

# PINTS WEST

Newsletter of the Bristol & District Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale

## Congratulations, Mr Shipp – it’s a brewery!

IT is with great pleasure that we can announce the (imminent) birth of a brewery to proud father Malcolm Shipp.

Malcolm may already be known to some of you as the person who leased the Swan With Two Necks in St Judes a while back, and who also operates his own wholesaling business, Shipping Beer, importing and distributing quality cask ales. Now he is realising his dream of opening and running his very own brewery.

The brewery is located in Keynsham on the outskirts of Bristol, sharing premises with the Shipping Beer offices, and has been christened Nursery Brewery. Eventually there should also be a bar and tasting room.

Initial plans were to have the brewery operational by the end of July, but mid August now seems more likely, and Malcolm hopes to launch the beers at the Cornubia in Bristol.

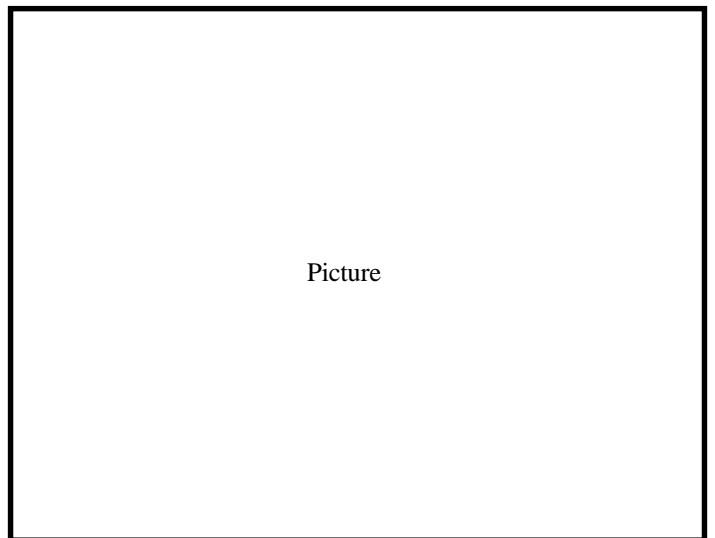
The man doing the actual brewing will be the ex-head brewer from Sutton Brewery, Steve Cheeseright, who brought us such delights as Plymouth Porter, Sutton Comfort and XSB.

But what of the beers themselves? These will be in keeping with the theme suggested by the name of the brewery, and the first ones to be made available will be:

- **Little Miss Muffet** – a light beer around 3.8% abv.
- **Hey Diddle Diddle** – about 4.3% abv.
- **Three Blind Mice** – about 4.6% abv.
- **Old Mother Hubbard** – about 5.3% abv and “pretty damn dark”.
- **Ole King Cole** – a porter at about 6% abv to be brewed in September and matured in in oak barriques for release no earlier than January 2002.
- **Hickory Dickory Dock** – this will be a lager, brewed in December, conditioned with hickory chips, and released in May. It will be “reassuringly expensive”.

We wish father and child well.

SP



Picture

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# GBBF 2001 – another plug

AS regular readers will have seen in the last edition of Pints West, the 2001 Great British Beer Festival takes place at London Olympia once again this year, from Tuesday 31st July until Saturday 4th August.

The Festival is run by CAMRA and is the biggest event held anywhere to promote traditional British beer (i.e. real ale). It will be staffed by around 800 volunteers from all over the UK. Some will come from other European countries and the USA too.

GBBF will feature over 300 different real ales, plus around 40 ciders and perries, 50 or so bottled ales and 200 imported beers. It's a big event: about 250,000 pints will be sold to 40,000 people. And it's not all about middle-aged blokes with beards: about 25% are likely to be female, 10% from overseas and 65% to be aged under 35. We don't know how many will have beards.

The Festival is open to the public from 5p.m. until 10.30p.m. on Tuesday 31st July and Wednesday 1st August (admission £5 a session), from 12 noon until 10.30 p.m. on Thursday 2nd and Friday 3rd August (admission £6 a session) and 11.00 until 7p.m. on Saturday 4th August (admission £4). There is also a cheaper lunchtime session on the Wednesday from 11.30 until 3p.m. (admission £1.50).

Live music is provided every session in one of the two halls, leaving the other free for less noisy enjoyment. The musical timetable is shown below.

<b>Tue 31 July evening:</b>	<b>Chaminade String Quartet</b>
<b>Wed 1 August lunchtime:</b>	<b>Eduardo Niebla (flamenco and jazz guitarist)</b>
<b>Wed 1 August evening:</b>	<b>Tom Robinson Band</b>
<b>Thu 2 August lunchtime:</b>	<b>Denham Hendon Brass Band</b>
<b>Thu 2 August evening:</b>	<b>John Otway Big Band</b>
<b>Fri 3 August lunchtime:</b>	<b>Jazzy Trousers</b>
<b>Fri 3 August evening:</b>	<b>Dr. Feelgood</b>
<b>Sat 4 August lunchtime:</b>	<b>The Animals and Friends</b>



There will also be many varieties of food available, plus pub games and tombola, stalls selling all manner of things, and a pub quiz on Saturday with a brewery trip and free beer as prizes. There will be tutored tasting sessions (for an extra charge) on the Wednesday, and an auction of breweriana (beer- and brewing-related items). We offer corporate hospitality packages, too (for details telephone or fax Ann Mace on 01543 251217).

Interested? Well come along - it's a lot of fun. Hope to see you there!

For more details, you can ring 0900 525 2525 (calls charged at 60p per minute) or visit our website [www.gbbf.org.uk](http://www.gbbf.org.uk).

Norman Spalding

Annexe Inn advert

Moles Brewery advert

# Young's at Horts

YOUNG'S of Wandsworth, London, the brewing company that recently acquired the whole of the Smiles pub estate bar the Brewery Tap, have just bought Horts City Tavern in the centre of Bristol from the Chapman Group.

It is believed Young's are spending well over a million pounds on the place and exciting things are promised.

The pub will naturally now feature the range of Young's beers – Bitter at 3.7%, Special at 4.6%, Tripple A (“AAA”) at 4% and Waggle Dance at 5% – plus some guest beers.

Horts, under the excellent stewardship of Matt Jackson, has really made its mark in the last couple of years amongst discerning beer drinkers not only in Bristol, but far afield as well. It gained recognition nationally when it was the subject of a full-page feature in a recent edition of *What's Brewing*, CAMRA's monthly newspaper sent to all 60,000 members.

Horts has the capacity to serve up in good condition eight and maybe even ten real ales. Their range so far has been exceptional. They have done much to support many of our local brewers – Abbey Ales, Wickwar, Moles, Smiles, Uley, to name but a few – and independent brewers from further afield, such as Batemans. They have catered for that particular class of Bass drinker we have in abundance here, supplying the required “Bristol flat Bass” at an affordable price. They have hosted numerous mini beer festivals concentrating on beers from certain areas, a Scottish real ale theme being just one recent example.

In short they have provided a discerning beer drinkers' paradise.

We welcome Young's to Horts. I for one enjoy their beers. (I'm particularly pleased they rescued the Waggle Dance brand from Vaux in 1999 when that brewery was closed.) Young's have promised to keep some of the guest beers on, alongside their own brands, which we appreciate, but which and how many depends on how sales go. They will obviously be viewing the situation closely to see how sales perform. Smiles is likely to remain, but we get the feeling they will want to get rid of Bass sooner or later, or at least jack the price up.

Support Horts, support the Young's beers, and, importantly, make sure you support the guest beers if you want them to remain.

SP

Hope & Anchor advert

## Our letter to Young's

Mr P Read  
Chief Executive  
Young & Co's Brewery plc  
The Ram Brewery  
Wandsworth High Street  
London SW18 4JD



Dear Mr Read,  
**Horts City Tavern:**

I am writing to you regarding the future of Horts City Tavern, Bristol, which has recently been purchased by Young's.

First of all may I commend you on your choice, as this is an excellent, popular pub. In fact it is so popular amongst local real ale enthusiasts that it made the finals of the Bristol & District CAMRA Pub Of The Year competition 2001, placing it literally in the best handful of pubs out of the 800 or so in the area.

A key factor in the success of Horts has been the commitment of licensee Matt Jackson to a range of changing guest beers and his full blooded support of local independent breweries. This has helped to really set the pub apart from the substantial competition in central Bristol and draw in many new customers who have since become regulars. Obviously we look forward to seeing some Young's beers on the bar, but we hope that good sense will prevail and that Matt will still have a free hand to select the range of beers he considers best to maintain Horts' success.

Yours sincerely,  
Richard Brooks  
Chairman  
Bristol & District CAMRA

## Young's reply



CPWR/GO

13<sup>th</sup> July 2001

Dear Mr. Brooks,

Thank you for your letter of 10<sup>th</sup> July and your kind remarks about Horts. You will, of course realise that the reason we purchased the pub, at considerable cost, was to sell our own famous beers. We do realise however that it would be a huge mistake to immediately discontinue all other ales being sold there. We shall allow Matt to continue to sell some other brands in addition to our own full range, albeit fewer than hitherto, but including Smiles.

On other matters in Bristol, you will I hope have noticed Smiles and Brains still on sale at the Highbury Tavern. I am also pleased to say that Le Chateau has reopened after extensive refurbishment and alterations.

I look forward to meeting you on one of my trips to Bristol.

Yours sincerely,

C.P.W. Read  
Chief Executive

# Are you yet young?

WITH national membership of CAMRA now over 60,000 and fast approaching 61,000 there was bit of friendly local rivalry with Gloucester Branch to be the first to reach 1000 members. Unfortunately for us here in Bristol and District we lost the race, but expect to reach the magic number soon – watch this space!

One interesting fact from the membership list nationally (and there are many statistics which I could go into) is the number of people under 26 years of age who have joined. Or perhaps I should say, the lack of under-26 members that we have, as they only make up some 4% of the 60,000. Admittedly this has nearly doubled in the last couple of years but this is an area that could see a large growth if the benefits of joining can be put across to them.

This age group is targeted by the lion's share of the millions of pounds that the drinks industry spends each year on advertising and promotions. It is important that we have a large number of members in this age group in order to make the industry sit up and notice us. CAMRA has set up a task force to look at ways of promoting membership to younger people and should be launching its first ideas at the Great British Beer Festival in the first week in August.

Locally, Bristol & District branch will be having a stall at the Fresher's Fair on the

main Frenchay campus of the University of the West of England. We plan to emphasise to the students the benefits of joining what has been hailed as the most successful consumer group in Europe. These include brewery trips, beer festivals, campaigning activities, and maybe writing articles for this publication. (*Is that a benefit? – Ed.*)

The cost of joining? Well if you're over 26 it is good value at £14 per annum; for the under 26s it is a mere £8. That is less than 70p a month!

There is a membership form on the back of this edition of Pints West – please fill it in and return it to the Membership Secretary.  
Pete Tanner

glass and programme (£4 Friday after 6pm). There is a £1 reduction for under-26s and CAMRA members.

Further information can be had from Brian Francis on 02920 664132 (home) or 07970 909343 (mobile).

## 16th Swindon Beerex

The 16th Swindon Beerex will be held at the Territorial Army Drill Hall, Church Place, Swindon from Thursday 18th October to Saturday 20th October 2001.

We hope to feature at least 35 beers. There will also be a selection of local Ciders.

There will be 5 sessions;  
Thurs 18th October 7-11pm £2.  
Fri 19th October 12-3pm £1; 7-11pm £3.  
Sat 20th October 12-3pm £1; 7-11pm £2.

The admission fee includes a souvenir glass and there will be a free pint for CAMRA members. All sessions will have food available.

For Friday evening only, tickets are available in advance, all other sessions are payment on the door. Tickets are available from the Beehive, the Gluepot and the Information Centre in Swindon, the Check Inn in North Wroughton, and the Red Lion Inn in Cricklade, or by post from Kevin Galton, 124 Okus Road, Swindon SN1 4JP (include a cheque payable to Swindon CAMRA and a stamped, self-addressed envelope).

## Cardiff Beer Festival 2001

**Regular attendees of the Cardiff Beer Festival should note the new venue and dates for the 2001 event.**

The festival will be held at City Hall, Cardiff on Friday 5th and Saturday 6th October, 11am to 11pm both days, with an evening "preview" on Thursday 4th, 7pm to 10:30pm.

There will be over 100 traditional ales as well as more than 20 ciders and perries.

Admission is £3 including a souvenir

South Cotswold Beer Festival advert

Wroughton Vale Rotary Club  
Beer & Cider Festival advert

# Festivals galore!

REAL ALE FESTIVALS are certainly gaining in popularity. There was a time when except for a handful run by CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, such festivals were almost non-existent.

For many years CAMRA has been running the hugely popular Great British Beer Festival each August (see page 2) and nowadays many branches of CAMRA put on their own annual beer festivals to promote the best of traditional British ales.

Many pubs and other enterprises are now also hosting their own festivals, ranging from modest one-day events with a few special well-chosen real ales to big events promoting a huge number of beers. All good news for discerning drinkers – the main message of CAMRA, the promotion of real ale, is working.

Some pub chains are in on the act, and Wetherspoon and Hogshead pubs often run beer festivals throughout their estate. Locally we have the likes of Horts in Bristol who have had many such real ale events each concentrating on a certain theme. (Let's hope that Young's, the new owners of Horts, will allow this to continue.)

Rotary clubs too get in on the act, and we have a couple coming up soon in Chipping Sodbury and Winscombe. There is also the Ashcott festival held on Whitley Farm, home of the Moor Beer Company. This was to have been held in July but had to be postponed because of foot-and-mouth disease. All going well, they now hope to have it in September. (For details you can call organiser Mike Moran on 07771 905244, email [beerfest@mmconsult.co.uk](mailto:beerfest@mmconsult.co.uk), or visit [www.mmconsult.co.uk/ABF.htm](http://www.mmconsult.co.uk/ABF.htm).)

Another big event on the festival scene is the one planned for Weston-super-Mare in August, and details of this can be found in

the "Weston News" pages.

The various branches of CAMRA hold beers festivals all year round. Bristol & District's is in February or March, Bath & Borders have theirs in October, as also do Cardiff and Swindon branches. Luckily this year none of them clash, so the dedicated can visit all three! Details of each can be found elsewhere in this issue of Pints West.

On a smaller scale, but no less welcome, are a couple of festivals planned by two pubs locally, the Shakespeare in Totterdown and the Lamplighters in Shirehampton. Both are about to run their second festival after being encouraged by the success of their first. There follows a few words on each.

SP

## LAMPLIGHTERS

September 9th, 2000 saw the first real ale and music festival in the garden of the Lamplighters in Shirehampton, Bristol.

The music was organised by Jerry Osborne of the Bristol Blues Club and featured live bands Fab House, Clive & Kickin and Looking Bach. Fifteen real ales were on offer sourced from all round the country including last year's CAMRA Champion Beer of Britain, Moorhouse's Black Cat. Good news for our local brewers was that Bath Ales Barnstormer and Butcombe Gold were voted into first and second place by the crowd of well over 100 people that attended. The weather stayed fine and everyone enjoyed themselves, so much so that Leon and Sue Franklin and Paul and Dee Tanner, who run the pub between them, have decided to make this an annual event.

This year's festival will take place on Saturday 8th September between noon and

7pm and will feature live music from Vibrakings, Uncensored and Blackfire. The event will start with a local brass band.

Advance tickets are now on sale and can be purchased from the Lamplighters, and also from the Bunch of Grapes in Denmark Street, Bristol and the Hare on the Hill in Kingsdown.

## SHAKESPEARE

Recently under new management after the retirement of "Mad Ernie" from the Shakespeare, Hilary and Vince look set to stamp their own mark on Totterdown's music pub.

First off was the May bank holiday beer festival, which proved very popular. A number of cask ales, together with a real cider as well, went down a storm, with most selling out. Beers like Smiles Imperial Stout, Theakston's Old Peculier and Old Specked Hen went so well that Hilary has decided to run another festival over the August bank holiday weekend, starting on the Friday, and finishing on the Monday evening, or earlier if the beer runs out! There should be extensions to midnight on Friday, Saturday and Monday (not Sunday), and a barbecue as well!

The pub normally sells three or four cask ales, typically Courage Best, Smiles Best, Old Speckled Hen, and a guest beer. There is also a DJ playing music from the 80s and 90s most nights of the week, with live bands about once a fortnight.

There is also a pool table, and an outside drinking area, which is where the beer festival is held.

The pub launches its own web site soon as well – [www.theshakey.co.uk](http://www.theshakey.co.uk).

A great pub for Totterdown, with the emphasis on good cask beer to go with the music and atmosphere!

Tim Proudman

Lamplighters, Shirehampton  
Real Ale & Music Festival  
advert

Shakespeare, Totterdown  
Beer Festival  
advert



# Another award for Wickwar

Congratulations to Wickwar are in order following their success in the Tesco Autumn Beer Challenge. The winning beer was their **Mr Perrott's Traditional Stout**, previously not available. So come this autumn, get yourselves down to your local Tesco store (sole distributors for 38 weeks) and pick up a case or two of this award-winning beer. As always with Wickwar, this will be a bottle-conditioned beer – real ale in a bottle, still maturing with its own natural yeast. If Tesco's rules allow, Wickwar will also produce a cask version for sale in pubs at the same time – otherwise it will definitely be available after the 38 weeks are up.

Wickwar are in the process of acquiring the free-of-tie lease – they may even be up and running by the time you read this – on the Princess of Wales in Westbourne Grove, Bedminster. The Manager there will be Mr Steve Osment, late of the Post Office Tavern in Westbury -on-Trym. The pub will sell the excellent Wickwar range plus guest beers. The company is also on the lookout for more free-of-tie leases.

Wickwar's summer offering is Sunny Daze at 4.2% abv. This is a pale, fruity, refreshing ale with a long lasting hop finish. Brewery boss Ray Penny described it as "a sunsational pint!"

SP

# Time Please

**'Time Please' for Government commitment on licensing reform  
Pub-goers 'feel cheated' on opening hours reform**

Members of the Campaign for Real Ale and pub-goers throughout England and Wales are calling for the Government to make a firm commitment to ensure plans to reform antiquated licensing laws are included in the next Queen's Speech in 2002.

Many pub-goers felt cheated after the recent Queen's Speech. Licensing reform featured heavily in Labour's election campaign and drinkers deserve to know when the Government is planning to stick to its commitment. The Government has stated its commitment to reform on several occasions, but its omission from today's Queen's Speech has derailed this important reform yet again.

CAMRA is calling on the Government to work closely with the industry and consumers to ensure that disputes over the details of the proposed new system are dealt with quickly. Disagreement between sectors of the industry over who should administer licensing under a new Act have led to delays, but CAMRA claims these problems can be easily dealt with through strong guidelines to ensure consistency.

The devil may be in the detail on an issue as complex as liquor licensing, but it is essential that the Government and the

industry do not lose sight of the objectives of reform. It is ridiculous that responsible adults in England and Wales can't enjoy a drink with friends in a local pub after 11pm.

It is important that people understand that reform will not lead to a free-for-all. Under the Government plans, pubs will not be allowed to open 24 hours a day when they feel like it. Rather each pub will have to seek agreement for its opening hours as part of a business plan. Most pubs will probably only apply to open for an extra hour or two at weekends and residents and the police will have a say in all applications.

CAMRA has welcomed the move for responsibility for liquor licensing to the DCMS from the Home Office. We hope that DCMS will be able to strike a better balance between the public order and crime aspects of licensing control and the importance of pub-going as an important part of the British way of life.



Wickwar BOB advert

Cornubia advert

# Pub Of The Year 2001

The Bristol & District branch of CAMRA are proud to announce that the winner of our 2001 Pub Of The Year Competition is the Cornubia in Temple Street, Bristol.

The runner up – and awarded the title of Country Pub Of The Year – is the ever popular Crown Inn in Skinners Lane, Churchill, itself a previous winner.

## THE CORNUBIA

NO-ONE was more surprised by the announcement of this year's winner than the landlord, a certain Mr Michael Blake. "I didn't even think I was eligible this year," he says, "I was planning to win it in 2002!"

In the relatively short time since he moved from the Swan with Two Necks, Mike has made the Cornubia a solid presence on the Bristol real ale scene. A seemingly endless supply of beers from all over Europe flows from the bar and the range is something of which he is justly proud.

Czech black lager was on the board recently, Irish beers and stouts are regular sights and the rest of the year holds plans for Belgian and French cask-conditioned ales to take their turns at the pumps.

Mike's beer policy is to keep a range that works for as many people as possible: one session beer (generally one that's brewed locally), a golden or bitter at 4.5% or less, something over 4.5, and a dark beer, which he generally has on about 90% of the time.

Lager, ciders and the odd perry fill the line-up, with a few bits and bobs for non beer drinkers. The perry is something that seems quite close to his heart, and he feels that while it's not too difficult to find a pint of cider in Bristol, the pear alternative is sadly overlooked and the reaction to his offerings is certainly a positive one.

All this leads us very nicely to what Mike calls the most important part of the pub: the cellar. This is about to receive a major upgrade as the old keg carbon dioxide lines from the Courage days come out (don't see much use for them any more!) to make room for double stillage meaning that there'll be more beer on stand-by for busy evenings. Everything sits here and settles for at least 48 hours before going on sale, and Mike is fanatical about making as sure as he can that nothing less than top quality beer is served.

The same rules apply to the food. All cooked on the premises, with a menu that changes every day and includes at least three vegetarian options and excludes chips, the food follows the theme of the beer: traditional. This is not a pretentious menu – just decent sized portions of good wholesome food to go with your good wholesome pint.

Plans are under way for a string of improvements over the next year: English Heritage have said that the original cobbles still exist under all the tarmac out front, so they'll be seeing the light of day again soon, along with a trellis and some plants to

provide a bit of screening from the car park and the drab, sixties architecture that looms over you when you're drinking outside. Also outside, the frontage will be receiving the attentions of a traditional varnisher, using the same techniques that were in effect when the frontage was rearranged in the nineteenth century and restoring the pub to the appearance it would have had a hundred years ago and more. Finally, the outside lights are being upgraded to make the place a little more welcoming in the evenings and to improve security in the car park.

Moving indoors, the cellar improvements will also allow a new hand pump to be installed, providing a useful stand-by for bringing beers on, and adding a little extra capacity for busy nights by sticking a fifth ale on the board, most likely another four and a half percenter.

Moving upstairs, the function rooms are to be redecorated and fitted out with conference and meeting facilities such as OHP, screens and suchlike. The smaller room will have a subtle nautical theme and a few pieces involving the history of the pub's name (pop quiz – what does "Cornubia" mean, and how did the pub end up being called that?) including the pictures currently hanging in the bar. The larger room will have a more beer-like theme, with old pub memorabilia lightening the mood. Just the thing for when the MD's boring you senseless!

All this effort won't drag him too far away though – the cellar will always be Mike's baby.

The critical change that's allowing Mike to get on with this ambitious programme has been in staffing. Lee, formerly assistant manager at the Lock & Weir, and incidentally the man who interviewed Mike for his first UK bar job and taught him the basics of cellarmanship, has been a stalwart supporter and stand-in and brings a great deal of skill to the pub. "Lee's a better barman than I am," says Mike. Also, I understand that we'll soon be seeing Lee on a late night HTV dating show, so the rumours are true, girls - he's single!!

Mylène has been on board now for about four months and again contributes greatly to the quality of service the pub provides. Even Mike's mum Ann gets a look in – being the person responsible for making sure the pub looks as good as it does.

Staffing is something that Mike feels is another vital factor in the pub's success. The aim all along has been to produce a pub that he'd want to drink in, and he makes a point of giving it all the attention, effort and

diligence that he would if the pub were his own. This, I think, is the key to his success – caring about the customers, the staff and especially the beer.

Mike started in the trade twelve years ago in his native South Africa, initially in a nightclub as a bartender and DJ and then moving when his bosses bought a pub and needed a manager. Mike got the offer, took it, and became manager of his first pub, the Purple Turtle in Greenmarket Square, Capetown. He stayed there for three years before moving (with the rest of his family) to the UK. Two weeks later, he was a CAMRA member.

Joining the Lock & Weir just after they won Pub Of The Year in 1996, he ended up as assistant manager, and stayed for two years, leaving at the same time as Mark Bryan. At that point Malcolm Shipp took him to take care of the Swan With Two Necks and it was there, in just eight months, that his present reputation was forged with such events as the St Patrick's Day festival that put fourteen different Irish ales in the same place for first time.

Malcolm just happened to be making a delivery when I was there, so it seemed appropriate to ask his opinion of the winner. He said, "I just want bigger orders for my beer now." And I think that sums it up nicely.

Doc

## THE CROWN INN

*(We sent someone who had never been before to give us his first impressions of the newly declared Country Pub Of The Year.)*

THE Crown at Churchill is a stunning example of what a good country pub should be like. Oak beams, fireplaces, a good range of ales and welcoming host. Tim Rogers runs the bar efficiently and with a cheerful disposition.

On my recent visit there was a good range of beers, varying in strength and flavour, served straight from the cask at the back of the bar and, purely in the interests of responsible journalism, I set about tasting the lot. As you'd expect, all of them were in perfect condition, but you have to be sure about these things.

Outdoor seating is available both in front of and behind the main building, and in fact the pub blends into its surroundings so well that on arrival the crowd sitting drinking in the sun was the only hint that this was a pub!

Food is also available, and they sold me the best roast beef sandwich I've had in a long time.

It was my first time there, but I'll definitely be back. In fact I enjoyed myself so much that I cancelled the planned trip onward to Weston and turned a 90-minute stopover into a five-hour session. Not bad for a dedicated urbanite, eh?

Doc

# A day in the life of a brewer

## Head Brewer at Smiles, Neville Mort, describes a typical day's work.

Sleep slips away with the night, it is time to get up – 05:00. At 05:30 leave for the brewery. Upon arrival at the brewery change into your “whites” and wellies, check the brewing programme, the availability of liquor and the temperature; ensure that the Grist Case ( the hopper which holds the ground malt for mashing) is full.

Mashing commences at 06:00 with the pre-heating of the mash tun – very important particularly in the winter; when the mash tun is heated and the plates flooded open the grist and liquor to the masher, blending both to a porridge-like consistency, ensuring the temperature is correct.

At 06:20 approx, mashing is complete – record the time and temperature in the journal. Set up the wort mains, paraflow and hop back for circulating detergent to sterilise the plant prior to cooling the wort.

Take samples of beer to be racked that day from the racking tank, checking for pH, yeast count, temperature and flocculation; authorise the rack if all parameters are met. Time for the first beer of the day – it is now 06:30. Draw a sample of beer from the previous day's rack and check for clarity, nose (aroma) and palate and record the findings on the gyle (this is the identifying number for each brew) sheet; remove the sheet and file for reference.

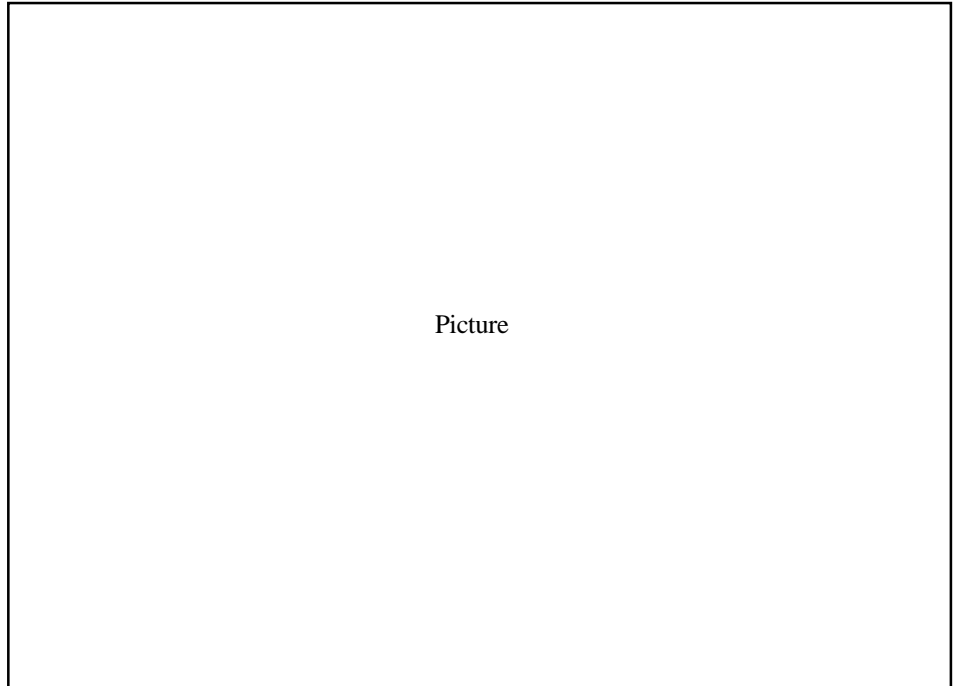
Disconnect the drop pipes from the racking tanks and run to waste, remove the “stand-pipes” from the bottom of the fermenting vessels and rinse out to waste excess yeast – for every kilo of yeast pitched four kilos are generated.

Readings have to be taken of the fermentations in process recording the temperature and gravity in the journal on each gyle sheet; should attemperation be needed adjust the settings on the control panel.

Check all starch is converted into sugar in the mash tun and circulate the wort until bright; it is now approximately 07:30. The bright wort is pumped slowly into the boiling vessel and the sparging of the mash tun is started, also slowly; both the run-off of wort and the sparge rate is increased as the gravity out of the mash tun reduces. Steam to the boiling vessel is turned on to lift the temperature as the vessel fills.

Tippling is not the result of the earlier tasting but the disgorging of the required blend of malts into the hopper ready for milling – **DO NOT FORGET TO TURN ON THE MILL!!**

When the boiling vessel is half full the steam is turned off to make safe the vessel for the addition of the hop grist (the secret blend of hops which are particular to every brew); when the Hop addition is made the



Picture

steam is turned back on. After approximately one and three quarter hours the boiling vessel is full, the temperature is raised to 102 centigrade and the boiling commences.

Sparging is stopped, the mash tun drained, the spent grains vehicle is placed under the mash tun, the plug removed and the tun is emptied. This is hot, hard, and sweaty work – a good cure for a hangover.

By now it is 09:30. The next brew is passed on to the “late” brewer who picks up the mashing of the second brew, the cooling of the first brew, pitching of yeast and aeration of the cooled wort.

Depending how the staffing is, a part of the morning may then be committed to the de-shiving and washing of casks ready for filling; this is physically demanding and good exercise. If that is not being worked upon then fermenting vessels may be cleaned – and cleaned they have to be, the ATP checks (checks for any living organism, yeast, bacteria, etc.) permit no lowering of standards, if the reading is not correct the vessel has to be cleaned again.

By now it is around 11:30 and there is a need to have a break for a pint of water and a bowl of fresh fruit – probably the only contribution made to clean living.

If no other physical work is required a shave, a shower, and diving into the e-mails or other admin. that have to be addressed, is now the order of the day!

Fortune may “smile” upon me – it could be that a maltster has made an appointment for lunch time, generally noon. Whilst this

might be tiresome it enables commercial communication to be made – supplier to customer, gossip to be passed on, the latest personnel changes in the trade to be aired, and, most importantly, the product to be checked in the market place – the pub. In days gone by such a visit would last up to four hours, or, on one notable occasion an allied trader attended his appointment with the head brewer on Tuesady at noon, but, did not leave until the Thursday afternoon!! The head brewer has retired as has the allied trader?!

Once the maltster has gone it is back to the administrative grindstone, or back to cleaning casks if required. The planning and checking of the beers is on-going and decisions have to be made in relation to skimming the yeast and cooling the fermenting beer to contain the drop in gravity. The staffing for the following day has to be worked out to make sure that all the objectives can be met. On occasion it requires considerable lateral thinking.

Improvements and maintenance tasks are generally carried out in the afternoon, being varied from the cleaning of drains to the installation of IPC (in-place-cleaning) equipment. Life is never dull.

The last task is to secure the premises and switch on the alarms and retire to the pub – surprise, surprise, by now it is 17:30 or 18:00.

Sleep settles all – including cask beer; it is now 18:05!!

A. Pinn & Arthur Firkin  
(Neville Mort really)



# Bass Brewers to be un-sold?

Early July saw a new development in the long-running saga of consolidation among Britain's brewers, when the Office of Fair Trading published a consultation document which indicated that Interbrew might be able to hold on to parts of the Bass empire if it gave up Britain's biggest selling beer, Carling.

This particular story started last year when the Belgian combine Interbrew bought Bass Brewers for £2,300 million. Interbrew had only recently acquired the Whitbread Beer Company for £400 million, and buying Bass as well gave it 32% of the UK beer market and triggered an automatic referral to the Competition Commission.

The initial outcome of the Competition Commission's review was that the government ordered Interbrew to sell Bass Brewers, which makes several well known real ales including Draught Bass, Stones and Worthington, as well as various keg beers and lagers. This ruling was then overturned on a technicality by the High Court.

The consultation document which has now been published (coincidentally, on 4th July, which of course is Independence Day in the USA) sets out four ways in which Interbrew could overcome the Competition Commission's concerns. Being forced to sell Bass is still a possibility, but the OFT now accepts that this is "now not the only

practicable remedy of the adverse effects found by the Competition Commission".

A more likely option seems to be for Interbrew to retain Bass Brewers' operations in Northern Ireland and Scotland, together with the breweries that make Tennent's and Draught Bass, but to sell Carling to an approved buyer.

Companies believed to be interested in buying Carling include Britain's third biggest brewer Carlsberg-Tetley, South African Breweries and Heineken.

Some pub companies still insist that Interbrew should sell all of Bass Brewers. "This is the only one that stands up", said a spokesman for Britain's second biggest landlord, Punch Taverns (which was formed only a few years ago, substantially from the pub estate which once belonged to Bass). Pub companies will, of course, be afraid of the market power that such a large supplier has when it comes to negotiating discounts.

What about the consumer's interest? Well, CAMRA believes that Interbrew is probably the best bet for keeping a diversity of traditional British products. Its track record in Belgium has not been half as bad as it could have been, where local breweries have stayed open and their beers have survived after Interbrew has bought them. Belgium is also the only other country with a surviving brewing tradition as diverse as

ours in the UK. By contrast, none of the other big multi-national concerns that seem to be interested has shown any commitment to real ale or to British traditions.

It is a great shame that anyone should be taking over the brewing operations of a long-established giant such as Bass, which has been going since 1759 and is still profitable; but Interbrew seems to be the least of the known evils, and could turn out to be a positive influence for the future of real ale if it is prepared to invest in some of the brands that Bass itself has neglected in recent times.

Norman Spalding

**Sombre news is the death of David Legg, retired Bristol publican, occasional journalist and former local CAMRA branch chair (1991/92).**

**David was always an outspoken character on all things pub related and anyone who met him will recall his wealth of opinions. He will probably be best remembered locally for his time at the Old Castle Green where he served many a fine pint of Marston's and his menu earned it the name of Bristol's curry pub.**

Smiles Brewery advert

## News from Smiles

IS there ever a dull moment at the Smiles Bristol Brewery? Looking at the last few months it would certainly seem not. A recent Evening Post internet survey asked what ex-pat Bristolians remember most about their home town – apparently Smiles beer came in second place after Isambard Kingdom Brunel!

Great news for head brewer Neville Mort and his team was that Smiles Best Bitter won a silver medal in the recent "Beauty of Hops" competition organised by the National Hop Association.

Looking to the next batch of Smiles seasonal ales, August and September will see the welcome return of the 3.8% abv Smiles Golden Brew – a popular beer some feared they would never taste again. Perhaps we will even see this reinstated as one of the permanent range. Another old favourite is scheduled to make a come back in October as Smiles Heritage begins its winter stint.

But can you wait that long? Apparently if there is sufficient interest Heritage could make an early appearance in September. Why not give Quentin Williams a call on 01275 375894 and let him know how keen you are – especially if you want to order some!

You can also let Smiles know if you might be interested in a possible home delivery service of beer boxes and bottled ales.

Finally there has been a change at Smiles' remaining pub, the Brewery Tap. Steve has departed for pastures new (the Merchants Arms in Hotwells) and head brewer Neville Mort (second mention in this article!) is now co-licensee with Katrina Rickwood who is new to the Smiles team. A new food menu and some other "improvements" are now in the pipeline.

Richard Brooks

# Stars from Wadworth

**JCB** – named after the grandson of the brewery's co-founder John Cairns Bartholomew, not the digger – recently joined the family of Wadworth beers, taking its place alongside the likes of 6X and Henry's IPA, filling a gap in the range's beer strengths at 4.7% abv.

Now Wadworth have launched the **Brewstars Collection 2001**, consisting of a number of 'star' recipes from three breweries and providing a second range of beers to complement Wadworth's year-round and seasonal beers.

The recipe for July comes from the **Red Shoot Brewery** located in the heart of the New Forest at the Red Shoot pub. Licensee and brewer Paul Adams has created a recipe for a beer called **Hop Shoots** which has already been appearing on the bars in

various Wadworth pubs.

The old brewing books from the now closed brewery of **Garner & Sons Ltd**, sold to Wadworth in 1969, provide the recipe for another beer in the collection, **Blunderbuss**, which will appear in November. Garnes originally introduced **Malt and Hops**, the superb seasonal brew later adopted by Wadworth which uses only fresh hops, not dried, and so is only available for the short period soon after the hop harvest.

The third of the breweries is **Mayhem's Brewery**, based at the Farmers Arms pub in Lower Apperly, Gloucestershire, and taken over by Wadworth in 1997. Three brews take their place in the Brewstars Collection: Mild Mayhem (May), Sundowner (August) and Odda's Light (September).

SP

# News of Moles

Rogger Catte, boss of Moles Brewery, is more than chuffed that **Barley Mole** has been selected by organisers of the Great British Beer Festival to appear on the new younger drinkers bar at which CAMRA hopes to attract a new section of the drinking public to traditional beer. Let's hope it's a success.

Barley Mole is the Moles seasonal beer for summer and will be available in pubs until the end of September.

The proposed Burns Leisure/Archers Brewery merger with Moles did not materialise as the former were eventually unable to fulfill their commitment. Fortunately throughout the negotiations Moles maintained their independence; they are happy to say that Moles Brewery, Cascade Drinks Ltd and Cascade Public House Management Ltd are still fiercely independent.

## Cask Marque

### Clearing up some confusion

People may have noticed that this year's CAMRA Good Beer Guide is sponsored by Cask Marque.

Cask Marque is backed by brewers and pub groups and is dedicated to quality real ale at the point of service, in the bar. It has no influence whatsoever on the selection of pubs for the Guide.

It is important to stress that the Good Beer Guide maintains its total independence, pubs are chosen by CAMRA members and branches alone. Cask Marque supplies us with a list of all its accredited pubs and those chosen for the Good Beer Guide have the appropriate symbol added during editing.

Wadworth JCB advert

Horts advert

## Red Lion, Mangotsfield, Bristol

The Red Lion is a busy three-roomed pub with a small restaurant attached, near the centre of old Mangotsfield village. Built in 1787, it is a Grade II listed building; its external appearance is striking, with red paintwork contrasted against the sand yellow render.

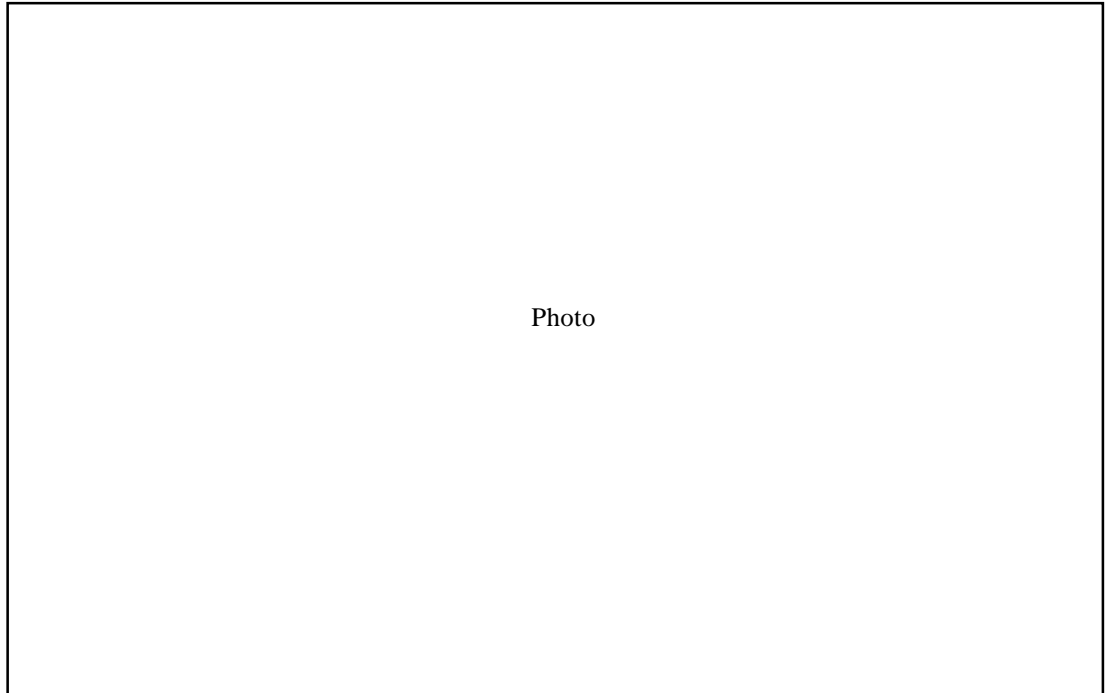
The Red Lion has two bars and a good-sized pool room. The trade is largely local, and at lunchtimes quite light; although wakes are becoming something of a speciality in the afternoons recently.

Food is available in the bar at very reasonable prices, with daily roasts and specials and traditional Sunday roasts. The restaurant opens in the evening for bookings only (ten or more people needed).

The pub sees plenty of activity, with live "middle of the road" music on Tuesday evenings and loud rock alternate Sunday afternoons (2.30 until 4p.m.), plus a charity quiz every Wednesday evening.

Regularly available real ales are Draught Bass and Greene King IPA, with

# Inn the Picture



Photo

two changing "guest" beers from local micro breweries such as Bath Ales or Cottage Brewery, usually served in excellent condition.

Outside there is an enclosed garden

with children's play equipment, and a tiny car park; on-street parking is not too difficult. Alternatively, you can catch a No. 49 bus from Bristol city centre, and the stop is nearby.

Norman Spalding

Bath Ales Brewery and pubs advert

## News from Bath Ales

THE BATH ALES BREWERY is having a record-breaking year with brewers Craig and Tim struggling to keep up with demand. Sales of the draught beers are over 40% up on last year. Spa Extra (5%), a light hoppy beer designed for drinking on warm summer days, is now available.

Talking of good weather the garden at the Hop Pole (opposite Victoria Park in Bath) has matured nicely (like a barrel of Festivity) after a year and is a perfect venue for weekends and evenings with its own boules area.

The bottled Gem, a stronger version at 4.8% of the brewery's flagship best bitter, is available in an increasing number of bars and restaurants in Bath and Bristol. Bath Ales have negotiated a deal with Waitrose (they put the upmarket in supermarket) to enable you to put cask-conditioned bottles of Gem onto your weekly shopping list.

Smiles Brewery Tap customers may be wondering what's happened to beer supremo Steve Lovell who has run the Tap for many years – the answer is that he is now installed at Bath Ales' Merchants Arms in Hotwells (leave the Centre towards Hotwells and Cliftonwood – aim for the Cumberland Basin and miss).

Tours of the brewery, located at Webbs Heath between Bath and Bristol, are available most weekdays and can be booked by contacting Alison at the brewery on 0117 9071797. More information about tours and what's going on at Bath Ales can be obtained by visiting their website, [www.bathales.com](http://www.bathales.com).

Steve O'Shea

# WATERING HOLES IN THE DESERT

## News from Weston-super-Mare

### Branch News

AT the time of writing, anticipation is building for “Weston Fest 01”. We are promised 32 breweries running bars – each expected to be offering two or three of their beers. In addition, there will be a festival bar with beers supplied by Beer Seller. In all, it is expected that there will be over 100 different real ales on offer and a good range of real ciders. If you don’t know what a real cider is – don’t expect fizz like Strongbow.

As if the prospect of the beers wasn’t enough, there will be 30 hours of live music, various other entertainments and numerous pubs in and around the town centre joining in with the festivities by putting on live music after the festival has finished each

day.

To be honest this all seems too good to be true. Personally, I don’t think I’ll believe it until I see it. Let’s hope the weather is good, the beer is cool and the crowds are large (and a few more people are converted to real beer!).

If you live in or near Weston and enjoy the beer why not consider coming along to one of the local CAMRA group’s socials? We meet on the third Wednesday of each month. Gatherings are informal and friendly. The

Wednesday after the festival we are going to nearby Banwell and in September we will be undertaking a town centre crawl, visiting three of the better pubs in WSM – between them they will offer around 16 different real ales. Details and contacts are shown elsewhere. Definitely not a bad way to spend an evening!

Tim Nickolls

Keep looking – there’s got to be over 100 real ales somewhere on this beach



Adnams Brewer advert

RCH Brewery advert

## Beers by the fireside

WELL NOW, this is it, the first in a short line of tales from the only original member of the Weston sub-branch who hasn't previously found the time to pen a section for 'Watering Holes in the Desert'. What could I possibly talk about? Oh I know, my favourite subject – Beer in Bottles.

So where do I start, and what type of beer can you find in and around WSM? The general supermarkets appear to be the best place, and as everyone knows we certainly have an abundance of them.

Anyway, onto my favourite – Safeway. Here is a supermarket that likes to entertain its Fireside Drinker with a selection from Britain and Europe's most common and not so common beers. Unknown to those of you who only pick the well known ones like Theakstons, Brains, Bass and of course Fullers, there lies an avenue of discovery in a bottle and what better way than to sample bottled beers from the local brewery at Hewish.

RCH Brewery has introduced its best beers, Pitchfork and East Street Cream, in bottle-conditioned form, and along with Oakhill, Exmoor, Freeminer, and a whole host of others too numerous to mention, have ensured that the bottled section in Safeway is full of choice. Add to this a selection from Belgium, France and Germany and you have, in my view, a good night's drinking.

Of course it is not all plain sailing as other supermarkets are not as well stocked as this, although the best way to find something new is by calling in on the off chance that they have just restocked. Steve Reed recently called in at Sainsbury's to see what was on offer there. I think their bigger stores have a slightly larger choice, however, at WSM it isn't bad.

Along with all the regular beers available in most off licences there is a very good selection of organic beers from the UK and Europe including one from New Zealand called Kiwi Organic Ale brewed specially for Sainsbury. There is also strong representation from Young's Ram brewery, including an excellent value four pack of various beers for £9.99 which includes the latest edition of Michael Jackson's (no not that one) Great Beer Guide book in paperback form, which in itself is worth the price alone if purchased separately.

Sainsbury's have been running a Beer of the Month for sometime now and this usually features a seasonal beer which most of the other outlets are not offering. At the time of writing this was Young's Summer Beer.

Tesco's selection is not as great as I would have expected. They do about 40 different British beers from around 20 breweries, but the range does not contain anything particularly unusual and does not seem to change much. The foreign selection is rather thin. As an example, they only do

two Belgian beers.

Somerfield has begun to make a genuine attempt to enter the bottled beer market. It is still fairly small, with only six beers available. However, this is a significant increase for them and the selection includes a beer from Hop Back and Wychwood.

Only a small selection of bottled beers available are conditioned in the bottle, most breweries use another method such as filtering, pasteurisation or carbonation. This, to some people, spoils the taste but I'm not totally convinced as I've drunk many beers from both types with highs and lows in both.

If you begin to exhaust the local area of new types of bottled beers, you can always rely on the mail order scene. One of the best is Tuckers Maltings in Newton Abbot who send out a list every quarter with new products as well as existing stocks.

Enjoy.

Rich Neale



Weston Fest 01 advert

# Summer Saunters 2001

READERS of Pints West this time last year may recall that during the Summer, certain die-hard members of the Weston Branch take it in turns to drive out into the neighbouring countryside to visit pubs that some may have never been to before or may not have visited for a considerable time. These trips usually start around the beginning of May and end sometime during September. The driver for the evening chooses the route and generally keeps his passengers guessing on which hostelrys are to be visited until, in some cases, the last few yards.

You could say that it's our own 'Magical Mystery Tour'.

## MAY

The May trip was arranged by Rich Neale and after picking up the 'entourage' we headed out through Winscombe and southwards onto the A38. First port of call turned out to be **The Wheatsheaf** at Chapel Allerton. Here was a pub that I had enjoyed frequenting about 20 years ago, where with friends we would enjoy a good pint of Whitbread Best Bitter on the hand pump and sometimes one of the excellent pub meals they would provide at the time. It was a fine, warm evening so we decided to sit outside in the garden to enjoy our drinks. The beer choice was limited, offering on this occasion Draught Bass and Flowers IPA.

We didn't stay long before we moved on to our next stop. It was to be **The New Inn** at Wedmore. Here Bass was on offer once again, this time alongside Butcombe Bitter. The opportunity was once again available to enjoy our refreshments in the garden at the rear. All of a sudden, "That looks like a Barn Owl over there!" exclaims Rich. Now bearing in mind we were in the heart of the countryside ... good spotting you might say? It was still very early in the evening with the best beers still to come (hopefully) but that budgerigar in the aviary had no idea it could look so menacing! What a hoot!

Soon after we were on our way again, this time heading over towards Mark (the village not a chap!). This time it was to be **The White Horse** and another of my regular old haunts from years back that has changed considerably since then.

Again beer choice was limited with Marstons Pedigree the main contender. After ordering and receiving our drinks someone spotted Old Speckled Hen marked up on a board behind the bar. When questioned, the barmaid replied rather curtly that it was off anyway. Disappointed, the Champions League football final kept us entertained before hurriedly moving on to the last stop before extra time commenced. Halfway down the Causeway however a cry of "Stop, I've left my Good Beer Guide behind at the pub" was heard from the back-seat. At that

moment Steve 'Lost Wallet' Reed became Steve 'Lost Wallet and Good Beer Guide' Reed. What a reputation this boy is getting! Fortunately upon our hasty return there it was resting all alone on a nearby table.

After grabbing it quickly we were on our way again heading, fairly obviously by now, to **The Coopers Arms** at Highbridge. As has become custom and practice we were to finish the evening at a recognised Good Beer Guide pub and as usual there was a good selection of ales on offer from micro breweries as well as established nationals.

The trip home resulted in the intrepid 'tourists' passing **The Queens Arms** at Bleadon and a stop off here was an extra bonus. This was eagerly anticipated as only a couple of days earlier I had called in on the way back from work to discover an excellent mild beer from Ringwood (I think!). Alas to everyone's disappointment they had sold every last drop of the stuff! Still, with Ringwood 'Old Thumper' on offer amongst the other regular stalwarts we completed the evening on a high note.

P.S. Anyone seen my mobile phone?.....

## JUNE

Wednesday June 6 arrived and tonight it was my turn to do the honours and choose a route for this month's 'Saunter'. Having collected 'the boys' we set off on a not dissimilar route to the May trip and made an early stop at **The Winscombe Social Club** to catch the first half of the England v Greece World Cup qualifier. Their regular beer of Wickwar BOB was available at a very reasonable price as usual. (Point to note: CAMRA members can gain entry to this very pleasant club on displaying their CAMRA membership card.) Half time arrived and this was the ideal opportunity to move on. Again, as last month, we set out via the A38 southbound but this time we headed off onto the Axbridge bypass. Fooling some and bypassing **The Lamb** at Axbridge (on this occasion) our next stop was actually a little further down the road at Draycott and **The Strawberry Special**. The game had just restarted and we settled down with a choice of Fullers London Pride and Flowers Original to watch Messrs Beckham and Scholes do the business. All enjoyed the Pride and agreed this was a good, friendly traditional local and one of our better discoveries.

Next stop was just round the corner at Rodney Stoke for **The Rodney Stoke Inn**. Attractive looking pub on the exterior but a little bland on the inside and after a swift and unremarkable half of Smiles Best we moved on again. We were now heading back from whence we came, back through Cheddar but then quickly veering off in the direction of Wedmore.

By now most people had guessed that this route was going to take us to an often talked about but rarely visited, if ever, 'secret' pub near Clewer called **The Trotter**. I say 'secret' partly because it's not that easy to find on a first visit and partly because I wonder how many non-local beer enthusiasts are actually aware of its continued existence. I first visited it in the late 70's having then just discovered Real Ale and at the time was spending many of my weekends scouting for new pub 'gems'. This is an unpretentious, classic rural pub littered with quirky artefacts and references to **The Trotter** in pictures and on objets d'art all around. I'm sure when I last visited all those years ago there was a boxer dog wandering around the bar, now lo and behold ..... surely not the first 25 year old boxer dog pooch still in existence?... Remarkable!

All agreed this was the highlight of the trip as at least two excellent beers are always served directly from the barrel (surely the best way to serve real ale as I'm sure **The Crown Inn** at Churchill and **The Queens Arms** at Bleadon will testify).

We ended the evening contented. To be continued next time.....

Steve Read

## JULY

Our July jaunt was not a good time to be driving – the beer was too good!

We kicked off at **The Lamb**, Axbridge. Axbridge is a fascinating village and I would

## Future events

**Friday, Saturday, Sunday 10-12**

**August** – Weston Fest 01, Beach Lawns.

**Wednesday 15 August** – Banwell two-pub social – 8:00 **The Brewer's Arms**, 9:00 **The Bell**. Bus from WSM 7.45, bus back at 10:52.

**Wednesday 19 September** – Three-pub town crawl. 8:00 Major From Glengarry, 9:00 **The Regency**, 10:00 **The Dragon**

**Wednesday 17 October** – Coopers Arms, Highbridge. Train from Weston at 19:44. Return train from Highbridge arrives back in Weston at 22:55.

**Wednesday 7 November** – Bristol city centre pub crawl. Ring one of the contacts below for train times.

**Wednesday 21 November** – Queen's Arms, Bleadon, 8:30.

## Contacts

**Tim Nickolls** - 01934 628996 (eves)

**Rich Neale** - 01934 429808 (eves)



## Weston Whispers (Pub & Beer News)

recommend anyone who has not been there to pay a visit. Quite olde worlde and also has a continental ambience, particularly in and around the village square. This is where we began our evening, sitting outside The Lamb sipping Butcombe Gold. The Lamb is a 15<sup>th</sup> century coaching inn, regularly appearing in the Good Beer Guide. The Gold was in fine condition – other beers available are Butcombe Bitter and Wadworth 6X.

Before leaving Axbridge we took the short walk to **The Crown**. I had met the landlord, Colin McDougall, one evening in The Bell at Banwell. He asked whether we could get him a regular supply of Pints Wests. He also said that he regularly stocked beers from Cottage and RCH. As these are two of our favourite breweries, I made a note to visit at the earliest opportunity.

On the evening of our visit we were not disappointed. On offer were Cottage Wessex Steam and Doom Bar Bitter from Sharp's brewery of Wadebridge, Cornwall. Both were sampled and were very much enjoyed. An impressive display of past pumpclips supported our view that this is definitely a pub to visit again.

Leaving Axbridge, we headed for nearby Winscombe. Resisting the lure of The Winscombe Club, we decided to try **Winscombe Cricket Club** – a new venue for all of us. The WCC offers Greene King IPA and a guest. The IPA was off, but the guest was another Sharp's beer – Sharp's Own. This 4.4% ale was well received by all (except the poor driver). The atmosphere in the club was very friendly. Another venue to be visited again.

Having tried a couple of new venues, we then went to a tried and trusted favourite – **The Crown**, Churchill. As ever, a wide range was on offer, containing some of the best beers around. Tonight's selection of **nine** were four from RCH (Hewish IPA, PG Steam, Double Header and Old Slug Porter), Bath Spa, Palmers IPA, Wickwar Coopers WPA, Bass and Cotleigh Golden Eagle. After some consideration, most went for Golden Eagle and the wonderful Old Slug, which is rarely seen in pubs. A travesty. (It's rarely being seen that is, not the beer.) The selection was so good we abandoned plans for visiting a fifth venue, particularly as the weather was great and we were able to continue drinking outside until closing time. A rare event indeed this summer.

The Steve Reed lost-wallet count for the evening reached three. It was first found on the floor at The Crown, Axbridge, same again at The Crown, Churchill and finally it was found on the back seat of my car – 10 minutes after dropping him off in Locking.

The lesson from tonight – there are some great and varied beers to be sampled in wonderful surroundings less than 20 minutes drive from WSM.

Tim Nickolls

YOU may have heard this before, but..... things are looking up again at **The Major From Glengarry**. Ken and Jacqui Randall took over at the helm at the turn of the year and seem to building up a reasonable trade. There are four real ales on offer – Wadworth 6X, JCB and Henry's IPA, augmented by Bass. All visits have been very satisfactory beer quality-wise and Ken reports that sales of Henry's Smooth are declining, with people moving over to (in Ken's words) "live beer". Interesting and accurate choice of words from Ken, as all keg beers are certainly as dead as the proverbial Dodo.

Another strong reason for visiting the Major is the new menu. Ken is a qualified chef and has introduced a wide-ranging menu with something for everyone – including steaks, chillis, seafood and plenty of vegetarian dishes. It is particularly pleasing to report that the prices are very reasonable. You can have a good-quality meal for £2.95. Sunday roasts are £3.95 (£2.95 for OAPs) and food is served all day.

**Off The Rails** continues to showcase some beers rarely seen in Weston. Recent offerings have included Robinson's Young Tom, Quay Steam, Tisbury Ale Fresco and Phoenix Nightliner from the Moor brewery. Pub favourite breweries RCH and Branscombe Vale continue to feature strongly.

Hats off to Colin, landlord at Off The Rails for organising a bus-trip to the Maltings Beer Festival in Newton Abbot in April. This event is the showcase of the South West Region of the Society of Independent Brewers. Forty West Country brewers were represented, serving up over 150 different beers.

Weston's own RCH brewery was joint winner of the Champion Beer of the Festival with PG Steam (if you want to try this at its very best, pop out to The Crown, Churchill). RCH Firebox was runner-up in the Porters, Stouts and Old Ales category. The crowd from Off The Rails all had a great time. Here's hoping for a return trip next year!

Rob Doddington at **The Bell, Banwell** thought he would give frequent Champion Beer of Britain Timothy Taylor Landlord a try. The barrel was drunk dry the day it went on and its continuing popularity has meant that Rob has given it a permanent place alongside the Butcombe and Old Speckled Hen (with occasional additional guest).



Still in Banwell, the Usher's beers have disappeared from **The Brewer's Arms** and have been replaced by Oakhill Bitter and Butcombe Bitter, alongside the ubiquitous Bass. There has been a recent change in landlord here, but the beer range has so far stayed the same. Why not come and try the Banwell pubs for yourself? Our August social will be at both pubs. The date in question is Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> and there are convenient buses there and back. The bus from Weston departs from town at 7:45. **Banwell drinkers particularly welcome!**

Nigel from The Brewer's Arms, Banwell has moved to **The White Hart**, Palmer Row. The Butcombe has been retained, although Nigel is said to be considering changes. There should not be cause for concern, as Nigel was a good supporter of real ale when at The Brewer's and will definitely continue with real ale at The White Hart.

Congratulations are due to the Judges at **The Nightjar**, Mead Vale. This pub is only the second in Weston (after The Dragon) to be awarded the Cask Marque. This is an industry award, recognising pubs who demonstrate excellent cellarmanship. The beers available at The Nightjar are Badger Best and Sussex Bitter. On a recent visit both were certainly in good condition. Sussex Bitter was brewed by Horsham brewers King and Barnes who were taken over (read "closed down") by Hall and Woodhouse last year. Interestingly, the pumpclip still says King and Barnes, just as Old Speckled Hen clips are still branded Morland, even though it is brewed by Greene King. Does anyone know if this contravenes trading standards?

There have been sightings of RCH East Street Cream at **The Balmoral Hotel**, Walliscote Road.

In the last PW we said that **The Imperial** on South Parade had introduced Bass as their first real ale. We did The Imp an injustice – in fact, it also serves Smiles Best.

Best bargain in town? No doubts on that score. **The London Inn** on the High Street offers Smiles Original straight from the cask for the princely sum of £1. On recent visits, the quality has been perfect. Heritage is £1.70 which is very good value these days for a 5.2% beer.

Lastly, if anyone has problems getting a copy of Pints West, let us know and we will make sure your pub gets a good supply.

Tim Nickolls

## CAMRA Bath & Borders Branch

### Bath & Borders Pubs of the Year

THIS YEAR, after much discussion over many weeks and many, many more pints we put it to the vote. Which one of the five hundred or so pubs in our area will be POTY, or Pub Of The Year.

What we in Bath look for when choosing a pub is not only the usual indicators, such as good beer, a friendly welcome and a good atmosphere, but how much a pub has improved over the last year to eighteen months.

When all the votes were in we found that two pubs had tied for top place, the **Star in Bath** and the **Griffin in Frome**. Both fully deserved the award so we decided to have two POTYs for 2001!

**The Star** is probably well known to most drinkers in Bath and Bristol as it has been in CAMRA's National Inventory for its outstanding multi-roomed interior, seemingly unchanged since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and its Bass served from jugs. Sadly, however, a few years ago things started to go wrong, landlords came and went, the quality of the beer dropped below Good Beer Guide standard, and the

interior became tatty rather than picturesque. Early in 2000 things started to change with the arrival of Abbey Ales, who took on the lease of the Star. After a few weeks closure for building work, the pub re-opened with a superbly renovated interior, well kept beers, including Abbey's Bellringer and Bass from the jug, and a warm welcome. This year the Star is not only POTY but has been re-entered for the 2002 Good Beer Guide.

**The Griffin** is a simple, basic, one-room local serving its own ales brewed out the back in the Milk Street Brewery. The brewery, built a couple of years ago in what was Frome's small and discreet blue cinema (!), produces Nicks, Beer, Zig-zag and seasonal beers, all good and some superb. The pub has a friendly bohemian atmosphere, much helped by the presence of the ubiquitous Nick who can be found on both sides of the bar testing the product! Although hard to find in the back streets of Frome, the effort is well rewarded. Give it try, you won't regret it.

Denis Rahilly

## Bath Beer Festival 2001

BATH BEER FESTIVAL will be held as usual in "The Pav", Bath Pavilion, this year, on Friday the 12<sup>th</sup> and Saturday the 13<sup>th</sup> of October. We will have at least sixty beers, from all over the country as well as our ever popular local brews from the likes of Abbey Ales, Bath Ales and Wickwar.

AQUAE SULIS



FESTUM CEREVISIAE  
MMI

Local ciders will be well represented and hopefully at least one perry (a drinkable one this year I hope, unlike last year's somewhat unusual brew!).

The Foreign Beer Bar will have a good selection of Belgian and Dutch beers, and maybe even the special Guinness brewed at 8% ABV for the Belgian market!

In the evenings we will have some great music from local bands, The Betty Blues Band on Friday, and on Saturday a

real favourite, Soul Commotion.

Last year's festival was our best ever – come along to make this year's even better. Ring me, Denis, on 01225 791399 (evenings) for details on tickets and times. If you would like to work at the festival, please give Pete a call on 01985 850803.

Cheers!

Denis Rahilly,

Chairman, Bath and Borders Branch.

### Bath & Borders Socials

#### July

**Tues 31<sup>st</sup>** 8:30 Branch meeting at the Three Horseshoes, Bradford on Avon, Wilts.

#### August

**Wed 8<sup>th</sup>** 8:30 The Griffin, Milk St, Frome, Somerset. Our joint pub of the year!! Lets go and celebrate it!

**Sat 11<sup>th</sup>** Trip to Weston Beer Festival. Ring for details.

**Fri 17<sup>th</sup>** Minibus trip to Marshfield and the north! Lets try some new pubs.

**Wed 22<sup>nd</sup>** 8:30 The Salamander, Bath. The new Bath ales pub in town and looks to be as good as the Hop Pole, so let's support it.

**Tues 28<sup>th</sup>** 8:30 Branch meeting at

### Pub News

STARTING with the good news, we visited the **Cross Keys** at Corsley recently and found that it had returned to being a true pub again after the previous, short-term owners had tried to turn it into a restaurant with a bit of beer on the side. Roy, landlord for seventeen years, is now a regular propping up the bar in his old pub!

The **New Inn** at Westwood, near Bradford on Avon, which had closed after the Landlord had gone to Spain leaving a large tax bill (!), has re-opened, still serving Hopback beers.

The **Piccadilly** in Bath has also opened its doors after a quick wash and brush-up.

The **Bladuds Arms** in Larkhall, threatened with closure (like its namesake below) by the St John's Trust, has been given a possible reprieve.

The **Rummer**, overlooking the weir in Bath, has been put back on the beer drinkers' map after an extensive refurbishment of both pub and choice of ales and was runner up in our area's Pub of the Year vote.

The **Salamander** (near Queen's Square), I'm delighted to say, has been taken over by Bath Ales and is now selling their full range.

Some older news, Archers of Swindon have taken over the **Rising Sun** in Bradford on Avon and the **Anchor and Hope** in Trowbridge, an oasis in a beer desert!

Sadly, over the last few months, we have lost quite a few pubs in our area. In Bath we have lost the **Wagon and Horses** has closed (but is hopefully going to re-open), in Warminster the **Yew Tree**, a former Good Beer Guide entry, has been the victim of the bankrupt Kestrel pub company, and in Trowbridge the **Castle** has been turned into a private house. In Bath we have lost the **Belvoir Castle**, the **Bladuds Head**, the **Windsor Castle** and the **Royal Oak**, all in the last year or so.

Denis Rahilly

Tuckers Grave, Faulkland, Somerset. A true classic pub and beers direct from the cask!

#### September

**Fri 7<sup>th</sup>** Minibus trip to the Bruton and south Somerset area. An area we haven't visited for a quite a time, so let's go!

**Tues 11<sup>th</sup>** 8:30 The New Inn, Westwood, Wilts. Recently reopened after a few months worrying closure, they are still selling Hopback Crop Circle.

#### Branch Contacts

**James Honey: 01225 868481**

**Denis Rahilly: 01225 791399**

## News from the Abbey

ABBEY ALES, the brewery based in Bath and owned by Alan "Bad News" Morgan, has taken on a new assistant brewer, a certain Robert Luke who hails from the now ex-brewery, Ash Vine. Another new face is Alan's son, Simon, who is now on the dray and will also be looking after their customers.

Alan has temporarily given up his plans to relocate the brewery to a bigger site. Alan puts this down to the lack of suitable premises in Bath and an insistence that they remain within the city boundaries even though premises outside of Bath might be much cheaper. Instead the company is in the process of buying their existing premises and now expanding inside as much as they possibly can. They are currently installing a new 10-barrel fermenting vessel which should help to keep up with the demand for Bellringer.

Alan commented: "We will however still decide who and where we supply. We will also still attempt whenever possible to produce a guest beer but will not produce beers for pump clip drinkers. Bellringer is our main concern and we are very proud of it."

Star Inn, Bath  
advert

## A tale of two cities!

I'M SURE that most readers of this publication would agree that in Bristol we are, on the whole, well served for real ale, particularly in and around the city centre.

But of course, as well as enjoying our locals to the full, there are other local cities which it also a real pleasure to visit. And so, on a sunny Saturday in May, members of the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA boarded the train at Temple Meads station for the short trip to Bath, where we were to be shown around by the local Bath & Borders CAMRA branch.

Although many of us have drunk in various pubs in Bath before, I don't think many of us had visited the full set which Denis Rahilly, the jovial and knowledgeable Bath chairman, showed us!

Our meeting place was the **Ram**, which is a two-minute walk behind Bath Spa station, and so our day began with good quality *Bellringer* from *Abbey Ales*, which is of course Bath's local brewery.

Moving on, we headed to **Lambretta's** on North Parade. This is the sort of place Bristol is crying out for; a trendy style bar but with varied and good real ales, with emphasis on our great local brews – on our visit the *Wickwar* beer was particularly enjoyable.

Moving on again, next stop was the unpretentious **Rummer**, located near to the city's various tourist traps and an up and coming pub in real ale terms.

The **Salamander** in John Street was our next port of call. This pub is now in the hands of *Bath Ales* and if it continues to be as good as it was on our visit, it will clearly become a most popular watering hole.

**Hatchet's** was visited next, a friendly, basic style boozier, and then we finished our day in style by visiting three of Bath's most renowned pubs, the eclectic **Bell** in Walcot Street, the wonderfully old-fashioned **Star** in the Paragon, recently named as Bath & Borders CAMRA's pub of the year, and finally we finished off somewhat tired and emotional in the classic **Green Tree**, located just off the busy thoroughfare of Milsom Street, in Green Street. Our heartfelt thanks to all the Bath branch members who proved to be such good hosts.

Another city worth visiting is Hereford, and it

was our pleasure to go to the **Victory** in Hereford, home of the *Spinning Dog* brewery. Landlord and brewer Jim, an ex-paratrooper forced to leave the service by injury, was our guide and we all left most impressed, having sampled all six beers available, five of which Jim brews himself, including the superb *Flannery's Oatmeal Stout*. And of course, we got to meet the dog after which the brewery is named, the famous *Cassie!*

With the Victory being in the same street it seemed foolish not to visit *Wye Valley's* brewery tap, the **Barrels**, and this proved to be as good as you would expect from such an accomplished brewery. On our return journey, we changed trains in Newport, and this allowed us to seek refreshment in the **Hornblower**, surely home of the most impressive rock jukebox the world has ever seen, and some mighty fine beer too, including *Brain's Dark*.

In our quest to find Bristol & District CAMRA's overall Pub Of The Year, and also to determine our Country Pub Of The Year, which is a new award, we spent an evening visiting the two country pubs that had received the most nominations, namely the **Ring O'Bells** at Hinton Blewitt, and the **Crown** at Churchill. Both proved a delight.

The Ring O'Bells is in a secluded village, but draws custom from all around, and is very involved in the community, with rugby and cricket teams to the fore. In the winter a real wood fire features. It offers changing guest beers, and has to be one of the friendliest pubs you could ever have the pleasure to visit.

The Crown is a previous winner of our Pub Of The Year title, and under the expert guidance of landlord Tim Rogers continues to be a fantastic place to go. It features half a dozen or more real ales drawn directly from the cask, with the emphasis on local breweries. Both rooms feature original fittings and real fires. For the uninitiated, the soup on the menu is definitely a meal in itself!

When the votes were finally totted up, the Crown proved to be the winner as our Country Pub Of The Year, and indeed runner-up in the overall POTY voting.

A couple of highlights which it would be remiss of me not to mention: splendid establishments visited by the branch *en masse* for the first time included the **Winscombe Club** in Winscombe, where we were delighted with the range of beers and their prices, and the **Bell** at Banwell, a fine pub which concentrates on its beer.

If you fancy joining us on one of our trips, look for the details on the back page of this publication – you'll be most welcome!  
Phil Cummings

## Prize crossword

*Win pizza!***Across**

- 6.** At 4.5% ABV and made from organic ingredients what is the Warrior beer brewed by Pitfield brewery of London? (3)
- 8.** What is the 4.2% ABV beer from Brains brewery of Cardiff? Affectionally known as Skull Attack the initials actually stand for Samuel Arthur Brain who founded the brewery in 1882 (1,1)
- 9.** Prize-giving pub (10)
- 10.** At just 2% ABV this "driving bitter" is brewed by Reepham brewery of Norwich (1,1)
- 11.** The 5% ABV bitter-sweet and full bodied beer from Greene King brewery of Bury-St-Edmunds (5,3)
- 12.** What is the 4.5% ABV rich dark stout brewed by Hop Back brewery of Salisbury? (6)
- 13.** What is the 4% ABV Tipple from Tally Ho brewery of Hatherleigh, Devon? (6)
- 14.** What is the 4.5% ABV full-flavoured and copper-coloured Old beer from Uley brewery of Gloucestershire(3) fine Saki and when cooked goes well with Curry (4) ???????
- 17.** What can be Rose at 3.6% ABV from Kent Garden brewery of Faversham or Spirit at 4.4% ABV from Marches brewery of Leominster? (4)
- 19.** Bristol & District CAMRA's current Pub of the Year (8)
- 22.** What is the 5.3% ABV porter brewed by the City of Cambridge brewery? (7)
- 23.** What can be a promise at 6% ABV from Triple FFF brewery of Alton, Hampshire or Cauldron from Tomintoul brewery of Ballinalloch, Banffshire at 4.9 % ABV? (7)
- 25.** Wickwar brewery's first pub (8,2,5)
- 28.** The 4.8% ABV full-bodied amber ale brewed by Oldershaw brewery of Grantham (3,3)
- 29,4.** The 3.3% ABV beer that is brewed occasionally by York brewery (6,3)

## Brass not Necks

THE landlord of the Bunch of Grapes in Denmark Street in the centre of Bristol has been changing all his swan neck beer dispenses for traditional reconditioned brass taps. Seems like a step in the right direction.

The only benefit I can see – if you can call it that – of swan necks is that you can stick one of those nasty tight sparklers on the end, plunge the swan neck right into the bottom of the glass (and the beer), and serve up an over-agitated, over-frothy, taste-destroyed pint (or too often far less than a pint).

SP

## Crossword grid

**Down**

- 1.** Originally brewed by George's this beer was discontinued by Scottish Courage when they closed their Bristol brewery and was then brewed under license by Smiles (1,1)
- 2.** Pub in Penallt, Gwent that is the only pub in Wales to have its car park in England (4)
- 3.** Close to Weston-super-Mare this place has the Golden Lion, Lamb and Woodspring in its High Street (5)
- 4.** See 28
- 5.** Pub in Church Lane, Cliftonwood (4)
- 6.** The 4.2% ABV fruity ale from Flagship brewery of Chatham (6)
- 7.** Brewed to 5.3% ABV by Linfit brewery of Huddersfield this well-balanced premium bitter has a fruity, bitter finish (3,3)
- 8,14D.** Brewery from Christow in Devon that brews the 3.8% ABV Scatty Bitter and the 4.8% ABV Scatter Brain (7,4)
- 9.** This brewery from Glasgow brews Amber IPA at 3.8% ABV and the Hazy Daze fruit beers (9)
- 14.** See 8 down
- 15.** Home City of Bullmastiff, brewers of Mogadog which at 10% ABV was the strongest beer at this year's Bristol Beer Festival (7)
- 16.** A drinking tour (3,5)
- 18.** Keynsham's new brewery (7)
- 20.** This Dark Ruby-Red Bear bitter is brewed by Beartown brewery of Congleton, Cheshire to 4% ABV (3)
- 21.** 36-gallon beer cask (6)
- 24.** What can be Ale at 3.8% ABV or Gold at 5.2% ABV from Evesham brewery? (4)
- 26.** What is the 3.9% ABV mild brewed by the Bass Museum brewery of Burton-on-Trent (3)
- 27.** At 3.7% ABV this full flavoured and light bodied bitter is brewed by Bath Ales (3)

Phil Brooks

**Send your solution to the editor (address under 'Contacts' on the back page) by 1st October 2001. The first 2 correct entries selected at random after that date win pizzas.**

The Coronation in Dean Lane, Southville has offered 4 pizzas as crossword prizes for two prizes of 2 pizzas each.

## Last edition's crossword solution

**Across:** 1 Worthington E. 7 Cob. 8 Knight. 9 Winter. 11 Sun. 12 Imp. 13 Roosters. 17 Taste. 18 Sharps. 19 Lia Fail. 21 Rye. 22 Interbrew. 24 Lamplighters.

**Down:** 1 Wickwar. 2 Robinsons Old Tom. 3 House. 4 Genesis. 5 Organic. 6 Enterprise. 10 Rye. 14 The Barrel. 15 Restalrig. 16 Mall. 17 The Mill. 20 Tyler. 23 Wat.

*The winner was CD Lovell of Rowan Walk, Keynsham who won a £10 Oddbins voucher and a festival T-shirt.*

Coronation advert

# South West Independent Breweries Tour 1991

## – 10 years on

**Ten years ago, in July 1991, the local branches of CAMRA arranged a publicity and fund-raising tour around all of the independent breweries in the South West of England.**

This was part of a series of tours, all of which also raised money for charities. The previous year had been a tour around Scotland, and the following year was the turn of East Anglia. In the South West, we raised over £2,000 for the children's cancer charity CLIC.

In 1991, we visited a total of 29 breweries, ranging from the far reaches of Cornwall and Devon, past Lundy Island, through to the edge of Wiltshire, and into Gloucestershire. A quick glance at the 2001 edition of the Good Beer Guide shows that we now have 50 breweries in the same area. In many ways, we can see that the choice of breweries has improved dramatically. These figures hide the loss of many well-loved older breweries, but also celebrate the launch of many more.

Cornwall provided five breweries in 1991. *North Cornwall Brewers*, on the coast near Tintagel, provided a suitable first stop, followed by *Redruth* brewery, then the *Paradise* brewery in Hayle, followed by an overnight stop at the *Blue Anchor* in Helston. The following morning saw us all eager to continue with a visit to *St Austell* brewery.

The *North Cornwall* brewery has now closed, and the *Paradise* brewery is now known as the *Bird in Hand*. These have also been complemented by the addition of *Driftwood* brewery, *Keltek* brewery, *Sharp's*, *Skinner's*, and *Ventonywyn*.

Our 1991 trip actually began at the *Tally Ho* brewery at Hatherleigh in North Devon, on our way down from Bristol to Cornwall. In Devon we also visited the *Royal Inn* at Horsebridge, then *Summerskills*, *Blackawton*, *Thompsons* in Ashburton, followed by an overnight at the *Beer Engine* in Newton St Cyres, then on to *Barron* brewery (now *Exe Valley*), and *Otter* brewery. Sad to say, after these ten years the memories of some of these breweries are fading, but I can't fail to remember the glorious sunny lunchtime we spent at *Otter* brewery. Unfortunately, we had to miss out the *Mill* brewery, but a select few people managed to include the *Marisco Tavern* on Lundy Island a few days previously, so this can also be counted. Of this old list, we have now lost the *Royal Inn*, *Thompsons*, and *Mill* brewery, but we have gained many. The new list now includes *Barum*, *Blewitts*, *Branscombe Vale*, *Clearwater*, *Country Life*, *Jollyboat*, *Princetown*, *Scattor Rock*, *Sutton*, and *Teignworthy*.

Moving into Somerset, we have a plethora of breweries to choose from. In 1991, we visited *Cotleigh* and *Exmoor* in Wiveliscombe, then *Berrow* and *RCH*, who provided a welcome night's sleep in the days when they were based in the Royal Clarence Hotel. We then moved on to *Butcombe*, *Oakhill*, and *Ash Vine* brewery. All of these Somerset breweries bar *Ash Vine* still survive strongly, and have now been joined by a new bunch of entrants: *Abbey Ales*, *Cottage*, *Juwards*, *Milk Street*, and *Moor*.

In 1991, we also visited the edge of Wiltshire, which was included as part of CAMRA's South West Region. This meant that we visited *Moles* in Melksham, and made an impromptu detour to the newly independent *Ushers* brewery in Trowbridge,

recently created after a management buy-out from Grand Metropolitan. Unfortunately, we have now lost the *Ushers* brewery.

We next swing north through Gloucestershire. *Domington* brewery had to be missed in 1991, but we did manage to visit *Uley* brewery, and then *Wickwar* brewery in the old North Avon area. Finally, we returned to Bristol with visits to *Hardingtons*, *Ross*, and *Smiles* breweries. *Hardingtons* and *Ross* are no more, but *Smiles* is still the area's biggest local brewery. Gloucestershire (and Bristol) now include many more; we now count *Bath Ales*, *Farmer's Arms*, *Freeminer*, *Goffs*, *Home County*, *North Cotswold*, and *Stanway* breweries. Plus the fledgling *Nursery* brewery.

(Though not an independent, it's worth remembering that we have also tragically lost the *Courage* brewery, which just happened to be the country's largest dedicated real ale brewery, and right on our doorstep – sadly missed by many.)

So there we have it. In 1991, ten or so CAMRA stalwarts visited 29 breweries by minibus over five days. At each brewery, members of the local CAMRA branches joined the group, and we finished each evening at a brew pub for a social and convivial evening. We all had an excellent time, and raised a lot of awareness about CAMRA and the region's independent breweries. It was exhausting, and a tough job, but someone had to do it...

As I have shown today, we now have many more breweries to include. If any one wishes to organize another South West Independent Breweries Tour, we wish you well, but you'll probably need ten days instead of five!

Cheers! **Conor O'Neill**

Bag O'Nails advert

Bear Inn, Wiveliscombe  
advert

# A day in Ghent

In late March, we had another welcome trip to Ghent, a nice medieval town with a good selection of bars on canals and down small side streets.

Our first encounter that day was *Het Waterhuis ann de Bierkant*, alongside a canal at Groentenmarkt 9. The beer we tried was from a selection of over 200: Kasteel Donker bier, a whopping 11% abv was a very nice flavoured beer but perhaps not the best choice for an early morning starter! The Lambic de Troch raspberry fruit beer, 7.5%, was seriously fruity with a lovely aroma. Het Waterhuis is a rustic single bar, with wooden floorboards and half a dozen tables, decorated everywhere with dried hops. It has good draught beer, is right on the canal side, with a large seating area, next to a bridge: very scenic, with the trams crossing. Ladies – try the loos and wait to be surprised – I was! Another good bar and restaurant is right next door.

The next bar visited (*Dulle Griet*) was in Vrijdagmarkt Square with over 250 beers on offer and several books on the bar with the beer labels to help you make your choice. Large, cavernous, three-roomed traditional inn, with lots of interesting memorabilia, stone floored, with tapestried walls and ceiling. Duck the hanging dolls! Good dark beer on draught with strong nutty flavour. We tried Westmalle and Trappist, both very good. Pecheresse Lindemans, a mere 2.5% alc, was delicious, a real peach! The only fault with this bar was it didn't open till 4pm!

After many more memorable samples of good beers, some good food! We picked a small, cosy fish and mussel restaurant, *Erasmus* on Mageleinstraat, for the compulsory mussels and beer. An excellent selection of beers: the Chimay Bleue at 9% was dark and very smooth with a strong chocolatey flavour and a nice complement to the fish salad. Lindemans Kriek cherry fruit beer at 4% went very well with a vast pot of delicious mussels, all very reasonably priced. This is well worth a visit. A few more really good beers finished off a very enjoyable visit to Ghent.

Ghent is full of some really excellent bars with brilliant selections of beers. Perhaps not as well known as its neighbour, Bruges, but in my opinion much more interesting, less touristy, more friendly and better beers!

Will Malik & Lin Gilks

Abbey Ales Bellringer advert

Bell, Kingsdown advert

Bunch of Grapes advert



## Become a beer explorer – part two

IN THE last edition of Pints West, I drew attention to one of Bristol's best kept secrets – the "Day Explorer" bus ticket, which allows unlimited travel on the region's City and Badgerline buses for only £5.70 per day.

Our route last time took us up into the Mendips to Wells, Wookey Hole, Axbridge and on to Weston-super-Mare and Congresbury then back to Bristol. It took us close to the front doors of eight Good Beer Guide recommended pubs in the process and proved that you can get to these excellent hostleries, without anyone needing to drive.

The good news is that the Explorer ticket can get you to even more excellent local pubs. I will now outline some other possible routes for you to try.

The first thing to remember is that you can buy the Explorer on board any bus as well as at the bus station, so if like me you live on the outskirts of Bristol you can include your return to town in the deal. That alone would cost £2.40 off peak from Kingswood.

Having arrived in town you can pick up the country buses from the bus station or from various stops around the centre. The route for this article takes us south towards **North Somerset** and the first bus is the 121/122 service that runs to Weston via many small villages and thus is not the fastest of routes (best done with an empty bladder rather than later on!). They leave at 10:47, 11:42, 12:42 and 13:32 amongst other times (Monday to Friday except bank holidays) and at 42 past each hour on Saturdays. A very limited service runs on Sundays and bank holidays. The 10:47 bus arrives in **Churchill** at 11:51 where you are highly recommended to disembark and visit the highly renowned **Crown Inn**. If you get off at the first stop past the main traffic lights the Crown is located a short walk down Skinners Lane which will be on the right about 200 yards past the lights. This wonderful old pub is open all day, except sometimes on Mondays and Tuesdays. It was Bristol & District CAMRA Pub of the Year in 1999, and is Country Pub of the Year 2001, and it is easy to see why. The old stone pub has been unchanged for many years and consists of two bars with many nooks and crannies, a beer garden and several other outside drinking areas. There are two roaring log fires in winter and absolutely no modern gimmicks or music – just good conversation. Good reasonably priced food is served lunchtimes only, using much local produce. But the real reason for coming here is the beer. All beers are served by gravity straight from the barrels, and always include some from RCH and Palmers of Bridport plus Bass and several interesting guest beers from independent breweries. You will be forgiven if you abandon the bus trip and just stay here, but there is more to see and experience yet.

Assuming you wanted two hours at the Crown, return to the stop that you got off at to catch the 13:46 bus onwards towards **Weston**, arriving in the High Street at 14:24. Get off near the railway station and Tesco's and you have a choice of two Good Beer Guide listed pubs nearby. One is **Off the Rails** which is the station buffet, and offers two or three changing beers from independent brewers and is frequented by a mix of locals and people between trains. The other is the **Dragon Inn** in Meadow Street, which is more or less opposite the cinema. This is the local JD Wetherspoon pub offering their usual mix of good beer and food at unusually cheap prices. Guest beers feature prominently as do regulars from the likes of Exmoor and RCH. Food is available all day so this could be a useful refuelling point on your day out. Both pubs are open all day everyday.

If you are doing this trip on a Saturday, a further treat is available by catching the number 83 or 83A bus to **Bleadon**. Catch the 15:11 from stop T on the High Street arriving in Bleadon at 15:37. Get off in Celtic Way and look for the **Queen's Arms**. It is open all day at weekends but not weekdays. This is another unspoilt old inn which also specialises in a range of good beers served on gravity, including Tanglefoot, Palmers IPA, Ringwood Old Thumper at a whopping 5.6% plus Butcombe and guest beers. Real cider is always available too as is lunchtime and evening food.

You may want to tarry quite a while here but alas the last 83 bus departs at 17:01. Should you get carried away and miss it you can walk back to the A370 about quarter of a mile away and catch the 902 back to Weston at around 17:40. The 17:01 gets you back to Weston at 17:27. There are number 353 buses back to Bristol at 35 past each hour until 20:35, and then at 21:45 and 23:05. Faster X1 buses also depart on the hour and 30 past until 17:00. If you want to break the journey (or need to) **Congresbury** makes a good choice with the Good Beer Guide listed **Plough Inn** (free house), Young's **Old Inn** and Greene King's **Ship and Castle** all worth a try. Number 353 buses arrive and leave at around 58 minutes past the hour.

If you are doing the trip on a weekday, or have even more stamina than two other options spring to mind.

After checking out Off the Rails and/or the Dragon, walk up to the sea front and turn right. Keep walking until you come to the Cabot bars just past the Winter Gardens. Turn right at the bars and then left by the college. On your right you will see the **Regency** pub in Lower Church Road. Open all day, this Beer Guide pub usually offers six beers – Bass, Boddingtons, Courage Best, 6X, Bath Gem and an independent guest. Lunchtime food is served and a separate pool room is available. Always worth a visit. If you are still in town at 17:30 you can catch the 3B bus from stop V by the Town Hall at 17:47 direct to the **Woolpack Inn** at **St Georges**, arriving at 18:05, just after it opens for the evening. Another Beer Guide regular, this very pleasant pub serves up Oakhill Best and three guest beers, with Timothy Taylor's Landlord often seen. It is very popular for food also. There are no later 3B buses back, but it is only a few hundred yards walk back to the main 353 bus route back to Bristol, with buses passing through at around 45 past the hour. Congresbury is still an option for gluttons for punishment or serious slackbladders!

The 353 buses re-enter Bristol via the **Merchants Arms** in **Hotwells** (Bath ales) and the **Bag O'Nails**.

With your journey home from the centre covered on the same well used Explorer ticket you can see what excellent value can be had, so put away the car keys and check out the pubs.

*Bus times quoted are from the Badgerline Timetable dated 28 May 2000, and it is possible that these may have changed since. Pub opening hours are taken from the Good Beer Guide 2001. You are advised to double check both before relying on these times*

Vince Murray

Dorothy Inn, Weymouth  
advert

## READERS' LETTERS

## FROTH OFF!



Your chance to let off steam.

Readers are welcome to send letters to Pints West Editor, Steve Plumridge, Garden Flat, 6 Royal York Villas, Clifton, Bristol BS8 4JR ([steve.plumridge@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:steve.plumridge@bristol.ac.uk))

## Warm words

Dear Steve,

I would like, if I may, to make some general comments through your organ.

I am very concerned that the recent hot weather has highlighted the pubs who serve warm, uninspiring, unacceptable beer. They do not either have the right cellars and therefore need to consider when to sell real ale, or worse lack the ability to look after real ale. It is not going to benefit them or the campaign to ignore the customers who may have now switched permanently to lager and cider. The average price for beer is now around £2 a pint and this is too high a price for people to pay for warm flat beer.

I know that the real ale market is shrinking and therefore the need to present real ales in the best possible condition is paramount and one of the options needed to turn this situation around.

I have recently closed a big Bellringer account in Bath because they continued to sell a large range of ales (Bellringer included and the best seller) but did not attempt to cool it down and real ales were being presented badly. I would sooner lose business than have my beer sold badly. (They are still selling other local real ales badly). Landlords have got to face up to the problem and present beer that they themselves would accept. I have many customers that do.

I am also concerned about the lack of potential real ale accounts in Bristol and I am pleased to see that Horts, now a Young's pub, will still offer a range of beers including their own. Matthew Jackson has put his job and his family on the line to continue to work a pub that satisfies the needs of real ale drinkers in a desert called Bristol. This has to be recognised.

May I suggest we have a new "Real Ale in Avon" that can point brewers in the right

direction and encourage landlords to try something different! Ask people to let brewers know who can take a real ale – small brewers have something to offer and good quality real ale from a small local brewer can increase a pub's trade if presented and marketed properly.

Yours sincerely,  
Alan Morgan  
Managing Director  
Abbey Ales  
Bath.



## A visit to the local

Dear Steve,

We sometimes take our pubs for granted, and the other evening I walked from my home in Almondsbury to our local pub with a friend of mine from New Zealand. We had a couple of enjoyable pints each, and returned home. Sitting in the kitchen I asked him what, as a visitor to Britain, he liked

about our pubs. This is the gist of what he said.....

The first thing is the atmosphere, very cohesive, cosy, warm and welcoming. Full of interesting nooks, crannies and pictures. Often an open fire. With friendly service, a 'cellar cool' not 'ice cool' full pint of cask appears. Each with its own character, memorable, not forgettable.

Pubs are very sociable places, and when we remarked to Pete the barman how pleased we were that the hand pumps didn't have sparklers to spoil the beer, he talked with us at length about other aspects of beer quality. Pete is also the cellarman and quite rightly proud of his skills.

Our second pint arrived in a fresh glass, the hand pump being virtually unique to this country, and produced the customary 'bright' pint, with a nice 'tight' head. We remarked on the simple imagery of the brand names, Butcombe, Smiles, Moles, Bath Ales. All relatively recent companies, but with 'traditional' quality.

We finish our pints, say good night to

Dear Steve,

Well, that **was** a surprise! And it was a very welcome one – especially for somebody who seems to have to spend more time reading about real ale these days than actually drinking it!

Incidentally, I should have told you before – but in my opinion Pints West is too 'classy' to be called a newsletter; it deserves the title of 'magazine'.

Thanks again,  
Maurice Tasnier  
Weston-super-Mare.

*In the last edition of Pints West Maurice Tasnier's published letter was given Star Letter status. This postcard was his response.*

Pints West Editor  
Steve Plumridge  
Garden Flat  
6 Royal York Villas  
Clifton  
Bristol  
BS8 4JR

TO THE POSTMAN: WHEN YOU POP IN FOR A PINT ASK IF IT'S CASK!



THE FANTASY LIFE-STYLE OF A 'PINTS WEST' STAR LETTER-WRITER TYPE OLD GIT...

Pete and a couple at the bar we've spoken with, and step out into the cool night air. As we walk across a field, homeward, a young fox crosses our path, by the light of a silvery moon.....

Just a normal night, in a normal pub!  
Cheers,  
Graham & Mike,  
The Old Hospital,  
Almondsbury.



## More Bass

Dear Steve,

Further to my list of outlets serving the best Bass which you published in the Spring issue, I've subsequently come across a couple more.

I was lured to the White Hart at Midsomer Norton on the strength of its gravity Bass (it's in the 'Good Beer Guide') but also as it's on CAMRA's National Inventory of pub interiors. I was not disappointed. The unprepossessing stone exterior houses a classic Victorian interior with several rooms grouped around the bar. The slight tattiness of the decorations only adds to its unpretentious charm. It is an oasis – or perhaps I should say 'island', since, oddly, that's its address – in the middle of Midsomer Norton.

Judging by my visit the pub obviously does a good trade in real cider. Bass and Butcombe are the beer offerings, both straight from the cask. I tried the Butcombe first and found it a little warm and disappointing. When I went up to order a pint of Bass the landlord pronounced: "A wise choice". So it proved.

I was just getting up to leave when the landlord caught my eye and said "There's a pint in for you". I was utterly perplexed – this was my first time in Midsomer Norton let alone the White Hart. Who could want to buy me a drink?

But a gift horse is a gift horse, so I went up to collect my pint and discovered I had not been singled out, but that a local printer had just retired and was treating the whole pub. I went over to thank him and, despite my feeble protests, he insisted on buying me another!. Now **that's** what I call a hospitable pub...

I also finally made it

to the Crown at Churchill (which I'd included in last issue's list on the basis of report and recommendation). It is a pub that richly deserves its reputation and its place in the 'Good Beer Guide' (since 1975 I believe). The Bass was excellent – though I confess the Palmers IPA was more of a treat: a fine beer not widely available in these parts.

I also visited the Plough at Congresbury, lured by a rave review in last issue's Weston Whispers which said the beers are 'straight from the cask'. The Bass was fine but, along with the other beers, is served by gas-powered pump through a fake cask-head (as at Horts in Bristol). Not straight from the cask as it was claimed. (*It was an error in that article – they got the dispense details correct in the Plough's entry for the current edition of the Good Beer Guide though, Ed.*)

In Bristol, the Magic Box on Cheltenham Road, a splendid Wetherspoon's conversion of a former cinema/chapel, also serves a decent pint of Bass by means of a gas-powered pump. Uniquely, Bass is 99p a pint every day until 6pm (as well as all day on Monday in common with other Wetherspoon's pubs).

Tim Mars,  
Stroud  
Gloucestershire



Butcombe advert

## PUB NEWS

London brewer Young's have been busy with their recent acquisitions. They have spent the last couple of months refurbishing the **Chateau** on Park Street in Bristol. The pub was taken over when they bought the bulk of the Smiles tied estate earlier this year and closed just before the last issue of Pints West. A major revision of the interior has taken place, including an expanded cellar bar and French windows installed at the front of the building contributing to a more open and airy feel.

Young's have also taken over the **Black Horse**, also known as the Rope Walk, in Nelson Parade, Bedminster but no news yet on what their plans are for the place.

Other pubs that have made the headlines recently are in King Street, Bristol. They are the **Old Duke**, famous for its live jazz, and the **Naval Volunteer**, better known as the **Volley**. Both were owned by Scottish & Newcastle and have been sold to Enterprise Inns and the Noble House leisure group respectively.

The **Park**, formerly **Aunties**, on the Triangle has reopened but no longer appears to have any real ale or bottle conditioned beer on sale. Aunties used to have four real ales, one a changing guest. There are of course other pubs in the area within easy walking distance which do have good real ale still, including the **Quinton House** in Park Place the **Eldon House** in Lower Clifton Hill, and the **Berkeley**, Queens Road.

Now that they have sold **Horts** to Young's, the **Chapman Group** has acquired the **Prince Rupert** in Fairfax Street, Bristol – could this become a Horts Mark 2?

South Gloucestershire Council have given the go ahead for the conversion of the **Horseshoe** in Coalpit Heath into two dwellings with a further four houses in the garden. The pub, which was owned by Phoenix Inns, was saved from demolition after more than 400 people signed a petition.

The **Swan With Two Necks** in St Judes, a former Good Beer Guide entry, is now sadly boarded-up, as its near neighbour the **Sportsman**.

The **Victoria** in Chock Lane, a Wadworth pub, has become the first pub in Westbury-on-Trym to be awarded *Cask Marque* in recognition of the quality of its real ales.

The **Three Sugar Loaves** on Christmas Steps, which was mentioned in the last issue, gets another mention this time. Unfortunately it appears to be closed and two attempted break-ins are evident.

Pete Tanner

# DIARY



See inside pages for Weston-super-Mare sub-branch and Bath & Borders branch diaries.

**Friday August 3rd:** Trip to Great British Beer Festival, Olympia.

**Tuesday, August 7th:** St Michael's Hill Crawl. Meet Smiles Brewery Tap, 7:30pm.

**Wednesday, 8th August:** Committee meeting, Cornubia, Temple Street, Bristol 8pm.

**Wednesday, 15th August:** Survey trip of North Somerset pubs. Depart Cornubia 6:45pm.

**Wednesday, 22nd August:** Branch meeting at Horts City Tavern, Bristol 8pm.

**Wednesday, 29th August:** Survey trip to South Gloucestershire pubs. Depart Cornubia 6:45pm.

For more information on local events either attend our branch meetings or contact Phil Cummings on 0117 9858220 (evenings).

See inside pages for Weston-super-Mare and Bath & Borders events and contacts.

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## CONTACTS

When contacting, please bear in mind that, as CAMRA members, we are all unpaid volunteers who do all CAMRA work in our spare time.

**TO ADVERTISE IN PINTS WEST** call Steve Plumridge in the first instance, evenings or weekends, on (0117) 9743242. (Email: [steve.plumridge@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:steve.plumridge@bristol.ac.uk))

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**Suggestions for future entries for the CAMRA GOOD BEER GUIDE**, and any comments on existing entries, can be made to our GBG Coordinator, Richard Walters, care of the editor (above).

**FURTHER INFORMATION** on all aspects of CAMRA can be had from Ray Holmes on (0117) 9605357 (h).

**SEVEN THOUSAND COPIES** of Pints West are distributed free to pubs in and around the city of Bristol.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** To be put on a mailing list send a cheque to the editor (payable to Steve Plumridge) – rate is £2 for four issues (one year).

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