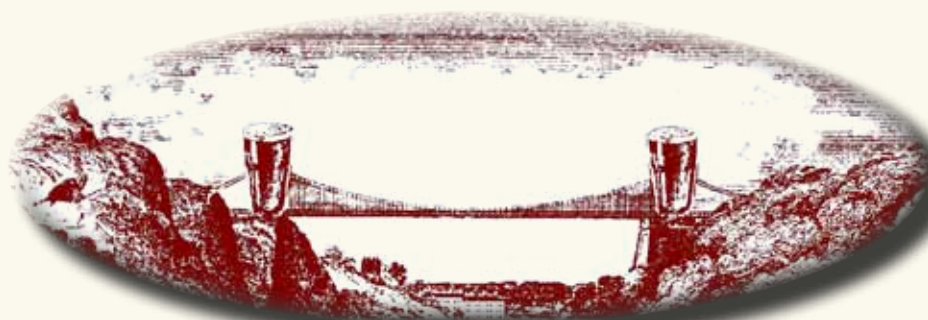




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# PINTS WEST

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



## Stitch 'n Bitch 'n Ale



# Pints West named best CAMRA magazine for second year running



## Pints West: best in the country (again!)

Bristol & District's *Pints West* was declared overall CAMRA branch magazine of the year for the second year running at a packed national members' weekend and conference in Norwich in April 2013.

The award was presented to editor Steve Plumridge, who was attending with several other members of the Bristol & District branch. Presenting the award, CAMRA director Jackie Parker said, "Branch magazines are essential for campaigning and a fabulous place to celebrate local pubs. These magazines are a credit to the unpaid volunteers who produce them."

"CAMRA members put a great deal of time, effort and dedication into producing branch magazines and newsletters", she said, adding that the judges singled out *Pints West* not least for the quality of its articles on both local and national issues.

We often receive unsolicited comments on the quality of *Pints West*, in person, by email and post, in pubs and at beer and cider festivals, but it is the icing on the cake to receive the national award two years running. So thank you to all the contributors who help make *Pints West* the informative and engaging read (and key campaigning publication) that it is. Many thanks too, to the advertisers, without whose financial support we would be unable to print the magazine.

Highland and Western Isles' *What's yours then?* and Solway's *Ale Tales* shared the honours for award for the most improved branch magazine.

Lesly Huxley

*Pictured, from left to right, are Pints West editor Steve Plumridge, West Pennines regional director Ray Jackson, CAMRA national director Jackie Parker, and Scotland & Northern Ireland director Lindsay Grant.*

## ADVERTISE IN PINTS WEST

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# Beer Duty Escalator scrapped!

As many people will be aware, the dreaded 'beer duty escalator' (BDE) was scrapped in the recent budget. This decision is a triumph for all the fantastic CAMRA members who have worked hard to spread the message of the campaign – by gathering support, signing the Parliamentary e-petition, attending the mass lobby and meeting with their MPs.

The BDE policy was introduced by the last Labour Government and imposed an annual increase in beer duty of 2% above the annual rate of inflation year on year. As we have lost about 7,000 pubs in the last few years, to impose this onerous tax on the mainstay of most pubs, i.e. beer in all of its forms, was ludicrous to say the least.

Since the escalator was introduced in 2008, beer tax has increased by 42%, driving up the cost of a pint and driving consumers away from their local pubs.

Yes, there are many other reasons why pub visiting has declined in recent years, but to impose this excessive tax, every year, has exacerbated the problem to a significant extent.

CAMRA has been lobbying on the issue for a long time – to get a fairer tax regime on beer duty. In 2012, CAMRA organised a national e-petition. The aim was to achieve 100,000 signatures on the petition to force a Parliamentary debate on the issue of the BDE. The magic 100,000 figure was reached – in fact, it got to almost 110,000 before the petition was closed. A debate was held in the House of Commons and there was overwhelming support from MPs to get the BDE scrapped.

Following on from the debate, CAMRA then organised a national day of action on 12<sup>th</sup> December. This resulted in around 1,200 CAMRA members descending on Westminster, meeting with MPs and holding a mass rally at which CAMRA members and several MPs spoke against the escalator, including Bristol's own MP for Bristol North West, Charlotte Leslie. Bristol & District CAMRA took about two dozen members to the lobby.

CAMRA put a lot of effort and resource in an attempt to get the BDE scrapped and on the day of the budget the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced:



***"I intend to maintain the planned rise for all alcohol duties – with the exception of beer."***

***We will now scrap the beer duty escalator altogether. And instead of the 3p rise in beer duty tax planned for this year I am cancelling it altogether."***

***That's the freeze people have been campaigning for. But I'm going to go one step further and I am going to cut beer duty by 1p."***

***We're taking a penny off a pint."***

Some media have said: big deal, a penny off a pint. They miss the point that without the BDE being scrapped, beer duty and therefore prices would have *increased* by a lot more than a penny.

This, in isolation, will not stop the threat to pubs. However, the situation would have been far worse, and cost you and me more money for our pint, had the BDE been used this year and carried on in future years.

CAMRA is lobbying to get more done to protect community pubs and help consumers get a better deal.

We also hope that the industry – that's both breweries and pub companies – will not only cease any further beer prices increases for as long as possible but also consider cutting the price of beer where possible to make pub going a little more affordable. Some have already done so.

You may wish to raise a toast to CAMRA in the meantime with a pint of beer – in a pub of course.

Pete Bridle

## Stitch 'n Bitch 'n Ale at the Red Lion

There's an exciting new ale event in town: Stitch 'n Bitch 'n Ale. Every Tuesday from 7pm you can find a cheerful bunch of folk at the **Red Lion** in Whitehall, Bristol (BS5) who like to have a natter while stitching, hooking and knitting.

When I joined the friendly gang on its inaugural event there was the usual fine selection of ales on offer, all in tip-top condition. On the pump were Marble Spring (4.6%), Towles Chocolate Stout (6.9%), Stroud Big Cat (4.5%) and Cotswold Spring Keeper (5.2%). On the stitching front we saw a knitted baby jacket, felted lavender bags and cross stitch which held no punches, along with several references to long-unfinished scarves (we've all got one!).

The Red Lion is a pub that really serves its community with silent film nights, regular bands and DJs, pool nights and free (yes free – first pint out of a barrel is normally offered free) and discounted beer (Happy Mondays see ales at £2.50 a pint). A sunny yard out the back can be used to store your bike or just enjoy a swift one in the warmth. Adding to all this we now find that us yarners are being encouraged. Stitch 'n Bitch events are an



international phenomenon, but not nearly enough of them are held in pubs. This new event is spot on in helping combine several passions: yarn, nattering and ale drinking.

It doesn't matter what your stitching skills are so dive into your stash and grab your needles or hooks. Bring along that button that needs sewing on, that scarf you've been meaning to finish, or that sock with a heel that just won't turn, and join in the stitchin' n bitchin' n drinkin' at the Red Lion.

Helen Featherstone



# New nano-brewery started in Yate

A new nano-brewery has been set up in Yate by Richard Poole. A scientist by trade, Richard has been a keen home brewer for 16 years and is an active member of the home-brewing club, Bristol Craft Brewers.

The brewery, too small even to call a micro-brewery, is located in Richard's garage. Work started last October to convert the garage into a fully functioning production brewery, and since then he has sealed the floors and ceiling, and painted the walls before installing a half-barrel (80-litre) plant. The legal paperwork has also taken a great deal of time.

Richard (pictured) started commercial brewing in April 2013 and his initial plans are to bottle all his brews and sell them from several outlets, including Raisin Fine Wines in Bath, West Country Ales in Somerset and local farmers markets (the first being the morning of 1st June 2013 at Chipping Sodbury) before hopefully expanding his market outlets to include local pubs, social clubs and off licences. Richard also has plans to be equipped to supply local beer festivals.



The name of the brewery is **Rocket Science Craft Ales**, which combines Richards's interest in space and the planets with the science and craft of brewers. All beers will be named on the space theme.

His first commercially available brew is called **Jet Black**, a black IPA. The following brew is **IO PA**, a heavily hopped American IPA. (Io is the name of one of the moons of Jupiter.)



During my visit to Richard's brewery, I was lucky to have a taste of his Hefeweizen beer, which was very good, and also tried his excellent multi-flavoured Saison style beer, which may appear in the future.

Richard grows his own hops (Target, Progress and Cascade) in his garden which he plans to use in seasonal brews. Also several years ago he grew and malted his own barley for brewing as an experiment. While he admitted this was not a great success, he learnt a lot from the process. His personal brewing accolades include Bristol Beer Factory homebrew champion in 2010 and 2012 (for **Mountain Goat IPA** and **Bête Noire** respectively), and first place in the IPA category in the 2011 National Homebrew competition.

The brewery uses local water which is treated before use, with several different yeasts being used in the various brews. After fermentation the brews are cold-conditioned before bottling. None of the beers are fined, filtered or pasteurised, allowing any remaining yeasts to help add condition while it is in the bottle. Richard is hopeful of gaining the CAMRA bottle-conditioned accreditation in the future.

Although the plan is just to produce bottled beer to start with, considering the small scale of the operation, Richard did say he hoped to be able to supply beer in casks for beer festivals.

So watch this 'spaceship' for exciting beers in the coming year.

Steve Matthews

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# News from Butcombe Brewery

## Beers

In addition to Butcombe's permanent cask beers – **Butcombe Bitter** (4.0%), **Butcombe Gold** (4.4%) and **Adam Henson's Rare Breed** (4.2%) – Mendip Spring was re-born this May as **Matthew Pale Ale** (3.8%) and will become the fourth permanent beer from now on.

Matthew Pale Ale is brewed using local Mendip spring water and English Maris Otter malt. The beer is grounded in the versatile English Challenger hop but is given its distinctive floral taste by the American Amarillo hops added at the end of the brewing process. The beer has fresh citrus notes and a clean, dry finish. The beer (in its previous incarnation as Butcombe's seasonal Mendip Spring) was the SIBA Gold Medal Winner for its class in 2011.

The latest seasonal ale from Butcombe is **Great Grey Owl** (3.6%), an all American hopped American Pale Ale. This is the beer for June, July and August.

For September, October and November there will be **Haka** (4.5%). This was originally going to be called Silver Fern and is a New Zealand hopped beer. It will replace Brunel IPA.

## Brewery tours

Butcombe brewery tours for groups of 25 to 40 run every Tuesday and Thursday for 10 months of the year and now individuals can also book a tour on the new once-a-month open tours. Although summer tours are booked, later dates can be booked by phoning (01934 863963) or via the web site ([www.butcombe.com](http://www.butcombe.com)). You can also take a virtual tour of the brewery by visiting the 'brewery' tab of the web site.

## Open day

The date for the next Butcombe open day has been confirmed as Saturday 25th September. The event promises to be bigger than ever, with music, food, tips, free beer and brewery tours.

## Butcombe Bytes

Butcombe have launched a new quarterly e-magazine called Butcombe Bytes. This is intended to offers news and exclusive content as well as giving away a series of great prizes to some lucky subscribers. Anyone can subscribe to this by visiting the Butcombe web site.

*Nigel Morris*

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# Bristol Beer Festival

The sixteenth annual CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival took place this year from Thursday 14th to Saturday 16th March at Brunel's Old Station at Temple Meads. There was an excellent range of around 140 different real ales from near and far on sale over the course of the festival with a good selection of beers still available right to the end. There were also around 50 ciders and perries, with an increased volume ordered this year to ensure that we didn't run out before the end of the Saturday evening session.

After so many years it's easy to consider the Bristol Beer Festival as just being routine, however it does take a lot of advance organising and many hours of work at the event to make it all happen – all put in by unpaid CAMRA volunteers and much of it unseen by customers. It's just as well that we all enjoy it so much. Unfortunately there was a slight delay with opening to the public on Thursday evening and we would like to apologise to anyone that was inconvenienced by this. Lessons



have been learned!

This year tickets sold well on-line for the Thursday evening session (which was added in 2012) and Saturday evening. However, despite the high demand for the other sessions there were still some tickets remaining unsold for the Thursday evening session and the branch will continue to keep this under review.

The winner of the 'LocAle of the Festival' competition was **Arbor Ales Yakima Valley** and the runner-up was **Bristol Beer Factory Southville Hop**.

The amount of money raised for charity this year was over £1,200 and this was split equally between the Julian Trust and Prostate Cancer UK.

We would like to thank all the advertisers and our main sponsors for supporting this year's festival – Wye Valley Brewery (festival glasses), **St Austell Brewery** (staff T-shirts), the **Bristol Beer Factory** (tokens), and **Bath Ales** for their help with the stillage.

If anyone would like to assist with organising the 2014 Bristol Beer Festival, we are likely to start that process around the end of September this year.

*Richard Brooks*

## Jerry says: “For real cider and perry, seek out local pubs and festivals”



CAMRA beer festivals and local pub festivals are good places to look for interesting ranges of real ciders and perries. There is no shortage of choice of festivals in Bristol and surrounding districts and, as Jerry Fletcher, Bristol and District CAMRA's cider aficionado, says: “Pubs

in our area have also recently been ‘upping their game’ and featuring a couple of real ciders and perries alongside the real ale on the bar.”

Jerry recently visited the inaugural Gloucester CAMRA Beer Festival and sampled several of the ciders available. “My particular favourite was Rosie's Wicked Wasp, a cider made in Wrexham with Bramley apples and fermented in a whisky cask, giving this cider a very distinctive flavour. Unfortunately I have yet to see this cider in Bristol, but definitely one to look out for.”

Over the past few weeks, Jerry has also been on the detective trail on your behalf to see what's on offer in several hostelrys in central Bristol – although as Jerry cautions, ciders and perries are often changing ‘guests’ in pubs, so you may not find exactly the same as he did.

“Beginning with the **Cornubia** in Temple Street, I was fortunate enough to find a cider that I hadn't previously had before. This was Jack Ratt from the Lyme Bay Cider company based in Axminster Devon. With a 6% ABV this is a dry-medium cider with a very pleasant taste. Also on in the Cornubia was Broadoak's Bristol Ruby Port cider, another 6%, a hazy red cider with a slight medium-dry sparkle.

The **Seven Stars** also has a good changing range of real ciders and perries. On a recent visit I started with an Oliver's perry from Herefordshire. If you're interested in how perry is made, Tom Oliver has posted a video clip on YouTube. I then moved on to a glass of Rich's Legbender cider from Highbridge which has a 6% ABV. Again this is a

very pleasant drink.

“The next pub visited was the **Bank**, where I had a pint of Gwynt y Draig's Celt Warrior which has a 5.5 % ABV. Thatchers Traditional was also on sale. This is a popular pub in John Street, central Bristol, where the small cider choice again changes regularly. The pub also has a festival on in August when it will have up to twenty ciders available. Please refer to the Bank for further details on this.

“Another visit took in the **Commercial Rooms** in Corn Street, where I supped another cider from Gwynt y Draig – Black Dragon – a cider rich in body and colour with a very fruity aroma. Also on sale were Weston's Old Rosie, made of course in Much Marcle, Herefordshire, and Thatcher's Cheddar Valley at 6% ABV. I often wondered how Weston's named Old Rosie; with several ideas being suggested, this warranted a closer inspection on the internet which has revealed that Westons named it after an old Aveling Porter steam engine that Weston's owned.

“At **Start the Bus** in Baldwin Street there were two ciders on sale: Weston's Old Rosie medium dry at 7.3% ABV, and Weston's Traditional Old Scrumpy at 6% ABV. My final visit was to the **Apple** barge at Welsh Back, the ‘pub’ with probably the biggest choice in the centre of Bristol with seven ciders available. Some of these are regulars, others are changed from time to time. The ciders tried here included Old Bristolian made by Broadoak – all too easy to sup but, be careful, it is 8.4% ABV! Next I tried a glass of Wilkins Dry at 6% ABV, and finished with a pint of Hecks Kingston Black at 6.5 % ABV. The other ciders on offer were Thatcher's Cheddar Valley, Rich's Medium (6% ABV), Sheppy's Sweet (also 6%), and Happy Daze at 4.5% ABV.”

So, it seems that there's no excuse not to sample a real cider or perry if you're visiting pubs in central Bristol. He has given some excellent pointers, so why not do as Jerry says and seek one out!

*Lesly Huxley*

# Branch 'Pub of the Year' and 'LocAle of the Festival' awards

On Thursday 14th March at the Bristol Beer Festival, the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA announced the results of our 'Pub of the Year' competition and the 'LocAle of the Festival' competition.

The winner of Bristol & District CAMRA Pub of the Year is the **Plough** at Congresbury, who were unfortunately not present at the time of the announcement. The runner-up is the **Severn Stars**, in Redcliffe, and Darren and Paul (pictured on the left) were fortunately available to receive the temporary version of the certificate.

The winner of the LocAle of the Festival competition was **Arbor Ales Yakima Valley** and the runner-up was **Bristol Beer Factory Southville Hop** – evidently the judges weren't afraid of strong, hoppy beers this year. Representatives from Arbor Ales and the Bristol Beer Factory were on hand to receive their temporary certificates.

The branch will be presenting the official versions of all four of these certificates shortly and more extensive coverage will appear in the next edition of Pints West.

Richard Brooks



## News from Arbor Ales

Arbor Ales brewery, based in Lawrence Hill Industrial Park, Bristol, now boasts three full-time staff – Jon Comer (head brewer), Paul Worsley (brewer), Ollie Leach (general assistant, bottler and apprentice brewer) – and one part-time, namely Megan (sales).

Production is now of the order of 30 brewer's barrels per week. Head brewer Jon Comer was unable, off the top of his head, to estimate the number of outlets now taking his beers but did say that the general trend is now for fewer outlets taking larger quantities, less being handled by wholesalers and more regular accounts. In addition to this Arbor Ales has reciprocal trading and distribution agreements with more than 20 other microbreweries. With around 1,000 casks now in regular circula-

tion, the production of cask ales is likely to have reached a plateau – future growth is expected in bottle-conditioned and keg beers. Like it or not, this expanding market is highly profitable. Not only is a charge for the one-way container included in the sale price, but also time and resources are saved in cask washing. However, cask ales will always remain the main business.

The brewery has scooped several awards recently. **Breakfast Stout** (7.4% ABV) was judged National Champion Speciality Bottle-Conditioned Beer at the SIBA National contest. **Yakima Valley** (7.3%) was LocAle Beer of the Festival at the CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival and also won Gold in the cask ales at SIBA South-West in Tucker's Malting, Newton Abbot where Silver was won by both **Mild West** (3.6%) and **Goo-Goo g'Joob** (11%).

At the end of April a beer festival took place in the Hanging Bat, Edinburgh for which Arbor was asked to contribute 20 ales. Six were cask-conditioned and the remaining 14 keg. The next 'Freestyle Fridays' ale, number 36, will be a 'Saison' – a style based on the historic farmhouse winter-brewed light ales of Wallonia (French-speaking area of Belgium). Modern examples of the species are usually around 6% ABV and similar in taste to a wheat beer. Jon intends to use the culture from this beer to propagate a yeast capable of fermenting a 14% ABV stout! A recent example of the 'Freestyle Friday' genre was a delicious 6% **Lime in the Coconut IPA**. The current one, at the time of writing, is **Greenhorn**, a bottle-conditioned ale.

A re-branding exercise has taken place. The maple leaf logo remains but all the pump clips and bottle labels now have a colour coding indicating the style of beer. The layout has been revised and is now cleaner, neater and easier to read. The regular beer range has also been revamped. **Blue Sky Drinking** (4.4%) is an English best bitter with an engaging and slightly sour astringency intended to replace **Brigstow** outside the Bristol area.

When bottling the stronger beers it was found that the yeast strains used in the brewing were incapable of continuing to work in the bottle. Therefore it is necessary to condition these ales in containers from which the liquid, when ready, is expelled by means of CO<sub>2</sub> gas applied at the top. In this way a little of the gas dissolves into the beer and gives it condition in the bottle; were the bottle to be filled by gravity the beer would have a very short shelf life. The conditioning vessels in use at the moment only hold 19 litres and so several have to be filled at the same time. Conditioning normally takes a week but it can be "forced" in a little as two days. The process will be less labour intensive once a five-barrel plastic tank has been commissioned and a gang-headed bottling machine installed.

As a follow-up to the collaboration between Arbor and Moor, **Double Dark Alliance** (9.3%) is to be brewed in conjunction with Moor Brewery and Clifton Coffee. This will be a well-hopped coffee stout and will be available in mid-June.

Henry Davies



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# Time for a Redcliffe Renaissance?

Things are moving fast in Bristol these days and a recent newspaper article sparked my interest; the newly elected Mayor was seeking to incorporate Redcliffe Way into the new Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone and I wondered if this could save the much abused Bell in Prewett Street. It then made me think about the remnants of the public houses left in St Philip's Marsh.

So, I set out one rainy Sunday afternoon to explore with fellow Bristol Pubs Group member and intrepid ace photographer, Tim Belsten.



Looking down Prewett Street, this first shot shows three centuries worth of architecture.

In the distance at Temple Gate is the scaffolded Victorian George and Railway Hotel. The 18th-century Bell is in the middle and adjacent is one of the last remaining Art Deco buildings in town, the former 1930's Palais de Danse (as an aside, could this be restored as well and used as a much needed community centre for Redcliffe?).



Is it too late for the Bell in Prewett Street? The one-time Blue Bell had its own brewery. This venerable pub dates back to the early 1700's and is associated with many of the area's old industries, including a bell foundry, that once thrived amongst the populace.

The ornate and unique bow windows on the ground floor once earned the pub a listing but since these were altered interest has been lost in them and the gaping holes in the roof are ominous.



When surveying the pub, Tim and I came across this piece of graffiti on the 'capital' skittle alley. Is it a Banksy? Probably not, but if it were it would be worth more than the pub! The skittle alley used to be one of the longest and oldest in Bristol but during WWII the Luftwaffe shortened it. Even so, it's still a long 'un.

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Here's the George and Railway Hotel on its island site just outside of Temple Meads station and alongside the Brunel mile (formerly the site of a viaduct for the docks railway).

This listed pub's future, along with its statuary and finials, seems secure as it has been protected by scaffolding for about a decade. Originally built in Georgian times, the Victorians maximised the potential of its location by turning it into a hotel and adding the railway sobriquet to its title.

An old trade card proclaims: "...Adjoining the Station...Family and Commercial Hotel...Open for all Trains...Night Porter in Attendance...Excellent stabling...A first class billiard room...E.Richards, Proprietress." Did Robert Louis Stevenson sleep here on his one night in Bristol?

If the pub's interior were to match its exterior it could be Bristol's answer to London's St Pancras Hotel and we would indeed have a treasure on our hands.



Around the back of Temple Meads is the Cattle Market Tavern on Cattle Market Road. First licensed in 1831, it was pulled down and rebuilt in 1915 after the GWR expanded Temple Meads over the market, which must have been huge. This substantial structure looks in pretty good nick and would be very handy for the forthcoming Bristol Arena.



This three-quarter view of the Tavern shows its large extent and some of the curtain walls from the former cattle market. The pub used to belong to the market and had a licence for six days a week, open all day on a Thursday, which was market day. On these days the pub used to get packed, with overspill being catered for over the river in the long gone Rising Sun in Cheese Lane.



On into the Marsh proper now and to the currently named Old Fox Diner, formerly the Fox, on the corner of Victoria Street and Chapel Street. It's the last surviving of the seven pubs which used to serve the 6,000 people that inhabited St Philip's Marsh. A proud island race, they were vanquished in the 1950's when Bristol Corporation designated the area an industrial zone.



In its scaffolding frame, the inn sign reflects the building's heritage and I asked the café's manageress, Ann, what lay in store for it. She said the pub's licence had been maintained and that in the summer they were hoping to do more of a pub offering with bottles of wine and canned beer. The scaffold was up for maintenance and to give the pub a much needed coat of paint. Ann was also hoping to exploit the venue's secret garden.

I liked the change of name which harked back to some long since vanished architectural gems which once stood in Redcliffe Street – gone but not forgotten.

In conclusion, with new money coming back into Temple Quarter, could people with vision please come forward and make use of these rare survivors and maximise their potential?

*Mark Steeds (photos by Tim Belsten)*

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# BRISTOL PUBS GROUP

The Bristol & District CAMRA Pubs Campaigning Group – or Bristol Pubs Group for short – was formed in response to the growing number of pubs in the Bristol area closing or being drastically altered. The Group was launched formally in 2008 with the support of local councillors, members of the trade and the media.

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



## Pub news

It's always exciting when we hear of brand new pubs and in this issue I can report on such. On King Street in the centre of Bristol the **Beer Emporium** is to open around the end of June offering cask real ales alongside a range of kegged and bottled beers. The Croft music venue in Stokes Croft has closed and the owners of the Lanes in Nelson Street have taken it on with the plan to open it up as a beer bar called **Crofter's Rights**. Not new but having undergone a full transformation, the **Barley Mow** in The Dings has reopened with an increased beer range, now with eight real ale handpumps and a variety of interesting kegged beers and bottled on offer. Expect many of the beers to be from the excellent owners, the Bristol Beer Factory.

So much for that bit of excitement. On Stapleton Road the **Stapleton Road Tavern** is undergoing conversion and is unlikely to appear as a pub again, and the **Old Fox** in St. Philips has become a cafe/diner (though still retaining its pub licence). In the Eastville area the **White Lion** has had its planning application to convert to housing approved, and the **Greenbank** remains closed and under threat of demolition.

Towards the west of the city the **Cotham Porter Stores** has been the subject of a busy selling process but its fate is not known at the time of writing. The **Plume of Feathers** in Hotwells is another pub being converted into housing, while the **Adam & Eve** has been closed and 'To Let'. Another pub to let but still open is the wonderful **Shakespeare** in Redland.

Just across Whiteladies Road, near the Downs, the **Coach & Horses** in Highland Square is offering a CAMRA discount on its ever-changing selection of real ales. CAMRA discount is also now being offered by the **Ember Inns** pub chain. Overlooking the Clifton suspension bridge, the **Grapes** in Clifton has been placed on the market where its freehold can be obtained for around £395,000 (plus VAT). Other freeholds for sale are the **Bourne End** at Henbury, the **Air Balloon** at St. George and the **Lamplighters** at Shirehampton. 'Sold subject to contract' are the **Scotchman and his Pack** at the bottom of St. Michael's Hill near the city centre and the **Chequers** at Hanham, whilst a planning application has been submitted to demolish both the **Harriers** in Hartcliffe and the **Long Cross** in Lawrence Weston. Totterdown's family of six pubs looks set to reduce to five as the **Bush** converts to a day nursery or similar while in Brislington a Greene King new-build **Hungry Horse** is taking shape on the old bus works site.

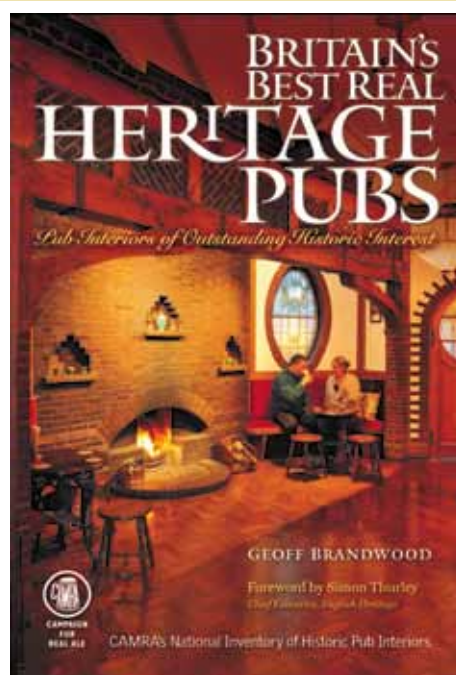
In Keynsham the former **Pioneer** could well be a restaurant by the time you read this, and a free-of-tie private lease is offered on the **Old Bank**. At Banwell the **Bell** has re-opened and offers up to four real ales (so far Teignworthy, Butcombe, Everard, St. Austell, Dartmoor and Forge have been seen amongst others) and at Clutton the Warwick Arms is now a Mezza restaurant (**Mezza at the Warwick Arms**) but can provide a drink at the bar for the non-dining visitor. Sadly the **New Inn** at Priddy has closed where the plan is, we are told, to convert into a house and holiday lets, and to build an additional house in the garden.

The **Parkway Tavern** in Stoke Gifford has closed and is boarded up; expect a conversion here. The **Star** in Frampton Cotterell is also closed and has changed hands, and is in danger of permanent loss. In Kingswood the **Anchor Made Forever** is boarded up, the **Royal Archer** is 'To Let' and

the **Highwayman** has been granted planning permission for the site to be developed for housing and retail. As if that is not bad, enough the **Queen's Head** at Willsbridge has also gained permission from South Gloucestershire Council to convert into a private house. Further out of town the **Carpenter's Arms** at Wick is closed and boarded, but the **Griffin** at Bridgegate has enjoyed a spruce up and is open once again for food and drinks.

As per the opening paragraph of this report, there are some positive things happening in our local pubs and much reason for celebration, but note that around 70% of the pubs mentioned in the preceding text are either directly threatened or subject to a potential change of use if a new owner or leaseholder decides to do something different. Give pubs a chance and keep your support in place. Happy pubbing!

Mike Jackson, for Bristol Pubs Group



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# Time's up for the Queen's Head

On 25th April 2013, South Gloucestershire Council's planning committee signed the death warrant for the Queen's Head, Willsbridge. They approved a planning application to convert this ale house into a family home, denying the public the right to appreciate and enjoy the very rare and historic features which have always given the pub a character of her own.

The Queen's Head was originally a 17th century house where the home brewing of ale took place. By 1719 it was licensed premises and had remained a pub ever since. It had been used as a court leet on occasions in the 18th century, and later a postal receiving house. It was also the only pub in the ward. This was one of the very few in our area to once meet the criteria for entry in CAMRA's *National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors* (284 in total nationally). Its original interior fabric and layout had been preserved. In 2008, a partition was removed without planning permission. After its replacement, the pub was reallocated to the *South Western Regional Inventory*.

Regular readers will know this pub has been closed and re-opened on a number of occasions in recent years. While it was owned by a pub company (pubco) it could not be operated profitably enough by any of the licensees who ran it. After its last closure in 2010, the building was offered for sale free of tie. In this guise it had a chance of success, as several interested parties in the trade showed by offering to purchase it.

CAMRA also heard that some local residents were keen to seek funding and buy the Queen's Head on a shared basis to operate as a pub. However, once a planning application to convert it to a house was submitted, some of the people living closest seem to have been in favour of this. There were five letters of support and seven objections, including one from Bristol Pubs Group and some from individual members of CAMRA.

The applicants' agent claimed that: "Christie and Co arranged 16 viewings of the premises and received four offers. In each case the offers were made on the basis of change of use to residential. Christie and Co have not received any offers based on retaining the premises as a pub." However before Bristol Pubs Group were aware of the planning application,

one person wrote an objection to it, stating he had put in an offer to run the pub which was higher than the applicants'. We are now aware of three other potential purchasers who wanted to run the Queen's Head as a pub, two of whom were existing pub operators. One made an offer and would still have been prepared to buy, but the other two did not because of concerns about the cost of restoration, given the building's listed status.

These interested parties obviously believed that the pub could make a profit if it was run free of tie.

Before the planning hearing, both the planning officer and the conservation officer for South Glos Council recommended that the application be refused, primarily because "It has not been adequately demonstrated that the site would be incapable of supporting its use as a public house". Thus the application was in breach of planning policies RT11 (viability and alternative facilities nearby) and L13 (historical significance). Potential viability was of critical importance. A second planning application concerned internal alterations which would destroy the historic plan form of the ground floor; refusal was also recommended for this application as it breached national guidance.

At the planning hearing, the applicant spoke in favour, claiming that



the Queen's Head was no longer viable as a pub and describing her and her partner's desire to turn it into a family home for themselves. She also said: "We believe [the objector who offered to buy] is a member of CAMRA" and: "Was this offer made solely to give the impression that this building still had a chance as a pub?" There is no truth in either of these speculations.

Objectors from Bristol Pubs Group were then allowed to speak; however it seemed to us that our comments were totally ignored. The committee responded as though their minds were already made up before the meeting. Their opinions were that the pub was not required, and not a loss to the area (even though it was the only one in the area, and would have created employment). A councillor also suggested that not serving meals, and having the historic plan form of a central corridor with small rooms for drinking, were both obstacles to viability and out of touch with modern pub culture.

After applicant and objectors have made their initial presentations the committee procedure does not allow the public to speak again to correct inaccurate or contentious statements made by members of the committee. Unfortunately there were a few of these.

One councillor said he could not find a definition of 'viability' in planning terms. CAMRA members who were present had with them a copy of its publication the *Public House Viability Test*, but there was no opportunity to draw this to the attention of the councillor who seemed to need it.

Bristol City Council aims to adopt CAMRA's *Public House Viability Test*; it is to be hoped that all the other local councils will follow suit on this.

Tim Belsten  
With thanks to Paul Townsend  
for some historic details on [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)  
Photos by Lesly Huxley and Tim Belsten





# News from Nailsea and District

Welcome to some new licensees in Nailsea community pubs. At the **Sawyers Arms** a local couple, Ali and John Hooper, have taken on the lease, and another local couple, Jane Badman and John Lindsay, have taken on the **White Lion**.

A recent notice in the window of the extended **Courtyard Wine Bar** suggests it is due to reopen in June 2013. The freehold sale of Punch Tavern's **Friendship Inn** is under offer as a pub at the time of writing.

Gemma Davidson and Andy Jones at the **Blue Flame** in Nailsea West End are undertaking some improvements that will not ruin the rustic charm of this hostelry. Access to the garden from the pub has been improved and an extra room will soon be brought into use that will double the bar seating area.

In Backwell, welcome to Pam Whitmarsh, Jayne Nash, and Wendy Hulbert who have taken the lease following a refurbishment by Punch Taverns of the **Rising Sun**, the only community pub in the village. Across the road we welcome Francesco, the new lessee of the **New Inn**, a gastro pub and restaurant where, according to their website ([www.thenewinnatbackwell.co.uk](http://www.thenewinnatbackwell.co.uk)), they offer a "taste of Italy in the heart of Backwell" and a selection of British real ales. In fact they will be having a beer festival from June 28th to 30th, including a pork grill in the pub's garden.

Microbrewery beers are alive and kicking in Wraxall. At the **Old Barn** Dibs and Fiona DeWolfe have Twisted Oak Old Barn and Spun Gold amongst their five regular ales and one guest beer, as well as real cider. On a recent visit to the **Battleaxes**, Three Castles Flatcappers Ale was supplemented by beers from Cheddar Ales and Dawkins Ales. Accommodation is now available at the Battleaxes (see [www.flatcappers.co.uk](http://www.flatcappers.co.uk)).

Note that the bus service through Wraxall does not operate in the evenings or on Sundays. The North Somerset Coaches buses numbers 55 and X54 do stop at Wraxall despite North Somerset Council failing to post information at the bus stops See [www.travelinesw.com](http://www.travelinesw.com) for timetable.

The freehold is advertised for sale (through agents James A Baker at £325,000 plus VAT) of Punch Tavern's **Queens Head** in Nailsea, described as a "traditional local's public house" with the "benefit of two internal trading areas", though worryingly as an "excellent cafe, coffee shop or retail opportunity."

In Flax Bourton the **Dew Drop Inn** is available on a 20-year free-of-tie lease through agents Christie & Co. The agents' web site says the property includes a self-contained manager's cottage and mentions potential for B&B accommodation.

*Laurie Gibney*



The New Inn, Backwell



The Rising Sun, Backwell

## Saving Your Local

On 11th May, Bristol Pubs Group were among 45 CAMRA members attending a Save Your Local [pubs] workshop. This was held at the **Barton Arms** in Aston, Birmingham.



Kicking off at 12:30 the subjects covered included national planning guidelines, Local Development Frameworks (new local planning policies), nominating pubs as Assets of Community Value (ACVs), Local Listing of the buildings, a range of funds for communities to buy their local pub and CAMRA's Public House Viability Test. Members exchanged their opinions and experiences of methods both used and avoided when campaigning to save pubs under threat. On return from the



meeting, some subjects were immediately put on the agenda for Bristol Pubs Group's next meeting.

A nice additive to the chosen venue and date was a mini beer festival being held (at a flat £2.80 per pint) in a National Inventory pub. I strongly recommend visiting this pub to admire its splendour, if in the area.

*Tim Belsten*



# Small is beautiful

In the last issue of Pints West we showed a photo, reproduced here, of Mike and Leanne posing with the Great Western Brewery (GWB) delivery vehicle. We asked, "Could any brewery possibly have a smaller dray?"

Well how about Gloucester Brewery's delivery vehicle?



Duncan Illsley of Gloucester Brewery takes the trike for a spin



Gloucester Brewery is located in the heart of the historic Gloucester Docks and its range of ales is currently stocked in about 20 pubs, shops and restaurants within pedalling distance – and all of these outlets now receive delivery by trike!

The trike is apparently proving to be a real head turner around town. It can accommodate six casks of real ale at once, each cask weighing approximately 50kg. That's less than they otherwise might be, though, as their casks are made of 100% recyclable plastic, somewhat lighter than the normal steel casks. The brewery is delivering up to 25% of a week's deliveries by trike, significantly reducing their carbon footprint – something which is close to their heart. ("We are committed to building a sustainable business model by reducing our carbon emissions and limiting our impact on the environment.")

Gloucester Brewery's beers are, of course, not only available in Gloucester, and for deliveries further afield they have to resort to using a van. A round trip to Bristol by trike, for instance, might prove just a little too taxing on the old leg muscles. It would make an interesting challenge though: as Beverley Booth of Gloucester Brewery says, "Staff fitness levels have improved significantly and leg muscles have doubled in size since using the trike."

Gloucester Brewery's cask beers include **Dockside Dark** (5.2 %), a 'silky rich ale, warm and chocolaty with a subtle sweetness', **Gloucester Gold** (3.9%), a 'refreshingly crisp, hoppy thirst quenching golden ale', **Mariner** (4.2%), a 'distinctly smooth, malty and hoppy copper ale', and **Priory Pale** (3.7%), a 'refreshing hoppy ale with citrus and tropical notes'.

If you are a Bristol & District CAMRA member (or perhaps even if you aren't), you may be interested to know that we have a trip arranged to Gloucester Brewery on Saturday 6th July. See the branch diary on the inside back page for further information.

SP

*Gloucester Brewery, Llanthony Warehouse, The Docks, Gloucester, GL1 2EH*  
Tel: 07503 152749 or 01452 690541 Email: [gloucesterbrewery@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gloucesterbrewery@yahoo.co.uk)  
Web: [www.gloucesterbrewery.co.uk](http://www.gloucesterbrewery.co.uk)

## News from Towles' Fine Ales

Towles' Fine Ales is a fairly young 10-barrel family-run brewery located in Easton Road, Bristol, and built in the tower style. The brewery equipment was purchased from Berrow Brewery in 2011 when the previous owner retired from brewing.

Some of the Berrow beers continue to be brewed, along with an ever-expanding range of their own beers. The aim is "to produce traditional beers of a consistent high quality."

Beers currently available are **Chocolate Stout** (6.9%), brewed with Fair Trade cocoa nibs from Beese's Riverside Bar & Tea Gardens (they are producing their own range of chocolate); **Gregory's Gold** (3.1%), a pale, refreshing fairly bitter beer; **Copper Leaf** (4.2%), **Topsy Turvy** (5.9%); and **Old Smiler** (4.1%).

Bottle-conditioned beers currently available, at slightly higher strengths, are **Old Smiler** (4.2%), **Copper Leaf** (4.3%), **Topsy Turvy** (6%) and **Chocolate Stout** (7%).

Andrew Towles intends to only use the Berrow brand for wholesale purposes, and the current range has been rebranded under Towles' name and the Berrow brand will be phased out for bottles and cask purchased direct from the brewery.

At least three new beers are planned over the summer and these will be launched at Beese's Tea Gardens with whom the brewery has a good relationship. The final new beer of the summer will be released at

Beese's Beer Festival in September – Towles' are sponsoring the event this year. Winter beers will be released via the Seven Stars in Redcliffe.

They are now regularly giving out samples and selling bottles at Whiteladies Farmers Market on the first Saturday of the month, and at Ashton Court Producers Market on the third Sunday of the month. They are also doing Bristol's BIG Market on 22nd and 23rd June.

They continue to do brewery tours, all of which have received excellent feedback.

Finally, we asked them what they thought of the recent scrapping of the beer duty escalator. The response was: "Re the duty escalator, of course we are very pleased that this has been abandoned – we are so grateful to all those that have campaigned for this and look forward to seeing pubs becoming a thriving part of communities again. It's a shame that so many pubs had to close as a result of the 42% increase since 2008."

Norman Spalding

# Cider Sisters go mad in DORSET

Five may well have gone mad in Dorset but not as mad as these two sisters on our most recent and long awaited cider weekend. Following our self-imposed 'always try somewhere new' rule, we headed to the beautiful Purbeck coast of DORSET. Drunk or not you can never forget where you are because pretty much every place you pass, shop you enter, consumable you consume, is prefixed proudly with the county name, so here we go with our DORSET tale.

We couldn't resist a swift half en route in one pub from a cider weekend of long ago, the **Barton Inn** at Barton St David, Somerton. Not great for cider, so just a half of Orchard Pig, which we agreed was pleasant enough in a sparkling pop style, reminiscent of Kiri/Appeltiser. The only women in the place, we were surrounded by a motley crew and the earwiggling opportunities were plenty – we now know it now costs £209 to have all your remaining teeth out in one go and that a new set can come in a 'four years of nicotine' shade of white; very enlightening.

Cozy as we were with the roaring fire and lovely settles, settle in we couldn't as we had bigger DORSET fish to fry.

In a late spring that felt more like mid-winter, an edgy drive through multiple hazards/danger zones/flash floods and fog necessitated a quick stop to stretch our legs in Wareham. Unfortunately for our legs we stopped right outside East Dorset CAMRA pub of the year 2011, the **Kings Arms**, and so the only stretching they got was out of the van and straight through the door. Slightly disappointed to see only Thatchers Gold on tap (now variously nicknamed Thatcher's Cold/Gone on account of the Iron Lady's recent demise) but the canny landlord recognised our crestfallen expressions and pointed us in the direction of the box of Westons Old Rosie on the back of the bar. He said, "You'd be surprised how many people perk up when they see the Old Rosie." We weren't.



A lovely pub with a very genial host, it would have been easy to get stuck in but our trip was only just beginning and we had the next stop off firmly in our sights (although we couldn't actually see a thing). What should have been a lovely drive with stunning views was totally consumed by fog and driving rain, and we only just about managed to spot a childhood landmark of ours, Corfe Castle, when we were about 20 feet away!

So the journey was harsh but the rewards were high when we wound our way through the mysterious and mist-enshrouded Isle of Purbeck and landed at the ancient gem that is the **Square and Compass** at Worth Matravers.

Listed on the CAMRA Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors, it really was like stepping back a century or two. A huge blaze roared in the fireplace and the flagstone floors, dark wood paneling and serving hatches all combined to make a blissful timeless atmosphere. At one end of the pub there is a room that has been dedicated to a museum of local fossils, the flinty taste of which

we swear could be identified in the very distinctive flavour of the ciders on offer.

We decided to sample only the ones made on-site by landlord Charlie:

- **Sat Down Be Cider** (dry 6.3%) – Cider Sisters' review: "lip-puckeringly dry."
- **Eve's Idea** (medium 6.2%) – "also on the dry side, with a gooseberry-like acidity, almost yoghurt nose."
- **Kiss Me Kate** (sweet 6.2%) – "more medium than sweet, fruitier, more palatable."

We ended up with a hand-mixed blend of all three that was our ideal combination and took the wincing edge off the dry without being too rich.

Once again it was hard to leave, but before any other hazards befell

## Cryptic Crossword

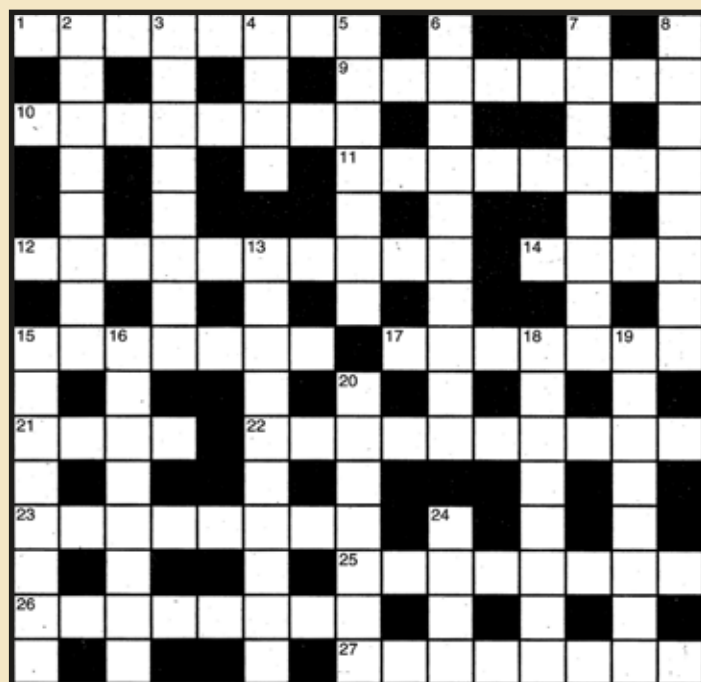
Compiled by Pete and Eddie Taberner

### CLUES ACROSS

- The lady's not for turning from a cider-maker (8)
- Bathes in whirlpool of green liqueur (8)
- Confine AI to local (8)
- Feature of 3 dn. displaying thirst for dog (4,4)
- Heartless northern county goes against the grain for pasta production (5,5)
- Hero takes a sip from pre-paid *Old Growler* (4)
- Special possessive female in charge having a very round figure (7)
- Oddly polite holding ales on mattresses (7)
- Club decreases hard stuff (4)
- Empire's last dregs – catastrophic for the sub-continent (3,2,5)
- Chuck or show contempt swallowing mixed gin (5,3)
- A nice hot brew is rudimentary (8)
- Shun race – off to arrive at rising pub (5,3)
- Diggers would surely give a XXXX for this (4,4)

### CLUES DOWN

- Manual lift for a beer engine (4, 4)
- Westbury-on-Trym pub displaying "wee timorous" poet's work (3,5)
- Seek out sport at the Fox & Hounds (4)
- Collects brollies evenly filled with ale (7)
- Fuller's strong beer. A pint? Certainly! (3,3,4)
- Come across to get on 13 dn. (8)
- Genuinely mild – or bitter (4, 4)
- Alternative hostelry to 3 dn. "How's it here?" Badly managed (5,5)
- Sounds like a plain Kentish ale (8)



- Trouble-maker starts at the Hog's Head, then by topless pool, with a gin cocktail to finish (8)
- A *Timothy Taylor* for mine host (8)
- St Austell beers given as gifts (8)
- Cutting out tied gin arrangement (7)
- Some drink Caledonian beer for a bit of energy (4)

Solution on page 39



us we needed to get our feet under the table for the night, especially the driving sister, keen to get tying one on after all this tantalising build up.

And so to our destination for the night, the **Castle Inn** at West Lulworth. Another beautiful old thatched pub, and the sign outside declaring 'permanent cider festival' was enough to get us champing at the bit. As soon as we walked in we were faced with the cider board, made up of 20 ciders and perries, many of them local to Britain's proudest county. With a choice like that we were very grateful for the 'any three 1/3s for £3.50' option, which we stuck with for the rest of the night. As is our wont, we often got to mixing things up and what with spillages wiping out the chalked cider names on our little tasting trays, the amounts consumed, and the overall excitement, what follows is a less than totally accurate summing up, but it's how our notes describe it:

- **Purbeck Joes Dry**: soft, light, not much oomph.
- **Lulworth Skipper**: blackberry vinegar nose, sweet and fizzy.
- **Fosseway Somerset Glory**: gentle, fragrant, same family as Purbeck Joes.
- **Hecks Blakeney Red Perry**: ?
- **Dorset Nectar**: sawdust nose, medium sweet rather than medium. Hits all parts of the mouth in a good way.
- **Dorset Tit**: lively! Agreed – a nice fruity drop.
- **Farmhands Reward**: needs a boost.
- **Jack Rat Scrumpy**: smoky.
- **New Forest Snakecatcher**: for connoisseurs only.
- **Sheppys Medium Dry**: reliably dry, clean, crisp and tasty.

MIXES:

O.R. + B.R.P. + S.G. = floral, fragrant, complex and delicate.

O.R. + B.R.P. + D.N. = happy days! Fruity, light-on.

Joes + D.N. = YES!

B.R.P. + S.G. = .....

..... And that's where the tasting notes end, so not until we can get our hands on some Blakeney Red Perry and some Somerset Glory will we know what we thought of that particular blend! The O.R. refers to Weston's Old Rosie, we must have felt too well acquainted with it to give an individual description.

A fantastic selection, lots we'd never had the opportunity to try before, and we thought we could detect a real family of flavour among the Dorset ciders, something on the soft and sweet side. We were very taken by the thirds policy, and may even credit it with the less-than-usually-thumping hangovers we woke up to the next morning.

All in all, a fine pub: friendly, rambling and welcoming, with live music (featuring kazoo), accommodation and big tasty meals. And avowedly dog-friendly. VERY dog-friendly. The breakfast room the next morning was filled with huge dogs happily eating sausages out of their own special bowls.

After a brief interlude with a broken-down van and a very helpful RAC man, with spirits undimmed we had a brief look at the natural wonder of Lulworth Cove (no swim) and were on our way again. Next stop, Swanage – site of many childhood family holidays, so a trip down memory lane for us both. Not much seemed to have changed in the 20 plus years since we last saw the old place, though the fondly-remembered Dickie's donuts is now Dino's. With a greasy paper bag of hot and not-so-nice nostalgic donuts in hand we headed up the High Street to the **Red Lion**, and the second cider board of the trip! Fifty (!) ciders this time, not all proper or good but with that selection who's complaining?

We had a local Cider By Rosie, a cloudy, smokey medium cider that we both thoroughly enjoyed, and a Jack Rat Vintage that had more of a scrumpyish cheesy note but was full-flavoured and tasty. Happy choices, and we enjoyed the unspoilt, unadorned town pub ambience. Well worth a visit for any cider-lover, just make sure you keep a look out for the parental-guidance-advised Cerne Abbas Giant clock. 'Tis a Dorset thing!

Time to head unwillingly home but one more stop was necessary when we saw the immortal sign "Cider Museum" at the side of the road at Owermoigne. Down a narrow country lane to apparently nowhere we boldly headed, arriving at the Millhouse Cider Museum with approximately 20 seconds to spare. Kindly let in as the gate was being closed, we discovered an unexpected mix of cider museum, plant nursery and historic DORSET clock collection (not to mention a "great bed" from Shanghai). Too late to gain admittance to this veritable cornucopia of exhibits, we took full advantage of the shop and carried off armfuls of off-sales of our new-found Dorset favourites – Marshwood Vale's Dorset Tit and their single variety Yarlinton Mill, Cider By Rosie and various other assorted delights.

A wonderful weekend from start to finish. We may not get the chance very often but we sure do make the most of opportunities when they knock. Times are a-changing and we witnessed pubs increasingly having to flirt with modernity with wi-fi, real coffee and even menu apps on offer. For these old girls though it's the traditional virtues that will always keep us coming back for more: friendly staff, open fires, Toby jug collections and lots and lots of great cider.

*Freya and Erica McLuckie, Cider Sisters*

WYE'S WORDS No. 12



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# The Great British Beer Festival 2013

This year's Great British Beer Festival will take place between 13th and 17th August at London Olympia.

With over 800 real ales, ciders, perries and foreign beers to choose from, we are sure there will be plenty of choice to suit everybody's taste buds! It is not all about the beer though. There is also plenty of food, live music and pub games to enjoy.

Tickets can be bought by calling 0844 412 4640 or by visiting [www.gbbf.org.uk/tickets](http://www.gbbf.org.uk/tickets).

If you are feeling lucky then visit [www.gbbf.org.uk/competitions](http://www.gbbf.org.uk/competitions) where there are plenty of great prizes to be won.



Last year's Nailsea Beer and Cider Festival

## Yeo Valley Lions Claverham Beer Festival 5th-7th July 2013 Claverham Village Hall

Friday 7.30  
Lipinski Band  
£8 incl free pint and glass\*

Saturday 7.30  
Against the Grain  
£8 incl free pint and glass\*

Free afternoon sessions  
CAMRA Saturday 12.30  
Local Folk  
"The Applejacks"  
Appalachian Dance Troupe  
Free token to CAMRA members with card.

Sunday 12.30  
Steve's old grey foxes

Plus World SpooF Championship  
& "The Ultimate Takeaway"



Free beer token for anyone  
in "relevant" fancy dress

**35 Maritime  
Beers**  
Cider Wine and BBQ



\* Festival glasses subject to availability  
Advance tickets are recommended  
to avoid disappointment available from  
Gift and Coffee Lounge Claverham.

Bishops Stores Cleve, Claverham Village Hall,  
AB's Motorcare, Yatton Newmarket (Clive's)  
[www.claverham-beer-festival.org.uk](http://www.claverham-beer-festival.org.uk)

Arguably, the South West's largest independant beer festival

## 2013 Nailsea Beer and Cider Festival

at Nailsea and Backwell Rugby Club

**Friday 12 July from 6.00pm-11.00pm**  
**Saturday 13 July from Noon-11.00pm**  
**Sunday 14 July from Noon-8.00pm**

Our 10<sup>th</sup> festival, with much to enjoy and sample, including for the first time, a range of international and keg beers

Over 120 beers, ciders and perries.

Free live music Saturday and Sunday.

Childrens' village and free entrance to the grounds.

Advance ticket valid for all sessions £7.00 includes programme, commemorative glass and first half-pint.

See our website [www.applefest.co.uk](http://www.applefest.co.uk) for full ticket details, directions and public transport links, or call us at the Club on 01275 810818.



## Here are just a few beer festivals to look out for in the coming months

- July 5th & 6th – **Ashcott Beer Fest**, Ashcott Playing Fields, [www.ashcottbeerfest.org](http://www.ashcottbeerfest.org)
- July 5th to 7th – **Claverham Beer Festival**, Claverham Village Hall, [www.claverham-beer-festival.org.uk](http://www.claverham-beer-festival.org.uk)
- July 5th to 7th – **Swan Beer and Cider Festival**, Swan, Tytherington
- July 11th to 14th – **Summer Cornish Beer Festival**, Star Inn, Bath
- July 12th to 14th – **Swan Real Ale and Cider Festival**, Swan Hotel, Almondsbury, [www.swanhotelbristol.com](http://www.swanhotelbristol.com)
- July 12th to 14th – **Nailsea Beer and Cider Festival**, Nailsea and Backwell Rugby Club, [www.applefest.co.uk](http://www.applefest.co.uk)
- July 13th & 14th – **Bird in Hand Beer and Cider Festival**, Bird in Hand, Saltford, [www.birdinhandsaltford.co.uk](http://www.birdinhandsaltford.co.uk)
- July 26th to 28th – **Weston Lions Beer Festival**, Beach Lawns, Weston-Super-Mare, [www.westonlionsrealalefestival.org.uk](http://www.westonlionsrealalefestival.org.uk)
- August 13th to 17th – **Great British Beer Festival**, London Olympia, [www.gbbf.org.uk](http://www.gbbf.org.uk)
- September 7th & 8th – **Somerset CAMRA and WSR Real Ale Festival**, Minehead, [www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk/section.php/23/1/camra\\_real\\_ale\\_festival](http://www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk/section.php/23/1/camra_real_ale_festival)
- September 13th & 14th – **Chew Valley Beer Festival**, Ubley Parish Hall, [www.chewvalleybeerfestival.co.uk](http://www.chewvalleybeerfestival.co.uk)
- September 13th & 14th – **Beese's Beer, Cider and Music Festival**, Beese's Riverside Bar and Tea Gardens, [www.beeses.co.uk](http://www.beeses.co.uk)
- September 20th to 22nd – **Wedmore Real Ale Festival**, Wedmore Village Hall, [www.wedmoreale.com](http://www.wedmoreale.com)

## Cotswold Spring continues its winning ways

In March, too late for the last issue of Pints West, it was announced that Cotswold Spring's **OSM** (Old Sodbury Mild) again won Gold in the Champion Standard Mild Ales class, and then went on to win Silver, in the SIBA 2012 Overall National Champions class. At the same competition 'Stunner' also won a Bronze in the Champion Best Bitter class.

At the Tewkesbury CAMRA 18th Winter Ales Festival, **Walloonic**, Cotswold Spring's special 1000th brew, was voted official beer of the festival by the public in its first appearance.

Finally, in May the brewery won seven medals at the SIBA 2013 Wales and West competition held at Ludlow. These were as follows.

- Overall Champion of the Regional Competition** - Bronze - **OSM** (3.9%)
- Standard Mild Ales** - Gold - **OSM** (3.9%)
- Strong Bitters** - Silver - **Trooper** (5.2%)
- Premium Strong Beers** - Bronze - **Walloonic** (8.5%)
- Bottled Bitter (up to 4.9%)** - Silver - **Codger** (4.2%)
- Bottled Bitters (over 5%)** - Silver - **Trooper** (5.2%)
- Bottled Porters, Milds, Old Ales & Stouts** - Silver - **Guv'nor** (4.6%)

Steve Matthews



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£50,000+ raised for the village Primary School, Pre-School & Playing Fields

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**GREAT ALE**

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**GREAT MUSIC**

**Frid 5th and Sat 6th July 2013**

[www.ashcottbeerfest.org](http://www.ashcottbeerfest.org)

## 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](mailto:ale@dartmoorbrewery.co.uk)  
[www.dartmoorbrewery.co.uk](http://www.dartmoorbrewery.co.uk)



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# BADRAG - Bristol And District Rare Ales Group

## Mild Month

May is CAMRA's national Mild Month, and it is promoted locally by BADRAG, the Bristol and District Rare Ales Group. This is a period when we encourage pubs and clubs to stock mild ales – and breweries to produce them – though we would ideally like to see them more widely available all year round.

This year five mild trails were organised, each covering different areas in and around Bristol. The first trail, involving pubs in East Bristol, got the ball rolling early. This, as with all the other trails, was very well supported, and it is this one we will concentrate on to give you a flavour of what Mild Month is all about. Steve Wilcox takes up the story...

We launched the Mild Month of May a little early this year on Saturday, April 27th with a mild trail around pubs in East Bristol, starting at the **Stillage** on Church Road in St. George, effectively the brewery tap for the local Arbor Ales brewery.

A few of us met queuing up outside at midday awaiting the first mild of the day – Arbor Ales' annual brew **Mild West** at 3.6% ABV. A few of us threw caution to the wind and had a pint. Those that opted for a half had a treat – the first sight of Arbor Ales' new half pint chalice with its new maple leaf logo.

Mild West is a bit like a vintage wine – slightly different each year, maybe because it seems that Arbor Ales up-size their brewery every year! Or so it seems. A few of us thought it perhaps a little thinner than previously, but that did not detract from it being a great mild. It was a good start to our day, and our annual homage to mild. By the time we had finished our pints more trailers had arrived and our numbers were swelling.

A little walk up Church Road and we came to our next stop which was Wetherspoon's **St George's Hall**, a busy pub given its location amidst an array of independent shops on the busy part of Church Road. We had a choice of two milds here, Otter's **Otter Dark** at, I think, 4.0% ABV, and Cotswold Spring's multi-award winning **OSM**, or **Old Sodbury Mild** to give it its original full name, at 3.9% ABV. I opted for half a pint of each to compare the two. The Otter Dark was more ruby in colour than brown. I found it perhaps a little one dimensional, but it was presented well – technically very good just not to my taste. The OSM was, as ever, very good – it was actually the more bitter of the two, but still very much a mild.

As it was lunchtime (remember we had started at noon!) a few of us opted for a lunch of a 'Green Dragon Curry' (never found out what that was, perhaps named after the chillies in it?). Not a classic combination I know, mild with curry, but it seemed to work well! By now it was time to move on to the next pub on our trail, the much improved **Red Lion**

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

on Whitehall Road on the fringes of Easton.

There was a time not so long ago when the Red Lion struggled to keep one beer engine going with beer in good nick. Now happily times have changed and there's always at least four real ales on that turn over quickly keeping them all in good condition.

An enthusiastic Anita, sporting an 'I Love Mild' T-shirt, and her partner Lemmy, made us feel most welcome, offering fresh rolls to those who had not lunched at our previous stop. Three mild ales had been available here, though the **St. Georges Legend** at 4.0% ABV went off just as I arrived. In spite of that we still had a choice of two others: **Dark Side of the Moose** at 4.6% ABV from the Welsh brewery Purple Moose, and Cotswold Spring's **OSM** again, just as good as it was in St George's Hall. The Dark Side of the Moose was a delicious dark ale with deep malt flavours and a fruity bitterness. Very enjoyable! Also available (but not strictly allowed on a mild trail) was Tiny Rebel's **NP10**, a 10% ABV Belgian pale beer, available only in halves. In the interests of research I managed to sneak in a half and it proved to be a good beer and a contrast to our milds!

Our next port of call was the more established (at least in terms of a good real ale offering) **Chelsea Inn** on Chelsea Road in the heart of Easton. As the sun was out (we are usually blessed with good weather on our mild trails) we opted to sit in the beer garden at the back and enjoy our halves and pints of mild. Here we enjoyed Cheddar Ales' **Mild Cheddar** at 3.6% ABV.

That just about wound up this our first mild trail, and from here we made our way to Stapleton Road to get a bus back to the centre, going our separate ways all with the feeling that Mild May had got off to a cracking start!

I have been asked, 'What does going on a pub crawl do to save mild?' As Ronald Pattinson says in his book '*Mild! plus*', mild is not one of those beer styles that has taken the world by storm such as Pilsener lager or stout, it needs to be kept alive in its birthplace, or at least in the country of its birth. Asking pubs to put milds on their bars for our trails means that they ask brewers to supply milds which in turn means that brewers brew them. At least it keeps the mild style in the brewer's portfolio even if they just brew it just once a year. Without that, mild may not just be a rare, endangered beer style ... it could become extinct.

We can't go without mentioning the other four mild trails though. The pubs involved were good enough to agree to stocking one or more milds for the occasion or even through the whole month and beyond. Briefly, these were as follows.

### ● Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May – Bedminster and Harbourside Trail

This started at noon in the **Robert Fitzharding** and then moved on to the **Hen and Chicken**, **Tobacco Factory**, **Orchard**, **Nova Scotia**, **Merchants Arms** and **Grain Barge**.

### ● Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May – Kingsdown Trail

This was an evening crawl kicking off at the **Highbury Vaults** on St Michael's Hill. From there it went on to the **Robin Hood**, **Green Man** and **Hillgrove Porter Stores**.

### ● Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May – South Glos Trail

This was a packed coach trip visiting the **Cross Hands**, **Globe**, **Rising Sun**, **New Inn**, **Grapes**, **Beaufort Arms** and **Salutation Inn**.

### ● Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May – Clifton Trail

This final trail started at noon in the **Portcullis** and then moved on to the **Hophouse**, **Lansdown**, **Victoria**, **Quinton House** and **Berkeley**.

We would like to express our appreciation to all the pubs which agreed to take part, the brewers for making such nice things for us to drink, and the people who turned up to offer their support. Thank you all.

The BADRAG team

## News from Dawkins

Dawkins **Resolution IPA**, originally made as a special, has proven so popular that it has now joined the range as a permanent brew. It joins another new beer, **BA2** which is aimed at Bath drinkers. The Dawkins brewery is based in Timsbury just outside Bath after all, even though all their pubs are located in Bristol. And in case you might not have realised, BA2 is the brewery's postcode area. This beer is a malty, smooth 4.2% bitter.

Dawkins has teamed up with the Bristol Shakespeare Festival to launch a range of three beers under the '**Shakesbeer**' banner, all made with English malts and hops. **Shakesbeer Yellow Stocking** is a 4% blonde beer made with 100% Bramling Cross hops. **Shakesbeer Lady M** is a smooth, full-bodied 4.5% stout. **Shakesbeer Poor Yorick** is a dark copper coloured 4.5%, modern recreation of an Elizabethan beer using rye, oat, brown and smoked malts, gently hopped. All three will be on sale in the run-up to and during the festival (5th to 21st July) including at several of the venues hosting events. For more information visit [www.bristolshakespeare.org.uk](http://www.bristolshakespeare.org.uk).



# Bundy's Bar: a recent real ale addition to Clifton

You could be forgiven for not noticing Bundy's Bar in passing: on the corner of St Paul's Road and Sunderland Place, the signage advertising its existence is rather more discreet than that of Rack's, opposite. But this intriguing family-run bar with sun-trap garden is worth further investigation for the recent addition of three real ales, including two on gravity.

The bar used to be the social club of the British Legion, to which the building still belongs (its listed status the reason for the understated signs). It has been run by landlord Nigel Bundy, wife Lorraine and their son for a couple of years, though they have only recently ventured into serving real ale. By popular consensus of the regulars, following a trial run of Teignworthy beers, there will always be a Teignworthy Gundog available on gravity (or perhaps later via handpump), alongside a real ale from St Austell (Tribute, on our recent visit) and another, also on gravity, from the relatively new Towles brewery, based on Easton Road. Towles' Gregory's Gold (3.1% ABV) was available on our visit. Sales are on a profit-share basis with the British Legion, with real ales selling at £3 per pint.

The main public bar is reached from a door off Sunderland Place, taking you downstairs to two large rooms, one with pool table, the other with more seating and the bar. Bundy's retains something of the British Legion Club atmosphere: this is a place for socialising, with several local clubs using it for meetings and playing games, including poker and darts, but all are welcome. You can bring your own music for the sound system, and rooms can also be booked for functions. The sunny garden is a particular feature for this area, reached from the bar, or via another side entrance, and is a welcome oasis of chairs, tables and planting in courtyard style.

The Bundys offer a warm and friendly welcome and are keen to maintain their real ale offering. So why not make a point of looking out for that small blue and white sign, and drop in to say hello?

Lesly Huxley

*Bundy's Bar: open 7-11.30 winter, variable earlier opening in summer.*



A happy Bundy's customer



## In Brief

### Ashley Down Brewery

Things at Ashley Down are moving in the right direction – demand for both bottles and draught are steadily building. At the CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival in March, both **Remedy**, a 4% chestnut-coloured, malty, single-hop bitter, and **Sideways**, a 3.7% hoppy straw-coloured bitter (“But not a resinous North American-style ‘Alcohol Hop’,” says

brewer Vince Crocker) received favourable comments and repeat brews are on their way. Both should be in pubs from the end of May.

Vince also says that, due to the increasing demand for his beers, he is still looking for a larger premises but has been holding out for “something local-ish”.

### Wiper and True

Wiper and True is one of our newest brewing companies, but don't yet have a brewery of their own. As reported in the last Pints West, they regularly gypsy brew at Ashley Down. They are busy expanding their range of beers and are on the lookout for a permanent home in Bristol. If anyone knows of a suitable brewing venue going spare, they would love to hear from you – email [michael@wiperandtrue.com](mailto:michael@wiperandtrue.com).

### Royal Clarence Hotel

Whilst visiting Burnham on Sea recently I was delighted to discover that the Royal Clarence Hotel – the original home of RCH brewery until they moved to Hewish many years ago – was selling both Pitchfork and PG Steam in excellent condition, along with Butcombe Bitter and a real cider. I was even more delighted to discover that both the RCH beers were being sold at an astonishing £2.10 per pint – actually slightly cheaper than the nearby Wetherspoon pub! I have no idea how they are achieving this but long may it continue. It is great to see the pub back in good hands after many years in the doldrums too.

(Vince Murray)

### Zerodegrees

In addition to their regular Pilsner and Wheat beers, the Zerodegrees brewpub in Bristol has a new and very tasty dark wheat ale on at the time of writing – it's 4.2% ABV and called “Dark Munich Wheat”. You don't see this style often so it's definitely worth trying. There is also likely to be another in July.

(Chris Rogers)

### Horse and Jockey

The Horse and Jockey on Nag's Head Hill in St. George held its first beer festival over the first bank holiday weekend in May. It was such a success that it will be an annual event on the same weekend each year from now on. See you there?

(Norman Spalding)

## Young Members' Bristol Social

The publication date of this issue of Pints West is too early to report on the social that will have been held on Saturday June 1<sup>st</sup>, and too late to advise you of it happening! So far it looks like the event which was planned for the afternoon will have been moved to the evening, on the request of some Bristol and District members who work on Saturdays.

The plan was to visit a number of Bristol's more interesting pubs (beers and ambience) that could appeal to ‘Young Members’ and to find out what they really like in terms of ale (light/dark, session/strong, etc) and environment (old style pub/trendy bar, Wetherspoon's/gastropub, etc).

Look for a review of the event and what ‘Young Members’ of CAMRA really look for in a night out in the next issue of Pints West.

Don't forget if any ‘Young Member’ has an opinion to share or ideas for the next event please contact me on [badyoungmembercontact@gmail.com](mailto:badyoungmembercontact@gmail.com).

Roy Sanders (Young Members Contact)

# New Good Bottled Beer Guide out now

The brand-new edition of CAMRA's Good Bottled Beer Guide has been launched, which this time features over 1,800 bottle-conditioned beers\*.

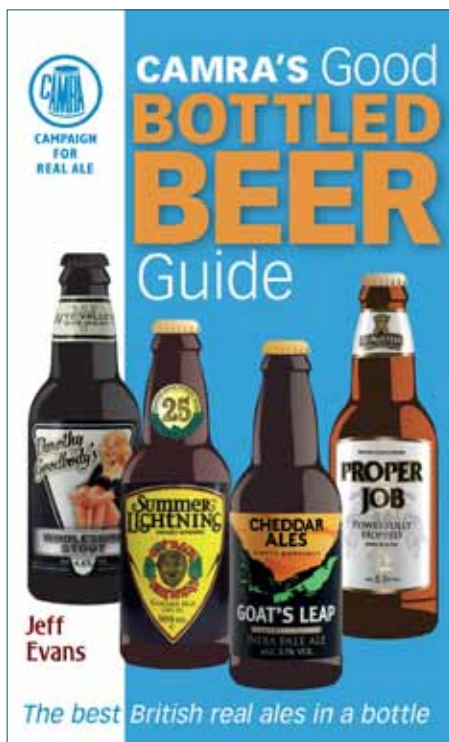
This definitive guide showcases beers from across the UK in a plethora of styles, from light thirst-quenching golden ales to aromatic and citrusy India pale ales and rich, powerfully flavoured stouts and porters.

Jeff Evans, author of the guide, says the book represents the huge range of beers now brewed in the UK.

*"The Good Bottled Beer Guide highlights the breadth of fantastic beer now being produced in the UK. As well as traditional British beer styles such as bitter and stout, we are now very lucky to have international beer styles such as American-style pale ales and German-inspired wheat beers being brewed on these shores."*

Jeff added, *"From world famous brews such as Fuller's Vintage Ale and Worthington's White Shield, to beers that use hops from New Zealand and America such as Buxton Brewery's Axe Edge IPA, the range of beers is so great that there's never been a better time to be a beer drinker in the UK."*

Bottle-conditioned beers from 342 different breweries are featured, with 583 beers chosen for detailed profiles, complete with tasting notes, within the guide – so readers aren't just informed of what's available, but what they should opt for too.



Other features include star awards for the best beers, rosettes for the best breweries, a comprehensive listing of specialist beer shops and full details of how to buy, store and serve bottled beer.

*"The number of breweries producing bottle-conditioned beer, or 'Real Ale in a Bottle' has grown massively in recent years thanks to an explosion in microbreweries across the UK. With more and more small breweries looking to bottle their beers both for local sales and in order to reach further markets, the traditional method of bottle conditioning – where live yeast is used to give the beer light carbonation via a secondary fermentation in the bottle – is proving a popular approach."*

A sister publication to the Good Beer Guide, CAMRA's Good Bottled Beer Guide by Jeff Evans is now available from all good retailers, and from the CAMRA shop ([www.camra.org.uk/shop](http://www.camra.org.uk/shop)), priced £10.99 for CAMRA members, and £12.99 for non-members. The book will also be on sale throughout the Great British Beer Festival at Earls Court in London from August 13th to 17th.

*\*"Bottle-conditioned" is a term used to describe beer which undergoes a secondary fermentation in the bottle via the addition of live yeast at the bottling stage. This is similar to real ale as served in pubs, whereby yeast in the cask gives the beer a natural soft carbonation. Therefore "bottle-conditioned" is often referred to as "Real Ale in a Bottle".*

## Pubs and Beer in South Island NZ

A wedding invitation earlier this year was a good excuse for a trip to New Zealand. Yes, a chance to meet members of the family that we had not seen for over ten years, but also a chance to do a beer tour in the north of the South Island of New Zealand.

We started the ball rolling in Christchurch, meeting up with some family members at **Pomeroy's Old Brewery Inn** (pictured) in Kilmore Street. Pomeroy's has 18 beers on tap, mostly from the South Island, including three beers in cask. All were served at suitable temperature and tasted very nice. We bought some bottles of Harringtons Classy Red, an ESB, before heading south to Geraldine, a small country town. After a round of golf, we were served some beer from the local **Village Inn Brewery**, including Valley Brewery Pale Ale dispensed directly from a keg at cellar temperature. The beer was not clear – but that is not always considered important in New Zealand.



At the wedding reception, we were served beer from **Emersons**, a small brewery from Dunedin. Emersons was recently taken over by NZ based multinational Lion Breweries, itself owned by Kirin, a Japanese beer company. Lion Breweries have said they will leave the brewery in-



tact, run by its existing brewer. Also available were bottles of **Tuatara**, a fine brewery from Blenheim. We did not have time to head south to the breweries in Dunedin, Queenstown and Invercargill, or to the beautiful lakes of the South Island.

From Geraldine we ventured north, crossing the intense sky blue Rakaia River (pictured). We then followed Arthur's Pass through the Southern Alps, the backbone of the South Island. The historic Jacksons pub (1868) in Arthurs Pass was not open. Reaching Greymouth, we went to the elegant **Speights Ale House**. Historically from Dunedin and owners of a large chain of South Island pubs, the **Speights Brewery** was bought by Lion Breweries. Beer production was moved to Auckland after a fire in the Dunedin bottling and canning plant, and the Christchurch Brewery was destroyed by the earthquake in 2011. Needless to say the beer has never tasted quite the same since.

We then followed the beautiful coastal road to Westport, a drive of about 100 kilometres (about two hours including all the photo stops). Here, the **West Coast Brewery** was applying for the renewal of its licence and so was not open for tastings. The **Portobello Bar & Grill** just down the road had a fine collection of West Coast beers, but were



# News from the Bristol Beer Factory

The Bristol Beer Factory, based in Bedminster, report that they enjoyed their biggest ever haul of awards at the 2013 Tuckers Maltings Beer Festival.

The awards went to the following of their beers in the stated categories:

- **Independence** – Gold (Bottled Bitters up to 4.9%), Gold (Overall Champion Bottled Beers), and Silver (Cask Premium Bitters).
- **Milk Stout** – Gold (Bottled Stouts) and Bronze (Overall Champion Bottled Beers).
- **Southville Hop** – Silver (Cask Premium Strong Beers).

They are also very pleased to have received gold stars for their Independence, Southville Hop, Exhibition, Ultimate Stout and Milk Stout in the brand new edition of CAMRA's *Good Bottled Beer Guide* that was released on 20th May.

The brewery has recently released a few oak-aged bottled beers as some limited runs. West Coast Red in Bourbon casks, Southville Hop in white wine casks and West Coast Red in Speyside whisky casks. These have been in very limited quantities and the Southville Hop quickly sold out.

The expansion plans for the brewery are coming along well albeit slowly. The first 30-barrel combination tanks were due to be delivered at the end of May with some 30-barrel fermentation vessels at the beginning of July. The installation of these will mean that every brew day will be a double brew day – those lucky brewers! The expansion has been planned in two phases: first conditioning and fermentation, and then second the brew house. They advise that doing it this way allows them to manage any changes in the behaviour of the yeast in the new fermenters before they add the possible complication of having slightly different worts coming from the new brew house. So it appears they are fully aware that changing the kit does effect the final result and are seeking to manage the expansion accordingly.

The Bristol Beer Factory consider that the revamp and relaunch of the **Barley Mow**, their pub located in The Dings in Bristol, has been a fantastic success and that having eight hand pumps and seven taps serving a wide range of cask and keg beer has really made it a place to have a great day or evening. (Initial reports in CAMRA circles about the new look Barley Mow have also been very positive.) They held their first monthly 'beer' event there in May where Harbour Brewing did a tap take-over. The June event will be more based around the brewing process or beer styles where the brewers will be on hand to answer questions. There will be many samples to try with accompanying food. More information about dates, etc, will be available on the Barley Mow website [www.barleymowbristol.com](http://www.barleymowbristol.com) and their Facebook page. The

events are free and currently you just need to turn up on the night with no need to book.

The drop in beer duty announced in the budget was welcomed by the Bristol Beer Factory, although it was a rather small gesture in the scheme of things from their point of view. However, they do point out that the duty did rise on high-strength beers of 7.5% ABV and above, which does penalise those who wish to brew and enjoy the occasional Imperial Stout.

Richard Brooks



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

Beers available from  
[www.bristolbeerfactory.co.uk](http://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

closed till 5pm. Things were looking grim. Heading to Cape Foulwind, we found the historic **Star Inn** – not actually open either, but they let us in anyway! After tasting a small range of West Coast Brewery beers, I settled on the tasty full bodied Pale Ale.

We headed up the scenic Buller Gorge towards Nelson at the top of the South Island, passing a hop farm close to Motueka. This is New Zealand's only hop growing district, supplying 1% of the world's hops. We made our way to the oldest pub in New Zealand, the **Moutere Inn**, Upper Moutere, built in 1850 (in NZ, that is old). Now a brewpub, it also provides a variety of beers from other breweries, including some cask beers. The Moutere Inn runs the fabulous New Zealand Beer Tourist web site [www.beertourist.co.nz](http://www.beertourist.co.nz).

Nelson is considered by some to be the beer brewing capital of NZ. That night we stocked the fridge with some bottles of **Boundary Road** beer. This Auckland brewery is now owned by Asahi, and their dark pale ale, Flying Fortress, is delicious.

The following day, we visited some of the pubs around Nelson. We started in the pleasant **Sprig and Fern** in Hardy Street. The beer-tasting rack was good value at \$NZ15 with six small glasses totalling 900ml. The beers were served too cold, but tasted very nice once they warmed up. We continued to **Founders Brewery & Bar** in Atawhai Drive. Set in the historic Founders Park, with organic beers, this is as much a café as a pub. The superb beer garden fills with birds as the number of lunch-time patrons diminish. The tasting rack contained six organic beers and was very good value at \$10. You can enter the Founders Park for free if you say you are just going to the pub, but the park is nice in itself and well worth a visit.

The last pub, **The Free House Pub** in Collingwood Street, is a free house serving beer in a former church with, of course, a Mongolian Yurt in the beer garden. On hand were the cask ales Townshend Twisted Ankle, Townshend Old House ESB and Cassell Alchemist, all served at appropriate temperature around 12°, perhaps a bit more, but still tasting good. The Twisted Ankle is a dark red beer with a serious burnt toast dark chocolate taste with bitter aftertaste. The pub does brew beer, but none of their beers were available on the day.

The next day we passed through another thriving brewing area, around Blenheim. Only having time to visit one place, we went to the **Olde Malthouse** – home of the **Renaissance Brewery**. Again, a good value tasting rack was available, which was enjoyed in a nice beer garden. The rack included some beers from other South Island breweries, as well as some beers on cask. Blenheim is also home to the **Moa Brewery**. Their fine beers are also available in Australia.

After a long, very pleasant scenic drive back to Christchurch, we visited the **Twisted Hop** brewpub. With three beers in cask, we got another tasting rack. Good beer in a very pleasant pub.

The next day, we visited Lyttleton and Akaroa. In a Lyttleton café, I was able to drink a nice **Three Boys IPA** – another Christchurch brewery. On return to Christchurch, we visited our last brewpub, **The Brewery** (Cassels & Sons) in Garlands Road, Woolston. A very pleasant family beer garden. More cask beer in another fine tasting rack.

The South Island of New Zealand is full of beautiful scenery and beautiful beer. A fine place to visit for any beer tourist or any budding photographer. Emirates fly from London to Christchurch for around £950 return. Time to go!

Gary Frost



# BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

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

### Bath and Surrounding Villages

#### Bath Tap, 19-20 St James's Parade, Bath

A planning application has been made for this pub, just off from the city centre, to undergo conversion to private dwellings. The deadline for objections passed on 10 April but, at the time of writing, the outcome was not known.

The pub has had a number of name changes over the years. As the Bath Tap it became something of a gay bar. In April 2010, following a major refurbishment, it became a far more food orientated pub and was renamed the Nineteenth House, but the pub closed the following year. It re-opened later in 2011 and the name reverted back to the Bath Tap.

#### Bell, 103 Walcot Street, Bath

The community buy-out of this much-loved pub is on course for success. Please see main article.

#### Independent Spirit, Bog Island, Bath

Not technically pub news, but this new specialist off-licence has recently opened at Terrace Walk on Bog Island in what used to be the *On the Video Front* store. Unlike traditional off-licences, Independent Spirit stocks specialist beers, a range of local ciders, wines and spirits, and has an area dedicated to single malt Scotch whisky.

#### King's Arms, 1 Monmouth Place, Bath

This pub was, at the time of writing, reported as recently closed. Its future is uncertain.

#### Packhorse, Southstoke, near Bath

This historic village pub, which effectively closed last year when the building was sold privately, has become the first property to be entered onto Bath & Northeast Somerset Council's *List of Assets of Community Value*.

The list is a new measure introduced by the Localism Act, which



Packhorse Reunion



enables local authorities to protect buildings and locations that enhance the social well-being of a community. It means that should the Packhorse come on to the market again, the local community must be given six weeks to put in a bid for it. We understand that the application to be listed was made by South Stoke Parish Council and is unrelated to the campaign by locals for the Packhorse to be re-opened as a pub.

In the meantime locals decided to mark the first anniversary of this much-loved pub's closure by holding a "Packhorse Reunion" on Saturday 18 May.

During the afternoon around two hundred people of all ages arrived to enjoy the late-afternoon sunshine and good company. The Packhorse's long-standing barman John served drinks. Live music played. Altogether it seemed a fitting way to remember the old place and the important part it played in the life of the community.

#### Rose & Crown, 6-8 Brougham Place, Larkhall, Bath

This Wadworth-owned pub had, at the time of writing, closed. Its future is uncertain.

#### Star Inn, 23 The Vineyards, off the Paragon, Bath

The Star Inn, one of Abbey Ales' four Bath pubs, should be holding its Summer Cornish Beer Festival July 11th to 14th this year.

#### White Horse, 42 Shophouse Road, Twerton, Bath

Landlord Jason Clark and his mum, who had run the White Horse for around seven years, left the pub in March. This is something of a loss to the city as Jason and his mum did so much to improve the Enterprise Inns-owned pub and widen its appeal. The beer range was always interesting and quality was top-notch. Such was the quality of the pub that it was made branch Pub of the Year in 2011 and City Pub of the Year in 2012. We understand that a new landlord has taken over at the White Horse and we wish him well.



## Bath Beer Festival 2013

The 35<sup>th</sup> Bath Beer Festival was held at a new venue this May, the Premier Suite of the Bath Rugby Club, right in the middle of Bath, with a lovely view of the river. On offer were 48 different beers, mainly from the West Country, and nine ciders and perries. Sadly, attendance was down a bit on last year, with just under six hundred happy punters through the door. Part of this was down to the terrible weather on Saturday night, which put people off venturing out, and, of course, the FA Cup final did not help! We're glad to say, however, that Saturday lunchtime session was very busy indeed, while Friday evening went well.

We have to say that those who did not come missed some very good beer indeed. All the beers were available, which is a great tribute to our beer managers Graham and Dave. No winner of the festival has been announced yet, but popular beers were Thornbridge Jaipur and Kelham Island Pale Rider, with Hop Back Citra, Bristol Beer Factory West Coast Red and Wessex Russian Stroat flying the flag for the region. We also had new beers from Bath Ales (Beerd), Dawkins, Wessex, Shed Ales and Box Steam. We're always amazed and impressed that, with even a modest volume of beer, there is always a whole plethora of styles and strengths, some new delights and, of course, some old favourites.

We also raised £210 for Myeloma UK. We must also say a very big thank you to all the volunteers who came and helped out. Without them this, or indeed any festival, would not happen. We would also like to thank everyone at the venue and our sponsors Wadworth's. We hope to be at the same venue next year but maybe at a different time of year. Keep reading Pints West for details and we hope to see you next year – Cheers!!

James Honey and Denis Rahilly  
(on behalf of the Bath Beer Festival Committee)



# BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

## Bath & Borders Branch Overall Pub of the Year 2013

### Raven, 7 Queen Street, Bath

This traditional, family-run, popular city-centre pub has been awarded the accolade of Bath & Border's Branch Pub of the Year 2013.

This superb free house is made up of two Georgian town houses on a quiet cobbled street just off the road that links Milsom Street and Queen's Square. There is always an interesting variety of beer at this pub, with two house beers, the Raven Ale and the Raven Gold, which are brewed exclusively for the pub by Blindman's Brewery, and an ever-changing range of guest beers. The full range is normally available in the pub's two bars, one on ground level and the other upstairs.

The pub specialises in traditional pies, usually served on a bed of mash with a choice of gravies. The range of nine different pie fillings is made from local ingredients and includes vegetarian options.

Meanwhile the Raven holds seminars covering politics and current affairs and science of the moment and hosts the Bath Storytelling Circle. And on top of all this the Raven runs three-monthly beer festivals.

What more could you wish for in a pub? Many congratulations to the landlord and staff on winning this award.

### Richmond Arms, 7 Richmond Place, Bath

A planning application was submitted on 23 March to convert this much loved pub, situated in a terrace on the northern outskirts of Bath, into a private residence. The Richmond is one of the only pubs in a large residential area of northern Bath which is already bereft of any shops or garages.



Richmond Arms: "Save Our Local"

Already a large campaign to save the pub has gathered pace among the local community and over three hundred objections have been lodged against the proposal. The campaign has organised a petition against the closure, posted around 2,000 leaflets locally and been publicised in the *Bath Chronicle*. Local MP Don Foster visited the pub recently to give support to the campaign. Meanwhile organisers of the campaign are seeking to register the pub as a community asset. The deadline for objections passed on 23 May and a decision on the outcome of the application is expected on 20 June.

## East Somerset

### Bell, High Street, Buckland Dinham, near Frome

We understand that Jeremy Westcott, the landlord of this highly successful village pub, which has its own annual beer festival along with a whole host of other events, including a recent Cider and Chocolate Festival, the highlight of which was a goldfish wedding, has been head-hunted to run a traditional English pub in Goa. We wish Jeremy well in his new venture.

### Bull Terrier, Croscombe, near Wells

This recently closed pub, which very swiftly gained planning permission to be converted into a private house, looks likely to undergo conversion to a number of separate dwellings.

### Knatchbull Arms, Stoke St Michael, near Shepton Mallet

This friendly village locals' pub, situated on the Mendips, was reported as closed at the end of February. Its future is uncertain.

### Bell, 13 Frome Road, Rode, near Frome

This large roadside pub, which closed suddenly in early December, re-opened under a new manager on Monday 11 March. The former mud-green exterior had, in the interim, been repainted a far more inviting cream. The interior of the pub is much as it was before it closed. When visited by branch members the day after it re-opened the beer range consisted of Otter Bitter and the seasonal March Madness from the nearby Milk Street brewery. Real cider in the form of Rich's Farmhouse was also available.

## West Wiltshire

### Bear, 26 Silver Street, Bradford-on-Avon

This town-centre pub, which, following on from years of closure was massively refurbished and happily re-opened around two years ago, closed briefly and, following a quick revamp, re-opened again under what appears to be new management. The pub advertises itself as an *Ale, Pie and Cider House*. Meanwhile there has been an increase in the beer and cider range to three beers and four ciders. Moles and Butcombe were found to be in the beer range during a recent visit by local members.

### Riverside Inn, 49 St Margaret's Street, Bradford-on-Avon

This town-centre pub, situated near St Margaret's Hall, had, at the time of writing, recently closed. Its future is uncertain.

### Prince of Wales, 94 High Street, Dilton Marsh

A major internal refurbishment of this friendly village locals' pub was underway at the time of writing. An enclosed stairway that formerly occupied and divided up the pub's main public area has largely been removed. This has had the effect of opening up the area of the pub to the left of the main entrance, which has been refurbished as a dining area. Meanwhile new floor boards have been laid in the area in front of the bar. There has been a thorough smartening up of the whole of the interior and, with its new décor and new chandelier style lighting, the skittle alley now doubles up as a function room. Meanwhile the exterior has been painted and new pub signs erected whilst a new beer garden should be open in May. New landlords Stephen and Kamil are determined to make a success of the Prince. There's a fresh emphasis on food, with the unbeatable deal that kids can eat for free. But above all the pub remains a focus of the community.

(Continued overleaf)



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# BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

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

(Continued from previous page)

### New Micro-Brewery

#### Three Daggers, Westbury Road, Edington, near Westbury

A new micro-brewery has recently started operating at this popular roadside pub.

The Three Daggers brewery is a 2.5-barrel plant. The equipment arrived on 20 March and experienced brewer Michael Andrews, who has taken on this brand new venture, got straight down to work and his first beer, **Daggers Ale**, was ready on 2 April.

Malt, sourced locally from Warminster Malting and hops from Charles Faram in Herefordshire will form the backbone of the basis of the brewery's beer range.

Cask beers are to be produced for the pub itself and selected other pubs in the area whilst bottled beers are being produced for the pub's own farm shop.

#### George, Longbridge Deverill, near Warminster

The freehold of this very large seventeenth-century roadside inn is on the market for £895,000. The selling agents are Christie & Co.

#### Muddy Duck, formerly King's Arms, Monkton Farleigh, near Bradford-on-Avon

This large village pub has recently re-opened following a major refurbishment. The name of the pub was changed from the King's Arms to the Muddy Duck shortly before the pub re-opened in early April. The name change came about as a result of the owner going into business with another pub, also called the Muddy Duck, in the Oxfordshire village of Hethe. The original name, however, still lives on in the name of one of its bars.

#### Crown Hotel, 12 Timbrell Street, Trowbridge

This Grade II-listed pub is still on the market. At the time of writing the pub was still open whilst work on the roof was underway.

### Bath & Borders Branch Rural Pub of the Year 2013

#### Fox & Hounds, 6 Deverill Road, Warminster

Congratulations to landlords Chris and Marion Pitcher on winning three awards in a row! In 2011 the Fox & Hounds was voted the branch's *Best Community Pub*, last year the overall title of *Branch Pub of the Year* and this year it has won the branch's *Rural Pub of the Year* award. A freehouse, this very popular pub is well supported by the local community and caters for all walks of life and all ages. The pub stocks at least three well kept beers, two of which are from the nearby Wessex Brewery, and a range of up to seven real ciders, all at very reasonable prices.

#### Anchor, 47 Market Place, Warminster

The freehold of this Grade II listed former coaching inn, situated in the main shopping area of the town centre, is up for sale for £450,000. The selling agents are Christie & Co.

#### Bath Arms, 41 Market Place, Warminster

A planning application for this currently closed and boarded-up town-centre pub has been submitted to convert it into Warminster's first JD Wetherspoon pub.

#### Hollies, 55 Westbury Leigh, Westbury

The refurbishment of this pub is nearing completion. Work on the kitchen should mean that the Hollies, which opened at Christmas for drinks, should be open for food by the time this is published. Future refurbishment will mean that the pub will be able to offer bed and breakfast style accommodation.

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

We believe that this pub, which had closed around the early part of the year, has recently re-opened.

Steve Hunt

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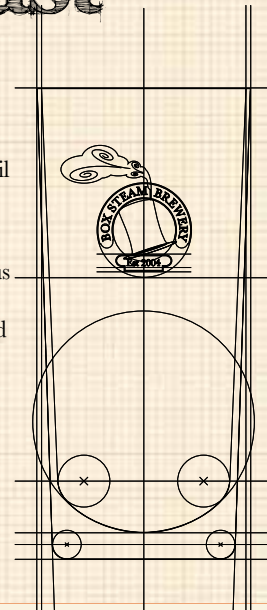
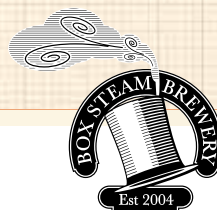
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# BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

## The Bell – community share offer sets new record!

### What a result!

The Bell on Walcot Street, Bath, is set to become the West Country's first co-operative pub with completion of the sale due at the end of May. The share offer ran for only a little over a month but managed to raise an amazing £787,495! This is a new record for a pub community share offer. Previously the most raised for a pub community share offer has been £325,000. Most of these have been village pubs and this is the first time such a high value city pub has been acquired in this way.

As detailed in the last issue of *Pints West*, the pub had been put up for sale by owner Ian Wood after 23 years. The community felt passionately that the pub's mix of real ale and live music remain unchanged, so a bid was launched amid a fanfare of publicity. There were articles in *The Financial Times* and *The Times* and television coverage from the BBC and ITV. There was persistent coverage in the *Bath Chronicle*. Bath MP Don Foster provided much help and promotion.

Music celebrities with links to the West offered their support including Robert Plant, Michael Eavis, Peter Gabriel, the Stranglers and Goldfrapp amongst many others.

There was also a huge amount of internet press coverage and social media promotion as well as good old fashioned out on the street with placards and flyers.

And last but by no means least CAMRA support from the Bath and Borders Branch, *Pints West* and from national CAMRA.

This ongoing publicity was absolutely key in maintaining the profile of the bid through the month long process.

As predicted by the experts, most of the money came in the last week, which wasn't great for the stress levels! There are 537 members



Robert Plant, the Stranglers and the Wurzels supporting the Bell, by Perry Harris

(or shareholders). Not surprisingly over 70% of the members are Bath residents. The majority of the rest are from neighbouring areas but we did get investors from all over the country and abroad too – the furthest being from New Zealand. There were a handful of investors at the upper limit of £20,000 but the vast majority of members put in between £500 and £1,000.

The Bell will be run as a customer co-operative with the existing manager, Patrick Cave, remaining to run the pub as before. The members will be represented by a board of directors. The directors will stand and be elected at the Annual General Meeting. Intermediate member meetings can be held and a comprehensive system of member communication and feedback will be set up.

It is planned that a further share offer will happen in the future to pay off all bank loans – this offer should be available in instalments over a year.

The Bell is to be featured as an exemplar project by Co-operatives UK who, along with the Avon Co-operative Development Agency, provided much professional help and guidance through the share issue process. The founder members of the co-operative now hope that the success will inspire others and become a source of help and knowledge for other community buy-out projects.

There will, of course, be a great celebration party at the pub on a date to be confirmed in early June. To keep up to date with all matters Bell, see [www.bellcommunity.org.uk](http://www.bellcommunity.org.uk).

Hopefully you will all come and visit soon – the same excellent range of local real ales will still be on offer.

And finally – a special thanks to all those who bought shares!

Tom Chapman  
The Bell Inn Co-operative



Patrick Cave makes the announcement to a packed pub

## Rucking Mole joins the pack!

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**Best Bitter** 4.0%abv  
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**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

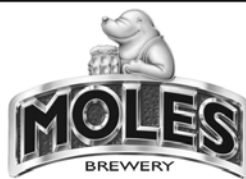
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# North West Bristol crawl by First Bus



Throughout the year, the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA run around 20 mid-week minibus trips to the more rural or difficult to reach areas of our branch. The aim is to make sure that pubs in those areas are visited and have a fair chance of being included in the next edition of the Good Beer Guide. These trips normally visit four or five pubs which often means that stops at each have to be short – 25 minutes is about the norm. One of the more popular routes that we do is one that takes us out to the Frampton Cotterrell and Chipping Sodbury area. I got to wondering whether this area could be covered on a day-time on a Saturday to allow a more leisurely pace – and was pleasantly surprised with what I discovered! To be sure that I had it right, I set off recently with Phil Cummings and Mark Young to do a “dry run”. Well more of a “wet run” really!

The first thing that you will need is a “3 Zone First Day” bus ticket which costs £6 and can be bought on any First Bus. Use it to get yourself to town and it is the only ticket that you will need all day. We chose to take the bus out to Chipping Sodbury and work our way back to town. We got to seven real ale friendly pubs but it is possible to do even more if you have the time and the stamina.

The first bus to take is the 342 which departs the bus station on Saturdays on the hour and half past the hour until 18.30 then hourly. It goes out via the M32, Fishponds and Downend and takes around 40 minutes to reach Yate. Bizarrely, it then takes a very circuitous route and 18 minutes to cover the half a mile or so to Chipping Sodbury! We chose to get off at Tesco’s at Yate and walk to the first pub – the *Grapes* in Rounceval Street. We reckon that we beat the bus there by about five minutes. The *Grapes* is listed in the 2013 Good Beer Guide, open all day and usually has up to six changing beers on – many of which are unusual and can be of any style. We tried three different beers including Skinners Hunny Bunny and Cotswold Spring Guvnor between us and were pleased with them all. There are about six other pubs on or near Rounceval Street and you can decide how many to try. Having not left Bristol until 15.00 we had time for one more and picked the *George* because it is near the return bus stop which is in Wickwar Road. They had three beers on – including Taylor’s Landlord and a seasonal Wadworth’s brew. We tried both of those but were not particularly impressed with the condition that they were in on this occasion.

The 342 departs back towards Bristol at 10 and 40 past the hour until 18.40 then hourly. It takes 25 minutes before stopping directly outside our next pub – the *New Inn* at Mayhill. This excellent free house, open all day on Friday and Saturdays but 11.45 to 3 on other weekdays, was local Pub Of The Year a few years ago is in the 2013 Good Beer Guide and offers three changing beers – usually including a dark one. All beers were in good order as always and the food here is highly recommended – best to book ahead though. You do need to drag yourself away in time for the next part of the trip though.

From the same handy stop outside the 327 bus runs at 41 minutes past each hour until 17.41 and then at 19.41 and 21.41 only. This bus will take you to Frampton Cotterrell and three more pubs, so it’s best to plan for two hours here. After just about seven minutes the bus stops opposite the *Live and Let Live* in Clyde Road. This former Bath Ales pub was sold as a free house recently and is open all day as do the other two Frampton pubs to follow. On our visit five beers were on – Bath Ales Gem, Taylor’s Landlord, two beers from Bath Ales’ new microbrewery, Beerd Copper and Beerd Brown Ale, and a beer not familiar to us from a brewery called Whittlebury. Not having tried any of the last three before, we had a half of each but cannot say that we particularly enjoyed any of them. Some of the Beerd brews are experimental at this stage and these ones were not to our taste. The Landlord was deemed in good order.

Just a couple of minutes’ walk and two streets away you come to the *Rising Sun* in Ryecroft Road – a pub that has been in almost every edition of the Good Beer Guide. The pub is owned by the same family that own the GWB brewery in Hambrook nearby, and at least two of their beers are served along with three or four others from a relatively predictable list. All beers, as always were in great order. A further five minute walk (turn left into Church Road and head for the church) brings you to the *Globe*, a pub with an increasing reputation for good beer and food. Unusually, Uley Pig’s Ear is a regular beer here along with a couple from Butcombe, London Pride, and one or two guest beers. Not having time for a full meal, we wolfed down large portions of chilli cheese garlic bread to stave off the hunger pangs.

The 327 bus also handily stops opposite the *Globe* and departs around 50 past the hour but watch out for those two-hour gaps later on! We caught the 19.50 and discovered that it is another bus with a tortuous route around every back street of Winterbourne. After 20 minutes we arrived at our last stop – the *Masons Arms* at Stapleton. This lovely unspoilt old pub offers up to six real ales mostly from local breweries and a convivial atmosphere. The massive beautiful garden to the rear comes as a major surprise and must be seen if possible.

Although we called it a night at that point, there does remain yet another possible stop with two more pubs, both in the 2013 Good Beer Guide. In addition to the 327 there are buses 4 and 5 that stop outside the *Masons* four times an hour. If you are heading back to town either will do, but if you are up for more punishment then take bus number 5 and after about five minutes get off in St Werburghs (just after Eastville and before Mina Road) and visit the *Duke Of York* in Jubilee Road (behind Mina Park) with its four changing beers, and the *Miners Arms* in Mina Road – a Dawkins Tavern with up to six changing beers. From the same stop bus numbers 5 or 25 will return you to the centre of Bristol.

So that’s it – a complete day out and eight or more pubs, including many from the Good Beer Guide – all for £6 including transport to or from your home area of Bristol.

Vince Murray

The Bar Code  
by Eddie Taberner



BARCODE@EURESEARCHER.COM

20/12/12 EDDIE TABERNER



# News from Cheddar Ales

Things are going from strength to strength at Cheddar Ales with production fast approaching full capacity. Sales are up 4% for the year so far, and to end of last financial year overall sales increased by nearly 10%. Having been approached by a couple of exporters who want to send their ales into the EU and Finland, and with plant at full stretch, owner Jem Ham is giving serious consideration to adding another 20-barrel fermenting/conditioning vessel to overcome the current backlog of brews. Recent investment in new bottling plant is earning its keep as the team are also contract bottling on occasion for others who need assistance.

Jem and his team are trying to keep six beers brewing at same time and have even managed to get seven going at one point.

New brewer Richard Norman has settled in well and has many, many ideas for new brews. Jem says these will be implemented as time and space allows, however he also wants Cheddar Ales to be a brewery whose brands are well known and recognised and feels doing too many different brews can sometimes confuse issues.

Part-time drayman Mike Hearn left a few months ago and best wishes to him in his new job. He has been replaced by giant ex-local policeman David Lightfoot who recently joined the team at Winchester Farm.

Cheddar Ales won a bronze medal at the recent Tuckers Maltings beer festival for **Goat's Leap IPA** in the strong bitters category, their first award for a while so the lads are really pleased.

Seasonal ale **Mild Cheddar** has been well received having made an appearance at a number of local pubs during CAMRA's Mild Month of May. Laurie Gibney of BADRAG even reported coming across it as far afield as Warwickshire recently when he called into the canal-side Two Boats Inn at Long Itchington. He was pleased to see that Mild Cheddar



Jem Ham with the SIBA award for Goat's Leap IPA

featured at that pub during the just-finished six-pub Long Itchington Village Beer Festival – the biggest village beer festival in Europe as advised. More to the point the young barman voted Mild Cheddar as his beer of the festival.

There are a couple of upcoming events to mention. Firstly, Cheddar Ales are running a mini one-day beer festival/barn dance/hog roast at the brewery in July with the beer list to be finalised nearer the time. It will be a ticketed event and once the tickets have gone they have gone. This event is in place of the annual Cheddar Ales Beer Festival which is taking a year off. Full details including the exact date will be published on the Cheddar Ales website ([www.cheddarales.co.uk](http://www.cheddarales.co.uk)) in the very near future so keep an eye open for that.

Cheddar Ales are also co-hosting an event over the late August Bank Holiday weekend including a real ale bar (probably 30 real ales on) at the British Lawn Mower Racing Championships on Old Coach Road, Cross (only three miles from the brewery on the A38). There will be lots of fun and activity for all the family and also food stalls, etc, etc. Keep an eye open for ticket sales via the website and also local outlets in Cheddar, as well as direct from brewery shop.

Finally, why not call in at the brewery shop next time you are in Cheddar or passing through? Jem and his team will happily serve you some of their excellent ales.

Bob Reynolds

## News from RCH

The RCH brewery, located in West Hewish just outside Weston-super-Mare, won two medals at this year's SIBA event at Tuckers Maltings. They were awarded Silver for **PG Steam** in the Bitters class and bronze for their occasional **Strawberry Fields** brew in the Speciality class.

Of their other brews, they report that their revived **Wheat Beer** sold very well at the national Wetherspoon's festival, and that they are still brewing their monthly 'Steaming' specials.

It is very pleasing to discover that the original home of the brewery – the Royal Clarence Hotel on the seafront in Burnham on Sea – is in new ownership and has reintroduced **PG Steam** and **Pitchfork**. Due to a special deal with the brewery these are currently sold at an incredible £2.10 per pint.

RCH are also hosting an open day at the brewery on Saturday 21st September from 10am to 1pm, and will be at the Burnham Food & Drink Festival on the 28th. Prior to that they will be involved in a beer festival planned for the Winter Gardens in Weston-super-Mare from 15th to 18th August.

Vince Murray

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# Watering Holes in the Desert

## brought to you from Weston-super-Mare

### Weston Whispers

The **Brit Bar** had a very successful beer festival over the first May Bank Holiday weekend. There were eight carefully selected beers covering a range of styles, including a very popular Plum Porter from Titanic Brewery and Gingernut Premium from Coach House. The great weather no doubt helped sharpen the thirsts of Weston ale lovers and visitors and by the end of the weekend well over 500 pints had been sold. All beers had sold out with the exception of a few pints of North Yorkshire Cereal Killer.

Let's hope the weather is as good for the annual **Weston Lions Beer Festival** being held on the Beach Lawns from Friday 26<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> of July. Visitors can expect over 50 real ales and plenty of real ciders. Last year around 8,500 pints of real ale were drunk along with almost 6,000 pints of cider. The festival is open from 11am until 10.30pm on Friday and Saturday, finishing around 5pm on Sunday. Admission is free until 5pm, £3 after that time. The exception to this is card-carrying CAMRA members who can gain free admittance at all times. Beer will be reasonably priced at £1.25 a half, £2.50 a pint.



The future of the **Bristol House** on Milton Road is once again in jeopardy. Enterprise (sic) Inns, who own the property, are appealing against North Somerset Council's earlier decision to reject Enterprise's plans to develop the site, with Tesco's keen to take it on and convert to a convenience store. The 'Save The Bristol House' campaign group summarise the situation as follows: *"The publicans running the pub are keen to stay and they have turned the pub into a much more professional concern and sales are improving so let's support the guys and help them through this. Enterprise is calculating and cunning and we must stop them from converting our pub into something else – we need this community asset not a take-away or another convenience store. We don't have a lot of time – please object now!"*

Another depressing situation is arising at the **Claremont Vaults**. The *Weston Mercury* recently had a heading "Seafront pub to close." It transpires that the owner of the premises has submitted an application to convert the pub into five flats. It would be terrible if the town was to lose the Claremont which has a great seafront location and is often extremely busy. The food is good, there is occasional live music and it is enjoyed by locals and visitors. More seafront flats we don't need. The planning application reference is 13/P/0685/F although the consultation closed on 31st May.

### Winscombe Cricket Club

For those of us who thought that the Woodborough was the only ale outlet in the disappointingly under-pubbed village of Winscombe, think again, for salvation is at hand.

The Cricket Club by the Rec has undergone something of a revelatory turnaround under the stewardship of current bar manager John Ogden. John has 25 years global experience in the trade, the last four of which have been at the Cricket Club. He has sourced over 100 different ales in the past two years, and there are always at least three top-quality beers on at any one time – the more popular ones return now and again. Whenever we have been in there, at least one of the nationally-sourced beers has been completely new to us, and we're not exactly new to real ale.

The club is open from 6.30pm Monday to Friday and from midday at the weekend. All of the staff are polite and knowledgeable about whatever ales are on offer. You do not need to be a member to enjoy the club; neither do you need to sell your grandmother to afford a drink, as ales vary from only £2.25 to £2.60 per pint!



The Bell Inn, Banwell

Better news is that the **Bell** in Banwell has re-opened after being closed for 18 months. The building was previously owned by Enterprise, who made trading so difficult for tenants that many came and went (a lot poorer) and the pub shut in 2011. It was bought at auction earlier this year and has re-opened under the ownership of Carmino D'Agostino who is the chef at the nearby Banwell Castle. Carmino is determined to put the Bell back in its rightful place at the heart of the local community. Some early redecorations have taken place and more improvements will be taking place over the coming months, including the introduction of food. Carmino is keen to ensure that real ales are a strong part of the pubs offer. There are four ales on at all times. These normally include Butcombe Bitter, which is extremely popular locally, and St Austell Tribute. These are backed up with two changing guest ales. On my last visit these were Rudgate Ruby Mild and Glastonbury Hedge Monkey. Opening hours are currently 3pm to 11pm Monday to Saturday and midday to 11pm Sunday. These hours are likely to be extended when food is introduced. Carmino and Sharon Broomfield, who has been installed as the manager, are determined to ensure that a friendly service is provided and the early signs are that the local community is responding. We hope that real ale drinkers in Banwell, Weston and beyond will visit the new re-vitalised Bell.

Another re-opened pub, the **Captain's Cabin** on Birnbeck Road, has its own beer – Captain's Cabin Best Bitter – brewed by Marstons.

Tim Nickolls



CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE



John Ogden at the  
Winscombe Cricket Club

Kym & Graham Robinson



# CCC I (Three Centuries Part 1)

From Hedley Verity in the multi-award-winning *Pinctæ Occidēs XCVII*, my thoughts idly turned later this spring from spin bowlers to straight batsmen. A sign of age, as in gayer times spring brought thoughts more exotic. Eny road up, as we used to say then, if you dig, 'twas to Len Hutton that they turned, particularly his triple century, with metrication presumably a 300 ml *De Nederlandse Bierfles* or *pijpje*, although I do not recall having seen the gentleman with a little pipe. The triple century concerned was for England against Australia in 1938, leaving the Aussies ashen as England reached a typical total of 903 for 7 declared. Before some Essex boy or girl shouts that Graham Gooch hit 333, possibly taking the State Express home afterwards, in a 1990 test with a second century in the second innings, the three centuries (CCC) referred to in the present Part I of this piece of purple prose are those during which Weston-super-Mare has had ale-filled watering holes around.

Actually, ale came to the present town of Weston much earlier, as our new town was cobbled together by one of my predecessors from Weston-super-Mare, Worle and Uphill, so it is not a sole town but part of awl three. Worle was possibly named after the effect the early ales had on its medieval residents. The *Valiant Soldier Inn* was built about MDCLXX, long before XXX was brewed by the Three Tuns Brewery. The *Old King's Head* came soon after and was the stuff of local legend, possibly for serving pig's trotters. Charles I had had his head separated from his body some years earlier and so transport must have been slow in those days. The *Lamb* was certainly earlier, although such animals are usually younger. Even the Woodspring in the guise of the *New Inn* was there before Weston's first hotels opened. Uphill, with its equally older *Dolphin Inn* and *Ship Inn*, was the first local seaside resort so the tides must have been even higher in those days.

Getting back to Weston-super-Mare before you run out of patience, if that is not mixing up my games, I have been asked by one of the many erudite members of the Weston flock not to write that its first serious century alewise was the XIX<sup>th</sup> and so, feeling sheepish, I will start with the *nonus decimus* Century, when early records began, XII<sup>th</sup> presumably. I trust there will be no objections to that anglicised minute measure, as the Romans had the inch or *uncia* and, obviously, the foot or *pes* (plural *pedes*), as most of them were pedestrians before Roman buses were manufactured in Romania and Fiat let it be, as with the Beetle.

In the early days, with horse traction, Weston had three watering holes listed. *Fry's Hotel*, which presumably specialised in Full English breakfasts, with the Goodman's coach concession, possibly for the more religious residents. References to harrowing experiences when staying

at the *Plough Hotel* never cropped up, although the weedier clients may have been rooted out. The place to stay, however, was *Fry's Hotel*, as it still is in its modern guise of the *Royal Hotel*.

By MDCCCXXX, the MCCC inhabitants (about 1,310 to be more precise, as that was not quite cricket, lordy me) residents had more hostelrys to choose from, including the *Masons' Arms*, of which the location in those far-off times was a secret. *Fry's Hotel* was being known as *Reeves' Hotel*, not, I am assured, because shire reeves or sheriffs owned it although the actual owners had a number of posses, including a ginger tom, over the years.

Yet another dozen years passed without Bakers Dolphin but then the Bristol & Exeter Railway arrived and the MM inhabitants, who did not yet have a Bus Stop, (about 2,100 to be more precise) and visitors had a new *Railway Hotel*, more recently the *Tavern Inn the Town*, on Old Station Square or The Plantation if you were from the Deep South and cottoned on. The *Bath Hotel* was probably the one with the cleanest residents, possibly later becoming the *Imperial Hotel* as the owners made a mint out of it. The nearby *Reeves' Hotel* was providing a coach service to the *Bush Inn* in Bristol, whose four octave singing soprano landlady may have been named Kate. The *Clarence Inn* probably got fed up with people asking: "Is the Duke inn?", as no one of that title existed at the time. The *Devonshire Inn* had a duke whose title did not have to be rescued by Lord Keighley, of *Pinctæ Occidēs XCVII* fame, until some years later. There was a true royal connection with the *Victoria Inn* in Locking Road, although there is no record of the landlady there also owning the *Windsor Castle* at that time. Her representative was in the town, as the *Plough Hotel* had offered its services as the Inland Revenue Office and may therefore have had the first mechanical staircase in the world in the form of a Beer Duty Escalator. The *Strand Hotel* may have been an early example of W.D. & H.O. Wills marketing a product as one where you would never be alone, even in your coughing.

Well, as they say around watering holes, I have not even arrived at the middle of *nonus decimus* Century but if I go over my word limit someone called Ed, who does not go out in heavy snow, will reduce the font size and anyone wont to shear sheepdogs instead of sheep, who will obviously not be wearing Boots, may find themselves inconvenienced, as would Weston if five such dewatering holes had not been transferred to the Town Council. There should be no worry in that case about the impermanence of transfers as compared with tattoos, royal versions of which were never brought from Edinburgh to the *Victoria Inn*. In any case, it turned out to be a lot cheaper than a Wayne Rooney transfer, for which the Town Council was not Gunning anyway.

Dr John (exactly 1,000 words)

## The night errant's story

To the *Lamb* in Weare we did go one starry night  
And this rugby pub's log fire was a welcome sight  
Cheddar Ales golden Potholer with local divers went down well  
With Sharp's Doom Bar and Butcombe Bitter a sure quick sell

Then to the New Inn, Cross on the old Turnpike too  
For Wickwar BOB at a black tie and long frock do  
With Dorset Brewing Company Tom Brown's Bitter on sale  
With Sharp's Brewery Cornish Coaster and Otter Ale

Next was Rickford's Plume of Feathers to all say *Ich Dien*  
Our paying with 2p coins (turn one over) was very mean  
For more Potholer, Butcombe Bitter and Old Vic Porter all  
With St Austell Tribute the Supreme Champion Ale of Cornwall

At the Crown, Churchill we did again with decimal coin pay  
For their Batch Bitter, Palmers Best Bitter and Hewish IPA  
RCH PG Steam, Bath Gem and Tribute from St Austell  
With Glastonbury Thriller, Butcombe Bitter and Bass as well

Finally, we went on to Sandford's Railway Inn  
For Tribute and Butcombe Bitter, with sadly no Mick Aston in  
For the house Thatchers Dry, Gold and Traditional ciders  
But it was a good place to end for we nightriders

Dr John

## Pub Quiz?

Q. Why does a pint of real ale cost £3.25?

A. Because it is a Pint, where:

Pi = 3.14

n = 0 because they have all flown the coop and banked away

t = 00.11 or just after four o'clock in Tijuana, which is teatime for the top brass there.

Dr John

## Upcoming branch socials

On 14<sup>th</sup> June, we will be taking the "Buzz Bus" to Winscombe and Banwell for the evening. This will provide an opportunity to visit the highly-regarded **Winscombe Cricket Club** bar or other venues in Winscombe as well as Banwell's two pubs, including the recently re-opened **Bell Inn** (see above). A "Buzz" one-day pass is £4.15.

On 5<sup>th</sup> July we will be undertaking a pub crawl in Burnham, visiting five or six pubs.

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> July is the opening night of the Weston Lions Beer Festival on Beach Lawns.

On Friday 16<sup>th</sup> August we will be having a "Summer Seaside Saunter" visiting several pubs and hotels on or very near the seafront. This used to be an annual event but was dropped last year as we had got fed up getting cold and wet on these evenings. However, this year will be different as the weather is going to be gorgeous (oh yes it is!).

Full details of the socials are shown in the diary section overleaf. Non-members are very welcome at all of these events.

Tim Nickolls

# A Round with Robin

The last Saturday in February found me with friends at a beer festival at the **Royal Oak** in Twerton, Bath. The beer list on the internet showed 30 beers that you might expect to be there, but there were only 11 at the time we were there. Still the *Sarah Hughes Snowflake* (8%) and the *Arkwright's Snow Leopard* (4.8%) were excellent and the *Rebel Henri* (5.7%) was amazing. Following that we had a game of skittles at the **Charnbury Arms**, near Oldfield Park Station, and later in the day to the **Three Tuns** beer festival in Hotwells where there were seven beers on the bar and 12 on stillage. As you'd expect hops dominated this festival and the *Bristol Beer Factory* (BBF) came up trumps with *Double Acer* (6.5%).

The **Bear Inn** at Weston-super-Mare has had *Portobello Star Ale Porter* (4.8%) from Portobello Road brewery in London which I had on three consecutive days. Staying with pubs in Weston-super-Mare, I note that on the first Sunday in April both the **Regency** and the **White Hart** had excellent *London Pride* (£3.20 and £2.90 respectively) and that in the evening I had my favourite beer in the last Wetherspoon's beer festival at the **Dragon Inn** – *Bateman's Mocha* (6%) at £1.89 a pint!

While at the **Seven Stars** in Redcliffe looking for a record on the jukebox by Prolapse (a punk band allegedly formed under a table in a pub) I felt encouraged to have a pickled egg, of which I wrote about the landlord's penchant for them in *Pints West* many years ago. The best ones in Bristol used to be the aptly named Stillborn from the **Bank Tavern**, but recently Phil Bennett at the **Cornubia** showed me his boiling pot of eggs being pickled in hot vinegar and chillies and I have to say they are the best I've had, and washed down well with a pint of the new *Arbor Cornubia* (3.8%) which I detect has a slightly smoky scent, almost like cordite. Talking of the Bank Tavern, they now have music there on Wednesday evenings – Chris Webb a regular performer at the Seven Stars introduces guests from the Bristol music scene, and this started on 6<sup>th</sup> February when the Alfie Kingston Duo played a set. The following Saturday at the Seven Stars Wolfhound gave an impressive performance with their new percussionist; followed by an equally good set by the Ant Noel band to accompany *Raw Blizzard Bitter* and *RCH Slug Porter*. At the March 'beeriocidal' at the Seven Stars there were beers from Worcestershire, and from the 20 or so beers that Paul had sourced I gained the most satisfaction from the *Waen Rich Coconut Stout* (6%).

A week later, the **Cornubia** had for the first time one of the 'Friday afternoon' beers from *Arbor*, this being *It's Brown Dammit* (5.1%), a good hoppy brown ale, and the day after, I drank the *Arbor Breakfast Stout* (7.4%) at the **Seven Stars**. About the same time, The **Horse and Groom** in St Georges Road, near the Council House, had three guest ales alongside their normal two St Austell regulars, these all being tasty: *Milk Street March Madness* (4.4%), *West Country Ale Pack of Cards* (4.1%) and *Otter Seville Bitter* (3.8%). Also about this time I first came across the *Kennet & Avon* brewery beers *Dundas Best Bitter* (4.2%) and *Pillbox Pale Ale* (4%), both of which I found to be excellent for a first outing for this new brewery from Wiltshire.

I enjoyed working again at all the serving sessions of the **Bristol Beer Festival** – stewarding, cider bar and beer bar – including this year on the Thursday. Of course I rarely got to try more than a sip here and there, but my favourite of the festival, and which I recommended to many punters, was the *Collingham Artisan's Choice* (4.4%) which was a replacement beer for another from that brewery. A week after this festival, with friends from Bristol and Somerset CAMRA branches, I went to the first **Gloucester Beer Festival** on the Saturday held at the Blackfriars Priory. This was enormously popular, so much so that when the first of us arrived there to queue in the snow flurries we were told that about 80% of the beer had been sold on the first day. Even so that still left some interesting ales to try, and the organisers had got busy scouring the local breweries for firkins of bright beer. After seven half-pints we decided to visit some of Gloucester's pubs; the first was the curious but snug and friendly **Cross Keys** followed by the **Fountain**, the **Pelican**, **Dick Whittington**, and the **Regent**, and on our return to Bristol we finished the day at the **Cornubia** for the best beer of the day, the *Coastal Golden Gorse* (5.6%).

The **Royal Clarence Hotel** on Burnham on Sea sea front is best known for the place where *RCH* beers started. Recently it has gone through bad times but before Easter it reopened as an over 25's pub. With at least three real ales and with the landlord saying that he will keep the prices he charges under that of the local Wetherspoon's, when I was last there the *RCH PG Steam* was £1.95 and the *Butcombe Bitter* £2.35 and their quality was good.



## Weston diary and contact

- **Friday 14th June** - Banwell & Winscombe. Catch 1930 121 bus from outside Weston Station. Arrive Winscombe 1959. Visit to Woodborough or Winscombe Club or Winscombe Cricket Club. 2048 bus back to Banwell. Arrives 2054. Visit the Brewers Arms and the recently re-opened Bell Inn. Catch 2254 back to Weston, arriving at station at 2307.
- **Friday 5th July** - Burnham-on-Sea crawl. Meet Weston Station 1820. Catch 1830 train from Weston to Highbridge (Group Travel rates mean very reasonable cost). 1850 route 21 bus from Highbridge to Burnham - takes 12 minutes. The crawl will involve some/all of the following: Reeds Arms, Old Pier, Somerset & Dorset, Victoria Inn, Royal Clarence Hotel (birthplace of RCH brewery), Dunstan Arms. Bus back from Burnham is at 2214. Time for a drink at the George or Coopers Arms in Highbridge before getting the 2305 train back to Weston, arriving back in Weston at 2315.
- **Friday 26th July** - Social at first night of Weston Lions Beer Festival on the Beach Lawns.
- **Friday 16th August** - Summer Seaside Saunter. A crawl visiting pubs on or very near the seafront. Start at Captain's Cabin at 8.00, departing there at 8.30. Other venues may include some/all of: Claremont, Sam's Bar, Slipway, Old Colonial, Criterion, Cabot.

Non-members are very welcome at all of these events.

### Contact

Tim Nickolls: email [bellavistahotelwsm@live.co.uk](mailto:bellavistahotelwsm@live.co.uk) or phone 01934 631931.

## Seven Stars Ale House

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On the Easter Bank Holiday I went to the “Mostly North Yorkshire Beeriodical” at the **Seven Stars**, where the *Scarborough American IPA* (5%) and more *Collingham Artisan's Choice* set the pattern for the day. After a few hours there, Graham and I decided to investigate the **Lanes** first beer festival, just off Rupert Street. You don't need to play tenpin bowling to drink at the bar there, and Lewis is happy to let people try before they buy and has a good selection of keg and cask ales; he had only six barrels left and had decided to sell all the remaining beers at £2 a pint and these included some of my favourite ales. *BBF/Arbor Colab* ale (6.8%) was followed by *Tiny Rebel Billabong* (4.8%), and *Moor Old Freddy Walker* (7.3%). The following day at the MNY beeriodical we continued with excellent *Scarborough Phrenology* (6.2%) and *Great Heck Dark Force Treason Stout* (5.4%). I have been accused recently of saying that (like some writers in CAMRA's *Beer* magazine) these are beers you must try – not a bit of it – I only list these beers in this article



Enjoying the Crown Tavern during the Bristol Pubs Group tour

so that if you should see them you will know that at least one person favours them (but of course we all have different preferences, especially taste-wise).

The **Gryphon** in central Bristol, just up from the Colston Hall, has been a regular haunt of mine, though admittedly usually on Tuesday evenings when beer is £2.50 a pint for under 5% beers, and one evening I was fortunate enough to be there when John Ashby had the Cornish

*Granny's Weapon Grade Ginger Beer* (5.5%) and the same evening there I had the lovely *Tring Tea Kettle Stout* (4.7%). On the following day the 'usual suspects' from Weston-super-Mare found the *Arbor Neomexicanus* (4.9%) very palatable at the **Cornubia**, but despite the powerful hops they weren't enough to spoil the *Elland Hoptocus* (4.9%) beer at the **Seven Stars**; I love the pump clip design for this Elland beer with an octopus on it. Graham then took Andy and me to the **Cider Press** in Gloucester Road which neither of us had been to before, and where they had a well kept *Marston's* ale for £2.45 with CAMRA discount. I ended the day at the revamped **Barley Mow** in the Dings, where eight cask ales and ten keg ales are certain to impress visitors, cask ales are priced from £3.40, and keg ales considerably more; *Magic Rock Rapture* (4.6%) was my choice there.

The **Bank Tavern** had a MacMillan Musical Marathon on April 13<sup>th</sup> where I was moved by a superb performance by Jane Thompson and she and other artists were accompanied by a selection of good *RCH* beers, whilst the volunteer charity workers sold us cakes, etc.

Later in April Adam Bell led a very interesting tour of pubs from Old Market to Redcliffe under the banner of the Bristol Pubs Group, starting at the **Coach and Horses**, then **Crown Tavern**, **Volunteer**, **Phoenix**, **Bank Tavern** and **Seven Stars**. There was a huge range of beer styles and beer prices, but I'm not going to reveal the cheapest place (where I also had a Jack Daniels for £1.10!).

At the end of April I went for the first time to the **Chippenham Beer Festival** despite this being their 22nd festival. More than 90 beers on gravity gave me a good choice, and the beer I voted for as beer of the festival was the new *Box Steam Evening Star* (7.5%), a chocolate malty old ale style beer, although I did have one beer twice as I was drinking thirds throughout, that being *Uphams Stakes* (4.8%), a good smoky dark bitter. The programme was both informative and witty, and the music was not too intrusive; a good festival, to which I will return. Afterwards we went to the best pub in Chippenham, the **Three Crowns**, to meet fellow drinkers from the festival and to try the *Shed After The Storm* (4.3%) that had sold out at the festival, but that the pub had a rare barrel of. They also had five other beers on and all with a good CAMRA discount.

The most notable thing to recount before I close is that in the first week of May we got to play boules on the newly finished petanque pitch at the **Cornubia**. Let's hope for more fine weather.

Robin E Wild

## Readers' Letters

Readers are welcome to send letters to the Pints West Editor

**Steve.Plumridge.PintsWest@gmail.com**

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

### Spread the word

I recently had the good fortune of finding myself in the Portcullis and picked up a copy of Pints West which I thoroughly enjoyed reading. I was very pleased to read the 'Shine on Clifton' article by Duncan Shine, especially as I was on a reconnaissance mission for a trip I am organising for a group of friends to the Clifton (and Bristol) area.

To this end, I was wondering whether you would be able to grant me permission to share this article (scanned and sent via email) to my group of friends to help put them in the mood for their visit. I appreciate that there maybe copyright issues involved and am therefore seeking the necessary consents.

Please keep up the good work with Pints West – it is a very enjoyable and informative read.

Kind Regards,  
Paul Parker  
(by email).

*Glad you enjoyed it and found the article useful. Of course you are very welcome to share it. We put no restriction on people copying articles to pass on to others.*

*In fact, as a campaigning organisation, we are keen for people to help spread the word. Although we would claim copyright, we are happy for our articles to be reproduced elsewhere; all we ask is that the source, Pints West, including the contributor's name where applicable, is stated. (Doesn't apply to artwork or logos though – the CAMRA logo cannot be used without permission.)*

*See under "Spread the word" on the inside back page. Ed.*

### Coach and Horses appreciation

Thank you very much for despatching/commissioning Dr Paul Thornton across to our new venture that is the Coach and Horses. I was very pleased with his write up in the last issue, not least "Andy likes flowery wallpaper", and am really just writing in appreciation.

It was fortunate for us that it coincided with the Bristol Beer Festival (which my wife and I both enjoyed maybe a little too much) as we have had the pleasure of the company of a fair few members as a result, whom I think found their visit agreeable as I have seen a few of them again since.

In appreciation I have been already discounting the pint to CAMRA members and am happy for you to add me to your printed list accordingly.

Lastly, I would appreciate people's views on my constant switching around of the ales.

I imagine there are two camps in this respect, one that likes the knowledge that their favourite pint will be on and in its usual condition on each visit, and the other that visits primarily because I have gone to the effort of sourcing something new and likes the unpredictability of not knowing what lies in

store.

I reckon the answer lies somewhere in between but am interested to know, if pushed, which way folks would go?

Best regards,  
Andy Lyon,  
Jolly Pub Landlord,  
Coach and Horses,  
Braggs Lane, Old Market, Bristol.  
[thecoachpub2013@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:thecoachpub2013@hotmail.co.uk)

### Golden Lion

Thank you for the heart warming pictures on the front of the spring issue of Pints West. It's good to see real ale enthusiasts keeping going despite the recession and the beer duty escalator (*the latter now scrapped though. Ed*).

I am writing to you to recommend my favourite pub in my village of Wrington in North Somerset. As you will know Wrington is the home of Butcombe brewery, and Phil Giorgetti serves a very fine pint of that beer; he also serves Rare Breed, Doom Bar and a guest ale along with Ashton Press, Thatcher's cider and many lagers and stouts. There's always a warm welcome at this great little pub from the staff and Phil, who plays a big part in village life.

Cheers,  
John Graham  
(by email).

### Suburban pubs

Well done Vince Murray with his article on the lack of imagination in suburban pubs. I've thought this for years living in Kingswood! The campaign to save the Chequers pub here is fine but if we still get the same old format as most other pubs in the area then frankly I'd rather see it as a supermarket which significant numbers of people would at least use! We desperately need pubs in the suburbs selling quality and varied real ales with good food and a welcoming and pleasant atmosphere. All these ingredients will be necessary if these pubs are going to attract people like myself back into them. I and others I know just tend to drink bottled ales at home now as it's too expensive and a hassle to get into town regularly. Either get some new imaginative thinking going, brewers and landlords, or go under! You can't just blame everything on other factors.

Wayne Coombes,  
Kingswood.

### Landlords

Having spent quite a while frequenting public houses, I have come to the conclusion that 'landlords are only human', and like all humans, have their good days and their bad days ... which accounts for the reception you receive when entering a pub for a decent pint. The attitude of the landlord comes over more when you enter a pub that you visit quite regularly.

I expect you have all encountered these attitudes; on entering the premises you are greeted with a "Hello John" (my name), "What do you fancy today?" The next time you call in, you are greeted with a grunt, no mention of your requirements, with a very obvious attitude that you have disturbed his day. He will serve your requested pint without a word. Another time, he will be stacking his shelves, and has no intention of serving you until he has finished. And yet the next visit could be a welcome, to inform you he has just put on a

barrel of a beer he hasn't stocked before, with the offer of a taster, and then continues to chat away like an old friend.

Then there is the landlord, usually in a quiet country pub that you have never been into before, who is sitting at the far end of the bar doing a crossword puzzle in the paper, or chatting to one of his regulars. On entering his establishment, you look at the range of beers he has on offer and look along the bar in the hope of 'catching his eye' to get him to serve you. There now comes a 'pregnant pause', until he reluctantly strolls along to ask "What can I get you?" If he is in a talkative mood he may say "Looks like rain", and you reply "Yes, and you are still charging £3.40 a pint for it." (The old 'uns are the best, and I should know, I'm one of 'em.)

We then have the one we all 'love'. The one who comes to serve you as soon as you enter, who will then talk 'knowingly' about the beers he has on offer, suggesting, why not try a taste of this one, it's light and hoppy, with a fruity after taste, etc. Ah! A landlord who 'gladdens' the heart.

Landlords, love 'em or hate 'em, we cannot do without them.

On to bar staff: I expect you could write a book on them, so I shall just cover a few. I expect you will have encountered them on your travels, usually when the landlord is not around to chivvy them along. These happen in all types of pubs...

You approach the bar for a beer, having perused the selection on offer. You endeavour to catch the young barmaid's eye for service, but she is too deep in conversation with a young 'buck' with arms full of tattoos, drinking lager, to notice she has a customer. Then there is the bar where two young barmaids are on duty – who are so deep in discussion on the latest entry in the top twenty, or who some young 'pop star' is courting, to even notice some 'old fella' waiting for a pint.

How about the young barmaid who, when asked a question about the beer on offer, gives you a vacant look, and says, "I don't understand what you mean," and who knows as much about beer as I know about 'quantum electronics' (if such a thing exists).

Mind you, as much as the aforementioned bar staff do exist, there are umpteen who are the exact opposite and are a joy to do 'business' with.

So there you have it, love them or loathe them, where would we be without them (lying on the floor gasping for a pint, I guess). Serving behind a bar: one of – if not the – most important job in the world.

CHEERS, to any or all who work behind a bar.

John Gatty,  
Thornbury.

## WARNING

From the Management of the  
**HOPE & ANCHOR**  
Exceptional Public House

**BEER  
DON'T  
SPILL**



# News from Bath Ales

## Expansion Activities

The pilot brewery installed in Hare House, the head office building, is now up and running and supplying beers commercially. The Beerd brand will be known for short run brews with a difference (see next section), not only for the Beerd pub but also other Bath Ales outlets.

The new brewer, Shane O'Beirne, has been concentrating on developing and producing new beery flavours on this kit and will soon also be producing new beers from the micro-brewery in Graze Bath.

The **training cellar** mentioned in the last edition of Pints West is now fully operational with its own bar attached. These additions to Hare House will be used to train new Bath Ales staff in the art of cellar management and serving the perfect pint. The bar will also be used for brewery tours, where an introduction will be held as well as a film showing the brewing process, before visitors inspect the pilot brewery followed by ample samples of the beers back in the bar.

The **Bath Ales shop** has now relocated from the brewery to Hare House. In the new expanded shop the Bath Ales range of beers and ciders are supplied in a number of different forms: from bottles and micro-casks to gift packs. Other products including gifts and clothing are also available.

Customers visiting the new shop will get a 10% discount on retail prices and will also earn points on any purchases using their 'Loyal Hare Force' membership card.

## Seasonal Ales and Specials

**Summer's Hare** hit the pumps in pubs across the South West from 1<sup>st</sup> May. This is the third year running for this light, hoppy, 3.9% ABV summer seasonal. It will be available in casks and micro-casks until the end of August.

Summer's Hare has been brewed using Maris Otter floor-malted barley with a transatlantic mix of UK Bramling Cross and US Chinook hops, combined to make a balanced, fruity beer.

Commenting on the seasonal release, head brewer Gerry Condell said: "Summer's Hare has been designed with warm evenings and alfresco dining in mind. The beer has a summer fruits aroma with spicy notes and is the perfect match for light dishes such as ploughman's, quiches and mild cheeses."

A number of **Beerd branded beers** have been brewed in the pilot brewery located in Hare House and distributed to various Bath Ales pubs and other outlets. The flavours may not sound enticing to some people but good reports have been received especially from younger people.

Porters featuring chilli, mint and peated malt (known as Dark Hearth), Smoked Scottish Ale, Sergeant pale ale brewed with rye and peppercorns, an American style IPA brewed with UK hops, and Superweizen, a strong wheat beer, are just some of the interesting Beerd brews that have been sampled. Latest projects include an Imperial Stout which will be matured in whisky barrels, and a pils brewed with rye and pink peppercorns to give a peppery/honey flavour. But be quick – once these short runs are over they may not be produced again.

Each edition of *Pints West* would not be complete without a Bath Ales rebranding, and this time it is S.P.A. which has changed to **Special Pale Ale** on pump clips, website and marketing documentation. However it is still the same crisp, citrusy ale brewed with a lager malt, at 3.7% ABV.



View of Bath Ales' expanded shop, now located in Hare House

## Pubs

The new **Graze Bar, Brewery and Chophouse** opened in Bath before Christmas and enjoyed a very busy festive season. It continues to trade well as does Graze in Bristol. In the last issue of Pints West I did say I would write a fuller review of the Bath Graze but I will save that for the time when the micro-brewery is in full swing.

**Beerd** in High Kingsdown is also holding its own, often featuring Beerd brews as well as other interesting guests. It should be noted all cask ales are only £2.50 a pint every Sunday and pizzas are two for the price of one on Monday evenings from 5pm.

## Events

The Wellington (Horfield) beer festival was held this year on Saturday the 25<sup>th</sup> and Sunday the 26<sup>th</sup> of May. This annual event featured Bath Ales and Beerd products, as well as guest ales, food and music.

Bath Ales hosted a Real Ale Festival Racenight at Bath Racecourse on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May featuring a selection of beers from around the UK as well as Bath Ales brews. After the racing there was live music from a Queen tribute band.

Bath Ales will be out and about in force again this summer at large and small festivals in the area. Check the website for a full list.

The annual Bath Ales Biking Bonanza charity event will be run on June 22<sup>nd</sup> this year, and registration is now open via the Bath Ales website. This event features a bike ride along the Bristol-Bath cycleway starting at either Gardner Haskins in Bristol or the Hop Pole in Bath, and finishing at Hare House in Warmley. Here riders can enjoy food, alcoholic and non-alcoholic refreshments, live music, a raffle, and children's activities.

The Biking Bonanza is a family-friendly, charity bike ride organised to raise as much money as possible for the Frenchay Hospital After Burns Children's Club (FAB).

Head brewer, Gerry Condell, will again be taking the lead and undertaking a mammoth sponsored walk, passing most of the Bath Ales pubs and old brewery sites before joining everyone at Hare House. This year will be the 6th annual charity bike ride and the aim is to raise more money than last year's total of just over £5,000.

Roy Sanders

# 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 [clothes@camrabristol.org.uk](mailto:clothes@camrabristol.org.uk). Please allow up to 4 weeks for delivery.



## PINTS WEST CLOTHING ORDER FORM

	Price each	Quantity	Size	Colour
T-SHIRT	£16.00	.....	.....	.....
POLO SHIRT	£19.50	.....	.....	.....
SWEAT SHIRT	£21.50	.....	.....	.....
FLEECE	£25.50	.....	.....	.....

**Prices include postage & packing.** If your order is for a selection of items more complex than this form can accommodate, please print your exact requirements on a separate sheet of paper.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

..... POSTCODE .....

EMAIL ADDRESS (in case of queries)

# Severn Vale CAMRA

## West Midlands Beer Extravaganza

A group of four CAMRA members – two of us from the local Severn Vale sub-branch – set off from South Gloucestershire early on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> February and headed to Northfield in Birmingham, and to the **Black Horse**. This is a large Wetherspoon's pub in the mock Tudor style with its own bowling green. It was formerly Davenport's number one show pub and contains old photographs of the brewery which once stood in Bath Row on the outskirts of the city centre. Not many beers on but the Sadler's Basilisk made a good start to the day.

We then travelled north-west to Netherton to our first brew pub: the famous **Ma Pardoe's** (the Old Swan). The National Inventory listed interior was the perfect setting to sample their range of beers including the Old Swan Original, Dark Swan, Entire and Bumble Hole Bitter. Our next port of call was the equally famous **Vine Inn** (Bull and Bladder) at Brierley Hill. This is Batham's tap and again the beer is brewed on the premises. A light lunch was taken here along with their mild and best bitter and the home-made pork pies can be highly recommended.

On to our third brew pub in a row with a visit to the **Windsor Castle** at Lye, home to Sadler's brewery. This is a much more modern establishment providing us with a range of nine of their beers, including Jack's Ale at 3.8% and Hop Bomb (need we say more) for the bitter drinkers, a good mild at 4.0% and Mud City Stout (6.6%) for those who prefer the darker ales. The food looked good and was quite upmarket.



Windsor Castle

The **Malt Shovel** at Lye was not open so we travelled to the other side of Stourbridge to the **Queen's Head** in Wordsley. This specialises in Enville beers which is the other beer brewed locally. We sampled the Enville Ale and Porter, both at 4.5%, and the Ginger Beer at 4.6%. Sarah Hughes Ruby Mild from Dudley was also available.

We were now heading to Bewdley for our overnight stay but did a detour back to Lye to take in the **Malt Shovel** which was opening at six o'clock. This was well worth it as ten beers were available to us including Holden's Golden Glow at 4.4%.

Arriving at the **George Hotel** at about 19.45, following a quick wash and brush up and a meal at the hotel, we then proceeded to visit a selection of the pubs in Bewdley. These included the **Woodcolliers Arms**, with Kinver Edge, 4.2%, and Light Railway, 3.8%, and Three Tuns 1642 Bitter, also 3.8%; the **Little Pack Horse**, where we tried Worcestershire Way, 3.6%, and its stronger version, Worcestershire Sway, 5.0%, and Hobson's Town Crier, 4.5%. And at the **Mug House** we had Taylor's Landlord, 4.3%, Wye Valley HPA, 4.0%, and, again, Worcestershire Way, before trudging back to the George for our final drink of a very hectic day.



All Nations

After a hearty breakfast, day two commenced with a 45-minute drive northwards to Ironbridge. A day ticket to all the museums in the area (birthplace of the Industrial Revolution) was not practical due to the time available but we did get brief views of the Blist Hill Industrial Museum whilst we were waiting for the nearby **All Nations** pub to open up. It was well worth the wait, a roaring coal fire and a pint of beer brewed by the Shires brewery on the premises. Dabley Ale at 3.8% and the stronger version, Dabley Gold at 5.0%, were the choice here.

We worked our way westwards down the valley going in the **Robin Hood** (Holdens Black Country Bitter, 3.9%), **Bird In Hand**, and the **Golden Ball** (Three Tuns XXX, 4.3%) before reaching the **Coalbrookdale Inn** opposite the Iron Gorge Museum. A very informative landlord with a good range of beers from which we sampled Ludlow Gold, 4.2%, Salopian Darwins Origin, 4.3%, Golden Thread, 5.0% and Stonehouse Off the Rails at 4.8%. Working our way back up the valley we called into the **Swan**, the **Malt House** and the **White Hart** followed by a quick walk across the first Iron Bridge over the River Severn and then on to the **Shakespeare** and the **Brewery Inn**.

We travelled back to Bewdley via Bridgnorth, making first for the **Railwaymans Arms** on the Severn Valley Railway; a gem of a historic station bar on the platform with about ten different beers and overlooking the steam trains as they drew in and out of the station, what more could you want? Hobson's Mild and Best, Cottage Vintage Ale and Bewdley Station Porter were taken on board here.

In the town we had a look at the funicular railway before a trip around the pubs, including the eponymous **Jewel of the Severn** – another Wetherspoon pub – serving Salopian Lemon Dream, Woods Shropshire Lass, 4.1%, Corvedale Golden Dale, and Kelham Island Pale Rider, 5.2%, amongst others. Other pubs visited were the **Shakespeare**, **Old Castle**, the **Bear** (no beers sampled in these three) and the **White Lion**, this being our fifth brewery pub (Hop & Stagger brewery) where we sampled their Golden Wonder and Hightown as well as Shipwreck Coast, a guest ale from Penpont brewery in Cornwall.

Arriving back in Bewdley, the day was rounded off with a Chinese meal overlooking the River Severn, and visits to the **Old Wagon and Horses** (Banks Mild and Bathams Bitter), the **Black Boy** (Banks Bitter and Sunbeam), the **Cock and Magpie** (none sampled), the **Black Boy Hotel** (Enville Ale, Wye Valley HPA), the **Great Western** (Bewdley Severn Way) and finally back to the **George** for a night cap of Conway Welsh Pride and Wold Top Headland Red before a well earned rest.

A leisurely Sunday morning drive following the river down to Stourport on Severn where a 'spoon's breakfast at **Ye Old Crown Inn** and a





Talbot

pleasant walk around the large canal basin complex set us up for our last day.

Leaving the river we travelled south west to the **Talbot** at Knightwick, our sixth and final brew pub. Its Teme Valley brewery did not fail to live up to its reputation with the This, That and T'other (those being beer names) going down a treat at 3.7%, 4.1% and 3.5% respectively, and followed by a shared Reveille, a creamy stout at 4.3%.

Moving on then to the **Foley Arms Hotel** at Great Malvern, another Wetherspoon's serving a delicious Wolf brewery Granny Wouldn't Like It and Coach House Innkeepers for contrast. Granny didn't know what she was missing here!

Back to the River Severn at Twynning where we visited the **Fleet Inn** without success and the **Village Inn** where we sampled Otter Ale, Courage Directors and Hook Norton at their usual gravities. Further down the Severn visits to **Gupshill Manor** just south of Tewkesbury and the **Red Lion** at Wainlode (Wickwar Coopers Pale Ale, 3.5%) completed our planned trip. However, calling in at Gloucester Docks we were given a surprise tour of the Gloucester Brewery and finished up in the **Dr. Fosters Wine Bar** on the quay side with their very moreish Docks Dark ale, 5.2%, and the hoppy Gold at 3.9%.

Over the long weekend we visited forty-seven pubs but due to the availability of the different beers drank only in twenty-seven. Of these six were brew pubs. A very satisfactory extended weekend enjoyed by all and our thanks go to our driver who was unable to sample more than 'tasters' during the day trips.

*Rod Lees and Keith McIndoe  
(accompanied by Paul Dickinson and Dave Sutton)*

## Severn Vale diary and contact

First Bus announced recently that they were discontinuing the 311 service from Thornbury to Dursley (via Kingswood and Wotton-under-edge), which would have made our trips to the Old Spot somewhat more difficult. However, following campaigning by Steve Herbert, landlord of the Old Spot, South Glos Council and Gloucestershire County Council, the service has been reprieved for a further 12 months. Hooray! What will happen in twelve months time, though, is anybody's guess at the moment. Use it or lose it.

- **Fri, 14th June:** Old Spot, Dursley, 12:30 - 14:30
- **Wed, 19th June:** Sub-branch meeting, Anchor, Thornbury, 20:30
- **Sat, 6th July:** Gloucester Brewery trip (see Bristol CAMRA branch diary for details)
- **Fri, 12th July:** Old Spot, Dursley, 12:30 - 14:30
- **Wed, 17th July:** Sub-branch meeting, Black Horse, Thornbury, 20:30
- **Sat, 20th July:** Bath survey trip
- **Fri, 2nd Aug:** Severn Vale Clubs survey trip
- **Fri, 9nd Aug:** Old Spot, Dursley, 12:30 - 14:30
- **Wed, 21st Aug:** Sub-branch meeting, Fox, Old Down, 20:30
- **Fri, 6th Sept:** Pub survey trip (TBA)

## Pubs news

### The Barrel Inn, Thornbury

This popular pub in the pedestrian area of Thornbury's town centre closed its doors toward the end of April. The pub was pretty much always a live music venue and will be missed by those rock fans it catered for. It will also be missed for its propensity to stock unusual beers that are seldom seen in this area of very conservative beer offerings.

The building is Grade II listed, on the basis of the cobbled floor in the bar being part of the original St Mary's Street, and the stone archway – complete with gate hinges – that once formed an entrance to some stables.

At the time of writing, Enterprise Inns – who own the pub – are selling the freehold; apparently by sealed bid, after initially asking an outrageous £450,000 for the place. As all but two of the remaining six pubs in Thornbury are also owned by Enterprise, it seems they have few concerns about potential future competition. That said, the "for sale" advert on Christie's website neglected to mention that it would be suitable as a pub, preferring instead to suggest use as a restaurant or café – neither of which would require a change of use planning application.

This is the second Thornbury pub to close within one year.

### Wheatsheaf, Thornbury

Russell at the Wheatsheaf is organising a cider festival on 24th to 26th August. Check his Facebook page for details (search for "Wheatsheaf Thornbury").

There's also a rumour that he might be putting on a beer festival in the Autumn. Watch this space.

### Swan, Almondsbury

The Swan at Almondsbury is having a beer and cider festival on Friday 12th, Saturday 13th Sunday 14th July. Keep your eyes on their Facebook page in case they plant further details there, but there's a link to a prospective brewery list on their website at [www.swanhotelbristol.com](http://www.swanhotelbristol.com) (follow the "What's on?" link).

### Swan, Tytherington

Continuing the beer festival theme, Rob and Kim at the Swan at Tytherington (Facebook: [www.facebook.com/theswentytherington](http://www.facebook.com/theswentytherington)) will be holding a beer and cider festival – July 5th to 7th. The details they've given me are as follows. Day 1: free entry. and the Mersey Makers (60's Mersey sound tribute band) will be featuring. Day 2: £5 entry with entertainment by the Great Eskape, a tribute ska band. Day 3: £15 entry to see the Wurzels and Daz. Full weekend tickets are £18 with a glass included. No details on the beers and ciders at the moment – perhaps they'll be posted on Facebook? For more information, please contact Kim or Rob on 01454 412380 or 07866 039514.

### The Salutation, Ham

All change here as celebrated hosts Don and Sue retire to life on the other side of the bar, where they'll be keeping tabs on the standard of beers and ciders on offer! We wish them all the best.

Likewise, greetings and "salutations" to Paul and partner – critically selected by Don and Sue – to follow in their footsteps. If the recent mild ale trail visit is anything to go by, then the new "keepers" are off to a flying start, with no less than an eclectic selection of beers (including two milds at the time), five real ciders, and a real perry. There are also rumours of brewing recommencing here sometime in the future. Watch this space, too!

*Martin Farrimond*

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

- **Fri, 13th Sept:** Old Spot, Dursley, 12:30 - 14:30
- **Wed, 18th Sept:** Sub-branch meeting, Bowl, Almondsbury, 20:30

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

For the most up-to-date details, please check our diary page at [severnval.camrabristol.org.uk](http://severnval.camrabristol.org.uk) or contact us directly by email to [SevernValeCAMRA@gmail.com](mailto:SevernValeCAMRA@gmail.com) or [ainsdeng@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:ainsdeng@blueyonder.co.uk).

# Lightweights on Tour - Oop North

A long weekend in Castleford may not be everyone's idea of fun, but Premier Inns had another sale on and we are on a quest to try things we hadn't done before, seeking out places where tourists rarely flock. Our base was the Premier Inn close to junction 31 of the M62 and a couple of miles south west of the town of Castleford. The main aim of our trip was to visit the home of the Castleford Rugby League Club, known locally as "the Jungle", the following Sunday. Before checking in, we took a slight diversion to take a look at the town of Featherstone, half a dozen miles short of our destination and a local rugby league rival of "Cas". We stopped-off at the **Featherstone Hotel**, a large and friendly old pub, close to the railway crossing. Desperate Dan would not have been disappointed by the slice of steak pie put in front of Mrs R and he would have been proud that she demolished all of it. The food served up was good old fashioned fare and went down well with a pint of Black Sheep Bitter at £2.70, setting us up for our trip.

Friday night saw us heading out to Leeds which is easily reached by a



Whitelocks

direct 40-minute bus ride or by taking the train out of the town centre which is what we did. We kicked off our brief pub crawl at **Whitelocks** which is tucked down a lane called Turk's Head Yard next to Marks and Spencer and in the middle of Leeds' main pedestrianised shopping street – Briggate. A bit of an institution in those parts and listed in CAMRA's list of Real Heritage Pubs, Whitelocks impressed. Dating from 1715, Whitelocks is known as an old-style luncheon bar and the impressive looking food is available between 12 and 8pm. The interior dates from 1895 and dark wood panelling, mirrors, brass and tiles are in evidence. Whitelocks is long and thin and the place was bustling when we entered early evening. It seemed to appeal to all ages and types; office workers on the way home or staying out, shoppers and people like us coming out for the night. The words "young", "fashionable" and "real ale" are not normally seen together but come to mind when remembering this pub. The bar staff were young and trendy, but knowledgeable. I recall seeing a choice of eight draught real ales. There seemed to be a local bias and I remember beers like Theakston's Old Peculier, Jolly Blonde from Jolly Sailor Brewery (my favourite of the night), Absolution from Abbeydale and Angel from Great Heck.

Squeezing ourselves out of Whitelocks, we headed south down Briggate, over the River Aire and to the top corner of Hunslet Road to the **Adelphi**. The Adelphi also features in CAMRA's inventory of Real Heritage Pubs. It dates back to 1901 as a large, multi-roomed Victorian "gin palace" with more tiles and wood panelling and impressive doors with decorated glass. Here we found a central lobby drinking area and I believe a choice of six real ales. This being a Leeds Brewery pub, we opted for Leeds Pale. Inside, the place was booming with mainly young people and loudish music and we loved it. We headed upstairs to explore and found a large room with another, smaller bar and comfortable furniture. We found the whole place welcoming, a bit alternative, younger and louder than we normally experience but excellent nonetheless. Leeds Brewery and the Adelphi demonstrate how a fantastic old pub can provide good music, good beer and a safe, comfortable environment in a city centre for a mixed crowd. Coming out of the Adelphi, the **Old Red Lion** was spotted opposite. To the wife's delight, she noticed it is a Sam Smith's establishment. This is a lovely old pub with lots of rooms and a pint of their own bitter was a staggeringly reasonable £1.80. In fact,

we got change from £4 for a pint and a half and two packets of crisps. From here we took the short walk back to Leeds railway station and the train back to Castleford. Then we popped into the pub opposite Castleford Station, unsurprisingly named the **Station**, where only one real ale was available, Cameron's Bitter, but it was a good way of finishing a good night.

Saturday was allocated to the **Transpennine Real Ale Rail Trail**. This has been increasingly popular, probably helped by being shown on a television programme with James May and Oz Clarke. In fairness, a more recent programme had shown how this trail is proving to be a bit of a drag for rail staff – particularly on Saturdays when hen and stag nights take their toll. It was then with some wariness, that we set off in the morning, hoping that the hen/stag effect was not fully revved up yet as it was only early March. The crawl goes between the line from Batley (west of Leeds) and Stalybridge, to the east of Manchester and incorporates renovated station buildings in Stalybridge, Huddersfield and Dewsbury. Once we saw that our platform at Leeds was overcrowded and had its fair share of groups in fancy dress, we wondered whether we should have picked a weekday for our trip. Our plan was to travel all the way to Stalybridge and then work our way back over the day. We got to **Stalybridge's Station Refreshment Rooms** before midday but it was already busy – it seemed most of our train's passengers had the same plan as us. It didn't dampen our enjoyment though. There were nine cask beers available; mostly from local breweries and we tried Hawkshead's Pale Ale and Black Cab from Moorhouse (£2.90 a pint). The place was nicely furnished and the food looked good. In fact, it appeared that the great majority of pub crawlers, like us, never left the station to see what the rest of Stalybridge offered.

In the main, the returning trains were hourly and there are eight stops on the ale trail. As self-professed lightweights, our plan was to miss a few stops, so the next call for us was the village of Marsden. Here, we could have tried the Station pub next to the station but headed down into the village itself which has an attractive appearance with a waterfall, shops, more than its fair share of off-road vehicles and, importantly, another couple of pubs. Next to the waterfall is the Good Beer Guide-listed **Riverhead Brewery Tap** which



Stalybridge Station

has the twin advantages of being owned by the excellent Ossett Brewery and offering beers from the on-site Riverhead Brewery as well as Ossett's. However, there was a bit of a queue of fellow travellers and only one bar staff to work through it. Luckily, we had spotted, across the road, a Thwaites pub called the **Swan** which everyone else seemed to have ignored and we decided to try this. The Swan was comfortable, offering pool and darts and acted as a temporary escape from the crowds. It only offered us one real ale in Thwaites' Bomber at £2.80 a pint but this was just the job. On reflection, we liked Marsden and will put it on our mental wish list to return (midweek) and have a proper look at it – and all its pubs. Next for us was the village of Slaithwaite. This seemed to be in a similar mould to Marsden, set in a dip in the valley and having a bit of history to it. As we got to the bottom of the hill, we saw the GBG-listed Commercial but also saw a sign for the **Shoulder of Mutton** and tried that. This turned out to be a good choice. The couple running it were welcoming, there were flagstones on the floor and an interesting choice of five ales. We went for their own Slaughtered Lamb beer (£2.40 a pint) and Copper Dragon Best (£2.60), and were pleased with our





The Swan

choices.

The next stop was Huddersfield which we visited many years ago in our pre-CAMRA days and when our experience was that every pub we entered was incredibly loud and the young ladies of the town preferred to opt to go without most of the clothing that a winter's night might normally call for. This time, with the experience which comes with age, we aimed to be a bit more discerning and picked out a promising pub close to the station from the Good Beer Guide. The **Sportsman** proved to be an inspired choice and one I would recommend to others. This pub is in a corner position with an award-winning interior which retains some of its 1930s heritage. Eight handpumps are in place. It was worth making the effort to get away from the party atmosphere around the station. The beer and food offering looked interesting and well described. We chose a couple of half pints at this stage (Manynka from Two Roses Brewery and Castle Hill from Mallinsons) which came to a total of £2.55. The bar staff came across as knowledgeable and cheerful and the clientele was a nice mix. It is obviously popular with the local CAMRA group, members of which were in evidence. When we got back to the station, the train we were aiming for had been cancelled so we headed into the **Kings Head** which is in the station buildings. A large and airy building, the lively feeling was similar to a beer festival. Ten real ales were on and we tried Farmer's Blonde from Bradfield and Curious from Magic Rock – a half of each only came to a total of £2.40.

After Huddersfield, we went to a quieter station in Mirfield where we walked by the GBG-listed Navigation Tavern and on to the Ossett Brewery-owned **Flower Pot**. By now it was only about 5 o'clock on a Saturday evening but the Flower Pot was bustling. In fact, I can't recall experiencing an Ossett pub which doesn't seem to be doing well. In this case, it appeared that work had been done to the outside and inside of the pub and the aim would seem to be to create a good traditional community local. Here, I bought a pint of Ossett's Silver King for £2.66. After Mirfield, we finished our personal crawl at Dewsbury in the **West Riding Licenced Refreshment Rooms**. To enter, we first had to dodge around the product of a local lad's recent digestive problems and we found this establishment – again part of the station building – to be busy and noisy. By now, we were starting to sympathise with the bar staff at some of the more obviously busy pubs in this rail ale crawl – and certainly those at the end of the crawl. I went for the Timothy Taylor's Landlord but by now my heart had gone out of this. Frankly, for a lightweight, I'd had a fair few beers, the crawl was getting a bit lively for me and I was starting to feel like the sober person at a party.

Saturday had been a bit of a mixed experience for us but we woke on Sunday with high hopes. Today we were concentrating on watching the rugby league game and experiencing how the town of Castleford deals with it. With a full breakfast inside us, we set off to start the lunchtime session at the **Junction**. This corner pub is pretty much in the middle of the town centre. If you ever visit it, don't be put off by the outside appearance – the owner of this free house has concentrated first on improving the interior and getting the beers right. Inside, we found a large, welcoming pub. It appeared well looked after and the landlord was busy getting his range of real ales set up for the busy game day. It was good to see free food had been laid on for the occasion. When we were there the expanding list of real ales numbered four but I understand this rises to six. All four available to us were from Yorkshire: from Walls, Ridgeside, Northallerton and Redcar breweries. We tried all four beers and loved them. Prices of the pints we

sampled ranged around £2.45/£2.55. As in most successful real ale pubs, it was evident that there were a range of people of all ages. We got talking to the two nearest local characters who were pleased and surprised that we had travelled so far to support "Cas" rather than the big-time charlies otherwise known as Wigan. With some reluctance, we left our new mates to have a bit of a walk out of town towards the suburb of Glasshoughton. My research had shown that there was a pub worth looking for on the way out there called the **Houghton**. The walk was a couple of miles or so and we found the Houghton in an oasis of three pubs close together. This was a pleasant looking place, again with a good mix of people. Here, the ales available were Black Sheep Bitter and Route A66 from Mithril Ales near Richmond. I tried Route A66 and had no complaints. From here, we walked back in to town for the rugby. I had chosen Castleford because their ground is a traditional one with mostly terracing. We found the supporters mingling together in most parts of the ground. The game itself was great fun with Wigan just managing to win with a late score.

After the game, we joined the exodus from the ground and headed across town to Methley Road which the local CAMRA magazine indicated had a couple of pubs with real ale. The first one, the **Eagle**, at the start of the road, turned out to be a nicely renovated place with Sky Sports. Sadly, its only real ale tap was off duty so I took to the delights of John Smith's Smooth. Across the road, I learnt the lesson to read your Good Beer Guide thoroughly because the **Shoulder of Mutton** was having its Sunday break before opening for the evening. This was a shame because it is the oldest remaining pub in town and has a bit of a legendary status for its ale. On we marched on the road back to our hotel and stopped off at the **High Town** on the outskirts of town. As we popped our nervous heads around the front door we could see no real ales on the bar. The friendly landlady could sense our hesitation. In the far corner of the lounge, someone was on the microphone running through pub quiz questions and a karaoke screen was evident. The nearest that the bar offered to our preferred ales was a keg beer from Theakstons. All these factors would normally lead to us retracing our steps with some embarrassment but sometimes you just have to go with the flow. We asked for the keg Theakstons which turned out to be a not untasty dark beer. The chap on the "mike" was excellent. The customers seemed friendly and we had another drink. We had stumbled across a good local pub. By now, we were in danger of harming our lightweight reputations if we kept going so finished with some solids and a reasonably early night to end a great weekend.

Neil Ravenscroft

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## Local MP gets behind CAMRA's Community Pubs Month initiative

As part of CAMRA's Community Pubs Month in April, Stephen Williams, the MP for Bristol West, joined some local CAMRA members for beers (real ale of course!) at the Annexe pub in Bishopston.

This was the second Community Pubs Month organised by CAMRA to highlight the importance of pubs as valued assets within local communities. The aim is also to encourage pubs to organise events to promote themselves and to encourage more trade.

Steve Williams, who a few weeks earlier have met with Bristol & District CAMRA members who were lobbying on the issue of the beer duty escalator, said: "I am delighted to be taking part in Community Pubs Month and to be supporting the CAMRA campaign here in Bristol.

"It's a great shame that pubs up and down the country are being closed, for a variety of reasons, often when they don't need to close. Pubs are more than just businesses; they are often the hub of the community as a focus for social, sporting and charitable activity.

"I was very pleased to hear in the Budget last month the announcement that beer duty would be cut. I successfully helped put pressure on the Chancellor and the Treasury to scrap the beer duty escalator entirely, which will stop beer duty rising above inflation in future. This should make a real difference to pubs and communities in Bristol and I encourage everyone to raise a glass and to visit their local pub!"

We are very pleased that Steve Williams MP has got behind the campaign to promote community pubs. We have been working with our MPs including lobbying them in recent months to get the Chancellor to scrap the beer duty escalator which increased beer duty each year at 2% above inflation. We are delighted that Stephen backed this successful campaign which was led by CAMRA. We now hope that, where possible, people will take a chance to rediscover that there are still some really great pubs around Bristol and they offer a great place to meet up with friends, family and neighbours. Pubs are an integral part of the way of life in the UK. We have far lost too many in recent years. However, a well run local pub is still a great way to enjoy meeting up with people and the Annexe is a good example of a community local that is popular with people of all ages and backgrounds.

The evening was a success and local members spoke to the MP on various issues including the need for planning legislation reform to give pubs even more protection.

Pete Bridle

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## 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
- Coach & Horses, Braggs Lane, Old Market
- Coach & Horses, Highland Square, Clifton
- Cornubia, Temple Street, Bristol
- Drawbridge, St Augustines Parade, Bristol
- Globe, Frampton Cotterell
- Grapes, Chipping Sodbury
- Gryphon, Colston Street, Bristol
- Hope & Anchor, Jacobs Wells Road, Bristol
- Horse & Groom, St George's Road, Bristol
- Horts, Broad Street, Bristol
- New Inn, Mayhill
- Old Stillage, Redfield
- Orchard Inn, Hanover Place, Bristol
- Queens Arms, Bleadon
- Robert Fitzharding, Bedminster
- 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
- Westbury Park Tavern, Henleaze
- Woolpack Inn, St Georges, Weston-super-Mare



**CAMRA  
FOR  
REAL ALE**

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



# Branch diary

## Diary of the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA

- **Tues 11<sup>th</sup> June** – Committee Meeting – Gryphon, 8pm.
- **Thurs 20<sup>th</sup> June** – BADRAG gathering – meet at the Kings Arms, Kingswood, 7.30pm for an 8pm start, then on to the Colliers – they should both have at least one dark beer on tap.
- **Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> June** – BBF Helpers Trip to Nottingham Brewery and Nottingham Pub Tour (open to all) – depart Cornubia 9am – return around 9pm.
- **Wed 26<sup>th</sup> June** – Branch Meeting – 8pm, venue tbc.
- **Fri 28<sup>th</sup> June** – Tasting Panel – 8pm, venue tbc.
- **Sat 6<sup>th</sup> July** – Gloucester Brewery Trip – depart Cornubia 11.15am.
- **Tues 9<sup>th</sup> July** – Committee Meeting – Gryphon, 8pm.
- **Wed 24<sup>th</sup> July** – Branch AGM – Horts, central Bristol, 8pm.
- **Thurs 25<sup>th</sup> July** – Bristol Pubs Group Meeting – upstairs at the Bag of Nails, Hotwells, 7pm.
- **Fri 26<sup>th</sup> July** – Tasting Panel – 8pm, venue tbc.
- **Sat 27<sup>th</sup> July** – Trip (arranged by BADRAG, open to all) to Weston Lions beer festival – meet Temple Meads 11.30am.
- **Tues 13<sup>th</sup> August** – Committee Meeting – Gryphon, 8pm.
- **Thurs 15<sup>th</sup> August** – BBF Helpers Trip to Great British Beer Festival (open to all) – depart Cornubia 9.45am.
- **Fri 23<sup>rd</sup> August** – Tasting Panel – King's Arms, Kingswood, 8pm.
- **Wed 28<sup>th</sup> August** – Branch Meeting – 8pm, venue tbc.

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

## Weston diary and contact

See page 30

## Severn Vale diary and contact

See page 35

## Need more Pints Wests?

If your pub requires more copies of Pints West (subject to availability), please contact Chris Rogers (email [chrisofbristol@ymail.com](mailto:chrisofbristol@ymail.com)).

## Twitter & Facebook

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

### Thanks to this issue's contributors

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

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

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## Bath & Borders diary

- **Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June 8:30pm.** A social at the George in Croscombe, near Wells, Somerset.
  - **Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> June 8:30pm.** The 2013 Pub of the Year presentation to the Raven, Queen Street, Bath.
  - **Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June 8:30pm.** A mini crawl in Bradford on Avon, starting at the Grapes and going on to the Bear, both in Silver Street.
  - **Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> June 8:30pm.** The Branch AGM and Rural 2013 Pub of the Year presentation at the Fox and Hounds, Deverill Road, Warminster, Wiltshire.
- See [www.bathandborderscamra.org.uk/events/](http://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](mailto:denis.rahilly@talktalk.net).

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

Views expressed in Pints West are those of the individual authors and not necessarily supported by CAMRA.

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## Solution to the crossword on page 14

Across: 1. Thatcher, 9. Absinthe, 10. Internal, 11. Long tail, 12. Durum wheat, 14. Idol, 15. Sphene, 17. Pallets, 18. Iron, 22. End of India, 23. Fling out, 25. Inchoate, 26. Scavenge, 27. Gold dust, Down: 2. Hand pump, 3. The Mouse, 4. Hunt, 5. Rallies, 6. ESB not half, 7. Straddle, 8. Real ales, 13. White Horse, 15. Spitfire, 16. Hoofing, 18. Landlord, 19. Tributes, 20. Editing, 24. Kcal.



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01/06

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