000, Imperial Stout, Imperial Stout aged in Bourbon casks, Imperial Stout aged in Speyside Whisky casks, Ultimate Raspberry, Mocha, Crème Brûlée, and Bristol Stout.

You can order the Twelve Stouts of Christmas (and other Bristol Beer Factory products) from their website www.bristolbeerfactory.co.uk.

Richard Brooks

Phil Roberts RIP

Exeter and East Devon CAMRA has lost an incredible campaigner and a great man.

Phil Roberts, who sadly passed away recently, had been involved with CAMRA for many years. In fact, he could well be the longest serving fully active member of CAMRA in the whole of the South West region. Phil was so committed to CAMRA for so many years that he served on his local branch committee in a variety of roles. At the time of his passing, Phil was the branch chairman. Phil had also held the position of branch secretary as well as membership secretary, amongst others.



Phil was known to many Bristol members though his voluntary work as the South West Region's Tasting Panel Coordinator. Phil was happy to travel to Bristol from time to time to give his expert advice of how to identify the component tastes of beer. This knowledge is now being evidenced in the branch area's breweries' beer descriptions section in the Good Beer Guide. Phil was also the South West Region's Champion Beer of Britain Coordinator.

In addition, Phil was also heavily involved in his local branch in many other ways, including the Exeter CAMRA beer festival, the branch newsletter production and distribution, and Good Beer Guide surveys. Not only that, Phil helped out with other beer festivals including, for example, the Cornwall CAMRA beer festivals and CAMRA's National Winter Ales Festival which, in recent years, has been held in Manchester.

For many years now Phil has also taken a week out to assist at CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival at either London Olympia or Earls Court. Phil often ran the corporate hospitality side of things and, as with everything he did, it was done with upmost professionalism, tact (often required) and cheerfulness.

All of this, and more, as a volunteer.

I got to know Phil very well during my time as the CAMRA South West Regional Director. Hardly a regional meeting went past without Phil being there and he always brought his good humour and practical advice to the meetings. He would go out of his way to help other branches and members with advice and support. When I was travelling around Devon to a branch event, Phil was happy to transport me to venues and let me stay in his house.

Phil had other interests and was also a family man. His love of Formula One, narrow boats (now there's a contrast!) and car trials played a large part in his life. His wife Jane is also heavily involved with CAMRA. Phil also leaves two daughters, Helen and Elisabeth.

There were no pretensions with Phil. He was from the Cheshire area and had a typical northern way about him, i.e. no nonsense. But he was also considerate in the extreme, hard working, friendly, committed to what he believed in, always willing to help others and a fantastic person all round.

His funeral service was packed out which was a clear reflection of the love and high esteem so many people held him in. Our sincere condolences to his family, friends and the many CAMRA members who will miss him so much.

Pete Bridle

Inn and Around Portishead

The main talking point here in Portishead is the intention of Tesco to change the **Royal Oak** in West Hill into a ... wait for it ... guess ... that's right, a Tesco Express. You can imagine the way the events unfolded – and this is my personal imagination. Over a number of years, Enterprise Inns pub company gave the leaseholder close support in return for a competitive lease and keen drinks prices. When the landlord showed evidence of struggling, Enterprise showed flexibility. Then, when the landlord left the pub, Enterprise investigated ways in which the business could be invigorated in the future (there is no other pub within half a mile and it is surrounded by a residential area) and quickly sought out future landlords whilst keeping up the outside appearance of the place. On the other hand, if you happen to be of more of a cynical bent, you could picture the pub company piling on the pressure, increasing rents, increasing prices and not showing flexibility or support in this difficult time. Then, when the pub closed and was boarded up, the outside of the pub was left to become a weed farm and there was never any intention to seek a viable future. Along came Tesco who flicked their corporate cheque book like a wand in front of Enterprise.

Tesco first put their heads above the local parapets when residents in the immediate location received letters from them on September 8th this year. This letter stated that Tesco did not need to seek a planning application to carry out retail work but they would need planning applications for some minor work such as signage and for installation of a cash machine. A statement from Tesco talked of maintaining the traditional character of the building. After a bit of a delay, planning applications from Tesco appeared in local papers towards the end of October. These applications covered the promised signage and cash machine along with plant equipment to the rear, external alterations to the appearance of the building, demolition of outbuildings and creation of parking spaces. The cynics amongst you may have spotted the intention of altering the external appearance and the creeping nature of the alteration requests. Will there be more and what are the chances that this will end up looking like any other Tesco Express?

Tesco invited local residents to meet them on November 7th so that they could address any issues. A couple of local groups have emerged to campaign against the Tesco Express. One of them centres on the existing



Costcutter mini supermarket which will only be about 50 metres away and which has collected over 2,000 signatures to their petition. Those of us who have used a Tesco Express will know that they are busy places and have extended hours which are greater than an average pub's hours. Personally, I think the main problems will be parking and access for deliveries – both of which will cause problems to residents. (The pub is on the bend of a busy and narrow road.) I will update you on progress in future editions.

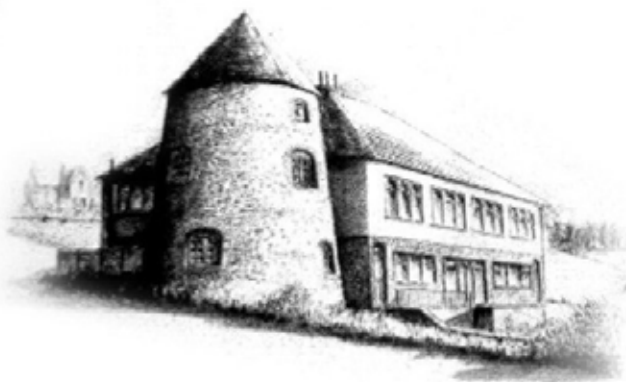
On a lighter note, the new **Hall and Woodhouse** pub/restaurant in the Marina area of Portishead is due to open by the time you read this. Some of you will have had the chance to try it by then. I'll give it a "once over" and report back in the next issue. It has already created a bit of a stir by the use of shipping containers in the new building.

On a final note, congratulations to the team at the **Poacher** on the High Street which recently reopened after an extensive refurbishment. It now looks cleaner and brighter and much more welcoming. The pint of Doom Bar sampled when I visited was good, too.

Neil Ravenscroft

The Windmill Inn

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Cotswold Spring celebrates 1000th brew

A special edition beer is being designed by Nic Milo, Cotswold Spring Brewing Company's master brewer, to celebrate the brewery's 1,000th brew. It is being based on an 8.5% Belgian Trappist style ale with a rich hazelnut colour.

The beer will go on sale in pubs throughout the region, together with bottle sales and sales over the counter at the brewery shop and online.

Cotswold Spring have been running a competition to name the beer; the winner will receive a crate of beer, Cotswold Spring merchandise from the brewery AND a free cask for their local pub. They will also be invited to the press open-day, which will give them the chance to participate in the brew itself!

The brewery, which is based at Codrington, just outside Chipping Sodbury in South Gloucestershire, was set up in June 2005 and since then it has won more than 25 awards, placing it at the heart of the real ale revolution in the West Country.

The brewery is currently brewing their two winter seasonal beers: **Guv'nor**, a full bodied fruity stout (4.6% ABV), and **Vixen**, a rich and warm tawny-brown beer which has a soothing waft of warm spice (4.8%), together with their three regular year-round brews **Stunner**, **Codger** and **Ambler**.

Steve Matthews

A day out in Wolverhampton

We were looking to watch a speedway meeting in an area where we could walk to quality Good Beer Guide-listed pubs. Well, my best ever pub crawl was in the Black Country and, if there is a capital of the Black Country, I would guess Wolverhampton would claim that position. Travelodge had just announced one of their deals. So off we motored to Wolverhampton on a Monday in August. Wolverhampton Wolves were hosting the Birmingham Brummies that evening. The Travelodge accommodation was ideally – if not a little noisily – placed next to the ring road and very close to Molineux, the impressive home of Wolverhampton Wanderers.

I was joined on this mission by my dearly beloved, Mrs R, and her country cousin, Andrew, aka Lagerboy. Arriving in good time for an afternoon session, we headed off to the town centre and, attracted by the tiled exterior, we entered the **Posada** in Lichfield Street. Inside we were served by a friendly barman who offered five real ales in the shape of Timothy Taylor's Landlord, Black Sheep Bitter, Adnams' Southwold, Jennings' Cumberland Bitter, and Castle Rock's Harvest Pale Ale which I plumped for, paying £3.15 for a pint. It being a warm day, we opted to walk through the sprawling and interesting interior to the beer garden at the back. The beer went down a treat and we all agreed that the day had started well.



The Posada

We then headed to the west side of town, just outside the ring road in the Chapel Ash area, to the **Combermere Arms**. Again we got a friendly reception and a good choice of real ales – beers from Purity, Banks, Hook Norton and Robinsons. I opted for Purity's Mad Goose, being a bit of a fan of this Warwickshire brewery. The beer prices ranged from £2.65 to £3 a pint and the food prices seemed even more reasonable at £4 and £4.50 for main courses. Now, this is the age of austerity, so we agreed it was a good time to get some solids on board. The pub itself has a welcoming frontage, is multi-roomed, and has a large beer garden. All of these come in handy on match days as, situated close to Banks' brewery, the pub is a short walk to the **Molineux**. A final point of interest: as a fan of outside urinals, I needed to visit the genes where the claim to fame is that a tree forms part of the building.

From the Combermere, we headed north west through West Park which is an attractively planted park with many facilities such as a boating lake. At the other side of the park we emerged into an area of terraced Victorian streets leading to Harrow Street and a corner pub built in 1900 called the **Stile**. Another friendly greeting and a choice of Banks' Mild, Bitter and Sunbeam along with Bountiful from Wychwood. I opted for the Sunbeam which didn't disappoint. Beer prices started at £2.45 a pint for the Mild. All-day food was available from a separate kitchen area which featured reasonably priced Polish dishes – the local area seemed to have a good-sized contingent from that neck of the woods. At the rear is a magnificent crown green bowling green which wraps itself around the place. If we had time, we would have moved on to the nearby **Newhampton** in Riches Street which also has a bowling green and a bigger choice of ales. A footpath led from the Stile to the Wolves football ground and our hotel room for a rest before the evening entertainment.



The Stile

The master plan for the night was simple. The speedway stadium was about half an hour's walk

from the hotel, to the east of the city. Our aim was to visit the **Great Western** before the race as this was on the way, tucked behind the main train station. The original building had been built in the 1850s and recently won the title of CAMRA's City Pub of the Year. I'd been keeping this one back as a bit of a treat. It is a large



The Great Western

pub and offered hot meat baps and, being a Holden's brewery pub, had a range of their beers: Mild at £2.30 a pint, Bitter (£2.40), and Golden Glow (can't remember). It looks as though Holden's get on pretty well with near neighbour Batham's brewery as Batham's Best Bitter was on as a regular along with another guest beer. As always, the greeting was friendly and patient (I should point out there was a bit of a language barrier – even we sometimes struggle to understand Andrew's deep North Devon growl, varying between loud and very loud, and we know him). It was about five minutes into my first pint of Batham's that I realised my alliances had changed, perhaps forever. I'm a typical real ale tart – I try anything and get bored easily drinking the same thing. If I had a favourite beer I'd say it was either Caledonian's Deuchars IPA or Rooster's Yankee, or maybe Sarah Hughes' Dark Ruby. But, with effect from about 6.30 in the evening of Monday, 20th August 2012, my favourite beer officially became Batham's Best Bitter. Now, as I say, I am a beer tart and I love a pub crawl and the best thing I can say about the Great Western and its beer is that after the race (Wolves beat the Brummies) we returned to that pub for the rest of the night and I didn't shift from my new love of Batham's Best Bitter.

It is with regret that I have to report that, over the course of the day, we gave Andrew samples of some of the best beers England can offer, all served in great shape and he was unable to enjoy any of them, mentioning that one tasted of soap and another of detergent. We can only reflect that his tastebuds have been ruined by a lifetime of drinking frothy lager and have to give him up as a lost cause to the world of real ale.

Over the course of one day, we only visited four pubs. There were another seven or eight featured in the Good Beer Guide which were reachable. What we did sample makes us want to return. Maybe next time we'll do a detour to visit one of only ten pubs in the Batham's estate in the surrounding area (there's also one in North Wales). Happy days!

Neil Ravenscroft



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BADRAG - Bristol And District Rare Ales Group

BADRAG loves dark beers. Not exclusively, but it's perhaps fair to say that the darker ale styles instil a passion in the hearts of BADRAG members.

Actually, BADRAG exists to champion all rare or threatened styles of ale. Founded as a group within the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA a few years ago by enthusiast Laurie Gibney, it certainly seems to have struck a chord.

BADRAG can't claim to take the credit, but is very heartening to see the number of our local breweries that produce dark beers. Such beers in the form of milds, stouts and porters seem much more readily available nowadays. Arbor Ales based in Kingswood stands out as worthy of a mention, as does the Bristol Beer Factory based in Bedminster. And during the winter months the reappearance of the excellent Festivity from Bath Ales and Old Vic Porter from Butcombe are very welcome indeed.

Over the years BADRAG has organised a number of crawls and trails to celebrate and promote – pubs willing – the rarer styles of ale. Most notable have been the well-attended Mild Trails that are organised during CAMRA's 'Mild Month of May' each year. These are a call to local breweries to produce mild ales and local pubs to stock them.

At other times of the year it is more often the stouts and porters that get the spotlight, though sometimes milds as well (milds aren't just for May!).

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.badrags.co.uk BADRAG@camrabristol.org.uk

Recent BADRAG crawls (detailed in a separate piece below) have included a 'Harbourside Hop' in September, a 'Clifton Climb' in October, and a 'City Centre Stroll' in November, each taking in a number of pubs that agreed to have dark beers on offer.

In the coming months there will be a series of BADRAG meetings. These will be focussing (though not exclusively) on the organising and planning for the 'Mild Month of May'. Please come along if you are interested and would like to get involved. These meetings are also social gatherings though, not just business, so plenty of opportunity for socialising and imbibing your favourite tipple. The dates and venues for these meetings are:

- Thursday 17th January 2013 at the **Three Tuns**, Saint George's Road, BS1 5UR.
- Thursday 21st February at the **Seven Stars**, Thomas Lane, BS1 6JG.
- Thursday 21st March at the **Hope and Anchor**, Jacobs Wells Road, BS8 1DR.

If you yourself have any suggestions for Mild Month 2013 please email them to BADRAG@camrabristol.org.uk as soon as possible.

SP

The recent BADRAG crawls

We had 24 people along to the 'City Centre Stroll' (led by Denise Swain) on 17th November, a really good turnout sampling some fantastic dark ale. The weather stayed dry, and all the pubs had at least one dark ale in the form of a stout, porter or mild.

All in all it was a very good day. We started at the **Volunteer Tavern** in St Judes with Bristol Beer Factory Milk Stout. Next was the **Bridge Inn** which had RCH Old Slug Porter. The **Cornubia** offered two, namely Otley Oxymoron from Pontypridd (5.5%) and Quantock Stout (4.5%). The **Seven Stars** presented us with Darksides of the Moose by the Purple Moose Brewery (4%), Pews Porter from the Church End Brewery (4.5%), and the Harbourside Brewing Company Porter, at a hefty 5.5%. The **Commercial Rooms** put on a Hook Norton Double Stout, and the **White Lion** had Wickwar FSB Stout. We finished the trail at the **Gryphon**, with a choice of three dark ales, No Escape (5.2%), Dark Drake (4.5%) and Colchester Brewery Mild (4.5%).

This trail built on the popularity of the 'Clifton Climb' on 18th October, when 20 plus people (led by Pete Bridle) started a crawl by visiting the **Victoria** in Southleigh Road, Clifton. This lovely street-

corner pub had put on the rarely seen (in this area anyway) Springhead Brewery Drop o' the Black Stuff Porter which was wonderful. Next was the **Quinton House**, another small well-run pub near to the Triangle. The landlord there was very pleased with the support the branch gave the pub during our recent Cask Ale Week social and he was more than delighted to put on Cheddar Ales Totty Pot Porter for us. Again, this was in superb condition. Then onwards to the **Eldon House**, where the new licensee kindly agreed to put on one of Bath Ales rarer beers, Dark Hare. Then, with some going on to the **Hope & Anchor**, **Bag O'Nails** and **Three Tuns**, yet more dark beers were sampled. A hugely enjoyable evening for all.

The 'Harbourside Hop' (led by Phil Luxton) on 18th September, which also took in Bedminster, attracted about a dozen trailers visiting the **Orchard**, **Cottage**, **Nova Scotia**, **Tobacco Factory**, **Hen & Chicken**, and finally the **Robert Fitzharding** where refreshments were kindly provided by the manager. Unfortunately as our current BADRAG co-ordinator George Clarke fell seriously ill shortly before that trail there were few of our style ales on offer. We wish George a speedy recovery.

Denise Swain, Laurie Gibney, Pete Bridle

The Bar Code
by Eddie Taberner



BARCODE @EURESE ARCHER.COM

15/05/12 EDDIE TABERNER

News from Bath Ales



Seasonal ales and specials

Festivity, the popular dark, rich porter, has become a fixed seasonal brew and is available now on draught in pubs and bars and also in 500ml bottles. It is brewed using floor-malted Maris Otter barley and roasted chocolate malt, together with Challenger and Bramling Cross hops from Kent. Dark ruby in colour, Festivity is brewed to 5.0% ABV and its hint of rum mingled with vanilla has earned it a loyal following. Commenting on its return, Gerry Condell, head brewer of Bath Ales said: "Festivity is our take on a winter warmer, a wonderful old style porter; it's a fittingly festive beer that's in demand every year. I hope everyone catches it while it's around and enjoys a little Festivity in the run-up to Christmas."

Bath Ales also brewed a special for the Wetherspoon beer festival held from 24th October to 14th November. This time the **Hefeweizen Hare**, a 4.7% ABV wheat beer, was served cloudy as it should be, unlike when they last brewed it two years ago, when Wetherspoon insisted it had to be clear. *(And very nice it was too when I sampled it in the Hop House in Clifton. Ed.)*

Pubs

Bath Ales are again making a bold move by signing a lease for a new venue in Bath that will be its biggest outlet yet. At just over 5,000 square feet, the new site is double the size of any of their other pubs, and will employ up to 50 local staff. It will add a quarter to the workforce of Bath Ales, bringing total staff numbers to approximately 250.

The premises are part of a new food quarter being built in and around the arches of the 19th century railway station. The new bar and restaurant will take up the entire first floor and will have two large outside areas for *al fresco* dining. When opened there will be capacity for around 140 diners. In addition it will have a large open-plan kitchen, a meat-hanging room and, most importantly, a small micro-brewery producing specialist beers, possibly starting with an unfiltered brew. It is planned to open the venue as '**Graze Bar, Brewery and Chophouse**' sometime before Christmas.

Bath Ales have confirmed that they have sold the **Live and Let Live** in Frampton Cotterell to Karen Cairns and her partner John. However they will continue to supply the pub.

Expansion activities

In September the two new 100 barrel brewing vessels installed in the existing brewery were commissioned and are now in full production. They are giving a 40% increase in brewing capacity thus allowing more flexible rotas.

Bottling success

Bath Ales announced that the ten millionth bottle of beer has rolled off the line! The state-of-the-art bottling plant was installed at its Warmley premises in 2007 and has since bottled its own beers, as well as beers from another 25 breweries nationwide.

Bath Ales' bottling plant currently produces around 65,000 (500ml and 330ml) bottles per week – nearly 3,500,000 a year – half for its own beer and the rest for other breweries.

Following successful exports to Finland and New Zealand, Bath Ales continued with further exports to Brazil, the Czech Republic,



Craig Lewis (front of picture), Bath Ales Bottling Plant Director, with his team

Denmark, Ireland and Mexico, with more countries in the pipeline.

Events and Christmas goodies

From 7th to 9th December Bath Ales will be exhibiting at the 'Taste of Christmas' event held in the Excel Centre in London. They will also have a stand this year at the Christmas Market in Bath, taking place from 22nd November to 9th December.

As well as a choice of gift packs, this year Bath Ales will be selling Christmas hampers. There are two types to choose from: one contains a bottle of Gem, Gem chutney produced by the Bath Food Company and Gem soap, produced by Village Soaps. The other contains a bottle of Festivity, Christmas Day chutney and a limited edition key ring. These items will be available from their pubs and the brewery shop in Warmley.

Roy Sanders

Sad news from Humpers

MICHELLE MURRAY, proprietor of Humpers Off License in Staple Hill, died suddenly at a much too young age. Humpers was a frequent CAMRA Good Beer Guide entry over the last 20 years and Bristol's only off license to offer both real ale and real cider.

Michelle was celebrating 25 years in situ and an article praising Humpers was included in the last edition of Pints West, which was already at the printers when the news broke.

Michelle was very well known in the local community and will be very much missed.

Graze
BAR, BREWERY & CHOPHOUSE

Cut	Weight	Price
neck	24 lbs	12 cts
chuck	22 lbs	13 cts
prime of rib	96 lbs	18 cts
porter house	70 lbs	22 cts
sirloin	92 lbs	18 cts
rump	64 lbs	13 cts
round	116 lbs	14 cts
flank	68 lbs	8 cts
shank	60 lbs	3 cts
brisket	32 lbs	8 cts
shin and plate	96 lbs	6 cts

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bath ales

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The 2Bs walk

I should make it clear from the start that this is a trip from Bath to Bristol and nothing to do with the Arkells session ale. This is despite the fact that the husband of one of our group went to school with their chairman, Nicholas Arkell.

And so it was that, one morning in late October, a group of CAMRA members from the White Horse branch in Oxfordshire set off to finish our coast to coast walk – London to Reading on the Thames, Reading to Bath on the Kennet & Avon Canal, and now the final leg along the River Avon.

We joined the river very soon after leaving the station and maintained a reasonable pace, dodging cyclists and joggers, before reaching open country. At Saltford there was a little confusion regarding the route of the towpath but by walking through the village we found that the **Bird in Hand** had opened three minutes earlier – that delayed train was obviously serendipitous. **Bath Barnsey (4.5%)** and **Butcombe Bitter (4%)** were both sampled in this welcoming and friendly pub. It was with some reluctance that we left, climbing up to the Avon Valley Railway to walk a short stretch beside the track. We soon returned to the river bank, meandering gently through some lovely countryside – as did the river!

Past Keynsham marina we saw the **Lock Keeper** along the road although Jane's assurances of another pub "just a mile away" persuaded us to carry on. Two miles further on we finally saw our destination but there was no little concern that it looked very Greene King like. Luckily 'hawkeye' John had spotted the free house next door.

The **Old Lock & Weir** at Hanham Mill proved to be an inspired choice for lunch. **Bath Gem** and **Otter Ale** accompanied very good food and the usual inconsequential banter. Also it was now warm enough for us to sit outside and watch the river go by as we ate. Just before it got too cold we resumed our trek, passing a curious 'unquantifiable danger'



The beer mat bedecked walls and ceiling of the Cornubia

sign – could they mean our beer consumption?

As there were no more pubs on the river bank we reached Bristol sooner than expected and, to avoid a busy road, we detoured around an old industrial area being redeveloped before crossing the blindingly shiny GW footbridge leading us to the Temple Meads station. What a lovely walk ... and why don't the local CAMRA groups make it an annual event?

We considered our options for many – well a few – seconds: train home or find a pub? A phone call to fellow, but non-walking, members of our group resulted in a plan to meet at the **Cornubia**, but our Sat Nav-aided search for the pub was interrupted by a sign advising us that the **King's Head** could be found at the end of Petticoat Lane. Concerned that we had taken a wrong turn and had ended up in a London market we thought it best to investigate and found a fantastic pub.

To be honest I have seen bigger garden sheds but, with a CAMRA-listed historic interior and more than 350 years old, this is a pub not to be missed. Between us we tried the **Butcombe Gold**, **Hogs Back T.E.A.**, **Fuller's London Pride** and **Sharp's Doom Bar** (in fact one of tried them all!) and found all to be in excellent condition. By this time the others had found us – although Lesley was a little confused as our visit coincided with the Bristol Zombie Walk and it was hard for her to tell the two groups apart.

It seemed only sensible to try more than one pub and so we did move on to the **Cornubia**, which incidentally was the Roman name for Cornwall. Another really good pub with a collection of pump clips to rival any I have ever seen. A friendly local recommended **Cotleigh Long Eared Owl** which I had while most of the others chose the **Cornubia Ale (3.8%)** brewed for the pub by Arbor Ales.

Some of the more sensible amongst us were now thinking about food and Magnus, who lives in Bristol, took us to the **River Station** where good food was accompanied by draught **Bath Gem** and other bottled beers. A short stagger then took us back to the station and a train home giving us time to start planning our next expedition and to think what a good place for a pub crawl Bristol appeared to be.

Dick Bosley



The intrepid group at the bar of the exquisite Victorian pub, the King's Head

The Bar Code
by Eddie Taberner



The Cornubia

– realising its potential

Ever since the Cornubia reopened its doors in the summer of 1997, it has always been one of Bristol's best-kept secrets due to its location, tucked away in what used to be known as Temple Back, perhaps better known now as "opposite the Central Bristol Fire Station". For 12 years, prior to 1997, the pub was used as a training/hospitality suite for the Courage Brewery. As you might expect, it has undergone a lot of changes in management since 1997 but current licensees, Phil and Jackie, ably supported by manager, Ben, are really starting to realise the potential of this lovely Georgian free house.

Phil and Jackie know a thing or two about running pubs. In 2002, they won CAMRA's National Pub of the Year Award with their pub the Crown & Thistle in Gravesend. They arrived in Bristol in early 2010 and by spring this year they decided to take on the lease long-term and set about firmly putting their stamp on it with a view to creating a traditional pub. First of all they invested in the cellar and increased the beer range from three to twelve real ales of all styles, often local. The local Arbor Ales brews a seasonal "house beer" for the Cornubia and the winter offering was due to hit the pumps towards the end of November which, I am told, is a port based brew.

A covered smoking area was added down the side of the pub and then Phil did an excellent job in creating an enclosed, attractive outside drinking area which has proved a tremendous success. Phil advises that heaters and lights are very soon to be installed to take some of us more hardy drinkers through the colder winter months. The latest addition to the pub is the creation of a French boules or petanque pitch with a view to encouraging inter-pub challenges, or maybe entering a team into a

local league. "It's all about keeping pubs alive in Bristol," Phil tells me.

Inside, there is a pull-down screen, mainly used to show sporting events of national interest. Food-wise, it's a traditional "pie and a pint"

offering which can be either pork pies and chutney, or a choice from of a range of five Pieminister pies, with optional potato and gravy, plus a "pie of the week" voted for by the regulars. You will also find Jaz the parrot and turtles Squeak, Frankie and Benny!

In January, the Cornubia will be one of an exclusive handful of pubs in the UK to be able to stock the Czech Budvar Yeast Beer, an unpasteurised version of Budvar Original (not to be confused with the American "Bud" product) by becoming a Budweiser Budvar Yeast Beer Ambassador. Budvar Dark and normal will also be available. To mark the occasion, on Wednesday, 23rd January from 6pm, representatives from the Czech brewery, along with probably the UK's most prolific beer-writer and editor of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide, Roger Protz, will be at the Cornubia to promote the range, so make a note in your diaries. According to Roger this Czech beer is close in spirit to a fine ale, infinitely remote from the Eurofizz which has given the lager-conditioned style a bad name amongst serious beer drinkers for so long.

The Cornubia, 142 Temple Street, Bristol, BS1 6EN, is open Mondays to Saturdays from 12-1130, closed Sundays.

Ali Bridle



Arbor Ales

Arbor Ales Fanboy IPA 6.5%
Arbor Ales Single Hop IPA Dr Rudi 6.5%
Arbor Ales Raw Mutiny Coconut Stout 5.8%
Arbor Ales Down Deeper 12.5%
Arbor Ales Conkered 4.1%
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Christmas at the Three Tuns

The 2012 Bristol & District branch Christmas Social will be at the Three Tuns (our current Pub of the Year) on the evening of Sunday 9th December. Doors open at 6pm, although you can of course get there later if you like. CAMRA membership cards must be shown, so please remember to bring yours with you.

News from Dawkins

Dawkins Ales has a new head brewer. James will be off to pastures new in January, and in the meantime he has been showing the new guy, Dave Williams, the ropes. Dave has moved down from Leeds for the job. The interview apparently featured a fair few samples of Dave's full-mash home brew – and this helped win over brewery owner Glen Dawkins!

Kris will continue to brew alongside Dave as well; somehow managing to divide his time between the Green Man in Kingsdown and the first child with his wife Helen, a present that is due around Christmas time.

Dave's first job has been to introduce a new house yeast. Like most microbrewers, until now the brewery has been buying in commercially-produced dried yeast but has planned for a long time to crop their own from 'live' wet yeast. Glen says this is much trickier to handle, but ultimately more rewarding from brewers' as well as drinkers' satisfaction. In blind tastings the universal verdict was that it adds a more rounded palate to the brews and accentuates the flavours.

Glen would like to publicly extend his thanks to Jon Comer at Arbor Ales, who has been of invaluable help with this big step for the brewery.

In the meantime, James and Kris have brewed a couple of batches for a new 'brand' that will feature alongside the Dawkins name. **'Now**

New hands at the Eldon

At the start of October the Eldon House on Lower Clifton Hill welcomed a new management team. Newlyweds Andy and Amy Bridges, along with their one-and-a-half-year-old son Victor, were thrilled when landlord Rab Clarke approached them about the position.

The Eldon is still in good and trusted hands, as Amy has returned to an old stomping ground – she previously worked at the pub as assistant manager between 2007 and 2008. Andy has previously worked for Bristol Beer Factory at the Grain Barge and the Barley Mow, as well as at the Tobacco Factory. He also had a stint at the Richmond near the Students' Union in Clifton.

Together, and with the help of their team, they say they "intend to fill the Eldon House full of life."

There pub has a range of five real ales to choose from, with offerings from Bath Ales plus changing guests. Good food is available lunchtimes and early evenings, including the ever-popular Sunday roasts. There are quiz nights on Mondays at 8.30pm and live music every Sunday from 5pm. Other events on the horizon include a "Christmas Jumper Party" on 15th December, a New Year's Eve "Disco Inferno", and the "Eldon Supper Club" which kicks off in January.

You can keep up to date with happenings at the Eldon house at www.theeldonhouse.com.

SP

Thus Ales' will be the name given to their most experimental recipes, especially inclined towards the powerful, hoppy styles that originated in the States and have found a niche following over here. At least initially they will all be one-offs in very small batches. The first was **Tapping The Admiral**, a 5.2% American Red IPA – rich, deeply fruity and hoppy.

Glen explains that the aim is to create beers with very bold flavours to appeal to drinkers that are currently going for the quite recent craze of "craft keg" ... but in cask-conditioned form! "I'll never do ale in keg, which at the moment for a microbrewer is strangely controversial. Why does that current fad remind me of The Emperor's New Clothes?"

These are the beers Dawkins has planned for this winter:

Proost! – this will be a 5.2% ABV juniper and orange stout with fruity flavours mingling amongst the roasty coffee tones; the first new recipe devised by new brewer Dave.

Chocadee – the 4.9% double chocolate milk stout returns (and there will be a one-off chocolate orange version this year, exclusive to Dawkins pubs).

HoHoHo – a 5.2% rum porter with a whole bottle of spiced rum in every cask will be out for the festivities.

Slapstick Black – Dawkins are once again brewing this dark, roasty 5% beer to support the festival of silent comedy held at the Arnolfini, Watershed and Colston Hall from 24th to 27th January. This year it will be joined by a new blonde 4.5% **Slapstick White**, wheaty and well-hopped.

The Now Thus winter beer will be:

Dr Zingi's Ginger Tipple – a spiced white winter brew, blonde and hoppy with grated root ginger, cinnamon and whole cloves for an intriguing taste explosion.

Finally, Joe at the Portcullis in Clifton is planning a Christmas beer festival from Thursday 13th to Monday 17th December.



DAWKINS ALES



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Proost! 5.2% Juniper & Orange Stout
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The Hillgrove Dove St, Kingsdown, BS2 8LT
The Victoria Southleigh Rd, Clifton, BS8 2BH
The Portcullis Wellington Ter, Clifton Village, BS8 4LE
The Green Man Alfred Place, Kingsdown, BS2 8HD
Dawkins Ales Timsbury, Bath Tel 01761 472242

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The Seven Stars Beeriodicals

The transpontine Seven Stars, Thomas Lane, Bristol has just hosted its 26th “Beeriodical” – the name coined by landlord Paul Wratten for his monthly beer festivals. As far as we know, these are the only ones in the country which are themed by county, or group of adjacent counties.

Since October 2010, when Paul held the first Beeriodical, breweries from the following counties, shown in alphabetical order, have been featured: Berkshire/Buckinghamshire, Bristol/Gloucestershire/Somerset, Cambridgeshire/Lincolnshire, Cheshire, Cornwall, Derbyshire, Devon, Greater Manchester, Hampshire, Kent, Lancashire, London, Norfolk, North Wales, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Shropshire, South Wales, South Yorkshire, Suffolk, Sussex (East & West), Tyneside/Durham/Northumberland, Warwickshire, West Midlands and, finally, West Yorkshire.

Each festival offers 20 ales from ten breweries and takes place from the first Monday in the month until the following Thursday. Twelve of the beers are always ready on the Monday – eight on the handpumps, dispensed by rods (the normal method here) and the remaining four (the strongest) direct from racked casks in the small ground-level ‘cellar’ behind the bar.

At the time of my visit to interview Paul, the 26th Beeriodical – South Wales – was in full swing. Printed lists of the featured beers were on the bar in addition to the whole range displayed on the chalk-board. The current availability was indicated in both places and several of the regular ale enthusiasts, who aim to ‘get’ all 20 beers, were on hand eagerly sampling the brews.

Paul recalled some memorable moments from previous Beeriodicals. Derbyshire was a near disaster. A van sent to collect the casks met with a snowstorm and was forced to miss out Thornbridge, Amber and two other breweries entirely. Whilst in the county they were lucky to find replacements at Coppice Side, Bottlebrook and two more totally unknown breweries all of which were able to supply beers at no notice whatever thus saving the day. It was a close run thing.

For the Cambridge and Lincolnshire Festival, Paul had delivery problems and was obliged to hire a van and drive there on the day the actual delivery should have taken place, fortunately managing to locate all the breweries and return with the casks in time to settle them before the start of the event.

The only Beeriodical which failed to present 20 beers was that featuring Cornwall. As many as five casks were of poor quality and had to be condemned leaving only 19 beers.

Of course the start of the Beeriodical seldom actually falls on the first day of the month – it has happened only three times – but so far Paul has always managed to hold it on the first Monday of the month. Unfortunately this record is about to be broken. The next festival, due to begin on Monday December 3rd and offering ales from North Yorkshire, will have to be postponed until 10th December because Paul and his

assistant manager Darren Laye are both having a rare break during the first week of the month in order to attend a music festival. Apologies are offered to all customers.

The Seven Stars has been a public house for well over two centuries. It is famous as the place where Thomas Clarkson interviewed sea captains, and other crew members involved in the Slave Trade, while he was collecting evidence in the campaign to abolish slavery in the British Empire. In more recent times, in common with almost all other Bristol houses, it was part of the Courage empire passing to Allied Breweries, under the Ushers banner, in the pub swop of the early 1970s. Like most old pubs, it has a large cellar under the whole of the premises which, in this case, fell out of use about 50 years ago. Following problems with flooding it was sealed off as most of it was surplus to requirements as large volume ale sales had fallen by that time. Indeed when Ushers took over it did not even appear on the inventory. Ironically, now that large volumes of real ale are once again being turned over, Paul has to manage with the rather cramped facility on the ground floor – hence the lack of space for adequate stillage and the enforced use of vertical dispense by rods. Paul found this a bit hit-or-miss to start with, having to guess when the beer had settled and cleared, but with a combination of experience and technical improvements, in Paul’s words, “The cellar runs itself.” Certainly the beers are invariably served in perfect condition. The present owner of the building has no plans to restore the original cellar.

Twice winner of CAMRA Bristol and District Pub of the Year, the Seven Stars offers CAMRA members a discount of between 20 and 40 pence off the price of a pint and on Wednesdays this applies to all sales. There are always eight ales on hand pumps of which two are stouts or other dark ales and one is a “strong ’un”. Paul, a surprisingly young man, has been running this private-freehold, totally free-of-tie pub for three years and two months. Long may he continue to do so.

Henry Davies



Seven Stars Landlord Paul Wratten in characteristic pose

Bristol & District CAMRA’s furthest reach?

Last year the Somerset CAMRA branch chairman met with our committee to review the boundaries between the branches with a view to rationalising them, given the very large geographic spread of Somerset’s area with its population mainly to the south of the county. It was agreed that one small such adjustment brought part of the post code area of BS26 into the Bristol & District CAMRA area, with one of the serendipitous outcomes being that the pleasant pub in the village of Lower Weare on the A38 south of Cross now lies within our patch.

I had previously driven past this pleasant ivy-clad pub on the Turnpike Road A38 regularly in a rush to get elsewhere but, having been alerted to the change, I decided to visit from time to time and have been very pleasantly surprised to find a terrific well kept real ale outlet with the added benefit of very nice food as well.

It is well worth going the extra mile or so beyond Cross/Axbridge to get to this well run hostelry which has three real ales on hand pump variously from Butcombe and Cheddar breweries plus the inevitable Doom Bar, all in excellent form as you would expect from landlord David Williams. David and his wife previously ran the White Hart at Cross as well as the Lamb at Axbridge before moving to their present pub on the busy A38. Opening hours are 12 noon to 3pm and 6pm to 11pm, Monday



to Saturday. Set your sat navs (if needed) to BS26 2JF and do make the effort to check this out.

Being 21 miles out, I suspect it is the furthest pub by distance from the centre of Bristol within the Bristol & District CAMRA region. Is there another pub quite so far out but still within our region? Nominations please.

Bob Reynolds

BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

Pub and brewery news from the CAMRA Bath & Borders branch

Bath and Surrounding Villages

New Westhall Inn, Westhall Buildings, Upper Bristol Road, Bath **To be re-named The Victoria Pub and Kitchen**

This pub has been acquired by the Banwell Bar & Grill Company, which has previously carried out excellent refurbishments of three other pubs in the branch's area, in effect saving them from the brink of permanent closure. A major refurbishment of the New Westhall was nearing completion at the time of writing with a billed opening date of 30 November. Those other pubs transformed by the Banwell company are the Duke of Cumberland at Edford, near Holcombe, the Three Horseshoes at Chapmanslade and the Rose & Crown in Trowbridge. All three serve excellent real ale, mainly sourced from local micro-breweries, so we're looking forward to the re-opening of the New Westhall with eagerness.

Rising Sun, 58 Lymore Avenue, Twerton, Bath

This pub, which closed earlier this year, is being redeveloped as a number of flats.

Bell, 103 Walcot Street, Bath

This well-loved mainstay of the real ale scene in Bath is believed to be up for sale. At the time of writing this was breaking news and little in the way of detail was known. We understand that owner Ian Wood told staff in mid-November that he was putting the former eighteenth century coaching inn on the market. Meanwhile a message posted by him on Facebook addressed to the community of Walcot seems to confirm that, after 23 years at the pub, he intends to sell. He said that he was very proud of the eclectic team of people who make the Bell so special but that it was time for somebody else to take over.

East Somerset

Redan, Fry's Well, Chilcompton

This pub seems to have closed unexpectedly during the week ended Friday 24 August. An apologetic note was posted to the main entrance, suggesting possible financial reasons for the closure.

Old Bath Arms, 1 Palmer Street, Frome

This town centre pub, which closed earlier this year, has been thoroughly refurbished and recently re-opened under new management. New landlord Richard Findlay, formerly of the Masons Arms in Warminster, has taken over the pub and, having taken advice from Rob Sherwood of Yeovil Ales on quality matters, will be serving real ale on gravity (as he did at the Masons Arms).



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West Wiltshire

Cross Keys Inn, Lye's Green, Corsley

This Wadworth's owned pub re-opened on Thursday 16 August with a big buffet. The landlady of the nearby White Hart has taken on the Cross Keys.

Three Daggers, Westbury Road, Edington

A farm shop is to open at this large village pub, which re-opened in early 2011 following a massive refurbishment, with plans for a micro-brewery to follow. Building work is already underway.

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

There are new landlords at this village-centre pub. At around three months in they are making an excellent job, with lots of hard work, of turning this pub back into the village local it deserves to be. Although not familiar with real ale they have listened and learnt from their experienced barmaid meaning that there is always a fine pint available. Good value and good quality pub grub is also offered. They have lots of plans for the future but for the moment are concentrating on providing the village with what it needs.

Axe & Cleaver, Southwick, near Trowbridge

The freehold of this pub, which re-opened only around eighteen months ago following years of closure, was reported to be on the market at the end of October. Christie and Co are the selling agents.

Courthouse, 2 Castle Street, Trowbridge

This town-centre pub has been closed since around mid-September. It is hoped that this is a temporary closure but, at the time of writing, the reason for the closure was unknown and the future of the pub was uncertain.

Stallards, 15-16 Stallard Street, Trowbridge

We understand that Milk Street have discontinued its lease on this pub and that the landlord has himself taken on the running of this Four County Inns owned pub.

Bath Arms Hotel, 41 Market Place, Warminster

This once lively town-centre pub is currently closed and boarded up. It is believed that it could re-open, following extensive refurbishment, as a Wetherspoon's.

Castle Inn, Bratton Road, Westbury

This pub, which has been closed for around two years, has been granted planning permission to be converted to a private residence. The planning application was made in early September. No local objections were received and so permission was automatically granted on 1 November. Situated only around 150 yards from the popular Angel Inn the Castle probably never stood much chance of surviving. We understand that in the time that the pub was closed little serious interest was shown in re-opening it.

Hollies, 55 Westbury Leigh, Westbury

This recently auctioned pub is now undergoing a major refurbishment and is due to re-open later in the year.

Oak, Warminster Road, Westbury

This long-closed pub has been demolished to make way for a new Aldi. The supermarket chain received planning permission to knock down the pub and an adjacent closed car dealership in 2008. But a last minute campaign to save the pub building, which is believed to contain many historic features, including sixteenth century beams, was launched in around September. Local resident Alex Prowse set up an online petition and officers at English Heritage were contacted with a view to getting the building listed, thus saving it from demolition. The race between Aldi and the campaigners effectively came to an end on Wednesday 31 October when the diggers moved in. This open space around this former Good Beer Guide-listed pub, which closed ten or more years ago, has been used, for most of the intervening time, as an extension to the forecourt to the adjacent car dealership. The building itself was largely neglected. In around August, however, the dealership permanently moved to larger site on the Westbury trading estate leaving the Oak free of vehicles. This effectively gave Aldi the green light to act on its plans to demolish the whole site.

Steve Hunt

BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

Accolade for the Devilfish Brewery

It didn't take long for one of the Bath & Borders branch's newest breweries to gain recognition for its excellence. Earlier this year Devilfish took the accolade of champion beer of the 2012 Bath beer festival with their *Apachi*, and a presentation was held at the brewery on Tuesday 14th August.



Bath & Borders branch chairman James Honey presents Devilfish head brewer Iain Masson (right) with the award for *Apachi*

Devilfish started out in 2010 as the venture of beer enthusiasts Andy Jones and Evan Metz (landlord of the Seven Stars in Winsley) with the aim of creating a variety of craft beers in the mould of American micro-breweries. They were soon joined by head brewer Iain Masson. They began brewing commercially at Wick Farm, near Monkton Farleigh, but, within a few months, moved to the larger premises of a former cowshed at Highchurch Farm in Hemington. It's a remote site: around eight miles south of Bath, the nearest pub, and nearest outlet for the brewery's beers, being the Faulkland Inn in the village of Faulkland, around half way between Radstock and Trowbridge.

The brewery quickly established a good reputation within the Bath area with its mainstay session beer *Devil Best* and the stronger American style blonde beer *Bombshell*. The Devilfish range now consists of six beers with a seventh which, at the time of writing, was in production for the first time.

Available all year round are *Devil Best* (4.2%), a medium brown to amber beer made with three types of malt and, like all Devilfish beers, plenty of hops; *That Gold Devil* (4.2%), originally a commemorative beer brewed for the Royal Wedding called WNK, a golden citrus beer and the hoppiest of the entire range; and the festival award-winning *Apachi* (5.0%).

Making up the seasonal range are the American blonde beer *Bombshell* (4.5%), the dark brown, rich and fruity *Stingray* (5.5%) and the strong dark Christmas ale *Satan Claus* (5.5%).

Meanwhile joining the range this autumn was a new dark beer *The Darkness* (4.5%).

Apachi, which beat off 49 other beers to be crowned beer of festival, is a light, refreshing, American Pale Ale. First produced in March 2012 it has a fruity, zingy flavour, and uses US hops that few other brewers



dare to use. The name is an amalgam of the initials APA and Chi, a Chinese devil or dragon.

Regular outlets for Devilfish include the afore-mentioned Faulkland Inn, the Seven Stars at Winsley, the George, Castle Inn and Three Horse-shoes, all in Bradford-on-Avon, the Rose & Crown in Trowbridge, the Masons Arms in Warminster, the Hope & Anchor at Midford, the Duke of Cumberland at Holcombe, the Oakhill Inn, the Wookey Hole Inn, the Two Pigs in Corsham and the Three Crowns in Chippenham.

Our congratulations go to Iain, Andy and Evan on a well-deserved award. We understand that this is their first CAMRA award and we hope it will be the first of many.

Steve Hunt

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Developments at Royal Oak, Twerton

It has been rather a long time now since I have felt moved to put pen to paper (two digits to keys more like it) for Pints West. On this occasion my decision to write arises from seeing very little lately about the Royal Oak in Twerton, Bath, despite the changes that have occurred recently.

The pub had been a licensed establishment for many years as Andrew Swift has informed us in Pints West and in his book about lost pubs of Bath. A few years ago it was not open for trading at all and was pretty much a building shell and in a bit of a state.

John and Becky Winnerah took responsibility for it in 2005 (ish) and with some keen help from their friends did a lot of refurbishment and opened it as an ale pub. The pub thrived for a number of years and in my opinion was the best in Bath. Since I work in Bath I try to visit the pub as regularly as I can achieve on my way home and have watched it wax and wane.

During 2010 John and Becky left for Dorset to open a brewery, Art Brew, leaving Chris Powell to manage the pub. John retained the role of licensee for the pub which operated as the brewery tap for his brewery. It came as a bit of a shock to customers and staff (including Chris) just before Christmas 2011 when it was announced that the license would not be renewed and the pub was effectively closed. The amount of notice given was just a few days.

Understandably staff and customers were rather distressed by this turn of events. However, Chris believed that the pub was viable and he spent some worrying weeks dashing round to try and find finance to renew the license and reopen. There was a desire to open before the Christmas period but for obvious reasons but this proved to be impossible. The Royal Oak actually reopened during January 2012 with Chris Powell as the licensee and Paul Hilferty as his assistant. Popular opinion had it that the finance was provided by Butts brewery since three pumps have been dedicated to Butts beers since the pub reopened. However, this was not the case and Butts beers are there because Chris reckons that they are good and are not generally available elsewhere in the city.

There has not been much change since the pub reopened apart from a 'freshening up' of the area behind the bar providing more shelving and some optics. The pub is no longer a cash-only establishment since it now has a card reader. As far as the ale is concerned, Chris rather limited the number and range of 'guest' ales while he got the pub re-established. Apart from Butts, mentioned above, Plain Ales have featured regularly. Chris has informed me that it is his intention to gradually widen the scope and extent of the guest beers as the pub settles in. From my observations this seems to be happening already. BADRAG followers will be pleased to hear that dark ales are regular features on the bar. The cider drinkers are also well catered for since there are normally six to twelve traditional ciders available at the pub.

Since the pub reopened there have been no beer festivals though the regular punk and cider weekends which started before closure have carried on. They come round about once every six months. I dropped in for one and my head was still throbbing the next week (and not because of cider). I am pleased to report that this situation is due to change.

Firstly Chris plans to have his favourite ales on the bar over Christmas featuring rather strong ales and in particular Thornbridge Jaipur, Downton Chimera IPA, Sarah Hughes Ruby Mild and Snowflake, if he can get them.

The pub intends to have a winter beer festival – the dates fixed for this are 21st to 24th February 2013, so please put this in your diaries. The details of the festival, the actual beers proposed and whether there is to be a theme, etc, have not yet



been fixed. Chris is considering purchasing a stillage so that all the ales can be available at the same time. It is proposed that there will be live music every evening during the festival.

Music still features heavily at the Royal Oak. There are regular live bands and regular Irish, English and French music sessions. The pub also now has two dogs. Star, a Malamute, as near to a wolf as you can get with domestic dogs, is affectionately known by the regulars as Fluffy. He has been there some time and rather pined when the pub was empty last Christmas. He likes to have his human 'pack' around him. Star has been joined by Ralph which is some sort of Husky cross puppy majoring on the cute.

Just one other snippet – there is a strong rumour (unconfirmed) that there may be a brewery being set up at the Royal Oak in the not too distant future.

Make sure that you do not miss the festival.

Phill the Pint

The Bar Code
by Eddie Taberner



BARCODE © EURESEARCHER.COM

EDDIE TABERNER 2/12/11

Abbey Birthday!

How time flies – it hardly seems possible that Abbey Ales has recently celebrated its fifteenth birthday.

Alan Morgan set up the brewery, based at Camden Row, fifteen years ago, reviving a brewing tradition in the city that had been lost for decades.

The firm's first pint was produced in October 1997 and since then the brewery has been awarded a number of prizes for its flagship best bitter *Bellringer*.

Over the years Abbey also added a range of guest and seasonal beers, such as *Black Friar*, *Bath Star* and *Chorister*, and this Christmas it will produce its popular seasonal (5.0% ABV) *Twelfth Night* winter warmer, plus a new beer brewed to a lower ABV of 3.8%, *Abbey Christmas*.

Bellringer in a 500ml bottle is also proving very popular with Bath's wine bars and restaurants.

Mr Morgan said: "When we started we made the decision to just supply to places within a fifteen-mile radius of Bath Abbey and this we feel has been one of the secrets of our success, we are known affectionately as the Beer of Bath. Everyone we talk to seems amazed that it has been fifteen years and repeatedly tell us how quickly it's gone. Many of our customers have been with us since day one. We still have the same team at the brewery but my son Simon is now taking on more of the day-to-day running of the brewery whilst I concentrate more on our pubs the *Star Inn*, the *Coeur de Lion*, the *Assembly Inn* and the recently added and refurbished *Trinity Inn*, all situated in Bath's city centre."

To mark the company's fifteenth birthday, *Bellringer Maximus*, which was introduced on the brewery's tenth birthday beer, was brewed again and went on sale in various real ale pubs in Bath around the end of October.



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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 1994/5.

Just what did we used to do on a Sunday afternoon before September 1995? Go for a walk? Go shopping for DIY or maybe weekly groceries?

Well, if you lived in England or Wales, you certainly were not able to visit your local pub. In 1988, the government relaxed licensing laws in England to permit 'all day' pub opening but due to a combination of pressure applied by religious groups, Sunday afternoon remained dry – although, by accident or design, pubs were allowed to open for an additional hour, until 3pm, at lunchtime. That extended hour proved really popular, with over 80% of licensees taking advantage of it, so in 1994 CAMRA was campaigning hard for the law in England and Wales to be relaxed still further to permit Sunday afternoon opening. After all, Scots were able to go to the pub on a Sunday afternoon, shops were able to open and it was probably confusing for foreign tourists who were visiting England and Wales. CAMRA felt that Sunday afternoon opening would benefit the local economy; we weren't asking anyone to force a landlord to open but just allowing them to have the choice.

Thankfully, legislation was eventually passed in August 1995 and I'm sure many licensees would agree that Sunday afternoons are now probably one of their busiest times should they choose to screen Sky Sports, serve traditional Sunday lunches, or simply be open for us to pop in for a pint after a walk. Interestingly, in Bristol, the Rose of Denmark in Hotwells was voted the best value Sunday lunch at £3 for two courses!

On the Bristol pub scene, JD Wetherspoon opened its second pub in Bristol, the Commercial Rooms in Corn Street. The first Wetherspoon was the Berkeley on Clifton Triangle. The Comm Rooms was the second "super pub" in Corn Street, the first having been opened by Courage and called '31 Corn Street'. Another pub refurbishment that "came and

went", literally, was the Seahorse, Upper Maudlin Street. Reopened by Smiles in 1994, its stunning interior design and outdoor drinking area won a national "Best Pub Refurbishment" award from CAMRA but, unfortunately, due to the development of the new Children's Hospital, it had to be closed – to this day you can still see its frontage, which is listed.

Pub names were changing at an alarming rate; gone were the old names we knew and loved in favour of brands such as Rats, Newts, Frogs, Toads and Howlin Wolves. Dr Thirsty's (nee Bunch of Grapes, King Street) introduced a dentist's chair into its bar, all in the name of progress, we were led to believe. Many of them have since reverted to their traditional names. Also in King Street, Scottish & Newcastle wanted to refurbish and do away with the jazz at the famous Old Duke, but thanks to a large protest, supported by CAMRA, the idea was kicked into touch.

The local branch Pub of the Year for 1995 was the Rising Sun at Frampton Cotterell, which is still in the same family today; still serves excellent beer and maintains its real community spirit. Oh, and the family also now runs a brewery, the Great Western Brewery in Hambrook.

The latest brewery to appear on the local scene was Bath Ales which presented its initial brew Gem at a gala launch in the Hope & Anchor on Jacobs Well Road on 19th September 1995.

Finally, in 1995, Avon CAMRA celebrated its 21st birthday with a well attended party held at the Old Market Tavern. Chairmen and members, past and present, were there, along with representatives from Avon's brewers. A commemorative beer was brewed for the occasion by Mike Ross of Ross Brewing Company. The late Simon Whitmore, founder of Butcombe Brewery, entertained us all with a memorable and fitting birthday address.

Ali Bridle

Watering Holes in the Desert

brought to you from Weston-super-Mare

Weston Whispers

Another period of turbulence in the local pub estate. The 1st November edition of the *Weston Mercury* featured an excellent, if depressing, two-page report on the demise of so many pubs in our area in recent times. This included reference to the reduction in pubs in Banwell from four to one, which has happened in little over ten years; the conversion of the **Bell** in Congresbury to a Tesco (one of the 140 pubs that have become supermarkets across the country in the last 18 months); and pictures of the boarded-up **Raglan** and **Ashcombe** in Weston – neither or which is likely to ever open again as a public house. The author of the piece could have included many more pubs that have closed permanently or temporarily in recent times.

The **Corner House** (ex-Elm Tree) on Meadow Street has joined the ranks of the boarded-up – future uncertain.

Tesco's planning application for the **Bristol House** site on Milton Road was turned down, in no small part due to the excellent campaign to save the pub organised by local resident Mark Thyer. However, the pub remains closed with the future still uncertain. If by some miracle the building re-opens as a pub, I hope that some of the 3,000 people who have registered their objection to its closure will use it more often. On my last visit the number of customers could have been counted on one hand. If the 3,000 popped in for just one drink once a fortnight, the viability of the business would be greatly enhanced. *It is no good people waiting for their local to close before taking an interest in it. Pints West readers: spread the word.*

On a more positive note, the **Captain's Cabin** has re-opened after a period of closure. It would have been a tragedy if this 160-year-old pub had been lost to Weston. Food and at least one real ale is available – on my last visit the ale was *East Street Cream* from RCH. We also understand that the **Balmoral** has been sold at auction and is likely to re-open soon once a major refurbishment has been carried out.

Sam's Bar and Grill on Upper Church Road recently celebrated its first birthday. There are normally two changing real ales on here. These are usually from South West breweries such as Bath Ales, RCH

and St Austell, but my recent favourite was from across the border, *Jack Black's Oatmeal Stout* from Brains brewery in Cardiff. According to the brewery website this seasonal special is: "Brewed in honour of Jack Black, the mysterious cobbler of Llareggub – this is the latest in our range of Dylan Thomas inspired beers." Sam's does very good quality food at reasonable prices. There is a Sunday night quiz, poker nights on the last Friday of the month and occasional themed food events – a recent Spanish Tapas evening was fantastic.

Off The Rails has introduced a promotion whereby you can get a pint of real ale for a mere £2 between 2pm and 4pm Mondays to Fridays. Recently I had particularly enjoyed beers from the Festival Brewery in Cheltenham (including an excellent ale called *Wayward Lad*, a horse on which I won a few bob during my misspent youth in the mid-80s). However, the brewery website advises that the brewery has now closed and the owner, Andy Forbes, has joined forces with the Nailsworth brewery in a joint venture called the Cotswold Lion Brewery. They plan to launch three beers in December – *Shepherd's Delight*, *Best In Show* and *Golden Fleece*.

The north-eastward march of the St Austell brewery continues and their excellent *Tribute* is invariably cracking at the **Claremont**. The Claremont also offers good food and a range of entertainment.

Local CAMRA member Steve Reed was lucky enough to be one of the few people locally who have come across beer from the new **Twisted Oak Brewery**, based in Wroughton. The brewery was only launched on the 26th of September by Keith and Debs Hayles. Steve sampled their 3.8% ABV amber session beer *Fallen Tree* at the **Plough** at Congresbury. His verdict: "All you hopheads out there will love it." Garry Polledri, owner of the Plough, also felt that it was a very promising start from the brewery and he looks forward to stocking their future offerings. The brewery website mentions the **Drum and Monkey** in Kenn and the **Blue Flame** in Nailsea as other outlets that have stocked their beer. The website also indicates that a golden ale called *Spun Gold* at 4.5% and an un-named 4.5% ruby ale are on their way.

Tim Nickolls

Early Season's Greetings

As Christmastime doth appear
We trust 2013 will be a good year
With no real ale hostilities shutting
And supermarkets their numbers cutting

May microbreweries advance apace
Their output our bars evermore to grace
And may the prices that are charged
Not be even more enlarged

How can all these things pass?
I hear you all cry out alas
"Tis simple", Xiānshēng Entwistle says
If Central Government changes its ways

Dr John

RCH in brief

The report from the RCH brewery, based in West Huish near Weston-super-Mare, is one of work continuing as normal: "Not a lot happening here at RCH, just busy brewing." Paul Davey says they have just finished a successful quarter with *PG Steam* in Wetherspoon's recent nationwide beer festival, and that they will also be brewing a new beer for their next beer festival in the spring (name as yet unknown).

They have also been brewing their strong Christmas beer *Santa Fe* (7.3%). This took place on on Monday 12th November to keep with the tradition of brewing it on Burnham Carnival night. It should be available from 3rd December along with their other two Christmas beers, *Steaming Santa* (4.5%) and *Steam Sleigh* (3.8%).

Paul also said he would be at the Tynesfield Christmas market on the 2nd December selling bottles of their brews.

SP



Weston diary

- **Wednesday 19th December:** 14th Annual Seasonal Ales Crawl. Meet at Criterion for 8pm departure, visiting 5/6 pubs in town with a Christmas/Winter beer on.
- **Saturday 19th January:** Cider Wassail at Millwhite's farm, Rooksbridge. Details from Bob Reynolds at westoncamra@gmail.com.
- **Friday 1st February:** Mini beer festival at the Waverley, Severn Road to celebrate Nick's second anniversary.
- **Friday 15th February:** Minibus trip visiting 5 current/potential Good Beer Guide pubs in the Mendips. Depart Off The Rails 7pm. Further details from Tim Nickolls at contact details below.

Non-members welcome at all of the above events.

Weston contact

Tim Nickolls: email bellavistahotelwsm@live.co.uk or phone 01934 631931.

The Sprackman Empire

In these tough times for pubs, with many closing or struggling to survive, it is heartening to be able to tell a positive story of how Westonian Paul Sprackman, with support from his wife Liz, has been turning around the fortunes of three of our local pubs.

After leaving Worle school Paul became a car spray painter, which he continued with for over 20 years. Needing a career change for health reasons he entered pub management with Eldridge Pope. After a spell running a pub in Poole, Paul had something of a turning point when he was placed at the Arrow in Yeovil. He hated this experience, feeling that the place was too big and impersonal with no soul. He formed a view then of the type of pub he would one day like to manage himself. After a pub tenancy in the Midlands, Paul moved back to his home town and became steward at the Working Men's Club in Weston town centre. Paul was keen to run his own show and took over the **Waverley** for the first time about five years ago in a partnership. This didn't work out. Paul left and turned his attentions to the **Criterion**, a boarded-up pub with a bad reputation on Upper Church Road. More or less gutting the place and starting from scratch, Paul re-opened the Criterion in January 2009. Paul says that for the first two months he spent much of the time sitting on his own in the pub with very few customers. However, he had created the type of pub that he had dreamed of running – in his words, “an old-fashioned proper pub” – and word got round that the Criterion was now a place worth visiting. Trade steadily grew and the Criterion is now a solid part of the local community and one of the best pubs in Weston, featuring in the 2011, 2012 and 2013 Good Beer Guides. The ales are normally sourced from South West breweries, with St Austell Tribute the only current permanent beer, accompanied by three guests. The occasional treat from other parts of the UK can also appear, as evidenced by the pumpclips on display behind the bar. However, it is not just the ales that make the Criterion a great pub. Paul says that the sign above the bar that says “Enter as a stranger, leave as a friend” is exactly what he wants to create in his pubs and he has undoubtedly achieved that, largely due to the excellent, friendly team working at the pub – Jodie, Laura, Colin, Plum, Craig, Jess and local legend Andy White, who runs a Tuesday night quiz, plays great music during

his barman stints and is leading the renaissance of corned beef. The pub is the only one in Weston with table skittles and bar billiards. There is also a dartboard, a range of other games on the bar, daily papers, books and a real fire. Occasional cultural excursions take place – usually to racecourses.

I have sent lots of visitors staying at my nearby hotel to “The Cri” and they have all come back delighted with it. A pub with character and characters.

During Paul's first stint at the Waverley, he got friendly with Nick Smith who was

raised in the past year. The RNLI is the main supported organisation but Nick says that the most successful event was a session of body shaving and waxing that resulted in £4,500 being raised for Breast Cancer Awareness. Milton Scout Group has been another recent beneficiary. On the beer front, Nick certainly knows his stuff. The wonderful mural on the pub frontage proudly proclaims “Passionate about Real Ale” and he certainly is. The Waverley has qualified for the Good Beer Guide in its first year of eligibility with lots of support from drinkers beyond Weston. The range is normally Greene King Abbot, St Austell Tribute and two guest beers. Nick is keen to support South West micros and Yeovil and Blindman beers have been amongst the most popular. The growing range of pumpclips behind the bar is testament to the many sources and styles that have appeared in recent times. There is also a changing real cider on offer from local producers such as Thatchers, Wilkins and Crossmans.

Nick puts the pubs success down to “the quality of the ale, good customer service, a warm welcome and reasonable prices” and also a top-notch team – Simon, Lois, Pedro and Mick. Nick will be celebrating his two years at the pub with a mini beer festival to be held on the weekend of 1st to 3rd February 2013.



Nick Smith outside the Waverley



Paul Sprackman in the Criterion

a long-standing regular customer. When Nick became unemployed he was given a job as a barman. Paul was so impressed with Nick that when he took over the Waverley for a second time in February 2011 he offered Nick the role of manager. Paul's role has very much been hands-off, leaving Nick with total freedom in running the pub – a bit of a risk given that Nick had never run a pub before. The result: Paul has been delighted and Nick says that the pub's performance has surpassed all his expectations. He has re-established the pub as being an important part of the local community. He is particularly proud of the way that the community has supported the various charity activities that he has organised, with more than £10,000



Tony Friend at the Horse and Groom

Another customer-turned-barman who impressed Paul Sprackman at the Waverley was Tony Friend. So much so, that Paul decided to look for a third pub in which he could install Tony as manager. This turned out to be the **Horse and Groom** on St George's Road in the centre of Bristol, tucked away behind the Council House. The building has been there for 300 years, trading as the Horse and Groom for at least 200. Tony took over in March and runs the pub with his partner Pip. As with Nick at the Waverley, Tony is a “first-timer” at pub management and he too seems to be making a great fist of it. St Austell beers feature, along with ever-changing guest beers. This is a quirky old pub, which currently has a half-completed mural along the back wall, which includes a half-completed Tony in it! I look forward to seeing the finished article.

“The Sprackman Empire” pubs have a very simple formula which has been successful at all three pubs – consistently deliver great customer service and provide a good choice of top-quality real ales in excellent condition. All three pubs are well worth a visit.

Tim Nickolls

A Round with Robin

Again the **Seven Stars** in Redcliffe has delighted us with the 'Beeriodicals' at the beginning of every month. August saw beers from Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire, with my favourite being *Black-bar IPA Notre* (5%). Bristol, Gloucester and Somerset was the area for September, with the *Bristol Beer Factory/Dark Star Southern Conspiracy* (6.3%) being my choice that time. October produced beers from Cheshire – a wonderful selection, and *Redwing* and *Off Beat* were in my opinion the best brewers for ales.

This seems a good point to mention that this quarter I have found three pubs that have really improved since I last visited them. The **Golden Lion** at Worle was never much of one for real ale, but since June they have had two beers from *Otter* and *Exmoor* and the décor is much brighter too. The **Full Moon** in Wells, though not easy to find, has had a complete makeover by John Bowles, long time CAMRA member and formerly landlord of the Red Admiral in Weston-super-Mare. It is a free house and John has four real ales, one of which is badged as the house bitter but is not afraid to admit to being *Moles Bitter* and is £2.10 a pint. The other beers are all less than £3 a pint. Food is served and the huge back garden is well laid out. The third is the **Fountain** in Bridgwater, at one time a pub consistently in the Good Beer Guide, but recently it had become a wine bar. Now it is flourishing again and in August had four ales on at £2.50 a pint, with a good selection. It also has the new river path outside its frontage so you can sit outside and look at the River Parrott.

In early August the inaugural game of boules took place outside the **Cornubia** played by members of Weston CAMRA and watched with interest by licensees Phil and Jackie. By the time you read this the new boules pitch should be in place! The pub itself is becoming more countrified with not just flowers but vegetables planted around, and hops too. When will we see barley being grown too, I wonder? They haven't neglected their beer as one of the best hoppy beers of this year I have tried was *Hopkettle Fresh Hop Dawn* (4.5%), although I did try it at **The Three Tuns** festival too.

This brings me to the festivals I have been to, but lack of space prevents me from naming the best beers at each. In August I visited **King Alfred** at Burrowbridge in Somerset for their first festival and later that weekend the **Crossways** at West Huntspill (their scoop was the *Donnington SBA* rarely seen outside Gloucestershire). The **Gryphon** Dark

and Light (nine beers from each) Metale Part II was at the beginning of September, closely followed by the Bristol Beer Factory **Factoberfest** confusing us to believe it was a month later; they had around 40 beers on including three keg beers. I worked at the **Minehead Railway Station** Somerset CAMRA beer festival the following day where we were serving 112 beers and for the first time a separate cider bar, and a week later **Wedmore** beer festival was fun and had a choice of 64 beers. Following a visit to the open day at *Butcombe* brewery I continued on to Bristol for the **Volunteer** Taverns's first birthday festival, the best organised one there yet, with 26 beers and seven ciders and good music too. Two weeks later the **Three Tuns** had 23 real ales and some keg beers, and later the **Barley Mow** had six beers on draught and four at the bar. These were, in their own ways, all very good.

In Weston-super-Mare I've been at the right place at the right time to have enjoyed superb *Adnams Gunhill* at the **Regency**, *Norman's Red Castle Cream* at the **Old King's Head**, Worle, and at the **Dragon Growler** (formerly *Nethergate*) *Umbel*, all good session ales.

Further afield I enjoyed a wedding in Sussex near Ditchling where the draught ales were *Dark Star Festival* and *Harvey's Bitter*. Later, at the end of October, I was with friends at the **King's Head**, East Hoathley, Sussex, brewery tap for the *1648* brewery next door, where as well as imbibing two of their beers I had *Old Thumper* ice cream, which was rather special. A few days before I went to the **Stand Up Inn** at Lindfield in West Sussex where they had twenty Sussex ales including eight on hand pump. Also in August I went to Croydon (see separate article) and Devon where I had *Downton Flaming Games* at the **Bridge Inn**, Topsham and *Coltiegh Olympian* in the **Crediton Inn**.

To conclude I'd like to congratulate the **Seven Stars** on their five years of music at the pub where the fine beers are at happy hour prices on Saturdays and Sunday afternoons. It has been a happy time and long may it continue.

Robin E Wild



Cryptic Crossword

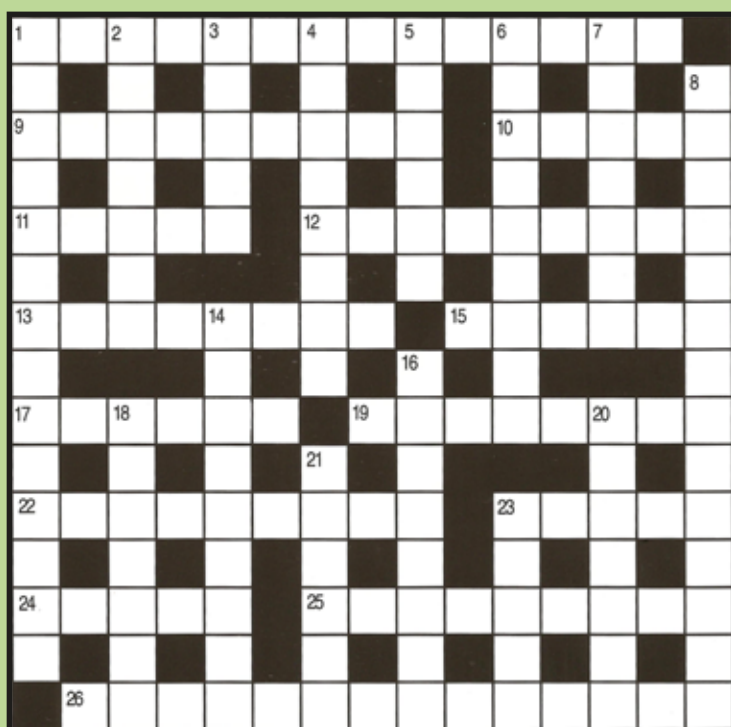
Compiled by Pete and Eddie Taberner

CLUES ACROSS

1. Lurid odd symbol brewed by Cotswold Spring (3, 7, 4)
9. Ex Devon brewery that might have supplied the Naval Volunteers' (9)
10. Mirror image of regal drink (5)
11. Pubs, banning university, take in the French – such common people (5)
12. Schoolteacher needs gin cocktail to becoming proficient (9)
13. Quote: "I start on Tetley's with a tonic mixer" (8)
15. Picture house shield that is silver, not white (6)
17. Get right into bigger version of 10ac (6)
19. Fat Elvis is dancing for the celebration (8)
22. Does fret about Deuchar's starting to have become warm (9)
23. Foster's global tinny. Some of this could smother curry... (5)
24. ...and some ale qualifies just the same (5)
25. No, I can't join teetotaler when drunk – pledge is broken (3, 6)
26. Large glass served to girl on board the sailing ship (6, 8)

CLUES DOWN

1. Greene King beer helped Ken's cold treatment (3, 8, 3)
2. Another brewery found under Wentworth (7)
3. Great heady beers from Llandudno? (5)
4. Man City fans' favourite beer is rarely seen (4, 4)
5. Serve up afresh the corned beef dish (6)
6. Met around top 50% of ullage to remove unfashionable hair (6, 3)
7. The view of the Cricketers: I sledge poorly (7)
8. Ideal beer for an authentic tart (8, 6)
14. Drunk tank where you can chill out in Bristol? (3, 6)
16. I get code translated into large earthy measures (8)



18. The man in black (a heavy drinker) will pull the chain again (7)
20. George Osborne – seen as Goldfinger by the pub trade (7)
21. Penny-pinching – like a Bristolian describing a nettle (6)
23. Not a Proper Job, an instrument (5)

Solution on page 38

More Signs of the Times

If readers were not board with the previous pursuit of the history of pub names in the multi-award-winning *Pinctae Occidēns XCV*, they may wish to read on. If they were, the reference to Conan Doyle's *Creeping Man* may apply to their moving on to the next article in the here present. Is it Christmas already?

As one is never sure which watering holes are to be found in the desert at any given time, there was no previous reference to the **Captain's Cabin**. Obviously this was where the sailer who had visited the **Ship** in Uphill to over-imbibe would have been found when his boat was being overtaken by the steamers. Said captain would certainly not have been of the calibre of John Cabot, aka Zuan Chabotto, who may have been from Genoa and told jokes that had the punch line: "I have never even met her and it certainly is not mine as I was at sea at the time." He it was who proved in 1497 that all those signing their names in the Venetian style are not blind when, long before the Greenwich Observatory was helping navigation, he discovered a new found land that only the Norsemen's longboats had previously visited from this side of the pond. The **Cabot Court** is thus not where he was tried and found wanting but a Lloyds very No 1 bar on what used to be a sand dune.

The **Old Colonial** is in a similar previously sandy position and is a Marston Hotel in no way associated with Samuel Marsden, a famous Farsley lad who went to New South Wales, not Newfoundland. He, in turn, had nothing to do with **Sams Bar & Grill**, another past sand dune hostelry. Nor did he have a Barbie doll, as Australia had not reached its present heights of civilisation by 1800, or even by midnight. Another sandy site was chosen for **Scally's**, where wags once hung out hoping the **Prince of Wales**, after whom it was then named, would come along to grace them with a favour if they said: "*Ich dien*", anticipating services to be rendered before feathering their nests.

There have thus been many times that a Weston pub has, like a Kameleon of the family *Chamaeleonidae*, flown new colours. Similarly, the

Grand Pier has changed its pavilion a couple of times, appropriate as we now bow to both the Lords Archer and Cotter. Looking towards the residence of the latter, one no longer has to go to the Puxton Park shop to find a parking space, as one can now park in the centre of Weston-super-Mare for less than the price of a round of four pints in 1920. Thinking about the House of Lords, out-of-town parking is also to be found at the **Uphill Cricket Club**, which does not in fact have the significant slope across the field that the Lord's ground has. Neither does the outfield become waterlogged if the floodgates are closed. Nor is a Second Chamber in fact needed, as the sanitary arrangements are first-class.

Another changed name is that of the **George & Dragon**, which according to the BBC History website commemorates England, Georgia and Moscow's patron saint, who is remembered here on 23 April. That date is also celebrated as the day William Shakespeare was born and died, obviously in different years, 1564 and 1616, as they would have had to employ all the monkeys in the world to produce his output if he had only lived a few hours. One must point out that the George & Dragon has absolutely no connection with Burt Kwouk, *Last of the Summer Wine*'s 'Electrical' Entwistle. That character's real name was McIntyre but he changed it so as not to be mistaken for a Scotsman, just as the city of Kingston upon Hull changed its name so as not to be confused with a less-well-known southern place or a Caribbean capital. The previously-mentioned oriental gentleman is fondly remembered as the fortune-teller from the land of eastern wisdom, the aforementioned Hull, selling second-hand washing machines and as the *Pink Panther*'s Cato.

Shakespeare not only had Juliet saying: "What's in a name?", but also had Mrs Page saying in *The Merry Wives Of Windsor*: "I cannot tell what the dickens his name is ...", a reference to the Devil, not to the Charles of *A Christmas Carol* fame, who despite *Great Expectations* lived through some Hard Times. Pub names may change but some other things sadly do not.

Dr John

CAMRA Membership – interested in joining?

CAMRA membership is at an all time high. At the time of writing, the national figure is over 145,000. It is hard to believe that it was only in 2009 that membership exceeded 100,000 for the first time ever! On a local basis, your branch, Bristol & District, has reached a total membership of 2,830. It was not that long ago that the figure was well below 2,000.

People join CAMRA for many reasons. Mostly they join because they support the campaign's aims for good real ale (plus real cider and perry) and choice of different styles, and campaigning to save the pubs of the UK. We campaign on many other issues including beer duty, planning legislation and pub company reform, amongst others.

CAMRA's mission is to support and promote good pubs and real ale. This valuable work is undertaken locally by branches and individual members. These efforts are backed up by national CAMRA campaigns to secure backing for pubs and real ale from Government. All branch members are volunteers.

Others join for the social side. Your local branch has a very active social side which includes pub crawls on foot, coach trips out to rural areas and the many small towns and villages in the area, brewery trips, visits to other CAMRA branch and pub beer festivals and specialist beer style socials.

The recent social events have once again proved to be very popular and extremely enjoyable. They are a great way to have a relaxed time, drinking great beer in great pubs and meeting new people. Don't feel in anyway awkward about coming along as you will be made most welcome!

Then there are the other benefits. Currently members receive £20 of free Wetherspoon beer vouchers which almost pay for single membership alone. On top of this, many pubs both locally and nationally offer discounts on (mostly) beer on production of a valid CAMRA membership card (see the list on page 38). You can get a significant discount on the purchase price of the CAMRA Good Beer Guide and discounts on some hotels and other leisure activities, plus CAMRA membership also offers a whole range of other benefits – please check out the national CAMRA web-site www.camra.org.uk for details. Then there are the 160 CAMRA



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

beer festivals, nearly all of which offer free or discounted entry to members.

As a member you will also receive a free monthly newspaper "What's Brewing" and a great quarterly magazine called "Beer". These are all sent to you for no extra charge.

Why bother?

CAMRA is a 'campaign of two halves.' Some of our valued members are happy to support CAMRA by paying their subscription, reading their monthly copy of What's Brewing and visiting their local beer festivals. But, for many others it is about actively campaigning.

Without individuals getting involved actively, CAMRA will struggle to continue to grow and help make a difference. Local branches including ours are always looking for new faces to join in at meetings or social events and would be very happy to hear from you. Being active within a branch is rewarding, fun and will no doubt at some point involve having a few pints. If you wish, you can also help with Good Beer Guide surveying and even help out at our beer festival. We have lots of activities within the local branch and it is good fun and a great way to make new friends. What could be better?

Why not check out the list of forthcoming events in the branch diary page of this newsletter.

Many people, when joining, say that they meant to do so ages ago.

So, if you have thought about joining and haven't yet got around to it? Or, if your membership has lapsed for whatever reason, why not join again now? It is so easy to join and even cheaper on direct debit (the way the vast majority of members pay). Also, compared to many other organisations, membership is such good value – single membership is only £23 for a year and joint (both at same address) is £28. These are the direct debit rates – non DD are £2 extra per year.

Many people now join via the web-site at www.camra.org.uk/join or you can fill in the form on the back page of this magazine.

Hope you join up and maybe we'll even see you at one of the events soon.

Pete Bridle (Bristol & District CAMRA membership Secretary)

An introduction to Croydon pubs

On the first Saturday in August (some people called it Golden Saturday, something to do with the Olympics I think, not a beer style) I went to Croydon via central London by coach. I got to Victoria from Bristol 15 minutes earlier than expected and I was in Croydon 20 minutes after that! No worries Boris.

I was eager to visit pubs that I remembered from my younger days there, and to see what had closed and what the new Good Beer Guide pubs were like. In Cherry Orchard Road towards Addiscombe, the **Glamorgan** was now painted battleship grey and looked menacing, but the interior was OK. There are Harvey's and other fine beers as standard here. The impressive Leslie Arms had closed a long time ago but the Cherry Orchard pub, now known as the **Orchard**, has real ales (this is where the Croydon Arts Lab used to meet in the late 1960's).

In the centre of Croydon lies the **George**. The tram goes past the door, and the tram stop is 50 metres away from the multi-door entrance. This is a big Wetherspoon pub near the site of a previous George that was old when Henry VIII came to the throne; before then it was probably

known as the George and Pilgrim. This was the local CAMRA pub of the year for 2011, and has 16 hand pumps of which three are reserved for Dark Star beers. A fine selection from Thornbridge and Oakham were on as well, so I had the Oakham JHB for £2.15.

Next I meandered towards Old Town and to the **Tamworth Arms**, a Young's pub, and virtually nothing has changed here since I was 18, except the view out the back and the price of Young's Bitter! A brown and green tiled exterior with steps up to the saloon bar, the partition between the two bars I think had gone by 1970. However on the doors are marked on brass plates "Beware of the dog" and "Entrance to public bar and garden" and in the old saloon bar the fireplace still remains and is capable of having a real fire. Just down the road is the brown tiled Eagle, which is now a community centre, and from here I could see the Reeves shop that was set ablaze during the 2011 riots. However just around the corner in Crown Hill is the **Gun**, a large Deco pub with many original features and where I had a very fine pint of Shepherd Neame Spitfire for under £3. The barman and most of the old chaps were drinking it, and the many of the younger element Thatcher's Gold! They still have a huge back bar for bands and other entertainment; I

first saw the Bonzo Dog Doodah Band here as well as Third Ear Band and the like!

Thence up the hill and into Surrey Street where a traditional fruit and veg market is held here daily and where the old town hall used to be before Queen Victoria ruled.

Here is Croydon's oldest pub, the **Dog and Bull**, another Young's pub, which the narrow frontage belies the Tardis-like interior and from the large back garden it is easy to imagine this area as a yard for the coach and horses. At the far end of Surrey Street where it meets the High Street I found the **Green Dragon**, the current Croydon CAMRA pub of the year, and well deserved too. Converted from the old Midland Bank, it has an upstairs area and bar (with hand pumps) for community and other entertainment (in fact no less than ten events take place every week). Eight beers including one straight from the barrel (Dorking Red India at 5%) and I had half of this complex IPA style red ale, and a pint of Westerham Freedom (4.3%) which is fairly local to Croydon. All beers have a 15% discount for CAMRA members.

The last pub I went too I remember as a small cinema, the art deco tiling remains and the interior is almost intact. This is another Wetherspoon pub, the **Skylark**, and much smaller than many, though it is on two floors. All of the Brit-tanic stained glass windows remain (possibly made at the Brislington factory) and there are enough local beers to make it interesting – I drank the Hammerpot Shooting Stars which I'd not had for years and which was only £1.99.

These are just a few of the many pubs in the vicinity of Croydon, which I hope to visit more next August in the company of another expatriate from that town living near Bristol.

Robin E Wild



The Glamorgan



The Orchard



The Gun



The Skylark



The Tamworth Arms



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Save your Pint:

Building on the success of the CAMRA-led e-petition regarding the outrageous beer duty escalator (see article below) which has achieved over 104,000 signatures and resulted in a debate in the House of Commons in November, CAMRA is leading a mass lobby of Parliament on this specific issue on Wednesday, 12th December.

It should be noted that every MP who spoke on the issue of the beer duty escalator wanted it done away with.

Duty on beer since 2008 has increased by a dramatic 42% due to a succession of inflation-busting tax hikes. These increases are having a harmful impact on pubs, jobs and pub goers' pockets and we need to show the Government the strength of feeling on this issue from voters. A recent poll by the Sunday Mirror newspaper showed that 54% of voters wanted a freeze in tax on beer.

Introduced under the last Labour Government, this vicious tax means that each year beer duty goes up by 2% ABOVE the rate of inflation. This coalition Government has carried on with this policy and its net results are shocking.

There can be very little doubt that so many pubs are closing (currently about 18 every week) or struggling because of the price of the main drink customers consume in pubs, i.e. beer – be it ales, lager, keg beers such as Guinness, etc. Around 5,000 pubs have closed permanently in recent years.

For a variety of reasons, most pubs cannot compete with supermarkets on price. Yes, there are other reasons why pubs are struggling, but there can be little doubt that in these very difficult economic times, for many people, price is a key consideration.

Mass Lobby of Parliament Wednesday, 12th December

CAMRA has been working with many parts of the beer and pub industry to get the escalator scrapped. So, around 1,000 members of CAMRA and some industry people will be heading to Westminster on 12th December to meet and lobby MPs, discuss the many reasons why the escalator is so damaging, and follow this with a rally with guest speakers supporting this campaign.

Bristol & District CAMRA is running a coach to Westminster on the day to meet with our local MPs and take part in the rally afterwards.

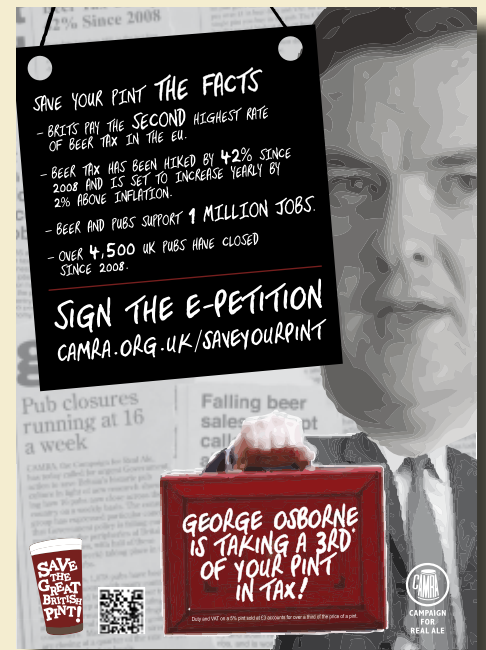
There are spare seats at the time of writing so, if you are prepared to join us in London, please email peter.bridle@camra.org.uk with your name and the name of your MP.

For those attending, full briefing information will be provided. The coach travel will cost you nothing. More information can be found at www.saveyourpintlobby.co.uk.

On the day, the plan is to leave central Bristol at 8.45am. The coach will depart from Westminster about 6pm for the return journey.

Don't forget – the beer duty escalator is closing pubs, putting people out of work and is impacting on the cost of your pint – whatever it might be.

Pete Bridle



Did your MP attend?

On the 1st of November 2012 at 11.30am, a House of Commons debate – triggered as a result of over 104,000 people signing a CAMRA e-petition – took place.

The main focus of the debate was “That this House welcomes the essential contribution of brewing and pubs to the UK’s economy in providing one million jobs and urges the Government to conduct a thorough review of the economic and social impact of the beer duty escalator (BDE), and to report back before the 2013 Budget.” The BDE hikes beer duty by 2% above inflation every year until 2015.

Did you, along with your MP, watch and listen? It started at 11.30am and finished at 2.18pm.

Attendance was encouraging: seventy or so MPs (although not all at one time) engaged in the debate. Conservative/Liberal Democrats attracted around fifty MPs, and there were twenty from the Labour group. Sadly only three MPs from our CAMRA branch area attended: Dawn Primarolo (Labour, Bristol South) was in the Chair as Deputy Speaker, but unable to speak due to Parliamentary protocol; Charlotte Leslie (Conservative, Bristol North West) spoke during the debate; and Chris Skidmore (Conservative, Kingswood) attended but did not speak and left before the end.

Mover of the debate was Andrew Griffiths (Conservative, Burton) who is Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Beer Group. He outlined the problems of Britain’s brewing and pubs industry and recorded many interesting facts and figures:

- 18 pubs a week are closing in the UK,
- 5,800 pubs have now closed since 2008,
- 68% of incomes in pubs come from beer sales,
- the price of beer has risen 42% since 2008,
- beer duty revenue increased 10% over the same period,
- 41 pence of the price of every pint is duty,
- 40% of European beer duty is paid by the UK but the UK consumes only 13% of the beer.

There were about twenty main speakers plus numerous interruptions during the debate, all of which were very focused, informative and knowledgeable and full of local tales of ‘their’ pubs and breweries. Not a single MP spoke in favour of the beer duty escalator.

Co-sponsor Greg Mulholland (Lib Dem, Leeds North West), who is the Chair of the Parliamentary Save the Pub Group, in his closing speech said: “I hope the Government accepts the will of this House in regard to

the beer duty escalator - it does not make economic sense, does not make social sense, it’s unfair, unsustainable and unjust – and agrees to have a review and abolish BDE once and for all.”

Charlotte Leslie spoke of the damage caused by cut-price beer in supermarkets, falling sales and the problems caused by BDE. Also mentioned by Charlotte was our very own Pete Bridle (Chair of the Bristol Pubs Group) on his efforts to raise awareness of the number of pubs closing locally – 24 in the last year. (So, Pete Bridle mentioned in Dispatches! Or more correctly in Hansard. Only £180 per copy last time I checked!)

At the end of the debate, in an informal vote, the ayes had it. None voted against.

The response came from Sajid Javid the Treasury Minister. It was not very encouraging! He said cancelling the BDE would cost £35 million in 2013 and £70 million in 2014. It was lifestyle changes and other factors that caused pub closures. He seemed to imply that the BDE had little or no influence on the size of the pub sector. The BDE was a valuable means of raising revenue.

Do not hold your breath.

Before the debate I wrote to eleven MPs in our branch area urging them to attend and speak in favour of the motion. Since the debate I have received four replies. The general theme running through the replies are “that the BDE is part of the deficit reduction plan” (Skidmore), “alcohol excise duty contributes to reducing deficit” (Fox), and on a different tack “reduce VAT back to 17½%” (Primarolo). John Penrose MP played the ‘not in my constituency’ card.

The reducing deficit plan does not seem to stack up. According to HM Treasury forecasts there will be no additional revenue generated from the BDE despite planned increase over the next two years. Clearly you cannot collect revenue from a pub or brewery that has been closed by an oppressive tax regime.

Overall these replies do little to suggest that such a review prior to the 2013 Budget of the BDE is not looking likely. Still we must wait and see.

Ray Holmes (Branch Public Relations Officer)

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

Disabled access

First of all thank you for publishing, in Pints West, my last two letters on this topic. Now I've no intention of using your letters page as a battleground for better disabled access to pubs, but as my letters have aroused no reaction this will probably be my last – unless something really controversial turns up!

I read with interest the Mike Jackson / Steve Comer debate over whether Wetherspoon was "friend" or "foe". As is usual with such polarised views the truth lies somewhere in between.

But Wetherspoon has my vote for one very good reason. They have very good disabled access and loos. So thank you JDW, and the rest of you, if you want my money and that of my friends and relatives who drink with me, stop whinging and sharpen up your act.

Yours sincerely,
Chris Buckell,
Eastfield Road, Bristol.

"Effing Tesco"

Just went to have a pint at what was my favourite pub in North Petherton, the Dolphin, always wedged full on Carnival night and a good atmosphere.....

Alas it's now Tesco bloody Express!
Adam Bell (by email).

Wild errors

Picked up a copy of your very well presented/published magazine whilst in Bath over the weekend.

Being a Liverpool resident I couldn't help but spot some factual errors in the article by Robin E Wild on his visit to Liverpool.

"Lion Returns" is a 3.9% beer from George Wright Brewery. The pub is the "Lion Tavern."

"Baltic Wharf" is the "Baltic Fleet," home of Wapping Beers.

I guess Robin enjoyed his beers.

Cheers,
Mike Hanford,
Liverpool.

Robin says: I got the pub name right in the original draft, but when I shortened it, the pub name 'Lion Tavern' got turned into the name of the beer I drank, 'Lion Returns'. Glad to see someone goes through the articles with a fine eye!

I do like pubs!

Some of you may have read the two letters I had printed by this inestimable magazine, regarding 'music & children' in pubs. If so you may well have thought "why on earth does this guy even bother to visit pubs, when he feels so strong about these two subjects?" I should like to explain why I visit pubs, excepting pubs that blast the ear with moronic music or those that have screaming kids running about.

The first reason for a pub visit is to sample the 'wares' the landlord has to offer. If it is a first visit, I always ask for a 'taster', then when an acceptable pint is cradled in my right hand, I cast my eye around at the cliental at the bar in an endeavour to open a conversation. Being that way inclined, I usually find it quite easy to strike up a conversation with someone.

As an example, I was visiting Fort William a couple of weeks ago, and got chatting with three people who had just finished walking 'The West Highland Way', a total of 97 miles (I was on a coach tour).

One of them was from the Yukon and the other two were from Boston, Massachusetts. Not only did I have a very interesting chat, with three complete strangers, I was also enjoying a pint of Red MacGregor's Ruby Red Beer. What more can one want from life?

Another reason for a visit to the pub is to enjoy the company of like-minded people, who are out to enjoy a pint and a chat. Also, a decent pub has an 'ambience' about it, which is difficult to find in other establishments.

One other thing I like to find in a pub is a landlord/bartender who can talk to you about the beers on sale.

So there you have it, yes I am a miserable "old sod" (the wife bought me a badge to prove it) BUT I still enjoy a lot of pubs, and I may add, I enjoy a lot of beers.

May I suggest the Anchor, Lower Morton, as a pub that fills my needs, as well as the Old Spot, Dursley and the Salutation, Ham.

John Gatty,
Thornbury.

Rucking Mole joins the pack!

ALL YEAR ROUND

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

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

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

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

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

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

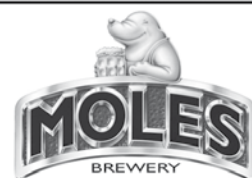
IN SEASON

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Spring beer that's heaven 'scent'

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EMAIL ADDRESS (in case of queries)

Severn Vale CAMRA

Recent activities

Perhaps the biggest recent event in the Seven Vale real ale calendar took place once more during the last weekend of October. Despite their beer supplier going into administration just days before, the **Christ the King Beer Festival** had some fifteen beers from the Wickwar Brewery, Great Western Brewery, and Bristol Beer Factory as well as others (including Sharp's for those that couldn't be without their Doom Bar). The weekend was as popular as ever, the two evening sessions proving especially busy.

CAMRA members were granted free entry and Severn Vale committee members assisted by serving at the bar during the Saturday afternoon session. The general consensus appeared to be that the three brews on offer from Bristol Beer Factory outshone all the other offerings, with opinions divided between the Southville Hop, Bitter Kiwi and Independence.

There was a notable increase in the number of people asking for dark beers; perhaps a more imaginative selection of beers could help boost the numbers to the least well attended Saturday afternoon session. The organisers were happy to consider the event and success, ultimately raising £2600 for the local Catholic Social Club.

The rearranged pub visit of 9th November started at the **Anchor** in Thornbury with Gale's HSB on offer, sadly the first time the author had encountered this beer since Fuller's take-over of Gales.

The second stop was the **Rising Sun** in Frampton Cotterell, brewery tap for the Great Western Brewery located in Hambrook. There were six real ales on tap here (though all circa 4.5% amber/brown bitters on this particular visit). This popular pub was busy, albeit – a brief wholly unscientific survey indicated – with predominately wine, cider and larger drinkers on this occasion.

Next to the **Cross Hands** in Winterbourne, where Hairy Hooker from Plain Ales augmented a selection from Wadworth and Courage.

The penultimate stop of the evening was at the **New Inn**, Mayhill where we received the usual warm welcome. The pick of the beers on offer was All American, a hoppy pale ale from Caledonian.

The final port of call was **Thorn's Farm** (JD Wetherspoon) in Yate; and their "International Real-Ale Festival". Beers from Belgium, Holland and Lithuania were sampled, but the most disappointing aspect of the night was how few customers were to be seen on a Friday night. I can only hope that this new venture of Wetherspoon's does not go the way of the Magic Box.

Andrew Pickin

Severn Vale diary

- **Saturday, 8 December, 6:00pm** - Severn Vale Pub Explorer Trip to Kingsdown, Bristol (Hare on the Hill, Hillgrove Porter Stores, Green Man).
- **Friday, 14 December, 12:30pm** - Severn Vale Old Spot lunchtime Social.
- **Wednesday, 19 December, 8:30pm** - Severn Vale Sub-Branch Meeting, the Anchor, Morton.
- **Friday, 4 January, 8:00pm** - Severn Vale Pub Survey Trip, Thornbury: Black Horse, Chantry, Mezza, Anchor.
- **Friday, 11 January, 12:30pm** - Severn Vale Old Spot lunchtime Social.
- **Wednesday, 16 January, 8:30pm** - Severn Vale Sub-Branch Meeting, Boar's Head, Aust.
- **Friday, 8 February, 12:30pm** - Severn Vale Old Spot lunchtime Social.
- **Wednesday, 20 February, 8:30pm** - Severn Vale Sub-Branch Meeting, Fox, Old Down.

○ 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 2:30.

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.

Severn Vale contacts

Keith McIndoe: ainsdeng@blueyonder.co.uk
Martin Farrimond: martin@farrimond.me.uk

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

Friday 26th October was the start of the Catholic Club Beer Festival, in Thornbury, and as we have done for the past several years, eldest son Roger and my good self attended this event. There were 15 beers and one cider on offer. I sampled 10, and the one which caught my taste bud was St Austell Trelawny, which I found just right. Several other members of our Thornbury sub-branch were in attendance, some not knowing that entry was free on showing your CAMRA membership card.

My only complaint with the evening (as you may well guess from previous mutterings) was the music which was pumping out, in a hall about 50 feet long by 20 feet wide – although I was lucky enough to get a seat in the small room at the end.

Not having "gone through the card" Roger and I went back on Saturday lunch time. This was much better, just the chatter of other 'imbibers'. I did manage to complete the list of entries, ending up with another Trelawny.

This is not a huge festival, just about the right size for Thornbury. It is well organized, the staff are friendly (a lot known, via other activities I get involved in), the beer good, and the selection mainly from local brewers.

So all in all, I'd like to say 'thank you' to all who organized this event.

As a footnote, Roger and I were photographed, with the possibility of it going into the local Gazette, where we both made it known we were CAMRA members.

John Gatty

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*Associate
Member*

Good Beer Guide 2013 launched

The new edition of the CAMRA Good Beer Guide is now in the shops and available direct from CAMRA. As is our traditional way, a launch event was held in one of our new entry pubs in mid September. This year this took place at the Gryphon in Colston Street central Bristol.

This is a pub that has been given a completely new lease of life over the last two years, after a long period lying closed. The pub's name was changed from Griffin to Gryphon to help emphasise the change



of emphasis from its previous incarnation into Bristol's premier real ale and heavy rock venue. The pub is brave enough to major on unusual beer styles, including many dark beers and often strong ones. The music is from the heavier end of the spectrum which is also unusual.

The launch event started at 12 noon on Friday September 14th and was very well attended from the start. We had over 100 copies of the book on hand at the start and only a couple left at the end of the event at 7pm. Many of the folk who came

along to buy a copy stayed for several hours to take advantage of the fine range of six beers on sale – and of the generous 'CAMRA discount' always on offer too!

Many thanks to John (pictured receiving his GBG pack) and his team for putting on such an enjoyable event – and congratulations on

their first entry in the Guide. The beer scene in Bristol is now so vibrant that competition for places in the book is the greatest that it has ever been. So gaining entry after only two years in business is a wonderful achievement.

If you somehow contrived to miss the launch and still don't have your copy, then you can order one online at www.camra.org.uk/gbg at £12.99 for non-members or only £10 for CAMRA members. This compares with the full price of £15.99 in the shops.

Vince Murray
(photo by Phil Cummings)



News from Ashley Down

Until recently, Vince Crocker at Ashley Down brewery had been maintaining a balance between a full-time job, family commitments and being a small-scale brewer. Being made redundant in July has now given Vince the opportunity to focus on brewing as a living. To this end he has installed a 5-barrel fermenter in addition to his original 3.5-barrel one, and has purchased extra casks.

Beers brewed during the year have been:

- **Best** – a balanced, malty, best bitter which comes in two forms, "Landlord's Best" brewed to 4.2% ABV and a slightly stronger "Brewer's Best" brewed to 4.4%. Vince prefers the 4.4% version (more malty body) but some landlords prefer the 4.2% version. He will continue, at present, to brew both as both are well received.
- **Bitter** – a hoppy and bitter 3.8% session beer.
- **Pale Ale** – not the palest, but a good balance between malt and hoppy bitterness. This 4.3% beer seems to be very popular.
- **Primrose** – a 4.0% golden ale with a big malt presence. Being relegated for the foreseeable future.
- **Vanguard** – a 3.8% dark mild with loads of malty sweetness balancing the bitterness of the roast malts (very lightly hopped). This has not proved to be one of his most popular beers, which is a pity as I know a lot of us love it.

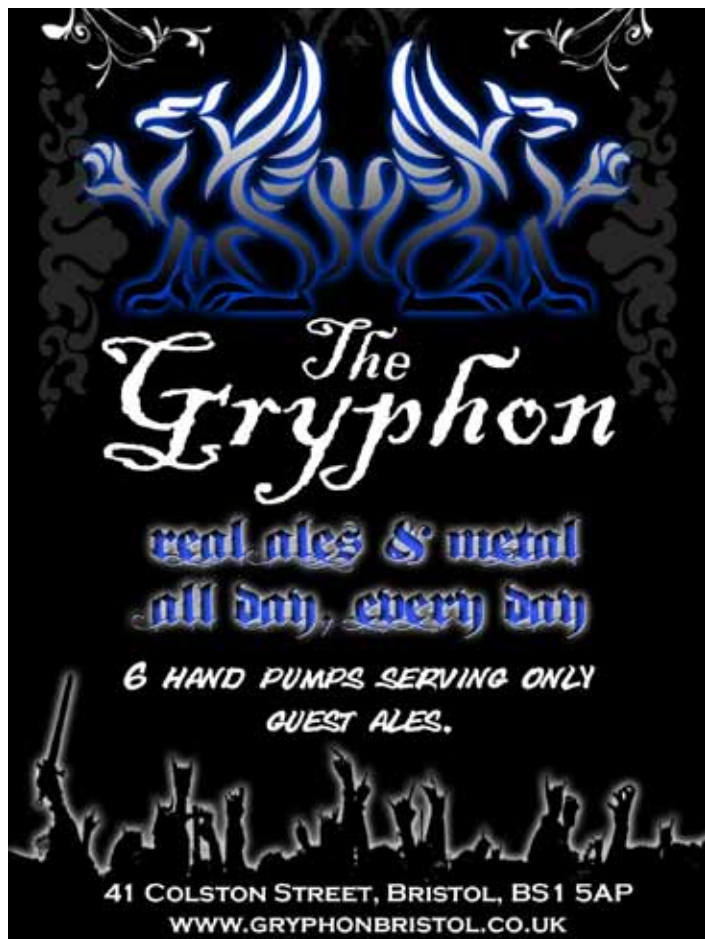
At the end of September Vince brewed a **Christmas Porter** (5.6%) in a collaboration with Richard Poole and Michael Wiper of Wiper & True Brewery. Richard won the 2012 Bristol Beer Factory Home Brew Competition with his Black IPA Bête Noir. The first batch, available in December, has turned out so well and been snapped up so fast that there is a second batch in the 5-barrel fermenter as I write. For November he has brewed a beer called **November** (4.6%), a dark reddish brown, malty beer balanced with a healthy bitterness from Bramling Cross and Goldings, and late hopped with lots more Bramling Cross (maybe a bit of blackcurrant and a bit of spice?). When this issue of Pints West comes out, **November** could still be available at the Annexe, Duke of York, Seven Stars, Prince of Wales, Highbury Vaults, Golden Guinea, Windmill and Bag O'Nails in Bristol, and the Three Crowns in Chippenham.

Vince has had a go at bottling some of his **Porter** and **November** for the Bristol Nails Christmas markets (various dates in December), where he is sharing a stall with Wiper & True Brewery, and hopes to bottle some **Best** and **Pale Ale** as well.

There are about a dozen pubs now that are happy to take Ashley Down beer when it's available and the list is expanding all the time. The deal with Luke at the Bag O'Nails, as featured in Summer's Pints West (issue 94) is continuing to flourish and there were three of his beers available when we visited the Bag on the national Cask Ale Week crawl on 6th October.

These are interesting times for Ashley Down brewery.

Tony Durbin





LocAle presentations

During our Cask Ale Week activities the branch visited both the Great Western Brewery and Zerodegrees and took the opportunity to present the official certificates for their 'LocAle of the Festival' awards from the 2012 Bristol Beer Festival.

This was won jointly by **Hambrook Pale Ale** from the **Great**

Western Brewery and **Pale Ale** from **Zerodegrees** – yes, pale ales were clearly popular with the judges.

The pictures show Kevin and Ashley Stone of GWB and Anna Schwaeble of Zerodegrees receiving their awards from branch chairman Richard Brooks, supported by branch members.

Richard Brooks (photos by Tony Durbin)

Highbury Vaults – ‘proper job!’

The ever-popular Highbury Vaults is a pub that has maintained its identity for a long time, probably from the early nineteenth century when it was first established. As landlord and well known local character Bradd Francis says, “It’s a proper pub, proper job!” It first started as ‘The Highbury’, the original name of the area that is now Kingsdown. It later became the Highbury Vaults when the cellars were added.

Bradd joined the pub when Smiles were the owners, and when they went under and Young’s came to the rescue in 2000, he stayed on. He says that they are a good employer: “We have a good working relationship.” When Young’s took over there were eight hand pumps so a few guest beers were needed to supply them. Nowadays, as well as Young’s expanded regular and seasonal range, there is still room for local ales and often beers from around the country, many from microbreweries and start-ups. The pub has been in the Good Beer Guide for pretty well all the seventeen years Bradd has been in charge, and he is the longest serving landlord in the area, both of which speak for themselves. Recession or no recession the pub always does good business.

The Highbury has the traditional style and comfort that epitomises the British pub, but it also has its idiosyncrasies and a certain subtle quirkiness. On the one hand there is a warm welcome, various nooks and crannies for convivial conversation, a separate tiny front snug bar, no music, a bar billiards table and an outside walled garden. On the other hand there are various ‘interesting’ photos, documents and artefacts on the bar back, a model electric train running through the bars, and the famous street art on the side of the building that people think is a Banksy (it isn’t, the artist is Nick Walker, another eminent local street artist). Look too for an owl on the roof surveying the street. Bradd is planning to add more art to the building, inside and out, and already the Highbury Vaults is on the Bristol Art Trail that includes Nelson Street and Stokes Croft.

The pub still has its original clientele mix – some nights you would think you are in the students’ union, other times it is an oasis of calm with academics and hospital workers taking a break from their nearby work places. “We like to treat our regular customers as family,” says Sara, Bradd’s partner of ten years, “and locals are treated as friends.” As well as working the bars, Sara is in charge of the food – “Reasonably priced, traditional, home-made pub meals using local suppliers,” she adds.

Bradd and Sara say they see a pattern in their customers. They arrive as young people, maybe work there behind the bar, go to university, get married, have children then “aren’t allowed out”. Later on they return and so do their children and the cycle repeats. “Often we get people in who have moved out of Bristol and are passing through; they pop in to see their



old local; they usually say it hasn’t changed a bit,” says Bradd. “Or it’s somebody who worked here and they want to show their partner,” adds Sara. “Actually we had a major refit earlier this year,” says Bradd, “and nobody noticed! If it’s not broken we’re not going to fix it.” There are also the customers who have been drinking there forever, some pass away, others are still there, like Sid. They think he is 90 this year and must have been drinking there for at least 50 years. He still pops in during the day a couple of times a week, and can be seen sitting at the bar having an animated conversation with the staff.

Two annual events should be mentioned. As usual they will be open on Christmas day from 12 to 2pm and the place no doubt will be filled with families and regulars having a good time. And every August bank holiday Sunday Bradd organises a street festival complete with live bands, a street bar and barbecue, and various stalls. Over the years they have raised thousands of pounds for Ward 32 (cardiac treatment) at the Children’s Hospital. This year was noted for nine-year-old son Jack helping out and making a killing on the tombola.

So if you haven’t been to the Vaults for some time, take a trip and remind yourself what a proper pub should be, or if you haven’t visited the Highbury yet, go and check it out. As a passing customer remarked, “It’s an institution.” Mind you, don’t ask silly questions or you might get a ‘Highbury Answer’, a selection of which are posted in the main bar doorway!

Roy Sanders (photo by Jo Sanders)

Cider Sisters - the Joy of Cidermaking

As is for apple, although sadly this year it's also been for 'absence' rather than 'abundance' of. Our great British summer has been a tough one for many crops as we all know and apples have been no exception. But much as I love an apple it's one step removed from the raw material that has worried me the most. It doesn't take a genius to work out that fewer apples means less cider, and with our small production due to kick in round about October time the summer months have been fraught with concern. One by one people that had kindly donated their apples to the greater good that is our cider making in years gone by informed us that this year their trees had either very few or no apples at all.



At cider grand central, aka the allotment plot tended by my brothers in cider, it was a similar picture. Thankfully the Fillingham tree that bore no fruit last year came good with a healthy sized crop but the two Cox trees provided very slim pickings.

And so it was that we started with what we'd got, trying not to be down hearted and to console ourselves with ideas of 'quality over quantity' and 'small is beautiful', and other assorted metaphors that masked our disappointment. The Kingston Black planted last year bore two beautiful fruits on its as yet tiny branches, so, promising as that is for the future, to press those would have been stretching the quality over quantity concept a tad too far.

Having joined (chiselled my way?) in on this small production a few years ago, October really has taken on a new significance. October weekends are pressing weekends, and I can honestly say that I am rarely happier when up the plot in fine company, with a healthy supply of cider to keep the workforce happy and a big mound of apples working their way through my (some would say too) vigorous quality control process, on to stomping and ultimately pressing. In earlier days we would hire the press on a daily or weekend basis which is a great thing to do if you've got apples of your own or know someone who has them going unwanted, and you want to put them to good use (we used to hire ours from Brewers Droop on Gloucester Road – www.brewers-droop.com). I really would urge you to give it a go, because if you want to make the leap from juice to cider (and being Pints West readers my assumption would be that you would) you really don't need a lot of kit. We have found the book 'Real cider making on a small scale' by Michael Pooley and John Lomax to be a useful resource and outlines all you need to get the ball rolling. The pleasure that can be gained from drinking fine cider (and believe me, people, ours is damn fine and I'm not just saying that, it has been verified by pretty much everyone that has managed to prize a bottle out of our vice-like clutches) that you have journeyed with from tree to glass, is hard to underestimate.

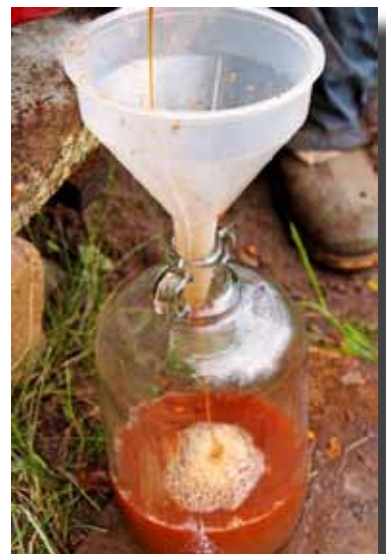
Moving on from rental we decided to invest in our own small press and have just finished our third year of use from it. Now we know that this is no flight of fancy but a labour of love that is going to continue, we are ready to step up to a slightly larger model, so the press will go back on eBay from whence it came and next year will see us starting the season with an upgrade.

Having picked and pressed all the apples from the plot, my cider brother did an excellent job of sniffing out apples where there at first

appeared to be none and managed to get a couple more good hauls picked and over to the plot. We also were lucky enough to receive about a hundred kilograms of mixed apples from our contact Denis at Handmade Cider (see Pints West summer 2012 for my review of his excellent establishment – www.handmadecider.co.uk). This means for pretty much the first time with donated apples, we know the variety of every kind, which will make the blending and experimenting stage that comes later down the line after a couple of months of racking all the more exciting and hopefully replicable. Most of the time, although we note the tree, we don't know the variety of fruit that we've been given as people don't tend to know what they've got with inherited trees and we haven't gone as far as finding out, although one or two trees have provided such great stuff that we will endeavour to find out what they are. It will also be interesting as these apples are traditional cider varieties when the ones we grow and use are dessert apples (with the addition of a few crab apples here and there to mix things up).

So the pressing is complete and we've also done the first and in a couple of cases second rack (siphoning from one container to another without transferring the sediment) of some of our precious brews. All initial signs are positive and the range of different fruits that we've pressed has resulted in some very promising early tastes. We've got a good range from very sharp high tones to richer, fuller and more complex notes and it's a wonderful time of anticipation now to see what the full fermentation process will bring out in each of them. At a later stage we will have to decide pre-bottling which we want to leave as they are, be that as a single variety or a single press (where two or more different apple types have already been combined), and which to blend to try and get the best possible results. It isn't always as simple as finding the ultimate winning combination but more a case of sacrificing something really good to make a quantity of less impressive stock become something you're happy to drink. Whatever we decide you can be sure that ferocious note taking, waxing lyrical and tasting has taken place in our quest for the holy grail.

Last year we were confident enough in our wares to enter into two categories in the Herefordshire Big Apple Cider and Perry Trials (www.bigapple.org.uk), which saw unprecedented entries of 191 different ciders and perries in a total of nine categories. Putley village hall was the venue and we were delighted and almost ludicrously proud to gain 4th place in the bottle-conditioned category and 6th in the novice draught. The whole event is peer judged and so there was additional joy in getting to taste all the other entrants in our particular categories. For us that meant working our way through about 45 different ciders ... I know, I know, it's a tough job, but we stepped up to the mark and had a really fantastic day of it. Hopefully we'll be pleased enough with this year's results (and prepared to sacrifice a quantity of the precious commodity for competition purposes) to enter again next year. I'll keep you posted.



Freya McLuckie



Jerry Says ...

Although Jerry Fletcher has stood down from his role as Bristol and District CAMRA's cider coordinator, he has fortunately not been neglecting his duty to investigate the range of real ciders and perries on offer in our region. As Jerry says, "a lot has happened since the last Pints West."

CAMRA's National Awards have been announced: congratulations go to the Royal Oak Wantage, National Cider Pub of the Year 2012. Gwatkin Blakeney Red has been named Perry of the year, while Cornish Orchards Farmhouse has been named Cider of the year.

Although he's been keen to attend local pub cider festivals, Jerry missed out on what was heralded a 'very good' event at the White Hart, Littleton recently. However, pub real ale festivals quite often also feature ciders and perries and such was the case at The Volunteer in St Jude's, where Jerry sampled the Two Trees Perry and Millwhite's cider (rum cask). Jerry adds that "the Three Tons on Anchor Road also had about five real ciders available during their recent beer festival".

Early predictions for 2012 by local cider makers, Jerry says, "were for a poor crop after the drought at the start of the year and the continual heavy rain that followed". So now might be a good time to follow in Jerry's footsteps to sample what remains of 2011 vintages with this suggested cider pub crawl.

"We start at the Golden Guinea which, according to advertising, is the 'home of Blackbeard Cider', a very tasty 8.4ABV tipple. They also serve Old Rosie and Ashridge. The Grosvenor is next on the list, where Thatchers Traditional is on tap, then on to the Avon Packet where the slightly less familiar Sherston's First Press, a medium dry cider, can be found. The Orchard is the final stop on the tour, a 'must visit' pub for serious cider and perry lovers, with at minimum 15 varieties available on draught and in bottles. I started with a Heck's Perry, one of my favourites, followed by a cider from the same maker. I finished on a Dabinett, and a medium sweet from Wilkins."

As Jerry says, not all the ciders mentioned will be available on every visit, as most of these pubs offer a changing range, so they're well worth a visit to see what's on.

Lesly Huxley / Jerry Fletcher

Are you a Young Member?

Every young member of CAMRA (aged 18 to 30) is automatically part of CAMRA's Young Members Group (YMG). And if you are a Young Member, the Bristol and District (B&D) branch would like to hear from you.

You may already know how to get involved, or get in touch with other Young Members, how to join Google and Facebook groups, what Young Members social events are taking place and how University Real Ale Societies can affiliate to CAMRA from the CAMRA web-site.

However the South West is making a big push to get more Young Members involved with local activities, and the B&D branch would like to know what kind of event is good for you, for instance Young Members' socials, pub visits, brewery trips, etc.

Of course you are also very welcome to come along to branch meetings as well as 'explorer', 'survey' and festival trips, meetings of the Bristol Pubs Group and Rare Ales Group (BADRAG), and get involved with the Bristol Beer Festival and any other activities as shown in the Branch diary on the inside back cover of Pints West.

So if you are part of the 11% of CAMRA who are Young Members please get in touch with your local Young Members contact, Roy Sanders, by email to badyoungmembercontact@gmail.com.

Roy Sanders

The White Lion, Eastville – passant no longer

If you were to walk down the Fishponds Road on the left-hand side by Eastville Park towards Stapleton Road you would come across a pub sign showing a white lion rampant on a green background which indicates the location of the White Lion public house.

The White Lion, 134-136 Fishponds Road, is a Georgian two-storey house which was re-fronted with a red brick façade in the later 19th century and turned into a pub. It also has a large 18th century walled garden at the rear of the property.

It was recently sold by auction to a new owner by estate agents Maggs & Allen (0117 9491888) who indicated that it was unlikely to be opened as a pub again. The potential loss of this pub would be a severe blow to the local community because there are simply no other pubs nearby. The nearest one is the Queen's Head at the top of Royate Hill which is some distance away, so accessibility is a major issue. The pub had a major refurbishment a few years ago and reopened in June 2009 but has now been closed for at least two years. In 2011 a planning application (reference 10/05171/F) for reopening the pub and building new flats was refused, partly over concerns about demolishing the pub's 18th century walled garden, and then in January 2012 a major fire damaged the interior of the building. This, together with recent vandalism, has added to the pub's misfortune.

Following some enquiries I made with the estate agents, contact was made with the new owner to establish what plans he had for the property. The owner informed me that he intended to convert the ground floor to retail use with 12 flats upstairs. I suggested to him that the building could be brought back into use as a community pub selling real ales and also hosting events such as karaoke evenings, quiz nights, live bands, wedding receptions, meetings, barbecues and other social events as there was a function room upstairs as well as the enclosed back garden. The owner seemed interested in these proposals but wanted someone else to run the pub as he did not have the expertise himself. I reassured him that CAMRA might be able to help him with this idea because of its contacts within the pub trade and that we would like to meet him at the earliest opportunity so as to find a way forward in re-opening the pub.

The results of the discussion were relayed to the CAMRA Bristol Pubs Group to formulate a reopening strategy and after a follow-up meet-

ing between me and Peter Bridle (chairman of the Bristol Pubs Group) some ideas were put forward to promote this proposal at an early stage within the local community. These ideas included contacting local councillors Steve Comer and Mohammadir Khan, Kerry McCarthy MP, the Greater Fishponds Area Neighbourhood Partnership, the Stapleton Road Traders, the nearby Sikh Temple on Fishponds Road, Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FOSBR) and First Great Western Trains (regarding the promotion of a new 'rail ale trail' leaflet similar to the existing FOSBEER leaflet produced by FOSBR for the nearby Bristol Temple Meads to Severn Beach railway line). The support of the local community partnership was considered vital in getting something done because it was felt that they would have the resources to promote community pubs and other businesses as part of a viable and sustainable community. Additionally, we believed that Bristol City Council should follow their own core strategy policy BCS12 on community infrastructure and do more to protect pubs from changes of use and keep them as community facilities (preferably pubs).

However, shortly after holding these positive discussions, I was informed by the owner that the property was to be given to other members of the family who wanted to convert the building into flats with a ground-floor retail outlet and new houses in the pub garden. This was not the positive outcome that we were looking for but as yet no planning application has been forthcoming. If a planning application is submitted then the Bristol Pubs Group will strenuously oppose any change of use and continue campaigning for the pub to be reopened. The local community partnership has already been contacted about this issue and seemed supportive about reopening the White Lion, but if CAMRA members feel the same way they should contact the Neighbourhood Partnership through the web at bristolpartnership.org/neighbourhood-partnerships/greater-fishponds-area-neighbourhood-partnership, as well as Kerry McCarthy MP and both local councillors, to explain why it is vital to save our community pubs. It might also be possible to put the pub forward for local listing via Bristol City Council's 'Know Your Place' website www.bristol.gov.uk/page/know-your-place, or alternatively by email to archaeology@bristol.gov.uk, to highlight the building's importance to the community. Time will tell to see if this lobbying is effective enough in keeping the pub for the benefit of the community in the future.

Ian Beckey

The United States of Beer

Part two - San Francisco and Las Vegas

In the second and concluding part, two local real ale fans, **Vince Murray and Phil Cummings**, recount their experiences of a very beery trip to the USA. *Vince sets the scene...*

You may recall in the last edition how we enjoyed three wonderful days enjoying the sights and bars of San Diego. We explained that whilst most, but not all, of the beers that we tasted were classified as “craft” rather than cask ales, that in our opinion they were of a wholly superior standard to most beers marketed as craft in the UK. We found them to be low in carbonation, not overly chilled and packed with a delightful cornucopia of intense flavours. We also observed that almost every licensed premise offered at least a few choices of genuine locally crafted beers and that the whole thing seemed to be driven by a much younger crowd than the cask scene is here. Well the time to leave San Diego and its amazing beers and bars came around all too soon and we boarded our United Airlines flight for the short hop to San Francisco in search of more beer!

I managed to leave my almost new Kindle e-reader (a present from my wife) in the seat pocket on this flight which was a disastrous start to this leg of the trip. Miraculously I got it back about four weeks later but there isn't room here to list all the events that led to that result – suffice to say it came via Houston in Texas, Amsterdam, Bristol Airport, Tim Proudman (former CAMRA social secretary and now EasyJet steward) and the Seven Stars!

Now it's over to Phil to relate our tremendous three nights in San Francisco...

Taking the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), an inexpensive and fast link from the airport, we alighted in the heart of the city at Powell Street, which is the terminus for the famous cable cars, and close to our rather aged hotel, the Chancellor.

As our room was not ready we decided to walk to the nearest quality bar, **Rogue Ale House**. What looked a simple walk up Powell Street, was anything but. Those of you who have ever seen films of this most photogenic of cities will recall the roller-coaster ups and downs of the streets! We had a serious thirst when we arrived at Rogue, which turned out to be one of the best and friendliest bars of the trip.

A helpful bar tender gave us local information. We had researched up to a potential thirty eight bars to visit in our short stay. Several were now discarded on the grounds of quality, distance, or for being in an area far too dodgy for beery tourists such as ourselves..

We took a buss to the hotel, then a cable car to Fisherman's Wharf. We quickly became aware that our choice of dates was less than ideal. We discovered shortly before we left England that this weekend was the 75th anniversary of the famous Golden Gate Bridge. We now discovered that it was also Memorial Day bank holiday weekend and it seemed that the whole of California was jammed into the relatively narrow streets!

Wading through the crowds we arrived at **Jack's Cannery**, a touristy but pleasing modern bar. Having sampled some local brews including Anchor beers, we took a stroll along the bay front past the famous Pier 39 and to the most bizarre bar of our whole visit, **Pizza Orgasmica** at the Embarcadero. One of several branches of the same name, this is a pizza restaurant which also brews its own beer. Set into the ground floor of an office block, we were less than impressed by the “welcome”, the beer, or our pizza slices. Americans do seem to regard pizza (and burgers) as the ideal food to have with beer. Later on Rogue's advice we headed to **Kennedy's Pub and Curry House**. Here we found 50 taps and 180 bottles, plus Indian and British pub style food. Tired by our struggles with the crowds, we returned to the sanctuary of Rogue then back to **Tunnel Top**, which we had planned as our last stop but we found closed, as was our hotel bar. In fact, there was a sign saying it would not open at all on the forthcoming bank holiday!

On the Bank Holiday Monday we had planned to go to Alcatraz, but all trips were booked solid. (We also enquired a month prior to our trip if we could get on a visit to Anchor brewery – there is a three-month waiting list!) Vince made a foray to the shops and purchased

some promised fine jeans for his wife Marilyn, and I tried but failed to get a look around the USS Pampanito, a World War Two submarine moored at Fishermans' Wharf. We then took the BART out across San Francisco Bay to Berkeley, where there is also a healthy beer culture. Two brew pubs are located close to Downtown Berkeley station – our first stop was **Triple Rock**, where we sampled Berkeley unfined IPA (6.5%), and Black Rock Porter, which was described as “English style”. As we had suspected, Berkeley had a more relaxed atmosphere than SF. We headed back towards the BART, until nearly opposite the station we came to **Jupiter**, where we tried the Honey Wheat and XHP. Unusually for San Diego and San Francisco, we were served Imperial pints here – the norm so far being US measures where the pint is 16 fluid ounces rather than our 20. The American brewer's barrel is also 31 gallons rather than our 36.

Upon returning to SF we got off at AT&T Park, home of the SF Giants baseball team. Built into the stadium is **Public House**, an airy modern bar with a big range of beers, where I drank Marin Orange and Black. Two hand-pulled beers were available. The bar was surprisingly civilized, despite being colonised by the crew of a US navy vessel on shore leave!

A short walk inland took us to one of the best bars of our trip, **21st Amendment**. Constantly packed during our visit, we managed to squeeze onto stools at the bar and sampled a wonderful array of their own beers, Watermelon Wheat (served with a slice of the same fruit!), Brew Free or Die IPA and Back in Black IPA, all impressing hugely. It was time for another pizza here, and they were nearly as impressive as the beer!

Another renowned brew pub was our last stop of the night- **Thirsty Bear**. This is a smart, modern bar, stretching back a long way and with ample space upstairs. As with many of the brew pubs we visited, the range of styles available was a delight. The hand pulled IPA drew our attention, as did the impressive Valencia Wheat and Ocean Porter. We felt that our SF leg of our trip was meeting our expectations- but the best day was yet to come.

Tuesday began with a boat trip out to San Francisco bay, giving us fine views of the city. We sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge, circled Alcatraz and saw seals playfully swimming alongside boats in the bay.

On our return, I finally got to visit the Pampanito, whilst Vince, after agonising on whether he had the correct size jeans, exchanged them on the advice of the shop manager. Alas, the original choice was correct!

We reunited at **Beer Zone**, a smart wood dominated bar which we had missed despite our research, until Vince walked past it! Located above an amusing 50's style diner, and only two minutes from our hotel, there were 40 taps – Vince tried North Coast Rasputin stout (9%), whilst I sampled Alaskan Amber. It would have been an ideal last stop each night, but sadly closed at 9pm daily.

Next an arduous hour long bus ride followed by a very pleasant walk along the Pacific coast led to **Beach Chalet**, a brew pub very easy to spot due to its resplendent red roof. We were somewhat parched by this point after a fair march in the heat so you can imagine our feelings when we peered at the sign on the locked door: “Closed for plumbing repairs, reopen at five.” We couldn't afford to waste two hours. Fortunately Vince glimpsed a bus out of the corner of his eye, and we headed to the nearest stop. Happily that it took us to Haight Ashbury, home of the hippy movement, and also to some cracking bars.

After quenching our thirst at **Alembic** we strolled down Haight Street, and bought souvenirs including outrageous hippy style T-shirts from a shop run by a delightful man who had been present during – and had not really moved on from – the “Summer of Love”. Our next stop was **Magnolia**, yet another magnificent brew pub. A homely, friendly place, with booths and tables for dining set aside from an area for drinking at the bar. We ordered high-class food (I had a superb Hawaiian Albacore sandwich) and sampled a great range of beers which included five cask beers, including a traditional Mild – an unexpected sight and the only one we can recall seeing on our journey.

A fascinating walk took us next to **Toronado**, sister pub of the bar of the same name in San Diego and just as good. It was here Vince had his beer of the trip – New Belgium brewery's Lychee Tart. Then he had another!

We bussed it over to the Mission district, to finish our trip in San Fran off in style.

Zeitgeist was one of our favourite bars of the whole trip. We entered to the sound of Warpigs by Black Sabbath on the jukebox. This unpretentious, merry, grungy, happy bar reminded us of Bristol's own Seven Stars, with the added advantage of a rear patio, plus forty beers on tap. **Gestadt** and **Elixir** ended our night – we have to confess our memories of the last few and our journey home are somewhat hazy!

Time ran short to visit all the sights and bars of this great city, but it's a great excuse to return in the future. Anyway, on Wednesday morning it was time to move on.

Back to Vince...

Our stay in San Francisco had flown by and it was time for the last leg of the trip. Another short United Airlines flight took us to the deserts of Nevada and Las Vegas – Sin City! On landing in Vegas several things strike you quickly. Firstly, the surreal experience of exiting security checks straight into the giant main airport hall which is packed with row after row of slot machines as far as the eye can see (very few being played though – sign of the times?). Secondly, as you step outside you feel as though you have climbed into a tumble dryer, so intense is the heat outside. We went in search of a taxi only to find ourselves literally about 250th in the queue! There were about a dozen staff marshalling the taxis and matching them to groups of people. In less than 15 minutes we were on our way – very impressive. Our hotel was the Aria right in the heart of the “Strip” close to the Bellagio and Caesars Palace, et al. This is an enormous modern creation with thousands of rooms, many bars and restaurants and six rooftop swimming pools. The reception is adjoined by an enormous casino. To say that our room was luxurious would be to understate the matter somewhat. Two giant super-king beds, nine varying pillows each, enormous bathroom, deepest bath ever seen, remote control curtains, etc. Very nice as it all was, we had beer to seek out!

Our research had uncovered the happy surprise that our hotel complex included one specialist beer bar – **Todd's English Bar**, which has 45 beers on tap including no less than five on proper cask hand pumps! These included Innis & Gunn Rum Cask – I've never seen any of their beers on handpump back in the UK. Beers here were an extortionate 11 dollars a pint – about double the price in San Diego. However we noticed that Happy “Hour” was 3-6pm and 10-12pm daily when all beers were half price. As it was just past 3pm we got stuck in! Some excellent beers were tried with New Belgium brewery amongst those to stand out. We had to try proper real ale in Vegas and my Rum Cask was great. Unfortunately Phil ordered an American cask beer and got a seriously warm pint – ironic in a desert surely?

After happy hour we wondered around the strip for a while before taking a taxi to the **Freakin Frog** bar a couple of miles off the strip. This is a proper “dive bar” which specialises in beer and live music, and claims to offer over 1000 beers, mainly in bottle form. The enormous barman, Jack

(pictured) looked like a Hells Angel and greeted us gruffly initially. Once he realised that we were fellow lovers of beer he quickly morphed into a perfect host and we spent hours chatting to him. The beer list did indeed contain over a 1000 beers as did the giant walk-in fridge which he kindly took us round. Unfortunately the list and the actual stock bore almost no resemblance to each other! A serious update is required surely? Despite the bar being almost empty, two live bands performed whilst we were there. Jack recommended a few beers including an



incredible stout from Salt Lake City (on draught) that drank like a 7% beer but was actually a mighty 13.2%! Apparently, under the Mormon rules

all beers sold in Salt Lake City must be 3.2% or under, unless actually brewed in the city – so the local brewery are cocking a snook at the rules! We finally dragged ourselves back to the hotel for happy hour part two.

Our second day was to include the touristy highlight of the trip – a sunset helicopter flight over the Hoover Dam and into the Grand Canyon, landing for half an hour. We thought it might not be wise to drink large quantities before this so spent much of the day enjoying the many sights of Vegas. We did find time to visit Downtown Las Vegas at the far end of the strip (a very useful and cheap bus service makes this easy). Downtown includes two brew bars – both housed inside casinos of course!

The first was **Main Street Brewery** attached to the hotel and casino complex of the same name at the old station. This was a tremendous place, brewing a range of around five home brews. We tried a sample tray each and enjoyed them all at only about \$4 the lot.

The other is **Chicago Brewery Company**, a small bar upstairs in the Four Queens casino. The beers are actually brewed at a much bigger bar 10 miles away. This one offered no less than nine home brews – available in a very amusing double decker sample tray for around \$10 (see picture). An alcoholic version of Root Beer sticks in the memory.



We then headed off to our Grand Canyon trip which was magnificent. Upon our return we took a cab out to the **Hofbrauhaus** about a mile from our hotel – a faithful recreation of the famous Munich Brewery and Bar. The three German beers and the food and service were all very good indeed. Plenty of oompah too! Bizarrely it stopped serving beer just after 10pm and closed altogether at 11pm – totally out of synch with everywhere else that was open 24 hours a day! Back to the happy hour!

The final day of our trip had arrived – but as we were not due to fly home until 20.45 we still had time on our hands. After a lie in we had a giant breakfast Burrito in the amazing Planet Hollywood Shopping Mall opposite the Aria, followed by a quick beer at **Sin City Brewing Company**. This was served from a small open bar in the Mall with half a dozen stools and little else! From there you could sit and watch the hourly very realistic “indoor thunderstorms” take place – you have to see it to believe it! The three beers were very good too, especially my stout. The friendly and knowledgeable barmaid was very good. When we mentioned our time in San Diego and San Francisco she mentioned around a dozen “must do” bars. She was mightily impressed that we had actually done them all! High fives all round! We were aware that Main Street Brewery had a happy hour 3-6pm daily so we decided to head back there and spend our last few hours getting nicely tipsy in the vain hope of actually sleeping on the plane. To our astonishment, all the beers were reduced to \$2 a pint and a huge meal could be had for about \$4. We took full advantage and spent a chilled few hours chatting to staff and locals – a nice way to end a wonderful holiday.

It is a rare thing when a much anticipated holiday actually turns out to be every bit as good as you hoped, if not better. We both loved all three cities and enjoyed fantastic service throughout. The beers that we tried were mostly superb and we saw some magnificent places. It really would be wrong not to give a special mention to my wonderful wife Marilyn who was unable to make the trip but insisted that Phil and I go ahead. This was a personal sacrifice well above and beyond that which could reasonably be expected and I am forever in her debt for it.

We hugely recommend to you the three cities, their brewers and their beers!

Vince Murray and Phil Cummings

Whatpub.com

A new initiative from CAMRA, available to members today and due to be opened up to the general public in 2013, seeks to be the most comprehensive and objective guide to real ale pubs across the country. Duncan Shine will be coordinating the database for Bristol & District Branch.

What's whatpub.com all about?

For a number of years, people have been asking why CAMRA as the UK's largest and most influential pub-going consumer organisation doesn't have its own online pub guide. Well now it does.

Currently available only to CAMRA members, whatpub.com can be used to search for details of pubs across the UK and then look up details such as opening times, descriptions, facilities and of course details of the real ale and cider on offer. Being an online guide allows for extra functions such as additional text for descriptions, photos and live map data.

So it's just an online version of the Good Beer Guide online, no?

Lots of people have been asking this, but the answer is no, but it does naturally complement the Guide.

When you search for pubs on whatpub.com you will not just see GBG pubs – and there is no way of searching specifically for GBG pubs – so you'll still need the book or mobile app to find the very best real ale pubs.

How it all started...

CAMRA's online pub guide has been planned and developed over three years and is the result of an immense amount of work by volunteers and staff.

A decision was made at the start to acknowledge the local expertise of CAMRA members, which is why the pub details and descriptions that appear on whatpub.com have come from CAMRA branches and will continue to.

So the first challenge was to develop a system to hold all the important things we need to know about pubs, including opening hours, location and real ales served as well as other information that goes beyond what we use for the CAMRA Good Beer Guide, such as photos.



But we're not there yet...

The plan is to make whatpub.com available to the wider public during 2013, but before we can let whatpub.com loose in the wild we are asking our members to help by providing information about your locals or favourite pubs. To help us on our way, we are inviting CAMRA members to start having a look around the site and seeing what information is up there about the pubs you know.

There are still over 600 pubs covered by the Bristol & District Branch of CAMRA, and we want to know more about all of them. So if you're a CAMRA member, why not go to whatpub.com? You can benefit from the expertise of your fellow members, and also share your own knowledge, pub pictures, etc with other users. You'll need your CAMRA membership number to sign in.

Members can update details on pubs they know whichever district they are in, not just here in Bristol. So what are you waiting for?

Duncan Shine

CAMRA pub discounts

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

- **Anchor**, Thornbury
- **Bank**, John Street, Bristol
- **Barrel**, Thornbury
- **Bay Horse**, Lewins Mead, Bristol
- **Bristol Cider House**, Surrey Street, Bristol
- **Brit Bar**, High Street, Weston-super-Mare
- **Cider Press**, Gloucester Road, Bristol
- **Cornubia**, Temple Street, Bristol
- **Drawbridge**, St Augustines Parade, Bristol
- **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
- **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



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

Champion Beer of Britain nominations (CAMRA members only)

Nominations are required for entrants into the South West Champion Beer of Britain competition. The winners will be put forward as finalists to the national Champion Beer of Britain competition at the Great British Beer Festival and the National Winter Ales Festival.

You will be able to make nominations using at the website www.cbobvoting.org.uk from 1st December 2012 until 31st January 2013. After the closing date, no further nominations will be possible.

There are 11 categories for the competition: Mild, Bitter, Best Bitter, Strong Bitter, Golden Ale, Speciality Beer, Old Ale & Strong Mild, Porter, Stout, Barley Wine & Strong Old Ale, and Real Ale in a Bottle. For each category, you may nominate up to five different beers, each in order of preference.

We have 11 breweries in our branch area who between them brew more than seventy eligible beers! Many of these are superb examples of their style, so please give our local breweries a chance to win this prestigious competition by voting for them.

Chris Rogers

Solution to the crossword on page 26

Across: 1. Old Sodbury Mild, 9. Dartmouth, 10. Lager, 11. Plebs, 12. Mastering, 13. Citation, 15. Screen, 17. Lager, 19. Festival, 22. Defrosted, 23. Bait, 24. Equal, 25. Not intact, 26. Sherry schooner. Down: 1. Old Speckled Hen, 2. Derwent, 3. Ormes, 4. Blue Moon, 5. Rehash, 6. Mullet cut, 7. Legside, 8. Original bitter, 14. The Cooler, 16. Geodetic, 18. Reflush, 20. Villain, 21. Stingy, 23. Banjo.

Branch diary

Diary of the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA

- **Wed 28th Nov** – Quarterly branch meeting, Horts, 8pm.
- **Thurs 29th Nov** – Bristol Pubs Group meeting, Ship Inn, Lower Park Row, 7pm.
- **Tues 4th Dec** – Committee meeting, Cornubia 8pm.
- **Thurs 6th Dec** – Bristol Beer Festival organising meeting, Gryphon, 8pm.
- **Sun 9th Dec** – Christmas social, Three Tuns, 6pm.
- **Wed 12th Dec** – Mass Parliamentary lobby in London. Depart Cornubia 8.45am.
- **Fri 14th Dec** – Tasting session, 8pm, venue to be confirmed.
- **Tues 18th Dec** – Gloucester Road Christmas crawl. Start Wellington 6.45pm.
- **Fri 28th Dec** – Tasting session, 8pm, venue to be confirmed.
- **Sun 6th Jan** – ‘Westbury Wobble’ starting at Victoria at 12 noon, then Mouse, RAFA Club, Post Office Tavern, Black Swan, Prince of Wales, White Horse and White Lion.
- **Wed 9th Jan** – Committee meeting, 8pm, venue to be confirmed.
- **Tues 15th Jan** – Bristol Beer Festival organising meeting, Gryphon, 8pm.
- **Wed 16th Jan** – Explorer/survey trip, Weston-super-Mare and fringes. Depart Cornubia 6.45pm.
- **Thurs 17th Jan** – BADRAG social at the Three Tuns, from 7.30pm.
- **Wed 23rd Jan** – Branch meeting, Horts, 8pm.
- **Thurs 24th Jan** – Bristol Pubs Group meeting, Bag O’Nails, 7pm (upstairs).
- **Fri 25th Jan** – Bristol Pubs Group social, 6.45pm at Highbury Vaults then Beerd, Robin Hood, Green Man, Hare on the Hill, Hillgrove.
- **Tues 29th Jan** – Explorer/survey trip, East Mendips including Clutton and Hallatrow. Depart Cornubia 6.45pm.
- **Wed 6th Feb** – Explorer/survey trip across Bristol. Depart Cornubia 6.45pm.
- **Wed 13th Feb** – Committee meeting, 8pm, venue to be confirmed.
- **Wed 20th Feb** – Explorer/survey trip, North Somerset including Cheddar. Depart Cornubia 6.45pm.
- **Thurs 21st Feb** – BADRAG social at the Seven Stars, Redcliffe, from 7.30pm.
- **Wed 27th Feb** – Quarterly Branch meeting, Horts, 8pm.

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

Andy Gray (Social Secretary)

Twitter & Facebook

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

Thanks to this issue’s contributors

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

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

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Bath & Borders diary

- **Tuesday 27th Nov, 8:30pm.** The Branch Meeting to be held at the Seven Stars, Winsley, nr Bradford on Avon.
 - **Thursday 6th Dec, 8:30pm.** A mini crawl of Bath centre, starting at the Old Green Tree, then on to the Salamander and the Raven.
 - **Tuesday 11th Dec, 8:30pm.** A mini crawl of Warminster, starting at the Organ and then on to the Fox and Hounds.
 - **Thursday 20th Dec, 8:30pm.** A Christmas social at the Castle in Bradford on Avon.
- See www.bathandborderscamra.org.uk/events/ for further diary dates.

Bath & Borders contacts

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

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

Weston diary and contact

See page 24

Severn Vale diary and contact

See page 31

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