



The multi-award-winning magazine of the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, plus the Bath & Borders branch

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Up to ten thousand copies of Pints West are distributed free to hundreds of pubs in and around the cities of Bristol and Bath ... and beyond

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Editor: Steve Plumridge: steve.plumridge.pintswest@gmail.com

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If you have any pub updates: please enter them via whatpub.com or email details to whatpub@camrabristol.org.uk

For further information on all aspects of CAMRA contact the Bristol & District branch secretary, Michael Bertagne:

m.bertagne@camrabristol.org.uk

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LETTERS: please email correspondence to the editor at steve.plumridge.pintswest@gmail.com or post it to Pints West Editor, Steve Plumridge, Garden Flat, 6 Royal York Villas, Clifton, Bristol BS8 4JR

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Thanks to this issue's contributors:

Andy Burt
Andy Coston
Bianca Ambrose
Bill Barns
Bridget Andrews
Chris Faulkner-Gibson
Clare Manning
Darren Douglas
Duncan Shine
Henry Davies
Heong Wai Tse
John Gavin

ntributors:
Laurie Jackson
Lesly Plumridge
Martin Campling
Martin Gray
Matthew Curtis
Michael Bertagne
Neil Ravenscroft
Paula Cannings
Pete Taberner
Richard Aldridge
Richard Brooks
Roy Sanders

Stephen Edmonds Steve Hunt Steve Plumridge Tim Webb Trevor Cromie Trevor Perks Vince Murray

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For instance, scanning this one should take you straight to the national CAMRA website (www.camra.org.uk).





If you are reading *Pints West* online, then whenever you see a web address or an email address, clicking on it should take you straight to the website or initiate an email. Furthermore, wherever you see a pub



name in blue in an article – or in some cases the picture of a pub – clicking on that should take you straight to the WhatPub entry for that pub.

For instance, clicking on this pub name – **Bridge Inn** – or on the photo should take you straight to its entry in WhatPub.



Welcome

to the Winter 2023/24 edition of Pints West, multi-award-winning magazine of the Bristol & District and Bath & Borders branches of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale.

The cover of this issue is a magnificent picture by local photographer Bob Holder-White (Bob Holder-White Photography bobhw2016@gmail. com). Regular readers of *Pints West* may recall an equally stunning photo adorning the cover of the Autumn 2022 edition, a nighttime scene of the end of King Street in central Bristol showing the Llandoger Trow, Old Duke and King Street Brew House. This time it is of the Bridge Inn in Passage Street, Bristol.

And staring out challengingly from that image is perhaps the best known work of Bristol artist, illustrator and signwriter David Blatch – the face of Jimi Hendrix adorning the front of the pub. One of David's most recent commissions was the painting of a large mural in the Lime Kiln pub in central Bristol, just behind City Hall. Fittingly, it depicts a woodland scene incorporating a lime kiln. Check out the article on page 4 and discover what a lime kiln actually looks like (if you didn't already know).

Another local artist getting a mention in this issue is Chris Hull. He has been busy painting pubs, twelve in total, from across the Mendips. Four of these are of Butcombe pubs, and the twelve paintings have been featuring in an exhibition at the Butcombe brewery shop. They have also been made into a 2024 wall calendar. Chris has been generous enough to offer valuable limited-edition prints of some of the paintings, and a number of the calendars, as competion prizes. Read all about it on page 7.

As well as the above, this issue features the usual roundup of local pub and brewery news, and plenty of other interesting articles. See 'Contents' for what's in store.

Steve Plumridge, editor

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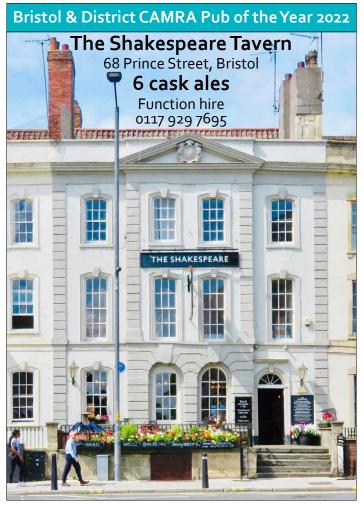
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And so much more







So that's what a Lime Kiln looks like

egulars at the Lime Kiln pub will know that this has been a particularly green and leafy year so far. As well as some new houseplants, there's been a spectacular array of chilli plants gracing the window to the street. Now this small city-centre pub, tucked away behind City Hall on St George's Road, is going to be displaying forest greenery all year round with the addition of a new mural in the main room.

Bristol artist, illustrator and signwriter David Blatch is no stranger to pub decoration, having previously contributed artworks to other Bristol venues including the Old Castle Green and the Hope & Anchor. Perhaps his best known work is the face of Jimi Hendrix which stares out challengingly from the front of the Bridge Inn on Passage Street.

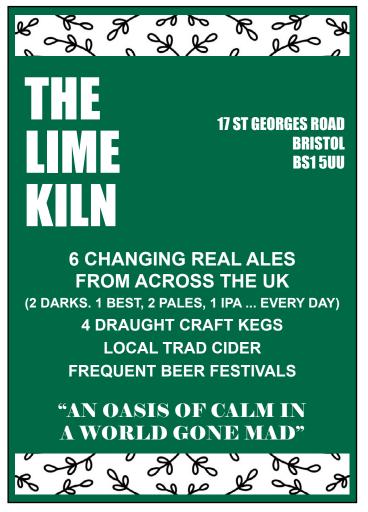
His work in the Lime Kiln takes him in a new direction, with a more naturalistic approach. Landlord Paul Wratten had some ideas about what he wanted for the space, and the result is a woodland scene, with a traditional lime kiln in a clearing, a river flowing at one side and mountains rising in the distance. Sharp-eyed visitors may also be able to see a nod to Simone, the pub's resident cat.

Whereas the interior of the pub has had plain white walls for some years now, it's not the first time there's been a mural on the spot. Some readers may remember its previous incarnation as the Horse & Groom, which featured a mural showing the landlord and a horse in what might have been a forge or stable. Having painstakingly tracked down a photo of that piece of art (there's a challenge for *Pints West* readers!) I can report that its replacement is a vast improvement and will hopefully be a feature for many years to come.

Bridget Andrews











Vic Long receiving his Special Award certificate from Bristol & District CAMRA branch chair Richard Brooks

Vic Long: 50 years at the helm

Bristol & District CAMRA branch members were pleased to be able to join in the anniversary celebrations at the Ship on Down Road in the Redcliffe Bay area of Portishead as landlord Vic Long reached an incredible milestone, having run the pub for 50 years since it opened on the 8th of November in 1973.

That in itself is a rare enough achievement, but in this case Vic actually built the pub himself (well, perhaps with some help) and as far as we are aware that is positively unique.

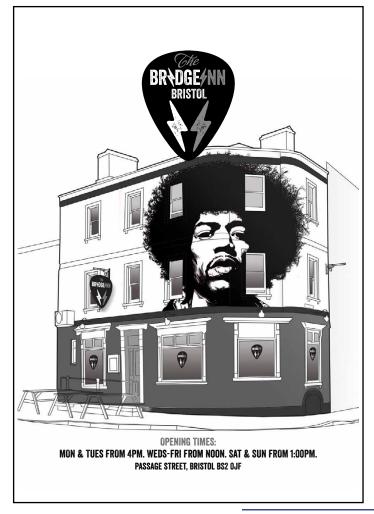
Amongst the other speeches and presentations on a packed evening at the pub, Vic received a Special Award from CAMRA to mark his 50 years as licensee.

Now 80 years old, Vic said that he has no intention of retiring any time soon.

Richard Brooks



The Bridge Inn (Passage Street, Bristol) at night
By Bob Holder-White (Bob Holder-White Photography bobhw2016@gmail.com)





If you're going to do a job, do a Proper Job.

Enjoy a properly crafted IPA.

Twelve pubs of the Mendip Hills

local Somerset artist, Chris Hull, has been busy painting pubs from across the Mendips. He specifically looked at a short list of pubs within this 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'. The result is twelve outstanding paintings, which have been displayed in an exhibition at Butcombe brewery shop (four of them being of Butcombe pubs).

Chris approached Butcombe earlier in 2023 and they were keen to offer him space to exhibit his work. Whilst not all of Chris's selected pubs are Butcombe managed, the team at Butcombe wanted to offer their support in promoting local pubs of the area. The exhibition ends in February we understand.

Chris has lived on the edge of the Mendip Hills all his life. During the lockdowns he realised how much he missed going to great pubs. As he put it: "It was the start of the 2020 lockdown that gave me the idea of painting some of my favourite pubs from across the Mendips. Not being able to visit these pubs made me long for a beer and a bite to

2024
TWELVE PUBS OF THE
MENDIP HILLS CALENDAR
Ovation

eat, soaking up the atmosphere that each of these pubs delivers so well. I painted one pub each month in 2021 and managed to pull it all together in 2022, ready to get a calendar designed and printed earlier in 2023."

The twelve pubs Chris has painted are: the Swan Inn, Rowberrow; the Hunters Lodge, Priddy; the Plume of Feathers, Rickford; the Ring O' Bells, Compton Martin; the Litton, Litton; the New Inn, Blagdon; the Castle of Comfort, East Harptree; the Waldegrave Arms, East Harptree; the Lamb Inn, Axbridge; the Blue Bowl, West Harptree; the Crown Inn, Churchill; and the Queen Victoria Inn, Priddy.



Chris Hull with his exhibition of pub paintings at the Butcombe brewery shop

This portfolio of work also features as a 2024 wall calendar with notes on each of the pubs and suggested circular walks from each

(downloadable from a QR code on the calendar). The pictures are also available as prints, postcards and greeting cards, available to purchase from Chris's 'Pig & Pen' website:

www.pigandpen.co.uk

(scan the QR code here to access it directly). Chris has also provided a coupon code that gives *Pints West* readers 20% off – just enter ff20 at the checkout (valid until 1st February).





Plume of Feathers, Rickford

THE LIMIT OF THE PARTY OF THE P

Lamb Inn, Axbridge

Competition

Your chance to win valuable limited-edition prints and wall calendars.

Chris is providing us a first prize of a framed very limited-edition print of one of his paintings, the Plume of Feathers at Rickford. Worth £200, the framed picture measures 40cm square and is double mounted and framed in oak. Also two second prizes of an unframed limited-edition print of your choice from one of the twelve pubs. He is also donating five A3-sized wall calendars as third prizes.

The question you need to answer is:

How many pints of beer does Butcombe produce a week from their brewery in Wrington?

A. 59,000 I

B. 170,000

C. 390,000

To enter, send an email to the editor at steve.plumridge.pintswest@gmail.com with:

- 1) your answer (A, B or C);
- 2) your favourite of the twelve pub paintings (all are on Chris's website);
- 3) your name.

Entries to arrive no later than 15 January when the competition closes, after which all correct answers will be entered into the draw and a random selection made to confirm one first-prize winner, two second-prize winners and five third-prize winners. Winners will be contacted to supply their (UK) address.

If you cannot wait till then, or don't trust your luck, you can always purchase items (prints, postcards, greetings cards) from Chris's 'Pig & Pen' website – see above for details.



Ring O'Bells, Compton Martin



Queen Victoria, Priddy



& Official supplier to CAMRA

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BAD Ladies

do Cardiff and Kingsdown

he Bristol and District Ladies Who Love Beer, aka BAD Ladies, are a group of CAMRA women who enjoy getting together for a few hours once every couple of months through the year to enjoy real ale and real cider. Here are a couple of recent events.

Ten tackle Cardiff

A group of BAD Ladies took the train to the capital of Wales on Saturday 16 September to explore a few pubs and to discover their beers. We began at Cathays Beer House, which welcomed us warmly and offered us three choices. Goffs Lancer at 3.8% ABV was a golden bitter, described by those who drank it as refreshing, mellow and smooth. Derby Brewing Company's Single Hop Sessions Jester was disappointing, because it actually wasn't very hoppy. Plugged In from Bristol Beer Factory proved to be a well-rounded, mildly hoppy, golden beer.

Our next pub was the Andrew Buchan. Many regulars were watching the rugby, but we were able to find a large table, where we chatted with Shirley, who is involved with CAMRA in Cardiff and would like to start a women's beer group, similar to ours. London Fields from Brodie's was pale, hoppy and light, Rhymney Export Light (4.4%) was smooth, fruity and very good value. Finally, Rhymney Bitter, in a classic style, was eminently quaffable.

We walked into central Cardiff, where the Pen & Wig impressed us with an extensive range of beers and a warm atmosphere. Mumbles Gold was described by one BAD Lady as having 'a nice little bounce to it'. It's a golden ale with a bold flavour of lemon and lime. Tomos & Lilford's Irreverent James, apart from having a great name, was an extra special bitter, with a malty finish.

Our fourth and final pub was the Flute & Tankard, near the university. We tried Thornbridge Astryd, which had tarty, citrus overtones and Crank's Young, Gifted and Welsh, which was not as dry as described on the pump, but perfectly drinkable.

A great day out for ten BAD Ladies.

And then there was Kingsdown

The second weekend in November was our last meeting of the year. Over 20 of us turned out for a wander around Kingsdown in Bristol. The first stop was the **Green Man** in Alfred Place. This pub has been licensed since 1851, and was a really cosy venue with its wooden panelling and dark green seat cushions. There was an impressive selection of local beers and ciders on offer here, with five beers on cask. The ones we tried included:

• Lost and Grounded Autumn Protagonist (4.4%), one of only a couple of beers they produce for cask, and described by one BAD Lady (Bianca) as a decent bitter and a nice introduction to Saturday afternoon.



BAD Ladies in the Green Man, Kingsdown



BAD Ladies visit Cardiff

- New Bristol Brewery *Bristol Bitter* (4%) of which BAD Lady Lou said, "There's something sweet about it which I like, a kind of toffee caramel in the background," which Jane agreed with, adding, "It's not too carbonated, with clean finish."
- On Point *Amberillo* American pale ale (4.5%) that Ali thought was "interestingly hopped, but no sharp dry hops."
- Bristol Beer Factory *Milk Stout* (4.5%) which Kelly remarked was good to see on cask, and to enjoy the sweet and roasty flavours. Becks, our cider lover, was not disappointed to find Iford ciders and a perry on offer here too.

We moved on to the **Highbury Vaults** on St Michael's Hill, busy as ever with a younger clientele enjoying board games and the large covered garden to the rear. This pub, which also dates back to the early 1800s, has a great local reputation. We crowded around the bijou bar and settled on trying the two dark beers on offer. Many of us went for the Young's *Winter Warmer* (5%) which Ali said was her beer of the day and Lauren said was the drink they were weaned on. The Listers *Limehouse Porter* (4.1%) was also appreciated, with a long bitter hoppy finish. Lou said she would carry on drinking this if she needed to keep it low.

For our last stop we doubled back round on ourselves and walked down to the Hare on the Hill on the corner of Thomas Street North and Dove Street. This pub has a stunning tiled exterior, and inside as usual it was busy, snug and inviting. Most of us ended our afternoon with a pint of Good Chemistry *Lamp Lighter* (5%), much to Kelly's amusement (Kelly being one of the Good Chemistry brewers).

One of the things we did during this meeting was to collect ideas for the next year's programme of events. We'll publish these soon on the BAD Ladies section of the Bristol & District website at www.camrabristol.org.uk/ladies.html and in the branch diary at www.camrabristol.org.uk/diary.html. We're looking forward to meeting more ladies who love beer in 2024!

Paula Cannings and Bianca Ambrose



BAD Ladies in the Hare on the Hill, Kingsdown

Shine on Bristol Harbourside

Bristol, if the excellent VisitBristol website is to be believed, is all about the 'B's. Beautiful countryside, bridges, boats, bikes and Brunel. So, for this issue, we're taking a trip around an area which provides you with all those Bs – though not really the 'Countryside' bit (but then that's a 'C' anyway so it's its own fault if you ask me). In fact, let's replace 'Countryside' with another 'B' and I reckon we're good to go.

So, head down to Bristol Harbourside area, and you'll find some great places to sample some really good beer. (That was the other 'B', but this is a CAMRA publication, so you guessed that, right?). There are loads of bars, especially around St Augustine's Reach, so what follows is just a selection that I recommend.

If you visit the pubs listed below in order you would, according to my exercise tracking app, complete a picturesque 2.6 mile walk around a beautiful part of Bristol. However, also according to my tracking app your heart rate would be dangerously high towards the end of the walk, largely because you fail to notice you are on the cycle path and end up leaping out of the way with far more urgency and vigour than is healthy for an overweight 55-year-old. But that may just be my app.

The walk starts in Wapping Wharf, just where the Matthew is moored.

The Junction 6-8 Gaol Ferry Steps, Wapping Wharf



The Junction

This pub, at the bottom of the Gaol Ferry Steps, was taken into the Bristol Beer Factory (BBF) stable back in May. There is a corral of outdoor seating on one side, while if you perch on the high stools by the picture windows on the other side you will have great views of the water and the Matthew. There are square wooden tables, bare light bulbs and exposed tube and pipework on the ceiling. Five handpumps dispense resident BBF Beers, and sometimes guests from other local breweries. On my visit there were four BBF beers: Notorious (3.8%), Fortitude (4.0%), Independence (4.6%) and White Desert (4.3%). This last one is a US-style pale ale, but with the 'pale' part written in block capitals with three exclamation marks after it. It is a gorgeous pint with a bitey citrus edge and a spicy sitting-by-the-Christmas-tree taste. They also offered Branch Release No 7 Hangman cider. At 6.8% it's not to be sniffed at, or rather it is, as the aroma is a fascinating mix of cinnamon, the Bazooka Joe gum I used to pop as a child, and the longan tropical fruit I once had as a dessert in a Chinese restaurant.

Stroll away from the Junction with the harbour on your right until the SS Great Britain forces you away from the water and a path off Gas Ferry Road takes you to:

The Orchard Inn 12 Hanover Place, Spike Island

This early 19th-century pub was called the White Horse until maybe the early 1980s, but its current name suits it far better as it is an oasis for lovers of the fermented apple, and indeed is the current Bristol & District branch of CAMRA's Cider Pub of the Year.

A few seats outside, and a traditional single bar on the inside, with a mini-mezzanine area to the left as you enter, an unusually large



The Orchard Inn



Inside the Orchard Inn

number of hooks on which to hang your winter coat, and a warm buzz of conversation throughout. Behind the bar is a blackboard listing up to 20 different draught ciders, many of which meet CAMRA's definition of 'real' cider.

Not only that, but there are also three real ales dispensed directly from the cask behind the bar. Otter *Bitter* (3.6%), and St Austell *Proper Job* (4.5%) plus *Ferryman* (4.2%), a very popular copper-coloured best bitter from the Exeter Brewery that doesn't appear in Bristol as often as I'd like.

Helpful brown touristy signs will take you back to the waterside beyond the SS Great Britain and the dry dock, from where it is a short stroll to:

The Cottage Inn Baltic Wharf, Cumberland Road

A long-term favourite for al fresco drinking during warm summer (or even mild winter) afternoons, the Cottage catches the later afternoon sun just perfectly as you gaze upon the multi-coloured terraces of Cliftonwood and Hotwells across the water.

The outside looks much as it would have done 150 years ago, while inside is a cosy, comfy one-bar pub set up for diners, but also welcoming if you just want a drink. As a Butcombe pub it offers their own brews, with *Original* (4.0%), *Gold* (4.4%) and *Rare Breed* (3.8%) on offer when I visited.

At the time of writing, the damage caused by the recent fire at Underfall Yard means you can't walk through to the next pub, so at the moment it's a slightly longer walk round Cumberland Road to get to:



The Cottage seen from the across the water

The Nova Scotia 1 Nova Scotia Place, Hotwells

Originally two pubs, though the Dock Hotel on the left was subsumed into the Nova Scotia in the last but one century. Plenty of historical interest still here though, not least the magnificent 'Captain's Cabin' which houses the snug behind an original Victorian screen. Very popular on Bristol City and Bristol Bears match days at nearby Ashton Gate, this is a really welcoming old-fashioned pub offering a selection of traditional ales.

When I moved to Bristol in the 1980s, there was plenty of Courage Best Bitter (4%), and Fuller's London Pride (4.1%) to be had, and Morland Old Speckled Hen (these days 4.2%) was a rarely seen brew from Abingdon. These three were all available here, as well as Hop Union Maiden Voyage (4%) on my visit.

This is the turning point of the walk, as you cross the Junction Swing Bridge to:

The Pump House Merchants Road, Hotwells



The Pump House

Another summer destination pub with plenty to offer out of season. Unsurprisingly the pub did used to be a Victorian pump house and is a great place to watch the boats coming through when the bridge swings. On my visit, BBF *Independence* and Hop Union *Maiden Voyage* were complemented by another BBF beer, *Beam Me Up* (4.2%), yet another pale ale, this one is described as an Australian session pale, but was very refreshing with that grapefruity tang that is so popular at the moment. Also available was a guest cider *Pulpt Level*, a 5.4% medium dry pressing from Somerton.

Head back down the Hotwells side of the water until you come across:

The Grain Barge Merchants Road, Hotwells

There is nothing more Bristolian than sitting on the top deck of this floating pub and watching the rowers and sailors wend their way past, while a cormorant dives for fish down by the SS Great Britain. Down the plank and inside there is plenty of seating and the view is almost as good.



The Nova Scotia

There is an extensive food menu, and a range of beers on draught. Both *Fortitude* and *Notorious* (3.8%) which is, you've guessed it, a pale ale, are available from Bristol Beer Factory, plus *Exhibitionist* (4.5%) from the Hop Union Brewery on my visit.



The Grain Barge

Finally, complete the walk back past the Lloyds Amphitheatre to St Augustine's Reach, where my recommendation for great beers is:

The Watershed Café Bar Canons Road, Harbourside

In place since 1982, this media and arts centre once resounded to the delights of my brothers and I performing the song 'Sisters' from the movie White Christmas to enthusiastic applause from 300 work colleagues.

As well as showcasing the very best of arthouse cinema, the Watershed has a popular café and bar which has consistently featured quality cask ales from local breweries. On my visit there was Arbor Ales' Blue Sky Drinking (4.4%), as well as a couple from Good Chemistry: Extra Special, a 5.6% strong bitter, and Kokomo Weekday (4.3%), another fruity IPA, this one with a hint of pineapple and mango.

Duncan Shine



The Watershed

Bristol Pubs Group

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

Website: www.camrabristol.org.uk/pubsgroup

Our aims are simple. Bristol Pubs Group will: Promote the use of community pubs; Campaign against closure of pubs that could be viable;

Campaign against insensitive alterations.

Email: bristolpubsgroup@camrabristol.org.uk



he Bristol Pubs Group (or the Bristol & District CAMRA Pubs Campaigning Group to give it its full title) is made up entirely of volunteers from the area.

We are a part of Bristol & District CAMRA, but the group welcomes non-members and representatives from the licensed trade, community groups, etc – in fact any like-minded campaigners and organisations. All of us have one thing in common: a love of the British pub.

We usually meet monthly on a Monday evening – in a pub – and hold occasional socials.

We promote pub-going and work with local communities to try and save what we believe to be viable pubs when they are under threat of closure. This group would very much like to see new members and if you are interested, please do get in touch by email:

bristolpubsgroup@camrabristol.org.uk

Bristol planning policy improvements will help pub campaigns

he Bristol Pubs Group (BPG) has been influential in the development of a new draft Planning Policy for pubs which – together with the 'Practice Note' we helped introduce last year – will offer Bristol pubs a far greater degree of protection than ever before and which will provide valuable ammunition to campaign groups fighting to save their 'local'.

Why did we take this action? Bristol's Local Plan*, adopted in 2014, included planning policy 'DM6 - Public Houses' which states that one of two tests must be met before an application for change of use will be granted: either that the pub is not viable, or that there is sufficient alternative provision within reasonable walking distance. Despite this 'protection', many Bristol pubs have been lost to developers in recent years. This is because DM6 lacks explicit definition and evidence requirements and so developers have become adept at circumventing it.

In 2021 we learned that Bristol planners had never checked any of the non-viability claims made by developers and BPG became so concerned that we pressed for a dialogue with the City Planners. As a result, by October 2022 Bristol City Planners published a 'Practice Note' to support DM6 by setting out in detail exactly what evidence would be required before any change of use could be considered. Claims of non-viability would only be accepted if supported by robust evidence including a revised version of CAMRA's 'Public House Viability Test'**, three years of accounts (the Covid period is specifically excluded) and evidence that all reasonable measures to improve trade have been attempted.

The evidential requirements for alternative provision were similarly given substance and 'reasonable walking distance' was set at 800 metres actual 'on-the-ground' distance.

The Practice Note ends with a list of the evidence applicants will be expected to provide, and makes it clear this must be real, substantive and persuasive – not just the vague, consultant-speak waffle we had so often seen before. It was accepted without hesitation by the Planning Inspector in throwing out the application for change of use of the Merchants Arms, Stapleton, in March this year.

However, realising a supporting document might be vulnerable to challenge, and knowing DM6 was soon to be revised as part of a new Local Plan, we successfully sought to be involved at the drafting stage. The result is an improved draft Policy that retains the two key tests but with far more detail and substance.

Key changes include not just showing that a pub was not viable but that it could not feasibly be made so and including a caveat for 'the



The Merchants Arms, Stapleton

loss of all or part', thus giving protection to accommodation or pub gardens whose loss might undermine future viability and giving much more specific detail for the evidential requirements. The wording around alternative provision has been significantly tightened up, and now formally sets 800 metres as a maximum for reasonable walking distance. The new Policy specifically references the Practice Note throughout, wherever specific detail or evidence is needed.

The new policy, together with the rest of the new draft Local Plan, has been adopted by the City Council and will now be offered for public consultation before being submitted for ratification by the Planning Inspectorate sometime next year. The Bristol Pubs Group is pleased to have been an influential voice in protecting local pubs and will continue to follow progress of the Plan in coming months.

Chris Faulkner-Gibson

- * Local Plans lie at the heart of the planning system and are the main consideration in deciding planning applications: all local authorities must have one. The Plan sets out what the opportunities are for development in the area and says what types of development will and will not be permitted and in which locations, addressing a wide range of priorities including the needs for housing, business, transport, leisure, community cohesion and environmental issues etc. Local Plans must be submitted for endorsement to the Planning Inspectorate and periodically reviewed.
- ** The CAMRA Public House Viability Test is a standard, objective test which will assist planning decision makers to make fair, open and informed judgements on the question of viability. You can download a copy from here:

 $camra.org.uk/campaign_resources/public-house-viability-test$

CAMRA Campaigner of the Year Finalist

hris Faulkner-Gibson, an active member of the Bristol Pubs Group, was recently declared 'Finalist' in CAMRA's national Campaigner of the Year awards. This prestigious award recognises significant contributions to campaigning for real ale, cider, perry, pubs and/or social clubs, and puts a face and personality to CAMRA's campaigning aims and goals. Chris's certificate cites his "outstanding pub campaigning and engagement with local government."

The Bristol Pubs Group nominated Chris for the award earlier this year (unbeknownst to him) and these were the reasons given at the time:

"Chris joined the Group as part of his efforts to save his local pub. He familiarised himself with Bristol's planning policies intended to protect pubs and related subjects such as Community Right to Bid, Asset of Community Value (ACV) legislation and listed buildings legislation.

"He then set up a 'community interest company' to purchase his local pub, all the while resisting numerous planning applications for change of use from the property owner.

"Chris wrote well argued objections to planning applications and harried the Council's officers whose failures to follow their own policies, frequent errors and omissions were communicated to them and the Planning Inspectorate employees. He discovered that developer claims about the economic unviability of pubs were not being independently verified as policy requires. They also accepted false claims about the existence of a diverse range of pubs within the locality without scrutiny. Chris brought this to the attention of the elected Mayor and has achieved meetings with the Head of Planning and Councillors with more to come.

"When the owners of his local pub appealed against the original ACV listing (on a legal technicality) Chris represented the Group at the appeal hearing. He subsequently secured a further ACV through the residents' association he chairs.

"Positive outcomes are that Bristol Council has now adopted a

comprehensive and detailed Practice Note explaining to officers how the policies should be interpreted and enforced; another improvement is that they have now started to scrutinise claims and subject them to external verification. Chris continues to push for this to be done properly.

"Chris inspired a number of our other campaigns to save threatened pubs and influenced all four Councils in our branch area to adopt and enforce pub saving policies. Chris uses his knowledge and experience to advise groups on how to save their local pubs, and developed a series of actions to help save any

CAMPAIGNER
OF THE YEAR
2023

This is to certify that

Chris Faulkner-Gibson

has been awarded

Finalist

For outstanding pub campaigning and engagement with local government

by the Campaign for Real Ale 2023

by the Campaign for Real Ale 2023

pub including seeking support from the Plunkett Foundation.

"Chris has become the group's de facto leader in scrutinising planning applications, writing objections, representing CAMRA during press events, interviews, commented for TV, radio and newspapers. He is now an invaluable member of the Group."

In response, Chris said: "I had no idea anyone had nominated me, so a huge thank you to whoever did!

"There have been successes and failures along the way, and it's ironic that I couldn't save the Merchants Arms, which is where I started with CAMRA, but I'm proud to have been associated with other more successful campaigns and the improved Bristol pub planning policies.

"I can't help thinking there are others who have actually delivered more success than me, so let's take this as recognition of the Bristol & District Pubs Campaigning Group as a whole – we're all in it together and no individual can do much without the support of the rest.

"Onward and upward!"







Pub news from Bristol Pubs Group

irstly this issue, a couple of apologies. Although we do our best to check and corroborate all the information we receive on pubs, sometimes errors slip through the cracks. Our apologies to both the establishments mentioned below.

In the last issue of *Pints West*, we reported that the Coach & Horses, Old Market had closed while new management were being sought. This was incorrect. Although the previous team have now retired, the pub has remained open throughout.

Secondly, in the *Shine On...* article in the same issue, I also indicated that the **Old Plough** in Westons Way, Kingswood, no longer sold real ale. In fact, if you go round to the rear of the bar area, you'll see handpumps dispensing (when I revisited) Courage Best and Marston's Pedigree.

BS1: Just as the ink was drying on the last *Pints West*, we heard that on Baldwin Street, a new bar called NQ64 was opening. It's part of a chain of 'neon splattered drinking dens full of retro arcade games and classic consoles'. No real ales on offer at present.



The Cornubia, whose garden is under threat – photo by Jake Davis

Many readers will be aware of a worrying planning application which has gone in for some redevelopment around the wonderful Cornubia in Redcliffe. The plans – if approved – would severely restrict access and badly affect the garden. CAMRA has been very active in fighting this application. The decision has been delayed till 30th November (while this issue is at the printers), so we hope sense has prevailed before the next issue of *Pints West*.

BS3: In Dean Lane, Bedminster, the long closed **Tap & Barrel** pub has reopened as **Dame**, a skater themed pub, with the suggestion that Bristol Beer Factory ales will be available. The **Old Bookshop**, Bedminster is now offering three real ales at any one time (one from Thornbridge plus two ever changing guests), as well as up to four Bagin-a-Box ciders. Well worth a visit!

BS4: In Totterdown, the **Bruhaha** brewpub is a permanent space for the nano-brewery who had operated a pop-up tap room at Windmill Hill City Farm. The venture on Wells Road often has a handpump ale as well as a variety of small-batch craft keg beers.

BS6: In Redland, a new bar and restaurant has opened on the corner of Zetland Road and Cranbrook Road. It's called the Two Crows, and drinkers are welcome without dining. No real ale on our visit.

BS7: More news about the **Bottle & Jug**, Bishopston, a new micropub that we reported had opened in early August. There is an emphasis on local ales and ciders, with a couple of Uley beers on when I last visited. Opening times variable so check before visiting.

BS8: Up at the top of Whiteladies Road, the Jersey Lily, Clifton has reopened after an extensive refurbishment. Part of the Wickwar Wessex Pub Company stable, it offers Wickwar-branded beers, which are currently contract brewed by other local breweries.

BS16: A change of management at the **Bridge Inn**, Shortwood. After seven years, Helen Barnes has moved on to pastures new. The pub remains open though, and continues to specialise in a variety of ciders and *Doom Bar* on handpump. In Stapleton, the **Masons Arms** was purchased by lessees John and Julie Edgeworth late in the summer, which is great news for a popular pub with a lovely 'secret' garden. Not necessarily news, but we did hear from the **Rose & Crown**, Pucklechurch, which has been under new management for a while now (but not mentioned in pub news before). The Wadworth real ales are a source of pride, so we're happy to give them a shout out here

BS20: Encouraging news reaches us of the White Hart, Weston in Gordano. Although it has been closed since the initial Covid-19 lockdown, the team who run the Inn At Yanleigh have updated the pub's Facebook page to say the White Hart will be reopening 'soon'.

BS26: The Wheatsheaf Inn in Stone Allerton is sadly no longer operating as a pub, instead offering private dining only on Fridays and Saturdays. However, just up the road Ad Astra Cider have opened their Ad Astra Taproom (or more accurately their tap barn). Ad Astra is on CAMRA's list of producers of 'real' cider. The barn is apparently only open for special events in winter, but will be more regularly open next summer.

BS30: One of two Hall & Woodhouse pubs to close in August, the Upton Inn in Upton Cheyney closed after the termination of the existing lease. It is currently listed as 'temporarily' closed. In Bridgeyate, the Griffin closed for refurbishment in early September. The pub website says they have plans including a new range of local beverages, more live sport and tasty food options 'coming soon'.

BS34: The Beaufort Arms, Stoke Gifford reopened in September after a significant refurbishment. They still offer up to five real ales with interesting guests. Look out for discounts on Mondays and Thursdays. In Filton, the Bristol Concorde, a Brewers Fayre pub, has closed its doors for the last time, with plans to demolish the property and replace it with student housing.

BS35: In Thornbury, **Hawkes House** in St Mary Street is being advertised by Fleurets, with the freehold being for sale.

BS37: Over in Yate, the Farmhouse (a Greene King pub tucked away in a residential area) has reopened after a major refurbishment. Sports events on TV and pool and darts are a big part of the offering, with one large screen in the garden by all accounts, and the Greene King range of real ales is still available.

BS40: News from Somerset that the **New Inn**, Blagdon closed its doors in October. We trust the closure is only temporary and await further news.

BS48: A change of name for the air-side bar at Bristol International Airport, which is now known as **Brigg & Stow**, but sadly did not offer any real ale the last time I passed through. In Nailsea, **Coates House** on the High Street, like its sister property in Thornbury, is being advertised as available to purchase, with the freehold available for around £500,000. It was still trading when we went to press.

BS49: In mid-August, the White Hart, technically in Congresbury but often referred to as being in Wrington, announced its closure on Social Media. The web site, however, lists the closure as temporary so we hope new tenants will be found by owners Hall & Woodhouse.

Duncan Shine

Cryptic Crossword

Compiled by Pete Taberner Solution on page 41

ACROSS:

- 1. It takes courage to open this (6)
- 4. Beer from Bath or Tintern (5, 3)
- 10. Find new home for old English Usher brew (7)
- 11. Some grain in garden is getting wet (7)
- 12. Horrors! Oi! Sit crate properly (10)
- 13. Fishy beer served at the Izaak Walton (4)
- 15. Pub demands I heard (7)
- 17. Get drink from beer on tap (7)
- 19. Craft beer that lubricates the cervical area (4, 3)
- 21. Fish with Les for a Greene King best bitter (7)
- 23. Go back to the King George for a naval spirit (4)
- 24. A grim stamp, when tipsy, illustrates a practical way of thinking (10)
- 27. Uley brewery strong ale is a bit of a local beast (3, 4)
- 28. A sample of unfinished liquor to start tasting (7)
- 29. Evidence of sipping from a glass, perhaps on the beach (8)
- 30. Headless hounds can provide funds for business (6)

DOWN:

- 1. Ian, after two pubs, becomes uncivilized person (9)
- 2. Casual wear for those with uncontrollable thirsts (1-6)
- 3. Drunken lout in Cannes coming from this Cornish town (10)
- 5. Offer money to member of pub staff (9)
- 6. Re-opening of the RCH brewery was a colossal event (4)
- 7. Emerging yeast could provoke a riot (7)
- 8. Ale, for example, gets the bird (5)
- 9. Star footballer's preferred beer (4)
- 14. Down to earth women behind the bar (10)
- 16. Phipps's golden ale has a heavenly body (5, 4)
- 18. Fellow cricketers at the five-day game (4, 5)

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 - 20. It's not clear what gluten's done to beer's appearance (7)
 - 22. A bit of ale I sure enjoy for recreation (7)
 - 23. Be good landlord, that's the spirit! (5)
 - 25. I'm out of barley for an elderly relative (4)
 - 26. Junk mail gets canned (4)





Good Chemistry

You may have noticed a change when ordering your favourite pint of Good Chemistry Brewing (GCB) cask beer at pubs and bars across Bristol (or at a beer festival in Hackney) in recent weeks, as GCB have redesigned their pumpclips to provide greater information and clarity for you to choose the best beer for you when at the bar. GCB hope that you like the new design if you have seen it, but look out for it if you haven't, especially when you're out supporting local pubs and breweries during the quieter post-Christmas months of January and February.

At Good Chemistry HQ (GCHQ) in St Philips, the sales team has seen changes, with sales manager, Ruth, leaving to take a job nearer her home in Wiltshire, and being replaced by Will and Jim, who local pubs will meet in the coming weeks and months as they get out and about. Brewers Elliot and Ed started at GCHQ in July, and are continuing to do a great job, with eight beers being released in the last two months of 2023.

On cask, *Time Lapse*, a traditional bitter, remains the flagship cask ale for GCB, proving popular across the local area, with *Bob's Best* and *Extra Special* – a best bitter and an ESB, respectively – being warmly welcomed when returning this autumn. Indeed, *Bob's Best* was the only beer from the South-West out of more than 150 casks at Hackney's Pig's Ear Beer Festival at the end of November and start of December, proving as popular in north-east London as it does closer to home, and allowing the Bristol-based cellar manager of Pig's Ear to not get too homesick during his 10 days in E5.

Alongside these casks, GCB's real ale offering also includes: *Feelin' Fyne*, a 5.4% collaboration with Scotland's Fyne Ales; *Lil' Ripper*, a 3.4% pale; *Mosaic Smash*, a 4.8% single-malt and single-hop (a SMASH, if you will) pale; *Silk Road*, a 3.4% spiced mild with ginger, cinnamon and cacao nibs; and Lamp Lighter, a 5.1% porter.

In keg, expect to see a new winter fruited sour, a keg-only stout, and the hotly-anticipated return of **Kokomo Weekend** for a limited period. After Christmas, a new IPA will be launched, alongside a brand new alcohol-free beer to join the popular **Zero Gravity**.

Even more new beer launches in the last two months of 2023 have included *All Welcome*, a 4,4% pale ale, brewed to celebrate two years of 'She Drinks Beer' (SDB), the monthly gathering of women who enjoy beer. The first meeting of SDB of 2024 will be Tuesday January 9th at The Good Measure in Redland – more information is available on their website at goodchemistrybrewing.co.uk/she-drinks-beer.

GCB have now been involved at **The Good Measure** for five years, celebrating the occasion over the weekend of 8th, 9th and 10th December, and plans are already in place for 2024's popular, monthly tap-takeover and meet-the-brewer evenings – do let GCB know if you have any suggestions for who you'd like to see in future.

At GCB's other pub, the historic and heritage Kings Head on Victoria Street in Redcliffe, Bristol, GCB marked its first anniversary with a 363rd birthday party for the old pub (well, if the pub is known to be c1660, then 2023 marks 363 years, doesn't it?). I'm sure no *Pints West* readers have been around for the entire history of the pub, but, if you've not been lucky enough to pay a visit in the last 12 months, do pop in and see what GCB have done with the old place.

Whether you've been enjoying GCB beers in their own pubs, at other pubs and bars around Bristol and District, at home in cans, or at beer festivals in Hackney, all at Good Chemistry would like to thank their customers for their continued support in 2023, and look forward to raising a glass with you in 2024. Cheers!

Stephen Edmonds



Arbor Ales

s we approach the festive season beer festivals seem thinner on the ground. Although the Hoptober Fest, held in November at the Hopyard in Feeder Road, Bristol, is as much a music event as a beer festival, Arbor Ales were there with four of their beers. The following week saw the CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival at City Hall, College Green, for which Arbor not only sponsored the glasses but also supplied two of their ales.

During the month of October collaborations with no less than three other breweries resulted in some new creations. First with Brixton Brewery came Cherry Amarillo Stout (6% ABV) available in cask, keg and can form. Then, for release later in November, jointly from Wiper & True came single New Zealand hopped Superdelic (4%), a pale ale in cans and kegs only. Finally, on 18th October in return for Shiny Brewery's visit to Arbor last year, the team visited Shiny at their Derby premises to brew Urban Horticulture (8%), a double IPA featuring Citra and Nelson Sauvin hops. Available from the first week in November in a limited number of casks as well as cans and kegs, it will be followed, in time for Christmas, by a reintroduced Panettone Festive Pale Ale (5.2%) infused with raisins, vanilla, lemon and clementine zest, and fermented with a Belgian yeast.

Two new recruits have joined bringing the total workforce to sixteen. They are Patrick Heggarty and Ross Sheen both of whom join the warehouse team.

The last news from Arbor Ales, in the autumn issue of *Pints West*, mentioned the latest piece of green technology at the brewery; a carbon capture plant which recycles the waste CO₂ from the fermenters for use in canning certain styles of beer. As a reminder, this is what was reported:

Always environmentally aware – having already installed solar panels – Arbor are now installing a CO2 recovery unit. This state-of-the-art technology, developed by Danish company Dalum, captures the gas produced in the fermenting vessels and recycles it in the production of their canned beers. Arbor's will be only the third such plant in the UK (Wiper & True also have it). For clarification: the canned beers are live unfiltered and unpasteurised. The blanket CO2 is purely for the canning



The Dalum carbon capture plant, with Arbor staff members Cameron Earshaw (left, plant operator) and Jamie Cansdale (sales manager)

process, varying in quantity according to the individual characteristics of the brew; e.g. the lager needs hardly any as it still contains a high degree of natural condition whereas the stronger dark beers will have been fermented to the point where they need a fair amount of extra CO2 to preserve them in cans. In short, Arbor cans contain live beer.

After sixteen years as CAMRA brewery liaison officer (BLO) for Arbor Ales I am afraid that this will be my final Arbor news item for *Pints West* as, for a number of reasons, I am retiring. My successor as BLO is Andy Coston.

Henry Davies

Pinkers Craft

pinkers have been invited to put an entry into the 'Bristol Brewery Challenge', an annual event held at the Siren's Calling in Portishead. Each year starting in November they hold the challenge, where they pit, head to head, two at a time, the best of our local breweries until they have a winner in early March.

First round ties are held throughout November. These see one cask beer put forward from each brewery; the first of the two to sell out sees that brewery progress to round two. The second round is held from Saturdays throughout January. This sees breweries (again two at a time) putting up two barrels; the first brewery to sell both barrels is the winner and moves on to the semi-final. The semi-finals again are with two barrels from each brewery. These ties are held in February. The two winning breweries then meet in the grand final at the beginning of March, when all the pub's taps are taken over, and it is three barrels against three. The first to sell out all three of their beers are pronounced the winners. Previous winners have included Cheddar Ales and Arbor Ales. Let's see how Pinkers fair this time round.

Pinkers now have their brand new (second) fermenter in place and already in production, virtually doubling possible output. One of the beers newly produced is *Hilde-Mare*, a luscious (my words!) Keller Pils at 5%, it being a collaboration between the *Hilde*sheim microbrewery



Malte and Jan of Hildesheim and Scott Pinkstone of Pinkers (front) in the Hildesheim brewery

in Germany and Pinkers in Weston-super-Mare, hence the name. This has already sold out in all forms and will probably next be brewed ready for the coming spring. Other new Pinkers beers include Darkside, a 4.7% dark fruit stout, and Northern Soul - Weston Funk, an IPA at 5%, celebrating 50 years of the Wigan Casino, famous for its Northern soul music – supplied in keg for the Fork 'n' Ale in Weston-super-Mare, and cans and cask for general release.

Bath Ales & St Austell

llegedly, the longest operating brewery in the city of Bristol started in 2004, but in the area served by the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA, Bath Ales has been operating since 1995. The brewery started off in Wincanton, Somerset, before moving twice to different sites in Warmley, South Gloucestershire.

Big news on the beer front is that Bath Ales' Festivity is being brewed this year, and some of you will have already enjoyed a pint or two at the recently held Bristol Beer Festival. This traditional winter warmer makes a welcome return after retiring hurt due to Covid, and its aftermath. Festivity is available in bottles, and cask in selected venues. As well as Festivity and Gem, St Austell Tribute and Big Job were also at the Bristol Beer Festival – plus last-minute additions not in the programme, Lansdown and Triple Bee – kindly donated by Bath Ales/ St Austell.

Some time ago I mentioned that St Austell's 'Cask Club' small-batch beers are available in the **Albion** in Clifton; now they are also available in the **Wellington** on Gloucester Road, Horfield. As with the Albion they usually appear on a Friday evening, and "when they're gone, they're gone!" As I write this, the previous week saw Andrew Routledge, one of the Bath Ales apprentice brewers, doing a tasting with his beer *Rhizome Cowboy*. Keen to showcase bright, fruity hop flavours, Andrew chose to brew a 5% East Coast IPA, and named it after the root system of the hop plant.

In September Bath Ales and St Austell won an "armful of accolades" for a range of beers in this year's International Beer Challenge, held

in Burgess Hill, West Sussex. Bath Ales *Wild Hare* (5% gluten-free pale) was awarded a Silver in the 'Ales' category. St Austell's *Divine Intervention* (incidentally at 13% the strongest beer the brewery has ever made) was awarded Gold in the same category, and *Mena Dhu* also secured a Gold in the 'Stouts and Porters' category. Also in the 'Ales' category, strong ale *Hicks* took home a Silver award, and *Tribute* came away with a Bronze.

Also in September St Austell acquired the Bath Pub Company, so increasing its 184-strong West Country pub estate. The pubs gained are the Locksbrook Inn (Locksbrook Road), Marlborough Tavern (Marlborough Buildings), in Bath, the Hare and Hounds (Lansdown Road) and Moorfields (Third Avenue, Oldfield Park). This brings the total number of sites in St Austell's managed pub estate to 43.

In a further drive to reduce waste and increase sustainability, St Austell is trialling a partnership with a food waste app giving away surplus food from its South West pubs. The scheme has started with Olio, a local sharing app which helps businesses to reduce food waste by redistributing whatever's left at the end of each day to nearby residents, made possible by Olio's nationwide network of volunteers.

A pilot in the summer, which took place over six weeks across nine of the brewery's pubs was a huge success: over 300 portions of food were donated and over 30 local families fed. This scheme will be rolled out to St Austell's managed pub estate in phases, and once fully rolled out it's predicted that almost 15,000 portions of food will be donated in a year, providing food for nearly 350 local families across the South West.

Roy Sanders

Moor Beer

s we head towards the festive season, the Moor Beer Tap at Days Road, St Phillips, which now features in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide, will be extending its opening hours to meet your beery needs! From December 4th the hours are 11am till 5pm Monday to Thursday, 11am till 10pm Friday and midday till 9pm Saturday. This is for on-site as well as take-away drinking.

Perfect Christmas tipples available will include the classic Old Freddy Walker, sometimes described as Christmas pudding in a glass, and there are also two recently released barrel-aged brews – both are imperial stouts barrel-aged for two years with added Brettanomyces yeast, giving a rich and funky element. One is a Victorian recipe, featuring brown malt, whilst the other is a modern recipe where roast barley predominates. Also available from the barrel-aged store is a Calvados Old Ale and an Extra Oak Barley Wine.

Both the Moor Tap in Bristol and the Moor Vaults in London have a range of music events coming up, usually involving heavy music, and New Year's Eve at the Moor Tap will feature a dub sound system. Please follow Moor's social media for details of upcoming events. It's not just music events; recent events have included a book launch with renowned beer writer Des de Moor and a comedy set and beer tasting with James Dowdeswell.

Also noteworthy is Moor's charitable work; as well as every pint of Moor's *PMA* sold helping to raise funds for charity, there have been several successful events also raising funds for charity at both the Bristol and London venues.

Phil Cummings



Oh, Man, New Bristol Brewery wins another award

ive real ale breweries in the Isle of Man may sound like a lot, but that was not enough when it came to stocking their local CAMRA beer festival held earlier this year, which offered 120 real ales, ciders, perries, fruit wines and mead. So when the festival

placed the beer order, New Bristol Brewery was included and their Cinder Toffee Stout (4.0% ABV) was on the stillage. It only went on to win the Beer of the Festival award! And no wonder. Described as "liquidised Crunchie Bars in a stout", Maris Otter, crystal, rolled oats, wheat, roasted barley, chocolate malts and blow-torched honeycomb lay down the perfect grain bill for this beautifully smooth, jet-black stout.

As is traditional, the CAMRA certificate was awarded at the brewery. Full marks to the Isle of Man committee members who made the journey down to Bristol do that.

As an aside, it's not just at the CAMRA beer festival where you will find good beer on the Isle Of Man. In CAMRA's national pub of the year competition, the Trafalgar Hotel in Ramsey is one of the last four finalists up for the prestigious title. Results will be announced in January 2024.

Michael Bertagne



Angela Aspin (in the centre) with others from Isle of Man and Bristol & District CAMRA presenting the Beer of the Festival award for Cinder Toffee Stout at the New Bristol Brewery





New Street Brewing



ppearing in *Pints West* for the first time, the New Street Brewing operation is tied to the *Volunteer Tavern* pub on New Street, situated between Bristol's Cabot Circus and Old Market. In many ways it's a micro version of your typical microbrewery. All of the brewing is done by the enthusiastic head brewer, Gareth, and the whole venture started to get going just before Covid turned everything upside down.

As a result, New Street Brewing is still very much in its infancy, although there are exciting plans afoot for an expansion in the next couple of years. For now, the microbrewery is concentrating on quality rather than quantity and offers just the one beer, which is sold exclusively at the Volunteer Tavern, is 4% ABV and is known as Volly Pale.

The current set-up of the brewery is creatively hidden away within an old shipping container, and includes a custom-made mash tun. As for those future plans, Gareth envisages a permanent building (with a little extra space) and additional people power to fulfill ambitions for new beer varieties in the New Street Brewing portfolio.

In the meantime, and for the foreseeable, Gareth will continue brewing as regularly as possible, with each brew delivering enough for eight casks. The popularity of the beer sees the locals consistently exhausting supplies, although unfortunately for me I wasn't able to try the *Volly Pale* on my recent visit. However, I will be going back soon to guarantee that I get to experience it, and look forward to keeping an eye on upcoming developments.

Darren Douglas



Bristol Beer Factory

he Bristol Beer Factory (BBF) is gearing up for the festive season with a slew of new beers coming out in cask, which include the following.

O This Side of Paradise – Brewed in bottles last year, the head brewer was intrigued as to what it would taste like in cask so he kept some aside and those two casks ended up being stars in the Bristol Beer Factory Tap Room and at the winter beer festival put on by the Siren's Calling in Portishead. Many at the brewery felt it was their beer of the year, so now it gets the full brew it deserves. Using smoked malts it is described as being deep, full, malty and moreish; the smoke is there but at a subtle level. The brewery can't wait for more people to try this one on cask!

O *Overtime* – A brand new American brown, malts are the star but a few old-school American hops keep this true to style.

O *Cover Star* – A hop combination they are excited to try (German Monroe and French Barbe Rouge) to make a blond beer that the brewery think should be the perfect style for them.

O *Out Front* – Apparently Superdelic is the next hit New Zealand hop and this beer pairs that with Motueka.

Also coming out in cask are an oatmeal stout, a plum stout, more new IPAs and pales.

On keg and in can they have the orangey Magic Landings. They wanted a beer with an orange golden hue and an orangey nose and palette and consider the German Mandarina Bavaria hop is perfect for this, paired with the New Zealand Nectaron hop for some juicy nectarine and peach and more orange notes. Disco Park is making its first appearance in keg and can. Espresso Martini is also back. First brewed three years ago to great acclaim, this has become a regular returner. The brewery say that it flies out, so catch it while you can.

Bristol Beer Factory's low-alcohol beer Clear Head (0.5% ABV, available in can and keg) continues to find a wider audience and the brewery says that they receive incredible feedback on its taste. They add that they have been overwhelmed recently with how much this beer is coming to mean to the people of Bristol; plus that it is a genuine collaboration with Bristol charity Talk Club, stating: "Buying this beer



'Brewed to Give, committed to serving the Bristol community' as seen in Bristol Beer Factory's newest pub, the Junction at Wapping Wharf

means you are helping to start real conversations and saving lives. How? Talk Club is a talking and listening movement, to help people get mentally fit. 5% of total *Clear Head* sales go directly to Talk Club. Creating a sustainable, positive, mental health community, this is a beer for good."

Talk Club is not the only charity Bristol Beer factory is involved with. As mentioned in the last *Pints West*, they have recently launched **Brewed to Give**. This is apparently a self-imposed tax of 2% on total brewery sales which they say they are investing in community groups and charities uplifting people and places across the city. Over the next year they estimate that Brewed to Give will invest £80k through a mix of stock, space and direct support. With a little assistance and use of their event equipment, the brewery wants to help the community turn this investment into £250k+ of unrestricted funds. Good luck to them.

Richard Brooks

Bruhaha small-batch brewery moves to new premises

ased at Windmill Hill City Farm in Bristol since early 2022, Bruhaha established successful pop-up tap room events serving their small-batch beers, which incorporated botanicals from the farm. The obvious next step for the growing business was to move to permanent premises.

156 Wells Road in Totterdown, recently vacated by 'Eat Your Greens' vegan café, provided the perfect new venue. Bruhaha opened there on 21st October, and their regular opening times are Thursdays and Fridays 5 to 10.30pm, and Saturdays 12 to 10.30pm, with food provided by guest pop-up food businesses. They hope to open more often once they've expanded their team.

Bruhaha founder Steve England (pictured pouring a pint) and business partner Dave Partridge (also in the picture) have also moved their craft beer production to the new premises, maintaining their ultrasustainable methods; the waste grain will still be fed to the pigs at Windmill Hill City Farm.

"We want to create a neighbourhood bar where everyone feels comfortable and welcome. Producing and serving really good beer is what we are about and we hope local people will enjoy our brand of local, small-batch beers," says Steve.

"There will also be lots of opportunities to use the space during the daytime and evenings," Dave says. "We want to provide a social space for all sorts of local activities including workshops, exhibitions, yoga and meetings, and will be hiring out the space for parties and events."

Also coming on board at Team Bruhaha is Simone, long-time Totterdown resident and marketing & events manager at the city farm. "I've loved being part of Bruhaha's journey at the farm and am excited to join them in their new venture. A hyper-local brewpub and social space is going to be a great asset for the Totterdown community." Bruhaha will continue to appear at pop-up events at the city farm.

Up to 12 different beers will be served at the new premises; approximately half will be Bruhaha's own brews, and the others guest beers, along with a couple of ciders (Branch has been a recent provider). Although the majority of beers are keg, the team are trying out cask options. They've been experimenting with an aspirating valve on the cask beers to prevent oxygen exposure, helping them last longer. Recently, Good Chemistry's Bob's Best and Bruhaha's own Fugg Life single-hop (Fuggles) best bitter have been available on cask.

Clare Manning (photos by John England)

Grain Alchemist

e were sorry to see the closure of Grain Alchemist brewery in October. An independent micro-brewery and tap room in Bedminster, they were known for collaborations with nearby breweries On Point and Bruhaha (the latter having recently relocated to Totterdown), as well as being part of the successful Bedminster beer trail weekends.

The brewers behind Grain Alchemist have vowed to return to brewing at some stage in the future.





Zerodegrees

llegedly, Zerodegrees is the city of Bristol's longest operating brewery, fighting it out for this accolade with Bristol Beer Factory, both established in 2004.

As for all venues in the hospitality trade, business could be better for Zerodegrees, however brewer Simon has his hands full, not only with brewing three core and four special ales, but coordinating production and deliveries of beer between the Cardiff, Reading and London sister brewpubs. As demand for beer in Cardiff has fallen, and both London and Reading do not have brewers at this time, Cardiff's surplus is shared out between the other two brewpubs.

Notwithstanding, Simon maintains a steady supply of specials for Bristol, the present crop comprising: Assertive Personality, a 5.7% IPA; The German Arkhitekt, a 4.1% witbier; LWA, a 5.4% California common, or steam beer (as a reminder this style of beer is brewed with lager yeast, but fermented at ale fermentation temperatures); and The Beast, the 4.6% black lager which has not yet joined the core range.

As usual Simon will be brewing a seasonal special, this time a Belgian amber ale, a treat you can enjoy with your turkey or Christmas pudding, or of course on one of your visits to the brewpub.

Roy Sanders

BADRAG

Bristol And District Rare Ales Group

BADRAG, the Bristol & District Rare Ales Group, is an award-winning campaigning group within the local branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale.

Its aim is to promote the rarer *styles* of real ale, in particular **dark beers** such as **milds**, **stouts** and **porters**.

For a list of pubs that support BADRAG please visit: www.camrabristol.org.uk/badrag/RareAlePubs.html

Email: BADRAG@camrabristol.org.uk

he BADRAG highlight this autumn has undoubtedly been Mild Time, running between the end of October until 10 November 2023. Instigated by Laurie Gibney in the autumn of 2019, this is a period when we encourage breweries to produce a mild ale, and pubs, bars and other outlets to serve them. We were not disappointed; many stepped up to oblige, and have continued to do so after 'official' Mild Time ended.

Mal Fuller and Laurie Gibney coordinated two social events for Mild Time in quick succession at the beginning of November. BADRAG member Heong Wai Tse reports.

"Attendance at the first social at the **Drapers Arms** on Gloucester Road far exceeded expectations, with Bristol's first micropub more than half-filled with BADRAG drinkers within 30 minutes of opening. Three mild beers were on offer: Lucifer Brewhouse *Mildside* (3.8%); Nuttycombe *Snow Leopard* (4.7%), an unusual 'white mild'; and Sarah Hughes *Dark Ruby Mild* (6%). The latter had been conditioned at the brewery for three months in the Drapers' own wooden cask!

"All the beers were in excellent condition. The *Mildside* was nicely balanced and full of flavour, a surprise for some given its 3.8% ABV. The outstanding mild of the evening was the Sarah Hughes; the added conditioning in the wooden cask gave it an extra complexity and it was so popular, the whole cask was sold out before the end of the night. Mal Fuller declared the wooden-cask-conditioned Sarah Hughes the best he's had in nearly 40 years! An evening enjoyed by all, and for me, it was a blessing that my bus home was from the stop right outside the pub."

It wasn't long before the second social event was upon us, on 5 November, at the Nailsea MicroPub, Laurie's local, with 18 in attendance. Heong Wai Tse picks up the story.

"After hopping off the bus, the micropub is only a couple of minutes' walk away. There was a welcoming atmosphere with both regulars and BADRAG drinkers enjoying two excellent milds from Nottingham, Castle Rock *Black Gold* (3.8%) and Nottingham Brewery *Foundry Mild* (4.7%). The former had a light roast balanced with a little sweetness, very drinkable indeed. The latter is dark, smooth, a lot richer and with maybe a touch of smokiness in there too, my personal favourite.

"Unfortunately time seems to pass very quickly when you are enjoying great beers with great company. So a short walk back to the bus stop where we picked up our ride back to Bristol was easier said than done. Some BADRAG drinkers enjoyed the *Foundry Mild* so much, they missed their return bus three times!"

Around a dozen pubs committed to putting on a mild for Mild Time, and we found several more we didn't know about in advance. Many thanks to all of them for their support.

The 'Redcliffe Beer Festival' involving three central pubs over the August Bank Holiday was an excellent, earlier treat for BADRAG drinkers. The Kings Head on Victoria Street offered Blackjack Brewing Company Manchester Stout (4.8%), Marble Beers Coffee Rye Mild (4%) and Swannay Brewery's Sneaky Wee Orkney Stout (4%), which Martin Gray described as "very dry, very good". The Bridge Inn on Passage Street had a Moor Brewing Company tap takeover, including their



The wooden cask of aged Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild at the Drapers Arms waiting to be tapped

Stout (5%), which sold out quickly. The Seven Stars on Thomas Lane had Saltaire *Triple Choc Stout* (4.8%), which was declared "excellent, very tasty". Peter Bridle summed up a view held by many: "I very much enjoyed the Redcliffe pub walk yesterday – the beers were all excellent in all the pubs."

The Lime Kiln on St George's Road in central Bristol (behind City Hall) held a beer festival at the end of September with six dark beers on, with the Wantsum Black Prince, a 3.9% mild, and Beowulf's Dark Raven (4.5%) getting a special mention. The Gryphon, just up from the Bristol Beacon, held its 23rd 'MetAle Festival' in early October; Colin Postlethwaite singled out the Derby Brewing Real Mild Child (3.4%) and Marble Coffee Rye Mild (4%). The Commercial Rooms on Corn Street also held a festival (as part of the wider Wetherspoon's promotion) which, amongst a total of 30 cask ales, offered Rudgate Vanilla Mild, Inveralmond Ossian Oatmeal Stout and Robinsons Fear of the Dark.

The winter period typically sees more BADRAG style beers in pubs \dots we can't wait!

Lesly Plumridge

Bath & Borders branch news

New bar opens in Bath

Grog is the latest edition to the Bath beer scene. Opened earlier in 2023, Grog is essentially an off-licence that accommodates a small bar, which can be used for small gatherings, tasting sessions and curated events. It can be found at 16 Margaret's Buildings. This is a short, smart, out-of-the-way shopping street, situated near the Royal Crescent in the northern part of the city centre. The new venue is part of the chain, which specialises in artisan beers, ciders and spirits.

Bath Pub Company acquired by St Austell

St Austell Brewery has acquired Bath Pub Company and, as a result, has taken over four pubs in Bath, increasing the size of its west country estate. Three of the pubs, the Hare & Hounds at the top of Lansdown, the Locksbrook Inn, near the northern bank of the river Avon in western Bath, and the Moorfields on Oldfield Park, will become part of the now 43-strong St Austell managed pub estate, whilst the Marlborough Tavern, just to the northwest of the Royal Crescent, will become part of the leased and tenanted estate and continue to be run by Bath Pub Company's founder and commercial director Justin Sleath.

Curfew under new ownership

At the junction of Cleveland Place and the London Road, to the northeast of the city centre, the Curfew, an attractive former Wadworth pub, reopened on Tuesday 26 September under the new ownership of Mick Dempsey, who previously has run the Ring O'Bells and the Ram in Widcombe. The beer range is likely to include Fuller's London Pride, Timothy Taylor Landlord and two or three guests, typically including St Austell Tribute and Butcombe Original and/or another from the Butcombe stable – but Mick plans to have changing quests from other breweries in the future.



The Curfew, Bath

Twerton pub closes for good

The Full Moon, an old-style, basic pub on Twerton High Street on the west side of Bath, is to be turned into a six-bedroom private house. The pub opened in 1872 and closed for business in 2020. In January this year the freehold was sold by Admiral Taverns for £270,000. The planning application to convert the pub was agreed by Bath & Northeast Somerset on 5 October.



The Full Moon, Twerton (no longer to let)

Rising Sun in Bradford-on-Avon reopens

We are pleased to report that the Rising Sun, which had been in limbo for months, has reopened under new owners. This unpretentious pub, located at the top of town, has been much smartened up, both inside and outside. There were two Butcombe beers on at the time of reopening, in late September, but Josh, the owner, intends to have two changing local guests once he's had two more handpumps fitted. Opening times currently "experimental".

Wells pub reopens after many years in limbo

The long-closed Mermaid on the corner of Tucker Street and Portway, a short walk away from the city centre, reopened as the Sheep & Penguin on Friday 11 August. The pub had been closed and languishing in limbo for around 10 years before being acquired by Nick James shortly before the pandemic. Since then, Nick and his family, who also own the Queens in Chew Magna, have lovingly renovated the premises, revamping the pub on the ground floor, and creating guest accommodation above. The accommodation consists of seven boutique guest rooms and four mews houses. A food menu comprises a combination of pub classics and internationally inspired cuisine, made with locally sourced ingredients, whilst the range of beers and ciders are also sourced locally. The pub's new name pays tribute to the Falkland Islands Agency, which is next door.

Tyning, Radstock, under threat of permanent closure

The Tyning Inn, situated on the northeast edge of Radstock, is under threat of permanent closure. A planning application has been made to convert this old, stone-built, Admiral Taverns-owned pub, which closed in February 2021, into three two-storey private dwellings, with a further six two-storey dwellings to be built across the extensive pub garden. The planning application was lodged with Bath and North East Somerset Council in early August, but only validated on 3 October. The deadline for objections was 9 November and the target date for a decision 28 November. The town of Radstock has only three pubs currently open – the Fromeway, the Railway and the Radstock Hotel – so to lose the Tyning would leave the pub scene of what is a quite large town in a rather bereft state. North-east Radstock is an area with

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The Tyning Inn, Radstock

few amenities, and recently it lost its local bus service. The Tyning, in the right hands, clearly has the potential to be a valued community hub, even if it survives as not purely a pub.

Pheasant Inn at Wookey closes

The Pheasant Inn, a beautiful old roadside pub, on the B3139 near Wookey, closed on 14 October. The tenants have cited beer purchase prices and cost-of-living pressures as the main reasons. This Stonegate-owned pub is multi-roomed, has a large beer garden and ample car parking, and is one of the few pubs that had been operating in the large west-of-Wells area. The future of the pub is uncertain. Departing landlords, John and Emma, hope that it will not be closed for long.

Alhampton Inn reopens

Nestled in the idyllic village of Alhampton, near Bruton and Castle Cary, the **Alhampton Inn** has reopened following much work by the local community who now have the leasehold of the pub. A local member visited in late August. The pub is managed by Simon from the **Halfway House** at Pitney, the region's Pub of the Year. Beers are rotated and, in these early days, have included Salopian *Shropshire Gold* and a couple of Otters.



The Alhampton Inn, Alhampton

Brewery News

New brewery being established south of Bath: Somer Valley

Somer Valley Brewing is a new venture, operating out of Somer Valley Farms, near Peasedown St John, a village off the A367 south of Bath. The brewer is Chester Ellis. Currently he is making his beer at On Point Brewery in Bedminster, but plans to build a new brewery in Peasedown. Originally from Bath, Chester learned to brew on Waiheke Island whilst travelling across Australia and New Zealand. Moving on to Wanaka, he became a full-time brewer at Rhyme X Reason Brewery. Somer Valley was first discovered by one of our branch members during a visit to the Fox & Badger at Wellow, another village south of Bath. We wish Chester all the best for the future and look forward to seeing his beers in the Bath area.



True Story holds open day

One of the branch's youngest breweries held an open day on Saturday 19 August. Opened in the summer of 2022 by friends Ben and Will, True Story can be found off Kingdom Avenue on the Northacre Industrial Park in Westbury. It's a modern, small-scale operation, run on a part-time basis (Will and Ben both having day jobs.) As a next step to promoting their venture, the two young brewers are looking to open a bar in the area. For the time being True Story beers are being marketed direct to customers and the retail trade. The brewery produces a core range of three beers along with regular seasonals and specials. On offer on tap at the open day were Smoothie Crush (4.4%), a berry sour beer, and Ancient Graffiti (5.5%), a hazy pale, both from the core range, and two seasonals, Smart Casual (3,3%), a hazy pale, and Naked Punch (0.5%), a low-alcohol Kombucha. Other beers, including the regular City Boiz (4.2%) were available in cans. Despite the uncertainty of the weather, it was a very well attended event. There was live music, free food, and open-air table tennis.

Wadworth moves into new state-of-the-art premises

The official reopening of Wadworth's new multi-million-pound brewery took place on Thursday 7 September. The new site has been named the Folly Road Brewhouse and opened with a ceremony attended by representatives of Devizes Town Council.

Steve Hunt



Bath Beer and Cider Festival 2024



Widcombe Social Club, Bath, BA2 6AA

Friday 16th February 4pm - 11pm Saturday 17th February 11am - 7pm

Tickets £10 (includes programme, glass and £3 beer tokens)

Advance purchase strongly recommended

Scan here for tickets:



bathandborders.camra.org.uk

Bath Beer & Cider Festival 2024

he Bath & Borders branch of CAMRA will be holding their annual Bath Beer & Cider Festival on Friday 16th (4pm to 10pm) and Saturday 17th (11am to 7pm) of February 2024.

Entry to each session costs £10 and includes £3 worth of beer/cider tokens, a printed programme and a festival glass. Please note that while a substantial number of 2024 commemorative glasses will be

available at both sessions on a first-come, first-served basis, depending on attendance, some visitors may be offered glassware from earlier festivals instead. Card-carrying CAMRA members will receive an additional £2 of beer tokens at the event.

Expect some 30 real ales and up to eight real ciders, including many local producers and others from further afield. As always, these come carefully selected to cater for a range of tastes, enabling festival-goers to enjoy plenty of your favourite styles with the opportunity to try something new. At the end of the 2023 event we still had 23 beers on sale and we expect there to be good choice at both 2024 sessions. Both sessions sold out a few weeks beforehand and tickets were not available on the door so advance purchase is strongly recommended.

The festival will once again be held at Widcombe Social Club, a stone's throw from Bath Spa railway station. Widcombe Social Club is a non-profit

community-focused venue hosting a wide range of events throughout the year. It is not necessary to bring your own food as a range of hot food, ploughman's lunches and non-alcoholic refreshments will be available during both sessions.

Please visit the branch website **bathandborders.camra.org.uk** for more information and to buy tickets.

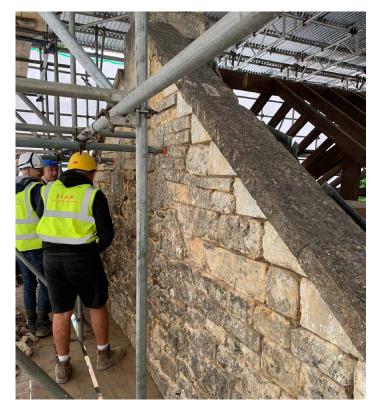
Trevor Cromie



Save the Hop Pole – final push

he Limpley Stoke Community Benefit Society have just launched the next phase of fundraising to finish the renovation work on the historic Hop Pole pub in Limpley Stoke, just south of Bath.

An Inn since 1580, the Grade II-listed Hop Pole featured in the 1993 film *Remains of the Day* starring Emma Thompson and Anthony





Hopkins (he drank beer rather than chianti) but closed in 2015 and fell into disrepair. After rapidly raising £360,000 the Society purchased the building in early 2022 and began the process of exterior renovation whilst continuing to raise funds for subsequent work such as refurbishing the roof, replacing chimneys and upgrading the windows. So far £900,000 has been raised, including £300,000 from the Government Community Ownership Fund.

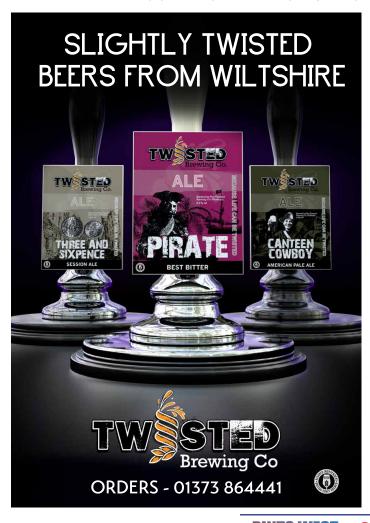
A further £300,000 is needed to refurbish the interior and build a new toilet block and kitchen block, and to allow the pub to reopen towards the end of 2024. The minimum investment for this share offer is £200 (unless you are lucky enough to be under 35 where the minimum is £20) and the target is to raise £150,000 by 31 January 2024 and a further £150,000 by 30 June 2024. If the £150,000 target is not met by 31 January then the renovation work will stop, the pub will not reopen and investment returned to those who have invested in this share offer.

If you are interested in helping to save and reopen the Hop Pole, a prospectus, business plan and application form can be found here: www.limpleystokecbs.org/useful-documents

Trevor Cromie

Photos courtesy of the Limpley Stoke Community Benefit Society





A coastal pub crawl of Portishead

his July one of Portishead's pubs, the Royal Inn, reopened. It had closed last September after acquisition by the Greene King group. Locals would have noticed the major building work being done to the side of the building and the transformation of the garden area. Well Portishead people are nothing if not inquisitive so a group of us mostly CAMRA members set off one Wednesday evening in August to check out the Royal.

To make it more interesting we thought we would incorporate our "once over" of the new Royal with a walking pub crawl starting at the western edge of Portishead with the Ship. In particular, I was interested to see how many different beers would be found and how they were priced. The Ship is run by the legend who is Vic Long who had celebrated his 80th birthday towards the end of July. More impressively, Vic celebrated 50 years as landlord of the Ship on 8th November 2023. As far as I know, Vic is the longest-serving landlord of a pub in the UK and his regulars are proud to have him. It might be a touch optimistic to wish him another 50 years at the helm but let's do it.



The Ship

There were four real ales on offer here on our crawl, in the form of regulars Draught Bass, Sharps' Doom Bar and Otter Bitter, and a quest ale of Greene King IPA, which were priced at £4.20 for the first two and £4 for the others. All four of us starting out on the crawl claim this as our local. Three of us tried the Bass and one the IPA and we found all of the drinks to be in good nick. With a decent walk in front of us we all opted for a pint at this stage. Vic was his usual informative self and we all avoided annoying him so did not leave crisp packets in our empty pint glasses – probably Victor's biggest pet hate (please use the bins provided). I should say that we were blessed by a beautiful evening's weather and the Ship commands a brilliant view of the nearby Severn Estuary. Vic and wife Debbie look after an award-winning pub garden to make best use of the views.



View out of the rear window of the Windmill Inn, with a boat carrying something interesting bound for Hinkley

Looking like extras from Last of the Summer's Wine we left the Ship and headed down the hill towards the other pubs on our list. We were keeping to the pavement along Nore Road but the next pub, the Windmill Inn, can also be accessed by taking the coastal path. For the less mobile, the X4 bus runs along this part of the trip.

Within our number we had one Jeff Churchill who had recently moved to Portishead. Jeff had originally acquired the Windmill in 1998 and opened it in 2000 after carrying out a major transformation – followed ten years later by an extension to the rear of the pub which further improved the access to estuary views. Jeff retired and sold the pub to Fuller's in 2014. As a free house the Windmill had built up a deserved reputation for its ales which included Bass along with two changing quest ales. In recent years the pub has again featured in the Good Beer Guide. It still has a good local reputation for food and has a large garden space and great views. When we visited, three real ales were available and two were from the Fuller's stable. They were their brand leader, London Pride at £4.80 a pint, along with Seafarers, originally a Gales beer (£4.35 for that one). Butcombe Original (£4.90) was the quest. None of us had any problems with the beers we opted for but with a tight schedule we all just had half pints. It has to be said that Mr Churchill stayed diplomatically quiet with his thoughts on his old pub.

A further half an hour's walk was required to get us to our next pub, the Royal Inn. We headed off over the field which used to be part of the original golf course, to the Lake Grounds, past the Lido, up to



The Royal Inn



View of the estuary from the patio of the Royal Inn

Battery Point and in through the woods which bring you to Esplanade Road, a quiet road with more walkers than cars. At the end of this road is the Royal Inn. The building dates back to 1830 and was originally used as a hotel for transatlantic boat passengers. The original front entrance remains and the hallway leads into an interior which has been sympathetically restored and then leads in turn to a side extension which makes a lot more tables available in the same style. As this was a lovely August evening we sat outside and enjoyed the view of both Severn bridges. The outside space is the area which impressed most. The original patio has been extended down towards the grass area. A new set of wide steps opens up the view and the new garden furniture is of a high standard. Greene King have not spent all of their money just to sell drinks but food was not on our minds at this stage. All three real ales on show were from Greene King – IPA, Old Speckled Hen and a golden summer beer called Al Fresco. The prices for a pint of the first two of these were £4.50 and £4.65 respectively. All of us enjoyed the beers we chose, perhaps the best of the night for some of us. An outdoor bar serves the garden but not with real ales. I did have a chance to notice that the gents toilets were much improved from the previous version; sorry ladies I didn't venture into your facilities.



View of the Marina from the seating area outside the Siren's Calling



Hall and Woodhouse

From here, we were a short distance from the steps which lead down to Portishead Marina and we ventured over the lock gates to the Siren's Calling. At this point I have to declare an interest. I absolutely love this bar. The wife and I are regulars here and we are delighted that it was declared Bristol & District CAMRA's Pub of the Year for 2023. Views out of the Siren's are of the boats moored in the marina rocking gently and you can take advantage of the seats outside to enjoy these views. Owner Andy Holian has created a drinking venue which is known for an ever-changing line-up of cask ales for a reasonable price – £4.10 a pint, having stood at £3.80 for the first five years of the bar's existence. Added to this the bar operates a loyalty card scheme whereby after 10 pints you get one free. The keg line-up is even bigger and includes a draught Belgian beer. Behind the bar there is an impressive range of beers in bottles and cans featuring almost 100 Belgian beers and quite a few from Trappist breweries. Although this was a midweek night, five cask ales were to be chosen from. Two of these were from Bristol Beer Factory- Fortitude and Startline. Brew York had Make It Motueka and Pale and Ilkley Brewery had Promise. I was impressed that proud Lancastrian Andy put on three beers from Yorkshire. All of us enjoyed the choice and settled down to savour our

Prising myself away from the Siren, the gang, which by now had beefed up to be six strong, moved along the same side of the marina in the direction of the High Street. Half way along the marina, we came to Hall & Woodhouse. Built by the Dorset brewery of the same name out of shipping containers, this imposing pub offers real ales from the Hall & Woodhouse Badger range with no guest ales. The three beers we found were Badger Best Bitter, Fursty Ferret and Tanglefoot priced at £5.05, £5.45 and £5.55 respectively. This establishment is right next to the waterside and is surrounded by outdoor tables to enjoy the setting.

Finally, we walked to the (inland) end of the marina and crossed Harbour Road to Wetherspoon's Posset Cup where the six real ales available were: Greene King IPA at just £1.77 a pint; Brains SA Gold, Exmoor Stag and Sharp's Doom Bar all at £2.55, Greene King Abbot Ale at £2.77; and Exmoor Beast for £2.95. A large and airy pub, this newbuild Wetherspoon pub is on the main bus route making it an excellent place to finish a crawl.

For those of you interested in statistics, our walk had totalled almost exactly four miles all mostly in sight of sea water. We had covered six pubs and we had 21 different real ales to choose from. Not bad for a small town. The ale brand which featured most often on the evening was Greene King *IPA* at three, which surprisingly beat *Doom Bar's* two. More surprising, perhaps Butcombe *Original* was only found once. The average price of the ales on the night was £3.97, or £4.48 if Wetherspoon's prices are taken out of the equation. Shortly after the walk it was revealed that all three of Portishead's entries in the 2024 *Good Beer Guide* had been included in this walk. Congratulations to each of them. You can of course purchase a copy of the guide to find out which the three were.

Neil Ravenscroft

'Watering Holes in the Desert'

Brought to you from Weston-super-Mare

ith the distraction of late summer holidays and rain, as well as a frustrating decline in public transport facilities, our campaigning activities have been somewhat restricted.

Nevertheless, we managed most of our plans. Three Weston-super-Mare CAMRA sub-branch members recall the events.

Sat 7 Oct: **Taunton Crawl** (Bill Barnes)

The much delayed trip to Taunton finally happened. Four of us met on the train to Taunton, led by Robin E Wild, who had done two previous recces for this tour (as detailed in the last *Pints West*).

The first pub, the **Ale House**, was a short walk from the station. Here I tried the Marstons 61 Deep and Butcombe Haka. There was also Draught Bass. Moving on to the Kings Arms – a further 10-minute walk – for lunch, accompanied by Timothy Taylor Landlord, one of four beers available on handpump. Heading south we crossed the River Tone to reach the renamed **Hideout** which had two beers and two ciders on handpump. I tried both beers, Hardy & Hanson's Olde Trip (bringing back memories of the **Olde Trip to Jerusalem** in Nottingham) and Greene King's Bonkers Conkers brown ale. Continuing south we came to our furthest pub, the **Cricketers**, where I had Wolfpack Second Row session IPA and St Austell Tribute. Our last pub was the Perkin Warbeck, a typical Wetherspoon, where I tried Elland 1872 Porter and Peerless Knee-Buckler IPA.

From here we returned to the station for the train home following an interesting variety of pubs and beer. Many thanks to Robin for a thoroughly researched trip, and thank goodness GWR were running to schedule on the day!

Sat 30 Sep: Worle Wander (Andy Burt)

I led a small group of people around Worle on a sunny Saturday afternoon, starting at the Parish Pump where I met up with one of the group, Frank, for a nice pint of Butcombe Original. Then we went to the Nut Tree, meeting others: Will, Liz, Paul and Poppy the dog. That was the only pub with a choice of which beer to drink: Bath Ales Gem, St Austell Tribute and Proper Job, and Butcombe Haka. Afterwards, with Frank and Will, I went on to the Old Kings Head where the only beer on offer was St Austell Tribute. We then went to the Lamb where we had Butcombe Original then, finally, to the Golden Lion, finishing the day with Sharp's Doom Bar. The group had a great afternoon, even though the beer selection generally wasn't great – rather limited except for the Nut Tree; they were all in good condition.

Sat 28 Oct: Bleadon & Uphill Crawl (Laurie Jackson)

A small group (five at the start) decided to venture to Bleadon and Uphill by bus to visit pubs not visited for some years. Our first stop in Bleadon was the Queens Arms. This clearly is popular for its food, including some unusual bar snacks, as well as a good range of Butcombe beers: *Original, Rare Breed, Gold* and *Haka,* which all were in good condition (after the end-of-barrel *Original* was changed).



The range of Butcombe beers at the Queens Arms, Bleadon

Next, we went to the **Catherines Inn**, another food-led pub, but with a disappointing beer offering: the Greene King *Abbot* was not on, although the pump clip had not been reversed! The Green King *IPA*, however, was available and in good condition. The final Bleadon visit was to the **Anchor**. This excellent, old-fashioned pub unfortunately had both pump clips reversed, so no real ale could be sampled. This was compensated for by a log fire, very welcome on this wet and chilly day, and by a rarely seen Harry's cider.

The group then moved by bus to Uphill, visiting first the Ship, where both the Otter Ale and Timothy Taylor Boltmaker were in very good condition, and this was the cheapest pub of the day. Here our group expanded to seven WsM CAMRA members plus Poppy the dog. Our next and final pub of the day was the Dolphin, just missing the Dartmoor Jail Ale, which had been enjoyed by a late joiner to the group. Despite the rain a good day was enjoyed by all.







Fat Head Brewery and Taproom

ollowing approval to brew at 127 High Street, Weston-super-Mare (see the last *Pints West*, page 37), Sam Cureton and Tom Adams opened the Fat Head Brewery and Taproom for business on 15 September 2023. Since then, a good mix of regular as well as new visitors from as far afield as Sheffield have made a home of the brewery's integral tap room.

Stepping through the glass door in the centre of the glass frontage you enter the drinking area – the taproom – a table on the left and cubicles on the right, with the bar opposite on the left. Next are the

FAT HEAD BREWERY racked casks and the brewing area, with kettles, mash tuns and storage containers through to the back with various brewing materials ready for use.

The real ales, dispensed directly from the casks conveniently racked next to the bar, are from across the seven styles brewed at Fat Head, ranging from the 4.2% Lemon Head pale ale through ESB, mild and porter styles

to Inu Pia, an IPA-style brew at 6% using New Zealand hops. Two casks are fresh on each Monday or Tuesday (depending on weekend sales), the number increasing to four by the weekend.





The selection also includes guest casks from far and wide – recently a stout from Liverpool – though more often from local breweries such as from Pinkers Craft in Weston-super-Mare. Current offerings, at the time of writing, are from Goffs Brewery in Winchcombe, Gloucestershire and Badgworth Brewhouse in Badgworth, Somerset (stretching the 'local' but this was the first cask supplied by Badgworth for public consumption). The ales – plus filled rolls, locally produced wines, cider, keg beers and soft drinks – are available seven days a week. Beer paddles are a feature, as well as non-alcoholic beer and locally supplied non-alcoholic spirits. Glasses with third- and half-pint markings, with a design unique to Fat Head, are standard issue, with two-third and pint glasses due shortly. A canning machine will be in operation soon, probably for the Fat Head *Inv Pia*, so look out for this.

Opening hours are Monday to Thursday 2pm to 10pm, Friday and Saturday noon to 11pm, and Sunday noon to 8pm.

Laurie Jackson





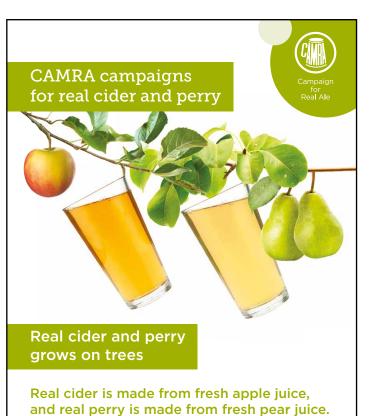
Cider

The Cider Salon

hile many readers of this magazine may not be partakers of the beverage, most will be aware of the popularity of cider in this part of the world. The "three counties" of Worcestershire, Gloucestershire and Herefordshire are rightly famous in the world of cider for the high quality of the ciders and perries produced there. Somerset, Devon and Cornwall have also always been major players in the market. Other southern counties have also been cider-producers for several centuries. Further afield, the ciders of Normandy and Brittany are well known as are the ciders of northern Spain, though fewer UK residents seem to have tried the latter.

The apple as we know it originated in the forests of Kazakhstan and it is not surprising that this tree, relatively easy to grow and generally very productive, has spread around the world in the form of thousands of varieties. For many UK-based drinkers, knowledge of the availability of cider beyond the confines of the regions mentioned earlier is rather limited, and this is where the Cider Salon comes in. This is an annual event held in the Trinity Centre in Bristol where cider producers from parts of the world which don't have a reputation as sources of cider present their offerings for sampling, alongside producers local to the

The last event was held on August 5th and over twenty producers were present from the UK and a dozen from far-away lands. There was a large presence from the USA, a country where, in certain areas at least, there has been a long tradition of cider-making, probably dating from not long after the first arrivals of Brits from the West Country. There were exhibitors from Virginia, New York, Oregon, Michigan,



Naturally fermented and free from concentrate or artificial processing.

> To find out more visit: camra.org.uk/cider



Fine Cider Company

Vermont, North Carolina and Washington. Also present were makers from Canada, Norway, Sweden and Hungary. The latter was interesting to the author, who lived there from 1993 to 2000 and found that the Hungarians didn't seem to have a word for cider in those days!

Many of the non-UK countries have their own varieties of apples. One exhibitor, Riley's of British Colombia, Canada, had on show one volume of an eight-volume series of beautifully-drawn sketches of apples from North America. The series described several thousand varieties. However, there were a number of ciders which were made



Riley's & Seattle cider

Nailsea MicroPub's first four years

n September the Nailsea MicroPub celebrated four years of trading and to mark the achievement customers were treated to a tap takeover with Fine Tuned Brewery and freshly prepared pizzas.

The pub opened its doors on 27th September 2019 and has since built a great reputation for real ales, craft beers and ciders, and for being one of Nailsea's smallest and friendliest pubs.

For much of the four years since trading began, Covid has hung over the hospitality industry like a dark cloud. During the height of the pandemic, while all hospitality venues were closed, the team at the pub offered a collection and delivery service of real ales so customers could still get their favourite tipple. This was recognised by a special award from Bristol & District branch – given to just a dozen or so pubs in the branch area – for 'Lockdown Hero Services to Beer'.

There have been ups and downs since opening four years ago, but mainly ups. Obviously the pandemic had an effect, but luckily they have some really loyal customers who came back after lockdown.

Nailsea Micropub is definitely a community pub, with many of the customers becoming genuine friends of hosts Mark and Carolyn. With



the current cost-of-living difficulties a lot of people aren't going out and spending money on nights out like they once were, so it's more important to have a good community atmosphere.

The pub prides itself on sourcing quality real ales from not only local breweries but also from further afield. Through their rotation of drinks they have had around 450 different beers over the past four years, and introduced a lot of breweries that many people may not have heard of.

They credit their success to following the model of the micropub and striving to offer



something new to the area. Apart from the ale, drinkers can also enjoy a wide range of ciders, gins, spirits and wine.

Looking ahead Mark and Carolyn are planning a number of tap takeovers, quiz nights and live music in the coming months.

As so many pubs, restaurants and hotels have sadly shut up shop due to energy price increases and the pandemic, it's great news for the Bristol area that community-minded venues like this are still going strong.

Richard Aldridge



from well-known eating apples, such as Katy. Such ciders are much lighter in flavour than those from the West Country and tend to be higher in acidity. Some say these are the more refreshing ciders but they really do need to be served slightly chilled since cider has similar characteristics to white wine and should be treated similarly.

It was noteworthy that the presentation of almost all ciders was in 750-millilitre champagne-style bottles, some corked but mostly crown-capped. Cider has a bit of a dilemma in that it has been, in the UK, traditionally drunk in volumes of pints and genuine, unadulterated cider can be quite strong, at least 5.5% ABV but often well over 6%. There are records of hot summers where the alcohol content has been as high as 10%. For non-mainstream cider-makers, there is an increasing tendency to now sell in the 750ml format, not solely because it can command a higher price, but also because it gives a greater prestige to these products. Felix Nash of the Fine Cider Company (www.thefinecider.company) was there to present a range of ciders in this format, including "ice cider", made by allowing the apples to freeze over winter prior to thawing and pressing, plus, naturally, his book Fine Cider.

For those interested in cider beyond the usual fare that is presented in this locality, the *Cider Salon* (www.cidersalon.co.uk) is highly recommended.



Upstairs at the elegant Trinity Centre

Bristol Beer Festival 2023

he twenty-fourth CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival ran from Thursday 16th to Sunday 19th November 2023 at City Hall, College Green, Bristol. We hope that everyone who attended had a great time. After a trade session and five public sessions the festival finally closed at 5pm on Sunday with a great range of 50 real ales and 13 ciders still available.

The Bristol Beer Festival would not exist without the hard work put in by a lot of unpaid CAMRA volunteers to plan, set up, run and then take down the event, so a big thank you to everyone who contributed towards it.

Sponsorship deals help to balance the festival budget and keep prices down for customers, so our thanks also go to the main sponsors Arbor Ales and LWC Drinks and all the other pubs and breweries that took out adverts in the programme, sponsored the tokens or sections of the stillage, or donated prizes for the games. So thanks again to ... pubs: Bank Tavern, Cornubia, Gryphon, Shakespeare Tavern; breweries: Arbor, Butcombe, Exeter, Fierce & Noble, Moor Beer, Nuttycombe, On Point, Otter, St Austell/Bath Ales, Uley; others: Chris Hull (Pig & Pen), LWC.

Some judging sessions were organised by the branch tasting panel. All tastings were done blind, and a beer from all breweries featured at the festival were judged. The results of their deliberations for beer of the festival were as follows: 1st Elland 1872 Porter, 2nd Orkney Dark Island, 3rd Long Man Rising Giant, 4th Cumbrian Ales Loweswater Gold.

The ciders and perries were also judged by the cider team, with Dorset Nectar's *Sweet Maiden* being declared the winner.

Richard Brooks













The CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2024

he new (2024) *Good Beer Guide* was published in September and the branch had a successful local launch at the Kings Head in Victoria Street, Bristol. I hope that by now many readers will have bought the new guide either as a book or as an app for a mobile device (or both). If not, copies are still available via the CAMRA website at shop.camra.org.uk/books (or from the App Store or Google Play for the app).

The process for selecting pubs for inclusion in the next (2025) *Good Beer Guide* (GBG) is now underway and we urgently need members to help gather information about the beer quality in them, preferably by scoring their quality on CAMRA's national database. Beer scores are the main factor in the selection process, so all scores recorded will influence which pubs are included in the next GBG.

In order to ensure that the selection process for the GBG includes the whole of the branch area on a fair basis we need more beer scores for more pubs. It would be helpful if members could score beers they drink wherever they are, but particularly in the rural parts of South Gloucestershire and Somerset where fewer beer scores tend to be recorded than in city centre locations.

Beer scoring can be done quite easily via WhatPub on a smartphone or computer, or the GBG app if you have downloaded it. So whenever possible, please score the quality of the beers you drink on the scale below:

- o. No draught real ale available.
- 1. Poor. Beer is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable reluctance. You may have been unlucky and were served the last pint in the barrel. If the beer is exchanged without a problem and taken off sale you may use your discretion and not score the beer at all.
- **2. Average.** Competently kept, but the beer doesn't inspire in any way. It is drinkable, but you may decide to try a different beer in the pub or move on to another pub. Below what is expected for the GBG.
- **3. Good.** Good beer in good form. A GBG user would not be disappointed with it. You may decide to seek out the beer again in the same session and visit this pub again.
- 4. Very Good. Excellent beer in excellent condition. Exceeds expectations.



2024 Good Beer Guide launch at the Kings Head (photo by Tony Durbin)

5. Perfect. Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.

You also have the option to use half points if your opinion of the beer falls between two categories, and remember that you should base your score on the **quality** of the beer, not whether it is a particular beer or beer style which you prefer.

So please help in the selection process for the next edition of the Good Beer Guide by scoring the quality of the beers you drink, either in our branch area or wherever you are in the country. Your scores will have an influence on which pubs are included in the GBG.

Martin Gray



The 2024 CAMRA Good Beer Guide is available from the CAMRA on-line shop. To order yours go to **shop1.camra.org.uk** and search for 'Good Beer Guide' – or scan the QR code to go straight there.

Why your beer scores count!



Not enough scores Not enough scorers NOT a GBG candidate



Enough scores Enough scorers A GBG candidate



Your pub Needs Your beer scores

Your beer scores help decide which pubs go into the Good Beer Guide (GBG) and ultimately affects which pubs go onto the Pub of the Year candidate list.

Enter your scores in WhatPub or the GBG App.



Opinion: Reverse ABV creep and why it's happening

n August, the British government launched an overhauled alcohol duty system, affecting all UK producers of beverages from wine and spirits to beer and cider. While the changes were numerous, and in some cases complex, the largest fundamental move was that alcohol would be taxed at the same rate, per litre produced dependent on their ABV (alcohol by volume), rather than each sector having its own separate duty system.

One of the most intriguing changes affects drinks being produced at the lower end of the alcohol spectrum. Prior to the legislation's introduction, breweries would have received a discounted rate for drinks rated at 2.8 per cent ABV or lower. Under the new system it has been extended to account for drinks rated at 3.4 per cent or less. The savings that can be made will likely encourage producers to focus on drinks that are lower in alcohol and therefore, in the government's eyes, carry less long-term health risks. Encouraging news for a market where younger customers are increasingly focused on mindful consumption and wellness.

Breweries large and small have quickly and understandably taken advantage of this. Greene King was quick to say it would be "crafting" the ABV of its IPA from 3.6 to 3.4 per cent, while Danish brewing giant Carlsberg applied the same reduction to its previously 3.8 per cent flagship lager.

Plenty of small, independent breweries are also getting in on the act, with Salford-based Marble brewery reducing the ABV of its best-selling pale ale Pint from 3.8 to 3.4 per cent. In London, the Five Points Brewing Company has chosen to launch a 3.4 per cent product exclusively for the cask market. Called Five Points Gold, this will sit alongside the Hackney brewery's core beers, that have so far remained unaltered.

The savings made producing a beer below this new threshold are, quite frankly, dramatic. At a time when producers have their backs well and truly against the wall due to the inflation driven costs that have made trading conditions as challenging as many will remember, they are understandably quite welcome. For example, most large breweries will pay £21.01 per litre of pure alcohol produced in products rated 3.5 to 8.4 per cent but will only pay £9.27 per litre produced in beers rated 1.3 to 3.4 per cent — beers rated below 1.3 per cent do not pay duty.

When rounded up, at the full duty rate a brewery is paying 42 pence per pint at 3.5 per cent. If this was lowered to 3.4 per cent, it would pay just 18p per pint. That might not sound like much, but over production volumes, it suddenly creates a far different picture.

Based on the above rate if, over a year, a small brewery produces 5,000 hectolitres (880,000 pints) of a beer it has reduced from 3.5 to 3.4 per cent, it will make a saving of £211,400. That's enough to cover the wages of several members of staff, or offset the dramatically rising price of ingredients, utility bills and business rates, some of which have increased by more than 50 per cent (or more) over the past 18 months.

Now let's look at a beer like Greene King IPA, of which around 32 million pints are reportedly produced each year. Reducing the ABV will save the brewery around £7.5m. That will likely bring a smile to the face of its owners, Hong Kong-based property company CK Asset Holdings, which, coincidentally, is registered to pay its corporation tax in the Cayman Islands.

Admittedly, for brevity's sake, there are other workings I have omitted from the above. Smaller producers, for example, will also benefit from what's now elegantly known as Small Producers Relief, a sliding scale that gives further duty discounts based on overall output. There is also a new, additional 9.2 per cent discount called draught relief, applied to all beer sold on premises in 20-litre containers or above, which all breweries receive regardless of their size. However, to save this short piece from becoming a drawn-out mathematical exercise, I have kept things simple by using the base duty rate, but this is for example's sake only

Around five or six years ago I was introduced to a beer-market phenomenon which was called ABV creep. This applied to the increase

in sales of stronger beers, potentially influenced by the increase in popularity of stronger imports from the United States, coupled with the success of homegrown beers such as Thornbridge Jaipur (5.9 per cent) and BrewDog Punk IPA (5.4 per cent). Duvel is a good example, as sales of the 8.5 per cent Belgian ale were growing in the years leading up to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Post pandemic however, the popularity of stronger brews seems to be on the wane, a fact that will only be hastened by the introduction of lower-strength beers, the new duty rules acting as a catalyst for this. It's something I have started referring to as reverse ABV creep and, due to the financial struggles that breweries are currently facing, I expect it to continue for some time.

Does it mean the death of beers in the popular 3.8 per cent to 4.4 per cent range? I don't think so, as I feel consumer demand for beers of this strength will remain high. It is inevitable however, to assume that we will see an increasing number of 3.4 per cent beers available as breweries seek to take advantage of the new duty legislation, whether it's a small operation desperately trying to recoup lost margin, or a far larger one doing its best to keep its shareholders smiling.

Matthew Curtis

The above article first appeared in *What's Brewing*, CAMRA's on-line news site, in November 2023. wb.camra.org.uk

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This is what Justin Hawke of Moor Beer in Bristol said on the subject just before the duty changes were implemented:

"Beers below 3.5%: let's start with the positive. Beers in this category will see a drop in beer duty. Consequently 3.4% is going to become an ABV you will see many beers at from pretty much every brewery. We will be lowering *Revival* and *Nano Cask* from 3.8% to 3.4%. Fortunately for us that is within our allowable tolerance so I would be shocked if anyone will taste a difference in the beers, but we will be able to sell them a bit cheaper than we used to. We've always been recognised as one of the best brewers of full-flavoured, low-ish ABV beers, and we're really confident that this will be a positive change for cask beer drinkers. I don't see why beers will exist any longer from 3.5% to 3.9%. It is basically a dead zone."

His post in full can be seen on the Moor Beer website at: www.moorbeer.co.uk/moor-words/changes-to-beer-duty

Is it time to stop saying 'real ale'?

recently posted a question in CAMRA's sparky chatroom, Discourse, intending to provoke thought. I asked whether CAMRA should stop using the term 'real ale', urging people instead to say 'cask' when they mean cask ale, and 'live beer', if they ever need a collective noun for all the different types of 'real' ale.

I have disliked the term 'real ale' for some while. It is now five years since I was involved in disambiguating it, and I had hoped that by now people would have noticed why that was done.

For those who mistrust six-syllable words, disambiguation is what you do to something that has two or more different meanings, so as to reduce the confusion this causes.

I know what I mean so you should too

I still hear people saying 'real ale' when they mean 'cask', or 'cask-conditioned' ale, and do **not** mean all the other forms of beer that have live yeast in them. 'Cask' singles out cask ale for special attention, leaving 'live beer' as a more accurate collective term for all beers that condition in their final container, be that a cask, bottle, can, tank or keg.

However, I have another, more profound objection to 'real ale', which is that it is casually insulting.

The term was originally coined in 1973 as a plainer way of saying 'authentic'. It was a cheeky way of suggesting that all types of beer except for cask (and a tiny handful of bottle-conditioned beers) were 'inauthentic', or 'imitation' if you prefer.

In those days, the beer alternatives to cask were mostly brewed with adjunctive sugars substituted for malted barley, cursed by dismally

poor hop recipes, fermented too quickly, and barely conditioned at all, so the put-down was well-earned. However, that was then and this is now.

Although such second-rate beers still exist, they are now dismissed alongside many others that have carefully designed grain bills, intricate hop recipes, careful fermentation, and a degree of conditioning that might even include barrel-ageing. To suggest that these are 'unreal', or 'fake' suggests a lack of knowledge in the person using the jibe, questioning whether they really know their subject.

The voice of the people

The response to my thread was interesting.

Some respondents began by suggesting that the letters RA would need to be removed from our CAM, though given the number of organisations that long ago turned their historic names into abbreviations, I don't follow that at all.

Others, rather predictably, suggested that this was a sign of CAMRA turning its back on cask ale and, for some reason, 3.8% ABV session beers in particular. I didn't follow that either. By calling cask ale 'cask', there is surely a better chance of it gaining a wider fan base, by resisting the urge to insult those better beers that younger beer lovers like, and giving cask an identity they might be able to support without becoming a fogey.

Changing the record

Sadly, over the years, 'real ale' has gained an image in younger eyes of being a warm, flat, dull type of beer, usually brown-ish and served in poor condition, eulogised by elitist old men who like to complain.

I would much prefer to see cask ale starting to get a reputation for being, as I once overheard it being described by a young attendee at the Cambridge Beer Festival a few years ago, "The beer you drink when you are looking for something good but don't want to get pissed."

We have common cause currently, across the whole of our diverse Campaign, that cask ale is badly in need of assistance. Its numbers are falling as it loses its natural habitat, the pub. In addition it is threatened by the post-COVID revival of the global mega-breweries such as AB InBev and Heineken, neither of which deigns to brew it any longer.

Suggesting that we should give it back its name is my contribution to a cask revival, alongside every other type of good beer made by independent brewers. In the UK, cask was the original craft beer, and my generation of cask drinkers were the first craft beer lovers.

My grandson, who is 18 months old, is currently experimenting with words. My hope is that when he gets to the age that his buying choices start to matter, he too will ask for 'cask'. For now, he just prefers the word to 'real', for the noise it makes when he says it.

Tim Webb





Tim Webb is an international beer judge, beer writer and broadcaster who has "campaigned for better beer since before handpumps became fashionable." He lives 45 minutes by train from Temple Meads station and can still be found sometimes in the tap houses and pubs of Bristol. His many books include The World Atlas of Beer (Octopus: 3rd edition 2020 UK, 2021 US), co-written with Stephen Beaumont, and Beer Breaks (CAMRA Books: May 2022).

Two beery trips to the south east of England

s well as the 'Beery days out from Bristol' in the last few editions of Pints West, my like minded friend 'Yug' and I have enjoyed several longer trips to different areas of the UK during 2023. We like to do this kind of trip roughly every two to three months. Careful advance research usually locates cheap train and hotel deals – then the serious planning begins! Having chosen a base location we then set about researching pubs there and in neighbouring towns and cities. Whilst the Good Beer Guide is useful we also make extensive use of WhatPub, which is CAMRA'S database of virtually all places that sell beer in the UK. Being on-line this is normally a lot more comprehensive and up to date. It is also great for locating newer openings or places that sell mainly or only keg beers. We both love both cask and quality keg beers. We then make detailed plans of which pubs we want to visit, their opening hours and days and directions. Here are two trips that we enjoyed from the first half of 2023. Too many pubs to feature them all in detail

January 2023: Colchester and Chelmsford, Essex

We picked out Essex as somewhere that neither of us had spent much time. Having chosen a Sunday-to-Tuesday stay, even though we were staying in Chelmsford, opening hours in our target pubs dictated that we head to Colchester first. Travelling from Bristol via London gave us a chance to take the new Elizabeth Line from Paddington to Liverpool Street. This is a fantastic upgrade on the older tube lines, and very fast too. Annoyingly trains from Colchester mainline to the town centre don't run on Sundays so we had to walk it. Pubs visited were as follows.



Magnet, Colchester



Ale House, Colchester

Magnet (134 North Station Road): very friendly, larger than average micropub with three changing cask beers and a good selection on keg.

Ale House (82 Butt Road): up to 10 cask beers, though less on our visit probably because it was Sunday.

Fat Cat (65 Butt Road): directly opposite the Ale House, with up to nine real ales and doing a roaring trade in Sunday roasts on our visit.

New Inn (36 Chapel Street South): old-fashioned proper two-bar pub with six changing cask ales and food Wednesday to Sunday.

Three Wise Monkeys / Other Monkey (60 High Street / 5-6 St Nicholas Street): two pubs adjacent and obviously

linked. Great range of cask and keg including many brewed by them. Food served too. We ate well here.

Queen Street Brewhouse (7 Queen Street): an unplanned stop which turned out to be our favourite Colchester pub. Not now a brewhouse and no cask beer on the day, but a very eclectic range of unusual UK and world keg offerings. Full of beer memorabilia and a large screen showing ancient silent movies. The two licensees were initially gruff then very entertaining. I have long been the butt of many jokes about my early college years when I 'followed the bear' drinking dreadfully weak tasteless Hofmeister lager. So when I saw that a relaunched version at 5% was present, it had to be done! It turned out to be a flavoursome proper European-style lager that you'd be happy to drink on holiday. Yes, really! Why they want to call it by the same name escapes me.

Victoria Inn (10 North Station Road): just time for a swift half from the choice of six changing cask at this excellent pub on the way back to the station.



Three Wise Monkeys, Colchester

With more time we'd have visited the *Good Beer Guide* pubs **Purple Dog, Odd One Out** and **British Grenadier**. Colchester is clearly a very good place for beer lovers.

It was then off to Chelmsford. An old college friend, Ian Harris, has lived here for over 30 years and had promised to pop out for a beer. He ended up joining us for the rest of the evening and the whole of the next day! This included a few pubs he'd never set foot in!

The top beer pubs in Chelmsford are pretty evenly split into two parts of the town – one group around the railway station and the other in the Moulsham Road area near our Travelodge hotel. With time limited we confined ourselves to three pubs in the latter area.

First up was the Woolpack (23 Mildmay Road). Although this is a Greene King pub, it is one of the few that are allowed to sell a full range of genuine guest beers – up to eight in total. A nice comfortable and friendly place.

The Orange Tree (6 Lower Anchor Street) was a great pub with six or seven beers including from the local Chelmsford Brewery.

Last pub of Sunday was the Queen's Head (30 Lower Anchor Street), owned by Crouch Vale, with two of their beers and two quests.

We decided to major on the area around the station on Monday lunchtime. Because it opened at 11am we started at the **Golden Fleece** in Duke Street, a cavernous old pub with many sports TVs and a couple of cask beers.

Then a slow stroll to the Railway Tavern (63 Duke Street) opposite the station. Two regular and five changing guests adorn the bar in this surprisingly large, long, narrow old pub.

It was now time to meet Ian and his wife Sue for lunch at the Ship (18 Broomfield Road) still very close to the station. Another Greene King pub that is allowed several guest beers. This was a very comfortable nautically themed pub with excellent food.

Back on to Duke Street for the Original Plough, a smart Mitchells and Butlers pub with three regular and three guest beers. Great to get Orkney *Dark Island* here but prices seemed about 15-20% higher than other local pubs. Sue now decided to leave lan at our mercy knowing it'd be some time before she saw him again!

Just down the road lies the Royal Steamer (1Townfield Street), a wedge-shaped pub with two local independent beers and two guests. Not in the *Good Beer Guide* but worth a peak.

Back to the station and in a couple of railway arches sits the Ale House (24-26 Viaduct Road), not to be confused with the one in Colchester. Ian confessed that he'd never been in here as he'd "heard it was horrible" and his daughter apparently hates it. We had to virtually drag him in. Two hours later we had to virtually drag him out as he wanted more! This large pub caters admirably for lovers of both cask (nine in all styles) and keg (eight fonts). We pointed out a rhubarb and custard sour keg beer to Ian who was amazed at it even existing. Two halves later and he was converted to sours! Definitely our favourite Chelmsford pub.

We then strolled back to the Moulsham Street area and visited a couple more pubs: United Brethren (New Writtle Street) with two Chelmsford beers and two guests; and Black Horse (164 Moulsham Street) with three or four changing beers.

Two of our target bars do not open Sunday evenings or Mondays, so we planned to do both at opening time on Tuesday. Both are in the same section of Moulsham Street. The Hop Beer Shop, apparently Essex's first micropub, was open offering its changing range of four gravity-fed cask ales and over 100 bottled beers. Sadly for us, Hopsters almost opposite remained steadfastly closed that day. So it was time to head home. I've already noticed two new interesting beer pubs in Chelmsford plus a national finalist in CAMRA's Pub of the Year 2023 competition less than two miles away, so we may have to return and drag lan to a few more pubs!

We were running early so decided to detrain at Stratford and seek out the Tap East brewpub (7 International Square) in the huge shopping centre there. This was very good with a great choice of own brews and guest beers in both cask and keg form. It is directly opposite the entrance to Stratford International station. It was then the Elizabeth line back to Paddington to visit two contrasting pubs. A first visit to the splendidly ornate Victoria in Strathearn Place (Fuller's) was followed by another debut in the Bear at 27 Spring Sreet, very close to the station. This is the latest in the much-loved Craft Beer Company chain and one of their finest pubs. Six ever-changing cask beers from small brewers are complemented by 29 keg fonts for beers from all over the UK and abroad. See Tim Webb's article on this pub in the last edition (Pints West 135, page 40).

April 2023: The Bermondsey Beer Mile

A few of us had been wanting to attempt this famous London pub crawl for some time. Basically it consists of around 18 modern brewery taps that are pretty much all in old railway arches and all in a line from near London Bridge station out into Bermondsey – a distance of around a mile and a half, possibly more. Although 'the mile' is more famous for 'craft keg' beers there is quite a lot of cask on offer too. The beer scene there is constantly evolving and changing so you are advised to do your own up-to-date research. Even though we researched, some places had closed and some moved recently.

We had chosen April Fool's Day and it felt like it when Yug, Sid and I were delayed on the up journey for 100 minutes, and the return train by 120 minutes (flooding at Chippenham). Other friends, Clive from Farnborough and Allan all the way from Cumbria, were unaffected and beat us there easily. Our frustration was eased by a later 100% fare refund and a cheeky 150% for Sid!

We eventually met up at the Southwark Brewing Company Tap Room (46 Druid Street), the only venue to very much major on cask rather than keg, with around six of their cask beers at markedly low prices for London. Great start.

Next up at 80 Druid Street was the **Barrel Project** – no cask as such but a bewildering array of keg and key-keg brews at varying stages of barrel-aging. One for the true aged beer enthusiast.

After finding Hiver beers temporarily closed, we moved along to 118 Druid Street to Arch House, the brewery tap for Anspach & Hobday. Whilst majoring on keg, there are several of their beers on cask.





Part of the Bermondsey Beer Mile

After a relatively long walk of a few hundred yards you come to a whole load of famous name brewery taps in a row. First up is our very own Moor Beer Vaults (71 Enid Street). Generally one changing Moor cask beer to complement the full live keg range. Literally next door lies Gosnells Meadery Taproom which we skipped and next door again lies Cloudwater Tap Room, the London outlet for the famous Manchester craft beer pioneers. Cask is often but not always available here.

A short way further along Enid Street lies the tap room of the Bianca Road Brewing Company, small brewery that originated in Peckham. No actual cask here but the five of us agreed that the beer was amongst the very best all day. If you like quality keg seek them out. Apparently they have opened a second outlet almost next door under the Dog House brand, the Dog House Tap.

Next up still in Enid Street was Mash Paddle Brewery Taproom, originally set up as a place for home brewers to brew their own but now a taproom too. No cask available on that day. Just off Enid Street in Dockley Road industrial estate is Kernel brewery Arch 7 Taproom, home of one of the greatest original purveyors of craft keg. Now offering one changing cask beer too.

Skipping a couple of places that were not actual breweries, the longest walk of the day took us on to the Outpost (Three Hills Brewing taproom) at 7 Almond Street. One or two cask plus up to 16 kegs, both from their own Northamptonshire brewery and guests.

Perhaps understandably my memory of the last couple of stops is a little hazy! Our target Partizan brewery appeared to have moved or closed, so a quick beer in the **Eebria Taproom** (keg only) was followed by a last beer in **Spartan Brewery Taproom**. The latter appears to have closed and reopened as **Substation** since.

As you can tell, the 'Mile' is a constantly changing scene so if you fancy a crack at it, my advice is: do your research and be prepared for late changes. There are an amazing range of brews available – many are strong, so pace yourself, eat well before and during, and think about the ABVs especially early on.

We need to go back sometime soon as we missed several bars, some have changed too. Maybe start at the other end?

Vince Murray

Conrad Frysol RIP

e were very sad to hear that Conrad Frysol, from Kingswood in Bristol, passed away towards the end of September 2023. He had fought a long brave battle with illness.

Together with his long-time partner Wendy, he was a familiar sight in many good real ale pubs and at local beer festivals for many years. Latterly they were regulars in the Lyons Den in Kingswood. Always happy to chat to anybody, he remained cheerful and good humoured right to the end. Rest in peace, Conrad; you died too young.

Vince Murray

Directory of breweries in the Bristol & District CAMRA branch area

Arbor Ales

181 Easton Road, Easton, Bristol, BS5 oHQ www.arborales.co.uk

Ashley Down

15 Wathen Road, St Andrew's, Bristol, BS6 5BY

Basement Beer

32 Upper York Street, Bristol, BS2 8QN www.basementbeer.co.uk

Bath Ales

Hare House, Southway Drive, Warmley, Bristol, BS30 5LW www.bathales.com

Brewhouse & Kitchen

31-35 Cotham Hill, Clifton, Bristol, BS6 6JY www.brewhouseandkitchen.com/venue/bristol

Bristol Beer Factory
The Old Brewery, Durnford Street, Bristol, BS₃ 2AW
www.bristolbeerfactory.co.uk

Bruhaha

156-158 Wells Road, Totterdown, Bristol, BS4 2AG www.bruhaha.beer

Butcombe

Cox's Green, Wrington, Bristol, BS40 5PA www.butcombe.com

Cheddar Ales

Winchester Farm, Draycott Road, Cheddar, Somerset, BS27 3RP www.cheddarales.co.uk

Clevedon

Unit 1, Tweed Road Industrial Estate, Tweed Road, Clevedon, BS21 6RR www.clevedonbrewery.co.uk

Dawkins Ales

Unit 2, Lawnwood Industrial Units, Lawnwood Road, Easton, Bristol, BS5 oEF (also had premises in Timsbury, Bath) www.dawkins-ales.co.uk Closed May 2023

Epic Beers (Pitchfork Ales & 3D Beer)

The Brewery, West Hewish, Weston-super-Mare, BS24 6RR Closed – company went into liquidation 1st March 2023 Some of the brands now made by Nuttycombe Brewery

Fat Head

127 High Street, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1HP

Fierce & Noble

25 Mina Road, St Werburghs, Bristol, BS2 9TA www.fierceandnoble.com

Good Chemistry

Unit 2, William Street, St Philips, Bristol, BS2 oRG www.goodchemistrybrewing.co.uk

Grain Alchemist

Unit 4, Windmill Farm Business Centre, Bartley Street, Bedminster, Bristol, BS₃ 4DB Closed October 2023

Hop Union (previously GWB)

20 Bonville Road, Brislington, Bristol, BS4 5QH www.hopunionbrewery.co.uk

Incredible Brewing Company

214-224 Broomhill Road, Brislington, Bristol, BS4 5RG www.incrediblebrewingcompany.com

King Street Brew House

King Street, Welsh Back, Bristol, BS1 4RR www.kingstreetbrewhouse.co.uk/brewery

Left Handed Giant

Unit 3, Wadehurst Industrial Park, St Philips Road, Bristol, BS2 oJE & Hawkins Lane, Finzels Reach, Bristol, BS1 6EU www.lefthandedgiant.com

Little Martha

23 Oxford Street, St Phillips, Bristol, BS2 oQT www.littlemarthabrewing.co.uk

Lost and Grounded

91 Whitby Road, Brislington, Bristol, BS4 4AR www.lostandgrounded.co.uk

Moor Beer

Days Road, St Philips, Bristol, BS2 oQS www.moorbeer.co.uk

New Bristol

20a Wilson Street, St Pauls, Bristol, BS2 9HH www.newbristolbrewery.co.uk

New Street Brewing (brewpub: Volunteer Tavern)

9 New Street, St Judes, Bristol, BS2 9DX www.volunteertavern.co.uk

On Point

Herbert Street, Bedminster, Bristol, BS₃ 1FJ www.onpointbrewco.com

Pinkers

148 Quantock Road, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 4DP www.pinkerscraftbrewery.co.uk

Portishead

The Port Bar, The Precinct, High Street, Portishead, BS20 6AH www.portisheadbrewing.com

Tapestry by PROPS

Unit B, Totterdown Bridge Industrial Estate, Totterdown, Bristol, BS2 oXH www.tapestrybrewery.com

Three Engineers

The Cow Byers, Winterbourne Medieval Barn, Church Lane, Winterbourne, BS36 1SE www.threeengineersbrewery.co.uk

Twisted Oak

The Brewery, Yeowood Farm, Iwood Lane, Wrington, BS40 5NU www.twistedoakbrewery.co.uk

Wiper & True

2-8 York Street, St Werburghs, Bristol, BS2 9XT & Unit 11, City Business Park, Easton Road, Bristol, BS5 oSP www.wiperandtrue.com

Zerodegrees

53 Colston Street, Bristol, BS1 5BA www.zerodegrees.co.uk

Directory of breweries in the Bath & Borders CAMRA branch area

Abbey Ales

The Abbey Brewery, Camden Row, Bath, BA1 5LB www.abbeyales.co.uk

Bath Brew House

14 James Street West, Bath, BA1 2BX www.thebathbrewhouse.com/brewery

Blindmans

Talbot Farm, Leighton, Nr Frome, Somerset, BA11 4PN www.blindmansbrewery.co.uk

Electric Bear

Unit 12, The Maltings, Brassmill Lane, Bath, BA1 3JL www.electricbearbrewing.com

Unit L13, Marshall Way, Commerce Park, Frome, BA11 2FB www.fromebrewingcompany.com

Golden River

Coronation Avenue, Bath, BA2 2JR goldenriverbrewery.com

Kettlesmith

16, Treenwood Industrial Estate, Bradford-on-Avon, Wilts, BA15 2AU www.kettlesmithbrewing.com

Plain Ales

Unit 17B/C, Deverill Road Trading Estate, Sutton Veny, Wilts, BA12 7BZ www.plainales.co.uk

Solution to the cryptic crossword on page 16

20 Clouded, 22 Leisure, 23 Ghost, 25 Gran, 26 Spam. Bartender, 6 Epic, 7 Arising, 8 Eagle, 14 Landladies, 16 Solar star, 18 Test mates, 28 Aliquot, 29 Tidemark, 30 Assets. Down: 1 Barbarian, 2 T-shirts, 3 Launceston, 5 Insists, 17 Draught, 19 Neck Oil, 21 Ruddles, 23 Grog, 24 Pragmatism, 27 Old Spot, Across: 1 Bottle, 4 Abbey ale, 10 Rehouse, 11 Raining, 12 Atrocities, 13 Pike, 15

Ralph's Ruin

The Royal Oak, Lower Bristol Road, Twerton, Bath, BA2 3BW www.ralphsruin.co.uk

Somer Valley

Knoll Farm, Peasedown St John, Bath, BA2 8PL somervalleyfarms.com/somer-valley-brewing

Three Daggers
47 Westbury Road, Edington, Westbury, Wilts, BA13 4PG www.threedaggers.co.uk

True Story

Unit 7, Curtis Centre, Kingdom Avenue, Westbury, Wilts, BA13 4EW truestorybrewing.com

9 Commerce Close, West Wilts Trading Estate, Westbury, BA13 4LS www.twisted-brewing.com

Wessex

Rye Hill Farm, Longbridge Deverill, Warminster, BA12 7DE

Wookey Brewing Company www.wookeyale.co.uk

Yonder

The Workshop, Rookery Farm, Binegar, Somerset, BA₃ 4UL www.brewyonder.co.uk

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Branch Diaries and Contacts

Bristol & District branch diary

- Sun 10 Dec: Branch Christmas social at the Gryphon, Bristol, starting at 7pm. Open to all CAMRA members please bring cards.
- Wed 13 Dec: Branch committee meeting at the Shakespeare Tavern, Prince Street, Bristol at 7.3opm.
- Wed 20 Dec: Bristol city centre pub walk (pubs that advertised in the Bristol Beer Festival programme) starting at the Shakespeare Tavern, Prince Street at 6.30pm, then Gryphon, Bank Tavern and Cornubia.
- Thu 28 Dec: Bristol city centre and Old Market area pub walk starting at the Old Fish Market, Baldwin Street at 1pm. All welcome.
- Sun 7 Jan: Westbury Wobble starting at the Mouse in Westbury-on-Trym at 12 noon. All welcome.
- Wed 10 Jan: Branch committee meeting at the Shakespeare Tavern, Prince Street, Bristol at 7.30pm.
- Wed 17 Jan: Minibus survey trip to West Mendips, leaving the Cornubia, Temple Street, Bristol at 6.45 pm. Price £12.
- Wed 24 Jan: Branch meeting at the Shakespeare Tavern, Prince Street, Bristol at 8pm.
- Thu i Feb: Staple Hill and Fishponds trip by public transport, starting at 7pm at the Wooden Walls, Broad Street, Staple Hill (bus no. 49 from Baldwin Street at 6.21pm). All welcome.
- Sat 10 Feb: Clifton pub walk starting at the Victoria Ale House,
 Southleigh Road at 1pm. All welcome.
- Wed 14 Feb: Branch committee meeting at the Shakespeare Tavern, Prince Street, Bristol at 7.3opm (tbc).
- Wed 21 Feb: Minibus survey trip to South Gloucestershire, leaving the Cornubia, Temple Street, Bristol at 6.45pm. Price £12.
- Wed 28 Feb: Meet & Greet branch social starting at the Inn in the Green. Horfield at 7.30pm, then the nearby

Green, Horfield at 7.30pm, then the nearby **Crafty Cow** at 8.45pm. All welcome.

There may be other events organised, or updates to one or two of the above, so keep an eye on the diary on the branch website:

camrabristol.org.uk/diary.html

Martin Gray



Bristol & District CAMRA

Web: www.camrabristol.org.uk
Twitter: @CAMRABristol
Facebook: Camra-Bristol-District
Facebook group: CAMRA Bristol Chat

Branch contact (Secretary): m.bertagne@camrabristol.org.uk Pints West contact: steve.plumridge.pintswest@gmail.com Got some news? Email it to news@camrabristol.org.uk

Weston-super-Mare

Weston CAMRA is a sub-branch of the Bristol & District branch covering Weston-super-Mare and some of the surrounding areas. Facebook: Campaign for Real Ale Weston-Super-Mare Contact: Laurie Jackson – glenfern13@icloud.com

Bath & Borders CAMRA

Web: www.bathandborderscamra.org.uk

Twitter: @BathCAMRA

Facebook: Bath-Borders-CAMRA

Branch socials contact: Denis Rahilly on 01225 791399 or 07486 884825 or email denis.rahilly@talktalk.net.

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

Weston-super-Mare sub-branch diary

- Thu 14 Dec: Bedminster & Redcliffe tour, catching the 7:10pm train from WsM. Buy return ticket to Bristol Temple Meads (same price) as we will be returning from there. Robin E Wild to lead.
- Thu 21 Dec: Seasonal Ales Crawl from Captain's Cabin at 7pm, to include the Criterion, Regency, Black Cat, Fat Head and Brit Bar.
- Jan 2024: Crawl by bus to Wrington on a Saturday (precise details to be announced).
- Jan, Feb, Mar 2024: visits to various pubs in and around the Westonsuper-Mare area (details to be announced).

Crawls outside Weston-super-Mare town centre are dependent on public transport. All events are posted, regularly reviewed and updated in the Bristol & District CAMRA diary at:

camrabristol.org.uk/diary.html

so keep an eye on that and also the sub-branch Facebook page – and note the WsM contact, Laurie Jackson, above.

Bath & Borders branch diary

- Wed 13 Dec: A social at our Pub of the Year, the Raven in Bath.
- Thu 21 Dec 7:30pm: A pre-Christmas social at the Cross Keys, Combe Down, Bath.
- Thu 28 Dec 7:30pm: a short(ish) wander around some of the pubs to the east of Bath city centre, starting at the Curfew on Cleveland Place West, followed by the Barley Mow and Pulteney Arms.
- Thu 4 Jan 7:30pm: a trip to the Alhampton Inn in Alhampton, then down the road to visit the Brook House Inn in Ansford.
- Thu 11 Jan 7:30pm: a social at the Bath Arms in Crockerton.
- Thu 18 Jan 7:30pm: a social at the Three Swans in the centre of Frome, then over to the George, a few minutes away.
- Thu 25 Jan 7:30pm: a social at the Stumble Inn, Bradford-on-Avon.
- Thu 1 Feb 7:30pm: a social at the Horse & Groom in Alfred Street, Westbury.
- Thu 8 Feb: a social at the Hope & Anchor,
 Midford
- Fri 16 & Sat 17 Feb: Bath Beer and Cider Festival.

For further events, or any updates to the above, please check the online branch diary: bathandborders.camra.org.uk/diary







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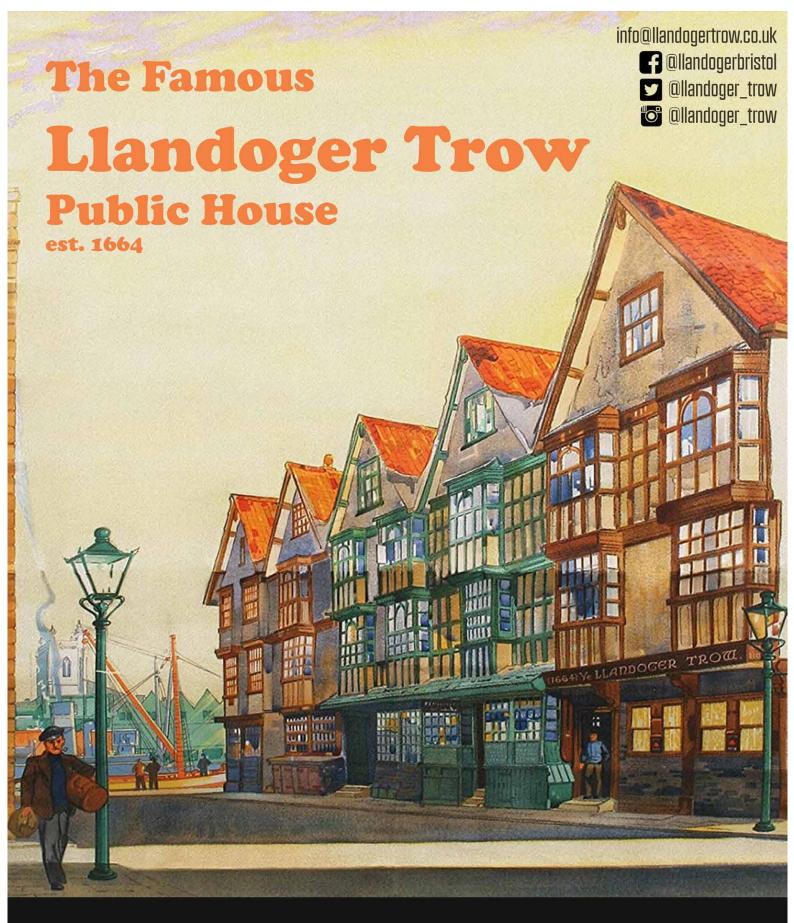
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