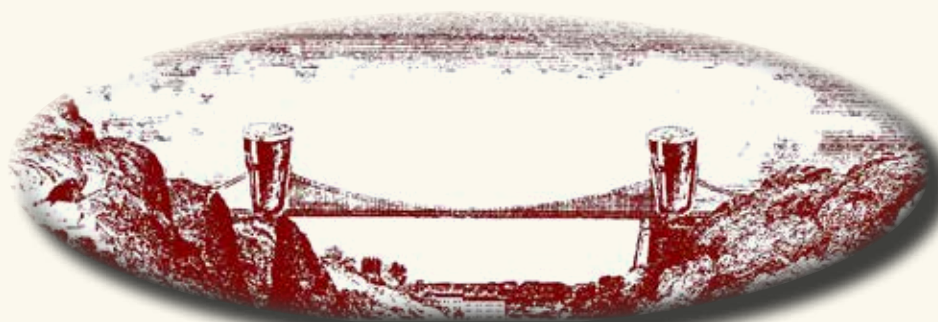




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PINTS WEST

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



**Featuring some contributions
that could not be
accommodated in the printed
version of Pints West**

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

Lightweights on tour – Eastside

As a Brummie, I've long held the belief that Hull is the Birmingham of the North East; it's a place which attracts some derision – often by those who haven't been there. Well I hadn't been there and so Mrs R and I decided to head in that direction this June. We stationed ourselves for three nights in the village of Cottingham. Cottingham had the advantage of having a railway station and being one stop away from Hull in one direction and Beverley in the other.

We arrived on a Friday lunchtime and headed first towards Hull for a leisurely wander around Hull's Old Town in the afternoon before catching a bus to the East side of town to watch Hull Kingston Rovers playing Rugby League against Huddersfield. Hull Old Town is close to the bus and train interchange and was a pleasant surprise with plenty of historic pubs in the Old Town's lanes. It appears a lot of shopping has moved out to around the Paragon transport interchange, leaving the old town centre itself a bit on the quiet side. The highlights of Hull centre for us were the Lion and Key and the Wellington. Both feature in the current CAMRA Good Beer Guide.

The **Lion and Key**, in the High Street, is slap in the middle of the Old Town and is a brewpub which also offers guest ales. We particularly enjoyed the food and liked the relaxed atmosphere. The pub is independently owned by the same people who own the nearby **Walters** and **William Hawkes** (both in Scale Lane).

Just outside the centre of town and on the other side of a main road called Freetown Way lies the **Wellington**. Another brewpub, it is set in a residential area and gives the feel of a proper local pub. Wandering around the Old Town again on Sunday, we noticed that the imposing Minerva Hotel, which is set next to the Victoria Pier and close to the marina, had held a beer festival on the previous weekend and this coincided with a powerboat championship taking place on the river Humber – an idea for a future visit maybe.

Saturday morning saw us take the train in the other direction towards the market town of Beverley for the main purpose of our visit; our first ever experience of horse racing. An easy walk through the attractive shopping streets towards the northern edge of town and our first pub of the day, the **White Horse** was the plan. This is an impressive looking former coaching house in Hengate. I already knew this was a Sam Smith's establishment – guaranteed to put the wife in a good mood. Entering, we saw that its proximity to the race course on a race day meant we were not the only customers. Our admiration went out to the people serving behind the bar who I think were the landlords. They seemed to spot the next customer from the crowd of drinkers surrounding the bar with experienced eyes and soon a pint of Sam Smith's bitter at an amazing £1.80 a pint was in my hand. We managed to find a seat in one of the many rooms in the warren of an interior. We were intent on being soberish for the racing so after another drink we headed west out



The Chequers Micropub, Beverley

of the town's walls and up the hill to the racing.

After a splendid afternoon of racing and slightly up financially, we walked back down the hill into the town and towards a night's drinking. On the way to the White Horse, earlier in the day we had spotted what was advertised as "Yorkshire's First Micropub" was about to open that day. On our return to town in the evening, **Chequers Micropub** in Swabys Yard was functioning. Now, I've got a bit of a thing for the micropub phenomenon. Over the course of the next hour or two we enjoyed the company of owner, Ian Allott and his delightful daughters who were all clearly happy with the reception the new pub had received. We are proud to say we tried the first ever five real ales sold here which were- Goffs' White Knight, All Hallows' Peg Fyfe (a mild), Thornbridge's Jaipur, Dark Star's Hophead and Buxton Moor Top. The ale prices ranged between £2.70 and £3.20 a pint. I can remember that the Jaipur and Hophead were both stunningly good. Ian's aim is that the beer offering will constantly change. His take on a micropub is also to offer four draught real ciders plus a small but interesting and well priced selection of wine. Ian is a bit of a foodie so a limited food offering may be available in future. We had a good chat with Ian. He had spent some-time researching other micropubs, especially in their heartland of Kent, and I think he has chosen wisely for the location of his. We wish Ian and his family every success and we will be back.

Dragging ourselves away from somewhere we could easily have spent the rest of the evening, we set off to explore other Beverley pubs which feature in recent Good Beer Guides. We started at the **Cornerhouse** in Norwood. Here, I chose Abbeydale Deception from a choice of a dozen real ales. We then moved on to the **Green Dragon**, set in Saturday Market. This was a lively place with a younger crowd. The pub itself must be one of the longest in the area which I found out when I sought to relieve myself. Next was the **Dog and Duck** in Ladygate and which was a bit of an oasis of calm after the Green Dragon. We chose from a choice of six real ales which included Copper Dragon



Ian at the Chequers Micropub, Beverley



Rory at the Prince Albert, Ely

Golden Pippin. Our final pub in Beverley, the **Sun Inn**, was chosen because it was near to the train station. It turned out to be, on Friday and Saturday nights, a live music venue. A packed crowd was enjoying some retro hard rock when we arrived but the plentiful bar staff still quickly delivered my York Guzzler. The band then transformed themselves into something even scarier than before for their second set and we trotted off to catch the last train back to Cottingham.

At this point, I would put in a word for the pubs of Cottingham where we stayed. It has three pubs in the current Good Beer Guide; the **Blue Bell**, the **Duke of Cumberland** and the **King William IV**, all of which we tried; and the **Railway**, close to our accommodation and which offers eight real ales. Cottingham is an attractive village with a relaxed feel to it.

After our stay in the North East, we slipped down the eastern half of England to explore Cambridgeshire and a bit of Suffolk. Here, the most favourable impression made by pubs was in the small Cathedral City of Ely. We had firstly quenched our thirst after a riverside walk at

the riverside pub, the **Cutter**, with Woodeforde's Wherry. The second of the three pubs which we visited here was the **Prince Albert**. A Greene King pub in the quiet Silver Street, they make the most of the freedom the brewery give them to maximise the choice of ales. The personable manager, Rory, was happy to offer Greene King's XX Mild, their IPA and Abbott, and their seasonal St Edmonds, along with Skinner's Betty Stoggs, Lion from Hook Norton, Woodforde's Nelson's Revenge and Thwaites' Nutty Black. This place struck us as a comfortable local pub. Dragging Mrs R reluctantly away from Rory, we stopped off at the **Townhouse**, in Market Street, which had a large beer garden and an interesting ale choice – I recall beers from Elgoods and Buntingford Breweries and that the prices were keen.

We enjoyed our personal survey of some of the east side of England and aim to visit again, to check on progress at Chequers Micropub and experience another day's racing at Beverley, but also to spend more time in Hull.

Neil Ravenscroft



Californian beer odyssey

You may recall that, in recent issues of Pints West, Vince Murray and Phil Cummings described "The United States of Beer"; their journey through the beer scene on the west coast of the USA.

As it happens, a group of nine of us were visiting California this spring, and we took inspiration from their write-ups to try to visit many brew-pubs ourselves. We were actually heading out on a white-water kayaking holiday, so the beer would have to fit in with the rivers. Thus we ended up in lots of very rural locations, far removed from the big cities which Vince and Phil visited. However, I think that we can say that the beer scene is certainly thriving, even in some rural locations.

As explained by Vince and Phil, the CAMRA guide to the West Coast is now a little out of date. We found that www.pubquest.com was very helpful and relatively up-to-date although a quick web-search sometimes found breweries too new even for pub-quest.

Our plan for the first evening was to leave San Francisco airport and drive for about an hour, to Fairfield, where we had booked a motel for the night, close to the **Blue Frog** brewery. However, our first major problem was that the brewery wasn't open! It does seem to still be brewing, but the bar/restaurant looks permanently shut. We had to retire instead to a neighbouring Mexican restaurant to eat and stave off some jet-lag. Failure to organise a piss-up in a brewery...

Day two was more promising. After paddling some white water, we ended up in Placerville, east of Sacramento, to visit the **Placerville Brewing Company**. We arrived quite late, but they were happy to see us, and we enjoyed much fine beer and food. The range of beers was good, including a vanilla stout with perhaps too much vanilla, and a porter, as well as some drinkable lighter ales. As was common in virtually all of the places we visited, beer was sold in pints or pitchers; the latter were easier for a large group so we tended to order by the pitcher, and at least one member of the group preferred this as it allowed the beer to warm up and de-gas through second decanting.

We next spent a few days in very rural locations up in the mountains, so did not manage to find any brew pubs. However, we can say that good, local, bottled beer was available in most stores, so we avoided drinking any of the national mass-produced junk for the whole trip.

Day six found us in Visalia, which is a 'suburb' of Fresno (30 miles away), where we found the excellent **Brewbakers Brewing Company**. This was on a high street in this smart college town; I think it was graduation day; everywhere was quite busy. We had a very good evening drinking their beers, Sequoia Red (5.7%) and Pale Ale #9 (5.6%) were the main beers of choice although one of our group ordered the apple beer which was just plain old cider. In addition to the beer the food was excellent.

Day seven, and we're now in Stockton, not too far from Sacramento.

We spent the evening in the **Valley Brewing Company**. This was pleasant enough, again with plenty of choice of craft beer, but only one beer brewed by them which was unremarkable. The food was good, but the bar somehow felt a little less cosy than the others we had visited. One thing we were starting to notice, however, was the trend for the beers to be far stronger than in the UK. Strengths of 5, 6, 7% are normal, and 8, 9, 10% are not unusual!

The next evening found us in Woodland, north of Sacramento, where we visited the **Black Dragon Brewery** (motto: "drink in the dark"). Our motel was at the other end of the 1.5 mile high street. We discovered, after our walk there, that this was a proper brewery, with a proper bar, and no restaurant (just snacks). A very many beers were drunk, and the Dragon's Eye Porter (6.2%) went down especially well with Richard, who is a fan of the dark stuff, as did the Drakonic Imperial Stout (9%) that they only sold by the half; Richard convinced them to sell him a second after nine people had tasted the first half. As if to make up for our first-night disaster they even had a Blue Frog Heffeweizen (5.4%) on tap which was good, making it more unfortunate we had missed out. Unfortunately the strength of the beers soon caught up with us and we had to go in search of proper food.

Redding was the next city that we arrived at, in northern California. On the Sunday evening, both recommended pubs were closed although the steak house served several craft beers. However, on the Monday evening we visited the **Ale House**. This is a very nice 'proper' pub; they don't brew their own beer, and nor do they have a restaurant (we checked in advance, this time!), but they do have about 20 fine beers available, including two British ones (Youngs Double Chocolate Stout and Belhaven Twisted Thistle IPA). We managed to drink samples of them all between us, even though the weakest was 5% and they went up to 11%.

The following evening found us in a small town called Yreka, close to the Oregon border. After a meal in an Italian restaurant, we found the **Miner Street** pub, which looked very uninteresting from outside, but had a dozen or so beers on tap.

The remainder of the evenings found us in various tiny locations, so we don't have any more brew-pubs to describe. However, we always found that good local bottled beers were available in the shops, and all of the restaurants we used had several beers on tap even though these are more often from the larger regional brewers, many also had a range of bottled beers for us to try. You can certainly spend a fortnight in California and completely avoid drinking any nationally-brewed junk.

If you want to know more about the kayaking which we did, have a look here: www.bristolcanooclub.org.uk/2013/06/california-2013.

Conor O'Neill and Richard Puttock

Promoting rail ale trails

PROMOTING RAIL ALE TRAILS AND THE ROLE SEVERNSIDE COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP

The idea of promoting the rail ale trail leaflet to help our local community pubs survive has been discussed at various Bristol Pubs Group meetings without any real progress being made in taking this idea forward with the West of England Partnership (Greater Bristol Unitary Authority). So far the only leaflet available is the FOSBEER one produced by the Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FOSBR) passenger group which covers the route of the railway line from Bristol Temple Meads to Severn Beach in conjunction with First Great Western Trains timetable 29. The Rail Ale Trail leaflet is available at a small number of local pubs along the route, and is downloadable from the FOSBR website (www.fosbr.org.uk).

Trying to find out which organisation is responsible for promoting rail trail leaflets in the Bristol/Bath area took sometime and I was unable to get a definitive answer to this problem.

Enquiries with the Bristol Tourist Information Office, First Great Western Trains, Bristol City Council and the Severnside Community Rail Partnership could not clarify this issue. However, after contacting informed sources I was told that ultimately, this responsibility rests with the Severnside Community Rail Partnership. This is a partnership between First Great Western Trains, Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council. Part of their remit is to attract more passengers

to use local trains and to encourage rail tourism using promotional leaflets and one way of achieving this would be to produce Rail Ale Trail literature. This would fit in with the Government's localism agenda.

A good example for promoting Rail Ale Trails in the West of England area can be found by looking at leaflets produced by the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership with the support of First Great Western Trains (www.railaletrail.com). These include the St Ives Bay line (Penzance to St Ives) and the Atlantic Coast Line (Par to Newquay). Funding comes from the Designated Rail Development Fund backed by the Department For Transport, Network Rail and the Association of Community Partnerships.

Perhaps Rail Ale Trail leaflets could be produced promoting the Weston Bay Line (Bristol Temple Meads to Weston-super-Mare), the Severn Vale Line (Bristol Temple Meads to Thornbury), the Berkley Vale Line (Bristol Temple Meads to Sharpness) and the Severn Estuary Line (Bristol Temple Meads to Bristol Parkway via Avonmouth and Hallen). This could bring tremendous economic benefits to both our urban and rural community pubs.

Please contact the Severnside Community Partnership via www.severnside-rail.org.uk if you want to highlight the importance of rail ale trail leaflets to the local economy in terms of job creation and local tourism.

Ian Beckey

Expanding limestone quarry threatens production at Trappist brewery

According to an article in The Independent on 20th June 2013, production at one of the world's eight remaining Trappist breweries is under threat.

Monks at the Notre-Dame de Saint-Remy-Rochefort abbey in southern Belgium (Rochefort to you and me) have been brewing since 1595. Their three dark ales, with ABVs of 7.5%, 9.2% and 11.3%, are renowned across the world for their depth and flavour. Now production is threatened by the proposed expansion of a limestone quarry which will cut off their water supply.

The monks who brew Rochefort say the water from a nearby well is critical to the taste of their sought-after ales, which frequently appear in lists of the best beers in the world.

But a limestone mining company which plans to deepen a quarry in the vicinity of the abbey could stop up the water source that the monks have relied upon for centuries. The Flanders News website reported that the mining firm, Lhoist, had offered to dig more wells to supply the monastery, but the monks fear that the flavour will not be the same.

"We only have guarantees about the quantity, not about the quality of the water," said a spokesman for Rochefort, Christopher De Doncker. Negotiations are continuing.

Norman Spalding



Microbreweries boom in Beijing

The current interest in beer from small producers and diverse flavours is not restricted to Europe and the USA.

In 2012, 59.3 thousand million litres of alcohol was consumed in China, nearly twice as much as in the US. According to the market research firm Euromonitor, beer accounted for 84% of that figure. Yet the Bloomberg news agency says that per capita consumption in China was only about 35 litres per annum, or less than half that in the United States. Market analysts believe that this still leaves room for substantial further growth.

This has led to a microbrewery boom in Beijing. Ryan O'Neal Johnston owns the Drive-Thru Bar in Beijing and is quoted as saying: "There's a whole slew of places that are about to emerge. For anyone interested in anything besides lagers and Tsingtao, it's on."

So if you're thinking of setting up a new brewery and can't find a site near where you live, maybe you should broaden your horizons?

Norman Spalding



CAMRA discovers 25-year-old APPLE

In 1988, the world of real cider was completely different to the situation we have today. It was mainly looked on as an obscure drink that the majority of the drinking public never saw. It was usually found in the West Country, and if you didn't know which pubs sold it, you had to go direct to a cider maker to buy it. The same applied to other cider making areas as well, for example Kent. It was, of course, found at most CAMRA festivals, but often in very small quantities. In fact, real cider was in a similar position to that of real ale when CAMRA was formed in 1971. There was clearly a market for it, but finding it could be a real problem.

CAMRA had, by this time, published its first Good Cider Guide, but there was no official group within CAMRA to collate all of the knowledge that was floating about amongst its members, and certainly nobody to actually promote it. So I decided to do something about it, and in 1988, at CAMRA's AGM, I proposed a motion to get a national cider committee formed so that cider had a real voice within CAMRA. And 25 years later APPLE, as the committee is known, is still going strong.

One of the first things that we did was to formulate a definition of what real cider is, compared to the fizzy concoctions still found in most pubs. We have modified this definition over the years, but we still have one and it can be found on CAMRA's website.

We started CAMRA's annual cider trip each October, where members visit two or three producers and see how it is made. These have become so successful that they are often sold out within weeks. It was only the very first one that didn't do too well financially. The organiser (who I won't name) forgot about the VAT when doing the figures. And what's his profession? An accountant!

We also held four national cider festivals in London, all of which generated a lot of publicity as they were real novelties at the time, which is where we started the Cider and Perry of the Year awards, voted for by the staff and the customers. These competitions continue to this day at regional competitions with judging panels, culminating in the Finals which are held at Reading Beer and Cider Festival in May each year.

Over the years, we have supported and advised producers, compiled a database of all known producers, published several cider guides, introduced a window sticker scheme for pubs who sell real cider, run cider training courses for members, liaised with both cider associations and Members of Parliament, appointed regional cider co-ordinators for the whole of the UK, advised and helped CAMRA festivals, run cider bars at outside events, have a National Cider Pub of the Year competition, and use October as the month for promoting real cider and perry. And a whole lot more that I can't think of at the moment. Oh, and drunk quite a lot of it as well!

So when you see or hear CAMRA banging on about real cider and perry, don't think that we've taken the organisation away from real ale because we haven't. CAMRA will always be about beer, but cider and perry as well. There may not be many of us on APPLE, but we make a bloody loud noise!

Mick Lewis



Brace Yourself!

So CAMRA's been campaigning for real cider and perry since 1988, but has that message made it into a pub or bar near you?

In 1988 real cider and perry were as rare as hens' teeth, so CAMRA festivals, health food shops and Cranks restaurant in London were about your only options aside from going to the cidemaker and buying direct from the farm gate.

25 years later and real cider and perry can be equally hard to track down – not because licensees have turned their back on two of this country's most authentic and 'green' products – but because the market has widened and the gulf between high quality real cider and perry and mass produced flavoured products has never been wider.

Brace yourself however as 2013 is going to be awash with cider and perry marketing! Many millions of pounds have been spent to achieve one target – getting you to buy their brand. The adverts are already popping up on our televisions, crowding into our magazines and generating followers on social media sites. Words like heritage, premium, provenance and traceability are scattered as liberally as the number of 'distribution points'. Even the award winning beer writers Pete Brown and Bill Bradshaw are getting in on the act by launching a Guide to the World's Best Cider later this year.

The Morning Advertiser (a trade paper for the drinks industry) recently stated that bottled fruit cider sales had increased 67% by volume. In just five years the Showering Brothers brand of Brothers cider has generated a retail value of £46 million. Research reveals fruit flavourings now include strawberry, black cherry, lime, toffee apple, berry, pomegranate, red grape, peach and apricot, raspberry, tropical, crushed pear and even apples.

But hold on – isn't this great news – after all some brands even have on-line maps showing you exactly where (including supermarkets and off licences) to find their fruity tipples? Not really if you are looking for the real thing. CAMRA does not recognise any cider or perry which has any fruit or flavouring other than the apples or pears that made it as being 'real'. So no limes, no berries, cherries or grapes and certainly no strawberries!

Recently I was invited to the launch of Hogs Back brewery's Hazy Hog bottled cider, but was unable to attend. Breweries getting involved with cider? Unimaginable 25 years ago! Yet here and now in 2013 Heineken who own Bulmers have launched three new flavoured ciders; Carlsberg have two flavoured ciders; AB InBev have two flavoured Stella Artois Cidres and Molson Coors have launched Carling British Cider.

On average these newly launched drinks are around 4% in strength, so some existing cider producers are introducing new lower-strength products. In 2013 Weston's launched a 4.8% Rosie's Pig Cloudy Cider. We as consumers are being continually bombarded by new products while fridges and shelving in pubs are groaning with variety.

So in some ways CAMRA has done a great job moving cider and perry up the ladder of acceptability by removing the stereotypical images and encouraging pubs to sell a drop of the real stuff.

Just be careful out there as sometime things aren't as 'friendly' or 'local' as they seem. Look beyond the branding, the glassware and sundry other gimmicks and support your local producers, go visit them and have a chat (they'll tell you which pubs stock them) or your nearest cider specialist pub and have a chat with the landlord [or maybe the Bristol Cider Shop].

Real cider and perry is out there and your mission is to find it. Enjoy!

Gillian Williams

Surveying/Explorer Trip North Somerset - Tuesday 30th July

What better way to spend a long, sunny, summer evening than with fifteen other discerning beer drinkers visiting some great pubs in North Somerset? This, without having to worry about finding them, parking there and of course driving home afterwards. But the Surveying/Explorer trips have a more useful function as well. They enable members to experience the pubs and the beer first hand, so that when it comes to voting for the Good Beer Guide and branch awards it's based on experience and fact. We also get to meet and greet the landlords and to hear their latest news.

On this North Somerset trip, we took in five pubs. The first was the **Old Inn** in Hutton near Weston-super-Mare. Then on to the **Bell Inn** in Banwell, recently refurbished. Around to the **Railway Inn** in Sandford, complete with signal in the car park. The **Crown** in Churchill was next, a popular place, even on the Tuesday night. The final stop was down to the **Plume of Feathers** in Rickford.

As expected, we found quite a few of the pubs stocking Butcombe ales, but it was interesting to see that St. Austell had made inroads to the area with many pubs carrying their beer as well. Of note was the fact that the Crown had more than half dozen ales dispensed straight out of the barrel.

A show of hands on the coach showed the 'best pub' to be the Plume of Feathers with the Crown as runner up. A further, fairly unscientific, poll resulted in Butcombe Matthew being voted as best beer.

The coach which had picked us up at the Cornubia at the start of the evening deposited us back in the Centre just before 11 in time for a last drink at the White Lion.

Thanks to Andy and Vince for organising and leading us. Although fifteen is a good number, we could do with more on these trips, so give some thought to coming on the next one. Hope to see you then!

Michael Bertagne

A New Brew Pub for Bath!

The Bath Brew House will be opening at the end of September, in what was the Metropolitan in James Street West in the centre of Bath. It has been bought by the Henley Brewing Company which already has brew pubs in Henley and Cambridge. The outside will be largely unchanged, but the whole place has been completely rebuilt inside with a large ground floor bar/restaurant and brewery downstairs and a function room upstairs. There is also a bar and barbecue in the large garden.

The drinks offer will be led by real ales with a selection of wines,

spirits and bottled beers. There will be 6 to 8 handpumps and they will begin brewing with a classic best bitter, a hoppy pale ale and a dark malty old ale, with wheat beers, stouts and a whole world of hoppy creations to follow later! The beers will also be available occasionally at The Cork in Westgate Buildings.

Food will be pub grub which will all be fresh, homemade and locally sourced. The manager will be Lucas Van Rensburg, who has had experience running pubs across the UK, including two brew pubs. The target audience is beer lovers and their families.

Chris Rogers



Photo by Richard Brooks on a visit to the Great British Beer Festival, London Olympia

And another reason pubs are great

Pubs get a rough deal in some of the media and get unfairly blamed for problems such as under-age binge drinking and other unsocial behaviour. It is time the pub industry worked together to help raise the profile of the great work pubs do for charities across Britain. Pubs need positive PR and this is one area that often gets overlooked.

Many pubs find it embarrassing to promote the amazing amount of money they raise for charity, but raise money they certainly do. It is estimated pubs raise over £100 million a year for charities.

In July, CAMRA encouraged pubs to organise charity events throughout the month. CAMRA produced free promotional packs for pubs to brand their pubs under the 'Pubs & Charity' campaign.

Many events were held at pubs throughout the UK to raise funds for worthy causes. Some of these would have been held regardless of the CAMRA promotion as many pubs hold such events as a matter of routine throughout the year.

In the local area, examples of events held include the **Assembly** in East Street, Bedminster which had a themed day including a barbecue

and raffle amongst other things. Around 600 people turned up to support the events and the pub raised hundreds of pounds for the Teenage Cancer Trust.

At the **Cartwheel** pub in the Whitchurch/Hengrove area customers took part in a bungee jumping event in the grounds of the pub. More than 100 people took part and raised over £1,400 for the Bristol Children's Hospital.

In Bishopston, the **Annexe** arranged an ale/brewery themed quiz and raffle with various prizes, e.g. pizza vouchers, T-shirts and bottled beer. The Annexe is another great community pub and this was an example of local people getting down to the local pub, having a great time and raising funds for a good cause simultaneously.

The above three examples are a reflection of the wider work that pubs do all the time to raise essential funds for charities. Another great reason to support your local pub.

Pete Bridle



Photo by Tony Durbin of Bristol & District CAMRA members on a recent visit to the Gloucester Brewery. Our thanks go to Duncan Illsley (centre, in black) for a welcoming and entertaining us so brilliantly.

Nottingham Brewery Trip

On Saturday 22 June, a large coachful of CAMRA members took a trip to Nottingham to visit Nottingham Brewery and see the city itself by visiting a few pubs (of course). The trip was a “thank you” to the volunteers who had helped with the organisation and running of the Bristol Beer Festival back in March.

We arrived outside the brewery’s tap house around noon. The name of the brewery is in gold letters on the facade, while above the main entrance “The Plough” engraved in the stonework has been retained. The pub has two drinking areas, with the bar between them. While some of us tucked into the beers and the splendid buffet laid on for us in the lounge bar, Philip Darby, the managing director of the modern-day Nottingham Brewery*, took groups of us to see the brewery. This is small, but perfectly formed, as it is housed in purpose – built premises at the rear of the pub,

With seven ales on the pumps and further ten on gravity for a mini beer festival we had plenty to choose from. All those sampled were in excellent condition and there was a good spread of styles and strengths. Nottingham Brewery has seven regular beers which we were able to sample: **Rock Mild** (3.8%), **Rock Bitter** (3.8%), **Legend** (4.0%), **EPA** (4.2%), **Dreadnought** (4.5%), **Bullion** (4.7%) and **Nottingham Supreme** (5.2%).

After a couple of hours sampling the beers and enjoying the fine hospitality it was time for us to move on. The coach took the main party to the centre of Nottingham, dropping off a couple of small groups on the way. We then split up and used the excellent maps, lists and descriptions of pubs provided by local CAMRA member Richard Studenly to find our way round (thanks Rich!). The pubs in Nottingham were varied, interesting and home to top quality ales.

One group visited the historic **Trip to Jerusalem** (with its impressive sandstone caves and location underneath the castle), now

owned by Greene King but offering a variety of beers from other breweries; the **Roundhouse**, a free house located in a modern building on the site of the former General Hospital; the **Salutation**, another free house where we were able to visit some medieval cellars under the pub; the **Bell Inn**, a multi-roomed Greene King establishment with a number of guest beers, where we were lucky enough to be given a guided tour of more sandstone cellars; the **Hand and Heart**, a free house with six changing beers which is hewn out of sandstone caves; and the **Organ Grinder**, which is the brewery tap of the **Blue Monkey** brewery and offers up to four changing guest beers as well as several of their own.

Other groups also found their way to the **Malt Cross** which has experienced an impressive transformation from music theatre to pub courtesy of Lottery funding. With plenty of tables, chairs and comfy sofas this was very comfortable. The large glazed ceiling let in lots of light (and a clear view of the rain!). The **Major Oak** and **Lincolnshire Poacher** were also visited along with the **Canalhouse** which is well worth a visit not only for the ales but also for having to cross the canal to reach the bar.

Despite this impressive range of pubs we visited there were plenty we didn’t get time to pop into. But that’s OK – more left for the next time we visit Nottingham. Here’s hoping it doesn’t rain quite so much next time!

* Some history: the original Nottingham Brewery can be traced back at least to 1847 and by the time it was sold to Tennant Brothers of Sheffield in 1944 had 150 pubs. It was closed in 1952. In 2002 local business partners Philip Darby and Niven Balfour revived the name in a new enterprise of their own.

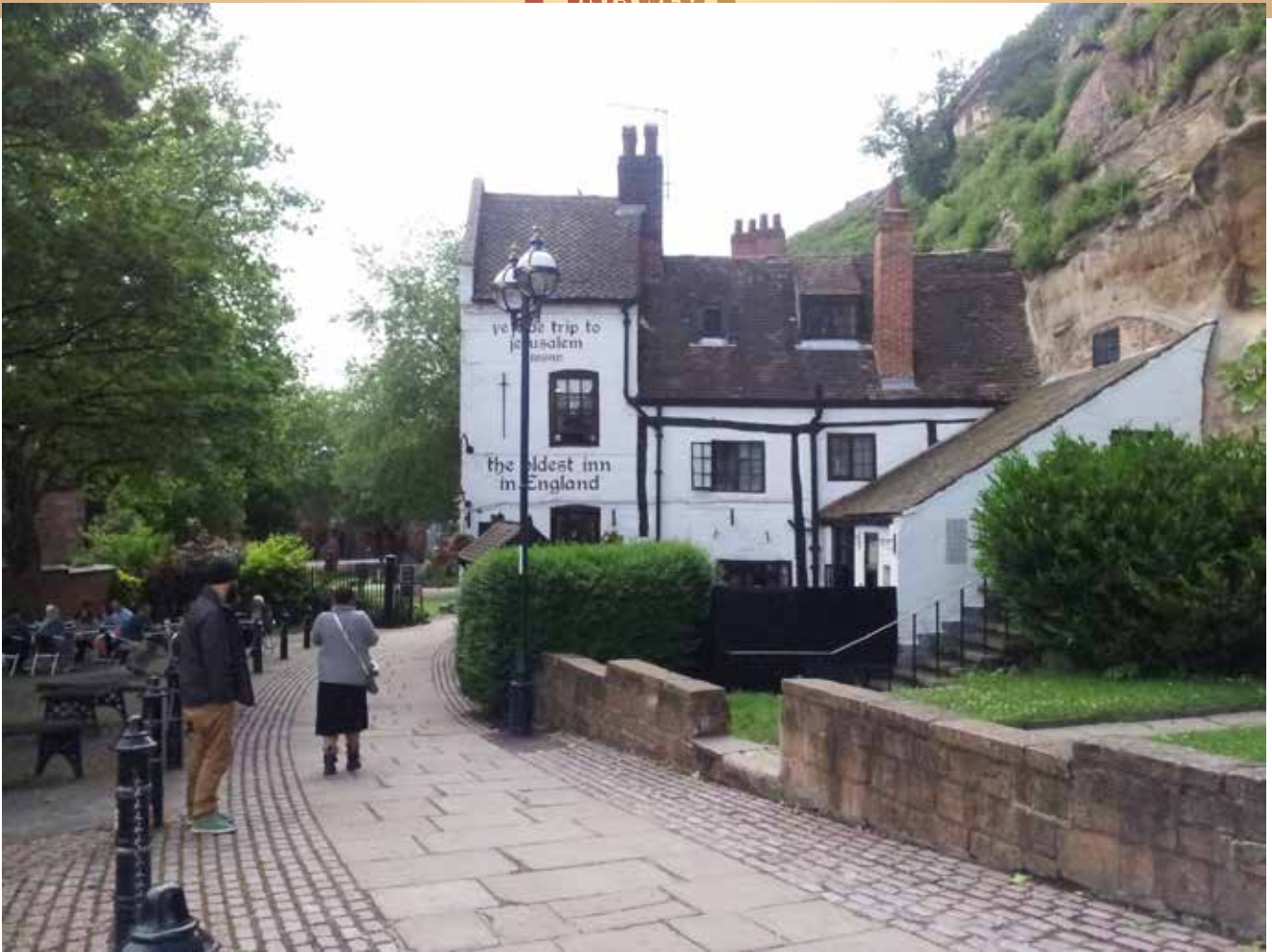
Helen Featherstone, Tim Belsten, Norman Spalding



Phil Darby, Nottingham Brewery



The Malt Cross



The Trip to Jerusalem



The Canalhouse

150,000
members
and growing!

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