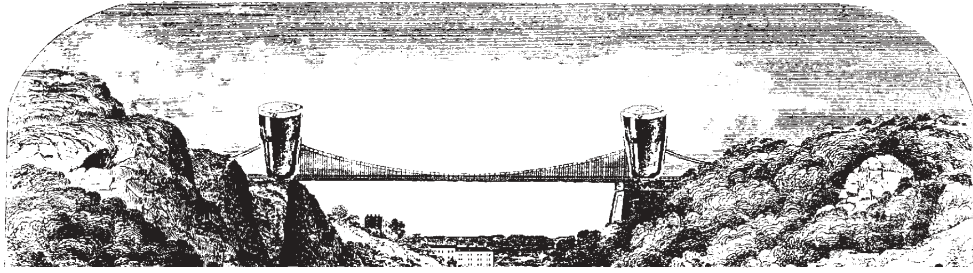




AWARD-WINNING

No. 62
Summer
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www.camrabristol.org.uk

PINTS WEST

Award-winning newsletter of the Bristol & District Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale

Beer and Tobacco or Three Men and a Brewery

Duncan Shine meets the man who is reviving a slice of Bristol brewing heritage.

A NUMBER of things happened in 1865: Abraham Lincoln was assassinated at Ford's Theatre in Washington DC; John Hyatts patented the world's first billiard ball and our own King George V was born.

Far more important than any of that stuff, though, is the fact that in 1865 the Ashton Gate Brewery was founded with the acquisition of the business and premises owned by the late Thomas Baynton on the Ashton Road. The Brewery, just opposite Ashton Park, was of the old tower style, and was to become a very successful business over the next 68 years, owning over 200 pubs and other properties, and home to the popular 'Sunrise' brand of beers. But in 1931 the business was purchased by George's Brewery of Bristol and, within two years, the brewery had closed.

But thankfully that is not where the story ends. Despite various uses and abuses over the years, the building survived until purchased last year by George Ferguson, current President of the Royal Institute of British Architects. He

expressed a vision to see the old Ashton Gate Brewery working again and providing beers for the nearby Tobacco Factory, which he also owns.

Enter Chris Godden, who had founded the Bristol Brewing Company some months earlier and now had all the equipment but no appropriate premises to put it in. The third partner in this operation is Simon Bartlett, a local man who has travelled the world building and commissioning breweries for Briggs of Burton, and who has risen to the challenge of recreating brewing history in South Bristol.

If you travel from Ashton Road into Bedminster's North Street, you will see the large stone gate posts that were once the entrance to the brewery. On my visit to the newly named **Beer Factory**, I have to go round to Durnford Avenue, past the BMW Garage, where Simon meets me and shows me around.

All the equipment is in place, with a ten-barrel brew length and shiny new barrels everywhere. Simon has already run some test brews to make sure the brewing equipment will do the business, and is pleased with the results. The intention is to start brewing in anger around the end of June, with the Tobacco

Factory providing the first regular outlet. Initially there will be a Beer Factory 'Best Bitter' and a Stout, although the brand names have not been finalised yet. The intention is to brew with only organic malt and hops in the future.

In researching the history of the brewery, Simon has retrieved a document from the Courage archives, which shows all the properties owned by the old brewery at the time of the take-over by George's. Astonishingly, some of the Bristol area's finest and most famous hostelries have rejoiced in the livery of the Ashton Gate Brewery. The Old Bowl in Almondsbury, the Black Swan in Westbury-on-Trym, Bath Ales' Welling-ton at Horfield and the George at Bathampton would all have offered Ashton Gate beers to help take people's minds off the national strike back in the twenties.

Simon will be approaching some of the old Ashton Gate Brewery pubs to stock the new Beer Factory beers, and thus return to their roots; and the beers will also be sold to independent cultural venues throughout the area.

Check future editions of Pints West to see where to try out Beer Factory beers later in the year.



NEWSLETTER OF THE YEAR AWARDS Highly Commended: PintsWest

For the third year running Pints West has won an award. Thank you and congratulations to all contributors, past and present, who have helped to produce what the judges described as consistently the best content and best read in a local CAMRA newsletter. I hope people will feel inspired to continue to contribute to the success of Pints West in the future. SP

Brewing by Degrees

READERS may wish to try the output of the new Zero Degrees Brewery, Pub and Restaurant, which is hoping to open in early July at the top of Christmas Steps in central Bristol.

This is the second brewery in the chain, and the brain child of Dipam Patel and Nick Desai. The first is in Blackheath, hence the name 'Zero Degrees'. (It's on the meridian line at Greenwich, so it's 0° West, or East). Already delivered is a 10 hectolitre (that's 218 gallons if my maths is right) plant, which will produce a Wheat Ale, a Pale Ale, a Black Lager, a Fruit-Flavoured (Mango) Wheat Beer and a Pilsener, plus other occasional speciality beers.

The unfiltered and unfinned (and therefore suitable for vegetarians) ales and lagers will be served from tanks using air pressure, and not carbon dioxide.

Although British brewing *cognoscenti* have traditionally been suspicious of newer methods and computer-controlled plants, the Zero Degrees venture in Blackheath has met with widespread approval. Indeed, its Pale Ale was praised by CAMRA as an excellent brew to accompany National Vegetarian Week at the end of May 2004.

The Bristol Brewery will also be offering speciality wood-fired pizzas, pasta and gourmet sausages, as well as fresh mussels, in their 17,000 sq ft premises. The main entrance will be from Colston Street, with a second entrance up on Perry Street. A section of the building is being let as offices, so whoever moves in there will have a pretty classy staff canteen!

Zero Degrees (should we call the Bristol branch 2° West?) are also hoping to open some bars in the broader area (Bath, Swindon, Gloucester perhaps), which will also sell their beers. We will report back in a future issue of Pints West, but it's great that the continued resurgence in Bristol's popularity as a great social and tourist city is attracting businesses such as this. Long may it continue.

Duncan Shine

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Staple Hill: Cavalier Print, 5 Soundwell Road - Tel: 0117 9753603

Hawkesbury Upton: The Beaufort, High Street - Tel: 01454 238217

Please note that tickets will not be available on the door.

Wickwar Brewery back on track

The historic old brewing house in Wickwar, Gloucestershire, will soon be making beer again

CONSTRUCTION work on the Old Brewery in Station Road, Wickwar is under way and the massive refurbishment is expected to be finished in early July.

Although there had been some objections to the expansion project raised by neighbouring residents last year, Wickwar Brewing Company, the "Brewery of Gloucestershire", now has planning permission and they are going full steam ahead to be up and brewing their excellent beers on the new site for this summer.

The building that will house the new brewery dates back to 1860, when it had been purpose-built to house 'The Arnold, Perrett & Company' brewery, whose brewing activities in the village had been brought to a halt because of the large-gauge railway that had been laid by one Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

To mark the historical significance of the site and its connection with Brunel, a new beer called 'IKB' will be available from July this year.

Managing director, Ray Penny commented, "We are investing a lot of

money in restoration and rejuvenation to bring brewing back to this wonderful building, at a time when most historical breweries are being razed to the ground just to satisfy the developers."

He added, "The brewery will be very much in keeping with the village and the surrounding Cotswolds. In its past heyday the original brewery's water wheel not only supplied power for the brewery but also supplied electricity for the street lights of Wickwar, making it the very first village in the country to have electric street lights.

"I have always wanted our brewery to relocate to Arnold Perrett's Old Brewery and to remain in the village, brewing beer somewhere which was built to do exactly that and it is a fabulous building!"

If South Gloucestershire Council had refused to let the million-pound project go ahead – and it was touch and go for a while, even though the original purpose

of the building was as a brewery – then Wickwar Brewing Company would have had to leave the village for good.

The expansion has been needed for the past two years as the brewery has been running at capacity level for that time.

The Old Brewery was used for its intended purpose up until 1924, when it closed and became a cider factory. When the cider factory closed some 52 years later, the building lay empty until Mr. Penny started his brewery in the old cooperage, just across the road.

The Wickwar Brewing Company currently brews 13 different beers, and when the "New Brewery opens at the Old Brewery" it will welcome people who are curious to find out more about Wickwar and Wickwar Brewing.



IKB 4.5%

IKB is described as: "Strong in multi-malt flavours, and very well balanced to produce rich fruit flavours of cherry and plum. IKB (Isambard Kindom Brunel) is the latest member of the Wickwar family. Introduced to the portfolio to help celebrate the opening of our new home at the Old Brewery. Engineered to perfection!"

A new beer will mark site's historical significance

Malt, Hops, Yeast & Water!



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Shine on Downend

AS part of his research for the impossibly delayed Bristol Pub Guide, Duncan Shine is visiting over 700 pubs and bars in the Bristol area. In his fourth report, he looks at the real ale situation in Downend.

Full details, opening times and photographs of all the pubs mentioned can be found on the www.britishpubguide.com web site. Landlords and regulars in these pubs are welcome to update the information on the website whenever they like.

PICTURE THE SCENE. Summer is here, and you love summer. Summer means everything you adore about Bristol: a thousand cars and caravans stuck in that no-man's land which is neither M4 nor M5; a steady stream of sports fans wandering around the centre armed with cans of super strength lager leaving it until the last minute before heading over to Cardiff for the 'final'; skateboarders on college green wearing grungy black leather and denim outfits even though it's hot enough to fry an egg on the ground; the whole of Clifton being gridlocked while 300 families try and get their cars into the 2½ spaces outside the Zoo; and most of all: cricket. To be brutally honest, you've always thought that the sound of leather on willow should be confined to the bedroom, but the idea of spending an entire day sat on the grass, sipping a pint of Bristol I.P.A. and throwing the odd admiring glance at someone's googly seems like pure heaven.

So, with partner in tow, you head for Downend, with its lush cricket square where the great Dr W G Grace once stroked one through the covers, and indeed played cricket from time to time. [*That's too risqué. Clean it up – Ed*] Sorry, how about "where the great Dr W G Grace allegedly once tickled a chinaman down to long leg" [*Now stop that! – Ed*].

You are very disappointed to find that there is no game of cricket taking place, particularly as you haven't used the terms "middle wicket", "bouncers" or "using the Duckworth-Lewis method" yet. You decide to retire for a pint.

Your partner has resigned as editor of *Soft Drinks West* to start up a new periodical covering the wide variety of savoury snacks available in the pub trade, tentatively titled *Crisps West*, and is keen to do a bit of research. But where can you both go that will satisfy your frankly rather stringent taste criteria? A shambling, slightly jaded looking

figure approaches you, and clears his throat...

"Downend is surprisingly well served for real ale pubs. Let's start down the road in **The Downend Tavern**." It is a cheery Edwardian one-bar pub with a skittle alley at the back and old photographs on the walls. Bass and Courage Best are on offer here, but you go for the Butcombe Bitter, which is in tip-top condition. Your partner chooses the same to wash down a packet of *Ripple Cut Foccaccia and Olive Flavour Twiglets*.

From the Downend, you head back up the hill to **The Beaufort Hunt**, a lovely brick built Victorian boozier complete with beer garden. It's had a chequered history, but seems to be doing much better these days, and there is certainly a good pint of Bass to be had. You have to leave quite promptly, however, after your partner nearly chokes on the first mouthful of *Banana & Liver Flavoured Pretzels*.

Two pubs down, and plenty more to go. Your shambling guide suggests a visit to **The Horseshoe**, a landmark pub in the centre of the 'village' of Downend. Licensed since the mid-nineteenth century, the Horseshoe is an excellent example of a pub which knows and caters for its clientele very well. As you enter the left-hand 'public' bar, you notice familiar faces from the group 'Blackfire' setting up their equipment for that evening's live gig, but adjourn to the garden with your pints of Wells Bombardier and Courage Best Bitter. Both are in excellent condition, and testament to landlord John's commitment to every aspect of the pub. Your partner is particularly impressed by a bag of *Low-Calorie Sumatran Seaweed Crackers (with extract of crude oil)*.

Next you stroll down the slope of Westerleigh Road, past **The Huntsman**, which has recently undergone a major refurbishment, and is selling Bass straight from the barrel in the back bar, to **The Emersons Green Beefeater**. Your guide tells you: "Although national brands like this are not seen as Meccas for cask-conditioned excellence, Simon Ebborn makes real efforts to maintain a good range of real ales, and the massive catchment area that is Emersons Green provides him with the turnover to keep them all in good nick". Today, Bass, Boddingtons Cask, Brain's Best and Wadworth 6X are on offer. You, your partner and your guide pick three from four, and pronounce yourselves pleased with each of them. The *Cayenne & Mango Flavoured Cheese Puffs* are also a great hit.

Next you proceed with Gay Abandon (a lovely girl, if a little reckless) to **The Willy Wicket**. The Willy Wicket is a Vintage Inns converted farm that has been a pub for all of

six months. The name comes from a Lancashire slang term for the Common Sandpiper, a bird which has never been seen within several miles of this pub. You wonder aloud whether this is the most spurious pub name ever invented. This sets your guide off:

"What about *Mbargo* on the Clifton Triangle? It is just a pointless misspelling of a word which has absolutely nothing to do with pubs or the locale in which the pub stands. It just happens to have the letters b-a-r in it somewhere. You might as well call a pub "Bar Charte", "Bar Bdwyer", "Bar Barb Lacksheep", or "All Bar One" [*now you're being silly – Ed*].

Anyway, once inside the Cask Marque accredited Willy Wicket, you choose from well-kept Bass and Fuller's London Pride and sit on the sun-trap patio. Your partner thoroughly enjoys an air-sealed packet of *Tobagan Goat Jerky*.

The next few pubs go by in a whirl. You stop briefly at **The Leap** – which sells Courage Best Bitter – and then turn right down Four Acre Road, left into Quakers Road, and on to **The Sandringham**. The Sandringham is run by national chain Ember Inns, and offers Cask Marque accredited Bass, 6X and Shepherd Neame Spitfire. All are on good form. From there you head down Oakdale Road and back up the Badminton Road to **The Green Dragon**, where you are pleasantly surprised to find Wychwood Hobgoblin alongside the ubiquitous Bass and Courage Best.

You manage a quick pint of Bass in **The Foresters** in Salisbury Road (a good community local which sadly seems to have stopped selling Cheddar Valley cider) before heading for **The White Swan** in North Street. This is a good old fashioned cider pub, and you and your guide are delighted to find the choice of Thatcher's Cheddar Valley and Taunton Traditional to complement the Bass.

You stay here for a second pint of Cheddar Valley, even though your partner has to go to the A&E Department with a broken jaw after taking an over-ambitious bite of *Organic Pistachio and Walnut-Shell Crunch*. The next thing you know, you are waking up tied to the heavy roller on the cricket square across the road, and you can just make out two burly figures in white disappearing into the distance, one saying to the other "And as if that wasn't enough, you should have heard what he said about W G Grace!".

Duncan Shine

Is there an area covered by the Bristol & District Branch of CAMRA that you would like to see featured in this column in the next issue? If so, send an email to Duncan.shine@britishpubguide.com and we'll see what we can do.

News from Butcombe

MUCH has been happening down Butcombe way since we last reported on the activities going on at the brewery.

Readers may recall how we told of Simon Whitmore, founder of the highly successful Butcombe Brewery, selling up to Guy Newell in order to enjoy a well-earned retirement. The brewery is located



in the grounds of the Whitmore family home, and so part of the deal was that the brewery would eventually be moved to a new site.

Initial hopes were to relocate to another site in the village of Butcombe

itself, but planning difficulties have necessitated a move to a place slightly further afield. But not too far though.

The move hasn't happened yet, but building has started on a one-and-a-quarter acre site at Cox's Green, Wrington. The brewery will be 13,000 square feet and encompass a brewery shop.

Building should take six months with a further two months to install and commission equipment, with the actual move scheduled for early in 2005.

The brewery will be fitted out with all new equipment, enabling a 150-barrel brew length and the capability of producing 30,000 barrels of beer a year.

Simon Whitmore won't completely disappear off the scene just yet though. He is to be retained for a further two-year period with special responsibility for beer quality and coordinating the brewery move.

All Butcombe Brewery staff will transfer to new site with the exception of Lester Bush who retires in June after 26 years uninterrupted service. We have spoken before of the fantastic loyalty of the staff towards Simon and the company, and this looks set to continue under the ownership of Guy.

People will be pleased to hear that the new site enjoys the same water supply as the current site, an important aspect in brewing and something that should help ensure consistency in taste and quality of the brews when production is relocated.

Other changes at Butcombe include a brand new beer, a certain Butcombe Blond, proclaimed by some who've tasted it as the best Butcombe brew yet.

The beer is brewed to a strength of 4.3 per



cent alcohol by volume (ABV). It was launched on 1st March 2004, and made a welcome appearance at the Bristol Beer Festival where it went down very well with the punters. Guy describes Butcombe Blond as "a classic bitter, made with palest English malt, using Saaz hops from the Czech Republic and Styrian hops from Slovenia."

Another recent change has been a new branding on Butcombe Bitter and Butcombe Gold. Have you spotted the difference in the pubs yet?

On the bottle front, Butcombe Gold should now be available in 500 ml bottles from Waitrose in Bristol, Portishead and Bath, from Majestic Wine Warehouses in the South West, and from many local pubs, clubs, off-licenses, stores, and even garden centres apparently!

And finally, on the pub front, Butcombe has recently purchased the Queen's Arms in Bleadon, near Weston-super-Mare. This brings the pub stock to seven. If Butcombe's track record with their other pubs is anything to go by, the Queen's Arms should be in very good hands.

SP



To sample perfectly kept Butcombe Bitter and Butcombe Gold, plus numerous Guest Beers, why not visit a Butcombe Pub...

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Cider Sisters

HOW DO readers, it's that time again. I feel a bit strange writing this column today – mainly because I'm (temporarily) sisterless, so my glass is definitely looking half empty. The other reason is that being eight-months pregnant as I am, and alcohol-free as a result, all this thinking and writing about cider is a somewhat bittersweet experience for me.

However, these dry months have been far from cider-free in some respects, and my new found sobriety has allowed me to enjoy a new (and I like to think more professional) slant on my love for the apple elixir. Added to that the fact that my sister is always by my side in any exploits undertaken, and in the way that I'm eating for two at the moment, she seems more than happy to drink for two, then we manage to achieve the perfect balance.

Back in March we had the pleasure of working a shift on the cider bar for the Saturday daytime session at the Bristol Beer Festival. What a great event it was – fantastic venue, capacity crowds and, most importantly from our perspective, a truly impressive range of ciders and parries that put other beer festivals to shame. Old favourites like Janet's Jungle Juice, Heck's, Wilkin's, Stonehead's, etc., were mixed in with new ones on us such as Kennford's Dry, Crossman's and many others whose names escape me now. Great too to see so many perries (made from pears rather than apples) on offer, where at many festivals you might get one if you're lucky. Even better to see them being so popular – on our shift anyway



people couldn't seem to get enough of them.

We were also delighted to see how many women were regulars at the cider bar. Not just beer regulars either, fancying a taste or two of something different (although we saw many of these through the day, male and female, all very welcome of course, and at least a few converts among them I'm sure), but bona fide cider lovers of all ages (strictly legal of course), getting stuck in and enjoying the rare opportunity to chose from such a great range.

Our fellow bar-keeps on cider were a fine bunch and we liked to think we were the crack team of the festival!... Roll on next year.

Our other great honour a couple of

months back was being asked to review some pubs for entry into the new **CAMRA Good Cider Guide**. It was a labour of love that kept us local and uncovered a couple of hidden treasures that we'll definitely return to. We went to quite a few pubs in South Gloucestershire, and were generally very impressed with the amount of ciders they offered, many more than most Bristol pubs. The **Bridge in Shortwood** and **The Star in Pucklechurch** were two good examples. Not only are several available on draught, but bottles such as Thatcher's Tremletts and Old Rascal are also offered, making for a greater choice. The landlord, Bob, who runs both pubs, definitely knows and cares about his cider, and it shows.

We uncovered another interesting fact in South Gloucs... many people there enjoy their cider with ginger beer. This is a new combination to add to our list of the widely seen lemon slice in Bristol, orange squash in some parts of Somerset, and a shot of gin in one or two more 'hard-core' establishments (including our much missed, now closed Portland House, off Portland Square, St Pauls).

Far and away our favourite find during our visits was *The Blue Flame* in Nailsea. An absolute gem, which I feel deserves a separate article, such was our love for the place. Look out for a future mention in this column, but in the meantime, check it out if you get the chance.

At the bottom of the Cider Guide forms to send back to CAMRA was a space for "Inspector's name", and as far as I'm concerned you can keep your "chief executives", your "managing directors" and your "team captains"... never again could I be bestowed with a title I was more proud of than that of "Cider Inspector"!

Cheers.

Freya McLuckie (Cider Inspector)



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News from Smiles

NEVILLE MORT, Smiles' legendary head brewer, is stepping aside to allow Chris Thurgeson to take on his responsibilities at the brewery in Bristol. Alex Kean will assist Chris.

Neville will now be brewing consultant to Smiles on a part time basis and act as distributor for Smiles products in the Weymouth area, where he has his home.

With Richard Meadows, ex-Head Brewer of Mansfield Brewery also on board as a Director of City Centre Breweries, Smiles now has a formidable wealth of experience in brewing to local and international standards.

Plans are in hand to ensure more visibility for Smiles products at major events in the South West. The Company have already had their first outing at the North Somerset Show, and their ales will be at up to fifteen other shows this summer, including Royal Bath and West, Bristol Classic Car Show and the Harbour and Balloon Festivals.

In an innovative move, Smiles are also planning to share their passion for real ale by running daily talks on the brewing process at many of these events. There will be the chance to examine raw materials and sample the finished product, along

the lines of the highly successful brewery tours, run by Tony Haynes at the Colston Yard Brewery.

On the back of this greater visibility will be a sales drive to make Smiles beer much more widely available. Smiles is planning a new product that has its roots deep in the history of brewing. Initially formulated as a competition entry, more news will be available soon. Strength and bitterness are rumoured to feature.

Cornubia acquisition

The Cornubia, Bristol & District CAMRA branch Pub of the Year in 2001 and 2002, has been acquired by Smiles.

The Company's Managing Director, Ron Kirk, said:

"Although Smiles products will understandably feature, it is planned to continue to offer a wide variety of other ales, with an emphasis on exceptional quality English brands (and who knows, even some from our Welsh friends!). Cornubia pub-goers will play a great part in advising on the selection of their preferred ales and our brewers will ensure high quality standards are maintained."

Hopefully this will allay the concerns of those who may feel this was a return to the previous Smiles practise of buying up free houses and then greatly reducing the variety of real ale. It is also very much hoped that the Cornubia will continue to stock real cider and perry.

The return of Smiles into pub ownership is to be welcomed and should pave the way to a small but high quality real ale estate, offering a range of beers.

Smiles have aimed high with their first new acquisition and real ale enthusiasts will watch the developments at the Cornubia with great interest.

Richard Brooks

Pub news

Young's pubs now have the option of taking one of their six seasonal beers on a two-month rotation. Currently available is St George's Ale at 4.3% abv (compared to 5.0% in its bottled form) and this will be replaced by the 4.7% Golden Zest at the end of June.

The **Pump House** in Hotwells has been closed and up for sale for several months now. However, it was due to be reopened on Monday 17th May. (Not sure if it did.)

The **Live and Let Live** in Frampton Cotterell is under newish management and the licensee plans to have a guest beer from Welsh microbrewers in addition to the Young's range.

Bar 155 in Kingsdown, formerly Bar Tiny as well as a multitude of other names, now has real ale available. This currently comes in the form of Fuller's London Pride, Courage Best and Bass.

Meanwhile just down the road from there the licensee at the **White Bear** has had his latest application for a late Public Entertainment's Licence, and hence late drinks licence, turned down in the light of objections from the police and the Kingsdown Residents Association.

The freehold of the **Quadrant** on the corner of Princess Victoria Street and Regent Street in Clifton Village is up for sale. The pub is still trading in the mean time of course. Landlord Tony Garcia is hanging up his boots for a well-earned retirement after running this freehouse successfully for ten years. Any takers? (*Agents Christie & Co.*)

Still not trading though is the **Assize Courts** in Small Street in the centre of Bristol, closed until a new owner of the freehold can be found.

Work has been underway on another two long-time-closed city pubs, the **Rummer** and the **Crown and Anchor**. The Rummer in St Nicholas Market has been undergoing refurbishment at the rear of the building, but whether it reopens as a pub remains to be seen. The historic Crown and Anchor in the Temple Quay/Dings area will definitely not be reopening though as it has been demolished!

On a more positive note, a new pub has opened on the Ring Road at the junction with the A432 Badminton Road. Called the **Willy Wicket**, it sells Bass and Fuller's London Pride.

Pete Tanner



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A Mild treat for the good folk of Bath

CAMRA, in its annual bid to promote Mild throughout May, and in particular National Mild Day on May 8th, asked licensees to come on board and stock this style of beer and actively encourage pub-goers to try it.

With this in mind the brewery of Bath, Abbey Ales, took up the challenge in style and brewed a special 4.0% mild ale for its local customers in Bath.

Mild is an ale with a strength and hop rate generally at the lower end of the scale, and this usually leads to a rounder and occasionally sweeter and distinctly less bitter beer than more highly hopped bitters. It is almost invariably darker than bitter through the use of a higher proportion of roasted malt.

John Norman, CAMRA's "Light and Dark Supporters" spokesperson, said: "Mild is one of Britain's finest styles of beer but it can be difficult for the beer drinker to locate pubs that supply it. I would urge all licensees to put on some mild in May (and beyond) and promote it



to local pub-goers, and this will hopefully benefit both the pub and the consumer and go some way to saving this wonderful drink from disappearing from British pubs forever."

Managing Director of Abbey Ales, Alan Morgan, said: "It is something new from Abbey Ales and we are happy to support the CAMRA Mild in May promotion. We have had great interest from the local landlords I have mentioned it to, and in fact I have already taken orders from the Volunteer Rifleman's, the Old Green Tree and the Star in Bath plus

the Watershed and the Bag O'Nails in Bristol." Well, yes, Bristol thankfully got a little look in too!

Landlord Paul Alvis of the Volunteer Rifleman's in Bath, a lovely little pub and keen promoter of real ales, and one of the first to order the Mild, said: "I stock all Abbey Ales occasional beers as they sell so quickly and I can't wait for the Mild to arrive. I also like the fact that it will mostly only be sold in and around Bath. I am sure this beer from Abbey will be another winner."

Well let's hope it was. I also hope the beer will extend beyond the end of May, but what with the brewery's constant and heavy demand for its flagship Bellringer ... well, we shall have to see.

Abbey Ales' historic Bath pub, the Star Inn, is under new management. Paul Waters is the new man at the helm. He has been working at the Star as a barman for many years and is no stranger to the trade. His brother runs the Midland pub in town by the way. I'm sure the pub is in very good hands, and we wish him and his team all the best in their new venture.

THE STAR INN

Worth a Visit!

Reputedly Bath's oldest inn steeped in tradition and renowned the world over.

Described by The Campaign for Real Ale as a rare and unspoiled pub interior of outstanding historic interest and listed on the National Inventory of Heritage Pubs.

Serving traditional English ales including:
 Bellringer brewed in Bath
 and Burton's favourite brew Bass.

23 THE VINEYARDS, PARAGON, BATH Tel 01225 425072

Cheers!

BELLRINGER

Award Winning Ale

BATH'S OWN BREWERY

01225 444437 www.abbeyales.co.uk

A rather Mild day at the Cornubia

AS part of CAMRA's traditional promotion of Mild throughout the month of May, the Bristol & District branch held its own Mild event on Friday 7th May, kindly hosted by the Cornubia in Bristol.

Mild is becoming harder and harder to find, and the annual promotion is all about asking licensees to come on board by stocking this style of beer, and encouraging pub-goers to try a few.

At the Cornubia on the day there were three different draft Milds on at the same time, and a mysterious bottle of Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild was also circulated and sampled at the lunchtime start.

The Bristol Evening Post ran a story about the event and Radio Bristol attended and interviewed the branch chairman, a genuine mild-drinking customer (when he can get it), and Julia the landlady who, as you can see in the picture, was our very own Miss Mild for the day.

National Mild Day itself was the following day, Saturday 8th May. We just hope that branch members left enough Mild for anyone else who wanted to come and try it.

Mild is usually an ale of low gravity and hop rate, hence rounder, normally slightly sweeter, and distinctly less bitter on the palate and in aroma than more highly hopped bitters. Mild is usually (but not always) darker in colour than bitter, through the use of a higher roast malt or caramel.

This traditional style of beer, dating back over 400 hundred years, has unfortunately disappeared from many pubs and is in danger of becoming extinct in certain areas of Britain.

A number of other pubs did their bit during May by putting on a Mild or two when they otherwise might not have, and we applaud their efforts. Hopefully, their customers appreciated it, and perhaps we can look forward to seeing Mild appearing throughout the year and not just in May.

Richard Brooks / SP



Saving your local pub

New Guide to help communities buy their local pub



A NEW GUIDE for communities on how to save and buy a pub threatened with closure has been launched. Produced jointly by CAMRA, 'Pub Is The Hub', and 'Business In The Community', the guide, entitled 'Saving Your Local Pub', is launched at a time when dozens of community pubs are being closed and turned into private houses.

HRH The Prince of Wales, President of Business In The Community, has provided the foreword and launched the guide recently at a pub which was saved by the local community.

HRH The Prince of Wales comments in his foreword to the guide: "The idea of this elementary tool-kit is to help those communities which are considering 'taking the plunge', giving them a clear way forward by providing knowledge about how to do it and pitfalls to avoid. This guide, produced in association with the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), to whom I am enormously grateful, collects the experiences and ideas of hundreds of people who have already saved their pubs and, I hope, provides an invaluable 'how-to' approach.

"I have been immensely impressed by

the tenacity and vision of so many people throughout this country who have battled to ensure that their pubs remain the hubs of their communities. I hope that this guide will give to those who want to follow in their footsteps the help that they need."

Mike Benner, Head of Campaigns and Communications at CAMRA, said, "The British pub is recognised as an essential amenity at the heart of the community, however, many pubs are still closing and this can have a severe impact on the community. 'Saving Your Local Pub' encourages communities to organise themselves and, if necessary, buy their own local pub when it is threatened with closure. Running a pub is never easy, but communities can draw on their collective talents and experience to turn a dying pub into a successful thriving business which is community-driven."

John Longden, Coordinator of Pub Is The Hub and partner at Gerald Eve Chartered Surveyors, said, "Each village and rural community has different priorities and requirements for services. We are trying to help by providing ideas and experiences from recent Pub Is The Hub

projects for villages to do what is right for them in the future so that the pub really is the hub of its local community."

The guide – aimed at urban as well as rural communities – offers advice on how to stage a campaign, set up a steering committee, deal with planning applications and appeals, prepare a business plan and secure finance. It includes case studies on a number of successful community-owned pubs.

The guide is supported by a detailed new web site at www.pubisthehub.org.uk.

Mike Benner added, "Saving Your Local Pub will empower communities faced with a pub closure which will adversely affect their community spirit and way of life. The guide demonstrates that buying and running a local pub, which may be unviable in the hands of current owners, is perfectly achievable if community groups are properly organised and focused."

'Saving Your Local Pub: A Guide for Local Communities' is available free of charge from CAMRA. Call 01727 867201. Full details can be found at the web site www.pubisthehub.org.uk.

News from Bath Ales

CAMRA Pub of the Year

THE WELLINGTON in Horfield has been voted Bristol & District CAMRA Branch Pub Of The Year for 2004.

This means the pub has been judged by Bristol Branch members against the wide range of factors which, taken together, make a pub truly exceptional.

Congratulations to all at the brewery, but particularly to Paul and Dee of the Wellington, for transforming it, in a few years, from a lager and pool beer desert to the pub CAMRA members would be most likely recommend to a friend.

It's well worth making an effort to visit the Wellington. It's on the A38, Gloucester Road, just north of the Memorial Stadium. As well as superb beer the pub provides excellent food, a large outside drinking area for summer lunch times and evenings, and the atmosphere of a traditional pub. On Sunday evenings you will find some of the best blues-based live music in Bristol.



Picture borrowed from Duncan Shine's Bristol Pub Guide (www.britishpubguide.com)

Bath pubs

OVER in Bath, Barry and Elaine at the **Hop Pole** are to marry in July and will be heading for the Emerald Isle for a huge knees up. The Hop Pole made it into the top 50 Gastro Pubs in the UK (Saturday Independent) recently. Congratulations and a fantastic achievement for Barry, Elaine and their team.

Recent cellar improvements at the **Salamander** will make it easier to manage the vast quantities of real ale sold every week.

Events

In terms of events, Bath Ales sponsored a whole day's racing on 17 May at Bath Race Course. While everyone had a grand day out a succession of long odds winners sent the bookies home happy.

The brewery provided beer at the Bath International Music Festival. Thankfully the sun shone this year. Looking forward, you will find Bath Ales at this year's Ashton Court Festival (17 - 18 July), the Jools Holland Concert (10 July) in Queen Square, Bristol and the Womad Reading Festival (23 - 25 July).

Relocation

The recent relocation to larger premises has meant increased availability of Rare Hare and Spa Extra. There are rumours that a new 'seventh' beer is due to appear at the Wellington beer festival on 29 and 30 May.

The bottled Gem — at 4.8% this is a stronger version of cask Gem — won the Bronze Medal at the OLN International Beer Competition of 2004. Beers are independently judged and this year there were over 300 entrants. You can buy bottled Gem (and Festivity) at Bath Ales pubs and a wide range of restaurants and café bars in Bath and Bristol.

Tours

The brewery is intending soon to commence guided tours of the new brewery on Tower Road North, Warmley. Details will be posted on the recently revamped web site, www.bathales.com. Whilst on line you can also order 5-litre micro-casks of real ale to drink at home during the summer's many sporting events.



The excellent, traditional interior of the Wellington

Steve O'Shea

The Windmill, Portishead

THIS year's runner-up in the CAMRA Bristol & District Pub Of The Year awards is the Windmill Inn on Nore Road, Portishead. This is a pub "discovered" by the branch only a couple of years ago. It has quickly become a firm favourite, due to its excellent range and quality of real ales, good food and panoramic views across the Bristol Channel to South Wales.

The pub was formerly known as the "Hole In One" as it borders on the local golf course, but the current owners



spotted its potential and changed the name. It attracts a large turnover of customers, due mainly to its all-day food service – a wide-ranging menu, with daily specials is offered from 12-9pm (9.30 Friday and Saturday) seven days per week. There is ample seating plus a large beer garden in summer, and the pub does not accept reservations for food. I have been at very busy times (including with 22 cricket club colleagues on a Saturday evening) and have never had to wait more than a few minutes to get a table. The inside is on three levels, including a spacious area devoted to families (no smoking). Portions are large, the desserts are particularly good and prices have always seemed reasonable – although a fairly sizable increase occurred recently. Service is usually impressively speedy too. On Sundays the normal menu applies and Sunday roasts as such are not offered.



The attractive patio at the rear of the Windmill, overlooking the Bristol Channel

the likes of Wickwar, Bath Ales and Hop Back breweries. Occasional treats from further afield can also pop up. The pub runs occasional festivals when typically 30 beers will appear over a weekend with 9 on at a time. Nobody needs to drive as the 358 bus runs at least hourly from Bristol bus station and opposite the Hippodrome and stops right outside the pub – stay on until about half a mile after the High Street.

We have also been impressed with the friendliness of the management and staff on our visits and were very disappointed to recently hear that John Dempsey, one of the managers, was leaving in May 2004 – he had always gone out of his way to welcome us and loved chatting about the beers on offer or coming soon. We have been assured by the management team that his departure will not change the guest ale and festival policy and that things will carry on as before.

Congratulations to the Windmill and its team for this award and we hope it continues to go from strength to strength.

Vince Murray

The main reason for the pub winning this award is the great range of real ales on offer, always in top condition on our visits. The regular beers include Bass, Courage Best, Butcombe Gold and RCH Pitchfork. Many other RCH beers appear as guests along with some from



THE WINDMILL INN

PORTISHEAD ~ GENUINE FREEHOUSE

6

Real Ales in excellent condition including Courage Best, Bass, Butcombe Gold, RCH Pitchfork and 2 other guest ales.

In fact if you are not completely satisfied with the quality of the beer served, we will exchange it immediately for any other no questions asked.

The Windmill Inn is situated next to the Portishead Approach Golf Course on Nore Road. To contact us please ring 01275 843677.



Bristol to Weymouth Rail Line Connects with Real Ale!

THE Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership, which promotes the Bristol to Weymouth railway and community involvement in the places it serves, has launched a 'Rail Ale Trail' linking selected real ale pubs along the line.

The trail covers pubs of character between Bristol and Weymouth, and gives a colour photo and brief profile of each pub, the real ales usually on offer, opening times, and details on how to get there using the rail line.

It also tells you more about the train service and where to get train times.

The full-length trail consists of 28 pubs in 18 different places on the 87-mile scenic rail route, including Keynsham, Bath, Bradford-on-Avon, Castle Carey, Yeovil, and of course Bristol and Weymouth.

You can collect a stamp at each pub you visit to win one or more prizes when you've been to enough different places – details in the booklet. You don't need to visit them all to win a souvenir T-shirt, but you do need to prove you got there by train, so start rail ale-trailing by planning your trip and showing your ticket at each pub. You also don't have to do them all in one go (unlike John Crowhurst's attempt at another Rail Ale Trail opposite). There's plenty of time to take in these pubs at your own leisurely pace.

The trains are most frequent at the Bristol end of the line, making a day trip or an evening out in Bristol and Bath or the towns and villages in the Avon Valley quite easy. For a longer day out or a weekend away, try a trip further down the line, or combine sand, sea and seductive ales in a visit to Weymouth!

Copies of the Rail Ale Trail booklet are available from Tourist Information Centres, railway stations across the region, the participating pubs, and certain local corner shops and post offices in villages.

The pubs in the booklet are:

Bristol: The Brewery Tap, Colston Street; The Shakespeare, Prince Street; The Cornubia, Temple Street; The King's Head, Victoria Street.

Keynsham: The Old Bank, High Street.

Bath: The Bell, Walcot Street; The Salamander, John Street; The Old Green Tree, Green Street.

Freshford: The Inn at Freshford.

Avoncliffe: The Cross Guns.

Bradford-on-Avon: The Bunch of Grapes, Silver Street.

Trowbridge: The Courthouse, Castle Street.

Westbury: The Horse and Groom, Alfred Street.

Frome: The Griffin Inn, Milk Street; The Blue Boar, Market Place.

Bruton: The Royal Oak, Coombe Street.

Castle Carey: The Horse Pond Inn, The Triangle.

Yeovil: The Armoury, The Park.

Thornford: The King's Arms, Pound Road.

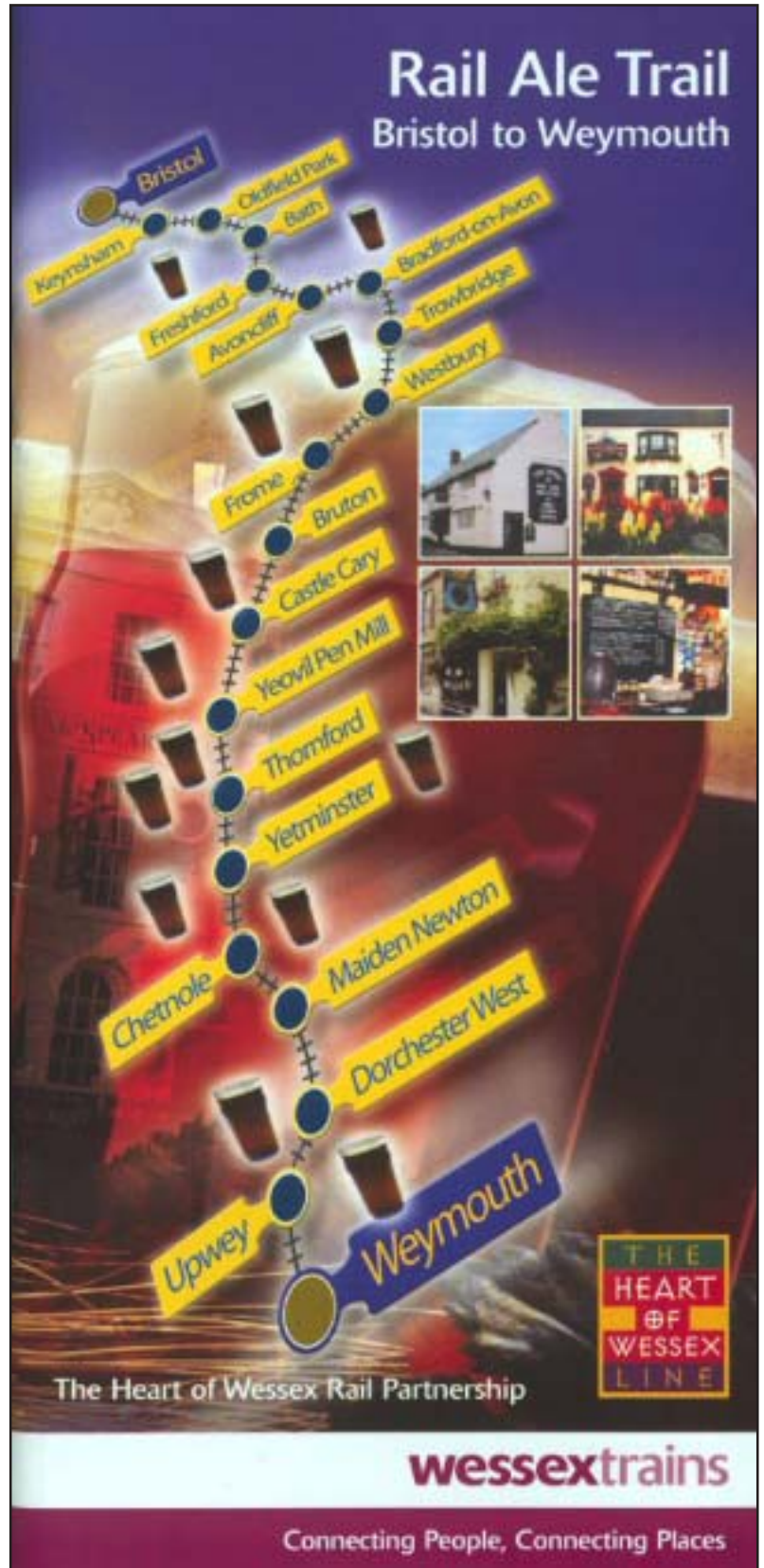
Yetminster: The White Hart, High Street.

Chetnole: The Chetnole Inn.

Maiden Newton: The Chalk and Cheese, Dorchester Road.

Dorchester: Tom Brown's, High East Street.

Weymouth: The Red Lion, Hope Square; The Boot, High West Street; The Dolphin, Park Street; The Weatherbury, Carlton Road North.



And here's one someone did earlier

Bristol to Weymouth is just one of a series of Rail Ale Trails available. Another takes in Plymouth to Gunnislake on the Tamar Valley Line. John Crowhurst attempted to do the whole trail in a 24-hour period (over two days). Here is his story.

On the morning of Thursday 4th March I made my way by train from Paddinton to Plymouth, from where the trail would begin, starting with the pubs in Plymouth itself.

From the station it was up the station approach, first left into North Road East, then first right, bringing me into James Street and the first pub, **James Street Vaults**. Being immediately behind the university campus, the Vaults is very much a students' pub. There used to be a cask cider here in earlier days but now the only cask product I spotted was Bass.

On down James Street and left into Cobourg Street crossing the roundabout by the subways then skirting the multi-storey car park and across the bus station brought me to the top of Looe Street. Continuing down Looe Street, I passed the Minerva, a long narrow pub presenting jazz on a Sunday afternoon, which then brought me to **Porters**, formerly a Tap & Spile with an excellent cellar. I was disappointed to be served my Sharp's Doom Bar through a tight sparkler. By turning right into Vauxhall Street I was able to cut across to the Barbican and the **Cider Press**. Don't be fooled by the name. Beer is also available. I found Coors XI brewed by Hardy & Hanson at their Kimberly brewery, available at a price, but in very acceptable condition.

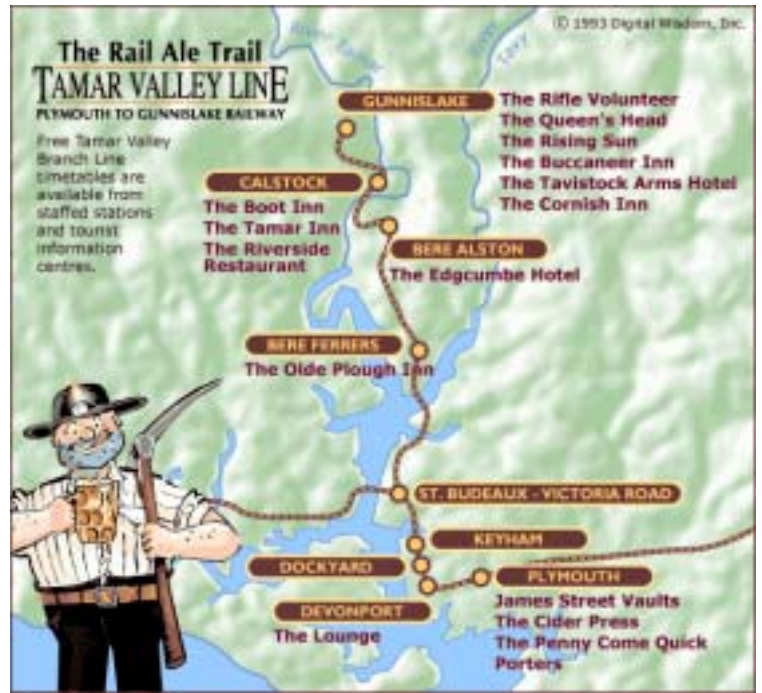
With half an hour to the train, there's just time to visit the last Plymouth pub, so back through the station, under the railway and across the roundabout to the **Penny Come Quick** for a tasty half of Sharp's Cornish Coaster.

Once aboard the train, after passing through the built-up area until past St. Budeaux, wonderful views of the Tamar and its bridges open up. When we cross Tamarton Bridge the train leaves Plymouth administrative area and into South Hams. On reaching Bere Alton the train reverses and commences the tortuous climb up to Gunnislake. I'm off at Calstock for three pubs in a couple of hours before continuing to the end of the line. A six-minute drop down Station Road brought me to the **Tamar Inn** where the music was rather overpowering. Lunchtime roasts are offered at £3. I chose a pint of Blackawton Strong 'un at 5.2 per cent rather than a Sutton beer before crossing the road to the **Riverside Restaurant**. The Tamar is a community pub whilst the Riverside caters very much for family lunches and cream teas. In spite of this, I found my best beer of the crawl here, in the form of Shepherd Neame Spitfire. This left the **Boot Inn** in Fore Street, just up a short footpath, which had just opened at 6 o'clock. The Hardy & Hanson's Old Trip and Fuller's London Pride were both in good condition. This is a small village 'local' offering a real fire which was just being lit when I arrived. There

was plenty of time to ascend Station Road and admire the railway viaduct before catching the train to Gunnislake for six pubs in three hours. I should make it!

After turning left onto the Callington Road, it's a good twenty-minute hike to the **Rifle Volunteer** in St. Anne's Chapel. I was served a good pint of Sharp's Cornish Coaster before retracing my steps to the primary school and the signed turn to Albaston. The pub is a quarter of a mile down the road opposite the post office. After a Sharp's Doom Bar in the **Queen's Head**, it was time to walk up Fore Street and Cemetery Road and back to the main road. I came out behind the Total garage and continued past the station and down the long hill into Gunnislake village and the **Cornish Inn**. Time here for a pint of Blackawton Original before continuing along Fore Street to the **Buccaneer Inn** and the **Tavistock Arms Hotel**. The Buccaneer offered Ring O' Bells One & All. I'm told that ten per cent of the proceeds of this beer are donated by the brewery to 'Pirates', the local Cornish charity. Over the road in the Tavistock, the Bass wasn't available but the Blackawton 44 was a very agreeable alternative. With one more Gunnislake pub to visit, I took the road beside the Tavistock Arms and followed it round for the seven-minute walk to the **Rising Sun** (01822 832201) where I found a warm welcome and a good pint of Sharp's Special. I could also have chosen Cornish Coaster or Doom Bar. This is a delightful little pub frequented by those appreciating real ale. The shortest way back to the station is by turning right and turning right again beside the field gate some 100 yards along the road. The crunch is that that turning, Stoney Lane, is unlit and fiendishly steep. A strenuous ten-minute pull brought me out opposite the station with a quarter of an hour to wait for the last train at 22.10.

As the journey home only involved two stops, one at Bere Alston for the driver to change ends, and the other at Victoria Road to surrender the branch line tablet, we were in Devenport a couple of minutes early, and there was just time to reach the **Lounge** before the final bell. A quick crossing of the footbridge and a quick pull up the footpath brought me into Havelock Terrace. Turning right across the road and into Acre Place and left past the traffic-blocking pavement brought me to the



pub with five minutes to spare. The gravity Bass had gone so I chose Lees for the last pint of the night. The Lounge is big on lunchtime food with some good value dishes. Well, that's the lot for one night. That was the last train so it was a one-and-a-half-mile walk back to my hotel. There were buses along Albert Road or Paradise Road if I couldn't face the walk.

The next day was a leisurely lunchtime trip that started on the 11.30 train up to Bere Alston. On arriving it was a brisk twelve-minute step out up the hill to the village and the **Edgcombe Hotel** in Fore Street. This is an estate-style pub offering Bass and Castle Eden. I chose the latter. After a leisurely walk back to the station for the train back one stop to Bere Ferrers, there was time for a look round the railway heritage centre before taking the eight-minute walk down to the village and my final pub, the **Olde Plough Inn** (01822 840358) where I was rewarded with a good home-cooked meal washed down with a pint of Ring O' Bells Bodmin Boar. After spending a few peaceful minutes enjoying the view of the river, it was time for a leisurely stroll back to the station and the 14.45 train back to Plymouth.

My goal had been achieved. All in all it was an interesting but energetic weekend. If anybody feels like trying out all or part of this crawl then I would strongly recommend ringing the pubs first as the opening hours in the Rail Ale leaflet do not all apply through the winter. Also, a couple of the telephone numbers were printed incorrectly but are amended in this article. A web site at www.railaletrail.com gives an ongoing overview of the trails, hopefully, including the one about to be launched on the Looe branch line.

John Crowhurst

(This is a cut-down version of John's article. If you want to read a copy of the full story, send a stamped, addressed envelope, marked "Ale Trail", to the editor.)

Watering Holes in the Desert

news from Weston-super-Mare

Weston Whispers

(pub and beer news)

WE did **The Raglan Arms**, Upper Church Road a great injustice in the last Pints West.

The pub re-opened last New Year's Eve, having been shut for many weeks. Our comments that the pub had had "a lick of paint" and that "Bass is the real ale on offer" were something of an understatement on both counts.

Gary Havard has taken over this free house and it has undergone something of a transformation. The pub has had a top-to-bottom refurbishment, happily retaining two separate bars and a pool room. Gary plans to make it a genuine real ale drinker's pub. He has added three beers in addition to the Bass. These have usually been Newman's Wolver's Ale and beers from Butcombe, Smiles or Grand Union. All the ales are £2 which, sadly, is becoming

an increasingly attractive price in town.

Gary plans to rip out the "T" bar in the lounge bar and install stillage to enable his beers to be served straight from the cask. His current plan is to have four permanent beers and a guest beer. Subject to beer quality being good, these developments at the Raglan make it potentially a very exciting addition to the real ale scene in Weston and we hope that the town's ale drinkers will pay a visit to "the new Raglan."

Another free house that has recently changed hands is the Good Beer Guide-listed **Crown Inn, Axbridge**. This pub has been a local favourite for several years and, given some of the vultures that snap up free houses nowadays and subsequently ruin them, there was some anxiety over the pub's future.

Happily, it appears that there is no cause for concern. The newcomers are Ian and Carolyn Hoyle-Johnson. Ian trained as a manager in the Fuller's pub estate in London and has run numerous pubs in London and Essex. Ian and Carolyn's plans seem to be to keep all the things that are good about the Crown (community pub with lots of pub teams, unpretentious, good atmosphere, good quality local beers) whilst making some sensible improvements.

The garden has always been an under-utilised resource, looking pretty tatty. Ian has smartened it up, has ordered hanging baskets and installed 28 garden benches, which can seat 200. The

garden is something of a sun-trap and he hopes that it will get filled on summer weekends.

All-day opening on Saturdays and Sundays has been introduced. The pub now also opens at 5 p.m. Mondays to Fridays. Free pool is available weekdays from 12 to 3 and 5 to 8. Basket meals will soon be available, although Ian is keen to stress that the Crown will not become a food pub – they merely want to offer some hot snacks, which makes a good deal of sense to me. Ian has installed a piano – he says that he is now looking for someone to play it!

On the beer front, Ian is planning to move from two ever-changing beers to one permanent beer and a guest. The current favourite for the permanent slot is the excellent Sharp's Doom Bar. The beer quality was spot-on when I visited recently and the Crown remains well worth a visit.

Yet another local free house that has changed hands recently is **The Queen's Arms, Bleadon**. The local Butcombe brewery has acquired the pub.

It is always sad when the nation's dwindling band of free houses loses another member of its ranks, but a takeover by Butcombe is definitely one of the better options.

Butcombe have a very good track record of nurturing old, rural pubs and this clearly seems to be their intent at the Queen's. Naturally, they are now offering the full range of their own beers (and many seem to think that the new Butcombe Blond is their best beer yet), but they are still offering guest beers and have retained the mighty Ringwood Old Thumper. Previous landlord Chris Smith once told me that the locals would lynch him if he tried removing Old Thumper.

All in all, the future looks pretty good in Bleadon.

The Borough Arms on Locking Road was closed for a few weeks for a significant refurbishment. In my view it has been vastly improved, with a much more comfortable feel to it. New licensees Kathy and John have retained live music at weekends.

The beers currently on offer are Courage Best and Directors, but there are plans to drop the latter in favour of a guest beer. On my recent visits beer quality has been good. If you are interested in finding out about James H. Porter,

'Everyone carries his own
inch-rule of taste,
and amuses himself by applying it,
triumphantly,
wherever he travels'.
(Henry Adams)



Waiting for you...

Courtesy of Newman's Brewery

Call 07879 665 999

the original brewer of Newcastle Brown, ex-Chairman of Newcastle Breweries, ex-President of the Institute of Brewing, then this is the pub for you!

Adnams Bitter now rotates with Charles Wells Bombardier in the guest beer slot at **The Windsor** on Upper Bristol Road. An unusual feature at the Windsor is that they try and serve each beer in its own branded glass. There are about a dozen, covering all the lagers, ales, cider, etc.

This is the norm in countries such as Belgium where it would be unthinkable to serve a beer in a glass other than that designed by the brewery to go with the beer, but no-one generally tends to bother here, where a pint of bitter can turn up in a Guinness-branded glass!

Sadly, it looks like there will be no Hutton Beer Festival this year. The tenants of the Greene King-owned **Old Inn** left earlier this year and temporary managers are currently running the pub. The annual weekend event held at the end of July looks likely to be a victim of the current uncertainty. (*More info in Steve Reed's article.*)

The White Hart, Palmer Row, continues to put on some good beers. On St. Patrick's Night they hosted the annual Weston CAMRA Skittles Competition and put on St. Austell's Black Prince mild, and St. Patrick's Leprechaun Ale from the Coach House brewery, Warrington. Both were certainly superior to West London's finest, Guinness.

I found it rather amusing that some people seemed dismayed by the recent news that the brewing of Guinness was going to cease in the historic confines of the Park Royal Trading Estate and in future will all be brewed in Dublin. As CAMRA's Head of Campaign's Mike Benner noted – "Perhaps Diageo (the global drinks giant that owns Guinness) could take the transfer of production to Dublin as an opportunity to supply British pubs with the same unpasteurised Guinness that Irish consumers enjoy."

Tim Nickolls

Reed On ...

... Newman's Brewery

RECENT correspondence from Newman's Brewery announced that they would officially be releasing their first IPA during the weekend of 30th April.

Following the success of their second beer, **Woolly Mammoth**, many outlets have apparently been asking for an IPA.

Bite is said to be a very hoppy 4.5% pale ale (hence bite!) with some very interesting tastes derived from a blend of malts and extra end hops used for aroma.

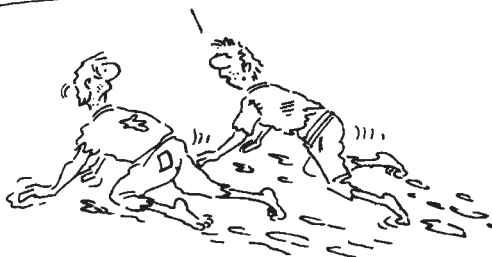
Brewery owner, Tom Newman, who featured on the front cover of the last Pints West, was anticipating that the new ale would initially be available at the **Cabot**, the **Regency** and the **White Hart** (Weston-super-Mare), the **Ship** (Uphill), the **Crown Inn** (Churchill), the **Old Inn** (Congresbury), and the **New Moon** (Biddisham). Other outlets were due to follow when the second brew became available.

I understand that the popular **Wolver's Ale** will still be at the front of the production line, with **Bite** being produced on a fairly regular basis depending on response. **Woolly Mammoth** looks like possibly becoming a seasonal (pity!).

Let's hope that a nice Winter/Christmas special is on the cards later in the year.

(Early reports subsequent to the penning of the above piece suggest that Bite could be Tom Newman's best yet! Ed.)

Never mind
water, I'm
dying for
a Bite



... The Britannia

AHH ... time and opportunity to reminisce. Back in the late seventies and early eighties the Britannia in Weston-super-Mare was my haunt. It was the era when pints of Bristol-produced Courage Best and the newly-introduced Directors were being shipped by the bucket load across the bar. Directors – now what a beer that was

Who remembers the lunchtime crispy jacket potatoes served with cheese and chutney that would often keep me going for the rest of the day? I seem to recall they also had a cracking jukebox as well.

Nowadays I rarely get the opportunity to visit but it seems to me that little has changed about the place. The beer selection is different now with 'new' Courage Best, and Smiles Best replacing the Directors. I'm told that a new jukebox is in place playing a wide range of music on CD (not vinyl like the old days) but the atmosphere of a good town-centre local is pretty much the same.

Last Christmas the WSM branch of CAMRA held its festive social there and all that attended had a really great time and appreciated Mark, the landlord, making an effort to bring in the wonderful and local RCH Old Slug Porter for the discerning membership. By the way, ask for the legendary lamb shank if you fancy a bite!

... and finally

IT would appear that a summer beer festival at **The Old Inn, Hutton** is looking decidedly doubtful this year.

The 'festival' manager has since moved on and apparently taken all the festival stillage with him. The acting incumbent will only be around for a few more weeks and a permanent replacement has yet to be appointed. We should know for sure by the end of May but time is moving on so don't hold your breath.

Shame really, because I felt it was a success. Still, fingers crossed, maybe later in the year if we enthusiasts can do enough lobbying...

Steve Reed

A round with Robin

HEY, isn't history an amazing thing? There I was, on Malta GC, looking for real ale in a place steeped with history, and do you think I could find any beer on draught? Nothing!

OK, some keg beers – English, German, Irish and Maltese – but not a drop of the real thing.

Three years ago on my last trip there they'd actually got some draught Hopleaf in a couple of bars, but I was told that it goes off too quickly. Now, if enough of us in CAMRA wrote to Tim Martin and told him about the number of McDonald's springing up on Malta, do you think he'd consider opening a Wetherspoon there?

I quite like the idea of one in the Inquisitors Palace in Vittoria, or in the Sally Port of Fort St. Angelo, a 17th century structure which is semi-derelict.

Still on the subject of history, I was reading an article the other day called "The Puxton Dolmoors". Puxton is a village south of Congresbury, best known for its leaning church tower. The author, Keith Gardner, sometimes to be found in **The Blue Flame** at Nailsea, quotes from a lovely manuscript of 1825 by one Mr. Bennett. This manuscript can be found at the Taunton Record Office and one thing

it tells us about is the Ancient Customs and the attending festivities, before the Enclosure of 1811, regarding amongst other things, **Ale**. *"On the Saturday preceding Midsummer's Day, the several proprietors of the Estates having any right in these Moors, were summoned by the ringing of bells at Puxton, to repair to the church, in order to see the chain measured. A certain quantity of strong Ale or Brown Stout was allowed for the Feast or Revel as it was called, also Bread, Butter and Cheese together with Pipes and Tobacco. The day was generally spent in sociality and mirth, but not infrequently of a boisterous nature, from the exhilarating effects of the Brown-stout before alluded to. In the year 1779 an attempt was made to procure an Act of Parliament for allotting the moors in perpetuity, but an opposition being made by the majority of the Proprietors, the Plan was relinquished... It was however actually enclosed and allotted in the Year 1811 and the ancient mode of dividing it, and consequently the drunken festival and Revel from that time discontinued."*


Still on a historic subject, I am indebted to Regan Callow for the information contained within a report to Bass by Professor L. Levi dated 1874. In this report are many amazing facts and figures, some of which I will regale you with. I wasn't aware that in 1853

the hop tax was repealed. This led to the importing of 4,739,307 lbs of hops compared to the previous year's imports as only 34,622 lbs. Tasmania appears to have been the biggest grower of hops followed by America. Kentish hops then were in decline. In the U.K. excluding bottled beer, there were in 1869, 25,542,664 barrels of beer brewed of which 521,272 barrels were exported (and these were the ones that were taxed – presumably none got past the Customs & Excise). In the liquor trade there was 34,000 licensed brewers, 6,000 dealers in ale, and 139,000 publicans. I wonder how these figures compare with what we have today. I also wonder how the Victorians ever taught us anything, Mr. Adam Hart-Davies?

I suspect like many other folk, I found that the Bristol Beer Festival venue was a delightful change, and was ideal for the purpose. Recent tastings for top ales I'd name as **O'Hanlon's Yellowhammer** at the **Loco Bar** in Exeter, and **Lees Firkin** at the **Dragon** in Weston-super-Mare. Incidentally I had a few very good pints of the **Shepherd Neame Spitfire** at the **White Hart** in Weston on Easter Monday, a beer I would not normally drink from preference as it seems to have changed its recipe from when first brewed.

Fellow drinkers in one Weston pub have commented to me on the way that the bar staff try to get people to drink up, when time is called at this pub. They brighten the lights and open all the doors so that it gets colder. I was wondering whether in summer, the bar staff will close the doors, turn the heating up and dim the lights?!

Robin E Wild



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Weston Diary | Black ties at the Old Fox

Wednesday 16 June – Bristol City Centre Crawl. 18.35 train from WSM. Pubs to be visited include Bunch Of Grapes, White Lion, King's Head and Cornubia. Trains back at 22.40 and 23.22. Group travel rates apply (3/4 go for the price of 2).

Wednesday 21 July – Weston Seaside Saunter. 8.00 The Captains Cabin, 8.20 Dauncey's Hotel, 8.40 Claremont Vaults, 9.00 Chalice Bar, 9.20 Major From Glengarry, 9.50 The Cabot, 10.20 The Dragon Inn.

Saturday 24 July – Walking/Drink-ing trip to Exeter. Visits to three of the finest pubs in the South West. 10.13 train to Exeter St Davids. Connection to Topsham. Visit to The Bridge Inn. Walk to Double Locks Hotel (approx 3 miles). Walk to the Great Western Hotel (approx 2.5 miles). Train back to Weston at 18.58, arrives WSM at 19.53. Group Travel rates apply (3/4 go for the price of 2). The trains mentioned also go to/from Temple Meads, so Bristol walkers/ drinkers very welcome!

Wednesday 18 August – Trip on the 826. Evening utilizing a bus service that is an endangered species, having only just avoided the axe this year. Without more use, it may not survive for 2005. Bus leaves Weston Railway Station (handily outside Off The Rails) at 19.50. First stop will be the Rodney Stoke Inn. Then a walk to the Strawberry Special, Draycott, finishing at the Red Lion. Bus back leaves Draycott at 22.21, arriving back in Weston just after 23.00.

Non-members welcome at all of the above events.

Contact

Tim Nickolls - 01934 628996 (evenings)



BLACK TIES were in evidence on the evening of Saturday 15th May 2004 – the final session at the Old Fox, Easton.

The pub was sold at auction, but unfortunately — and coming as a complete shock to us — this was not to someone who will continue to run it as a pub! Apparently it will reopen as a computer education centre.

The Old Fox, Easton, dates from the early 1700s and is a familiar sight to the left of the M32 as you drive into Bristol.

It also features in the history of the Campaign for Real Ale. Indeed, it was

the first pub bought by CAMRA Investments back in 1975.

It had been in private ownership for many years now. Until Saturday 15th May 2004, the focus was still on a changing range of mostly local micro-brewers' beers.

At the closing session, many regulars were expressing great concern at where else they could go. The Old Fox was somewhat atypical of the area, providing a wide range of quality real ale in excellent condition and at premium prices.

Will another pub step forward to fill the gap?

Richard Brooks

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Smoke-free or not smoke-free?

THE issue of smoking in public places has become very much an issue of debate of late. The widely publicised bans, which include pubs and bars in New York and Dublin, have polarised opinion on this topic. The impact these bans have had on the pub and bar trade in these two cities is hard to ascertain – it depends on who is giving the feedback – the pro- or anti-smoking lobbies.

This matter is now very much up for debate in the UK. The Government currently appears to be steering away from a total ban in public places including places of work. The specific issue surrounding smoking in pubs in the UK is clearly a very hot topic with many interested groups expressing very strong opinions. A recent report to a Conference of The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) stated that every week in the UK, one hospitality employee dies from passive smoking at work. Professor Jamrozik of Imperial College in London calculated the figures. The pro-smoking lobby group FOREST challenged these figures.

The issue for consumers is also a bit of a fug. Clearly, broadly speaking, those who smoke would not want to see an outright ban, whereas those who don't smoke may be more inclined to support such a ban.

But what impact would a total ban have on our pubs? We have already seen quite a few of our pubs close in the area in and around Bristol. We don't want to see any more. What would be the trade implications be on a total ban? Would smokers be driven away from pubs preferring to enjoy their smokes with beer from the supermarket at home? Would enough non-smokers who currently stay away from pubs suddenly flock to their locals to make up for the lost trade? I somehow doubt it.

It is interesting to note that the same professor who came up with the estimates of the one-a-week death of hospitality employees

from passive smoking also estimates that at least 3,600 people below the age of 65 die each year from lung cancer, heart disease and stroke caused by passive smoking at home.

I recently went into a pub in central Bristol at the end of my working day (about 6pm). There were a total of about eight groups of people in the pub. Without exception, every group had at least one smoker amongst their number – most had more than one. If these people were no longer able to enjoy (!) a fag with their pint would they still visit a pub in future?

Pubs such as The Post Office Tavern in Westbury-on-Trym (The POT at WOT) have perhaps led the way. For a few years now they have set an area aside in the pubs for non-smokers. This appears to be very popular – as is the rest of the pub where smoking is permitted. Even in the smoking area there is good ventilation which keeps the air fairly smoke free for customers and staff. CAMRA has long bemoaned the knocking down of internal walls in pubs that have created large barn type interiors rather than intimate rooms where customers can have a choice of, say, a "lounge" or "bar" room. On a recent visit to Stockport, it was a delight to see several pubs that still retained multi-room interiors. Such pubs would be well placed to have smoke rooms and non-smoke rooms. Perhaps we should all encourage pubs, where possible, to reinstate internal walls to recreate multi-room interiors for the benefit of non-smokers and smokers. Surely it also therefore makes no sense at all for the few pubs that still have separate rooms to remove these?

CAMRA has thrown its weight behind the industry-led Charter for Smoking in Public Places. The Charter, announced in the 1998 "Smoking Kills" White Paper is a close co-operation between the industry and the Department of Health. It is based on using market forces and customer choice to drive change and involves five smoking options which enable customers

to "vote with their feet" if a pub (or restaurant or hotel) doesn't meet their needs.

- CAMRA's research showed that:
- 50% of adults disagree with a total ban on smoking in pubs and bars. 30% are in favour of a total ban, 29% of men and 32% of women support a total ban.
 - Of regular pub users, only 18% of adults support a total ban.
 - Only 40% of non-smokers support a total ban compared with 11% of smokers.
 - 83% of adults support the view that pubs, where possible, should have a number of rooms to meet the needs of both smokers and non-smokers. Only 6% disagree with this position.

Mike Benner of CAMRA said, "The Charter represents a positive and effective way forward to manage smoke in pubs. Choice is the key issue for consumers and Charter-compliant pubs tell customers about their smoking policy before they enter the premises, so if they don't like the policy, they can choose to go elsewhere.

Our research shows that a total ban is not what the public want and we believe that the Charter represents public feeling on the issue of smoke in pubs. It is essential, however that every pub in the land starts to take this issue seriously and signs up to the Charter. It is up to the industry to get its own house in order and make sure that its premises provide a comfortable environment for smokers and non-smokers alike. If they fail on this issue, then a total ban on smoking in pubs is likely to result before too long".

Surely the key issue here is for pub customers, both smokers and non-smokers, is comfort and catering for their needs. It is pleasing to note that recently the Cambridge Arms in Redland has introduced a large no-smoking area as well as retaining one for smokers. Another key issue, of course, is ensuring the well-being of staff and it is therefore essential that even in smoking areas, there is good ventilation.

Pete Bridle

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Pub news (Weymouth)



JOHN AND CRICKET PARKER, who have run the Dorothy Inn in Weymouth for a number of years, and regularly advertised in these pages, have moved on (a little way). April 14th was their last day trading there as the business has now been taken over.

Their new home is now the Luggar Inn in West Street, Chickerell, Weymouth. We wish them well in their new venture.

Bristol Beer Festival 2004



THE Bristol Beer Festival 2004 took place at the Brunel Passenger Shed, Temple Meads, Bristol on Friday 5th and Saturday 6th March 2004.

The customer feedback we have received indicates that it was our best festival so far. People particularly liked the new venue and also thought the quality of the beer was excellent.

As ever, thanks must go to all the unpaid volunteers. Without all the many hours put in by the organisers and the work of those who actually staff the festival, this fantastic event would not be possible.

Our congratulations go to the winners of the Beer and Cider of the festival competitions, as voted for by the festival-goers. The results were as follows:

Beer

- 1st **Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild**
 2nd **Daleside Morocco Ale**
 3rd **Fernandes Double Six**
- ## Cider/Perry
- 1st **Westcroft Janet's Jungle Juice**
 2nd= **Coombes**
 2nd= **Heck's Port Wine of Glastonbury**

Here is a representative sample of the feedback we received.

Dave Bethell, who ventured to the festival from Bradford-on-Avon, reckoned that: "The Brunel tramshed was a most excellent venue for the festival, being so much more airy and spacious than the council chambers. The beers that I sampled were all in excellent condition and the range was quite astonishing. I might even consider volunteering for some bar work next year if it is held there again!"

Richard Tapscott emailed us to say: "Just to let you know that I attended the Bristol Beer Festival on Saturday lunchtime at the Brunel Train Shed and I thought it was excellent. It was well organised and not too much of a crush (as has previously been the case at the Council House). I am sure that I will echo the thoughts of many by saying that I hope that in future years the festival will continue to be held at this venue. Only one small point – perhaps there could be more variety in regard to the food. I have to say though the pasties were superb,

but perhaps the addition of sausages, chips, and burgers might be appreciated! Many thanks for a great day."

John Grantham also enjoyed the new venue: "Congratulations and well done on a great beer festival at the weekend! It was an excellent and well organised event and a superb venue. 10 out of 10! Please hold next year's festival at the Brunel rooms again."

Roy Pepworth, one of the band of people who stepped forward to volunteer their help at the festival, said: "May I say what a privilege it was to work Friday and Saturday at the 2004 Bristol Beer Festival and I cannot give praise highly enough for the efficiency of the whole festival. The full committee should be congratulated. Looking forward to next year. Congratulations."

Steve and Mara Webb, who just popped over from Chelmsford, had this to say: "I'd just like to say that it was worth the 170-mile trip to from Chelmsford to Bristol for the beer festival. We found it very well organised, with plenty of space and a good balance of beers. It was nice to see that locals were friendly too: we would like, via your pages, to say thanks to all who organised the event and thanks also, to Bill and Veronica who gave us a lift back to our digs afterward! Thanks again for the event."

And a final word from Neville Mort of Smiles brewery: "Excellent organisation, venue, beer. Best wishes and thanks to all."
(See also the letters page.)

Secret patios around North West Bristol

HAVING experienced such an unusually warm Spring, the desire was there to seek out some pubs where a beer could be enjoyed "al fresco".

There are of course the well-known places such as the **Highbury Vaults** at the top of St Michael's Hill and large gardens can be found at both the **Cambridge Arms** on Coldharbour Road and **Kellaway Arms** on Kellaway Avenue. The **John Cabot** (soon to change its name again) on the corner of the Gloucester Road and Ashley Down Road boasts the largest outdoor drinking area in Bristol and the **Annexe Inn**, located close to the Country Ground in Seymour Road, Bishopston is also blessed with a pleasant and safe garden for children. Further up the Gloucester Road, at Horfield, CAMRA's 2004 Pub of the Year, the **Wellington** has an agreeable outdoor seating area.

But there are some pubs, that are less well-known for their outside drinking

areas. First stop was the green-tiled **Bell** in Hillgrove Street (off Stokes Croft). The Bell is owned by Butcombe Brewery and in addition to its Bitter, is currently selling Butcombe Gold plus the new Butcombe Blond. The guest ale on my visit was Bath Ales' Gem. Out the back is a well-designed patio with plenty of plants and flowers plus patio heaters for those more chilly evenings. The pub serves an interesting selection of food at around £5.25 a meal – Sunday lunch at £4.75 is very good value. The pub does tend to have music on most evenings.

Our next stop was, what is fastly becoming known as the "organic" pub on Gloucester Road. Since taking over the **Prince of Wales** (opposite Zetland Road) a couple of years or so ago, the current owners have re-invented the pub and the emphasis is on "organic", not only food (served all day) and wine but they also try and make available at least one organic

beer, currently from the Wolf Brewery. The very refreshing Butcombe Blond is also on sale here, along with Bristol stalwarts Courage Best and Directors. Attention is now being turned to making a feature of the small patio at the back of the pub with new integrated patio heater furniture and the introduction of a retractable roof. Barbecued meals are due to start on Wednesdays during June.

Two other pubs worthy of mention in this category of "secret patios" are the **Shakespeare** (just off Lower Redland Road) and the **Port of Call**, York Street (off Blackboy Hill, Clifton). Both pubs, particularly the latter, serve a good range of real ale and good food.

Here's hoping for summer weather that will live up to summery spring weather we have been experiencing during April and May.

Alison Bridle



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)

Unmitigated success

Dear Steve,

As a participant, I can only see the Bristol Beer Festival as an unmitigated success. This was due mainly to the spacious new venue. The non-cramped facilities allowed more people to choose from more beer and if they were lucky a chair to sit on.

I was privileged to be asked to staff the cider bar. I am not really a cider drinker, but my appreciation of the drink grew throughout the festival and I shall ask to work there next year. Cider drinkers are much maligned, but after meeting dozens of lovely people (not to mention the Cider Sisters) I shall not be jumping on the old stereotype.

A few people I have talked to said the festival might have been enhanced by some music, maybe a local jazz band, but all in all, bring on next year!

Yours sincerely,
Richard Lobb,
Yate.

(See also the article on the Bristol Beer Festival elsewhere. Ed.)

Saving the Coronation Tap

Dear Steve,

I read, with more than a little amusement, Duncan Shine's article "Shine on Clifton Village" in issue number 60, specifically in respect of the Coronation Tap. Funnily enough, the Tap, which is very dear to my heart, would have ceased to exist if it hadn't been for my intervention in 1975.

At that time I was Divisional Estates Manager for Courage (Western) and the Coronation Tap didn't have a cellar and was to be closed down as all the cider was only ever on the non-cooled back fitting. The proposal of my then mentors was that the Tap would be shut and sold off as housing. I argued strongly against the idea as the place had always been one of my favourite watering holes before toddling down the hill every other Saturday to watch Bristol City at home.

The solution was rather complicated in

that on behalf of the company I bought the freehold of 17 West Mall, nicked half the back garden, got planning for the construction of the now highly successful cooled cellar and then sold on 17 West Mall, having not touched it an iota. Funnily enough, the back-to-back sale showed a loss of £3,000 which merited me a reprimand and a year salary freeze from my then director, John Parsons, on the basis that "we sell beer and cider, we are not into property development". When last heard of, I think John Parsons was farming somewhere in Scotland. I am still a Chartered Surveyor thoroughly enjoying being up to my neck in licensed property matters nationwide.

Love the mag – keep up the good work.
Yours sincerely,
David Morgan,
Stroud, Gloucestershire.

P.S. As I recall, I sold CAMRA its first public house in 1975 which was the Old Fox at Eastville. I think the then purchase price was the handsome sum of £22,500! How times change.

Canals and pubs

Dear Sir,

We, like CAMRA, share an increasing concern about the continued healthy existence of the "Great British Pub".

First and foremost we are dedicated canal boaters and are increasingly worried about the effect that the large theme pubs are having on our traditional canal-side hostelrys. We have found on our travels that an ever increasing number of smaller pubs, both town and country, are experiencing hard times with reduced trade and falling profit margins. If present trends continue, we may soon find a serious shortage of good watering places along the entire length of the canal network and this will be a great loss to us all.

To raise public awareness of the treasures hidden away in our countryside and towns, we have started a new and exciting website called www.canalsidepubguide.com.

This is aimed at all those using our canals and towpaths, be they ramblers, cyclists or boaters. It aims at encouraging increased patronage by providing accurate and concise information for each of the pubs included. We have initially featured only canal-side inns, listed in order, along the route of each canal and covering the entire waterway network. Our listings provide the precise whereabouts of each pub, with a handy map to pinpoint every location and a telephone number for easy contact. This will be presented with a summary of all facilities currently on offer and will include a full colour photograph of each Inn.

We feel however, as you do, that a fundamental part in the make-up of a good pub is the choice and quality of beer available, and we would like to make this an important part of our guide.

To assist in keeping our records as accurate as possible we would welcome feedback from any member of CAMRA who wishes to comment or provide up-to-date information on any pub listed and even, in fact, suggest suitable premises for inclusion. Our only criteria are that each pub must be within very easy reach of the canal towpath, say within a two or three minute walk.

We will of course be pleased to credit CAMRA on our site for all assistance and comments and would welcome permission to mention your own excellent website, together with a direct access link so that our visitors can enter your domain to learn more about CAMRA, Real Ale and the art of Traditional Brewing. We would be extremely grateful if you will reciprocate and add our site as a link to yours.

We look forward to your comments and hope that between us, we can provide all canal users and visitors with the necessary information needed, to enjoy and appreciate more of the unique inns which form so much a part of the British Heritage.

Yours faithfully,
P B Clawson (CAMRA member)
Cs Promotions,
PO Box 391,
Harrogate HG1 5WU.
cs promotions@canalsidepubguide.com
Tel 01423 552172
Mobile 07909 573164

Apres ski

Hi,

Having returned from our ski trip to Vail, Colorado, we thought it was worthwhile recommending a small bar we located in 'down town' Lionshead. Away from the Austrian-styled Mountain Lodges found in the ski centre, a short twenty-minute walk, or ten minutes by bus, to the Lionshead area revealed Bart and Yeti's bar. An Irish-styled bar located behind the Lionshead gondola, this was a lovely little pub with friendly service and a bit of local colour. According to the pub's 'history', it is named after two dogs who frequented the bar with their owners. Pictures of the hounds are etched into each glass. You enter into a small bar area, with sporting memorabilia adorning the walls; here you can sit and the bar, chill out and enjoy a choice of five draught beers (though surprisingly for an Irish bar not draught Guinness). On the nights we visited we stuck mainly to the Nut Brown Ale which slipped down rather well as the evening wore on. Before braving the journey back a small dram of John Jamesons was a good warmer.

A definite bonus was the apres-ski prices which were about half price and in a town where runs at six dollars a pint!

To one side there is a nice unpretentious dining area where you can eat good food without breaking the bank. Particularly recommended is their speciality for the winter, a warming Irish Stew served piping hot and, unusually for the US, with a good mix of vegetables in it.

It was a good little local, and thanks to our host Dennis Foley.

Jon and Ron Parr,
Downend,
Bristol.

Crawling in Bath

The "Great Bath Pub Crawl" starts its third season on Tuesday 1 June. Despite its title, this not aimed at those who want to get seriously out of their heads. Instead, it is a leisurely ramble through 2000 years of Bath's history - with an emphasis on the raising of the wrist.



Devised by Kirsten Elliott and Andrew Swift, authors of the best-selling guide, "Bath Pubs", it is very much an antidote to your average guided tour. And when the tales of beerhouses, gin epidemics, boozy Bathonians and ghostly goings-on get too much, there's the chance to sample some of the ales brewed in local breweries.

For the real ale enthusiast or for anyone who wants to hear some of the tales that don't get into the history books, the Great Bath Pub Crawl provides a unique and unforgettable introduction to one of the world's most fascinating cities.

Walks start at 8pm on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights, from the beginning of June to the end of September. Starting point is the Old Green Tree in Green Street, one of two Bath pubs on CAMRA's national inventory of pubs with historic interiors. We generally end up at the other, the famous Star Inn, hardly changed since a make-over in the mid-nineteenth century.

For visitors to Bath, the Pub Crawl is a great way to get to know the city's best hostelrys. CAMRA members also get a 10% reduction on the normal price of £5 on production of their membership card.

Pre-booked walks for parties, tailor-made to your requirements, can also be arranged at other times throughout the year.

For more details, see our website www.greatbathpubcrawl.com, phone us on 01225 310364 or e-mail info@greatbathpubcrawl.com.

Andrew Swift,
Bath.

Do Your Level Best

(This letter appeared in the last Pints West, but with the wrong phone number. To make amends, it is reproduced again in full, hopefully with the correct number this time. Ed.)
Dear Sir,

I don't think that the Bristol area is doing enough for disabled customers who want to eat and/or drink locally. The UK-wide website www.yourlevelbest.com, which lists several thousand accessible establishments, shows how patchy the local provision is.

You have a reasonable choice in central Bristol, but only one in Chew Stoke and one in Clifton.

To qualify for free inclusion on www.yourlevelbest.com, places must have a wheelchair-accessible doorway plus a disabled toilet. Simple.

I'm not interested in rating food or drink by range, price or quality – as a wheelchair-user, I just want to get inside.

Surely Bristol can do better than this?

I need help from local customers, restaurateurs and landlords. Phone 0208 355 4328 or email info@yourlevelbest.com, or contact me through the website.

As [yourlevelbest](http://yourlevelbest.com) is a large (3,000-plus listings) and high-profile website which has been featured in *The Guardian* and *Good Housekeeping*, it will be possible to produce a "league table" of UK-wide accessible pubs/restaurants region by region and I want the area to be fairly represented.

Mary Dixon,
London.

A Greek microbrewery

I spent a few days in Crete at the end of April and got quite a surprise. During a walk following irrigation water channels through the olive groves in the hills above Plakias I stopped for refreshment in a small village called Myrthios. I chose the Plateia taverna to quench my thirst and expected to enjoy a glass of the ever reliable Greek beer Mythos. When I tried to order, the waiter was keen to persuade me to try a new draught beer that he described as weissebeer. What could I do? I had to give it a go. Choosing a large glass to give it every chance I waited in the sunshine for my order to arrive. My expectations were of a golden and perhaps cloudy liquid but what arrived was red.

It was served in a half-litre glass emblazoned with the brewery name, "Craft", which claimed to be a microbrewery of Greece that produced handcrafted beers. It certainly made a change from the usual range in Crete which often drives visitors to drink the local spirit, raki, and I was sufficiently impressed to have the other half of the litre. I was unable to discover anything further about the beer, not even if it was local to the island or had been imported from the mainland.

The next day I caught the bus to Rethymno for the ferry to Athens and, with a few hours to spare before the boat was due to depart, I wandered along the streets facing the harbour and found a sign outside a bar advertising "Craft Beer". I stopped, of course, and discovered four beers were on draught, three of which were from the Craft microbrewery. There was Amber Lager, Weissebeer and Red Ale. I sampled the Amber Lager and found it reasonable then tried the Weissebeer, wondering if it would be red as sampled the previous day. But no, it was pale and cloudy and very tasty and so far from what I would ever expect to find in this wonderful setting. Clearly my pleasure must have been apparent because when I paid my bill the management presented me with a free drink asking me to try the Red Ale, being interested in my opinion. Of course the taste

was already familiar to me since, despite the description offered by the waiter, I had been drinking Craft Red Ale in Myrthios.

So if anyone is travelling to Crete I recommend they watch out for Craft handcrafted beers. The bar in Rethymno that was so generous to me was the Sky Restaurant at Eleftheriou Venizelou 46. I am sure there must be many more outlets and I will be on the look out for them when I return to Crete in August. Perhaps some other readers of Pints West have made the same discovery and may have more information on the brewery.

Bob Ford

Pub news

The White Lion on the Centre in Bristol now has five handpumps and is offering two guest beers as well as its regular range of Wickwar beers.

Bar 59 is now selling three real ales (Courage Best, Fuller's London Pride and a guest beer).

A planning application has been lodged to convert **Don John's Cross**, St. George (currently closed) into flats.

Norman Spalding

After many changes of licensee in recent years – and many periods when the pubs have been closed – it is pleasing to see that Cyril (until quite recently landlord of The Merchants in Hotwells) has taken the license at **The Plume of Feathers** on Hotwells Road. An increased range of beers features including regular appearances from the likes of Timothy Taylor Landlord, Adnams beers and Blacksheep. A refurbishment is planned with a view to making the pub more welcoming, including some bench seating. Cyril did a great job at The Merchants and we look forward to a bright future for The Plume. It is time this pub returned to being the thriving local as it once was.

Pete Bridle

More pub news

The Duke of York in St Werburghs (only open in the evenings we think), has started doing Weston traditional ciders (including Rumpy Pumpy and Manic Organic) from boxes behind the bar. The real ales when I visited were Archers Silver Train, Archers Waddington and Swales Indian Summer.

Le Chateau, a Young's pub on Park Street in Bristol, is changing its name to the **Bristol Ram**.

The Antelope in Stockwood is another sad the victim of the current pub demolition craze (like the Crown and Anchor reported elsewhere).

Happier news is the opening of a new pub called **The Old Post Office**, a Smith & Jones pub in Fishponds in, funnily enough, the old Post Office. Beers on offer appear to be Courage Best plus up to three from the Wye Valley Brewery. Wye Valley Bitter and Butty Bach were on when I visited, and they tasted pretty good. I just hope they are able to sustain four handpumps here.

Duncan Shine

Island in the sea

By your Nailsea correspondent
Laurie Gibney

THE **Sawyers Arms** is demonstrating the benefits of the Unique Pub Co's expanded guest beer list. Recently the real ales included Courage Best, Marston's Pedigree, Smiles Best, and Wolver's Ale from the new local brewery at Banwell, Newman's Brewery.

Welcome to Michael Baxter and Adrian Boone, the new licensees of the **Old Farmhouse**, replacing a series of managers.

Welcome also to Craig and Cherona, the new landlord and landlady of the Unique Pub Co's **White Lion** in Silver Street, where Craig hopes to introduce a guest beer to augment the two existing real ales, Courage Best and Butcombe Bitter, when the cellar lines have been replaced. There are also plans to add a darts team to the existing pub cribbage team and reintroduce lunchtime meals. Go along and meet Craig and Cherona on Sunday lunchtimes, enjoy their "Sunday Soaker Free Snacks" and real ales.

The **Friendship** despite a change licensee still had no real ale on a recent visit.

It is amazing where you hear interesting titbits about ale, pubs, etc. In his sermon at St. Francis Church the other day, Father

Michael McAndrew said that, at a recent parish quiz, most teams did better at answering questions about ale and pubs than the history of the popes, and said that may be explained by the fact that inns and pubs had been run by churches and monasteries over the years, which is still reflected in some pub names. The "**Cross Keys**" are those of St Peter, the "**Lamb & Flag**" reflects the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, and the "**Salutation**" was the old word for the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary when she was told that she would be the mother of Christ.


Arriving early in Yatton for a recent CAMRA pub crawl, I went to the **Market Tavern** for a pint of Ansells Mild, which is always available for one of their regulars, Colin, and is enjoyed by CAMRA "Light and Dark" supporters amongst others. Talking to a builder in the bar, I learnt how big the neighbouring parish of Congresbury is and how many pubs and clubs are within its boundaries. These include the **Star** at Roddy, **Bell, Ship & Castle, White Hart** on Wrington Road, **Old Inn, Plough, Memorial Hall** and

Recreation Club, and once included the **Palmers Elm** (now a Chinese restaurant), the **Prince of Wales** (now a Greek restaurant), the **Spotted Horse** on Brinsea Road (now a housing estate) and another on Venus Street which is now Pineapple Farm.

Welcome to Lorraine Flower, one time manager of the White Lion, Portishead, and her team who are taking on the challenge of running the old world Nailsea pub and restaurant, the **Moorend Spout**, which started life as the Butchers Arms at Kingshill in the 18th century. It is the oldest pub in Nailsea and is said to date from 1735, when it faced a village green, which along its northern boundary had a row of cottages housing miners and agricultural labourers. History abounds in this area with the then pub being close to Methodist minister John Whiting's cottage and the Poor House. Situated at the bottom of Union Street, it is in an unspoilt haven of old Nailsea.

Later this year Lorraine has plans to develop the business to its full potential. She is keen to offer bed and breakfast accommodation, much in demand in the Nailsea area.

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Gavin Foreman, Lorraine's nephew will be taking full responsibility for the restaurant. As head chef he has introduced a carvery, as well as a wide-ranging menu that will include fish and traditional dishes, specials and vegetarian choices, plus regular lunchtime buffets aimed at local business people and residents. All food is freshly prepared and offered at competitive prices. Lorraine's parents, Rex and Anita Priddy, formerly owners of School Togs, are looking after the marketing and financial side of the business, and the bar manager is Bev Truscott, formerly of the **Sawyer's Arms**, Nailsea. There is plenty of parking at the rear of the pub and the cosy and inviting restaurant has seating for up to seventy.

The previous licensee of the **Moorend Spout**, Bernadette O'Reilly, was only given seven days' notice by the *Un-Inspired* Pub Company to leave the pub, having been assured when the last Pints West went to press that was not on the cards.

Bernadette and John write: "Thanks to the support of fellow CAMRA members, our regulars, *Inspired's* BDM Barry Fortin (who knew we knew our stuff from his years with Bass) and a lot of hard work, we were able to bring the **Moorend Spout** up to the standard we would wish to find as customers, and we sincerely hope the new licensee and her staff will maintain the standard that we worked so hard to achieve, and we wish them well. *Inspired's* financial difficulties last year resulted in them drowning tenants with unacceptable increases in rent, beer and other prices, which ultimately resulted in an aggressive termination of our tenancy when I refused to sign their new license after six months of negotiations. We have been head hunted by six or seven companies, and hope that our next pub will be free of the stranglehold of companies such as *Inspired*. I feel sorry for all those tenants of *Inspired* which just takes your money and gives very little support."

Bernadette and John are currently running a B&B in Weston-super-Mare and have applied for a drinks license.

Apologies to Richard Cole, the previous manager of the **Mizzymead Social Club**, who I named in the plural as Richard Coles in the last Pints West. Richard has moved to the **Clarence House Club** in Portishead High Street, and would welcome CAMRA members there, particularly if they bring a supply of Pints West magazines with them.

Jackie Thursby, the new manager at the **Mizzymead Social Club**, is continuing to field a variety of guest beers, principally from the Scottish Courage range that is limited to about ten each month. The first appearance of a 9-gallon cask of Butcombe Blonde was emptied in 26 hours, which included a quiz night.

Have you arrived at a pub expecting to find it open and it wasn't? Pubs no longer open at set times throughout the country and new legislation due to come into force soon will allow them to vary opening times even more. Local CAMRA members, Mark Ashman and Laurie Gibney (myself), recently conducted a survey of opening times of Nailsea & District real ale pubs and clubs to which Pints West is delivered, with some interesting results.

Closing time was universally predictable at 11 p.m. on Mondays to Saturdays and 10.30 p.m. on Sundays, as were opening times on Sundays at 12 noon.

Morning opening times were more varied, the earliest to open being the **Courtyard Wine Bar** in Nailsea at 9.30 a.m. for coffees and 11 a.m. for alcohol. Also opening at 11 a.m. were the **George Inn** and **Village Club** at Backwell, and **Moorend Spout** and **White Lion** in Nailsea; at 11.30 a.m. were the **Star** at Tickenham, **Old Barn** at Wraxall and **Sawyers Arms** at Nailsea; and at 12 noon the **Olde Farmhouse**,

Mizzymead Club, **Ring of Bells** and **Blue Flame** at Nailsea, **Jubilee** at Flax Bourton, and **Battleaxes** at Wraxall.

Those opening all day included the **Battleaxes** on Sunday only; the **Blue Flame** and **Jubilee** on Saturday and Sunday only; the **George Inn**, **Ring of Bells**, and **Star** on Friday, Saturday and Sunday only; and the **Moorend Spout** and **White Lion** open all day all week.

Afternoon closing saw a very mixed pattern, closing from 2.30 to 7 p.m. all week is the **Mizzymead Social Club**; between 2.30 and 5.30 p.m. is the **Backwell Village Club** and the **Olde Farmhouse** on Mondays to Friday and the **Star** on Mondays to Thursdays; between 3 and 5 p.m. is the **George Inn** on Mondays to Thursdays and the **Jubilee** and **Old Barn** on Mondays to Fridays; the **Sawyers Arms** closes between 3 and 5.30 p.m. Mondays to Saturdays; between 3 and 6 p.m. those closed are the **Backwell Village Club** on Saturdays, **Battleaxes** on Monday to Saturday, **Blue Flame** Monday to Friday and **Ring of Bells** Monday to Thursday; between 3 and 7 p.m. on Sundays the **Old Barn** and the **Backwell Village Club** are closed; the **Sawyers Arms** closes at 3.30 p.m. on Sundays and reopens at 7 p.m., the **Courtyard Wine Bar** closes at 3.30 p.m. every day of the week and reopens at 6 p.m. except on Sundays when it remains closed in the evening.

And finally, I am still collecting names of people in Nailsea & District who would like to attend beer festivals or visit a few interesting pubs "as a group" by mini-bus, bus, train or shared cars, to avoid drinking and driving.

You may contact me on (01275) 798479 or by emailing laurie@lgbibney.freeserve.co.uk. Contact me also if you would like details of the Nailsea & District Saturday Pub Crawl, the date of which is printed in the Branch Diary on page 27.

Laurie Gibney



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Valentine's weekend in Scotland

BEING born on Valentine's Day has its advantages – you can usually find a party to go to on your birthday for starters. For many years now I have treated it as an excuse to go off on a beery weekend with my wife and a number of friends. This year I decided that I could be romantic after all and suggested to my wife that we take off to Scotland as a two-some. She took no persuading!

This kind of weekend has been made a lot more feasible with the arrival of the cheap, no-frills airlines. Easy Jet is one such operator. In early January I checked out their website and managed to book return flights to Glasgow for a mere £35.50 each – if you consider that £23 each of this goes to the Government in taxes, the price is truly amazing. Taking the train or driving would cost much more and take a whole lot longer. For those who haven't tried this way yet – you enter your choice of destinations and dates and the website comes up with suggested flights at various prices. If you can be flexible about times and dates, some serious bargains are available. Once you have made your choice you are wise to complete the booking there and then with a debit or credit card, as bargains often disappear quickly. You are emailed a confirmation, which acts as your tickets.

Our flight on Friday 13th (just as well we are not superstitious!) departed at 07.10 from Bristol, meaning a very early start, but also a wonderfully early arrival (08.25 at Glasgow). By 08.50 we were queuing to collect our hire car – we had booked this through Easy Jet at £30 per day for a "Ford Focus or similar". We were therefore delighted when told "we are low on cars so would you be happy with an automatic Mercedes C series?" – silly question!

By 10am we were in our hotel bedroom – we had chosen the **Uplawmoor Hotel** in Renfrewshire for a number of reasons, not least of which being the fact that it appears in the Good Beer Guide (more of that later)! By 10.30 we were proudly heading for the hills in our lovely Mercedes. First port of call was Largs, a lovely seaside resort 15 miles away. Next onto Inverkip for lunch at the **Inverkip Hotel** – described in the beer guide as having three changing guest beers. Not today it didn't – indeed it had no real ale at all! They said they "usually had beer on but it wasn't ready yet." Hmm. Oh well at least we were both still fit to drive! I then devised a plan to double back about four miles and pick up a ferry to Rothesay on the Isle of Bute. My plan was to drive around the island and end up at the Port Royal Hotel at Port Bannatyne – listed in the guide as a café bar with no lager or fizzy drinks, beer from Scottish microbreweries and Russian style food and décor! Sounds unique – off we set via the somewhat expensive ferry (£30 return for car and two people), but after a lovely one-hour drive around the island we arrived at the pub, to be greeted by the dreaded "pub closed for refurbishment" sign! As it was now 4.30 and still no beer, we headed back to the ferry.

Driven to the edge of madness by our bad luck, I then devised an even crazier plan to get to the **Fox & Hounds at Houston**, to try the Houston brewery beers brewed on site. After a 90-minute struggle through Greenock's Friday rush hour and my erratic navigation (this tested even my wonderful wife's patience) we arrived. Filled with dread, I opened the pub doors and was delighted to see an array of six handpumps – five Houston beers and a guest, from Tring in Herts of all places! It is a very nice pub with a tardis-like

interior of three or four drinking areas and an upstairs restaurant. The brewery is visible from inside too. The beers were all very pleasant and all stress was extinguished. Marilyn then had to put up with some more iffy (half cut) navigation back to our hotel. Straight to the bar to order dinner and a pint – the **Uplawmoor** was offering Kelburn Red Smiddy (a lovely local red ale) and Houston Horny Wee Devil – another red ale brewed for Valentines Day. Sadly the Red Smiddy was looking

and tasting unwell and the barrel was taken off, but the Houston was fine.

On Saturday morning, after a lovely breakfast at the hotel, it was time for some serious driving. Over the Erskine Bridge (gateway to the Highlands and Islands), and onto the shores of Loch Lomond – only a few miles North of Glasgow. You cannot pass here without stopping to admire the scenery. We had done this route before so we cut across to the A814 which runs along the shores of Loch Long – this too is lovely, but blighted by an MOD base and an oil refinery at the Southern end. Both the Loch Lomond and Loch Long roads converge at a lovely little village called Arrochar. The beer guide recommended the **Village Inn** (pictured) here, and it didn't disappoint. Orkney Dark Island is joined by a changing guest beer, which was Fynes Pipers Gold (brewed locally) on our visit. They also do all day food at what looked very fair prices, but we wanted to press on into the wilderness. I decided to forego Dark Island as there was much driving to come and I needed to do my share. The biggest reason to visit this pub has to be the utterly spectacular views from the beer garden across Loch Long to the mountains beyond (pictured). We, at this stage, planned to stop again for food (and Dark Island!) on the way back, but that wasn't to happen.

We drove on along Loch Fyne and through some more amazing scenery, to Inverary and beyond. We realised that daylight time was running out and that Campbeltown on the south end of Kintyre, near the famous Mull, was just a bit too far off. I realised that we were not far from Tarbert, from where a ferry runs to Portavidie, and that a 25-mile drive across Cowal would bring us to Dunoon and another ferry to Gourock, just 25 miles from our hotel. This was the quickest, but not the cheapest route (£28 for the 2 crossings combined). It turned out to be well worth it due to the spectacular sunset over the mountains Kintyre that we saw. Also the views of the Isle of Arran. The road from Portavidie to Dunoon was full of more great scenery and challenging driving (mostly single track). We made it back to the hotel at 7pm – Red Smiddy was back on and in good form.

For the evening the plan was to take a taxi to Neilston and a train to Glasgow to check out a few pubs. We had trouble getting a cab but one of the hotel staff kindly drove us the 3 miles to the station. We took the train as far as Mt Florida station and went to the **Clockwork Beer Company** nearby – this is at numbers 1153-1155 Cathcart round – in an area that you might not expect to find such a bar. After 5 minutes inside, we knew that this would be our only port of call that evening! The pub brews its own beer, often experimenting with various fruit beers. No less than 9 of

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its brews were available that night. These were Amber IPA, German style Red Alt beer, Oatmeal Stout, Wheat beer, Raspberry wheat beer, Hazy Daze Ginger beer, Blueberry beer, Thunder and Lightning (6%), and Real Pilsner. As if that were not enough 6 guest real ales from Scottish and English micros were also on. Five draught Belgian beers, and 75 bottled ones (the best selection of quality Belgian beers that I have seen outside of Belgium), were augmented by beers from other countries too. For those of you who like a drop of the hard stuff, there was a huge selection of malts, including 5 rare vintage ones (one of them from 1959!), Belgian Jenevers and weird Polish vodkas too. Food is also served all day until 9.45 pm. The other striking thing was the extremely reasonable prices for all of the above. I decided that I had found beer Nirvana and didn't really want to leave – but the last train and our pre-booked taxi were due, so we had to go.

A perfect end to a pretty near perfect birthday, and Valentines Day of course.

We flew back at 09.35 Sunday morning, landing at 10.35 and had time for a full Sunday at home. We brought with us memories of a wonderful time, very friendly and welcoming people, beautiful scenery and a pub or two to really remember. I recommend this kind of trip to you.

Vince Murray

(This article just missed inclusion in the last issue of Pints West. Ed.)

The Mendip Explorer

BRISTOL and District CAMRA's Mendip Explorer trip visited some places we haven't heard from for a while one Tuesday evening in May, with the following observations:

The **Stoke Inn** at Chew Stoke, a sizeable village pub with a skittle alley, was selling Butcombe Bitter and Courage Best; a third handpump had contained Bath Gem, but was not serving when we were there. Thatcher's cider was also available.

In Blagdon, the **Live and Let Live** had Butcombe Bitter and Wychwood Hobgoblin; the **Queen Adelaide** was serving Butcombe Bitter, Draught Bass and Marston's Pedigree; while the **Seymour Arms** was offering Butcombe Bitter, Courage Best, Greene King's Morland Old Speckled Hen and Tetley Bitter. The **New Inn**, a Wadworth pub, had a poster advertising Pint Size Brewery's Mild (a new beer and brewery for us, but very welcome in May, which is CAMRA's Mild month). Unfortunately, however, the pub was closed, despite our being there during its apparent opening hours, which were proclaimed on a sign outside. A shame as this was a pub some of us were keen to visit.

On to Priddy, where the **Victoria**, which changed hands a year or so ago after 37 years in the same hands, was selling three Butcombe beers (Bitter, Blond and Gold), plus Wadworth 6X and Cheddar Valley cider. Little about this fine old pub seemed to have changed, except for the wider beer range. Along the road, the **New Inn** had five real ales on hand-pump: Tanglefoot, Butcombe Bitter, Draught Bass, Fursty Ferret and Wadworth 6X.

The **Red Lion** at Draycott, right on the edge of our Branch area and a new port of call for all of us, seems to be operating as a true free house, selling beers from local micro-brewers. Newman's Wolver's Ale and Cotleigh Peregrine Porter were the choices of the day.

Finally, on to Shipham, where the **Miner's Arms** had Fuller's London Pride and the nearby **Penscot Inn** was selling Butcombe Bitter, Greene King IPA and Old Speckled Hen.

Altogether a rewarding evening, with information gathered from ten pubs; and some enjoyable drinking, with fourteen different real ales and two draught ciders on offer.

Norman Spalding

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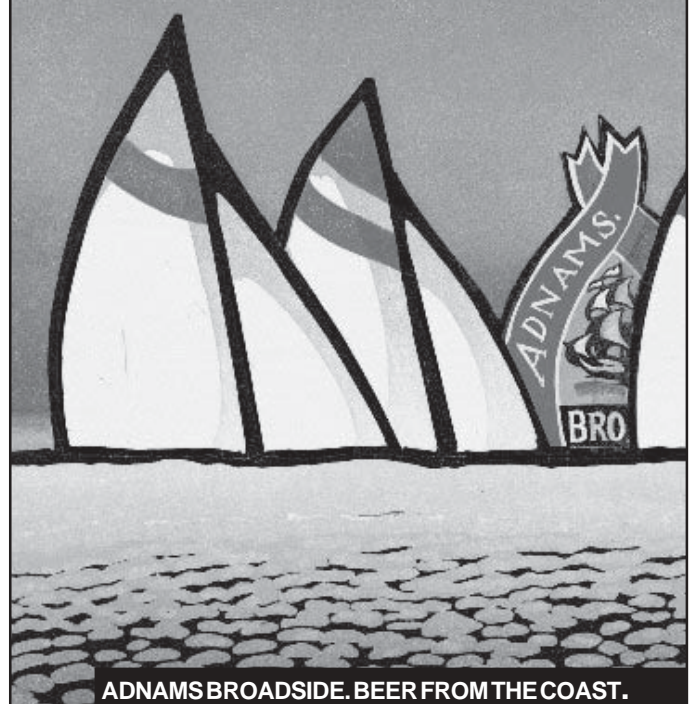
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Views expressed in Pints West are those of the individual authors and not necessarily supported by CAMRA.

Inclusion of an advertisement does not necessarily imply endorsement by CAMRA.



Diary

Diary of the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA.
 See inside for the Weston-super-Mare sub-branch diary and contact.

- Tues 1 June:** Coach to South Gloucestershire. Departs Cornubia, Bristol, 6.45pm.
 - Sun 6 June:** Branch committee meeting at the Smiles Brewery Tap, 7:30pm.
 - Tues 15 June:** Coach to Axbridge / Churchill area. Departs Cornubia, 6.45pm.
 - Sat 19 June:** Trip to Nailsea by Service Bus followed by walking tour. (No. 364 ex Bristol Bus Station 11:50am, No. 350 ex Weston-super-Mare 11:10am.)
 - Wed 23 June:** Branch meeting and AGM, Horts City Tavern, Broad Street, Bristol, 8pm. Bring membership cards.
 - Fri 2 July:** Coach to Ashcott Beer Festival. Departs Cornubia, 6.45pm. Note - late return.
 - Tues 6 July:** Yate Explorer trip. Departs Cornubia, 6.45pm.
 - Wed 14 July:** Committee meeting, Cornubia, 8pm.
 - Tues 20 July:** Coach to East Mendips. Departs Cornubia, 6.45pm.
 - Sat 24 July:** Trip by train to Exeter and The Bridge, Topsham.
 - Wed 28 July:** Branch meeting, Horts City Tavern, 8pm.
- For more information on local events either attend our branch meetings or check the diary section on our web site www.camrabristol.org.uk**

Past editions of PINTS WEST on-line

Bristol and District CAMRA would like to remind readers that we have a web site at **www.camrabristol.org.uk**

This contains information on the local branch and the Campaign for Real Ale generally, as well as details of forth-coming meetings, socials and other activities. The web site is regularly updated and so is the best place to find out about any last minute changes to arrangements as well as some of the latest real ale related stories. It is also the place where you can find past editions of Pints West, from edition 50 onwards. Number 50 also contains a potted history of Pints West from the very first edition in 1989, when it was then known as Avon Drinker.

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CAMRA Good Beer Guide: suggestions for future entries, and comments on existing ones, 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).

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Bristol & District (AVN)

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Advance notice of beer festivals throughout the U.K. and Europe - and discounts when you get there. Many festivals allow CAMRA members in at reduced rates or free.

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Just fill in the form below and send, with either a completed Direct Debit Mandate form or a cheque payable to CAMRA, to:

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Cider drinkers will find a wide choice of real ciders on offer at the Real Cider and Perry Bar and there is also a large range of bottled real ales for you to enjoy at the Bottled Beer Bar. There are dozens of different bars at the festival and you will find many of your favourites as well as some of the newest beers available. What's more, to truly appreciate the tastes on offer, you could attend one of the tutored beer tastings hosted by an international team of beer experts.

Not only is a trip to the Great British Beer Festival an enjoyable day out, if you book your tickets in advance you can save money. Book your ticket by 23rd July and receive a £1 discount on all single-session tickets. If you are a CAMRA member you will also receive an additional discount.

CAMRA welcomes families to the festival and provides a Family Room with entertainers and games open until 9pm every night. Children must be supervised by a family member at all times and under 18s must remain within the Family Room.

There are also a number of corporate hospitality options including tutored beer tastings and a Corporate Lounge. For further information, please visit the festival website www.gbbf.org or telephone CAMRA on 01727 867201.

The Great British Beer Festival is open every day from Tuesday 3rd August to Saturday 7th August and full details of opening times, prices and live music can be found at www.gbbf.org or on the Information Line 0900 525 2525 (calls to this number cost 60p per minute). Tickets can be booked online or by telephoning 01727 867201.