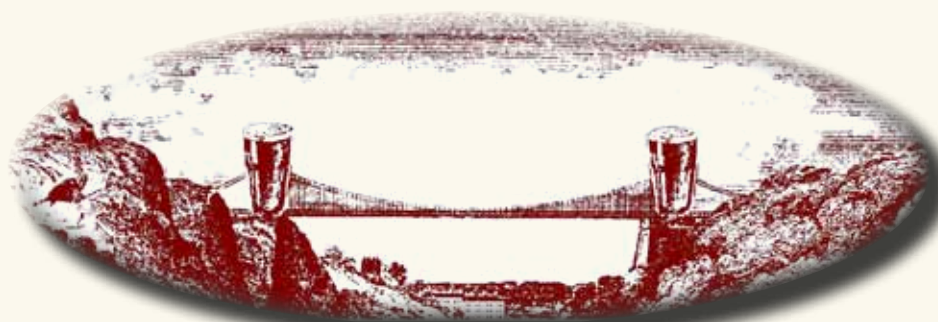




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PINTS WEST

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



Historic central Bristol pub reopens

One of Bristol's most historic pubs, the Rummer on High Street, has reopened. It has been renamed the Looking Glass.

The reopened pub was once a part of a larger Rummer pub. The other part of the Rummer, which has an entrance in All Saints Lane in St Nicholas Market, has been open and trading for about seven years and is not affected by the reopened pub.

Back to the High Street location. The pub had been closed for over 13 years and the building was in quite a sorry state. A few months ago it reopened as an art, music and enterprise community venue. However, the intention was always to restore the place as a pub.

Emerging from the derelict Bristol City Council-owned building, this atmospheric venue is steeped in a rich history dating back to 1241. As Bristol's first coaching house it is said to have accommodated guests such as Elizabeth I, Charles I and II, and Oliver Cromwell.

Rolling Stage and the Motorcycle Showrooms, two art organisations, have come together to create this revitalised pub and art gallery. They have converted half of the cellar into a gallery space and the other half into a beer cellar.

During my recent visits, the real ales on offer were the excellent Bristol Beer Factory's Bitter Californian (which was replaced by Kiwi when it ran out) and Independence, plus Bath Ales Gem.

The beer range is likely to vary and the good news is that the people who run the place believe in the local economy so will be serving a selection real ales from local micro-breweries. A range of bottled-conditioned ales is also on offer including beers from Wiper & True, a new brewing company based in Bristol, and Gloucester brewery.

It is tremendous news to see this wonderful pub, right in the heart of Bristol, reopened again. Joe and the team running the place appear to be very keen to get feedback from customers. Having been closed for over 13 years, it is almost like having a new pub in town to visit.

Get down there and check it out!

Pete Bridle (photos by Richard Brooks)

The Looking Glass, 39-40 High Street, Bristol BS1 2AT



Front cover

Anti-clockwise from top left:

- Keith Hayles, founder of the new Twisted Oak Brewery, raises a glass of one of his new brews (see page 23).
- Mike and Leanne pose with the Great Western Brewery (GWB) delivery vehicle. Could any brewery possibly have a smaller dray?
- Landlord Andy Lyon proffers a pint in the newly reopened Coach & Horses in Old Market (see page 24 – photo by Dr Paul).
- When snow and ice came to the branch area some pubs were better prepared than others for the cold weather. Manager Tony Friend is proud of their real fire at the Horse & Groom (St Georges Road, central Bristol) and clearly wanted to make sure there was plenty of fuel on hand to keep it going through the winter (photo by Richard Brooks).

Wear Pints West

YOU can now wear Pints West! T-shirts, polo shirts, sweat shirts and fleeces are now available to order with an embroidered Pints West logo on the left breast. All are available in **navy, black, bottle green, grey, red, dark royal, purple and burgundy**, and in sizes **S, M, L, XL and XXL**. All except the fleeces are also available in **jade, sky blue, gold and white**. Make cheques payable to "Bristol & District CAMRA", and post your order to **19 Willada Close, Bedminster, Bristol BS3 5NG**. Email enquiries to badrag@camrabristol.org.uk. Please allow up to 4 weeks for delivery (not guaranteed in time for Christmas).



PINTS WEST CLOTHING ORDER FORM

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Bristol Beer Festival

Tickets still available 2013

Hopefully you are reading this before the start of the sixteenth annual CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival which runs from Thursday 14th to Saturday 16th March 2013 at Brunel's Old Station, Temple Meads, Bristol.



The Friday lunchtime, Friday evening and Saturday lunchtime sessions have all sold out, however we do currently have some tickets left for the Thursday and Saturday evening sessions. At the time of writing these are available to buy in the **Seven Stars**, Thomas Lane, Bristol (we recommend you check ticket availability before making any special journeys) and are also available to purchase online – details at www.camrabristol.org.uk.

Bristol Beer Festival tickets went on sale at organised events as usual and our CAMRA member ticket sale at the Old Fish Market on Sunday 3rd February was the busiest ever. Some people have expressed concerns about the length of the ticket sales

queues, although long waits can largely be avoided by arriving later in the session. The queue was dealt with quite quickly at our following public ticket sales session at the Commercial Rooms on Sunday 17th February and for most of the period people were able to get served almost immediately on arrival. Simultaneous ticket sales took place at Off the Rails in Weston-super-Mare and we would like to thank the staff at all three pubs for their cooperation.

The session times and ticket prices are unchanged for 2013. The details of the sessions for which tickets currently remain are:

- **Thursday 14 March, 7pm – 11pm, £10 per ticket (including £5 worth of beer tokens)**
- **Saturday 16 March, 7pm – 11pm, £9 per ticket (including £5 worth of beer tokens)**

There will be around 140 different real ales from near and far on sale over the course of the festival as well as around 50 ciders and perries. A range of food will be available at all sessions. 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. The provisional beer order and the cider & perry order are available to view on line now at www.camrabristol.org.uk.

Richard Brooks

www.gloucesterbeerfestival.org.uk



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 for more details and entrance prices

Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2013

Elland Brewery wins top winter beer award for second time!

Elland Brewery's 1872 Porter, at 6.5 per cent ABV, was recently crowned the Supreme Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2013 by a panel of judges at the National Winter Ales Festival in Manchester. The panel consisted of beer writers, members of the licensed trade and CAMRA members.

The West Yorkshire brewery first scooped the country's top winter beer award in 2010.

The winning beer is described in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2013 as a creamy, full-flavoured porter, with rich liquorice flavours and more than hint of hint of chocolate.

CAMRA director Nik Antona praised the outstanding quality of the champion. He said: "Porters should not be regarded as endangered beers, they are beers for today's discerning drinkers. And on a cold day, 1872 Porter is a perfect winter warming beer. This is a fine example of a modern day interpretation of one of this country's classic beer styles. It's gorgeous, drinkable, likeable and is highly recommended."

Elland Brewery owner Martin Ogley said he was shocked to win the award again. "I am gobsmacked, as I never expected this. There are so many great beers at the festival that it is remarkable for the judges to choose us again. 1872 Porter is our most award-winning beer and I will now have to be ready to brew more of it."

Also in the overall awards, Silver went to Bartram's Brewery's Comrade Bill Bartram's EAISS (Egalitarian Anti-Imperialist Soviet Stout) while the Bronze medal went to Kelburn Brewing's Dark Moor.

Reigning supreme at the Winter Ales Festival today, Elland Brewery 1872 Porter, as well as the overall finalists, will now enter into the final of the Champion Beer of Britain competition at the Great British Beer Festival, Olympia, London, 13th to 17th August.



Winter beer styles, as taken from CAMRA's 'Dictionary of Beer'

Porter: A dark, slightly sweetish but hoppy ale made with roasted barley; the successor of 'entire' and predecessor of stout. Porter originated in London around 1730, and by the end of the 18th century was probably the most popular beer in England.

Stout: One of the classic types of ale, a successor in fashion to 'porter'. Usually a very dark, heavy, well-hopped bitter ale, with a dry palate, thick, creamy, and a good grainy taste.

Old Ale: Now virtually synonymous with 'winter ale'. Most 'old ales' are produced and sold for a limited time in the year, usually between November and the end of February. Usually a rich, dark, high-gravity draught ale of considerable body.

Barley Wine: A strong, rich and sweetish ale, usually over 1060 OG, dark in colour, with high condition and a high hop rate.



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The results in full

Old Ales and Strong Milds category

Gold: Kelburn Brewing, Dark Moor (East Renfrewshire)

Joint Silver: Jennings, Sneek Lifter (Cumbria)

Bronze: Purple Moose, Dark Side of the Moose (Gwynedd)

Porters category

Gold: Elland Brewery, 1872 Porter (West Yorkshire)

Silver: Blythe Brewery, Johnson's (Staffordshire)

Bronze: Derby Brewery, Penny's Porter (Derbyshire)

Stouts category

Gold: Bartram's Brewery, Comrade Bill Bartram's EAISS (Egalitarian Anti-Imperialist Soviet Stout) (Suffolk)

Silver: Marble Beers, Stouter Stout (Greater Manchester)

Bronze: Hop Back Brewery, Entire Stout (Wiltshire)

Barley Wines category

Gold: Hogs Back Brewery, A Over T (Aromas Over Tongham) (Surrey)

Silver: Heart of Wales Brewing, High as a Kite (Powys)

Bronze: Kinver Brewery, Over the Edge (Staffordshire)

OVERALL result

Gold: Elland Brewery, 1872 Porter (West Yorkshire)

Silver: Bartram's Brewery, Comrade Bill Bartram's

EAISS (Egalitarian Anti-Imperialist Soviet Stout) (Suffolk)

Bronze: Kelburn Brewing, Dark Moor (East Renfrewshire)

Great British Beer Festival Olympia, London, Tue 13th-Sat 17th August 2013



Stick it in the diary.

www.gbbf.org.uk

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**CAMPAIGN
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CAMRA mass lobby of Parliament

Recently, CAMRA members from all over the country descended on Westminster for a lobby of MPs regarding the scandalous beer duty escalator. This followed a Parliamentary debate held in the House of Commons which was triggered by CAMRA's e-petition which gained well over 100,000 signatures.

Introduced by the last Government and carried on by the coalition, the beer duty escalator sees an annual increase in duty of 2% above the rate of inflation.

This is against a backdrop of one of the worst downturns in the economy in living memory, with static or declining disposable income in many households, and unfair competition from supermarkets which has resulted in thousands of pub closures in the last few years – a trend which is continuing, with latest CAMRA research showing that around 18 pubs are permanently closing their doors every week.

Beer duty increased by 5% in the last budget. How many of you have had a 5% pay increase in the last year?

Beer is the UK's national drink and pubs are a part of the country's social fabric. Yet this increase in duty, which of course is passed on to the price at the bar, has resulted in beer sales falling, resulting in yet more pub closures. Surely it can't be right that beer should be so expensive that many people are stopping using pubs, resulting in the loss of so many locals.



Charlotte Leslie MP speaking against the Beer Duty Escalator

Reasons, but a major reason is that the Government takes £1 of every pint in duty and VAT. There are around 15 million regular pub users in the UK. Pubs play a vital role in the social lives of individuals, and communities suffer when they are lost.

Beer and pubs support over a million jobs in the UK and contribute £21 billion to the UK economy. The escalator is putting yet more jobs at risk. It is time to say 'enough!' Do we really want to see virtually every pub turned in flats, supermarkets, restaurants or whatever? We already have several areas of our branch with no pubs left. This of course is reflected throughout the UK. A fairer beer duty policy will help retain



Some of the Bristol lobby on the terrace of the House of Commons with Stephen Williams MP

Oxford Economics forecast that scrapping the beer duty escalator in the 2013 budget would actually save the Government money. Any loss in beer duty – and people are drinking less of it as a result of price – would be offset by higher beer sales resulting in more VAT, corporation tax and employment taxes being paid and savings on social security. As well as providing a place of social cohesion, pubs also provide direct and indirect employment for people such as bar staff, kitchen staff, suppliers, cleaners, decorators, etc. Then there are the breweries that employ thousands of people also.

Pubs are closing for many



The Bristol lobby in discussion with Stephen Williams MP

pubs as places to go, for people to have a drink, meal, play a game of darts, etc. Simple pleasures – why should they be taxed out of existence?

The lobby day was very well organised by CAMRA HQ staff and volunteers. Over 1,000 members took part in the lobby including around 24 from the Bristol & District branch. Many of our local MPs met us, and listened to our concerns. Charlotte Leslie spoke against the beer duty escalator at the rally that was held after the meetings with MPs.

Some might say we need the escalator to plug the black hole in the nation's finances caused by the economic downturn. The amount raised is now almost immaterial as the escalator is resulting in falling beers sales – albeit real ale in increasing market share – so less revenues are being generated coupled with job losses. Then there is the whole issue of the loss of community pubs!

The Government has had well over two years to abolish the escalator. It's time to stop hiding behind the argument that the last Labour Government introduced it and they are just carrying on this policy.

If you haven't done so yet and you want to help save pubs, please find a little time to write to your MP and tell them so. This can be by letter or email.

However you choose to communicate, please do it soon and make your point in polite but in no uncertain terms. It might be your favourite pub that closes next if we stand by and do nothing.

Pete Bridle



Two members of the Bristol lobby with Steve Webb MP

Chris Skidmore - correction

In the last edition of Pints West we ran an article about the impending CAMRA mass lobby of Parliament. In this we referred to the opinions of our local MPs on the beer duty escalator (BDE), including attributing the statement "that the BDE is part of the deficit reduction plan" to Chris Skidmore MP. However, Mr Skidmore has expressed concern that we did not quote his exact words which were that "the revenue received from alcohol duty remains vital to the government's deficit reduction plan." We are happy to put this right.

Shine on Clifton – then and now

For the Autumn 2003 edition of Pints West, I visited the pubs of Clifton village to see what real ales were on offer. I found a mixed bag of the good, the average and the really rather disappointing. Some three and a bit years later, I returned for the February 2007 edition to find some subtle changes to the beers on offer. But that was six years ago, surely it's time for a revisit to see what's changed!

In 2003, the **White Lion** was attached to the Avon Gorge and also to the word 'Brasserie'. The beers on offer were Courage Best Bitter, and Smiles Best Bitter. I used to love the Smiles beers... what a shame the brewery is now long gone. By 2007, both the word 'Brasserie' and the real ale had gone as, if I'm honest, had any sense of atmosphere. Nowadays, the White Lion is thriving, with its central island bar three deep in rugby fans when I visited. **Butcombe's Adam Henson's Rare Breed** was on handpump and pretty good form. It's a lovely golden brew with a citrusy spring-bloom character that screams of Spring.



The White Lion

When I visited the **Portcullis** ten years ago, it was run by Dave Crofton, and, as for much of its recent history, only opened in the evenings during the week. He offered three ales: Courage Best, Butcombe Bitter and Wadworth 6X, and my notes say I particularly enjoyed the



The Portcullis

Butcombe. Between 2003 and 2007 the Portcullis had spent a good deal of time closed altogether, but my return visit found it again opening in the evenings, struggling more than a little, but still offering Butcombe Bitter. These days, it's still weekday evenings only but all day at weekends, but now run as a Dawkins Ales pub. Offering **Brassknocker** in all its blonde glory, alongside Dawkins' first ale, **Green Barrel Bitter** and the flagship **Bristol Best**, a copper best bitter in the old style. It actually reminds me a bit of Courage Best at its best. Usually three guest ales alongside the Dawkins brews, and the guests can be quite obscure.



The Bristol Fringe Cafe Bar

My mid-thirties self then journeyed to the Greyhound in Princess Victoria Street. This was a two-bar Unique Pub Company house offering Adnams Broadside, Bass, Courage Best and Morland Old Speckled Hen. By 2007 it had introduced Fuller's London Pride and Bath Gem alongside the retained Courage Best. Big

changes for 2013, however. Greyhound no more. This is now the **Bristol Fringe Cafe Bar**, a 'one-bar' pub and entertainment venue offering live music or DJ sets pretty much every night. While it is a shame the old corridor leading to the back bar has gone, it is at least refreshing to note that three real ales are available, in **Sharp's Doom Bar**, **Bath Gem** and **Brain's S.A.**

Further along Princess Victoria Street stood, in 2003 as it does today, the **Somerset House**. A gloriously historic building that somehow has remained largely unchanged for a lot longer than ten years. Back in 2003 it offered Courage Best, Morland Old Speckled Hen and, sadly unusual at that time, a genuine guest beer, Wyre Piddle's Piddle In The Hole. The Courage Best and Speckled Hen persisted through the years and have only relatively recently been replaced by the current rack of barrels behind the bar. **Courage Director's** is a rare sight these days, especially from the barrel, but there it was on my visit, next to **St Austell Tribute** and **Fuller's London Pride**.



The Somerset House



The Quadrant



The Clifton

The **Quadrant** was rather proudly displaying new signage when I visited in 2003. Courage Best Bitter and Butcombe Bitter were on offer and there was a sense of optimism about the place. Butcombe Gold and Bath SPA had arrived by 2007, and those two breweries still supply the resident ales today, although **Butcombe Bitter** has replaced Gold, while **Bath Gem** has superseded SPA.

There were grand plans for the **Clifton** ten years ago. Closed for refurbishment amid promises (should that be threats?) that the front snug bar, entrance alleyway and rear bar area were all to be knocked together to form one super-bar. London Pride and 6X were both on tap. Thankfully, the 'improvements' came to nought, and in 2007 the history of the place still creaks happily. Butcombe's Brunel IPA has made an appearance, alongside Caledonian Deuchar's, Taylor Landlord and London Pride. Although there has been a lick of paint or two since then, the building remains mercifully intact, with **Bath Pale Ale** and **Gem** these days gracing the handpumps alongside **Sharp's Doom Bar** and **Butcombe Gold**.

The **Albion** in Boyces Avenue has been through some changes in the ten years too. In 2003 it was quite a tatty student pub with Smiles



The Albion

Best Bitter the only real ale. Four years later it called itself a “Pub And Dining Room” boasting Quail’s Eggs washed down with Thatcher’s Traditional Cider. Butcombe and Doom Bar were complemented by Bath Barnstormer (sigh) and Wye Valley Bitter. Today, the Albion is St

Austell’s first foray into pubs in Bristol. So **Trelawny**, **Dartmoor Best Bitter** and **Tribute Ale** are all regulars, alongside **Otter Ale** as the interloper on my visit.



The Hophouse



The Grapes

The **Hophouse** around the corner opened in the early 21st century as a Wadworth tied house and changed little between 2003 and 2007. 6X, Henry’s IPA and other Devizes brews have been commonplace throughout. Not an unpleasant state of affairs, as Wadworth beers remain



The Clifton Sausage



The Mall

very popular, but the 2013 Hophouse has gone in a different direction, with spectacular results. The row of handpumps is like a lucky dip of unusual beers from near and far. My visit yielded **Moor RAW** and **Moor Nor’hop** from Somerset. Plus there was **Otter Amber** and **Glastonbury Hedge Monkey** and **Dark Star Hophead** from Sussex.

Quick mention for a couple of places where the beers have changed very little since 2003. The **Grapes** in Sion Place, and the **Clifton Sausage** offer today, as they did in 2003, **6X** and **Henry’s IPA**; and **Butcombe Bitter** respectively.

The **Mall** at the top of, er, the Mall has blossomed in the ten years since I was disappointed to ‘only’ find Bass and London Pride on offer. By 2007 Taylor Landlord and London Pride sat alongside what my notes call a ‘divine’ pint of Wickwar Old Arnold, and by 2013, **Bath Gem** and **St Austell Tribute** were complemented by an unexpected pint of **Thwaites Nutty Black**.

Just down the hill a smidge sits the **Royal Oak**, run today as it was in 2003 by Simon Dauncey and wife Carolyn. Always a good choice of real ales dictated by the tastes of the capricious clientele. **Courage Best** has been pretty much a constant throughout, and still sells very well. But Bass, Greene King IPA and Morland Old Speckled Hen had been replaced by **Butcombe Bitter** and **Sharp’s Doom Bar** by 2007. Those two brews remain, but 2007’s London Pride has come and gone, and its place on the clips taken by **St Austell Tribute**.



The Royal Oak

The **Coronation Tap** has always been famous for its ciders and live music, and has changed refreshingly little since way before my 2003 visit. In those days you could still get a pint of Ushers Best alongside the Pedigree and Bass. By 2007 the Usher’s was long gone, and eventually Pedigree would be replaced by **Brakspear Bitter** alongside the ever-present **Bass**.



The Coronation Tap

Quick summary. In 2003, between the 13 ‘village’ pubs, there were 29 working handpumps offering 15 different beers. In 2007, there were 30 working handpumps, and 20 different beers. In 2013, I counted 38 beers in total, and 28 different brews. That’s a pretty good indication of a trend which, despite the economic woes facing us all, resolutely keeps heading in the right direction.

Duncan Shine
(Photos by Lesly Huxley and Duncan Shine)

A good day out in Westbury-on-Trym

As has been the way in recent years, your local CAMRA branch shakes off the post New Year blues in January for a wander around the pubs of Westbury-on-Trym on a Sunday afternoon. This is known as the 'Westbury Wobble'!

We started at noon in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide-listed **Victoria**. This welcoming pub is situated down Chock Lane, a small side road just off the village centre. Being winter, it was not a day for outside drinking, but this Wadworth-owned traditional pub does feature a raised garden that can be a sun trap in the summer months. All the beers tried were in excellent condition. Wadworth beers featured were Henry's IPA, 6X, Horizon and Swordfish; Butcombe Bitter was the guest ale.

Leaving the Victoria, we took a walk back up to the top of Chock Lane where we visited the **Mouse**. This is quite a lively pub and, again, welcoming. The Mouse is a single-roomed pub with an elevated outside drinking area to the rear with good views over the valley to the rear.

The Mouse often features live sporting events on TV. Beers included Courage Best, Deuchars IPA and Bath Ales Gem, and a fourth hand pump had the clip turned around. All beers tasted were in fine nick.

It was then left out of the Mouse, across the road and right into Eastfield, and into the **RAFA Club** at Carlton Lodge, 38 Eastfield. The Club did us proud with a very warm welcome and the excellent beer range consisting of Wye Valley Butty Bach; Skinner's Ginger Tosser and Heligon Honey; Wickwar Coopers and BOB; and Palmers Dorset Gold. On top of all this, the club kindly put on a wide range of free nibbles.

By now, our group was exceeding 30 members and all having a great day out. The weather was staying dry, the company was good and the beers did not disappoint!

Having said our farewells to the good people of the RAFA Club, we turned right, wandered along the road until we arrived, having crossed the main road, at the **Post Office Tavern**, or the 'POT at WOT'. Again, a very warm welcome with beers in excellent condition.

The POT is a prominent brick built building on Westbury Hill. Enter the pub through the front door and you enter a long lounge. To the left is a separate room – well, almost. Old Post Office memorabilia features in the pub including an old telephone box! The very friendly licensee, Vikki, explained to our group that the four permanent real ales, Butcombe Bitter, Bass, Doom Bar and Courage Best are very popular with the regular customers. However, they have an extra guest in the summer months apparently. The POT also holds a beer festival. The pub has for a long time specialised in pizzas. It also features major sporting events on their large screen.

Next down to Stoke Lane and into the **Black Swan**, also known as the **Dirty Duck**. The pub is owned by landlord and landlady Andy and Charlotte West who took over the business in December 2011. They have already made some improvements to the pub and further changes are planned.

Again, we were made to feel most welcome. The front area of the pub is intimate with a real log fire. To the rear is a much larger room and beyond that is a west facing garden which you can enjoy when we get some decent weather. The pub has a range of board games and such like for customers to enjoy.

Beers on offer were Courage Best, Doom Bar and a guest, which was Dartmoor Jail Ale. They also had a guest loyalty card. During our visit some free hot roasted spuds appeared on the bar which were most welcome!

Out of the Black Swan and into the **Prince of Wales** next door. This is a popular community pub which is full of old paraphernalia including pictures of various Royalty. The pub is owned by Butcombe brewery so it comes as no surprise to see some of their excellent ales on sale. However, the pub also features a good selection of beers from other breweries. While we were in there the real ales on sale were Timothy Taylor Landlord; Butcombe Bitter; Fuller's London Pride; and Wadworth Henry's IPA and 6X. Yet again, a great community pub experience with all the beers tried being spot on.

Into the centre of the village and some of our group went to the **White Horse**. This is a pub that is full of crannies and nooks with different areas and levels. On the day of our visit the ales on offer, served by gravity directly from the casks, were Bass, Butcombe Bitter and Brains Reverend James.

The last pub on our wobble was the **White Lion** which is just down the road from the White Horse. This is run by the Ember Inns pub chain – which itself is part of a bigger pub company. Ember Inns do state that real ales feature quite strongly in this pub – as it does in other pubs in their estate. The White Lion is a large pub and it is clear that it is part of a branded chain. Nonetheless, all recent reports regarding this pub have been positive regarding the quality of the ales. The beers on during our visit included Moles Molecatcher; Bath Gem and SPA; Doom Bar; and Moorhouses Pride of Pendle. Again, all the beers tried were in fine fettle.

The Westbury Wobble was a really enjoyable day out. I don't think we had a poor beer between us – and there were a lot of us! It was great to see most of the pubs doing some decent business and, although the village appears to have lost the Foresters, the remaining pubs look like they will be around for a very long time.

Bristol & District CAMRA run a full programme of pub crawls on foot and by minibus or coach, as well as brewery trips. Then there are our branch meetings and other sub-groups such as BADRAG which campaigns for rare beer styles, the Bristol & District Pubs Campaigning Group, etc, etc.

Why not check out one of our socials in the diary section of this newsletter and come along to an event soon? You will be most welcome!

Pete Bridle



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Pubs around Nailsea

The **Friendship Inn** freehold is for sale by Jones Lang LaSalle of Exeter. It is the second oldest pub in Nailsea dating from the 18th century. Licensee Russell Wragg left in December when Simon and Tracey Healey took over the pub for Punch Taverns until the sale is completed. It may not remain a pub.

The **Courtyard** in Nailsea that closed in 2012 remains closed, with planning permission to expand it. The future of the **Queens Head**, another Punch Tavern pub, is rumoured to be in doubt, but no confirmation has been made available. The leases of the **Sawyers Arms** at Nailsea, **Dew Drop Inn** at Flax Bourton and **New Inn** at Backwell are advertised for sale. The New Inn is closed.

The licensee of the **White Lion** has changed from Hayley Gould and Louise Thomas to John Lindsay, previously a member of the bar staff. Caroline and Debbie have taken over the management of the **Star Inn** at Tickenham. Between them they have forty-four years working in the business. This is the first license they have held. When visited, regular real ales were Butcombe Gold and Courage Directors, with Greene King Old Speckled Hen as the guest. Thatchers Traditional was the real cider.

Laurie Gibney

News from the Butcombe Brewery

Brewery tours

Tours of the Butcombe brewery are usually booked up months ahead but from this May individuals or small to medium groups can book the 'open tour' night without having to wait. There will be one slot per month on a Tuesday or Thursday evening and bookings are now being taken. The tours will be free of charge as ever! See their web site butcombe.com for more details.

Beers

There will three new beers from Butcombe for 2013:

○ Great Grey Owl (3.6%)

This is an all American-hopped American Pale Ale and it will be the new seasonal beer for June, July and August, replacing Blond. The hops come from the Sierra Nevada in Western USA, where the Great Grey is a rare breed.

○ Silver Fern (4.5%)

This is a New Zealand-hopped seasonal beer for September, October and November, replacing Brunel IPA.

○ Matthew Pale Ale (3.8% TBC)

This is the seasonal Mendip Spring rebadged to become a permanent beer available from Butcombe from the 1st of June, and from national wholesaler Matthew Clark from the 1st of March.

Also

Butcombe brewery will be at the Bath & West show in conjunction with Thatchers on the 29th May to 1st of June 2013.

Nigel Morris

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BUTCOMBE BLOND

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

During the winter Cotswold Spring celebrated their 1,000th brew with a one-off special, a Trappist-style beer with an ABV of 8.5% called Walloonatic. It went on to win, by public vote, the beer of the festival award at Tewkesbury CAMRA's 18th Winter Ales Festival.

After seven years of unstinting service, Vic Giles is retiring as brewery manager. Vic joined pretty much at the outset and has been the public face of the brewery ever since, leaving brewer Nik Milo to get on with the clever stuff in the brew house.

Cotswold Spring director, Mark Francom, reported that they have secured the hops required for the coming year and hope to be brewing some great beers again this year. They are reviewing the family of characters within their current beer portfolio, and may be introducing one or two new ones this year.

Steve Matthews

Brewery news in brief

RCH

The RCH brewery, based in West Hewish, near Weston-super-Mare, is brewing its wheat beer for the forthcoming Wetherspoon beer festival. This is the first time for about 15 years that they have brewed it.

They also brewed a special beer for the Swindon Apprentice School reunion which took place last September – the beer, Western Apprentice, is still available in bottles should you be lucky enough to find one.

GWB

Great Western Brewery's project for a water borehole to provide the brewery with its own dedicated fresh water supply is progressing well.

The newly refurbished George Hotel in Chipping Sodbury, now under new management, re-opened its doors to customers on 31st January 2013. GWB were please to be asked to be the main provider of cask ale, their new beer Shires taking pride of place on the opening night.

Cask Marque awareness grows

In a recent National Opinion Poll survey, 57% of cask ale drinkers recognised the Cask Marque plaque and 62% related the sign to beer quality.

Interestingly, awareness is higher; 67% in the 21 to 44-year-old category, which must in some part be due to the 'CaskFinder' app, which is used over 60,000 times per month to find Cask Marque pubs. The app also offers the opportunity to join the world's biggest 'Ale Trail' and, so far, the Cask Marque certificate in pubs has been scanned over 30,000 times to record visits.

The region with the most awareness of Cask Marque is the West Midlands (75%), followed by the South West (68%) and Yorkshire and Humberside (65%). The lowest awareness was in Scotland (40%). This awareness has a significant effect on footfall in pubs, as indicated in the licensee survey undertaken in 2012, which showed that:

- 88% of Cask Marque licensees have seen an increase in cask ale sales since accreditation;
- 98% of licensees would recommend the scheme to other licensees.

Cask Marque executive director Paul Nunny was delighted with the results: "It is particularly pleasing that our licensees through the survey have stated that the accreditation increases cask ale sales. We are all in a commercial world and today quality is a key component of retailing success."

Miles Selby, head of purchasing at Stonegate Pub Company, said: "As the popularity of cask ale continues to grow within our estate it is important to have a badge of quality that consumers can recognise and trust. Over 85% of the Stonegate cask ale houses have Cask Marque accreditation and the performance of cask can be partly attributed to the award. When an assessor visits from Cask Marque, as well as checking beer quality, they also undertake a cellar audit, ensuring that all elements

in the serving and dispensing of cask ale are checked and verified."

Cask Marque has over 8,300 licensees with the Cask Marque award.

The 'CaskFinder' app is free to download on i-phones and the android system. It gives details of Cask Marque pubs, a location map, beers on sale, beer festivals, tasting notes on beers and the 'Ale Trail'. Cask Marque also sponsors the CAMRA Good Beer Guide.



What is Cask Marque?

Cask Marque is an independent non-profit-making organisation set up to improve the quality of cask ale in pubs by way of an accreditation scheme. It is operated by an independent body called Cask Marque Trust which is a company limited by guarantee. The company is run by a management committee elected by its members. The members who pay a subscription include representatives from brewers, retailers, trade bodies and consumer groups.

Pubs that join the scheme are visited unannounced by an independent assessor twice a year. In the first year they are visited twice in the first three months and in subsequent years they are visited once in the summer and once in the winter.

The assessor checks all cask ales on sale for temperature, appearance, aroma and taste.

If all beers reach the required standard then the pub passes and it receives a plaque, framed certificate and merchandising material to inform its customers of the award and their rights.

If a pub fails an inspection they have one month to make improvements specified by Cask Marque before being reinspected.

Consumers are encouraged to comment independently to the Cask Marque organisation on the quality of cask ale in the pub and further visits are made if required.

Norman Spalding

Pub events (beer festivals, etc)

The **Volunteer Tavern in St Judes** will be holding its next beer festival over the Easter Bank holiday weekend (Thursday 28th March to Monday 1st April). There will be about thirty different beers from a region yet to be decided on.

The **New Inn at Cross** is having its tenth anniversary beer festival at the pub this Easter, from Friday 29th March to Monday 1st April. Over 25 local beers and ciders, as well as live music, barbecues, kids entertainment and loads of other stuff, are promised.

The **Rose & Crown at Rangeworthy** is holding its annual beer festival on Saturday 18th May. Sessions are afternoon (12-4) and evening (7-12). The cost of tickets (available from the pub) includes a burger, commemorative beer tankard and live entertainment.

The **Star in Bath** always has a festival to celebrate St Pirans' Day (the patron saint of Cornwall). As it falls on a Tuesday this year, they have decided to split the festival. On the day, Tuesday 5th March, there will be a one day beer festival with Cornish beer, food and songs. Then, after a couple of days to recover, Friday 8th and Saturday 9th will be 'The Nearly St Piran's Day Two-Day Cornish Beer Festival' with more Cornish beers, food and songs.

The **Raven in Bath** will be having a 'request' beer festival starting Friday 5th April. The idea is that it will have 40 or more beers, all being requests by the pub's customers.

The **Bag O'Nails in Hotwells** is running a 'Monday Club' from 5pm with all real ales below 5% at £2.50 per pint and a 175 ml glass of house wine at £2.50, with reductions on other drinks.

The launch event for the new Czech Budvar Yeast Beer that was due to take place in the **Cornubia** in January, as reported in the last Pint West, was postponed due to the snow. It has been rescheduled for Tuesday 5th March (6.30pm for 7pm) when Yeast Beer Mark II – unfiltered and unpasteurised – will be unveiled. This beer was inspired by Roger Protz, beer journalist and editor of the CAMRA Good Beer Guide, and he will be present to talk about it in person. Tasting will be free and Roger will also review some of the Cornubia's real ale collection.

SP

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**
www.WyeValleyBrewery.co.uk

SHARE OUR TASTE FOR REAL LIFE

Otter - Eco Brewery

The building of the family-run Otter Brewery was, and still is, a labour of love. Established in 1990 by David and Mary Ann McCaig (with son Patrick now part of the team) and located on a sixteenth century farm in some stunning Devon countryside, it is now one of the South West's leading suppliers of cask-conditioned beer and employs 32 local people.

As well as barn owls and bats, the site is also home to the UK's first underground eco cellar. Built deep into the clay hillside, the state of the art construction cleverly uses the earth's natural core temperature to chill the beer without electricity. This in turn saves over six and a half tonnes of CO2 emissions per annum – the equivalent of removing eight chillers and compressors which would otherwise be running 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

A set of inner and outer doors creates an airlock on the north side of the cellar to prevent temperature fluctuations. The whole cathedral-like structure has been capped with a massive living sedum roof that acts like a living sponge to store rainwater. The roof water is captured and then used for washing and other domestic maintenance. The living roof not only provides a haven for wildlife but also helps to blend the building into the natural habitat of the surrounding Blackdown Hills, an 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' and also a 'Site of Special Scientific Interest'.

In addition to the environmental benefits, the main purpose of the eco cellar is, of course, to provide the perfect environment for their beers. This is where the range of **Otter Ale**, **Bitter**, **Bright**, **Head** and **Amber** are kept – at the magic 12°C, the ideal temperature for storing cask ale – before going out to pubs.



Following an extremely busy 2012 with Otter beers being sold during the Olympics at Hyde Park and at six national music festivals culminating with 'Beautiful Days' in East Devon, they have also just been named the 2013 'Brewery of the Year' by the Good Pub Guide. The whole team were thrilled to get such recognition as the brewery has long prided itself on the consistency of the beer it produces and the support it gives to landlords.

Also new for 2013 is an exciting line up of seasonal beers each with



just a hint of fruit behind them.

Bramble Bitter kicked things off back in December (and promptly sold out), now it's the turn of **Seville Bitter** with the strapline 'Can you taste the Oranges?'

This is an orange/amber coloured bitter brewed to a strength of 4% ABV using American hops called Amarillo and Summit which deliver a hint of orange, but not enough to diminish the balanced hop/malt base.

You can keep up to date with all the Otter news through their web site, which even features a video page, 'Otter TV'.

SP

Otter Brewery, Mathayes, Luppitt, Honiton, Devon EX14 4SA.

Email: info@otterbrewery.com Tel: 01404 891285

Web site: www.otterbrewery.com



David and Mary Ann McCaig

AMBER ALERT

Otter Amber. One to watch out for from the Good Pub Guide's 2013 Brewery of the Year

OTTER BREWERY
www.otterbrewery.com

Otter Amber (4% ABV)

"Otter Amber was first brewed for the trade in March 2009 as a mid gravity beer to complete the Otter range. Over the last 10 years the 'mid gravity' beer has become popular with drinkers, delivering a reasonable strength with great flavour. This gave us the opportunity to develop a really special beer, which within a month of its launch, won its first award in Newton Abbot at SIBA's prestigious Tuckers Maltings beer festival. Otter Amber has all the qualities of other Otter beers but with a more complex mix of aroma and flavour.

"The special Cara malt and carefully selected hops in Amber deliver a finely balanced bitter flavour, with hints of tropical fruit and spice, sometimes even an impression of ginger."

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.

web: www.camrabristol.org.uk/pubsgroup
email: bristolpubsgroup@yahoo.co.uk

*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.**



A social tour of Kingsdown

Every now and again, members of the Bristol Pubs Group take time out from campaigning tirelessly to save pubs in peril to relax and enjoy the great pubs thriving in Bristol. 25th January 2013 was one such occasion, when the group toured a number of pubs in the Kingsdown area.

The evening started at the **Highbury Vaults**, a long dark pub with three characteristics that make it different from a lot of pubs in Bristol. The main bar has a model railway running around its edges, there is a small and rather cosy snug at the front of the pub and, for those minded to play traditional pub games, the Highbury is one of only a few pubs in the area with a bar billiards table. Beer-wise, the pub has a strong Young's showing, and as well as local favourites such as Bath Ales Gem and St Austell Tribute, it has enough handpumps for at least a couple of guest beers. On our visit, I tried the Hook Norton Twelve Days at 5.5% ABV and the Broad Gauge from Box Steam Brewery near Bath. This is a full-bodied amber bitter with a fruity flavour.

By the time we made the second stop on our tour, at **Beer'd**, we'd been joined by a few more members, with about twelve to fifteen of us supping on a night where every pub we visited was busy. Beer'd is a relatively new hostelry on St Michael's Hill, almost opposite the Highbury, and is a Bath Ales house. This is a very light bar with a large glazed exterior. It is probably fair to say that the emphasis is on eating, with the venue specialising in pizza. There is still a great choice of beers

with Bath Ales regulars and guests which, on this occasion, were Hop-head's Galaxy, and Castle Rock's Snowflake. At 3.7% ABV, my choice of Bath Ales Spa, a golden beer, was a very refreshing drink.

For the next pub on our list we moved slightly down St Michael's Hill to the **Robin Hood**, a medium sized pub with a small garden and an upstairs seating area to act as overflow for the downstairs main bar. Here the choice was Hedge Monkey from Glastonbury, Otter Bright, Otter Ale, and Moor Revival. I chose the Moor at 3.8% ABV, a hoppy beer (probably my favourite type) which I quaffed readily.

The next port of call was the **Green Man**, a Dawkins pub which was holding a beer festival. My first selection here was Autumn's End and my second, Slapstick Black, both Dawkins beers. Autumn's End at 4.7% ABV is a dark brown, fruity, full-flavoured beer. Slapstick Black is another dark ale, quite fruity with coffee overtones. We continued on to another Dawkins pub, the **Hillgrove Porter Stores**. As well as their own beers, the choice included an Imperial Pacific Porter from the Raw Brewing Company, at a strong 7.3% ABV.

Finally the last pub on this Pubs Group social was the **Hare on the Hill**, where the choice included Bath Ales regulars, and also Revelation from one of my favourite breweries, Dark Star, at 5.7% ABV.

Why not follow in Bristol Pubs Group's footsteps and take your own tour of Kingsdown?

Jerry Fletcher

Ludlow Food Spring Festival
Beer, Bangers & Bread

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CHIPPENHAM BEER FESTIVAL

Friday 26th & Saturday 27th April 2013
Sports Hall, Olympiad, Chippenham SP15 3PA
(5 minutes from rail and bus stations)

Over 90 Real Ales, Ciders and Perries

Friday evening 6pm to 11pm ~ £6.
Saturday lunch 11am to 4pm ~ £5.
Saturday evening 7pm to 11pm ~ £5.
Prices include festival glass plus £2 beer tokens for CAMRA members.
Live music Saturday sessions only.

Tickets available from:
Sam Henly, 35 Park Lane, Chippenham, Wilts SN15 1LN.
Please enclose SAE and state clearly which sessions you wish to attend and give a contact number. Cheques payable to CAMRA NW Wiltshire. Tickets will also be available direct from the Olympiad reception during April.
Admission to evening sessions by advance ticket sale only.

Organised by the North West Wiltshire Branch of CAMRA
www.nwwiltscamra.org.uk

The Cross Keys at the crossroads

On a dismal Tuesday evening in early February 2013 a small group of CAMRA Bristol Pubs Group members gathered at the Cross Keys public house on Fishponds Road, Fishponds to pay a final visit to the pub before it closed for the last time following its sale by Admiral Taverns to a property developer. He intended to convert it to flats once planning permission was obtained from the City Council so a get together was arranged at short notice with the intention of making a nostalgic last visit to the pub, and to gather information as to why it was closing with hardly a murmur of opposition from local residents, amenity groups or other organisations.

We met in the bar of this open-plan pub for a drink of Sharp's Doom Bar – rather appropriate in the circumstances. An events board on the wall stated that the next forthcoming event was 'FLATS'. This sign of impending closure seemed to sum up the problem facing our local pubs, where they are often targeted for flat conversions. We were left asking ourselves how it had come to this.

We were soon in discussion with the landlord, who had been in the trade for many years, and he explained that this pub was the second oldest in Fishponds. He actually wanted to buy it from the pub company but the property developer put in a higher offer when it went to auction in November 2012. He said that the pub did not have a regular customer base and relied on passing trade, but I mentioned that because the pub had been closed and boarded up for a while not too long ago, this was not at all surprising. Most regulars would no doubt have found somewhere else to go for a drink and, once regular customers have gone, it takes a long time to rebuild your customer base if a pub does reopen.

Apart from ourselves there were a few other customers, which is what you would expect quite often on a Tuesday night these days, but the overall impression was that it was very quiet and after we finished our drinks we bade farewell to the landlord and his wife and wished them luck for the future. We were also left lamenting the passing of Fishponds' second oldest pub and wondered if it was going to be the last pub closure in the greater Fishponds area for the foreseeable future.



Within a month of the property being sold, the developer submitted a planning application to convert the pub to flats and part ground-floor retail. Before closure the pub had upstairs residential accommodation for the landlord with a two-storey rear extension/function room. It also had an extensive rear pub garden but that was sold off separately for housing. The pub was also able to provide cooked food at lunchtime because of its downstairs kitchen facility.

At the time of going to press, the planning application was still open for comment, so if anyone feels strongly enough that the pub should be saved, they could submit their comments on Bristol City Council's planning website quoting application reference 12/05726/F and citing core strategy policy BCS12 on community facilities, potential pub job losses and local suppliers being affected, and the effect on other local traders by reduced footfall, etc. You could also contact the local councillors Steve Comer (Liberal Democrat) www.steve.comer@bristol.gov.uk and Mahmudur Khan

(Labour) www.mahmadurkhan@bristol.gov.uk to ask them what they

intend doing about keeping the pub for the benefit of the community in the future. The Greater Fishponds Area Neighbourhood Partnership www.myneighbourhoodbristol.com could also be contacted about these proposals since they are major stakeholders in promoting regeneration and community wellbeing in the greater Fishponds area.

What happens next is anyone's guess.

Ian Beckey



The Chequers, Kingswood

Not another supermarket please!

St George East Councillor Fabian Breckels was contacted by local residents concerned that the currently disused Chequers pub in Lodge Road, Kingswood was at risk of being turned into yet another mini-supermarket.

Fabian said, "I've been in touch with the owners Enterprise Inns and I have been advised that they are looking for tenants. There is a clear demand for the pub to reopen and the venue would be ideal as a food-orientated establishment. Enterprise have recently renovated and reopened the Hobgoblin in Gloucester Road so hopefully a similar standard of renovation can happen here."



Pub News

One day I may write a completely positive column describing thriving community pubs and long closed pubs re-opening and prospering with record sales and great attendance levels. But first we must deal with the today...

In Bristol city centre a surprise closure was that of the **Famous Royal Navy Volunteer** (the Volley) on King Street. The previous tenant has left and a new one has, at the time of writing, not yet opened up. This significant pub can certainly claim fame locally, I might suggest that few local people have not encountered it at some point. The **Rummer** on High Street is now open (as the **Looking Glass**) and joins its other half on All Saints Lane as a trading pub. On its opening night it was selling Bristol Beer Factory Bitter Californian and Independence, and Bath Gem. The High Street end had been closed for 13 years while the market side has been open for around four. It's good to see them both welcoming customers once again. The **Ship** on Lower Park Row was suddenly closed in January under mysterious circumstances, but thankfully has subsequently re-opened. The **White Hart** next to the bus station is to let with Greene King but is currently open. In Hotwells the **Grain Barge** is for sale which includes the freehold of the hull (yes, it's a boat) and the business – the moorings are paid up with the council. This has been a fantastic Bristol Beer Factory venture and we wish BBF and the next owner of the Grain Barge continued success.

The **Cotham Porter Stores** in Cotham has re-opened and is being run by Simon Constance who is a well-known publican in the Hereford area. We urge you to visit this atmospheric drinking hole in order to give it support so that the owner can be convinced that is needed as a pub. In Old Market the **Coach and Horses** on the corner of Gloucester Lane and Bragg's Lane has re-opened as a pub by the Euphorium Bakery and is selling two real ales as well as Thatcher's cider. Three minutes' walk away at Lawford's Gate the **Stapleton Road Tavern** has a planning application to convert into dwellings. Another three minutes along Stapleton Road finds you at the **Armoury Tavern** which has just been bought by a gentleman who tells us that he wishes to re-open it as a pub very soon. The **George and Dragon** in Redfield had burned down at the start of the year but the owner has pledged that he wants to return it to life as a community pub. Nearby in Avonvale Road the freehold of the **Hop Pole** has been acquired by a new owner. The **Prince Albert** in St. George has a planning application pending that seeks to convert into two dwellings and add seven new houses onto the site. Talking of domestic dwellings, the **Old Fox** in Albert Road, St. Philips near the...um...well not near any other pub as this was the last one in that direct locale, has been closed and would appear judging by a sign on the window that it is being used as a private residence. No planning permission was sought for this change of use so it will be interesting to see how this situation will unfold.

The **White Lion** in Eastville makes yet another entry into this column where the owner has again applied to convert, this time to three two-bedroom flats – very imaginative. A planning application to demolish the **Greenbank Hotel** in Greenbank in favour of flats was withdrawn following overwhelming opposition including from the Bristol Pubs Group. Miserable news from Fishponds where, as well as the long closed **Farrier's Arms**, the **Cross Keys** has changed hands and is planned for conversion into flats and retail, and the **Greyhound** on Lodge Causeway has closed. The **Chequer's** in Lodge Road, Kingswood is still closed but local community action may see this one clawed back as a local action group are fighting to retain it. Owners, Enterprise, have said that they are seeking a new tenant saying that there is a need for the pub to re-open possibly with an orientation toward food. There is overdue good news on Gloucester Road where another Enterprise pub, the **Hobgoblin** in Bishopston, has reopened and is well worth supporting. In Bedminster the **Brunel** on St. John's Lane has closed and appears to be undergoing a refurbishment by owner Greene King.

In South Gloucestershire the **Star** in Frampton Cotterell has changed ownership and the new owner wants to develop the site into housing. This comfortable traditional village pub oozes character and history and to date has served a community as a reliable place for a chin-wag and games of darts and pool. It was owned by County Estates Management (CEM) until they went bust a few years ago and passed into the hands of LT Pub Management. Another pub in the same boat is the **Queen's Head** at Willsbridge. Also an ex-CEM pub, it fell on hard times following destruction of part of its Grade II-listed interior and unruly

behaviours by some of its then customers which resulted in licence restrictions. It struggled to recover from this episode and ended up closing around 18 months ago. We do not know the intentions of the new owner.

The **Salutation** in Mangotsfield has enjoyed an attractive decoration. The spacious interior has plenty of room for drinkers and diners as well as pool and darts players. Externally a very comfortable smoker's shelter is fitted out with pub furnishings. On a recent visit Bath Ales Gem and Wickwar BOB were the real ale offerings.

The **George Hotel** in Chipping Sodbury has re-opened its doors following a four-month closure and a major re-vamp. The new owners have designed the pub, they say, to attract a more mature clientele than the previous one which tended to be in their early drinking years. The **Forester's Arms** in Downend has closed due to the departure of the tenant but it is understood that owners Enterprise do intend to re-open it. The Bristol Pubs Group along with many local residents objected to yet another planning application to demolish the **Highwayman** in Kingswood and build nine homes and a commercial unit on the site. The application was pending a decision at the time of writing.

I think that this is the first mention Bradley Stoke has had in this column. Its town-titled pub the **Bradley Stoke** has been closed for around five months but it has been bought by Marston's who also own the **Bailey's Court Inn** in the same town. It has undergone an extensively refurbishment and it will re-open as the **Hollow Tree** in March with a 'two-for-one' meal format in a family-friendly setting. The other two pubs in the town are the **Orchard** and the **Three Brooks**.

Please note that this column in the last Pints West stated that the Buthay at Wickwar would re-open on December 1st. This did not happen and, at the time of writing, the pub remains closed.

North Somerset and BaNES are not exempt from pub threats. A heated battle by the local community to save the Enterprise-owned **Royal Oak** in Portishead attracted in excess of 2,000 names on a petition against Tesco turning it into a store. The community have made clear that Tesco are not wanted, and having lost their post office and school they are in no mood to lose their pub. It sounds like it is about time Tesco dropped the idea and cleared off – but will they? The **Pioneer** at Keynsham is 'tinned up' and is for sale and the **Friendship** in Nailsea is also for sale.

Pubs are great, there's something for everyone. If you haven't tried one lately then get out and try several – you'll like at least one type, but you may like them all! Happy pubbing.

Mike Jackson (Bristol Pubs Group)



Closed pub:
The Forester's Arms at Downend



Threatened pub:
The Star at Frampton Cotterell



Open pub:
The George Hotel at Chipping Sodbury

Inn and Around Portishead

This review could be entitled “Tales Along the Riverbank”. My intention was to take a look at the new pub/restaurant on the Marina area of Portishead but also incorporate a few other pubs in a pub crawl along the banks of the Bristol Channel.

I started at the **Ship**. This is on the coast road with views of the estuary, on the western outskirts of town and home to the inimitable Victor Long. Now, if any of you long for the days when you could find a real character running a pub, I urge you to pop in to the Ship. Vic’s 40th year in charge of this free house, which he opened from new in 1973, comes up on 8th November and he will be passing his own 70th birthday this summer. The Ship offers lunchtime food every day and three real ales – currently Otter Bitter, Butcombe Bitter and Bass.

Vic is a well known character in town and is not known for being short of local knowledge. This may be what prompted local, Tony Eastham, to think of him when a pub sign for “The Bell Inn” was found washed up on the shore close to the Ship. Young Victor quickly solved this problem – a telephone number was on the sign. On the other end of the phone when Vic called was Bell landlord, Nick Till. Nick revealed that his pub is in Redbrook near Monmouth and some 40 miles away. It seems the sign had blown into the River Wye and then sailed down the Wye and on to the Severn Estuary, under the two Severn Bridges and across the other side of the estuary to arrive at Blacknore Point, Portishead, finishing, slightly battered, in Vic’s safe hands. Arrangements were made for the sign’s safe return and Vic is checking to find out if he needs a passport for the journey. It would have been nice to include a picture of the sign’s return but I’m afraid Vic claims he does not possess a digital camera – I think it’s safe to assume he doesn’t do Twitter or Facebook either (I didn’t know he had a phone). I should mention here that the Ship operates old style hours and is not open all through the day.

Back to the pub crawl. The Ship’s beer as usual was perfect – we tried the Otter Bitter and then we headed off. At this stage we could have picked up the coastal path and simply followed it eastwards but it was a bit muddy so we took to the road towards Nore Road and after 25 minutes reached the **Windmill Inn** which sits just above the coastal path and is popular with walkers and dog walkers. This Good Beer Guide-



Ship landlord, Vic Long, with the sign for the Bell

listed free house was extended a few years back to give even better access to its sea views. It is well known locally as a reliable source of food all through the day and offers six real ales, including two guest ales. The regulars are Bass, Courage Best, and Butcombe’s Bitter and Gold. On the day, the guests were Wickwar’s Bob and Station Porter. As usual, I sampled the guest ales and both were top order.

Anyway, by the less interesting inland route, it took another half an hour to walk to the **Royal Inn** which is further round on the coast, in a wooded area next to the Marina. Standing on the water’s edge, it has superb views of the Severn Bridges and the nearby Portbury and Avonmouth ports. Another free house, this pub also offers good, reliable food all day except Sundays when the food offering finishes at 4 in the afternoon, I believe. I saw landlord Jimmy here and got the usual friendly greeting. Behind the bar was Jimmy’s son Mike and another face I recognised as Mark Hazelton who had previously been landlord at the Poacher in the High Street. Four real ales were on – the regulars Sharp’s Doom Bar and Butcombe Bitter, and the guests Bristol Beer Factory’s Acer and Butcombe’s Rare Breed. Now, the latest Redcliffe Bay Beer Festival had converted me to the abilities of Bristol Beer Factory’s beers with a blindingly good Bitter Kiwi, so I tried the Acer and wasn’t disappointed. Since this visit I understand a third guest ale has been added.

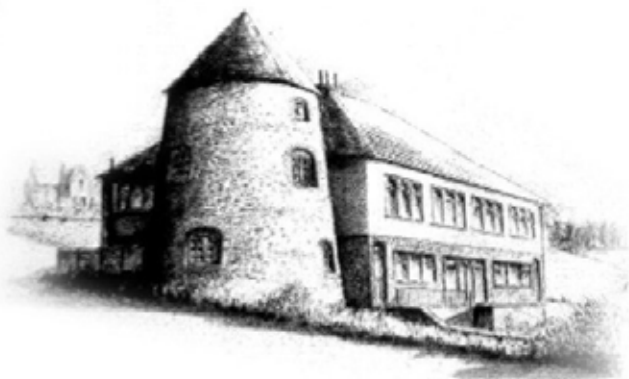
From the Royal we headed down the steps opposite the pub’s entrance which leads to the Marina area of town. At the lock gates, we crossed over to the other side of the marina and to the new pub/restaurant, the **Hall and Woodhouse** in Chandlery Square, which had opened at the end of last November. It is hard to describe the appearance of the place – at times it reminds me of a scene from ‘The Killing’ and also to the bit of an airport which leads you to the plane. Recycled shipping containers form a large part of the construction and metal beams and hanging bits of equipment are dotted around. Downstairs in the high-ceiling bar there are areas with comfortable sofas and the main tables are long and reminiscent of Czech beer halls. The three real ales available are all from Hall and Woodhouse – Badger Bitter and Tanglefoot plus a seasonal ale. I understand this establishment has proved extremely popular. Upstairs is the restaurant. Opening times are 8am to 11pm (10pm Sundays). Food is served 8am till 11am (breakfast) and then 12noon till 3pm and 5pm till 9pm.

I can also update you on other local pubs. While Tesco continue to convert the Royal Oak in West Hill, better news has been given on the **White Lion** at the Marina end of the High Street. This pub has been closed for more than a year so it is good to see that local company, Mezza Restaurants, have announced that it will be opening its fifth venue here in May this year. A listed building, it was known that major work was needed in order to make the place safe and then to refurbish it. The plans look exciting and I look forward to trying it. Although it is expected that a big part of the future offering will be food based, a bar area has been promised for those who just want to drink.

Neil Ravenscroft

The Windmill Inn

PORTISHEAD



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Butcombe Bitter and 2 other guest ales.

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Portishead Approach Golf Course on Nore Road.

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News from the Bristol Beer Factory (Grain Barge to be sold)

In a surprise move the Bristol Beer Factory have announced that they are putting the **Grain Barge** up for sale. Moored alongside Mardyke Quay on Hotwells Road, the Grain Barge was the Bristol Beer Factory's first 'pub' and has become a popular, Good Beer Guide-listed, real ale venue.

The Bristol Beer Factory are hoping to continue supplying their real ale to whoever takes on the Grain Barge, however they now want to focus their attention and capital on further developing the brewery and also more traditional local pubs such as the **Barley Mow** in the Dings. The plans for the brewery include another significant increase in

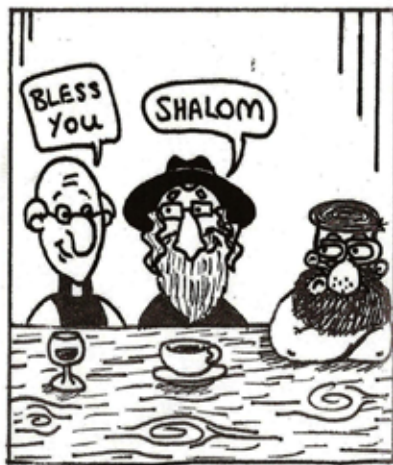
capacity that will involve major work such as taking down the existing internal walls. The Barley Mow is going to get a face-lift inside and out and the new bar will feature a total of eight hand pumps.

The brewers have apparently taken advantage of the traditionally quieter January period to get busy on their 10-gallon pilot brewing kit for the first attempts at this year's specials, which are likely to include a true English IPA which they say will be "none of this 3.8% nonsense."

The Bristol Beer Factory have also been working with River Cottage on their new venue on Whiteladies Road where they are putting in one hand pump and supplying bottle-conditioned ales behind the bar.

Richard Brooks

The Bar Code
by Eddie Taberner



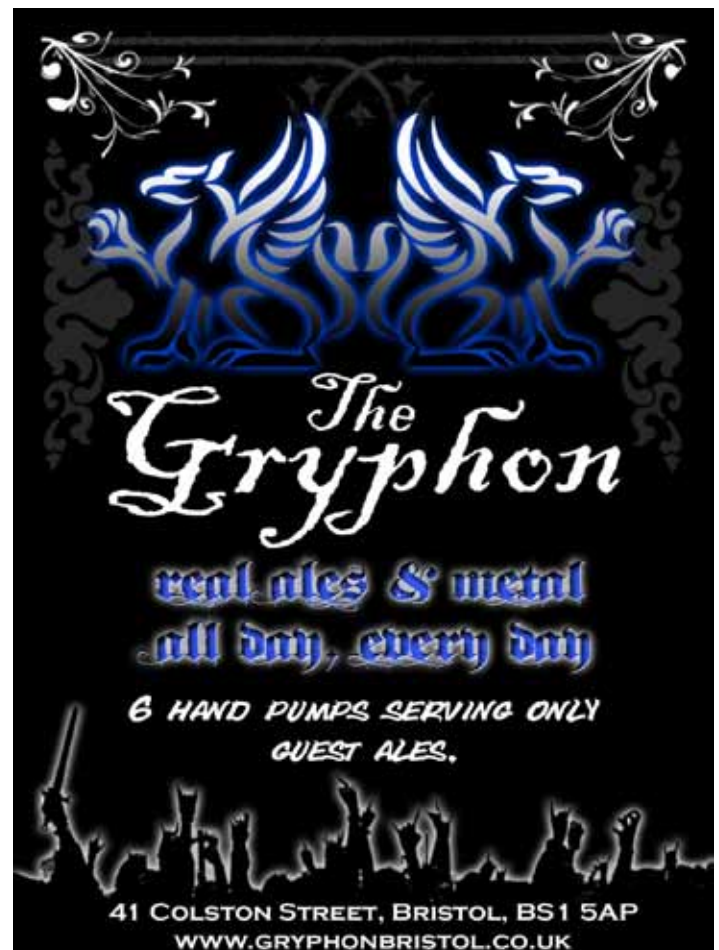
EDDIE TABERNER 22/05/12



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



‘Meet the Brewer’ at the Globe, Frampton Cotterell

When Lloyd at the Globe in Frampton Cotterell told me on 23rd December of their up-and-coming ‘Meet the Brewer’ evening, I had a lot on my mind, and January was a long way away, so I stored it in the grey matter until the festivities of the season had passed by.

Planning a couple of outings in the new year I recalled Lloyd’s invitation. A ‘Meet the Brewer’ evening with **St. Austell Brewery** – hmm ... a regional from Cornwall whose 4.2% Tribute I know well. I also know that they had just taken on the Albion in Clifton and their next nearest pub is the Racehorse Inn at Taunton, and the rest of their 170 pubs are pretty well locked in Devon and Cornwall. But as one who happens to be interested in beer I found myself compelled to attend.

St. Austell’s head brewer Roger Ryman drove all the way from Cornwall to present to us and was driving back home afterwards, so he was mindful that two inches of snow was on its way later that night; therefore full marks to him for commitment to completing the task in hand. He explained that at the grand old age of 162 years the brewery is still owned by the founding Hicks family, and that by using a small pilot brewery alongside the main brewing equipment, new ideas can be tried in small volumes in order to reduce waste should anything not turn out quite right. Many of St. Austell’s brews such as Tribute, Clouded Yellow and Trelawny started out in this way as small-run experiments that became what we know today.

The format of the tasting was that we, about 45 of us assembled in the comfortable pavilion function room, were given tasters of about 125ml while Roger told us about the brewing and characteristics of the beer that we were drinking – quite simple really. But in addition, and in keeping with the increasingly popular wish to match beer to food, Roger made suggestions of food matching.

First up was their **Dartmoor Best Bitter**. A beer originally from Plympton in Devon, it has been brewed by St. Austell for around 15 years. At 3.5% ABV it does not pack a big punch but is an easy drinking amber coloured session beer with a light classic English bitterness of spicy hops followed by a malty toffee finish. The malts used are Maris Otter and black malt and the hops Willamette. The food match? A good old ploughman’s lunch.

A surprise diversion was taken next as **Black Prince** was handed around. The fact that this is St. Austell’s oldest currently brewed beer surprised me because it is a mild, a style not generally associated with Cornish or indeed south-west breweries. It was renamed Black Prince from XXXX Mild about ten years ago at the time when mild was struggling to keep a following. At 4% ABV it has subtle flavours of fruity caramel behind a sweet dry coffee taste accentuated by molasses. The malts used in this black beer are Maris Otter, Crystal and black with Fuggles and Goldings hops – very English. I like the food match suggested for this one. Steak and kidney pudding or steak and ale pie. I can taste them right now.

Roger then spoke of the current move towards hoppy beer and his move to create a low-strength beer that hop heads would pick up on. **Trelawny** is about 20 months old and at 3.8% ABV is a light weight copper coloured beer that uses Australian Galaxy hops in the brew as well as English Golding. Though it has a bitterness the taste is of biscuit and caramel giving a medium sweetness and there is a whiff of peach and apricot on the nose. The malts are classic English Maris Otter, Cornish Gold and Crystal, and as for the food match? Sausage and game. I have seen this beer in several pubs from Weston-super-Mare to Iron Acton so it is soon getting around for such a young brew.

A brand new brew was next, one that was brewed to coincide with the climax of the rugby season – **Ruck & Roll**. Roger was quick to point out that although he creates many of the beer names he did not name this one! At 4% ABV this amber coloured pale ale has a citrus fruit aroma and flavour along with toffee. It has a fuller body than the beers that we had sampled so far and with it a deeper structure. Hopefully we will see more of this beer in the future.

The next beer was a wild card that had sneaked in the back door and Roger was somewhat surprised to see it. **Pack o’ Cards Ale** is a beer that is brewed for the Pack o’ Cards hotel in Combe Martin and at 4.4% ABV was the strongest of the evening so far. This English pale ale with an amber colour has a nose and taste of citrus fruits, mostly orange and grapefruit but was also quite sweet. Made from Maris Otter and Cornish Gold malt and a trio of hops that are Fuggles, Styrian and Willamette, it drank rather well and we were told that chicken or fish would be its best food match.



I rather like **Proper Job** so I was glad to see it make an appearance. Roger explained that he wanted to produce an IPA (India Pale Ale) that was not just a low-strength pale bitter as the trend had been with some brewers a decade and some ago, but a ‘proper job’ as Roger put it. So he selected three hops in Willamette, Cascade and Chinook and created a golden 4.5% ABV beer with plenty of bitterness dominating any sweetness. The only malt used is Maris Otter and the result is a resinous fresh tasting clean beer. Because of its hoppy edge it was suggested that barbecued and marinated meats and sausages were a good match.

Roger had brought some bottled beer along and gave us an introduction to a couple of bottle-conditioned brews that aren’t normally available in cask. **Admiral’s Ale** was first brewed in 2005 to mark the 200th anniversary of Nelson’s victory at Trafalgar and is rarely seen in cask form as Roger says it better suits being bottled. I was sceptical of a bottled beer being able to hold its own following a series of cask beers but it really was very good. The deep bronze colour makes this beer very inviting and at 5% ABV it had plenty of robustness. The spiciest beer of the evening, it had a malty biscuit taste from the Cornish Gold malt and the Styrian and Cascade hops. Personally I would not eat anything while drinking this beer but the suggestion was with a steak pie.

The last beer was one that I have never encountered before. The bottle-conditioned 6% ABV **Smugglers** is an old ale style that has plenty of richness from the sweet dominance. With its luxuriant deep red-orange colour it oozed toffee, caramel and vanilla flavours that were derived from the whisky cask racking process and the Maris Otter, Crystal and roast malts. Fuggles, Styrian and coriander were the hops. It is in fact a blend of a dark ale and an oak-aged barley wine (neither were specified by name). This is the sort of beer I like to drink late on a January night while sitting by an open fire. And no surprises as to the suggested food match – a well stocked cheese board.

Although not officially on the tasting, **Tribute** and **HSD** were also available for purchase at £2.50 a pint.

I personally am not a disciple of food matching as I think food gets in the way of a good drink, but that’s just me. I have included all references here as I hope many will be inspired to take the time to order the appropriate beer with their food and therefore get the best out of both. And as we are in Britain it does make more sense to enjoy a British drink with your food as opposed to a French one! Having said all of that, the curry and Cornish pasties which the Globe landlord Lloyd put on for the evening went down an absolute storm.

Many thanks go to Lloyd and to Roger and St. Austell for putting on such an informative and enjoyable evening.

Mike Jackson

Solution to the crossword on page 31

Across: 1 Guinness, 5 Plough, 9 see 25 dn, 10 Star billing, 12 Enthusiast, 13 Lmb, 15 Ashton, 16 Outwear, 18 One ouzo, 20 Slushy, 23 Rape, 24 Ethical IPA, 26 Age-old right, 27 Hal, 28 Hostel, 29 Bristol. Down: 1 Ginger, 2 Ignites, 3 Nasturtium, 4 Station Porter, 6 Lily, 7 Utilize, 8 & 22 dn Highbury Vaults, 11 Bishops Fingert, 14 Stout altos, 17 Sour mash, 19 Empress, 21 Height-ho, 22 see 8 dn, 25 & 9 ac Blue Nun.

Whiteladies and Blackboy real ale pubs

Dividing Clifton and Redland, Whiteladies Road and Blackboy Hill have always been synonymous with pubs. In fact both names derive from inns that were once situated here during the 19th century. Maps from 1804 show both the Black Boy Inn and the White Ladies Inn being present; although both have since closed (the current Black Boy Inn was renamed from the Elephant and Castle in the 1990's). Despite the rich pub history, real ale is not always associated with this stretch of road. This area is a major watering hole for the term-time student migration from the Stoke Bishop halls of residence to the Centre, and most of the pubs tend to reflect this trade.

Admittedly the lower end is well served in terms of real ale with the **Penny Farthing**, the **Vittoria** and the recently opened Wetherspoon pub, the **WG Grace** – all worthy of a visit – but what about the upper Blackboy Hill end?

It was with this question in mind that my father and I set out on a dull, late December day to discover what was on offer to two generations of real ale fans.



The Port of Call

Our first port of call was (pun intended) the **Port of Call**. Situated on York Street just a few yards off Whiteladies Road up a small steep hill, you'll find this surprisingly spacious L-shaped pub. If you've never been here before the nautical theme of its name is reflected in the décor inside. With fishing nets and other sea detritus covering the ceiling, it certainly has a lot of character. On our arrival we were presented with four real ales: Sharp's Doom Bar (4%) and Cornish Coaster (3.6%); Otter Ale (4.5%); and a Christmas-themed guest beer which we'd not come across before, Bah Humbug (5%) from Wychwood. The staff were very friendly and the beer well kept, the Bah Humbug in particular



The Coach & Horses

being as dark, rich and fruity as the Christmas pudding I'd had a few days before. If we had wanted to brave the weather there is a patio garden with a view over Clifton, but the warm fire kept us inside and helped the ale slip down. Alongside real ale they have the usual national keg brands as well as a lunch and dinner menu offering traditional pub grub.

Receiving a friendly farewell from the staff we headed round the corner to Highland Square which is dominated by our next destination, the **Coach and Horses**.

This horseshoe-shaped pub is one I'm very familiar with having enjoyed their ever-popular Wednesday quiz nights and Sunday lunches for over two years now (both of which are, in my opinion, some of the best in Bristol). It was once an old coaching and staging post for coaches on the Bristol to Gloucester service via Henleaze and Filton. You enter through the small terrace garden which has recently been renovated with tables and decking. The pub has benefited from a recent refurbishment which has smartened the interior with leather bench seating while retaining its cosy charm with brass bar rails and a traditional log fire. There was a wide selection of drinks on offer including Exmoor Ale (3.8%), St Austell Tribute (4.2%), Sharp's Doom Bar (4%), Courage Best (4%) and, for the cider drinkers, Weston's Old Rosie Scrumpy at 7.3%. The Exmoor Ale was golden and crisp while the warm malts of my pint of Best were equally lovely. With an ever changing selection of guest beers, you could easily expect to find on a different day beers from other notable local breweries, including Arbor, Bath Ales and Wickwar, to name but a few. It has managed to get the perfect balance for its mixed clientèle of students and locals, so it never feels too noisy when busy and is pleasantly quieter out of term time. We could easily have stayed longer, but duty called.

Heading around the other side of Highland Square approximately 50 yards away is the **Beaufort Arms**. This unpretentious, down-to-earth cider pub is (like the last two) well tucked away. With bare red brick walls and sizzling wood-burning stove it has a well-worn feel about it. There's just one long bar and to the right of that a pool table and plasma TV. Despite its claim to be a cider pub there is an equally acceptable offering of real ale alongside it. Beer-wise there was the ubiquitous Doom Bar as well as Fuller's London Pride (4.1%) and Tetley's Christmas Cracker at (4.3%). For the cider drinkers there were three on tap including Ashbridge (6%), Thatchers Dry (6%) and Taunton Traditional at a supping strength of 5.3%. The staff and locals were full of conversation which, alongside the décor (or lack thereof), made this feel like a traditional country pub, which is a rarity this side of the city.

Our next intended stop meant a slight detour back into Highland Square and down some steps to Worrall Road to check out the **Red Lion**. This pub recently went through a full refit but previously had a polished stone floor, hops above the bar and served a very decent pint of Bath SPA. On arrival we discovered it was closed and now goes by the name of the **Red Lion Wine Bar**. Before this news lowered our estimations we noticed a sign in the window declaring that they were 'now serving real ale'.

This would certainly be one I would be keen to come back to in future, but for now we returned to the top of Blackboy Hill and to the **Kings Arms**.

This large multi-level pub has gone by many names in recent times; you may know it better as Babushka or the Black Bear. If you remember its early days as a big basic Courage pub with a skittle alley, it has changed out of all recognition. The décor is a heady mix of Art Nouveau, gilt and gingerbread, statues, spiral staircases, Regency style door fittings, and a variety of wallpapers and mirrors appearing on its four levels. At the main mezzanine bar, one level up from the entrance, there were two hand pumps offering Wickwar's BOB and Exmoor Ale. The pint of BOB I had was delicious as always, but a bit too chilled for my personal taste on such a winter's day. Alongside the beer



The Kings Arms



The Jersey Lily

there is a large selection of drinks and cocktails available. The courteous staff were keen to inform us they also do food and I have had the hamburgers here recommended to me on more than one occasion. What came as a real surprise once we were seated was the large number of dogs present, belonging to both customers and the pub. I imagine that after a long walk on the Downs with a pooch this would be a welcome stop-off point. However, not being dog owners we found the wet noses around the knees a tad unwelcome.

The next pub on the list was across the road one minute away down the hill, the **Jersey Lily**. This, like many on Whiteladies, has a colourful history. Named after the Jersey-born Victorian actress Lily Langtry, it's popular with locals and shoppers alike. The small bar, mostly bare wood, has a cosy feel with comfy sofas, a vase of lilies and low ceilings. It is now under new management and the friendly landlord assured us that the emphasis was now much more on real ale and local micro-breweries and less about 'three shots for £5'. On offer we were pleased to find a number of real ales including Wadworth 6X (4.3%), Butcombe Bitter (4.0%), St Austell Tribute (4.2%) and a 'Jersey Lily Ale' (apparently a rebranded version of Caledonian Brewery's 80/- ale at 4.1%). Tasters were readily forthcoming and the beer was of excellent quality,

my Tribute having a good balance of biscuity malt and citrus hop with a long finish. The 'Jersey Lily Ale' was also splendid with a strong lingering hop flavour.

The warm welcome, the board games in the corner, and promise of more beer almost made us stay, but we had one final pub to visit, the aforementioned **Black Boy Inn** two minutes down the hill.

This two-room pub situated on the corner of Whiteladies and Lower Redland Road has recently gone through a complete refurbishment. You could be forgiven for thinking you were walking into a genteel French bistro with potted shrimp and parsnip crisps appearing on the menu. We positioned ourselves in the front room alongside a warm log fire in high backed chairs looking out through wide windows onto the hustle and bustle of Clifton life. The beer on offer was Thwaites Wainwright (4.1%) and Butcombe Bitter, both of which proved delicious and slipped down very easily in the clean and comfortable surroundings. Feeling settled and snug we reflected on the pubs we'd visited and where, if we were inclined (which on this occasion we weren't), we could head next. Again you would not be short of choice; this is a pub-rich area in every sense and direction.

Although this part of Bristol is not generally considered one for real ale there is a lot on offer, catering for all ages and types of clientèle. Every pub we visited had good beer and charm aplenty; we would recommend them all. For those of you that don't fancy walking up Blackboy Hill, which can be a steep climb in places, there are several bus routes from all over Bristol that will take you to the top and you can work your way down. With so much on offer you could come here any time of year but we found this a very pleasant way to end 2012.

Eddie Taberner



The Black Boy Inn

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Seymour Road, Bishopston, Bristol
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- 30p off a pint of real ale for over 60's.

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BADRAG - Bristol And District Rare Ales Group

Mild Month

May is CAMRA's national Mild Month, and is promoted locally by BADRAG, the Bristol and District Rare Ales Group. We are encouraging pubs and clubs to stock mild ales throughout the month. BADRAG is also organising trails during May, which you are welcome to join. And BADRAG would also encourage you to undertake your own DIY trails. Brewers and pub chains also lend support to the promotion.

Mild ales can be either light or dark in colour, but on the whole are mostly dark and not very bitter. They are available in May but are not easy to find at other times, so drinkers, please keep asking for them! In the Bristol area they have increased in popularity recently.

Local breweries support Mild Month by brewing mild ales. The following are expected and deserving of your support:

- **Arbor Ales – Mild West** (3.6%), from mid March.
- **Ashley Down – Vanguard** (3.9%).
- **Cheddar Ales – Mild Cheddar** (3.6%).
- **Cotswold Spring – OSM** (3.9%), their SIBA National Champion dark mild that will be available from March until early June.
- **Dawkins Ales** will be brewing several mild ales.
- **Great Western Brewing – Meerkat Mild** (3.6%).
- **RCH – Hewish Mild** (3.6%).
- **Severn Vale – Monumentale** (4.5%).

DIY Mild Trails

The following pubs, in postcode order starting from the centre of Bristol, will try and stock mild ales throughout the month of May, unless otherwise stated, so please support them:

- **Commercial Rooms**, Broad Street, BS1 1HT.
- **Gryphon**, Colston Street, BS1 5AP.
- **Three Tuns**, St George's Road, Hotwells, BS1 5UR.
- **Bag O'Nails**, St George's Road, Hotwells, BS1 5UW.
- **Cornubia**, Temple Street, BS1 6EN – stocking mild ales from available pumps.
- **Seven Stars**, Thomas Lane, BS1 6JG – mild ales every week subject to pump availability.
- **Bridge Inn**, Passage Street, BS2 0JF.
- **Highbury Vaults**, St Michael's Hill, Kingsdown, BS2 8DE – Thursdays and Fridays.
- **Green Man**, Alfred Place, Kingsdown, BS2 8HD.
- **Hillgrove Porter Stores**, Dove Street, Kingsdown, BS2 8LT.
- **Volunteer Tavern**, New Street, St Judes, BS2 9DX – email volunteertavern@gmail.com to check availability.
- **Miners Arms**, Milna Road, St Werburghs, BS2 9YQ.
- **Robert Fitzharding**, Cannon Street, Bedminster, BS3 1BN.
- **Tobacco Factory**, Raleigh Road, Southville, BS3 1TF – week ending 11th May.
- **Chelsea Inn**, Chelsea Road, Easton, BS5 6AU.
- **Red Lion**, Whitehall Road, Whitehall, BS5 9BP.
- **Lansdown**, Clifton Road, Clifton, BS8 1AF.
- **Hope and Anchor**, Jacobs Wells Road, Clifton, BS8 1DR.
- **Berkeley**, Queen's Road, Clifton, BS8 1QE.
- **Victoria**, Southleigh Road, Clifton, BS8 2BH.
- **Hophouse**, King's Road, Clifton, BS8 4AB.
- **Portcullis**, Wellington Terrace, Clifton BS8 4LE.
- **Kingswood Colliers**, High Street, Kingswood, BS15 8HP.
- **Rising Sun**, Ryecroft Road, Frampton Cotterell, BS36 2HN.
- **Salutation Inn**, Ham Green, Ham, GL13 9QH.

N.B. Dawkins Taverns will be operating their mild passport scheme again this year.

Posters and Leaflets

Should you or your pub want them, posters and leaflets to promote mild are available from CAMRA HQ – email camra@camra.org.uk, or locally you can email BADRAG@camrabristol.org. BADRAG is planning to provide local posters for any pubs and bars stocking mild ales.

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

BADRAG organised Mild Trails

The local Mild Month BADRAG events shown below are open to all, CAMRA members or not. At the time of going to press – and subject to confirmation (see www.camrabristol.org.uk) – they are:

● Saturday 27th April – East Bristol Trail

The launch of Mild Month, starting at 12 noon in the Old Stillage (BS5 9LA) then on to the St George's Hall (BS5 9HL), Red Lion, Chelsea and Sugar Loaf (led by George Clarke, tel 0779 66 77004).

● Saturday 11th May – Bedminster and Harbourside Trail

Starting at 12 noon in the Robert Fitzharding (BS3 1BN) then on to the Hen and Chicken, Tobacco Factory, Orchard, Nova Scotia, Merchants Arms and Grain Barge (led by Phil Luxton, 07780 873786).

● Thursday 16th May – Kingsdown Trail

Starting at 7pm in the Highbury Vaults (BS2 8DE) then on to the Robin Hood, Green Man and Hillgrove Porter Stores (led by Denise Swain, 0782 115 7655). This will include a short BADRAG business monthly discussion at the final pub.

● Saturday 18th May – South Glos Trail

This will be a coach trip (led by Mike Lawrence, 07896 233237) and seats will need to be booked through Andy Gray, Bristol & District CAMRA social secretary, at branch meetings or by emailing camrasocials@btinternet.com. Departure is from the customary point (the Cornubia, Temple Street, BS1 6EN) at 11.45am. Visiting the Cross Hands, Globe, Rising Sun, New Inn, Grapes, Beaufort Arms and Salutation Inn.

● Saturday 25th May – Clifton Trail

Starting at 12 noon in the Portcullis (BS8 4LE) then on to the Hophouse, Lansdown, Victoria, Quinton House and Berkeley (led by Jerry Fletcher, 075858 07613).

Other BADRAG activities

Since the last Pints West the group gathered at the **Three Tuns** on a wet, cold and frosty Thursday in January when nine stalwarts did some planning for Mild Month. Alongside other delights there we enjoyed Tiny Rebel Dirty Stop Out, a 5% smoked oat stout, and Arbor Ales Oyster Stout at 4.6%. Many thanks to Simon and Oli for putting on a good range of BADRAG style ales.

The next gathering will be on **Thursday 21st March** from 7.30pm at the **Hope and Anchor**, Jacobs Wells Road. Food, Wickwar FSB Stout and probably other BADRAG style ales will be available.

Change in roles within BADRAG

The BADRAG co-ordinator, George Clarke, has relinquished that role; the various BADRAG team tasks will now be shared between four or more people. George will undertake 'BADRAG research' visiting pubs and feeding information to the team so that the database of pubs and ales is maintained.

BADRAG events will be co-ordinated by Denise Swain, and BADRAG communications by Steve Wilcox. Laurie Gibney will undertake a 'BADRAG campaigns' role, representing BADRAG on the Bristol & District CAMRA branch committee, and encouraging drinkers and the trade to support BADRAG style ales.

The BADRAG team

News from Bath Ales



Expansion activities

Bath Ales continues its ambitious development plans with the relocation of the brewery shop from its current location at the brewery to the head office at nearby Hare House, where a training cellar and a commercial centralised trade kitchen will also be established. More information on these developments will be available in the next Pints West.

There are also plans for an additional bottling line to be commissioned later in the year at Hare House and a new brewery will follow on a year after. The current brewery will stay in its present location for the foreseeable future and all developments at Hare House are additional.

To cope with these increasing activities, Bath Ales have announced the arrival of an additional brewer. Shane O'Beirne has a brewing degree from Heriot Watt university as well as an engineering degree, and is already at work with trial brews in the pilot brewery at Hare House. Shane and head brewer Gerry Condell are experimenting with different hop and malt varieties as well as unusual yeast strains. As soon as the results are ready for the market place Shane will oversee brewing at the micro-brewery in **Graze**, Bath, which opened successfully in December (see below).

Seasonal ales

Golden Hare, Bath Ales' seasonal spring ale, is now available in their pubs and the usual outlets until April, as long as stocks last. It is brewed using floor-malted Maris Otter barley and the aptly named Golden Hops.

Golden Hare is described by the brewery as a 4.4% cask ale "bursting with flavour and brimming with condition, smooth yet dry, wonderfully fresh and delightfully zesty."

Commenting on the beer head brewer, Gerry Condell, said: "We have been producing Golden Hare in a bottle for a while by popular demand. Making it available in cask makes absolute sense – it's simply packed with flavour and perfect for spring."

Rare Hare will again be brewed this year and in time for Easter. It should be available from the third week in March. Looks like this popular "turbo-charged Gem" is becoming a regular seasonal.

Pubs

Bath Ales' new flagship pub/bar/restaurant/brewery, the **Graze Bar, Brewery and Chophouse**, opened in the new Vaults development

at the side of Bath Spa station just before Christmas. It is certainly an impressive enterprise, in size and design, and will be even more interesting when brewing starts at the microbrewery (located in full view of customers) in the near future.

Bath Ales' regular cask ales are available as well as keg beers and lagers and an extensive menu based on British meat cuisine, with an emphasis on dry-aged steak cooked in a charcoal oven. Fish and vegetarian options are also available as well as seasonal dishes. A fuller review of the Bath Graze, hopefully complete with descriptions of the microbrewery output, will appear in the next issue of Pints West.

Roy Sanders


Bristol Cider Shop at the Drinks Retailing Awards

Bristol Cider Shop – located half way down Christmas Steps in central Bristol – has been recognised as one of the top cider retailers in the country in a national competition. The shop was short-listed as one of three finalists in the Independent Cider Retailer of the Year category at the Drinks Retailing Awards, although they narrowly missed out on the top honour.

Owners Pete Snowman and Nick Davis attended the awards ceremony, which was held at the Dorchester in London. Nick said, "It was a great night. We were disappointed not to win, but it was a real honour to be nominated, and being a drinks industry event there was no shortage of free drinks!"




The shop, which opened in December 2010, has become a firm favourite with locals and visitors alike. It stocks over 100 varieties of local cider and perry, as well as cider brandy, cider gifts and a whole host of other cider-related things.

The pair are just gearing up for their new season of cider tours and events, which starts with a cider dinner on 6th April, followed by the return of their ever-popular cider and sausage festival on May Day bank holiday weekend. More information can be found on their website at www.bristolcidershops.co.uk.



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Graze (Cirencester)
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01285 658937

The Hare on the Hill
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0117 9095140

The Hop Pole
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Pub Profile: the King's Arms, Kingswood

The King's Arms in Kingswood is run by an enthusiastic young CAMRA member, Michael Evans. He bought it two years ago from Enterprise Inns and the pub is now free from any tie. It is situated in an area that is significantly short of independent pubs serving interesting beers. There is a Wetherspoon about 100 yards away, which Michael says he cannot really compete with on price, although his cask ales are very reasonably priced for the area. His regular cask ale is now



Cheddar Gorge Best which is priced at £2.60 per pint. He did try a few other "regular" bitters and has now settled on Gorge Best at the request of his regular cask ale drinking customers. I tried a pint of this and it was excellent.

One or two guest cask ales, usually from local breweries and of a variety of styles, are served, often including a dark beer or stout which Michael says is popular with a number of customers. On the day I visited the guest

ale was St Austell Ruck and Roll, but he has recently had guests from Arbor Ales, Cotswold Spring, Bristol Beer Factory and Wye Valley. From the collection of pump clips behind the bar Arbor Ales appears to be the greatest variety.

The pub itself is fairly basic, based at the end of the High Street in

Kingswood, on the A420 going towards Warmley. There is

no car park but several buses stop outside or very close by. The pub perhaps looks a bit run down from the outside, but the atmosphere inside is good. It is quite an old building and Michael has recently had it confirmed that the pub is a Grade II listed building. The pub is currently a single L-shaped room with a pool table and dart board in one part. There is a very large patio and grassed garden at the rear which Michael said he would be interested in using for music events (there are no adjoining houses). Some parts of the building (not in use by customers) are in poor condition at the moment, but this is not visible in the drinking area. Michael is planning to undertake some refurbishment in the pub.

No food is served but Michael encourages customers to bring in take-aways if they want. There a number of these nearby including an excellent sandwich shop opposite which is popular at lunchtimes. The lunchtime trade includes local workers who bring in sandwiches.

Michael would like to extend his range of beer and have two guest ales on a regular basis, but more often than not at the moment he can only maintain one guest. He is also considering providing some real cider, which is quite popular in this part of Bristol. He also stocks several real ales in a bottle, including dark ales and stouts which are particularly popular when he isn't serving a dark ale or stout as one of the guest ales. He also offers discounts on cask ale 'take-aways' in four-pint containers.

The King's Arms is open from 11 am (12 noon Sundays) to 11 pm everyday and a visit is recommended if anyone feels like supporting an enterprising new landlord and sampling a pint of something a bit different for the area.

Martin Gray



Dartmoor ales make a break for Bristol

From mid-March, licensees and publicans in Bristol and Bath will be able to offer Dartmoor's **Jail Ale** on their bars. Early stockists include the Black Swan in Westbury-on-Trym, the Victoria Park in Bedminster and the Star at Pucklechurch.

Dartmoor Brewery, based in Princetown and within sight of Dartmoor Prison, has been brewing in the heart of the Dartmoor National Park since 1994. The highest brewery in England (at 1400 feet above sea level), Dartmoor produces award-winning real ales using traditional brewing techniques, local spring water, Devon malted barley and English hops from a £1.5m state-of-the-art brewery.

Jail Ale (4.8%) is a full-bodied deep golden brown beer with a well-rounded flavour and a sweet moreish aftertaste. Other brews include **Dartmoor IPA** (4%); **Inmates' Pale Ale**, a highly drinkable amber coloured beer with a smooth, thirst-quenching taste and subtle hop aroma; **Legend** (4.4%), a classic full flavoured beer with a crispy malt fruit finish, and seasonal ales, generally available in pubs, restaurants and hotels across Devon, Dorset, Cornwall and, now, Bristol and Bath.

The brewery started in a converted garage behind the Prince of Wales pub in the centre of Princetown. It was established by Simon Loveless, a former Gibbs Mew and Hop Back brewer. Remaining family-owned to this day, and now brewing from a purpose-built brewery on the site of the old Princetown Railway, Jail Ale and Dartmoor's other brews are now reaching beyond their immediate West Country heartland. Look out for them in a pub near you soon.

Lesly Huxley

Dartmoor's finest



Dartmoor Brewery is England's highest brewery sited at 1400 feet in the heart of Devon's beautiful Dartmoor National Park. The brewery was founded in 1994 and moved into a much larger purpose built premises in 2005. Expansion has been lead by its most famous brand Jail Ale which over the years has found a large following of dedicated drinkers who like its exceptional balance of flavour and aroma.

This is a full bodied mid-brown beer with a well rounded flavour and a sweet Moorish aftertaste.



Dartmoor Brewery Ltd
Station Road, Princetown, Devon
PL20 6QX

Telephone: 01822 890789
Fax: 01822 890798

Email:
ale@dartmoorbrewery.co.uk
www.dartmoorbrewery.co.uk

The new Twisted Oak Brewery



A real ale enthusiast from Clevedon has seized the chance to realise his dream of opening his own microbrewery. Keith Hayles launched Twisted Oak Brewery at the end of September 2012. Keith, who runs the business with the support of his wife Deb, is currently brewing on a part-time basis. He has twenty years' home brewing experience behind him, but took an opportunity last year to turn his hobby into a business.

Keith said: "We currently have three beers available – **Fallen Tree**, **Spun Gold** and **Old Barn**. All three beers have been very well received

and the support we have had from local pubs has been tremendous." Each batch of beer is made by hand and is a labour of love. "It's probably the best job in the world," said Keith. "I take water, hops, barley and yeast and end up with beer. What could be better?"

Fallen Tree is a 3.8% amber "session ale" which the brewery describes as "clean tasting, with light fruit notes and a notably bitter finish." **Spun Gold**, as its name suggests, is a golden ale at 4.5%, described as "well-balanced with a medium bitterness. Plenty of late hops have been added to give a floral and fruity finish." Last but not least in the core line-up is **Old Barn**, 4.5% and a traditional ruby coloured ale "made with four different malts. English Fuggles and Bramling Cross hops have been generously added to provide a distinct fruit and spice flavour." Something there to suit whatever the weather throws at us in the next few months then!

Twisted Oak beers will soon also be available in bottles and boxes and they hope to expand on the core three ales currently in production. Current thinking is for development of an IPA, an American amber and a stout for next winter, by which time Keith hopes to be running the brewery on a full-time basis. The six-barrel microbrewery was installed by David Porter of PBC Brewery Installations and is located in a former agricultural building on a working farm in Wrington.

You can follow the joys and challenges of setting up a new microbrewery (and news of where to find the beers, expansion plans, etc.) via Keith's blog at www.twistedoakbrewery.co.uk/blog/index.html.

Lesly Huxley



Hoppy news from Arbor Ales



Arbor Ales continue to enhance their reputation as one of the top micro-breweries in the UK as Jon Comer and Paul Worsley keep on producing awesome one-off specials in addition to their excellent core range of beers.

New for 2013 is the triple-hop range of hoppy session beers at 4%, which has now replaced the single-hop range that they pioneered so well.

First up was **Dr Rudi/Galena/Simcoe**, which was closely followed by **Bullion/Cascade/1st Gold**. An alternative hoppy session beer is **Hoptical Delusion** (3.8%), now up to Version IV.

The innovative "Freestyle Friday" range also continues to impress, with recent examples being **Phoenix Stout** (4.3%); **Galaxian Dark Ale** (5%); **Bock Star** (6.4%), which was brewed with the beer-writer Adrian Tierney-Jones; and **NZ Copper Ale** (5%).

A recent collaboration with the excellent Raw brewery from Derbyshire yielded **Mutiny Coconut Stout** (5.8%). The punchy IPAs at 6.5%, which are my personal favourite, have included **Dr Rudi** and **Fanboy**.

An interesting recent development has been the 50/50 mixes of **Yakima Valley IPA** (7%) with **Fanboy IPA** and **Man Versus Beer** (4.4%) respectively. Yakima Valley IPA from the new brewery has been even better than ever, so the thought of diluting it with another beer did cause me some concern when Oli at the Three Tuns first mentioned he had done the mix with Fanboy IPA. However, I had no need to worry; it provided a splendid beverage for New Year's Eve. The mix with Man Versus Beer that I "adopted" for my recent 50th birthday party at the Three Tuns slipped down rather too easily for a 5.7% beer.

Last, but not least, mention must be made of **Down Deeperer** (12%), a black barley wine; this is the big brother of **Down Deeper**, a relatively modest double IPA at 10.2%!

By the time you read this article, new pump-clip designs should have been rolled out as part of a re-branding exercise. Expect to see **Mild West** (3.6%), **Yakima Valley IPA** and **Breakfast Stout** (7.4%) at the Old Stillage, Three Tuns and elsewhere; they have all reached the finals of the SIBA National Beer Competition in March.

Finally, make a date in your diary to attend Simon's spring beer festival at the Three Tuns from 24th to 27th May.

Dave Graham

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The Coach & Horses reopens

The handsome Grade II-listed Coach and Horses pub stands on the corner of Gloucester Lane and Braggs Lane, Old Market. Reopened on January 18th by the Euphorium Bakery Ltd, publican Andy Lyon presides over an extensively refurbished three-bar establishment.

The front door from Braggs Lane opens into the wide and narrow main bar, featuring panelled walls and restored bay windows including some stained glass. Framed rugby shirts adorn the walls along with two television screens; there are plans to screen major sporting events here. Seating accommodation in this bar consists of stools both at the bar and around a number of poset tables. There are also two window seats.

Behind the bar, accessed from the right hand side, are two further rooms. These are much quieter and cosier in character and provide armchairs and sofas. No food is currently available but Andy intends offering a range of pizza in the near future. Overall the standard of



restoration is very impressive. Andy likes green flowery wallpaper.

An off-street smoking area with tables, chairs and a tented 'gazebo' is entered from the left of the main bar. Friday is free live music night; local acoustic acts will perform weekly.

Two handpumps provide real ales, with plans for a third. On my first visit, Butcombe Bitter and Sharp's Doom Bar were available; second time the Butcombe had been replaced by Belhaven Grand Slam. All were in excellent condition. In a pub with no recent history of serving cask ales, Andy has a real commitment to develop this side of the business.

Currently, Thatchers Cheddar Valley is the only 'real' cider, but there are plans for others. Taps dispensing 'fizzy' ciders abound – echoes of the pub's past perhaps? An increasing selection of wines is becoming available. Spirits are dispensed using measures; there are no optics to clutter the attractive backbar.

Opening hours are 12.00 until night closing time, 7 days a week.

The Coach and Horses lies about 250 metres due east of the Volunteer Tavern; why not visit them both when next in the area?

Dr Paul

News from Dawkins Ales

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Dawkins Ales Timsbury Tel 01761 472242

The new brewer at Dawkins Ales, Dave Williams, has settled in well, ably assisted by Krishna of the Green Man (one of the five Dawkins pubs). Just released are two of his first new brews:

Resolution IPA is a 5.3% American ale with mango aroma and grapefruit flavour, amber gold colour. It uses American Cascade and Chinook hops in the boil, and is dry-hopped with Centennial hops.

Crystal Gold is the first of an occasional series of single-hop variety brews. This is a 4.1% beer, the Crystal hops said to add "a subtle tangerine flavour to the clean, crisp, hoppy palate."

Next up will be **Five Star**, an American brown ale brewed to 5%, and made with five different malt and hop varieties. This has been brewed to celebrate the inclusion of all five Dawkins pubs in the 2013 CAMRA Good Beer Guide.

Spring will see a new stout, **Bristol Black**, with the aim of it being a regular brew alongside their established **Bristol Best** and **Bristol Blonde** (shortly to be the new name for **Brassknocker**).

Further specials will include a smoked porter, a single variety Saaz brew and a double IPA. Recent experiments with bottle-conditioned beers have proved successful and the brewery will be launching these later this year.

In March their **Bristol Best** is showing at the giant SIBA Beerex festival run by the trade body for small brewers, to be held in Sheffield on 13th to 16th. Brewery owner Glen Dawkins grew up in the Steel City and he says the recipe for it is based on the beer of his youth – the much-missed Wards from the Sheaf brewery which was very near his family home.

On the pubs front, Glen says that after many false starts he has finally signed a new lease on the **Miners Arms** in St Werburghs. For the first time, from mid-March, this his first pub will be able to consistently sell Dawkins beer, as the new agreement with owners Punch allows for three free-of-tie handpulls (at a price in terms of rent though). There will still be three rotating guest beers as well. The **Green Man** in High Kingsdown will once again be holding their annual Easter beer festival over the Bank Holiday weekend. And as usual, all five pubs (the other three being the **Portcullis**, **Victoria** and **Hillgrove**) will be taking part in a Mild Month of May trail with several of these rare beers featuring during that month.

SP

Developments at the Ashley Down Brewery ... and an introduction to Wiper & True

On a pre-Christmas CAMRA pub crawl of the Gloucester Road area of Bristol, we were fortunate to be offered the chance to pop into the nearby **Ashley Down Brewery**. Owner Vince Crocker invited us to take the small detour between pubs and have a look round, and even sample several of the Ashley Down beers.

A "tour" of the brewery is not really the right word, the whole operation being accommodated in his converted garage. But squeeze in we did and were made most welcome. Vince described the operation and his beers, which included the following:

Vanguard, a dark mild at 3.9%; **Landlord's Best** at 4.2%; **Pale Ale** at 4.3%; **December**, a strongish malty best bitter at 4.6%; and **Ported Porter** at 5.8%.

Also there on the night was Michael Wiper of the very new Bristol-based **Wiper & True** brewing company, launched that very month. This company is so new it doesn't even have its own premises yet, but is currently making beer at breweries kind enough to let them use their equipment (like Ashley Down) while they look for a permanent home.

Michael brought along some of his bottle-conditioned beers for us to sample and purchase, which included a **Blackberry** porter at 6% and a



Michael Wiper of Wiper & True

Winter Rye amber ale at 5.6%.

Ashley Down Brewery's first batch of bottle-conditioned beers sold out at the Nails Christmas Market. Bottling of Landlord's Best, Pale Ale and Vanguard continues and they should hopefully be on sale from a number of off licenses and may even be available in a number of restaurants and cafes in the Gloucester Road.

Even in the limited space available, the Ashley Down Brewery is expanding. The new five-barrel fermentation vessel has been commissioned with several successful brews. However, as the expansion looks set to continue during 2013, Vince now feels that it is time to find larger premises, and he is currently viewing properties. His intention is to stay local to Ashley Down if possible.

Vince has brewed two new beers recently, one or both of which will be available at this year's Bristol Beer Festival. These are: **Remedy**, a



Squeezed into the compact Ashley Down Brewery

single-hopped 4.0% bitter, chestnut coloured, with good malt up front followed by the spicy flavours and bitterness from Pilgrim hops; and **Sideways**, a 3.6% bitter, light and amber in colour, which starts with delicate caramel sweetness and quickly leads to tropical fruit and bitterness. You will also be able to try a Wiper & True beer in cask at the Bristol Beer Festival, a 5.4% pale ale called **The Summer**.

So, lots to look forward to from Ashley Down and Wiper & True in the coming months.

(More information on Wiper & True can be found on their web site at wiperandtrue.com.)

Tony Durbin

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BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

Pub and brewery news from the CAMRA Bath & Borders branch

Bath and Surrounding Villages

Bell, 103 Walcot Street, Bath

A community buy-out of the freehold of this well-loved and very popular mainstay of the real ale scene in Bath has been mounted. This is for the first attempt at a community buy-out of a pub of any sort in the Bath area. Please see main article.

Graze, new Bath Spa station complex, Bath

Bath Ales has opened a new bistro-style bar here with micro-brewery attached. Access appears to be from the outside and not from the Bath Spa station platform.

Royal Oak, Lower Bristol Road, Bath

This mainstay of the Bath real ale scene is now publicising that it will be offering a discount of 50p per pint for card-carrying CAMRA members from the beginning of March (although this discount may not apply to the Butts beers, which are already discounted).

Victoria Pub & Kitchen, Westhall Buildings, Upper Bristol Road, Bath (former New Westhall Inn)

Banwell House Pub Company, headed up by Toby Brett, purchased its fourth freehold from Wadworth last year. Following a major refurbishment the former Wadworth's New Westhall Inn re-opened on Friday 30 November. Brett said that the New Westhall was a great sized site in a great location but that it needed to direct itself towards the target demographic of the area. The new pub has been re-named as the Victoria Pub & Kitchen due to its location opposite the Royal Victoria Park on the Upper Bristol Road. The revamp has been extensive with the old toilets knocked through and relocated to an under-utilised skittle alley. The windows, meanwhile, were knocked through to create full sized bi-fold doors. The bar was re-positioned to a more welcoming location whilst a theatre kitchen was installed so that customers can see their food being prepared. The design, by Ricci Tamagna of Hollington Architects, goes for a traditional yet contemporary feel and incorporates full-wall panelling, exposed brickwork and a distressed zinc-topped bar cladded in reclaimed floor boards and old doors. The new-look freehouse has been designed to be a pub first and foremost, but one with great food offers, specialising in the best steaks that won't break the bank. The Bath pub joins the Rose & Crown in Trowbridge, the Three Horseshoes at Chapmanslade and the Duke of Cumberland at Holcombe. In addition Banwell House manages under contract the Globe Inn at Wells and the community-owned Fleece Inn at Hillesley in Gloucestershire.

East Somerset

Redan, Fry's Well, Chilcompton

This pub, which closed unexpectedly in August, re-opened at the start of the new year under new management.

Bull Terrier, Croscombe, near Wells

Planning permission was granted in January for this historic village centre pub to be converted into a private residence. The planning application was submitted in November. This means the nearby George will become the only pub in Croscombe.

Devilfish Brewery, near Faulkland, near Radstock

This relatively new, but already highly-regarded, micro-brewery has sadly closed. Please see main article

Old Bath Arms, 1 Palmer Street, Frome

This large town centre pub, which closed early last year, re-opened under new management in June. Under new landlord Richard Findlay, formerly of the Masons Arms in Warminster, this Grade II listed pub

has undergone a major refurbishment and complete transformation of character. This split-level building now includes restaurant areas, function room, a traditional pub bar (Findlay's Bar) and a cosy lounge with comfortable armchairs. There is also an outside deck for people wishing to dine al-fresco. The food includes Black Rock steaks, traditional British food and a tapas and paella menu. The beer range includes beers on gravity and handpump, with Yeovil Ales regularly appearing, whilst there is a good selection of real ciders. Richard plans to open four en-suite double bedrooms in the near future.

Elm Tree, Wells Road, Radstock

This pub on the southern edge of Radstock had, at the time of writing, recently closed. Its future is uncertain. The freehold had been on the market with selling agents James A Baker with a price tag of £400,000.

Bell, 13 Frome Road, Rode, near Frome

This pub closed suddenly in around early December. We understand that the lease is still owned by the Flatcappers pub chain and that new landlords are being sought. An encouraging sign is that the exterior of the pub, formerly mud-green, has been completely re-painted in a much more attractive cream colour.

West Wiltshire

Prince of Wales, 94 High Street, Dilton Marsh

There has been a change of landlords at this village locals' pub. Stephen Greatwood and Kamil Zywicki, who had previously managed the Cross Keys at Corsley and the Antelope at Upavon, took over at the Prince on Tuesday 4 December and moved into the premises early in the New Year. For much of December, during which time Stephen and Kamil were still managing their previous pub on the Devon-Cornwall border, former landlord Alan Packman helped out with the running the Prince, looking after the cellar and doing a few stints behind the bar. Stephen, who is a native of Dilton Marsh, and Kamil have recently embarked on a refurbishment of the pub whilst keeping it open and hope to re-start a full food service from around April. The beer range is principally made up of two or three beers from St Austell brewery with occasional guests and Weston's Old Rosie cider. Stephen and Kamil are continuing to hold the pub's traditional Sunday evening quiz and open-mic nights every second and fourth Monday of each month.

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.

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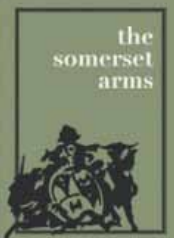
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BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

2nd TROWBRIDGE ALE FESTIVAL at the TRADES & LABOUR CLUB

The 2nd Trowbridge Ale Festival is coming up at the Trades & Labour Club, Stallard Street, Trowbridge, on Friday 1 to Sunday 3 March.

Opening times are Friday 7pm - 12, Saturday 12 - 11, Sunday 12 - 4. Entry is by donation, with all donations and raffle money going to Trowbridge Lions. Souvenir glass £2. There will be ten real ales and two ciders. All bar one of the beers will be from Wiltshire breweries – with the one exception being Brains SA (in recognition of St David's Day) – ranging in strength from 3.8% to 6.8% ABV. The club is just a five minute walk from the Trowbridge station.

Axe & Cleaver, Southwick, near Trowbridge

The freehold of this pub, which re-opened only around eighteen months ago following years of closure, has been on the market since at least the end of October. The pub closed towards the end of last year and was, at the time of writing, boarded up. 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.

Bath Arms Hotel, 41 Market Place, Warminster

We understand that the JD Wetherspoon chain has acquired this once lively town centre pub, which has been closed and boarded up for several months, and intends going ahead with a major refurbishment. A planning application has been submitted for various works, which include restoring many of the pub's original features and an upgrading of the rooms and kitchens.

Hollies, 55 Westbury Leigh, Westbury

This recently auctioned pub has been undergoing a major refurbishment. The Hollies re-opened for drinks shortly before last Christmas. New owners Charles Dale-Staples and Laura Joyce have spent the last few months improving the interior of the pub, which dates from the 1600s, refurbishing the toilets and upgrading the pub's utilities. At the time of writing the kitchen was being extended and the couple are hoping to open the restaurant with a menu of traditional pub food in the spring. Further refurbishment will enable the pub to offer bed and breakfast style accommodation in the future. The beer range includes Butcombe Bitter and Wadworth's Henry's IPA and 6X.

Seven Stars, Winsley, near Bradford-on-Avon

Landlords Evan and Clare have sold the lease of this popular village pub. It is understood that the lease has been bought by a local man, who will be taking on the pub in the near future.

Steve Hunt

35th CAMRA BATH BEER FESTIVAL

AT BATH RUGBY CLUB PREMIER SUITE, RECREATION GROUND, OFF PULTENEY MEWS, BATH
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Please note that this is a new venue for this event

FRIDAY 10th MAY: 6pm - 11pm

SATURDAY 11th MAY: 11am - 3.30pm & 6pm - 11:00pm



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SATURDAY EVENING SESSION

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Ticket price includes **£2 worth of beer tokens** to all customers (which will be given to customers on entry to the event itself), a free souvenir glass and an up-to-date beer list.

A further £2 worth of beer tokens can be claimed by card-carrying CAMRA members at the event itself. The full price must be paid when ordering tickets in advance.

Advance Tickets available by post between Friday 1st March and Monday 6th May (subject to availability)

Tickets can be ordered from Martin Ansell, 38 Maple Gardens, Bath, BA2 3AG. Please state session(s) required and send cheque made payable to 'Bath & Borders CAMRA' with sae. Please note that the new venue is smaller than our traditional venue of the Pavilion and we cannot guarantee that tickets will be available on the door.

Devilfish A sad farewell

Some of you may already be aware, but Devilfish brewery has brewed its last.



The decision was made in January and was due to the fact that, although they had made loads of money for the Government, they had made little for themselves.

The final brew was called F.U.D., the 'D' standing for Alistair Darling MP who introduced the Beer Duty Escalator which has caused and is still causing great problems. You can use your imagination as to what the 'F' and 'U' are for.

By the time this issue goes to print, this final brew should all have been drunk, though there may be an odd cask lurking in a cellar somewhere.

The loss of the Devilfish brewery is a great shame. The last edition had a picture of me presenting an award for their Apachi; this edition brings news that you will no longer be able to drink it or any other of their brews.

If you have any of their bottles at home, these are now sadly collectors' items. A hot summer's day will no longer be the same without a pint or two of Apachi, and Christmas without Satan Claus will be much poorer.

I am confident that all drinkers will wish the Devilfish team the best of luck for the future and raise a pint of thanks for brewing some excellent beer. Maybe one day they will return; we can but hope.

James Honey



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

Help save the Bell!

Plans are in motion to make the Bell on Walcot Street Bath's first community-owned pub, after it was put up for sale by its owner of 24 years, Ian Wood. The local community has grabbed its chance and is forming a co-operative to buy the pub. And they need your help! A share offer will run until 20th March and starts at £500. The Bell co-operative will keep running the pub as it is with the same management team – and is committed to maintaining and enhancing the excellent quality and choice of real ales on offer. The Bath & Borders branch of CAMRA is fully behind the first co-operative bid in the region and they wish us all the best. So if you don't want the Bell to change – now is your chance.

The Bell on Walcot Street

I'm sure many reading this may have visited the Bell. It truly is a fantastic pub and the cornerstone of the local community. It is famous for the quality of its live music ranging from Bluegrass to Afrobeat and everything imaginable in between. I personally also go there because of the beer. They have a great range of West Country ales on with seven regular ales and two or three guests. It is a perennial entry in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide. The Bell is at the heart of the parish of Walcot in Bath – an area with a unique community feel on the east side of the city. It feels a bit more lived in than many of the smarter surrounding areas and it's long been seen as an area of creative enterprise and alternative culture. The Bath Fringe Festival is run from an office at the back of the



Real ale handpumps at the Bell (photo by Hattie Knight)



Steve Henwood and Patrick Cave of the Bell community co-operative and Don Foster MP at the opening of the share launch party.

pub and there is a long tradition of street and music festivals going back to the 1970's, including Walcot Nation Day which was effectively run out of the Bell itself. Under Ian's tenure the pub has grown in stature to become the hub of the Walcot community, so it was a shock for all when it came on the market.

So why does the community want to buy the Bell?

Although Ian Wood has said that he wants to sell it to someone he can trust to run the Bell in the same spirit, the community thinks the safest way is to control the future of the pub. A new buyer may take over with the best intentions but circumstances change. Pubs that people have thought of as immortal institutions have not proved so. This has been brought into sharp focus for the people of Bath by the shock closure of the much loved country pub, the Packhorse at South Stoke, in May 2012 (see Pints West 94, Summer 2012, or www.southstoke.net). Many of the customers of the Bell were also customers of the legendary (or infamous) Hat and Feather, a hundred yards up the road on London Street, which closed in 2004. That pub was also run by Ian Wood but was sold by the owners and is now sadly a steak restaurant. The community is concerned that a similar fate may await the Bell.

Co-operatives – the new community business model

Communities are now becoming aware they may need to do something themselves if they want to save their pub. And co-operatives provide the ideal way to achieve this. It will not suit every pub – it needs an active community ready to raise the funds and then to use the pub! There is a lot of help out there available from bodies such as the Co-operatives UK, the Plunkett Foundation, and CAMRA, who are all now providing help and guidance (see links below). We have had invaluable help from Hilary Sudbury of the Co-operative Development Agency in setting up the company. Andy Shaw, a CAMRA National Executive Director, and chairman of the Hail Weston Community Pub Society, has given valuable feedback and advice on the proposal.

The Bar Code
by Eddie Taberner



14/03/11

There are now 13 co-operatively-owned pubs in Britain the oldest being the Old Crown at Heskett Newmarket in Cumbria that was set up in 1999. And this trend is accelerating – the Plunkett Foundation say there has been an dramatic increase in the number of new enquiries since the Localism Act came into force. The Localism Act is an exciting new development that allows groups to register community assets with the local council – this could include the local shop or pub. When the registered asset comes up for sale, the community has six months grace to prepare a bid to buy it. This is a major boost to communities whose pub is under threat. CAMRA have now asked their branches to identify suitable pubs. The Bath MP Don Foster's Department of Communities and Local Government is responsible for this Act and is also active in supporting and promoting co-operatives as a new community business model. Don is fully supportive of the Bell bid, attended the opening launch party and is promoting it through his department as a model example.

The Bell Co-operative share offer

The Bell share offer will run until the 20th March. The launch party was held on the 16th of February in true Bell style.

The asking price for the Bell is £925,000 for the freehold. We

are anticipating that we will have to pay the asking price or close to it. We are under no illusions that this is a massive target – but we are confident we can reach it. We have a target minimum of £575,000 with the shortfall being made up of a bank loan which has already been negotiated on good terms. The share offer documents are available to download from the web at www.bellcommunity.org.uk. The minimum investment for an individual is £500 and the maximum £20,000. An attractive interest rate on share investment is anticipated and registration for the Enterprise Investment Scheme is underway – any investment would then qualify for a tax rebate of 30%, providing you are a UK taxpayer. All the detail is available on the website. If you want to be part of this exciting community project – and contribute to conserving the Bell for future generations – then please don't hold back!

Tom Chapman

CAMRA member and member of the Bell Community Co-operative

Useful links:

CAMRA local pubs campaign: www.camra.org.uk/pubs

Plunkett Foundation co-operative pubs:

www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/currentcooperativepubs.cfm

Co-operatives UK: www.uk.coop

Co-operative Development Agency: www.cda.coop

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The Bar Code
 by Eddie Taberner



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EDDIE TABERNER 12/11/12

Watering Holes in the Desert

brought to you from Weston-super-Mare

The re-opened Bear

The Bear – formerly known as the Balmoral Hotel – was re-opened on November 22nd. It is situated on Walliscote Road not far from the centre of Weston.

Lease owner Rob Luxon and manager Adam Llangley have put heart and soul into the building as it had been run down for the last few years. The front bar has now been refurbished and has real ales, real cider and a real fire giving it the warm friendly atmosphere of a true pub.

Regular beers are Bombadier, Skinner's Betty Stogs and Hobgoblin, along with a rotating guest. Wilcox cider is also stocked.

Having worked in real ale pubs for some years, Adam has welcomed the challenge of turning the pub around, and he is ably supported behind the bar by Lisa Oleksiewicz, his partner.

Adam says, "We have a lot of work to do, but there is a lot of potential with two large function rooms, a darts room, and what I have been told is Weston's best skittle alley. This, along with a 20-room hotel situated above it, should prove to be a great project."

Adam is an integral part of the Weston rockabilly band Combyne Arvesters, which play rock'n'roll numbers with a Wurzel sound.

The Bear has regular live music every Saturday evening, and a jam session on Sunday afternoons reminiscent of the old Raglan pub shut down last year.

Tony Wilcox



Adam and Lisa behind the bar of the re-opened Bear. (Despite its cunning disguise as a keg font, we are reliably informed that the beer dispensed from the Hobgoblin tap is indeed real ale.)

Weston Wassail Wander

In MMXII, Weston members found the Orchard Barns, Rooksbridge Millwhites IVth Cider Wassail so good they went back for more this year, upgrading from taxi to minibus, with Tim and Bev Cabot but no mouse so they were not frightened off the Wassail as Bristol were. (The Wassail Bristol members had intended to attend was cancelled due to the heavy snow. Ed.) Millwhites use Somerset apples and oak barrels. The offer included Hedge Layer (4.8%), Apples & Pears (5%), Blackberry Blush and Mixed Scrumpy (both 6.5%), Rioja Cask (6.7%), and Rum Cask and Whisky Cask (both 7.5%). The Strawberry Line had closed. Once again, we heard excellent music from The Somerset Paddies and feasted on free snacks, with fabulous food flowing to the long Qs for the brilliant BarB. There many prizes in a wonderful raffle for the Great Ormond Street Hospital.

Wassail is from the Old Norse 'ves heill', 'be healthy', and the ceremony took place in the orchard, aiming to produce a copious crop of apples for this year's cider.

Wassailing started in the 1400s, before we arrived at 1900, and is still celebrated near to the Old January 17 Twelfth Night, not the present January 5 eve of Epiphany. We processed in song, fortunately not needing a key to get through the orchard gate but with lanterns to guide us to the representative apple tree, perhaps decorated in the New Year Honours. Forming a circle round the tree, a loud 'Three Cheers' awakened the tree and frightened off the 'evil spirits'. Pieces of toast soaked in cider from the Wassail Bowl were hung on the tree for the robins, insects, etc, the 'good spirits', who are still thinking about a new stadium. Loud shouts and a shotgun blast aimed to scare off the 'evil spirits' and then everyone returned to the bar to continue the celebrations.

The Wassail Song

Here we come a-wassailing
Among the leaves so green o',
Here we come a-wandering
So fair as to be seen o'

Love and joy come to you,
And to you your wassail too,
And God bless you and send you
A happy New Year,
God send you a happy New Year
Send you a happy New Year

Dr John

Dr John



Weston diary

- **Wed March 6th:** CAMRA Members Night at the Criterion. Special night organised by Paul Sprackman, owner of the Criterion. All CAMRA members very welcome, but the evening is primarily aimed at the 100+ local CAMRA members who we never see! There will be special discounts for CAMRA members and also some free food.
- **Thurs March 14th - Sat 16th:** Bristol Beer Festival.
- **Friday 12th April:** Worle Crawl. 8.00 Old King's Head. 8.45 The Woodspring, 9.20 The Lamb, 9.55 The Golden Lion.
- **Friday 26th April:** Wedmore Crawl. Visiting four pubs in and around Wedmore, including a lengthy stay at the legendary Trotters. Also stops at the GBG-listed New Inn, Swan (current ale offering Cheddar Potholer, Bath Gem, Otter Ale plus a guest beer) and one other. Exact itinerary to be published nearer the time.
- **Friday 3rd May:** The Brit Beer Festival. 8.00 onwards.

Non-members (potential new members?) welcome at all of the above events.

Weston contact

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

The Brit Bar

In the last Pints West I reported on how the Criterion had had its fortunes changed by entering imaginative (and real ale supporting) hands. A similar story has happened in Weston town centre. The Britannia, as it was previously named, closed in the Autumn of 2009 and stayed shut for many months. In September 2010 the property was bought at auction by Chris Cureton and his son Sam. Sam has had the lead role in managing the business ever since.

The internal area was given a bright, modern makeover and initially the business was pitched primarily as being a café that sold beer. After three months the Curetons realised that this formula was not working and they switched the emphasis to being a bar that sold coffee, with a strong focus on real ale and the introduction of regular live music.

Two years on and the business has gone from strength to strength. The Brit now delivers two beer festivals a year – an ale-focussed one over the first Bank Holiday weekend in May, and the second over the August Bank Holiday weekend, which is more centred on cider.

It has become the centre for the local gaming community, with different themes each night of the week Mondays to Thursdays. Happily the gamers are nearly all real ale drinkers. Most weekends there is live music – when the weather is good this takes place outside in the front courtyard, which also serves as a nice area for smokers. Future plans include the introduction in April of a film night every Thursday.

Food is currently limited to a “burger bar” offering, with a choice of burgers and toppings with chips for £6.95, which includes a pint of real ale or a range of other drinks, representing great value that rivals the nearby Wetherspoon.

On the all-important ale front, demand has been steadily increasing and there are normally two real ales on offer during the week, with a third being added most weekends. There is a strong focus on dark beers. The Brit is the only pub I have ever been to where the only beers on offer can be just stouts and porters – much to my delight I hasten to add. The three most-featured breweries at the current time are Celt, Box and Wickwar. Delights from other top breweries, such as the wonderful Dark Star brewery, also appear. Sam has always encouraged his drinkers to try the various new beers he has put on, with the result being that he has a large number of dark-beer lovers (and some landlords will still say that



Sam Cureton behind the bar of the Brit

people won't drink dark beer).

Sam offers 30p off a pint for card-carrying CAMRA members. However, a more attractive alternative is to get one of their loyalty cards, whereby you get a stamp for each pint purchased and after getting six your next pint is free. A further offer is that completing 10 loyalty cards will get you a very nice personalised glass in which to enjoy your future ales at the Brit. There is usually a real cider available – Thatchers Heritage.

The Brit has sensibly adapted its opening hours to meet demand – something many other pubs are going to have to do in the coming years if they are to survive. It is open from 5pm to midnight Sundays to Thursdays and midday to 1am on Fridays and Saturdays.

Sam says that his intention has been to create “a modern take on a traditional pub” and I would urge Weston ale lovers who have not tried the new Brit to get along and see for yourselves what has been achieved. As it says on the loyalty card: “Here GB Means Great Beer.”

For those who don't know, the Brit is on the High Street close to the Playhouse. Contact details: Sam@thebritbar.co.uk or 01934 632629.

Tim Nickolls

Cryptic Crossword

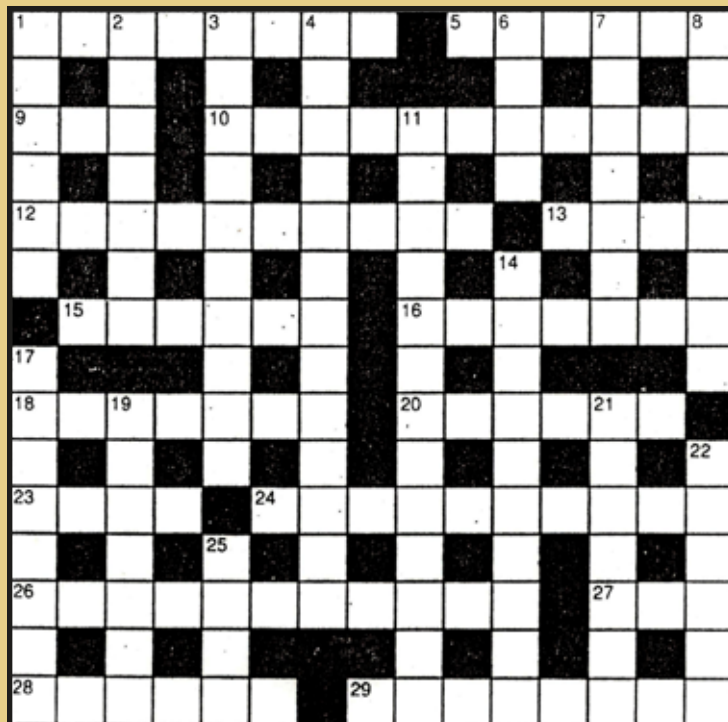
Compiled by Pete and Eddie Taberner

CLUES ACROSS

1. Guess about inn serving Dublin's favourite drink (8)
5. This Pilning pub could get 10ac. when out at night! (6)
9. see 25 dn
10. Stiff gin initially brilliant cocktail occupies the headline spot (4, 7)
12. Beer aficionado gets his tetanus shot (10)
13. The King's Arms – singularly – evens out ale in mob (4)
15. Drunken nosh at gate-less stadium (6)
16. Headless brew auto-destructs. It should last longer (7)
18. Shamolic EU zoo on just a single Greek spirit (3, 4)
20. Over-sentimental heavy drinker surrounded by scrumpy, first and last (7)
23. Violent assault in “The Bunch of Grapes” (4)
24. Honest Indian – or good beer (7, 3)
26. Ancient authority like the Reinheitsgebot for example (3-3, 5)
27. 2001 supercomputer withholding posh ale (3)
28. Landlord at the Spanish inn (6)
29. Dorothy Goodbody's outstanding features – according to a cockney (8)

CLUES DOWN

1. Spice girl's choice of ale? (6)
2. Gets lit up from gin poured into a bottomless stein (7)
3. Flower ruining tan suit with spilt rum (10)
4. Strong and dark railway worker from Wickwar (7, 6)
6. Cowgirl at the Clifton pub (4)
7. Using all initials like it's zero effort (7)
8. & 22 dn. Kingsdown local disgracefully vulgar by his hut (8, 6)
11. Shepherd Neame's beer – the choirboys' digital nightmare? (7, 6)
14. Drunken louts toast the well-built choir members (5, 5)



17. US whiskey grain seen oddly in Scot, UK, Rome, also HK (4, 4)
19. Victoria's position over India Pale Ale (7)
21. Weary expression from those who might be grumpy or sleepy (5-2)
22. see 8 dn
25. & 9ac. Cold sister, on the bottle, is quite sweet (4, 3)

Solution on page 17

Tyke Times

Having made the antipodean connection by mentioning Farsley's Samuel Marsden in the multi-award-winning *Pinctæ Occidēs XCVI*, I thought I would move forward a couple of centuries and see if a Wetherspoon had come on a return visit, although that would be more Hogg than sheep. In Spanish, we would say that Farsley is still without *Timón* and so there were no guest ales at £2.09, breakfast at the same with opening much earlier but confusingly finishing at 12.00, or two meals at £6.59. However, the New Inn there has a free 'Husband Crêche' with 'TLC guaranteed'.

The Wetherspoon nearest Farsley is *The Crossed Shuttle* in Pudsey, not to be confused with a *Le Shuttle* crossing. It had: Hydes Racy Rudolph, of course; Daleside Morocco Ale, bound to please; WharfeBank Cranberry Blond, with no e by gum; a cooling Burton Bridge Santi-Freeze; Rudgate Brewdolf that was flying; non-Polish Moorhouse's Lap Prancer; and a catalytic Acorn Cracker. As elsewhere, Greene King Abbot was £2.49 and Ruddles Best £1.89.

Arriving in Leeds by train, the Wetherspoon in the station had: Rudgate Ruby Mild, a gem at £2.45 for this 2009 Supreme Champion; a book-and-candle-worthy, I'm told, Leeds Midnight Bell; Thornbridge Seaforth IPA, for Scottish and Canadian Highlanders; and a magical Loddon Hocus Pocus Old Ale. The *Becketts Bank* is of interest and had: a superlative Leeds Best; Ossett Excelsior, brewed by a Longfellow; Springhead Robin Hood with their Roaring Meg crying because he preferred their Maid Marian; Green Jack Trawlerboys Best Bitter, for drinking in Plimsolls; and Marston's Old Empire IPA, first seen in Leicester Square in 1884. The *Cuthbert Brodrick* is not very architectural but had: a rudely refreshing Saltaire Raspberry Blonde; Leeds Pale, for fencers; Naylor's AVB Aire Valley Bitter, for woodworkers with partings, and their Premium Cask, for insurers; Nick Stafford's Hambleton Ales Festive Folly, best kept dark; a well-regimented Moorhouse's Black Witch; Oxenhope's Bridgehouse Diken Gold, not to be panned; and Daleside Brodrick Blonde, who was serving. The *Hedley Verity* Lloyds No 1 commemorates a war hero spin bowler and had: Butcombe Christmas Steps going down quickly; Saltaire Raspberry Blonde making one dizzy; a spellbinding Moorhouse's Blond Witch; Daniel Thwaites Good Elf, for safety; Limestone Pudding Stone, to be drunk with haggis whilst curling; Elland American Robust Porter, for heavy lifting; Exmoor Exmas, for after church; and Westons Cider Twist Raspberry, served by Oliver. The *Stick or Twist* Leeds CAMRA Pub of the Season had no Blackjack but had: Adnams Yuletide coming in; Greene King Abbot Reserve, for drinking on the bench; Partners Christmas Cracker, served by a wench with bangs and their Ghost, recalling a late barmaid; Arkell's Noël Ale, not for Cowards; Elland American Robust Porter, for Road training; Ilkley Mary Christmas, with virginals accompaniment; WharfeBank VPA Verbeia Pale Ale, better than a Romanian Bürger;

Ossett Silver King, streaking in late at 2511 as 60016, and Roosters Yankee, for doodling dandies. *The Three Hulats* had a word for the wise and: a tautological Leeds Best; Ilkley Origins Holy Cow with calf and leek soup; an unlikely Daleside Old Leg Over; York Centurion's Ghost, for past cohorts; Moorhouse's Lap Prancer, for the Spring; Kirkstall Pale Ale by the bucketful; a Dickens of a good Wychwood Bah Humbug!; and a flock watching night-time Shepherd Neame Rudolph's Reward.

The *Sir Titus Salt* in Bradford, where he was the second mayor, not in Saltaire, had staff worth their *salarium and*: York Three Kings, in a not Full House; non-Waxy Rudgate Ruby Mild; Ilkley Gold, drunk by Moors baht 'at; Daleside Monkey Wrench re-turning; Northumberland Firkin Freezing, for those quartered there, and Sheepdog with no hot ones on the menu; and Elland Iceic-Ale with bread and dripping. The *Turls Green* is also in the city centre, not Bowling, and had: a very 90s Ossett Big Red; a very Civil War Springhead The Leveller; a Puckish Wychwood Hobgoblin; and a preoccupyingly political WharfeBank Camfell Flame.

Shipley's Lloyds No 1 *The Sir Norman Rae*, a Co-op department store in sunnier times, had: Butcombe Christmas Steps in full flight; Daleside Morocco, for a winter holiday; Hydes Racy Rudolph, for red noses; Mordue Tinsel Toon with a special rabbit-clip designed by Roger; a high-octane Skinner's Jingle Knocker; and the hot favourite Westgate Fireside. The *Myrtle Grove* was a picture in an old Bingley cinema and had: Phoenix Porter, for Harry Potter on Platform 9½; Daleside Morocco served with Rabat stew; Kelham Island Riders on the Storm served by The Doors; Ossett Excelsior with the shades of night falling fast; and Wychwood Hobgoblin awaiting Midsummer Night. The *Livery Rooms* in Keighley used to have mares for the Corporation and had all guests at £2.09 with: Greene King Abbot Reserve, drunk by a twelfth man; Moorhouse's Pride of Pendle served by one of the Lancashire Hills; Wychwood Hobgoblin served by a willowy blonde; a full-bodied Saltaire Cherry Stout; Springhead Maid Marian, bouncing in; and Old Rosie Cloudy Scrumpy 7.3%, to be drunk in the lee of a lorry at £2.69.

The *Barum Top Inn* in Halifax was not for wool spinning but was once a garage so it had a full service with: Daleside Square Rigger, racing downwind; Elland Nettlethrasher, worth grasping; Goose Eye Blackmoor, better for Popeye than spinach; an outstandingly bookish Headland Red; Wychwood Hobgoblin winning brownie points; a gripping Naylor's Old Ale; and a break time Elgood North Brink Thin Ice. This Wetherspoon has now been joined by *The Percy Shaw*, which had "cat's eyes" outside and: a theatrically royal Butcombe Old Vic Porter; Bridgehouse Rudolph's Ruin, for old dears coming in out of the rain; Daleside Monkey Wrench and Old Leg Over, for acrobats; Moorhouse's Lap Prancer, being quaffed by twelve lords; and Saltaire South Island Pale, returning us to the original antipodean theme, recording our old Māori No 1 full-back John Wilson's beloved *Te Wai Pounamu*, as he was never sold a dummy.

Dr John

Rucking Mole joins the pack!

ALL YEAR ROUND

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Smooth malty flavour & clean bitter finish

Best Bitter 4.0%*abv*
Well balanced, copper coloured bitter

Molennium 4.5%*abv*
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Rucking Mole 4.5%*abv*
Clean, dry & malty golden bitter

Landlord's Choice 4.5%*abv*
Dark, strong and smooth hoppy bitter

Molecatcher 5.0%*abv*
Copper coloured ale with spicy hop aroma

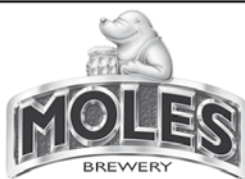
IN SEASON

Holy Moley 4.7%*abv*
Spring beer that's heaven 'scent'

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A Round with Robin

In early January I found a new beer for me – *Kite* brewery (from Gorslas in Carmarthen) *Bluestone Bitter* (4%) at the **Bear Inn**, Weston-super-Mare. It was so good I had to have six pints of it to last the afternoon and evening musical jam session there. It was a surprise not to have seen it at the wonderful South Wales ‘beeriological’ at the **Seven Stars** in Redcliffe in November, where the *Violet Cottage* and *Tiny* breweries were among my favourites. Twelfth night came early last year, 21st November to be precise when the **Seven Stars** had the *Abbey Ale Twelfth Night*, but at the same time the latest *Arbor* single hop *Fanboy* ale made good syzygy with *RCH East Street Cream* in both colour and zymurgy.

The first week of December was strange in that there was no ‘beeriological’ at this time of the month as Paul and Darren were attending a pop festival, but there were some very impressive ales on around that time, most especially the *Arbor/Harbour Colab* (7.4%) at the **Cornubia**, the *Raw/Arbor Mutiny Coconut Stout* (5.8%) at the **Seven Stars**, and the *Wentworth Raspberry Ripple* (4.4%) at the **Gryphon** (all central Bristol pubs). I also attended the *Bristol Beer Factory* open day and sampled the *Bristletoe*, *Bitter California*, *Kiwi* and four of the ‘Twelve Stouts of Christmas’, whilst watching the Bristol University Rag Morris dancers. North Yorkshire featured for the ‘beeriological’ in the second week of December with giants such as *Blackhole No Escape* (5.2%), *Truefitt Tumbler* (7.4%) and *Outlaw Mad Hatter* (6.1%) to be reckoned with. From the weaker beers the *Walls Gun Dog* (3.8%) was the top dog for taste and scent.

Around this time I had two outstanding beers (no, not *Outstanding* brewery beers) at the **Cornubia**, being *Newby Wyke* (of Grantham) *HMS Queen Elizabeth* (6%), and one of the *Frys* (from Cornwall) *Chough* ales at 5.1%. Other great ales for you to look out for which I’ve enjoyed this quarter are *Fyne Highlander* (4.8%, **Cornubia**), *Celt Silures* (3.8%, **Dragon Inn**, Weston-super-Mare), *Lymstone Cold Sober* (5%, **Knights Templar**, Bristol) and *Goff’s Twelfth Night Christmas Ale* (at various locations). Moreover the **Dragon Inn** has regularly had *RCH Santa Fé* (7.3%) on this quarter and on one occasion also had *RCH* beers *Double Header*, *Firebox* and *East Street Cream* on, so it was possible to make the infamous *B52* beer blend (though this was not condoned by the bar staff). It is a great shame that the *Devilfish* brewery has closed; the *Darkness* was one of my favourite beers from them and I had some at the Tewkesbury beer festival in February. In the **Crediton Inn** in December I was drinking the *Dark Star Special Edition Winter Solstice* (4.2%) which is worthy of a mention, as were the pints I was given on Christmas day by the landlords of the **Regency** and **White Hart** in Weston-super-Mare (*Box Steam Christmas Box Dark* and *Moles Möel Möel* respectively).

Just before Christmas the Weston CAMRA sub-branch had a crawl around some of the Bath pubs, and starting at the **Bell**, progressing to the **Garrick Head**, **Trinity Arms**, **Cork Vaults** (where I had *Dark Star*

Revelation at 5.7% for £3.55 and it was mild enough to stand outside), thence to the **Volunteer Rifleman’s Arms** and concluding at **Lambrettas**. Following that trip in early January a group of us rambled from Bradford-on-Avon via Winsley to the **Cross Guns** at Avoncliff where, despite them having five *Box Steam* beers on at most reasonable prices, I chose the mulled cider at a mere £3 for a pint. (This I would say wasn’t the same quality of that served in the **Cornubia** – which has brandy in it! – but was in its own way and on a chilly day most welcome.) We then made our way back to the **George** at Bradford-on-Avon, a real gem of a pub and well worth the walk uphill to it. This is the brewery tap for the *Willy Good Ales*, and we were rewarded with a pint of *Brown Willy* (5%) for £3. All beer is dispensed straight from the cask, and the real ciders from hand pumps. No optics, and the chalked beer menu informs as to when the beer was first tapped.



The bar of the George, Bradford-on-Avon

The **White Hart** (Weston-super-Mare) had something of a rarity when the sub-branch had their festive ales crawl, an 18-gallon barrel of *Ordnance City Daisycutter* (6.2%) beer at £2 a pint dispensed by gravity serve, following a party there when much of the beer wasn’t consumed (until we got there!). At the end of December I went to the joint Dog-named beer festival held at the **Chelsea Inn** in Easton and the **Red Lion** in Whitehall; there were beers both on gravity dispense and hand pump at both pubs and the real fire and comfy chairs were a bonus at the Red Lion on a cold and foggy day. The best beer was (for my taste) *Herefords Mutt’s Nutts* (5%), and we finished the day in front of another real fire at the **St Georges Hall** in Redfield. I had decided not to be a beer tacker for the winter Wetherspoon’s beer festival, but did have a few excellent ales here and there in Weston, Bristol and Exeter, and it was good to find the quite elusive *Wickwar Station Porter* (6.1%) at the **Knights Templar** in good condition.

The New Year ‘beeriologicals’ at the **Seven Stars** were from Wiltshire and Dorset in January where *Hopkettle* was far and away my favourite brewery with their *Snakes Head IPA* (6.2%) topping the bill and *Small Paul’s Rich’s X75* (7.5%) beer the first I’ve ever had from this reclusive brewery; the February feast featured beers from Merseyside and the *Liverpool Organic Kitty Wilkinson Chocolate Vanilla Stout* (4.5%) was the highlight for my taste buds!

With friends I attended the 19th **Tewkesbury Beer Festival**, my sixth in a row, and wasn’t disappointed at the range of beers, though going on the Saturday that did mean the beers were beginning to run out on the last day. I started with the evergreen *Coastal Erosion* (7.5%) always a favourite of mine there, and the only beer that I had twice was the dangerously drinkable *Three Tuns* (from Shropshire) 7X at 9.5% (£3.60 a pint). I was most amused by the pump clip for the *Potbelly Hop Trotter* (4.1%) beer which showed a pig dressed for Morris dancing; fortunately it was an English drawing, if it had been in Belgium no doubt we would be shown if it was a male or female Morris dancer!



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Readers' Letters

Readers are welcome to send letters to the Pints West Editor

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Disabled access

I have just been reading Chris Buckell's letter in the last *Pints West* re disabled access in pubs.

My wife and I are not the greatest drinkers but we enjoy a pub lunch and have been disappointed when recent renovations at two pubs on the A370 have given excellent access and space for wheelchairs but have not installed a suitable loo for wheelchair users. We prefer to support local traders, but like Chris it appears we will have to give our custom to larger chains or it is back to the kitchen for me.

Roy Godwin, Weston-super-Mare.

The pub that became a Tesco

In your letter section in the last *Pints West* there was a letter from an Adam Bell. The gentleman must be confused, as I have lived in North Petherton near Bridgwater since 1977 and the public house which he claims was his favourite is not called the Dolphin, it is called the Swan and is now a Tesco Express.

Regards, John Hesketh,
North Petherton, Somerset.

Whither Spoons?

The autumn edition of *Pints West* included two well-argued pieces about JD Wetherspoon, one in favour and one against. It seems extraordinary that one pub chain should cause so much controversy, so perhaps it is time to examine the evidence.

What were the complaints? One was that "Somehow JDW are offering ridiculously low prices on all of their drinks." I don't think that should be cause for complaint – unless you think it so cheap that there must be something wrong with them, in which case go somewhere else. (There was once a rumour that they purchased beer that was going out of date. A silly idea. Just try supplying 800 pubs with beer that only fell into that category!) On the other hand, Punch Taverns has well over 2,000 pubs, which theoretically should give it far greater purchasing power than Tim Martin has and therefore the ability to charge even less. Presumably the reason why their prices are over £1 a pint more is because of their debt level. (JDW was also the first to offer free samples of the ales on sale.)

One drawback is that it is often difficult to know where to queue. In a city like Bristol the staff behind the counter tend to remain in one spot and customers form a more-or-less orderly queue in front of them. I have noticed, however, that in smaller outlets you are more likely to find people lining all the way along the bar, the staff appearing not to know (or sometimes even to care) who is next to be served.

Certainly Wetherspoons are not the kind of establishments that encourage leaning on the bar to drink and chat, but as food is an integral part of their business that should be understood. As to the food, while it may be 'cheap and cheerful', it is of a consistent quality and

one can count on the same basic menu in all branches. For example, their Thursday 'Curry Day' – choice of half-a-dozen or more curries plus a pint for £6.75 – represents excellent value.

"If you've been in one then you've been in them all." This is simply not true. Some are larger than others, some better run than others. Each week I make a visit to Exeter where *The Imperial*, (up a short, steep incline from St.David's station – but it's downhill going back!) is a veritable palace, with adequate staff who ask you if your meal is OK, whereas the two nearest to where I live (Burnham-on-Sea and Bridgwater, since you ask) are places I would not normally choose to frequent.

A personal problem I have is waiting for a pint behind someone who is ordering two coffees. (I am old enough to remember the days when asking for a packet of crisps in a pub after the pint had been pulled often led to a tap on the shoulder from behind and 'Come on, young man! There are other people waiting to be served.') I also dislike coffee that requires a noisy machine to produce it, but I appreciate that this franchise represents a substantial part of JDW's income, and if it keeps the price of beer down I am not one for complaining.

Does JDW lead to closure of other pubs? A branch opened in a small town where I lived until a few years ago and, while one of the other pubs turned into an Indian restaurant while retaining its license, none has actually closed. The huge discount on take-home beer at supermarkets is a far greater threat to the local pub and, while I support the idea of minimum pricing I cannot see that 45p per unit (equal to 90p a pint!) will do much to discourage binge-drinking. The fact has to be faced that many of the pubs that have closed in recent years simply failed to provide what was wanted. Near me is one that was a highly-successful free-house until ten years ago when it was bought by one of the nationals. They installed a succession of what can only be described as desperate, no-hoper managers, and the place is now on its knees. Don't these organisations employ tests of suitability? I am not suggesting that running a pub is easy work, but a little intelligence and a tad of personality should not be hard to come by.

The greater threat to community pubs lies not in the price of supermarket beers but the fact that they are drunk at home. 'Meeting at the pub' has become a pastime of the older drinkers, and is far less popular among younger people. Perhaps that is an area where CAMRA should be concentrating?

One final observation: having reached a significant birthday my annual CAMRA subscription is equalled by the value of JDW tokens, all of which I make a point of using. So who's to complain?

Christopher Redwood
(by email).

Thank you for your well written observations and comments on the articles in the autumn Pints West regarding the pros and cons of JD Wetherspoon. As one of the authors (I wrote the 'Cons') I am glad that it invoked some debate and opened some discussion amongst pub-goers on a subject that is of such high importance. The pricing comparison that you made with Punch goes further as just about all pub company-owned pubs, brewery-owned pubs, and indeed free of tie and genuine free houses, ask similar prices. I am not suggesting

that the quality of the food and drink is deficient in JDW, in fact I don't recall ever having a bad pint in one, but what I find so infuriating is when pump clips are displayed for beer that is not ready to be served as I often prefer those to the ones that are actually available!

Happy pubbing!
Mike Jackson.

Skittle verse

'Skittles. You play skittles! In a pub with a skittle alley.
Are you the Team Captain? Or do you chalk up the tally?'

'As a Matter of Fact we have a match in Avonmouth on Thursday.'
Mr Matteraffect is helpful to me - he can read an Explorer map you see,
And walks on God's good earth cautiously through fields and meadows locally.
Mr Matteraffect is instructive to me.
Aviation, innovation, navigation made Bristol history.
Was Whitchurch International Airport the landing spot for Lord Brabazon or not?
I ask as we walk around the periphery of Filton Airport.

Tonight's skittles night.
I board the train to watch a skittles game at the Miles Arms.
The station, the street, the pub - Avonmouth is calm.
I buy a drink. Mr M welcomes me.
The Rattlers team is mostly young. Surprise number one.
Rumble, tumble crash. Can't see. No fun for me.
It's quarter past 8 - an hour to wait for my train.
Mr M and the team captain talk. The captain nodded.
'We're a player short. Would you have a go?'
'Aim for the red skittle,' whispered Mr M.
I held the heavy wooden ball in my hand then rolled it on its way.
The sound of crashing to the ground was bound to score.
Mr M emailed next day to say the Rattlers had won.
Pub skittles is fun. I want to shout. That was a good night out.

Julie Boston, CAMRA member, Bristol Rambler and Campaigns Organiser of Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FOSBR).

Sport in pubs

I've managed to pen a number of letters to the Editor regarding my attitude towards pubs and music, children, etc. In an endeavour to keep my record going and, I hope, to give the Editor the opportunity to help with his sterling efforts to continue to fill Pints West with articles which may, or may not, be of interest to fellow drinkers, this time I would like to give my views on 'Sport in Pubs'.

Let me start by saying that I am a 'fully paid up' member of a premiership football club, as well as a member of their supporters club, so I think this puts me in the bracket of 'being a sports fan'.

Now to my views on watching sport in a pub. On the rare occasions I have entered a pub with the express decision to watch a football match on (usually a big screen) television, I will choose my pint of real ale and settle in a chair where the screen is in full view. As kick-off time approaches, the pub will start to fill with other

Severn Vale CAMRA

Manchester Winter Ales Festival visit

The weather leading up to it had been abysmal and a decision whether to go was delayed until the Thursday evening. Paul Dickinson and myself had never done a National Winter Ales Festival before and, as this was the last year at Manchester, we decided that if the weather did not deteriorate we should make the effort.

So early Friday morning we set off for Manchester by train over the more scenic route via Hereford, Shrewsbury and Crewe, arriving at our destination at about 1.30pm.

Having checked into our hotel we proceeded on a walking tour to the Castlefields and Deansgate areas of Manchester. Many of Manchester's interesting museums, the 'Coronation Street' television setting, and a good selection of decent pubs can be found in these areas. Although the temperature seemed about 6 degrees below that of Bristol we carried on walking after lunch via the M.E.N. Arena (is our arena in Bristol finally to be built?) into Oldham Road and onto the Sheridan Suite where the festival was being held. It was now about 4 o'clock and after such an exhilarating walk a few beers were just what was needed.

With over 300 beers the choice was amazing. I started with a very strong (8%) German smoked beer. We proceeded to try a selection of the 'Winning Beers' from the various judged categories before moving on to winter ales brewed locally and across the north of England. What surprised us was the number of friends and acquaintances we bumped into, including Tim Belsten (active Bristol Pub Group member) who was there for the duration of the festival.

We came out of the Sheridan Suite at about 9.30 to be greeted by driving snow which had already settled on the pavements to a depth of two inches. Making our way back to the hotel headlong into the snow, we called in at the Crown and Kettle (six real ales and an incredible ornate ceiling) and the Piccadilly (five real ales); a typical town centre



people who may or may not have come in to watch the match.

Some will sit to view the proceedings, while others will see a gap on the floor and stand there to sup their ale. So now, to watch the screen, one must lean at a precarious angle from one's chair, trying not to shout at the people stood in the way. OK, so far so good, when all of a sudden the people sat in front of me will leap from their chairs as some goal mouth activity is in progress, leaving me, who is not so agile, wondering what the hell is happening.

Deciding to get another pint is also fraught with problems, due to those who have decided to lean on the bar to view the game, thus making it difficult to purchase one's next pint. Not only that, the bar person (I believe it is not correct to say 'barman' now) will no doubt be watching as well.

That is why I do the vast majority of my sport viewing sat at home with a couple of bottles at my elbow – bottle-conditioned ales if possible.

To conclude, further information on 'my

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.

pub but surprisingly selling real ale.

Before departure on the Saturday morning a visit to the Art Gallery and Town Hall was followed up with locating a few more heritage pubs. It was always our intention to break our journey on the way home at Shrewsbury but we were fortunate that the first pub we went into – the Salopian – had its own beer festival taking place. Local CAMRA members also put us right as to other good pubs to visit in our short stopover. These included the Shrewsbury, the Nags Head, the Loggerheads and the Yorkshire House.

Arriving home back in South Gloucestershire at 9 o'clock Saturday evening we were glad that we had attempted "our last chance to Manchester" and that it had turned out so successful despite the weather.

Rod Lees

PUB NEWS

The **Black Horse**, Thornbury has changed hands recently. Previously, there was a sometime offering of one or other indistinguishable Cottage beers; the pub now boasts four handpumps. Regular beers should be Timothy Taylor's Landlord and Butcombe Bitter, alongside two guest ales, which often seem to be Sharp's Cornish Coaster and Otter Bitter.

The Black Horse is a community pub outside the town centre, with a large lounge, a popular bar at the back and skittle alley. We wish success to Claire, Dan and Jack who are now running the place.

Martin Farrimond

Severn Vale diary

- **1 Mar** – Pub Survey Trip. Thornbury (Details TBA)
- **8 Mar** – Old Spot lunch. Dursley (12:30)
- **20 Mar** – Sub-branch meeting. Bowl, Almondsbury. 8:30pm
- **5 Apr** – Pub Survey Trip. (Details TBA)
- **12 Apr** – Old Spot lunch. Dursley (12:30)
- **18 Apr** – Sub-branch meeting. Anchor, Oldbury. 8:30pm
- **3 May** – Pub Survey Trip. (Details TBA)
- **10 May** – Old Spot lunch. Dursley (12:30)
- **15 May** – Sub-branch meeting. Wheatsheaf, Thornbury. 8:30pm

○ 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.

Please check our online diary at severnval.camrabristol.org.uk or email us at SevernValeCAMRA@gmail.com for more details.

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team': it is the longest professional football club in London, they had the first £100 a week player, who was also the first player to have an agent. The pitch they play on was originally a wood, Stamford Bridge was built for them to play in, but they rejected it. Their ground is situated on the banks of the Thames, and I was brought up half a mile from the stadium. If you have worked out the name of 'my' team, I will be happy for you to buy me a pint if we ever meet ... so I can tell you how clever you are.

John Gatty, Thornbury.

Suburban pubs – imagination urgently needed?

Vince Murray offers a personal analysis

Much has been written in these pages over the last few years about the plight of many pubs in our area. In particular a huge number of our suburban pubs seem to be either closed down or in imminent danger of closing soon. I got to wondering why suburban pubs should be in so much more peril than central or country ones and then I realised that I am, in fact, part of the problem! That is because I almost never use any of the pubs close to home – preferring to take the bus five miles into town to drink in the likes of the Seven Stars, Three Tuns and others. If we fancy eating out then we drive to somewhere more rural. Either way I don't visit any pubs in my local Kingswood / Staple Hill area, so am contributing a bit to their demise.

Naturally I asked myself two questions: "Why don't I use local pubs?" and "What could they do differently to make me want to use them?"

I usually allow myself a couple of nights out per week so I want to make sure that I get the most from these. If I am meeting friends from other parts of Bristol, then it usually makes sense to meet up in town. Not a lot that local pubs can do about that. However if I am going out with family or more local friends I still tend to avoid local pubs. The main reason for this is that I simply cannot get the type of beers that I prefer to drink locally. I have a taste for high quality independent real ales of various styles. I prefer hoppy beers to malt dominated ones and I love real stouts and porters. My preferred beers are now widely available all around central Bristol, but virtually not at all in the suburbs. At well over £3 a pint I really do expect to drink beers that I enjoy. I am fully aware that many suburban pubs are owned by the large pub companies and have limited say over what they stock. However they do all tend to stock the same few "safe" beers and show almost no imagination at all. In my area all you can expect to find are the likes of Courage Best, Sharp's Doom Bar and Bass – none of which interest me and all of which are not the beers that they once were in my opinion. If you are a little luckier then you may be offered Butcombe Bitter (good but not enough on its own) or Bath Ales Gem (too malty for my taste). It is well known that there has been a major trend away from traditional brown bitters towards golden hoppy ones but it seems that nobody has told the suburban pubs yet! We do have several local Wetherspoon pubs but I simply don't enjoy their style of atmosphere for more than the odd pint. My message to anyone trying to attract real ale drinkers back to suburban pubs is to take maximum advantage of whatever choice is available to them and make the beer range varied, interesting and well kept. We have a number of excellent local breweries who I am convinced would be an attraction in these pubs – Courage is no longer local as it has been brewed in Bedford for years and even further away than that before so there is no logical reason for its presence in our pubs.

The second thing that keeps me away from my locals is the sheer lack of imagination shown by the stream of folk that take on the pubs. I have watched as licensee after licensee take on failed pubs only to offer exactly the same product to the same few drinkers as the previous ones – madness for sure! They fail again several months or more later. The traditional model for local suburban pubs is clearly no longer right. The same boring range of beers, stereotyped pub food or no food at all, and ill-mannered drunken locals making strangers feel unwelcome or uncomfortable just simply does not work. The real art of being a licensee used to involve being able to welcome all types of drinkers but keep a good friendly ambience. You also used to see licensees stood outside at closing time encouraging drinkers to leave quickly and quietly – that is now a real rarity and I have often seen licensees more drunk and noisy than the punters! Above all else what is guaranteed to keep me out of local pubs is the "live music" that involves somebody of very limited talent singing cover versions to a backing machine for several hours. Such singers often assume that they have the vocal range to sing everything from Kate Bush to Barry White! Usually sung so loudly that conversation is impossible and local residents are disturbed in their homes. I am no musical prude and my tastes extend from classical music to very heavy metal, but there are times and places for everything. As soon as I see "karaoke" or "live music" signs for that type of act I know that the pub is not for me. It also genuinely frightens me how almost everybody attending these events seems to arrive and depart by car – are they all really drinking soft drinks?

So – what would attract me back to suburban pubs? Apart from a decent selection of genuine high quality beers I would love to see

a lot more imagination and attempts to involve and live in harmony with local residents. I often arrive home after a hard day's work and think "I wish we didn't have to cook tonight" – it would be great to think that any of the three pubs walkable from my house could offer a decent range of interesting healthy and tasty food (not all deep fried or microwaved) at an affordable price – preferably washed down with a tasty beer or two. The same applies to Sunday lunch. As for music – if any is deemed necessary then why not have one room with low volume classical music, or decent quality acoustic music (Bristol is very well blessed with excellent local singer/songwriters as often featured in the Seven Stars for example)? It works very well across the continent. Add in some nice comfortable furniture and I believe you might have a chance. It is imperative that all forms of drunken and threatening behaviour are discouraged and repeat offenders are excluded. It would take time but local households might eventually be enticed back into pubs that they have avoided for years or never considered using. Community events and maybe other live acoustic music (full plugged in bands if in a suitable area) could follow. Surely it is worth a try and we may get to keep more of our precious pubs?

Just after writing the above I have spent two very enjoyable evenings in the Bedminster / Totterdown area where it seems that a number of pubs are already doing pretty much exactly what I was looking for. In particular the Star and Dove in St Johns Lane, the nearby Victoria Park in Raymond Road and the Windmill in Windmill Hill are all thriving with an offering of good food, a nice selection of quality beers and convivial surroundings. If pubs around there can do it why not in other suburbs? Come on Kingswood pubs – make me want to stay local!

I would welcome other views on this subject.

Vince Murray

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
- **Black Swan (Dirty Duck)**, Westbury-on-Trym
- **Bristol Cider House**, Surrey Street, Bristol
- **Bristol Cider Shop**, Christmas Steps, 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
- **Hop & 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
- **Royal Oak**, Lower Bristol Road, Twerton, Bath
- **Seven Stars**, Thomas Lane, Redcliffe, Bristol
- **Three Tuns**, St George's Road, Hotwells, Bristol
- **Volunteer Tavern**, New Street, St Judes, Bristol
- **Waverley**, Severn Road, Weston-super-Mare
- **Westbury Park Tavern**, Henleaze
- **Woolpack Inn**, St Georges, Weston-super-Mare



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.

Milk Street Brewery

“It’s all about the beer..”

The Milk Street Brewery in Frome was founded by Rik Lyall in 1999. The eight-barrel brewery is based at the back of the **Griffin** – one of the five pubs owned by the brewery – which is a showpiece for Milk Street’s carefully crafted beers such as **Funky Monkey**, **The Usual** and **Beer**.



Rik previously worked as head brewer and developed beers for Cotleigh, Stonehenge and Hop Back breweries before branching out on his own. Brewing has been his lifelong passion, he says – and he actually started brewing beer at the tender age of 14. He comes across as an extremely talented and knowledgeable brewer who prides himself on the highest quality beers. “I do like to experiment but for me it’s all about balancing delicate flavours to produce easy drinking beers.”

At Milk Street, brewing takes place up to five times a week, with ingredients comprising malt from Warminster,

hops from Charles Faram and their own yeast. And 2012 was a particularly exciting year according to Rik, during which there was a complete redesign and rebranding of all their beers. “I am really happy with our core range of beers now they provide our customers with a choice of strengths and styles and 2012 has been a great year for sales.”

Their recent winter seasonal beers were reportedly a great success, with their delicious porter **Devils Backbone** available in October and November, followed by **Winter Spice**, a great winter warmer brewed with cinnamon that “flew out the door.”

Rik also likes to point out that they supplied the Houses of Parliament twice last year with **Funky Monkey**. And Milk Street are no strangers to awards, having won many for their **Funky Monkey** and their **Zig Zag** stout. Furthermore, the brewery was voted Best Drink Producer in the Taste of Somerset Awards 2011.

The coming year is promising to be even more exciting for the brewery. They have spent the dark winter months creating lots of new recipes for their seasonal beers, all with completely new pump clips and designs. “We are really proud of our 2013 seasonal list,” says Rik. For January and February they had a delicious ruby red beer called **Folklore** (3.9%), brewed with crystal wheat. Next up is **March Madness** (4.4%), a smooth copper-coloured beer with a malty base and rounded bitterness. **Gulp** (4.8%) returns in April but is now a refreshing English IPA. The year continues with **Amarillo** (4.6%) in May and June, exhibiting floral and spicy notes, including that of burnt orange; their golden ale **Ra!** (4.1%) in time for summer; and the blonde **Cobble Wobble** (4%) in September.

Milk Street continues to grow, and their success means they are now in a position to develop and expand the brewery site – and employ more staff – giving them more capacity to create more delicious beers.

SP



Milk Street Brewery
The Griffin, 25 Milk Street, Frome, BA11 3DB
Telephone: 01373 467766 or 07703399976
Email: sales@milkstreetbrewery.co.uk
Web site: www.milkstreetbrewery.co.uk



Milk Street Brewery has been making beer since 1999. However, director Rik Lyall has been brewing beer for 30 years, since the age of 14! He brings years of experience, creativity and passion to the brewing process. With a committed team of staff, who share Rik’s love of beer, Milk Street have an exciting range of brews to suit all tastes.



Meet some of the Milk Street team – from left to right: Carl (Griffin landlord), Rik (director and head brewer), Dave (assistant brewer and drayman), James (assistant brewer), Jackie (head of accounts), Cathy (director of sales and marketing).



Where it’s all about the beer!

Brewing high quality beers since 1999.

Milk Street Brewery, started by Rik Lyall, has grown into dedicated team of beer lovers committed to producing interesting and diverse range of award winning beers. All taste tested and approved by the team!



Milk Street Brewery Ltd. 25 Milk Street, Frome, BA11 3DB
For more beers and seasonal go to: www.milkstreetbrewery.co.uk
Call 01373 467766

CAMRA Members' Weekend & AGM 2013

This year's Members' Weekend and AGM will be taking place at St Andrew's Hall in Norwich from Friday 19th to Sunday 21st April. Norwich is a beautiful city packed with medieval buildings and quality pubs. It is also home to a number of breweries, with another 20 within the surrounding area, many of which will be providing their beer for the members' bar. You will have the opportunity to visit some of these pubs and breweries, and also some cider producers, as part of the weekend's organised trips.

St Andrew's Hall is a Grade I listed building which dates back to the 14th century and has been the host for a number of civil occasions, including Norwich's CAMRA Beer Festival. Other historic buildings include Norwich Cathedral and Norwich Castle both of which offer beautiful scenery within their gardens. If you fancy extending your stay then you may like to visit these attractions or enjoy the countryside views by visiting the Norfolk Broads.

Norwich is easily accessible by road, train or air, and the public transport system is easy to use and offers all-day travel passes. With spectacular architecture and a fascinating history, Norwich is well worth a visit.



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

The weekend is open to all CAMRA members to:

- Review what has been happening at branch, regional and national level over the past year
- Review campaigning themes and form policy
- Hear guest speakers on issues related to beer, brewing and key campaigns
- Meet the formal requirements of an AGM, including presentation of accounts
- Meet up with CAMRA members from around the country, National Executive and HQ staff members
- Discuss ideas to forward to campaign through workshops, policy discussion groups and seminars
- Enjoy a few drinks in the members' bar with a good selection of local real ales
- Visit pubs in Norwich and the surrounding area
- Visit local breweries and cider producers on organised trips

www.camraagm.org.uk



Pre-register Now for
**Members' Weekend
& AGM, 19th - 21st April 2013**



CAMRA Members' Weekend, including the National Annual General Meeting, is where our members discuss our future policy and direction. The weekend also offers the opportunity to members to socialise with friends, visit recommended pubs and go on organised trips.

The AGM is open to all CAMRA members and will be held at St Andrews and Blackfriars Halls, Norwich from 19th April to 21st April 2013.

Pre-register your interest today

You can pre-register online through the new Members' Weekend and AGM website:

1. Please login to the Members' Weekend and AGM website; www.camraagm.org.uk. This is located on the top right hand side.
2. Select the "Pre-Registration" tab in the menu.
3. You will then need to re-enter your login details using your membership number and password.
4. Select "Interests/Clubs".
5. Under the "Interests/Clubs" section you will need to select the "Add" tab and browse for "AGM 2013 Pre-registration".
6. Click "Save".
7. You will now be registered for the event.

Please note that joint members will need to login and register individually. Closing date for pre-registration is **Friday 22nd March 2013**.

As a pre-registered member you will receive the Members' Weekend Handbook before the event. This will be sent out the week following the cut off for pre-registration. Alternatively complete and send in the pre-registration form below. Members' Conference packs will be available at the venue.

I would like to pre-register (Closing Date for Pre-registration is Friday 22nd March 2013)

Membership Number	<input type="text"/>	Joint Member Number (if applicable)	<input type="text"/>
Full Names	First <input type="text"/>	Surname <input type="text"/>	
(Joint member details if applicable)	First <input type="text"/>	Surname <input type="text"/>	
Email <input type="text"/>			

Volunteer at the Members' Weekend

There are plenty of volunteering opportunities to get involved in at the Members' Weekend. If you wish to volunteer to work at the Members' Weekend please mark in the boxes below, Tuesday the 16th April to Monday 22nd April 2013, the day and times which you would be available. Your details will be passed to the Members' Weekend Staffing Office and you will be contacted nearer the time.

Tue		Wed		Thu		Fri		Sat		Sun	
am	<input type="checkbox"/>	am	<input type="checkbox"/>	am	<input type="checkbox"/>	am	<input type="checkbox"/>	am	<input type="checkbox"/>	am	<input type="checkbox"/>
pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	pm	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please return the completed form to:

Members' Weekend 2013 Registration, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 4LW.

Closing date for pre-registration is Friday 22nd March 2013

Branch diary

Diary of the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA

- **Sun 3rd March** – GBG Selection Meeting – Bristol County Sports Club (opposite the Gryphon) 12.15pm.
- **Thurs 7th March** – POTY Survey Trip – Pubs to be confirmed – depart Cornubia 6:45pm.
- **Wed 13th March** – Committee Meeting – 8pm, venue tbc.
- **Thurs 14th – Sat 16th March** – Bristol Beer Festival.
- **Thurs 21st March** – BADRAG gathering – Hope & Anchor, 7.30pm.
- **Wed 27th March** – Branch Meeting – Anchor, Thornbury 8pm.
- **Thurs 28th March** – Bristol Pubs Group Meeting – Robin Hood, St Michael's Hill (upstairs), 7pm.
- **Wed 10th April** – Committee Meeting – 8pm, venue tbc.
- **Wed 24th April** – Branch Meeting – Horts, 8pm.
- **Sat 27th April** – East Bristol Mild Trail – See BADRAG article on page 20.
- **Wed 8th May** – Committee Meeting – 8pm, venue tbc.
- **Sat 11th May** – Bedminster & Harbourside Mild Trail – See BADRAG article on page 20.
- **Thurs 16th May** – Kingsdown Mild Trail and BADRAG Meeting – See BADRAG article on page 20.
- **Sat 18th May** – South Glos Mild Trail – See BADRAG article on page 20.
- **Wed 22nd May** – Quarterly Branch Meeting – Horts, 8pm.
- **Thurs 23rd May** – Bristol Pubs Group Meeting – Golden Guinea, 19 Guinea Street, BS1 6SX, 7pm.
- **Sat 25th May** – Clifton Mild Trail – See BADRAG article on page 20.

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.com 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)

Young Members' Bristol Social

● It seems there is a stirring of interest from Young Members (YMs) in the greater South West region of CAMRA. Not only Bristol but also Gloucestershire and Wiltshire YMs think that a dedicated social held in Bristol would be a good thing. So anybody who is interested in a get-together in late spring please let me know on badyoungmembercontact@gmail.com.

Roy Sanders

Twitter & Facebook

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

Thanks to this issue's contributors

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

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

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

Bristol: 0117 9223444 / S. Glos: 01454 624000

Glos: 01452 426201 / N. Somerset: 01934 888802

B.A.N.E.S: 01225 396755

or visit www.tradingstandards.gov.uk

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Bath & Borders diary

Thursday 7th 8:30pm. A social at the Victoria Pub and Kitchen, Upper Bristol Rd, Bath (formally the New Westhall).

Tuesday 12th 8:30pm. A social at the Three Horseshoes, Chapmanslade, Somerset.

Thursday 21st 8:30pm. A mini crawl starting at the Bell at Standerwick, on to the Full Moon at Rudge, and then, maybe, the Kicking Donkey at Brockerswood.

Tuesday 26th 8:30pm. The Branch Meeting at the Fox and Hounds, Warminster.

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 30

Severn Vale diary and contact

See page 35

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A Campaign

of Two Halves



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REAL ALE**

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Complete the Direct Debit form below and you will receive 15 months membership for the price of 12 and a fantastic discount on your membership subscription.

Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit www.camra.org.uk/joinus or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to Membership Department, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

Your Details

Title _____ Surname _____

Forename(s) _____

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

Email address _____

Tel No(s) _____

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title _____ Surname _____

Forename(s) _____

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

	Direct Debit	Non DD
Single Membership (UK & EU)	£23 <input type="checkbox"/>	£25 <input type="checkbox"/>

Joint Membership (Partner at the same address)	£28 <input type="checkbox"/>	£30 <input type="checkbox"/>
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For Young Member and concessionary rates please visit www.camra.org.uk or call **01727 867201**.

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

I enclose a cheque for _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Applications will be processed within 21 days

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01/06

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Name(s) of Account Holder

Branch Sort Code

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Name

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