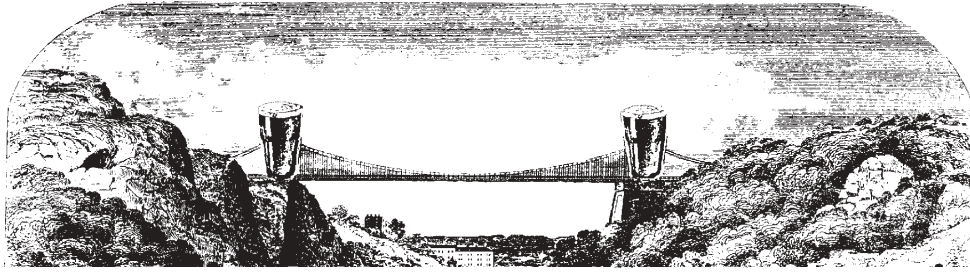




CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

AWARD-WINNING



www.camrabristol.org.uk



CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

PINTS WEST

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

Looking for a beer festival?



Great British Beer Festival

Over 450 real ales plus cider, perry and international beer.

2-6 August, London Olympia

Featuring live music from Chas & Dave, Los Pacaminos and The Rollin' Stoned

Tuesday - 5.00pm - 10.30pm
 Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 12 Noon - 10.30pm
 Saturday - 11.00am - 7.00pm
 Entry £6 - £7 concessions for CAMRA members.

Ticket Hotline 01727 867201

Organised by CAMRA

Great British Beer Festival 2005 London Olympia Campaign for Real Ale

£10 OFF BEER

Organised by CAMRA

*Discount applies to single session tickets booked by 21st July

SCARCELY a month goes by nowadays when there is not a beer festival to be had somewhere or other. So popular can real, traditional, cask-conditioned beers be that everyone seems to want to get in on the act. (When did you last see a festival promoting "smoothflow" beers?)

Such festivals come in all shapes and sizes, from small real ale promotions in pubs, though charity events held in marquees on the village green or in the village hall, to large-scale events such as CAMRA's annual Bristol Beer Festival at Temple Meads in March or the mammoth Great British Beer Festival held each summer in London. The coming months are no exception with much to choose from.

For a round-up of such festivals you need look no further than page two — so take a look inside now.

ALSO — what's happening to the Rose & Crown in Iron Acton? Who has won this year's Pub of the Year award? What links Gulliver's Travels to Bristol's pubs? Who makes the best beer? What gets us hopping mad? Just what has Janet gone and done again?

Step inside now to find out the answers to these questions, and much, much more...

Beer festival round-up

Pucklechurch June 17-18

In Pucklechurch there is the Revel Beer Festival, organised by a committee of villagers and now in its 29th year. This has been a main feature of the *Pucklechurch Revel* since 1976, making it one of the longest running real ale festivals in the country. It is being held on the evenings of Friday 17th and Saturday 18th June in a marquee near the Star Inn on Castle Road. It promises 28 real ales and five farmhouse ciders, along with live music and a barbecue. Tickets are available from the social club (above the village hall), the post office and the Star Inn. All proceeds go to village clubs and charities.

Bedminster June 24-26

A newcomer to the festival scene is the Princess of Wales in Westbourne Grove, Bedminster. This pub was acquired by Wickwar Brewery a number of years back, and has been selling Wickwar and changing guest

beers. Wickwar's other pub, the White Lion in Bristol city centre, has run a few very successful mini-beer festivals in recent years, and it was decided that this practice should extend to the Princess of Wales as well, partly to raise the pub's profile as it seems to be "off the beaten track" for some people.

We hope it will prove as popular and successful as the White Lion's have.

Claverham July 1-3

The enlarged Claverham Village Hall (just off the A370 at Cleeve) will welcome this year's beer festival over the weekend of 1st to 3rd July with sessions on Friday evening, Saturday afternoon, Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon. Being the third such event there they've dubbed it the Claverham "Slurd" Beer Festival. It should prove a bigger event than the previous two, with around 30 real ales mostly from Dorset, Wiltshire and Hampshire breweries, and a selection of ciders, plus a

barbecue and live music. The organisers say they have "strived to select a variety of types, strengths and flavours so there will be lots to suit even the most assiduous tastes."

From around 4.30pm on the Sunday session you will have the chance to take home five pints of your chosen beer or cider in a free container for £5, that's £1 a pint.

Tickets are on sale at the Claverham post office and village hall, Pullars of the Precinct, and AB Motorcare. Pre-purchase of tickets is advised for the Friday and Saturday

evening sessions. Exclusively, CAMRA members can reserve tickets by calling Nigel Carson on 01934 838899.

This event is set to raise £3,000 and will be used by the Yeo Valley Lions to support the local communities.

Chipping Sodbury July 8-9

The weekend of the 8th and 9th of July sees the return of the South Cotswold Beer Festival. In its tenth year now, this is organised by the Yate and District Rotary Club in association with the Chipping Sodbury Rugby Club.

This is a big event held at the rugby club's grounds with lots of real ales available in the marquee and plenty of entertainments laid on. There is even free camping available, so those of you who live some distance away can stay overnight, or even make a weekend of it.

Tickets, which will not be available on the door, should be on sale at Any Sports in North Walk, Yate Shopping Centre; David Hebblethwaite & Co Solicitors in Chipping Sodbury High Street; the Tourist Information Centre also in Chipping Sodbury; Calalier Print in Soundwell Road, Staple Hill; and from the Beaufort Hunt pub in Hawkesbury Upton High Street. You can also write off for them at the address in the advert below. Visit their web site at www.bs37.com/beer for further information.

The annual beer festival is the club's main fund-raising event. Plenty of organisations are sponsoring the event this year, including Uley and Wickwar breweries, with profits going to worthy charities.

Nailsea July 15-17

Chipping Sodbury is not the only rugby club to be hosting a beer festival in July. Nailsea and Backwell Rugby Club are also getting on the act with the Nailsea Beer and Cider Festival over the weekend of Friday 15th to Sunday 17th July. This too promises lots of entertainment, and should be offering

The Bag O'Nails

141 St. George's Road, Hotwells,
Bristol BS1 5UW Tel: (0117) 9406776

A Real Ale Pub

Bristol & District CAMRA

Pub Of The Year 2000

Host to two beer festivals a year

At least 12 different real ales a week

Imported German wheat beers
English bottle-conditioned beers
Unpasteurised imported bottled lagers

Web : www.bagonails.org.uk
Email : pub@bagonails.org.uk

YATE & DISTRICT ROTARY CLUB

in association with **CHIPPING SODBURY RUGBY CLUB** are pleased to announce
that they will be holding their

TENTH SOUTH COTSWOLD BEER FESTIVAL

at the **Chipping Sodbury Rugby Club** on

FRIDAY 8 JULY 2005 & SATURDAY 9 JULY 2005

6.00 pm to 11.30 pm

12.00 noon to 11.30 pm

Advance ticket admission only @ £6.50 per person

OR at £5.50 if applied for by post before 1st June, by writing to:

YATE & DISTRICT ROTARY CLUB, PO BOX 1141, YATE, BRISTOL BS37 6YA

enclosing P.O. or cheque made payable to Yate & District Rotary Club indicating which day (Friday or Saturday)
also enclosing a S.A.E.

Visit www.bs37.com/beer for further information.

over fifty different beers and ciders.

They organisers mention that this is a cider as well as beer festival and say they "intend this to be a massive festival right at the very heart of cider country." They have sought the advice from us at CAMRA (thanks to Laurie Gibney) on putting together this their second event, so we hope it will be a great success.

Advance tickets will be available from the Grove Stores, Nailsea; the Corner Stores, Kingshill; Samuel Bird TV and Video, Nailsea; or from the Rugby Club itself. See their advert elsewhere in Pints West and visit their web page at www.appelfest.ik.com for further information. Profits will help worthy causes, with 25 per cent going towards Babe's Big Appeal.

CAMRA BEER FESTIVALS

Plymouth July 1-2

The CAMRA Plymouth Beer Festival will be held at the Plymouth Pavilions Main Arena in Millbay Road, just a five-minute walk from the train station. It will be open on Friday 1st and Saturday 2nd July from noon until 11pm. There will be 200 real ales and ciders, and live entertainment both sessions.

CAMRA members pay £3 admission – show your membership card at the membership stand to receive £3 worth of beer tokens. Glass and souvenir programme cost £1.50. Call 01752 222200 for general enquiries, or visit the web page at www.plymouthcamra.co.uk for the latest news.

Devizes July 2

The seventh Devizes Beer Festival will be held at the Wharf in Devizes on July 2nd, opening from 11.30am to 11pm.

This event comprises a beerfest, under canvas, beside the Kennet and Avon canal, with over 50 real ales, cider, and food available. It is a mainly out-of-doors, family-orientated event with various entertainments all day including live music and children's entertainment.

Admission is only by advance ticket at £5 (includes souvenir glass, and £1 worth of tokens for CAMRA member). Send a stamped, addressed envelope and a cheque made payable to "Devizes CAMRA" to David Rapley, 9 Walden Lodge Close, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 5BU.

Cotswold July 29-31

The 29th Cotswold Beer Festival will once again be held at Postlip Hall, near Winchcombe, Gloucestershire, where you can enjoy an extensive range of beers and ciders in a beautiful rural setting.

It takes place from Friday 29th to Sunday 31st July. Opening times and prices are Friday evening 7pm to 11pm, Saturday lunchtime noon to 3pm, and Saturday evening 6.30pm to 11pm, all at £5. Sunday's session is noon to 3pm and is entry is free.

Prices include souvenir pint glass, entertainment, car parking etc. Card-carrying CAMRA members receive complimentary tokens at each session except Sunday.

Tickets are only in advance by post from:

Cotswold Beer Festival, 59 Welland Lodge Road, Cheltenham, Gloucs, GL52 3HH. Note that there will be no tickets available on the door. Send a stamped, addressed envelope and a cheque made payable to "Cotswold Beer Festival" to arrive by Friday 24th June.

THE BIG ONE!

Great British Beer Festival Aug 2-6

The really big one happens each year in August. The Great British Beer Festival is a celebration of beer from around the UK and around the world. It is Britain's biggest beer festival and attracts around 45,000 beer drinkers. They come to London Olympia because of the unparalleled choice – where else could you find a choice of over 450 real ales as well as foreign beer, cider and perry? Last year's festival was one of the most successful ever with over 46,000 visitors who between them drank 210,000 pints of beer! Great British Beer Festival 2005

The festival takes place between Tuesday 2nd and Saturday 6th August. Opening times and prices are Tuesday 5pm to 10.30pm, £7 (CAMRA members £5); Wednesday to Friday noon to 10.30pm, £7 (CAMRA members £5); Saturday 11am to 7pm, £6 (CAMRA members £4). Season tickets are available at £17.50 (CAMRA members £15) and entitle you to entry at all sessions (CAMRA members £15). Tickets are available on the door throughout the Festival. Advance tickets are also available to buy direct from CAMRA HQ on 01727 867201 and each ticket is reduced by £1.

SP



The Princess of Wales

Westbourne Grove, Bedminster presents its first

Summer Mini Beer Festival

FRIDAY 24TH JUNE through to SUNDAY 26TH JUNE

"RARE" BEERS FROM AROUND THE U.K.

ALL BEERS @ £1.90 per pint.

No entrance fee, No door fee.

10% discount on all beers for card-carrying CAMRA members

"??? GUESS THE MYSTERY ALE ???"

BAR-B-Q/PIG ROAST (weather permitting)

GREAT MUSIC

A very warm welcome from your new hosts

Richard & Sheleen

SEE YOU THERE !!

Nailsea and Backwell Rugby Club present
Nailsea Beer and Cider Festival 2005

at the Rugby Club

Friday 15th July: 6.00-11.00pm
Saturday 16th July: Noon-11.00pm
Sunday 17th July: Noon-9.00pm

- *Over 50 different Beers and Ciders*
- *Children's Entertainment * Toss the Caber *
- *Live Bands throughout the weekend *
- *Free Disco Friday night * Tag Rugby Tournament*

Advance Ticket £4.00 will include your commemorative glass, programme, tasting notes and your first beer.

Parking and Entry to grounds free

Tickets available from The Grove Stores, Nailsea; The Corner Stores, Kingshill; Samuel Bird TV and Video, Nailsea or from the Rugby Club (call 01275 810818)



All beers kindly sponsored by local businesses



Or for more info see our new web-site www.appelfest.ik.com

Rose & Crown, Iron Acton update

AS most of you will be aware, the Bristol and District branch of CAMRA has joined forces with local residents to attempt to save the Rose & Crown at Iron Acton, which closed suddenly on 23 November 2004. In the last edition we told of an upcoming public meeting. The owners, Allan and Gail Didcott had not made their future plans clear at that time. Much has occurred since – here is a brief summary.

The public meeting took place on Monday, March 14th in Iron Acton Village Hall and was extremely well attended. Just over 100 people came on the night and many messages were received from others unable to make it. The owners were invited but refused to attend and sent a terse message saying, "It is not for sale". The Bristol Evening Post featured the meeting both before and after the event, and sent a reporter and photographer to cover it.

The meeting was jointly run by the local action group and CAMRA. Speeches were made by both groups and key points included the following.

The building had been a public house since 1680 and was seen as the "central hub of the Iron Acton community" by many. Indeed several people stated that they had moved to Iron Acton to be near this pub. It had featured in the last twelve editions of the Good Beer



Guide, putting it in the top few pubs in our area for consistent excellence. Several people said that they had enquired about buying the pub, or were aware of others who had tried. All had met with a complete lack of interest from the owners.

Bob Ford, of Iron Acton Football Club, said that they had been prevented by the owners from using the full-sized football pitch and changing facilities, to the rear of the pub, for some years. They would dearly love to return to play there, rather than in Yate as they have to now. This could obviously bring in considerable trade to the pub, from players, spectators and their families.

Many others bemoaned the fact that the owners had always declined to open during lunchtimes, except on Sundays, and it was obvious that much potential trade was lost as a result. The fact that the pub had never sold

food, other than a handful of filled rolls at opening time, was also obviously a missed opportunity to gain revenue. Whilst many of us loved the place partly because of this, the pub serving food and open is infinitely preferable to it ceasing to exist.

All of the above were felt to be clear indicators that the Didcotts' claim that the pub had become "unviable" was open to considerable question. Perhaps the most damning evidence of all though came from a number of comments made by former regulars at the pub, who alleged that they had been made to feel increasingly unwelcome and uncomfortable when using the pub over the last two years. Quite a number of people stated that they were convinced that a deliberate effort had been made to run the business down and engineer an "unviable" situation. Anecdotes included people being banned for "parking their bicycle in the garden" and for "singing Christmas songs at Christmas"!

A rumour was circulating

at the meeting that one of the other two pubs in the village – the White Hart – was about to be converted into a Thai restaurant. This has just been denied by the incoming licensee who insists it will remain primarily a pub, with Thai food. Even so, it may mean more opportunity for increased trade at a reopened Rose & Crown, with less emphasis on food than the two other village pubs and offering an alternative ambience to them.

A vote was taken to ascertain support for continuing to fight the closure. All but one person agreed with this motion. At this point a local District Councillor identified himself, and offered his full support for the campaign. After more debate a three-person committee of local people was formed to take things forward, with the promise of full support from CAMRA.

On 22nd April 2005 the Didcotts finally declared their true intentions by submitting a request to South Gloucestershire Council to change the use of the building to become a private residence.

They cited "unviability" as the reason. Details of how to view the application are at the end of this article. By the time that you read this then the request will have been agreed or refused. We are aware of many people planning to lodge formal objections and are optimistic that the Council will refuse the application. How can the claim of unviability be accepted when so little attempt was made to unlock the true potential of the place? In addition there is very little evidence of any genuine attempt to sell the pub as a going concern, so we have to come to the sad conclusion that this was indeed a cynical attempt to take advantage of the boom in property prices by realising the maximum value of the buildings and land.

It is a sad fact that virtually all rural pubs are worth much more as private houses than as going concerns, and if this application is allowed then no such pub will be safe from closure. Even if planning is refused at this stage then the owners are likely to keep applying and the fight will be a long one – but one that we are determined to win. The owners would do well to remember that they got their hands on the place in 1985 only after a considerable amount of backing (including a 150-signature petition) from the very same local people that they have now let down so badly.

Whether or not you were familiar with the Rose & Crown, you should consider joining our fight to save it – it could be your favourite pub next!

Vince Murray

Planning Application Details:
Application No. PK05/1143/F. Can be viewed at www.southglos.gov.uk or in person at Yate One Stop Shop, Yate Leisure Centre. Case Officer Sarah Tucker.

STOP PRESS: As at 18/05/05 there were 71 letters opposing change of use and 1 in support on the council website!



THE STAR INN



Worth a Visit!

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

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

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

23 THE VINEYARDS, PARAGON, BATH Tel 01225 425072

The Hope & Anchor

THE HOPE & ANCHOR nestles half way up (or down) Jacob's Wells Road at the junction with Constitution Hill, on the edge of Hotwells.

A genuine free house, the Hope & Anchor endeavours to support as many of the smaller breweries as it reasonably can.

There are almost always six real ales on the bar at any time and, whilst none of these are permanent fixtures, some do feature with more regularity than others due to popular demand.

Amongst these favourites are a number of local beers such as those from the Butcombe stables and the remarkable beers from those new kids on the block, the Bristol Beer Factory.

Coming from further afield are such beers as the Deuchars IPA and the 80/- from the Caledonian Brewery in Edinburgh, and the ever popular range of beers from the old Palmer's Brewery down in Bridport in Dorset.

That said, these breweries (although often well represented at the Hope & Anchor) do find themselves having to make way for other brews such as Fuller's London Pride, Timothy Taylor's Landlord, Blindman's Buff and many, many more. The beers are served in good condition, at the right temperature, which is reflected in the fact the pub is a frequent entry in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide.

The real ale choice should satisfy most beer drinkers, but for those who haven't yet discovered its delights, there is also a range of premium lagers and wheat beers.



The Hope & Anchor has a very popular food operation and owes its position upon the culinary map largely to head chef, Nikki Hughes.

The policy on food has never been one of having pretensions above its station but, rather, more upon catering for an ever-increasingly discerning public by being several shades more upmarket than the standard 'pub-grub' type of outlet whilst still giving a nod to those dishes which have their roots in traditional pub fare.

To this end, chip butties, served in a basket on fresh crusty bread, happily share menu space with fresh whole trout stuffed with prawns and lemon & dill butter. Wholetail scampi rubs shoulders with pork escalopes in a dijon sauce and lamb curry is perfectly happy sharing a dressing room with

moules frites and seafood paella.

The overall emphasis at the Hope & Anchor is one of trying to create a relaxed atmosphere and the clientele, rather than being 'studenty' or 'locals' or 'suits' are, in fact, an eclectic and broad mix of all of these and more.

One of the attractions of the pub, of course, is the terraced garden at the rear which used to be referred to as the 'secret' garden. As it tends to get pretty packed out on sunny days by all and sundry, however, it is now just called 'the garden'.

The Hope & Anchor, whilst taking the matters of beer and food very seriously (what could be *more* serious?) also exudes a sense of not taking itself terribly seriously. It is, as the pub's motto states: 'A Bent Nail On The Fencepost Of Life.'

(Whose round is it?)

Pete Bridle

THE HOPE & ANCHOR

38 Jacobs Wells Road, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 1DR. Tel: 0117-9292987. Open all hours.



Cotswold Spring Brewery

M4 Junction 18. Picture it. Streams of cars heading south on the A46 to Bath, road works on the motorway and the annual snarl-up trying to get to the Badminton Horse Trials. A pretty unremarkable motorway junction.

Ah, but little do we realise that this motorway junction is your best route to a new brewing venture whose use of natural ingredients is set to make it the darling of the conservationist movement. For, at the base of the Cotswolds, not half a mile from the motorway, is a natural spring, home to a successful mineral water operation and, as of this summer, to the newest brewery in South Gloucestershire.

The **Cotswold Spring Brewery** is the brainchild of John Worlock and Warren Bryant. Given John's background in Training & Consultancy in the Financial Services Industry, and Warren's successful career as a Carpenter and Builder, it is perhaps surprising that they have chosen a new craft brewery as their next venture, but here they are.

The truth is that this is a labour of love for them. When I meet them at the brewery, they are both positively buzzing with enthusiasm

for the project. They agree to show me around.

The new brewery has been purpose-built by Warren on the site of the Cotswold Spring Water Company. Apart from the obvious benefits of siting a brewery at a natural spring, the decision to build from scratch has also enabled the guys to make sure that everything about the brewery is absolutely as they would wish it to be. For example, the brewery is spacious and well-laid out, with cladding throughout allowing precision temperature control as well as lending itself admirably to high-power and hygienic cleaning techniques.

The equipment itself was purchased from the *Felon and Firkin* pub/brewery in Leeds. It is a ten-barrel plant using the local spring water in exactly the same condition as that which is bottled for sale by the Cotswold Spring Water Company. The guys are confident that customers will agree that the purity of the central ingredient will contribute to a crisp and clear taste in the beers produced here.

Talking of which, Cotswold Spring Brewery beers will be available during the summer at free-trade outlets and beer festivals

across the region. There will be three brews to start with:

○ **Cotswold Spring Old English Rose** (3.8%) – An eminently quaffable session bitter with a light, crisp summer flavour to it.

○ **Cotswold Spring Codrington Codger** (4.2%) – The flagship bitter. This will be a classic best bitter with malt and hops present throughout, and a smooth aftertaste.

○ **Cotswold Spring Royal** – The strongest beer in the initial portfolio, weighing in at a full-bodied 4.5% ABV. Flavourful and moreish, this will be the big brother of the Cotswold clan.

Early outlets for the Cotswold Spring beers are likely to be the Codrington Arms in Codrington, as well as the George and the Beaufort, both in Chipping Sodbury; though there will be plenty of other places to sample these ales if all goes to plan.

Not only that, but the Cotswold Spring Brewery will be offering 'beer boxes' and possibly specially bottled beers, available direct from the brewery. Call (01454) 323 088 or email info@cotswoldbrewery.com for more details.

Duncan Shine

Pub of the Year

TWO pubs have made the top spot in this year's pub awards. The Port of Call in Clifton (near the Downs) and the Wellington in Horfield have been voted joint winners in the Bristol & District CAMRA Pub of the Year 2005 competition. And the Crown at Churchill has been voted runner-up.


All three pubs have featured in these pages previously. The Wellington was actually voted Pub of the Year last year, and so was the Crown a few years ago. This is the first time the Port of Call has been given such an award. All three have been recognised for the quality and consistency of the fantastic real ales they offer, as well as other aspects of the pub such as service and atmosphere.



The Port of Call

Watch out for lots of publicity for these pubs in the local press, and look to our web site at www.camrabristol.org.uk for further details. (At the time of going to press, the pubs had not yet received their awards.) Profiles of each of these pubs can be found in your collection of old Pints Wests (you do have one, don't you?) or past editions also available at our web site.

SP



bath ales

To enjoy the full range of bath ales beers at their best, pay a visit to one of our pubs

The Hop Pole
Upper Bristol Road, Bath (opposite Victoria Park playground)

The Hare on the Hill
Dove Street, Kingsdown, Bristol

The Merchants Arms
Merchants Road, Hotwells, Bristol

The Salamander
John Street, Bath

The Wellington
Gloucester Road, Horfield, Bristol
and at

The Bridge Inn
Passage Street, Bristol

Casks and beer boxes available for parties and functions
Contact bath ales on 0117 9527580 or email hare@bathales.co.uk
www.bathales.co.uk

News from Bath Ales

Wild May for Bath Ales

Naturally CAMRA has been promoting Mild May – however, the brewing team at Warmley have gone wild and organic. A new beer called 'Wild Hare' was scheduled to be launched at the Wellington Beer Festival. This is a fully organic golden ale designed for summer drinking.

Well done the Welly!

For the second year running, Paul and Dee at the Wellington Hotel, Horfield, celebrate the prestigious title of Bristol CAMRA Pub of the Year. This year the lengthy democratic voting process (which involves visiting a large number of excellent pubs nominated by CAMRA members – tough but someone has to do it) resulted in a dead-heat between the Wellington and the Port of Call in Clifton. For the first time two pubs will jointly hold the title. The Welly is now hosting live jazz on some Monday evenings in addition to the regular showcasing of top quality live blues music on Sunday evenings.

A day at the races and more...

On Monday, 16 May, Bath Ales sponsored a day's racing at, appropriately, the Bath Race Course. Trips were organised from the six Bath Ales pubs and punters were treated to a grand day out involving betting, racing and low cost Bath Ales beer, a dangerous combination. I noticed a horse called Stargem in the 3.10 and one called Gems Bond in the 5.10 – obviously they couldn't lose at a Bath Ales meeting. I should have stuck with the 4.1% Gem at £1.25 a pint.

The race meeting was the first of a busy summer schedule. The Bath and West Show at the end of May is followed by providing beer at something called "Glastonbury", from there Bath Ales are involved at the end of June with the Festival of the Sea in Portsmouth, followed by the Ashton Court Festival in Bristol. Next up is the WOMAD Festival in Reading towards the end of July, and in August Bath Ales are once again at the Brecon Jazz Festival. On 26 August it's back to Bath Race Course for the Party on the Hill Beer Festival.

Thanks from Bristol Beer Festival

As well as sponsoring the glasses, Bath Ales gave a tremendous amount of support and practical help in making this year's Bristol Beer Festival such a huge success. They provided and helped set-up both the stillage and bar two days before the event, and also with the take-down and removal on the day after the festival. It's no exaggeration to say we couldn't do it without you, so the Branch sincerely thanks everyone involved.

More information about the brewery is available at their newly revamped website, www.bathales.com. This now includes an on-line shop and gives details of brewery tours.

Steve O'Shea

The BELL

Alfred Place, Kingsdown, Bristol

**A Genuine Freehouse
offering
Excellent Local Real Ales
Good Wines, Interesting Lagers**

Opening times
4.30 - 11.00 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
12.00 - 11.00 Wednesday
4.00 - 11.00 Saturday
12.00 - 3.00 & 7.00 - 10.30 Sunday

Mild Month of May

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

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

In 1960 mild was very popular and made up an amazing 60 per cent of the beer sold in the UK. These days mild production in the UK seems to have settled out at around just 3 per cent of the market.

As part of CAMRA's traditional promotion of mild throughout the month of May, pubs were encouraged to come on board and stock some of this undervalued style, and actively encouraging pub goers to try it.

Some local pubs were enthusiastic in their support. In particular the **Cornubia** in Temple Street, Bristol featured a number of different milds throughout the month, including Downton Maroon Maker Mild, Archers Dark Mild, and Spinning Dog Mutley's Dark. Here's a picture of Julia pulling some mild in the Cornubia.

Other local pubs that have featured mild during May include the **Hope & Anchor** and the **Bag O'Nails** in Hotwells, and the **White Lion** on the Centre. Wetherspoon's May beer festival also had several advertised in the tasting notes, such as Cain's Dark Mild, Beartown Black Bear, and Hardy & Hanson's Cursed Galleon.

OVERINBATH

With CAMRA's Mild in May promotion in mind, Bath's own brewery, **Abbey Ales**, again brewed a 4.0% ABV mild ale for its local customers in Bath.

Managing Director of Abbey Ales, Alan Morgan said, "It is the second time we have brewed Mild and last year's sales justified us brewing it again. We are more than happy to support the CAMRA Mild in May promotion once more and we had numerous enquiries from the local landlords who stocked it last year and wanted to know if we would be brewing it again."

Paul Waters at the **Star Inn** and Paul Alvis of the **Volunteer Rifleman's** in Bath were the first to re-order the Mild and Paul



Photo by Richard Brooks

Alvis said, "I stock all Abbey Ales occasional beers as they sell so quickly and I can't wait for the mild to arrive. I also like the fact that it will only be sold in Bath as it means that you have to visit Bath to drink it."

SO WHAT DO YOU RECKON?

What do you think of mild? Is it a style of beer you appreciate? Would you like to see more of it available in the pubs and more often? Write care of the editor and let us know.

SP & Richard Brooks

Extra discount from Abbey Ales

Mention "Pints West" when ordering a Bellringer beer box from Abbey Ales and you will get an extra discount of £5 per 36-pint box for all orders collected from the brewery or from the Star Inn. 18-pint boxes are also available.

Abbey Ales presents...

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A trip to Cotleigh

ON a sunny, mid-April Saturday a dozen of us took a minibus down to the **Cotleigh Brewery** in Wiveliscombe, Somerset. We made such good time that we popped into the **Bear Inn**, the unofficial brewery tap, and enjoyed the three Cotleigh beers on offer.

Moving on to the brewery we were met by the owners Steve Heptinstall (pictured) and Feddy Domellof. A tour of the brewery commenced, interspersed the Steve and Freddy's talk of their vision for Cotleigh, and finished with some sampling of the products, including Harrier (3.5%), a refreshing light session beer that was discontinued several years ago but was brought back early this year as an antidote to Christmas, and has been doing well since. Cotleigh beers have been difficult to come by in the Bristol area, though they are seen regularly in the Port of Call in Clifton (near the Downs). Steve explained that the previous owners made a conscious decision to limit how far they were going to supply. This is something Steve wants to change and is looking for more outlets in the Bristol area. Expansion is something that is on the cards, with buildings available next door to the brewery. Another point of interest was their increasing use of plastic casks and they have been getting a favourable response, especially from the ladies, who find them a lot easier to handle. We spent an enjoyable two hours with our hosts and finally left to make a dash for the **New Inn at Halse** (pictured), home to the Somerset Electric Brewery, which was due to close after lunch.



Luckily, Mark (owner/brewer) and his partner were on the premises and we enjoyed their hospitality into the afternoon. Sadly, Mark told us that he was selling up and going back to his day job, working for the National Grid in Wokingham! He had had a few bad experiences with managers and was finding the travelling wearing. At the time of our visit the sale was going through and the new owners were going to be trained by Mark to continue brewing.



From Halse we made for the **Rose & Crown (Eli's)** at **Huish Episcopi**, passing the **Canal Inn, Wrantage** (current Somerset Pub of the Year) and the **Halfway House, Pitney** (a previous winner). Eli's is full character with its cosy rooms and serving tap room (i.e. no bar). As well as excellent beer, I'm told the cider was well worth drinking.

Looking for a stop on the way home we chose the **Waldergrave Arms at Chewton Mendip** and got back into Bristol late evening.

Tony Durbin



Brewing excellence from the Heart of Somerset since 1979

It has been 26 years since Cotleigh Brewery started trading from its first home, the Cotleigh Farmhouse in Washfield near Tiverton in Devon. Immediate success forced the brewer to move to larger premises, and in 1980 the company relocated to Wiveliscombe, 11 miles west of Taunton. Last year the business celebrated its Jubilee 25th Anniversary. Cotleigh Brewery supplies 300 Freehouses in the South West and is available in the rest of the UK through selected wholesalers. Cotleigh Beers will now be available to the Bristol area.

Tawny Bitter 3.8% abv

A West Country classic, a subtle hop palate which blends with the sweetness of the malt, to give a beautiful and balanced flavour.

Barn Owl Premium Ale 4.5% abv

Copper coloured with hints of toffee and nut with a smooth malty bitter sweet finish. Champion Beer of the Maltings Festival 1995.

Buzzard Dark Ale 4.8% abv

Traditional old ale, deep copper red in colour. The chocolate malt gives a dry nutty flavour with hints of amarone biscuit.

Cotleigh 25 4.0% abv

An explosion of flavours originating from the American Cascade hops gives this brilliant pale golden beer a fresh aroma and a fruit filled finish.

Golden Eagle Best Bitter 4.2% abv

Smooth and malty with a background of honey flavours offering a refreshing and citrus finish.

Harrier Lite 3.5% abv

A light golden low alcohol beer with delicate floral and fruity aroma leading to a smooth, almost sweet finish.

Cotleigh Brewery, Ford Road, Wiveliscombe, Somerset TA4 2RE

Tel: 01984 624086 Fax: 01984 624365 Email: sales@cotleighbrewery.com www.cotleighbrewery.com

Beer festival winners

AT the Bristol Beer Festival held at the Brunel Shed, Temple Meads back in March, the award of Beer of the Festival – as voted for by those attending the event – went to **Downton Chimera IPA**.

Joint runners-up were **Acorn Barnsley Gold** and **Skinner's Heligan's Honey**.

Downton is a Salisbury brewery set up as recently as November 2003 with equipment leased from Hop Back Brewery and based on a 20-barrel copper and two 20-barrel fermenters.

A number of beers of differing styles are produced, mostly with the "Chimera" name. The Chimera IPA is a superb, light-coloured beer with an alcoholic strength of 6.8 per cent.

A recent trip saw a party of local CAMRA members visiting the Downton Brewery to hand over their Beer of the Festival award. The photograph below shows brewer Martin Strawbridge receiving the certificate from branch social secretary Norman Spalding. Brewery owner, Martin Howard, is at the front on the left of the group photograph.



On the subject of festival winners, it is also worth mentioning the results from the recent Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) National Beer Festival held at Horts in central Bristol in April. The festival comprised around 60 beers, all of which had been short-listed following competitions held in the seven SIBA regions. The winners were:

- | | | |
|-------|------------|--------------------------------|
| ○ 1st | Wolf | Granny Wouldn't Like It (4.8%) |
| ○ 2nd | Grainstore | Ten Fifty (5.0%) |
| ○ 3rd | Wolf | Woild Moild (4.8%) |

SP



Photos by Tony Durbin

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Bedminster – a stroll through West Street

THE pubs and inns of Bedminster have always been popular with local residents and workers, the shoppers of East Street, those visiting the area for theatre and comedy in North Street, jazz in West Street, or simply to meet up with friends before a City match. There are so many different pubs that everyone finds more than one favourite, whether it is for TV sport, pool, darts, skittles, music, or real ales there are quiet pubs or lively pubs to choose from.

People have been drinking in Bedminster since Roman times, long before Bristol even existed. Sitting astride the route from the lead mines on the Mendips along the Roman road of West Street/East Street, those thirsty Romana-British merchants dragged and pushed their carts to the port of Sea Mills. Like us, they were always glad of a glass or two on a hot day, and here on top of Bedminster Down, with views across to Long Ashton and the Avon Gorge, there was once a Roman building that would have obliged.



The Cross Hands

Nowadays, there is the **Cross Hands**, a Greene King pub popular with locals, and where we begin the search for our favourite local. This old 1824 stone-built pub has two rooms and a skittle alley; one is a sports bar and the other a comfortable lounge that has been created from several smaller rooms but still managed to maintain an intimate feeling. The paved area in front of the pub has a white picket fence surrounding tables and benches that get packed on summer evenings and weekends. There are normally three cask ales available – Bass, Old Speckled Hen and IPA – but when we visited, Greene King IPA was the only one on and that was past its best. This range has not changed for months.



The Miners Arms

Crossing the A38 and moving down Bedminster Down hill in search of our next watering hole, we walk over the Bristol to Exeter railway line, which was cut through the hill in 1841 and serves Bedminster's two train stations of Parson Street and Bedminster. The last train to stop at Parson Street is around 6.30pm, so if you were visiting by train you would have to bus it to Temple Meads station to catch later trains home.

We approach the **Miners Arms** – a small pub hugging the main road on the left towards the bottom of Bedminster Down hill. Many names of Bedminster's pubs reflect its past, from a thriving rural hamlet before the Civil War, through the coal mining, industrial and manufacturing ages, to the present day. Nothing remains of the South Liberty Lane coal mine that operated from 1744 to 1923 behind the Miners pub and had its tunnels stretching from Dundry to Temple Meads. It was surprising to find this old pub was now one long room full of young people and no real ales as there are often customers sat outside enjoying the sunshine on weekends.

Moving quickly on, we continue down to



The Plough

the lights at the bottom of the hill and cross back over the A38 to the **Plough**, a large pub situated at the top of Winterstoke Road where it joins the A38. It has two different bars, and a sunny rear patio where barbecued food is often served on a weekend. Alas, they don't serve real ales. Parson Street train station is situated behind this pub.

It is nearly an hour since we started this quest and we still haven't had a decent drink,



The Three Lions

and faced with the climb up West Street to the **Three Lions** it is tempting to jump on the number 52 bus opposite and head into town. We resist this temptation and head for the Three Lions, a popular and friendly sports bar pub but with no real ales.

Forty yards on is the **Plough & Windmill** run by Steve Westcott. The busy front bar has two cask ales, Bass and Courage Best,



The Plough & Windmill

both in superb condition and very welcome on this warm spring evening. There is also a rear bar, skittle alley and garden for children.

Another thirty yards brings us to the **White Horse**, now owned by Punch, but with four cask ales available. Ushers Traditional, Old Speckled Hen, Bass and Butcombe are all



The White Horse

in good condition, with the Traditional coming out on top. This is a large inn knocked into one room with a raised "stage" at one end where live jazz bands entertain here every Tuesday night, so if you want a table, get here early as it becomes packed. Further details at



The Red Cow

www.whitehorsebedminster.co.uk.

The bus stop outside is well served by the numbers 52, 75, 76, 77 and several country buses heading into the centre, and a return stop is just opposite.

Further down West Street we arrive at the **Red Cow**, named after the West Street colliery that used to operate here. I can remember many a lunch time spent drinking Triple Crown in the lounge during the 80's with Richard Longman when we worked at Robinson's Malago bag factory, but today it has sadly been knocked through into one bar with no real ales.

We head on, with the smell of chips wafting over from the Argus chip shop. It is worth mentioning that West Street has many takeaways to suit most people's tastes with Chinese, Indian, pizzas, kebabs, southern chicken, fish & chips, sandwiches and even an Indian Restaurant (but you will need to bring your own drinks).



The Jolly Colliers

Just before the Jolly Colliers there is a pile of rubble in front of Mail Marketing, which is all that is left of the Lamb Inn. We stare through the fence at the archeologists' pits and look for any signs of the ghost that used to haunt it, and wonder how many more Bedminster pubs will be gone in five years time. In the 1850s there were about 30 pubs in Bedminster with half the male population employed by the collieries. In 1904 with the collieries closing and the tobacco and bag making factories expanding there were 101 pubs in Bedminster. Today, with much of the industry gone, it is less than 30.

The **Jolly Colliers** is a lively community pub with Bass and Courage Best on offer, and some serious pool being played at one end of



The Black Cat

the pub.

The **Black Cat** is a single long-roomed pub popular with locals and was selling Bass. The oak planks lining the walls, combined with a low beamed ceiling, reminded me of a mine tunnel as I watched a couple of regulars sat playing crib under the leaded windows.



The Albert

Across the road we saw lights on in the **Albert**, so wandered over, to find to our surprise that it is still open – it appears the property company "Atlas Way" that were supposed to convert it to flats last year haven't agreed terms with the landlord Ian. This once thriving jazz pub had Bath Ales Gem and Courage Best that were drawn straight from the cask and they were good.



The London Inn

The **Albert** should be open until at least July.

Around the corner, sitting at the top of East Street, is the **London Inn**. The interesting Victorian exterior of the London Inn was decorated inside in typical PubCo style and had Courage Best on. This inn was rebuilt in 1895 when the original ancient coaching inn was demolished to allow access to what is now called British Road.

As it was May we thought we'd nip across the road into Wetherspoon's **Robert Fitzharding** to see if they had any milds on for CAMRA's "Go Wild for Mild" promotion. As it was Wetherspoon's May Beer Festival (until 22nd May), there were seven ales to choose from and one was a mild – Beartown Black Bear – but after drinking so many biters it was difficult to appreciate the subtleties of this mild ale. The Robert Fitzharding is the largest of the Bedminster pubs, and uses ornate wooden partitions to



The Robert Fitzharding

create smaller, more personal areas (and is probably one of Wetherspoon's better decorated Bristol pubs). There is always a good range of reasonably priced food available and during the two-week festival period there were to be about 50 ales offered.

It was now getting late and we still had one more pub to visit, so we vowed to return in a couple of days to sample some more ales (regrettably, we missed the Robinson's Old Tom by about an hour, as it had just run out).



The Princess of Wales

We headed up the side of the London Inn to the **Princess of Wales**. The outside of this early 19th century pub looks very decorative and inviting, although inside is quite small compared to some of the pubs we visited. This is a Wickwar Brewery-owned pub and BOB was on offer along with a good pint of Crouch Best from the Crouch Vale Brewery. Wickwar intend having a beer festival here towards the end of June and there should be about nine or ten different ales racked up in the corner of the bar. We look forward to that as its always fun to try something different – and for details of this festival see the advert elsewhere in this publication.

We hope you will get the chance to visit some of the better pubs we have mentioned, and enjoy them as much as we did. We intend to visit all the pubs in Bedminster over the next few months, and have already started planning our next tour, an East Street crawl. Our friend Terry Goodfield told us that on Friday nights in the 70's they would often try to walk it with just a half pint in each pub, but could never make it to Bedminster Bridge! We shall see.

Colin & Pennie Postlethwaite

Something old, something new

Something old, something new... This 'something' is Butcombe Brewery, past and present — or to be precise, deceased and reborn.



The old brewery – Simon Whitmore with the old brewery sign

Originally born in September 1978 to Simon and Maureen Whitmore, this fledgling was created as a ten-barrel plant in an old farm building at the back of their home on the edge of rural Butcombe village, hence the name.

This conception quickly outgrew itself, to take up another farm building in 1983, this time a 45-barrel plant. Ten years later, now owning six pubs and with over 300 regular outlets, it was imperative to expand again. The council's answer was a guarded yes... but this is the last time here – any more and you'll have to move elsewhere!

So off came the roofs of the existing buildings, and in with a brand new 85-barrel plant: Butcombe Brewery Mark 3 was born, A.D. 1993.

As CAMRA's Brewery Liaison Officer for Butcombe, I asked Simon Whitmore countless times when we were going to have a second beer as we still only had Butcombe Bitter, albeit a very successful beer. The answer as usual was, sorry its only Butcombe Bitter, but 'never say never'.

Well, that 'never' became a reality in 1999 with the launch of Butcombe Gold – at 4.7% ABV a pale full-bodied bitter, and as with all Butcombe products continuing quality is the name of the game.

Mr. Whitmore, as founder and owner,

was now approaching his late sixties. He stated that he would sell the business, when the 'time and conditions were right'. He is what I would describe as a caring employer, one of a dwindling breed, who would sell the business only with the staff intact, and not to a major concern who would buy the name, asset-strip it, and bid goodbye to the staff.

In February 2003

the ideal suitor turned up in the personage of Mr. Guy Newell – business friend ex-owner of Beer Seller – who bought it lock, stock, and barrel you might say. Just over a year later, Butcombe Blond at 4.3% ABV was launched at the Bristol Beer Festival in March 2004, although the beer itself had been first brewed and tasted at the 21st birthday celebrations in



September 1999 to invited guests at the brewery only. Suffice to say the recipe has been tweaked since.

We now come to the projected move to a new site (as per the selling contract). Plan A was to move half a mile up the road (still just inside the Butcombe boundary), buy and knock down the Wadworth-owned Bungalow Inn, and replace it with a new state-of-the-art brewery, public house, and accommodation. However, the planning authorities thought otherwise after local objections.



The new brewery



Equipment inside the new brewery

So Plan B evolved: a space on a trading estate at Wrington was available, exactly suitable for their requirements. The idea of a public house with accommodation was dropped and a bigger brewery planned in its place. What originally was going to be a new 120-barrel plant became 150 barrels instead. As it turned out, the planning outcome was a blessing in disguise, because this site has got mains gas and main drains which the other site didn't, and further continuing expansion would have necessitated it in any case.

The old brewery is now devoid of any equipment. All brewing has been undertaken at Wrington since early March 2005. The baby is now an adult – what comes next we shall have to wait and see...

Colin Pursey

Hopping mad

YOU may have noticed the increasing trend in recent years towards pale and hoppy beers in the small independent brewery sector. Indeed, the judging at the Champion Beer of Britain competition at CAMRA's annual Great British Beer Festival has reflected this trend with the last three winners being JHB from the Oakham Brewery (Peterborough) in 2002, Bitter and Twisted from the Harviestoun Brewery (Alva, Clackmannashire) and Pale Rider from the Kelham Island Brewery (Sheffield) in 2004.

Closer to home, the Beer of the Festival voted by visitors to the Bristol Beer Festival earlier this year was Chimera India Pale Ale (IPA) at 6.8% ABV from the Downton Brewery (Salisbury). This is an excellent re-creation of the IPAs of the past, i.e. high in strength and hop rate to enable them to survive the arduous journey by sea to the far-flung colonies where they were eagerly awaited by the troops. Hops imparted a delightful bitterness and inhibited the growth of bacteria.

Although such beers may not suit your palate, and I have heard a few grumblings of discontent from real ale drinkers over the recent discovery by UK brewers of, for example, the Cascade hop, this recent move reflects market forces more than individual personal taste.

You see, the limited number of outlets available these days for small independent brewers to sell their wares to means that a distinctive product is required if a repeat order is to be gained in the highly competitive guest beer market. One of the simplest ways of achieving this, and to my mind one of the most pleasurable for the drinker, is by the careful and balanced use of a goodly amount of quality hops; which can be used for bittering, flavour and aroma.

In addition to the breweries mentioned above, others that have already established a well-deserved reputation in this area include Dark Star (Haywards Heath), Meantime (Greenwich), Porter (Haslingden) and Roosters (Knaresborough).

Further afield, the Americans can teach us a thing or two about use of the glorious hop. Contrary to what you might think, there is a thriving microbrewery scene over there and a good place to sample some of their products over here is at the Great British Beer Festival. In addition to the vast array of British beers available from far and wide, there is also a selection available of some of the finest beers in the world on the Bières sans Frontières bar.

Here you can try classic beers on draught and in bottles from fine brewing nations such as Belgium, Czechoslovakia and Germany in addition to those from America. The latter includes some brilliant examples of British beer styles such as IPA, Stout and Porter; but usually much stronger and more heavily hopped than what we are familiar with.

Last year I was able to try American beers such as Redhook IPA (5.8% ABV) from the Redhook Brewery, HopDevil (6.7% ABV) from Victory Brewing, Hop Monster (7% ABV) from Paper City and 90 Minute IPA (9% ABV) from Dogfish. They were all fantastic and have made me re-consider my views on the Americans in general and their beer in particular! Their dark beers are also well hopped too, with Storm King Imperial Stout (9.2% ABV) from Victory Brewing currently being the best stout I have ever tried (so far).

The next time you are partaking of a beer, you might like to think about the basic ingredients of malted barley, hops and water. Has the brewer applied their craft to make best use of these natural materials, particularly the hops, to produce a distinctive, balanced and satisfying drink that you would go back and request again?

Also, the next time you are listening to the Tony Christie song "Show Me the Way to Amarillo", recently made popular again by comedian Peter Kay's video for Comic Relief, you might like to note that Amarillo is the name of another American hop that has been used to good effect by the Milk Street (Frome) and Crouch Vale (Chelmsford) breweries in their hoppy beer of the same name.

Dave Graham



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Chimera India Pale Ale

Voted Beer of the Festival Bristol 2005
Silver medal winner at the
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Brewed by the Downton Brewery Co. Ltd.
(tel 01 722 322890)

who also brew Chimera Gold, Chimera Red,
Chimera Quadhop and Chimera Raspberry Wheat

Janet does it again

THE Bristol Beer Festival is not only about beer. Real ale is indeed our passion, but we are also supporters of real, traditional cider and perry. As well as over a hundred real ales, this year we also stocked around forty real ciders and perries. Perries, for the uninitiated, are like ciders but made from pears instead of apples – and also a much rarer breed.

Every visitor to the festival is eligible to vote for their choice for beer and cider or perry of the festival. The results of the cider and perry voting this year was as follows:

- | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| ○ 1st | West Croft | Janet's Jungle Juice |
| ○ 2nd | Thatcher's | Sweet |
| ○ 3rd | Gwynt Y Ddraig | Medium |

This is not the first time West Croft have won an award at our festival with their Janet's Jungle Juice. And they have also won a clutch of other awards for their ciders over the years, so they are obviously doing something right!

The cider is made on the West Croft Farm, which is situated in Brent Knoll, Somerset. John Harris is the man in charge, and though he only started around 1992, follows in the footsteps of his grandfather who was also a traditional cidemaker.

The farm has its own small orchard from which John gathers the apples to make his ciders. He also gets in varieties of apples from other orchards nearby to augment his own. He uses his own press to extract the juice of these apples, and then lets the yeasts get to work fermenting it – just as nature intended.

One bright and pleasant evening in May a group of us paid John a visit on his farm to present him with his award. The accompanying photograph shows John (on the right) receiving it from branch chairman Richard Brooks in front of a gate to the orchard. The visit also gave us the opportunity to sample and purchase some of the Janet's Jungle



Juice and other cider varieties, ranging from medium-sweet to very dry. There was also one that had been maturing for quite some time, and which John referred to as his "Super Duper" cider. And it was. And I had to have some. And I'm drinking it now as I compose this on my computer at home.

So, where can you get West Croft cider yourself? Well, you could wait for the next Bristol Beer Festival, or seek out other CAMRA beer festivals which may have some available. Alternatively, you could always pay a visit to the farm in Brent Knoll. It's open to the public for cider sales from about 10am to 7pm daily, though may be closed Sunday afternoons in the winter. The telephone number should you wish to check, or get directions, is 01278 760762 or 01278 760259.

But what about the pubs? Don't any of them they stock it on a regular basis? Sadly, the answer (as far as we can ascertain) is no, with one notable exception. That pub is the **Coronation**, a Hop Back pub in Southville, Bristol. For some years now the Coronation has been dispensing Janet's Jungle Juice from a handpump on the bar, and for this it should be applauded. Many pubs do indeed serve a nice drop of real, traditional cider, but almost always from one of the big producers. It is rare indeed to see a cider (or perry) from one of the small farm producers on sale on the bar.

One or two other pubs do stand out from the crowd though, such as the **Cornubia** in Bristol which has a changing cider on tap from various small producers. If only more pubs could do the same. If you have a pub and can stock a real cider, why not consider taking it from West Croft or other producers like them? I'm sure your customers would appreciate it. Give them a call, or contact us and we'll offer what advice we can.

SP



THE CORONATION
18 Dean Lane, Southville, Bristol
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Lorna and her team warmly welcome you to come along and enjoy the great range of Hop Back beers, monthly specials and guest ales and to drink in the great atmosphere!




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REFRESHINGLY HOPPY BEERS

Hidden success

IN 2003, Gary Lumber – ex-head brewer from Oakhill – started up his own brewery and called it the Hidden Brewery, hidden away somewhere in rural Wiltshire. (Actually, it can be found in Wylve near Salisbury, in Dinton Road to be precise.)

Since those early "one-man band" days the company has grown. Four people are now involved in producing and supplying beer to over 350 pubs and clubs throughout Wiltshire, Dorset, Hampshire, Devon and Somerset.

Recently they took their beers to the Society of Independent Brewers South West Festival at Newton Abbot. They won the Best Bitter Class, and Reserve Champion of the festival, with their Hidden Quest (4.2 % abv) out of over 230 other beers.

Well done Gary.

SP

Cider Sisters

IT was good to make contact with a whole world of cider fans and keen newcomers at the Bristol Beer Festival, where once again we gave sterling service behind the cider-bar. We were proud to be part of an all-female crack team on the Saturday night shift, and as with last year, were also very pleased to see a lot of ladies on the other side of the bar thoroughly enjoying the fabulous selection on offer — some of whom could really put it away.

We didn't learn much over the course of the night, but what we did learn was: the big men love a drop of the sweet. In fact, the bigger the man the sweeter they seemed to like it (we even felt one or two would have asked for a Babycham if they thought they could have got away with it).

Freya was able to provide expert advice to these big fellas, having suddenly and unexpectedly discovered a taste for sweet cider for the first time in her life. Her particular recommendations: Gwatkin's Sweet Stoke and Wilkin's Sweet.

Not to say that this meant she'd lost her taste for a crafty mix: one of our favourites on the night was a cocktail of Gwatkin's Sweet Stoke and Dry Fox, creating the imaginatively titled Sweet Fox — verdict: "ooh la la!"

Others we enjoyed: the Churns Yarlinton Mill, Naish and Perry's Medium. Edgar Harding Dry was a real treat, once again. The Late Aubrey Allen was unusual in its richness — the cider equivalent of a slice of cake and a glass of port.

Not so popular with us: Rathay's Old Goat (pretty much what it tasted like) and Abbis, which had a distinct taste of polish. There were a few French ciders on offer, which we found a bit empty, but which were very popular with some of the less committed cider samplers.



Photo by Richard Brooks... but which ones are the Sisters?

The perries went very quickly — there were only two left for the Saturday night shift, Oliver's (our favourite — nice and fruity) and Hartland's (not so nice or fruity). Lots of people didn't know what a perry was but were keen to try anyway.

In fact, the generally enthusiastic attitude of our customers could be summed up in the following exchange:

Customer: "I'll have an Edgar Harding."

Cider sister: "Dry or Medium?"

Customer: "Yes please."

Not everyone was as keen, with one joker describing his choice as "too cidery!"

Some just didn't seem too sure who they were or what they were drinking:

Customer: "I'll have a Boxing Dog."

Cider sister: (pours drink) "There you go."

Customer: "Is that cider?"

But we welcomed them one and all.

Our enthusiasm and desire to serve our readers meant we obviously had to try as many ourselves as possible, which meant that a lot of the evening was spent in a state of some confusion, pouring drinks then asking: "This is nice — what is it?"

So, a big shout out to our fellow cider bar gals, Lesly and Sarah, who made the evening go with a swing, and to all the cider drinkers and dabblers who gave us so much enjoyment on the night (with the exception of certain punters, marked code orange, we can't remember exactly what that referred to but it was definitely a cause for concern). If you'll be there next year (or even if you won't), we plan to be back — miss it and miss out.

Freya and Erica McLuckie

A question for you...

WHERE do Pints West, our entries in the Good Beer Guide, Pub Of The Year awards and even the Bristol Beer Festival originate? To expand the question, how do you get onto surveying trips to pubs or social trips to breweries?

The answer is that the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA is an open, democratic organisation and is based around monthly branch meetings. These are held in pubs and members are welcome (and encouraged) to attend. So if you want to find out what we are doing and why we are doing it, come to a branch meeting. They do include beer breaks and normally start at 8pm and finish before 10pm, to allow for some social time afterwards.

Without the structure of branch meetings no local campaigning would be organised and you wouldn't now be reading a newsletter detailing some of things that we get up to!

Input from members is appreciated, although you won't be forced to take an active role if you would rather just observe.

The next meetings are as follows:

Wednesday, 22nd June - Branch AGM at **Horts City Tavern**, Broad Street, central Bristol.

Wednesday, 27th July - Branch meeting at the **Mayor's Arms**, Clarence Road, Redcliffe.

Wednesday, 23rd August - Branch meeting at **Horts City Tavern**, Broad Street, central Bristol.

Hope to see you at one of them.

Richard Brooks

Raspberries

THE latest beer to be brewed by Zero Degrees in Bristol is a fruity concoction made with raspberries. This beer — very red with a pink head — is made with the addition of a substantial quantity of raspberry puree. The resulting beer is less sweet than the earlier mango beer; in fact it is fairly sour, and if you like sour — as I certainly do — it makes for a very nice, refreshing drink. It's brewed to a strength of 4.6 per cent if you want to know.

SP

Watering Holes in the Desert

news from Weston-super-Mare

Weston Whispers (pub and beer news)

WE have been contacted by **Weston-super-Mare Cricket Club** on Devonshire Road, who were keen to report improvements in their beer range. Ex-Champion Beer of Britain, Deuchars IPA from the Caledonian brewery of Edinburgh, has been introduced as a permanent offering and has apparently gone down very well with the members. It sits alongside the slightly nearer offering of Butcombe Bitter and an additional changing guest beer.

Our man with his nose pressed up against the window at the refurbished **Woodspring** in Worle reports that the lonely Bass is now accompanied by Wadworth 6X and a guest beer – usually Butcombe Bitter.

For those who can't stay at the pub for long and want some real ale at home, **The Raglan** now offers the facility of a 4-pint carry-out.

There is a theory amongst some publicans that customers don't like stronger beers. This doesn't seem to be the case at **The Ashcombe**. Landlord Pete Boyer saw a cask of RCH's 5% ABV East Street Cream disappear well before closing time on RCH Day, Saturday 30 April, with a second cask being drunk dry on the Sunday and the bulk of a third going on the Bank Holiday Monday. His regulars love it so much that Pete is trying to get the pub company that owns The Ashcombe to allow it in on a regular basis.

A healthy contingent of local CAMRA members joined forces with some of Off The Rails' real ale crowd to form a 16-man party, led by OTR landlord Colin Hicks, that travelled to Newton Abbot on the Friday of the annual **Maltings Beer Festival**. This event only features beers from South West breweries, but still produces a fantastic range of beer styles, with almost 200 different beers to choose from this year. You really should make this event a "must" in your diary and join the Weston party in 2006. Look out for details in future editions of Pints West.

A recent Weston CAMRA branch social comprised of a minibus outing along the A368 (Bath Road). First stop was the furthest pub visited on the evening, the **Ring O'Bells** in Compton Martin. This excellently run pub is owned by Butcombe and has been a Good Beer Guide regular for many years. It has something for everyone, with a large no-smoking eating area, an excellent family room, and it still retains some great nooks and

crannies for people that just want a drink (and a fag). It is a great place to settle in front of its real fire in winter and there is a lovely garden for summer days. The beers (all in top condition) were Butcombe Bitter, Blonde and Gold. The guest beer was Wadworth 6X. I can heartily recommend the Ring O'Bells for an afternoon out on August Bank Holiday Monday. A top-quality lunch at prices that put most village pubs to shame, followed by an afternoon lazing in the garden enjoying a live band (John Fenlon's Blues Band last year) and a pig roast, all accompanied by great ale. Bliss.

Next stop on our trip was nearby Ubley. Ubley lost its only pub several years ago. A few of the locals have got together to transform the Village Hall on the first Friday of each month into "**Ubley Publy**." As the name suggests, for one day a month the villagers get their own pub and this is well supported. Happily most of the organizers of this initiative are real ale connoisseurs and a cask of ale is always featured. On the evening of our visit this was Liberation, a 4.5% abv mid-brown beer from Thwaites brewery of Blackburn. The hospitality was much enjoyed. My task of getting people out and back on to the bus was much harder than usual – one or two said that they could have happily stayed there all evening. As it turned out, the Liberation was regarded by most as the best beer of the evening.

Look out for the 3rd Chew Valley Beer Festival to be held at Ubley Village Hall on the 9th and 10th of September.

A minibus will be running from Weston on the Friday evening of the festival – more details in the next Pints West.

Heading back towards Weston, we next stopped at **The New Inn**, Blagdon. This is a Wadworth-owned pub and the beers on were 6X and Henry's IPA. We got chatting to a

couple of locals who have migrated from South London to a house across the road from The New Inn. They were great advocates for the customer service at the pub. When the husband (Wally Mears) was housebound with a bad knee, jugs of beer were delivered to his bedside. Interestingly, The New Inn has been totally no-smoking since the beginning of March. The landlord reports that trade has slightly increased since then. This is perhaps not totally surprising, as Blagdon is a village fortunate enough to have four pubs and a licensed club, so there is plenty of choice for the lucky residents.

On leaving The New Inn there was some debate over whether to go to the nearby **Queen Adelaide** or the **Seymour Arms**, both in Blagdon. Eventually we decided to split into two groups and visit both. I joined the Adelaide party. No real regrets. The local Butcombe Bitter was good. Other beers on were Marston's Pedigree and Bass. It was also pleasing to see real cider from Thatcher's, based about five miles away from Blagdon. The Seymour Arms party reported that in addition to a few commonly-seen beers there was an interesting guest – Lady Of The Lake from the Glastonbury brewery.

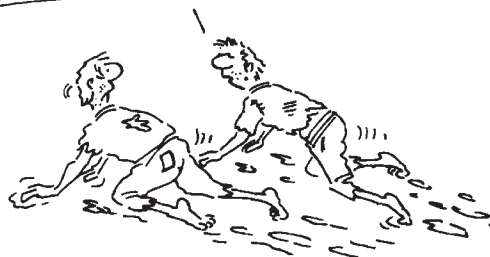
Last stop of the evening was **The Crown**, Churchill. A safe banker to finish at, as almost everyone loves this pub, which is one of the gems of the area. However, nine beers were available and given this number the variety in terms of styles and strengths was a bit disappointing – and can someone tell me what punter wants to pay £2.60 for a pint of Butcombe Gold? Nevertheless, beer quality was very good, as indeed it was all evening. I cannot recall hearing anyone complain about the quality of anything they drunk.

There are loads of good pubs out there – check them out.

Tim Nickolls



We've lost our pub!



A Round with Robin

WITH discussion about pub opening times and the re-invention of Dr Who, I thought that this would be a good time to examine clocks in pubs.

This piece is from Jerome.K.Jerome's book "Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow":

By the way, how awkward it is having to depend on public houses and churches for the time. The former are generally too fast and the latter too slow. Besides which, your efforts to get a glimpse of the pub clock from the outside are attended with great difficulties. If you gently push the door ajar and peer in, you draw upon yourself the contemptuous looks of the barmaid, who at once puts you down in the same category as cadgers. You don't see the clock because it is behind the door; and, in trying you jamb your head. The only other method is to jump up and down outside the window. After this proceeding, however, if you do not bring out a banjo and commence to sing, the youthful inhabitants of the population who have gathered round in expectation become disappointed.

I wonder if you have noticed where pub clocks are in those pubs you frequent, or perhaps you have a wrist watch.

In Weston-super-Mare, the Regency, Off the Rails, and the Dragon all have two clocks in one bar. In the street-level bar of the Cabot the clock was only visible at the end of the bar – I almost think it was there for the benefit of the staff. In the lounge bar of the Raglan Arms there is no clock, nor could I see one recently when attending a mini beer festival at the George Inn



at Middlezoy.

This, by the way, was an excellent little festival with 26 ales named from A to Z (Milk Street brew Amarillo to Moor brewery's ZZZ). Three of us from the sub-branch walked there from Bridgwater on the Saturday lunchtime and all but one beer were still on despite 400 pints having been drunk the previous day. The photo shows us in front of the casks.

Another good festival attended recently was the SIBA Champion Ales held at Horts Tavern, in Bristol. Again we attended Saturday lunchtime, which was very quiet, but the place had been heaving on the Friday night. All the SIBA beers were £2 a pint, and our favourites

were the Hawkshead Gold and Wolf's Woild Moild.

Tim Nickolls in his column in the last edition of Pints West made mention of the possibility of a new brewery in Weston-super-Mare. Regrettably I have no news on that, but to put the record straight on other breweries in Weston I quote from the Avon Extensive Urban Areas Survey (sponsored by English Heritage): "Two breweries have been identified, though it seems probable that brewing also took place on the premises of some public houses, inns and hotels. In 1838, Thomas Locock operated a brewery on the corner of Worthy Place, opposite the Market. It is not known how long this brewery was in operation, but it is not mentioned in the earliest Directory so far examined, from 1859, and the site had been built over by 1885. It was shown however on the 1838 title map. Thomas Locock was advertising his brewery in 1843 as 'opposite the railway station' but it transpired from later evidence that this was probably situated in the Victoria Hotel as Thomas Locock was the Landlord there in 1840 (shown in The Westonian). The railway station at this time was in Alexandra Parade, and the Victoria Hotel was demolished to make way for the new Post Office. In 1843 the Westonian reported a beer, ale and porter brewery set up in the High Street by Albert Printer. The business flourished but it is not referred to in the Directory of 1859, so did not survive for long. We know that the unfortunate Printer was declared bankrupt on 19 July 1856 due to bad debt (Weston Gazette)".

It is perhaps not so unusual that the RCH brewery was started in a hotel after all.

Robin E Wild

RCH Brewery – 21st birthday celebrations at Weston-super-Mare

THE award-winning RCH Brewery, located in West Hewish just outside Weston-super-Mare, celebrated their 21st birthday on Saturday, 30th April. Despite the high quality of their beers, they are not easy to find in pubs, even in the local area. The Weston CAMRA sub-branch decided to put this right – for one day at least.

On Saturday, 30th April, each of the seven beers regularly made by the brewery was available at a designated pub in Weston. Organised jointly by the brewery and local CAMRA member Tim Nickolls, this was an excellent and probably unique opportunity to sample the full range of RCH beers in one day, and to those completing the “tour”, a t-shirt was given depicting the 21st Anniversary Ale logo.

The beers and pubs involved were:

- **Hewish IPA** at **Off The Rails**, Weston Railway Station
- **PG Steam** at the **Cabot Bars**, Knightstone Road
- **Pitchfork** at the **White Hart**, Palmer Row
- **Old Slug Porter** at the **Raglan**, Upper Church Road
- **East Street Cream** at the **Ashcombe**, Ashcombe Road

- **Double Header** at the **Regency**, Lower Church Road
- **Firebox** at the **Dragon Inn**, Meadow Street

In addition, RCH’s monthly special brew Steampole was available at the Dragon Inn, and RCH 21 – a beer specially brewed to commemorate the brewery’s birthday – was available at Off The Rails and the Dragon Inn.

Saturday was a bright sunny day and those who tried all or at least some of the beers came from far and wide. We know of CAMRA members from Devon, Somerset, Bristol and Gloucester, as well as members from the sub-branch of Weston-super-Mare, who attended. There were also regulars from the Raglan and Ashcombe pubs, and Lou & Nigel (normally Guinness drinkers) and Nick & Tash (usually lager drinkers) from the White Hart were trying the beers too. Many people just out for the day and regulars of the other pubs tried the RCH beers on offer, all at special low prices for the day.

At 1.30pm at the Regency, a presentation was made to the RCH Brewery party of a framed certificate (produced by CAMRA HQ) with members of the local press in attendance. A good crowd at the Regency enjoyed the

Double Header at £1.50 a pint (many people’s favourite beer of the day), although the 5.2% ABV was felt a bit strong by one of the members of the press, who drunk a couple of pints on an empty

stomach!

In the evening many of the members of the sub-branch gravitated to the Raglan for the Old Slug Porter, whilst at the Ashcombe the RCH Brewery party was in full swing. These two establishments were the depositories for the t-shirts: a total of 33 were earned over the course of the day. The lucky recipients included people from Cheltenham, Tiverton, Cullompton, Birmingham, Bristol and Reading. The Reading visitor was seen by local CAMRA stalwart, “Gunner” Graham Teague, proudly wearing his “RCH 21st Anniversary” t-shirt the following day at the Reading Beer Festival. Three drinkers from Weston seemed proud of their achievement in completing the route in double-quick time, annotating their completed passports “2.50pm!”. It is not known whether they then commenced on a second circuit for an extra t-shirt.

As a general rule it is always difficult to judge the success of these kinds of events, but some sort of measurement can be taken from the amount of beer sold on the weekend. For example, the Regency, not known for selling beers stronger than 4.4%, sold its first barrel by 8pm, as also did Off The Rails, and the Ashcombe by 9pm! The White Hart, with most of its regulars not known for imbibing real ales, sold its first barrel by Sunday lunchtime.

All in all a great day enjoyed by the licensees, Westons and visitors alike.

For those who missed out, the Raglan is holding an RCH Weekend from 24 to 26 June. Five RCH beers will be available and the first 20 people having a pint of each will get a free RCH t-shirt.

Robin E Wild



THE WINDMILL INN

PORTISHEAD ~ GENUINE FREEHOUSE

6

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

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

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



RCH Brewery

West Hewish
Nr Weston-super-Mare
Tel: 01934-834447

Brewers of award-winning beers including

- ◆ P.G. Steam
- ◆ Pitchfork
- ◆ East Street Cream
- ◆ Firebox

Guest Beers and Beer Festivals catered for

Welcome... the Ebdon Arms

OVER 200 pubs close in Britain every year and, on the rare occasion when a new one opens, it tends to be a ghastly town centre joint aiming to get under 25s plastered a.s.a.p. and often not bothering with stocking any real ale. Therefore, it is very pleasing to report the opening of a new pub in the Weston area that is pleasant to visit and seems genuinely committed to real ale – local ales at that.

The Ebdon Arms is part of Wick St. Lawrence, which has mushroomed hugely in recent years and is now well and truly part of Weston's "urban sprawl" (I am convinced that in a hundred years time Weston will be physically joined with Bristol). The pub is a very large building, taking up a sizeable portion of a retail centre that has been established to service the large new housing developments in the area. It has a large car park and bus route 5A stops outside.

When approaching the pub for the first time, I was pleased to see "local cask conditioned real ales" on the signage at both the

front and rear of the premises. I was a bit surprised when the first three handpumps that I saw were Bass, Fuller's London Pride and Everard's Tiger – none of which are brewed within 100 miles of Wick. However, my eyes lit up when I moved on to the next bank of handpumps which housed two beers from RCH Brewery – Hewish IPA and East Street Cream. No problems there with the "local" definition – the RCH Brewery cannot be much more than a mile away from the Ebdon Arms.

I met Steve Beasley, who has taken over the pub in partnership with Rose Cunningham. Steve has moved to Wick from Leicester where he managed an Everard's pub for 14 years. Steve seems very committed to real ale. In his own words: "I pride myself in keeping a good cellar." Steve said that the two RCH beers would be permanent beers, along with the Bass and two guest beers. The pub is owned by Celtic Inns, a Hampshire-based group who own about 70 pubs mostly in Wales. Celtic are owned by Coors (of Colorado, USA) which apparently means that the Bass is a compulsory beer to stock, although Bass is

brewed by Interbrew (of Belgium). Ain't life simple!

Celtic are good supporters of real ale, but I asked Steve whether he felt that there would be enough local demand to justify five real ales on a permanent basis. I was particularly concerned over the East Street Cream, a brilliant beer but a bit strong for many tastes at 5 per cent ABV. Steve's reply was that he would have to wait and see whether five could be sustained, but the early signs have been very good. The pub only opened on 29th April and when I met Steve ten days later, he had sold six casks of East Street Cream and had successfully got through four different guest beers during the first week of business. The omens appear good and on my two visits the RCH beers have been in perfect condition.

As with any sensible modern pub, the Ebdon is seeking to provide something to suit a range of potential customers. The main lounge is a vast area, with a large no-smoking area. The room is bright and airy. There is quite a strong (but not over-bearing) focus on food. There is also a dozen-strong wine list. They offer a local real cider – currently Thatcher's Heritage. There is a separate room that houses a pool table and skittle alley. If you like to drink outside, there is a patio area at the front of the pub and an enclosed garden at the rear.

The opening of the Ebdon Arms is a welcome addition to the local real ale scene (to my knowledge it is the only pub in the area that stocks East Street Cream on a permanent basis) and I hope it proves to be well-supported by the local community and also by real ale drinkers from Weston and Worle.

Tim Nickolls

Reed writes..... on Newman's Brewery

Newman's Brewery has recently developed new branding for all its beers. This is part of the drive to expand the brewery and get its beers further afield. At the time of writing the brewery is very close to clinching the purchase of a site in nearby Yatton to relocate the brewery from its small domestic operation in Banwell.

Tom Newman hopes that the new operation will be up and running in around eight weeks following completion and it will allow a much greater brewing capacity than is currently possible. Once satisfied that all is well with the relocation, Tom plans to hold an inaugural beer festival at the new brewery later on this summer. Watch this space (*Watering Holes in the Desert*) for further info.

Sales have grown steadily all year and look set to continue to rise in the foreseeable future.

Meanwhile **The Castle Tavern** at Kewstoke (just outside of WsM) is continuing to flourish as the brewery tap, boasting a growing reputation for quality fresh food.

Other Banwell news

I understand the lease of **The Bell** was sold a few months ago and is now in the hands of new tenants. This Enterprise Inn has had always had a loyal following and it is hoped that the policy of maintaining a locally brewed guest beer will continue.

Exciting news at **The Brewers** just around the corner. Rob, who previously ran the Bell has acquired the Brewers and has great plans to breathe new life into this once extremely

popular establishment. As locals will probably know, it is currently closed as work has already started to completely refurbish the place inside and out with a planned reopening around Whit weekend.

Rob hopes to resurrect this sleeping giant by serving four real ales and, with his enthusiasm for motor cycles, hopes he will attract the biking fraternity to visit 'his new baby.'

Things are still moving steadily at **The Whistling Duck**, still the only regular outlet for the excellent Adnams Broadside for at least a 20-mile radius to my knowledge. Check out the new initiative to sell all beers at a reduced price early evening. Go visit for details.

Maltings Beer Festival, Tuckers Malting, Newton Abbot, Devon

Shame if you missed it — what a great day out. 'Nuff said.

Did anyone visit **The Woolpack** at St. George's a few months back and try the wonderful **Tally Ho! Strong Dark Ale**, 5.5% ABV, brewed by Palmers? What a cracking pint that is! Well done to the Woolpack for giving that a run during the winter. More beers like this *s'il vous plait*.

And finally

Anyone interested in joining the debate over the alternative CAMRA? See the next issue of *Watering Holes in the Desert* for thoughts on my CAMpaign for Real Air! Considerate smokers and landlords welcome.
Steve Reed

Weston Diary

○ **Wednesday 15 June – Bath Crawl.** Train from Weston at 18.35 (subject to Summer timetable). This train stops at Milton and Worle.

○ **Friday 24-Sunday 26 June – RCH Weekend at The Raglan.** 5 beers from RCH available at all times.

○ **Friday 1 July – Claverham Beer Festival, Claverham Village Hall.** Service bus 353 from Weston. Departs town centre at 19.35.

○ **Wednesday 20 July – Seaside Saunter.** Flying visits to 7 venues on or near the seafront. First stop will be The Captain's Cabin at 8.00, then Daunceys at 8.25.

○ **Wednesday 17 August – Two-venue town social.** Starting at The Bristol Hotel at 8.00, moving on to The Ashcombe at 9.00.

Non-members welcome at all of the above events.

Contact

Tim Nickolls - 01934 628996 (eves)
or email tim.nickolls@virgin.net

Island in the sea

By your Nailsea correspondent
Laurie Gibney

"New" pub in Flax Bourton

The Dew Drop Inn dropped into the local pub scene on Friday 8th April, being a very heavily disguised and "made over" renamed Jubilee Inn, which was closed for only four days. Outside and at the front the new pub name is evident as is the pub company name of "Eldridge Pope". Also a couple of pergolas with hanging baskets and some potted palms illuminated at night serve to welcome you in. The garden has been provided with a covered patio and an extension to the kitchens is planned.

Inside, there used to be steps down from the bar then up to the main eating and sitting areas. There are now no steps down as you leave the bar to make life easier for disabled customers and those carrying drinks or food. The shallow steps up to the eating and drinking areas might have been eliminated also but would have needed serious structural alterations. Clever use of mirrors gives the pub more depth; potted plants, books, pictures and stuffed birds and fish in glass boxes partially hide the mirrors.

Michael Cannon bought the Eldridge Pope pub chain that leased the Jubilee from Enter-

prise Inns last year. The pub has been under-performing for some years and CAMRA were concerned that it might close and be sold off for other uses. Maybe Michael had a soft spot for the Jubilee because it was his Dad's local, or thought that being on a busy major road just outside of Bristol and given the right make-over it must succeed!

We welcome managers Sharon (a Devon girl) and Carl (an Essex boy) Brockington, with baby Vincent just six months old, to the Dew Drop Inn and wish the venture every success. They previously spent four years at the King William Ale House in King Street, Bristol – a Samuel Smith house but with no real ale. At the Dew Drop Inn Carl will be able at last to use his skills looking after cask ale again. On the opening night the cask ale was Courage Best, Butcombe Bitter and Marston's Pedigree, but it is intended to provide a varying cask ale range to include local ales. Thanks to John and Christine from Coventry and others for keeping the pub going over the last few months since "Rich & Mel" moved on.

An extensive menu is offered under the banner of "H. J. Wellfed's" including tapas, fish, vegetarian, salads, roasters, grills, curries, pies, bar snacks, children's meals, and at limited times "241" steaks and over-55's offers, plus specials of the day. Phone 01275 462741 to book a table.

Another new name and management

The Battleaxes at Wraxall has now been renamed the New Battle Axe. The pub was built by the Gibbs family whose nearby family seat Tyntesfield, and part of the estate, has recently been taken over by the National Trust and is well worth a visit.

The pub was part of a small group that has gone through various ownerships in recent years, and was bought last October by Panna and Kemar Patel who successfully run the Patco Supermarket in Wells Road, Bristol. At the same time, Panna

and Kemar purchased the Gleneagles Hotel in Torquay, which was the original inspiration for the Fawlty Towers TV comedy starring John Cleese and Prunella Scales.

Alistaire and Julie Scott managed the Battleaxes for seven years through thick and thin times and left recently, moving to Surrey. Andy Charlock, who was a Wetherspoon's manager in Weston-super-Mare and Burnham-on-Sea took over management of the New Battle Axe in April.

The popular carvery will continue to be served in the restaurant together with two-for-one offers at quiet times and the *à la carte* menu. A range of meals and snacks are also available in the bar. Local produce is used wherever possible.

A drinks supply deal has been struck with Scottish Courage, so Courage Best has replaced Bass. The other real ale will be provided from a local brewery, which presumably rules out the previously-stocked Smiles Best because that is now brewed in Walsall. Newman's Wolver's Ale from Banwell currently occupies the second pump and is proving very popular. Andy is keen to add a third real ale pump, so support the New Battle Axe and suggest what third real ale you would like to see on the bar – Newman's Cave Bear Stout perhaps?

New faces at the White Lion

Welcome to Louise and Nikki who have taken over the license of the Enterprise Inn's White Lion in Silver Street, Nailsea. They have retained the real ale range of Courage Best and Butcombe Bitter and have introduced a varying guest ale, starting with Sharp's Doom Bar.

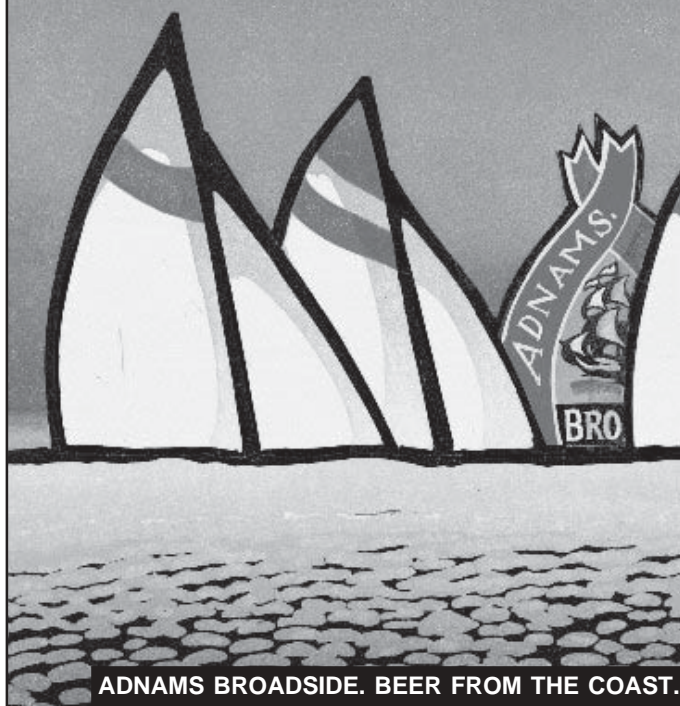
Nikki's previous experience in the license trade was at the Windhover Chapel Brampton in Northamptonshire, a Vintage Inn that also runs the Dovecote, ex-Smyth Arms at Ashton, and Priory at Portbury. Louise is a Nailsea girl and her parents Roy and Joan Thomas have lived in Nailsea, Yatton and Wraxall during the past fifty years. The previous licensees Craig and Cherona have gone abroad.

Food is now served at the White Lion from 12 to 2.30 and 6 to 9pm except on Mondays, and from 12 to 4pm on Sundays. The menu prices range from £3 to a sirloin steak at £6.95. Their beef and Butcombe pie is very popular. Telephone 01275 852776 for more details.

Real ale popular at the Mizzymead Club, Nailsea

Unlike some other clubs, the Mizzymead Club's real ale is very popular, supporting Courage Best and Butcombe Bitter plus a varying guest beer. Club manager Jackie Thursby and cellarman Tony Freeman recently undertook an S&N sponsored cellarman'ship

THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE
CHAMPION BEER OF BRITAIN 2003
GOLD MEDAL WINNER
STRONG BITTER CATEGORY.



ADNAM'S BROADSIDE. BEER FROM THE COAST.

course; the manual and DVD of the course was very comprehensive.

Every week the club sells four nine-gallon casks of Butcombe Bitter, two and a half of Courage Best and two of a guest beer from the S&N's Cellarman's Reserve list. Low-alcoholic and dark ales sell particularly well. The membership fee of £9 per year is soon saved in lower drink prices with guest beers being priced from £1.70 for lower strength ales to £2.10 per pint for 5% beers. Nineteen different ales have featured in the last three months, some being re-ordered because they sold so quickly.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Maureen Buchaly, licensee of the Courtyard Wine Bar in Nailsea, who has been admitted as a Fellow of the British Institute of Innkeeping, and to Ron Peters, licensee of the Sawyers Arms, Nailsea, who has been made a Companion of the British Institute of Innkeeping for services to the industry over many years. Also, to Scottish Courage who are the first brewer after many years campaigning by Ron Peters and others to show the brewery price increases as a percentage of the price before duty, instead of hiding the real increase by quoting their increase as a percentage of the inclusive-of-duty price.

North Somerset's beer and cider festival

Put a date in your diary: the Nailsea & Backwell Rugby Club will be holding a second beer festival at their ground in North Street, Nailsea from 15th to 17th July. This is a fund-raising event too, and local businesses are invited to sponsor a cask of beer to raise funds for the club and the chosen charity, which is the Children's Hospice South West, more-familiarly known as Babe's Big Appeal.

The festival is open on Friday 15th July from 6 to 11pm, Saturday 16th from noon to 11pm, and Sunday 17th from noon to 9pm, with over 50 different, reasonably-priced beers and ciders. There is also children's entertainment, toss the caber, live bands throughout the weekend, disco Saturday evening, and a tag rugby tournament. Advance tickets will cost £4 and include a commemorative glass, programme, tasting notes and a first beer. Parking is free but the nearest bus is First Bus 354 (662/3 on Sunday) – ask for Blackfriars Road. Tickets should be available from the Grove Stores, Nailsea, the Corner Stores, Kingshill, Samuel Bird TV and Video, Nailsea, or from the Rugby Club (call 01275 810818). More info on the club web site www.appelfest.ik.com for the festival or via their main web site www.nbrfc.ik.com.

Courage Best gone!

Butcombe Bitter, Fuller's London Pride and Adnam's Broadside are so popular at the Moorend Spout that they have stopped stocking Courage Best. Many CAMRA

members will be saying hooray for that! Over the years Courage Best has lost its sparkle, particularly after brewing moved from Bristol to Yorkshire, and there are now so many other craft-brewed ales to choose from. The Moorend Spout is now owned by Punch Tavern, which purchased the Innspired Group. A barbecue with jazz band during the afternoon of the Spring Bank Holiday, Monday 30th May, is planned to be held in the garden.

Away from Nailsea

After too long a break I called in at the Angel in Long Ashton, which used to be one of my favourite Smiles pubs. When Smiles sold it to Young's they put it up for sale and it was bought locally as a free house with a manager in charge. The owner Tony Vile and partner Sian Powell now manage the pub themselves, supported by a lovely one-year-old bullmastiff dog Alfie, who is friendly when the pub is open but knows to be on guard when "Time Please" is called.

Tony and Sian have retained the Angel much as it has been for years with a good local country pub atmosphere. Good food is on offer as well as a real ale line-up of Bass, Courage Best and Butcombe Bitter, plus a varying guest beer preferably from a local brewery. Butcombe Gold had just run out on my visit and a Cotleigh beer from Wiveliscombe was due to be available the next day.

I had heard that the Old Inn in Walton Road, Clevedon now offered good real ale so just had to visit! Lesley Butler and Jamie have been in charge there since last summer and offer Courage Best and Old Speckled Hen regularly with one or two guest ales. As if running a busy pub is not enough, Lesley has kindly offered to distribute Pints West around pubs in Clevedon if no-one else volunteers.

Toni Antoni, ex-licensee of the Regent in Hill Road, Clevedon which I reported in the last Pints West is to close down for good, has taken over with his wife Christine at the Moon & Sixpence in Beach Lawns, Clevedon. We expect to find an excellent pint of award-winning Greene King IPA and other Greene King ales at the Moon & Sixpence which is one of their pubs. Of course Toni will be offering excellent cuisine as well.

Short measure

During the recent election campaign Dr Liam Fox MP for Woodspring (North Somerset) listed "beer" as one of the things he enjoys, however he does not support the CAMRA "Honest Pints" campaign. Dr Fox argues that it would cost £250m a year to protect you from being given short measure – forgive me if I am a little naive but don't we elect our MPs to protect us from retailers who give short measure of any kind, through "Consumer Protection" departments of local government (Weights & Measures Departments to those over a certain age like me) not "Consumer Deception" by pretending that "Pints" are being served whereas 5% of it would legally be froth if Dr Fox has his way. Most drinkers probably thought their pint measure was protected by the Consumer Protection legislation already, in which case, Dr Fox, what has been done with the £250 million "extra cost" which should have been spent on protecting us in the past? Dr Fox is one of a about 30 Conservative MPs who are supporting the labour government proposed legislation reducing our pints to 95% of a full measure although about 300 mostly Labour MPs have signed an early day motion opposing it.

And finally...

I have been "asked" why I don't often feature news from the pubs reputed to be most popular with real ale drinkers in this area such as the Old Barn at Wraxall, the Blue Flame at West End, Nailsea, and the Black Horse at Clapton in Gordano, which all serve beer by gravity from casks behind the bar. There are various reasons. I don't drive so getting to some places is difficult; I try and cover about thirty pubs and clubs in the area; I rely on tips about news items and get very few from these three pubs (if you have any news item ideas please contact me via the editor of Pints West); I am a volunteer and personally prefer my ale dispensed from a cellar; but above all I joined the *Campaign for Real Ale* so prefer to *campaign* where drinkers need to be encouraged to try real ale and licensees need encouragement not to reduce their commitment to real ale.

Laurie Gibney

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The Old Green Tree Fat Cat apology



Celebrations were the order of the day recently at the Old Green Tree in Green Street, Bath. This gem of a pub, a must visit on any trip to Bath, made party on March 16th having been awarded the status of "Pub of the Year" by the Bath and Borders branch of CAMRA.

Even though the place is very small it more than makes up for it by the quality of the interior (a feast for the eye) and the quality of the beer. While not being my favourite tippie this pub always puts on a stout or porter which I feel is an important selection principle often ignored by other establishments. The others are typically Pitchfork, Bob, Old Green Tree and two guests, usually local. And on top of that they have the best selection of single malt whiskies that I have seen in Bath.

My only frustration is that I have not been able to get them to admit where the Old Green Tree session bitter is made.

Phill the Pint

READING about the Fat Cat in Norwich in the recent issue of *What's Brewing* gave a sudden jolt of misty eyed déjà vu. My wife tells me that she always has to take me somewhere three times. The second time is to apologise and the third to clear up. So far I have been to the Fat Cat twice and the second time *was* to apologise.

I had heard that this pub was a gem and on a visit to Norwich a few years ago I was determined to seek the place out and try a few. On an organised trip to the city I managed to procure a lift to the centre with strict instructions to be back at the centre about one and a half hours later for the lift back. Fine, except that the walk out to the pub took about half an hour leaving. Aaahhh..... only 30 minutes for a pint!

"Never mind," I thought, "this should not be a problem." And it wasn't, until I got through the front door and saw what seemed to be a list of 30 real ales available. I did not count but was reassured by the *What's Brewing* article to see that my impression was right. Oh well, at least it was an opportunity to try a few in the time available so a selection was made, a half served and followed immediately by an increasingly frantic search for my wallet.

It just was not my day. Very red faced I had to admit that I had left the wallet back at base. The bar maid was, however, very understanding and allowed me to have the half anyway. I handed over all my small change (barely 50p) and tried to look inconspicuous. Shortly afterward the second bar maid came over and expressed concern over my problems. My thoughts were, "Stroll on, has my luck changed?" She told me that another customer had bought her a pint and would I like it. My luck had changed and I gratefully accepted her offer.

I paid my second visit last year, paid my outstanding account and spent a very, very, very happy two hours there playing cribbage with some friends. Pity the bar maid wasn't there though!

I am now looking for a third visit to clear up.

Phill the Pint

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Not *that* Fat Cat

THOSE of you who keep abreast of CAMRA activities at national level will be aware that the Fat Cat in Norwich has recently been awarded the accolade of National Pub of the Year for the second time (the first time was back in 1998).

I have only visited this fine pub once – several years ago when holidaying in Norfolk – and can certainly vouch for its well-deserved reputation for fine ale and lots of it. Indeed, it was one of the six best pubs in Great Britain as recently chosen by Vince Murray of Bristol CAMRA based on his extensive travels around the country (see the Winter 04/05 edition of Pints West).

However, there are no doubt several good pubs called the Fat Cat in the Good Beer Guide and my personal favourite is the one in Sheffield, which is the tap for the Kelham Island Brewery that brews Pale Rider, currently Champion Beer of Britain. Hailing from nearby Doncaster, the Fat Cat was a favourite haunt during my formative drinking years and is still a regular fixture on my drinking itinerary when returning up north.

Located in Alma Street (the nearest tram stop is Shalesmoor) in what was once an area of heavy industry which is now undergoing urban re-development, this Fat Cat (originally the Alma) was purchased from Bass in 1981. The idea was to provide a real alternative to the pubs owned by the big breweries that dominated the city at that time.

A range of beers was introduced that were new to the area. Prominence was given to beers from small independent breweries and a guest beer policy was introduced, the first ever in Sheffield, which allowed a wide range of choice. It was the first outlet in Sheffield for beers from Boddington's, Fuller's, Greene King, Marston's, Theakston's and Timothy Taylor.

Traditional cider, fruit wines, draught Belgian beers and bottled beers were also gradually introduced. A non-smoking room was introduced, the first in the area, and open fires were re-introduced for winter. It was decided to have no music, fruit machines or other electronic games machines. Home-cooked food was made available, with a menu

Muslim beer?

International reports say that Dutch brewer Heineken has decided to invest in a Muslim beer in Morocco. An alcohol-free beer called Fayrouz, brewed in Egypt by Heineken's subsidiary, Al Ahram Beverages Company (ABC), is to be available this summer. They may not be able to drink real ale there, but you have to start somewhere....

Norman Spalding

that always has a choice for those wanting meat, fish, vegetarian, vegan or gluten-free food.

In 1990, David Wickett became the sole owner of the pub and decided to construct the Kelham Island Brewery in a small building in the pub's garden. Due to its success, the brewery moved in 1999 to purpose-built premises alongside the pub.

Regular beers include Bitter, Gold, Easy Rider and the aforementioned Pale Rider. Since the brewery opened, all four of Sheffield's large breweries have closed: Whitbread's old Tennants Brewery; Bass' Hope and Anchor Brewery; Bass' Stones Brewery and Wards.

At the Great British Beer Festival held at Olympia in August 2004, Kelham Island Brewery won Champion Beer of Britain with Pale Rider (5.2% ABV), a well-balanced, straw-coloured pale ale flavoured with North American hops. This award presented the brewery with a dilemma: how to meet the vastly increased demand for Pale Rider in a brewery working at nominal full capacity.

To avoid the need to have the beer contract-brewed by another brewery under the same name, the pragmatic decision was made to get Ridley's Brewery of Chelmsford in

Essex, who had spare capacity, to brew the beer to the same recipe but with a different name (Pale Island). Thus there is no confusion at the point of dispense; Pale Rider is brewed in Sheffield and Pale Island is brewed in Chelmsford. Initial tastings indicate that the two beers are indistinguishable.

During my latest visit over the Easter weekend, the Kelham Island beers on tap were Fat Cat Bitter, Kelham Gold, Pale Rider and IPA; the latter at 5.5% ABV being a new beer in the traditional IPA style and flavoured with lavender. Guest beers were available from Brewster's, Durham, Salamander and Scattor Rock.

So, should your travels take you to the Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire, make a visit to the Fat Cat in Sheffield a priority (follow the brown tourist signs for the Kelham Island Museum once you hit the city centre should one of your party be driving).

Whilst there, you can reflect on the fact that the award-winning Fat Cat in Norwich takes its name from its namesake in Sheffield. A deal on the name was agreed with David Wickett on the understanding that they would stock his beer (Pale Rider has been stocked since day one and they still get through three firkins a week).

Dave Graham



The Bristol Beer Factory, apart from releasing its new memorable logo (above), has stepped up production and is looking to supply as many beer festivals and pubs as possible over the summer.

Their 5.0% single-hopped golden ale – **Gold** – has been perfected and is ideal for those long summer evenings sat outside your favourite pub (or equally enjoyable sat inside your favourite pub staring at the rain outside!).

The refreshing, moreish **No.7** (a 4.2% traditional bitter) is proving to be a hit in the **Pipe & Slippers** in Stokes Croft and also the **Hope & Anchor** in Hotwells. It has also been

a great success in the **Tobacco Factory** theatre where it is the first hand-pulled real ale to be served there. The theatre-goers have drunk the place dry a number of times. Cheers Luvvies!

Their website will be up and running in few weeks so look out for that as it will have details regarding open-evenings and the brewery history.

Contact Simon or Chris by phone on 0117 9026317 or 07746 950070 or by email to enquiries@bristolbeerfactory.co.uk for further information – perhaps you are the licensee of a pub who fancies stocking some of their beer for instance!

Richard Brooks

Wolves on the prowl again

WOLVERHAMPTON AND DUDLEY BREWERIES (W&D) made its second big acquisition of the year in May, when it secured 82.46% of the shares in Cumbrian brewer Jennings Brothers plc. W&D bought the 450-strong estate of the Warrington-based Burtonwood pub company (but not the Burtonwood brewery, which is owned by a separate company) in January. Jennings has added a further 128 leased pubs to W&D's total of over 2,000.

W&D's management said they had no plans to close the Jennings brewery, but that: "Given the local appeal of the Jennings brands, W&D perceives the continued operation of the brewery and the development of this business as key".

CAMRA has heard this sort of thing many times before. For instance, when Boddington's took over the Oldham Brewery Company in 1982 they promised to keep the brewery going for at least five years. They did, but then they closed it.

Nationally, CAMRA is seeking more detailed assurances on the future of the Jennings brewery, beer brands and pub estate.

Mike Benner, CAMRA's Chief Executive, said, "A clear message has been sent to W&DB, that while their acquisition of Jennings has been successful, they are now



faced with the challenge of convincing the people of Cumbria, smaller shareholders and beer drinkers that they are committed to the future of Jennings as a thriving regional brewery."

Mr Benner added, "We have several concerns which need to be addressed. What are W&DB's future acquisition plans? Experience shows us that takeovers often lead to brewery closures and loss of beer brands, which in turn reduces consumer choice and competition. If W&DB acquires more brewing capacity, a downturn in market conditions would force them to reduce capacity which could lead to the closure of Jennings brewery. CAMRA will not sit back and allow this to happen.

"We would like to thank the people of Cumbria and Jennings shareholders who have supported our campaign to keep Jennings independent. An 18% shortfall in acceptances of the W&DB offer strongly suggests widespread concern about W&DB's plans and this must be disappointing to W&DB."

CAMRA has been an ardent supporter of W&D over the years. We mounted a major, and ultimately successful, campaign to keep them independent in 2001, when Pubmaster made a hostile takeover bid. The W&D shareholders

eventually rejected Pubmaster's offer, which would probably have seen W&D's own breweries closed down.

W&D's brands include Banks's and Marstons. They are strong in the East and West Midlands, North-West and North-East. CAMRA was keen to see them stay independent because they had four breweries (since reduced to two) and a large number of local, community pubs; not the most profitable kind of property these days, but important to the community they serve.

We can but hope that W&D will be as good as their word over Jennings.

Norman Spalding

KEEP ON SMILING



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Pub news

The **Foresters Arms** in Downend has undergone a complete refurbishment. The interior now mixes a rustic Tuscany feel with New York Jazz bar artwork. For what it's worth, your correspondent thinks it looks great. Also worth a mention is the fact that the Foresters Arms is one of the very few pubs in the area serving Courage Best Bitter straight from the barrel.

Not far away on the outskirts of Emersons Green, the **Folly** has added a suntrap patio at the front, the perfect place to enjoy a pint of Bass as you watch the Sainsbury's lorries roll by...

Meanwhile, in the historic Portland Square in St. Paul's, an unexpected delight recently has been the introduction of a regularly-changing guest ale in **Cosies**. Situated on the corner where Portland Square meets Surrey Street, this subterranean bar is popular with business lunchers during the day, and a lively bohemian crowd at night. The Everards Tiger Best Bitter was in tip-top condition on a recent visit. Martin, the landlord, is not tied on his 'guest' ale, and welcomes suggestions from beer connoisseurs.

Just around the corner, news has reached us that the **Surrey Wine Vaults** was due to reopen on May 20th, just as we went to press. More news next issue perhaps.

Still in St Paul's, we are sad to report that the **Portland Inn** has now begun conversion to residential property.

In the centre, J D Wetherspoon have announced that their flagship Bristol pub, the **Commercial Rooms**, is to go completely smoke-free from June 4th. Wetherspoon's are committed to making all their outlets non-smoking by May 2006, and the Commercial Rooms is in the first tranche. We sometimes take pubs like this for granted, but it's worth pointing out that, as well as offering the range of ales we expect from Wetherspoon's pubs, the Commercial Rooms boasts surely one of the most impressive pub interiors in the region.

The **Quadrant** on the corner of Princess Victoria Street has reopened and, despite opening night drainage problems, looks to be a vibrant re-addition to the Clifton pub scene. On my visit, the Butcombe Blond was scrumptious.

(Nice refurb, but the range of real ales has been reduce though, from three to two – not quite the increased range they promised before closing for refurbishment. The beers are now Courage Best and Butcombe Blond, but the latter may change. When I asked a member of staff about the reduced range, I was told: "I think it's because we're now a wine bar and not a pub." Ed.)

The pub formerly known as the Assize Courts has reopened as **La Cantina**, a Mexican restaurant/bar with no real ales available.

Sadly, the **Swan Inn** in Midland Road, Old Market, has been sold to property developers. The lease for the pub is held by Bristol City Council, so planning permission will be needed before they can close the pub. I feel another campaign coming on...

Congratulations to the staff and regulars at the **Inn on the Green** in Horfield, featured in the last Pints West. They have been holding quiz nights for the last year and a half to raise funds for the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at nearby Southmead Hospital. They've so far raised over £5,000. Next time somebody moans about pubs and binge drinking, just remind them how much money pubs raise for charities all across the city and beyond.

While we're on the subject of pubs as part of the community, here's a few recent examples that have reached us...

The **Cross Keys at Fishponds** held a special event to commemorate our World War 2 heroes on VE Day.

The **Shield & Dagger** at Hartcliffe teamed up with the Stroke Association to provide free health checks to locals.

The **Crown Harvester** in Hanham has teamed up with local schools for an educational project around growing cress.

The **Wishing Well** in Longwell Green recently held a charity fun day to raise funds for Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Charity CLIC.

Paul and Debra Cheesley have moved from the Star at Tickenham to take over the **Knowle Hotel** in Leighton Road in Knowle. We wish them well.

A general reminder to pub licensees: the new licensing rules mean that you must have applied for your new licence to your local Council by the beginning of August.

Duncan Shine

If you're a landlord/lady or regular with some news about your pub, please feel free to email duncan.shine@britishpubguide.com or steve.plumridge@bristol.ac.uk (we'll share the info) and we'll be glad to consider putting it into the next issue of Pints West.

The Porterhouse Rant

WHILST on a recent, brief trip to Dublin I was lucky enough to get the chance to visit The Porterhouse. This is the name of a small pub chain that also brews its own beer and is now the largest genuine Irish brewery. It specializes in stouts and porters and the quality of these beers puts Guinness, Murphy's and Beamish to shame.

This was my first trip to Ireland and I was expecting the beer to be very expensive. This proved to not be the case – perhaps we have caught up in recent years? A pint of Porterhouse Wrasslers 4X Stout cost £2.70 for a pint of 5% ABV beer. Given that the much weaker Guinness can cost near to this in pubs in Weston and Bristol, I don't think price needs to put anyone off going. The return flight was £29, which compares well with the £110 I paid the last time I went to London on the train!

The Porterhouse has a beer menu, which contains some interesting articles. One page which caught my eye was headed "The Porterhouse Rant". One of the items on the page was a piece called, "Tips for avoiding Bland Beer." I am reproducing this below and hope you will take heed of these wise words.

To compensate for flavour and to appeal to the "mass market" advertising executives have dreamed up an exciting range of words to hide their bland reality.

Don't be fooled and follow these tips to avoid bland beer:

Avoid "LITE"

Avoid "DRY"

Avoid "COLD-FILTERED"

Avoid "ICE"

Avoid "SMOOTH"

Avoid "CREAM/CREAMY"

Avoid "CLEAN"

Avoid beer advertised with words ending in "FLOW"

Avoid beer advertised on TV

Avoid beer with sports tournaments named after them

Avoid beer with "RICE" in the ingredients

Avoid beer "BREWED UNDER LICENCE", it's usually a different strength, a different taste and no resemblance to the original. Often brewed just down the road but they hint that it's an exotic import.

So...Beware of B.U.L.

Tim Nickolls



READERS' LETTERS

Froth Off



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

KEEP ON SMILING

Steve,

I have been passed a copy of Pints West spring edition which I have to say makes for an excellent read – well done.

I do appreciate the immediate loss of the brewing facility in Bristol for Smiles is a setback in the company's history, but something did have to be done to secure the longer term interests of the brand. Clearly Smiles never recovered from selling its own pub estate and I am not qualified to discuss the reasoning behind that original decision.

There must have been some comfort in Young's Brewery agreeing that those pubs could continue to stock Smiles. I understand however that after the brewery closure in January some of the Young's pubs are no longer selling Smiles and that is of course a setback. However thanks should go to them and their licensees for resisting the change earlier and we reluctantly understand their reasoning behind the decision.

We can only hope to convince them to change their mind in the future, so that their customers will not walk down the road to the nearest Smiles stockist.

Ron Kirk and his team should be applauded for the courageous decision "to have a go", and yes, the great plans the team outlined did not work out, but the point is they had a go rather than sitting back and letting the brand disappear from the map.

Highgate Brewery, who have previously brewed beer for Smiles in its heyday, are delighted to have this opportunity of carrying the torch, and being a part of helping to put Smiles back on its feet.

We are passionate about real ale and local heroes, and are determined that Smiles will not be just another regional brewer to have disappeared off the map. For example, we have now, after a long period of negotiation, secured the patent and trademarks for Davenport's and are working hard to revive this great Birmingham institution.

We will apply ourselves in the same

manner with respect to Smiles. We will not get everything right from day one, but we have been delighted with the response to the brews we have put into the market place, and the support and encouragement the majority of existing stockists have given us.

The restructuring has taken out huge overheads the previous organisation simply could not continue to support. Sadly that meant some tough decisions had to be made, but given time we hope to build on the sales team that is now in place and return jobs to Bristol. We are now using the same yeast culture, and we are confident we can continue to produce a consistent stable beer that will be a credit to the original.

There has been some trial and error in terms of stock needed, and Tradeteam logistics have moved mountains to put the distribution plan into place. Our thanks go to them and all at Coors for the back room work their teams put in at incredibly short notice. This now means that, in addition to Smiles beers, a full range of Coors brands and wines and spirits and soft drinks can be purchased with one order delivery and invoice.

Of course, the long term plan is to return Smiles to Bristol and that has to be right. The intention is to start by refitting the Brewery Tap and installing a micro-brewery plant to brew exclusively one of the existing brands that will supply not just the Brewery Tap and the Cornubia but also local pubs and clubs.

Plans are all well and good, but delivering them is something else, and whilst accusations of previous mismanagement abound it is imperative that the "return Smiles to Bristol plan" gets off to a good start, and for that we need your members' and readers' support, and the volumes to support it.

So dismiss the cynics – let's look to the bright side and keep on Smiling!

We would welcome a visit from your membership to the Highgate Brewery where we would be happy for you to sample the Smiles brews.

Best regards,
Bob Norton,
Managing Director,
Highgate Brewery.

THE PRINCESS OF WALES USE IT OR LOSE IT

Our little gem of a pub, The Princess of Wales (POW) in Westbourne Grove, Bedminster, has three or four real ales on at any one time and not all of them are Wickwar beers, but it seems that it has not been on the list of pubs to visit when you real ale drinkers are in the vicinity. There are a lot of pubs in that area, but at the POW, if you want to try some different beers from brewers outside the city, then we would be only too happy to oblige.

Even on the recent CAMRA pub crawl around Bedminster, reported in the Autumn edition of Pints West, the POW wasn't even mentioned let alone visited. (*Because it was a cider crawl around Southville, visiting a few pubs selling real cask-conditioned cider, Ed.*)

In an attempt to bring to your attention the quality of this forgotten piece of pub history we will be holding a beer festival in

mid June and we will offer a 10% discount to card-carrying CAMRA members. See our advert in this edition.

More should be done to visit, identify and create a buzz about more of the real ale pubs in and around Bristol, and they must be supported. Remember what CAMRA is really about, the campaign for real ale. If we have no pubs we certainly will have no real ale. Believe me, you can make a difference.

We are in an ever-changing scenario when it comes to our local pubs. A pub that sells your favourite tippie today may not necessarily be able to sell it to you tomorrow. As the powerful pub companies (pubcos) are acquiring more and more pubs, our choice of real ales are limited more and more. Even J.D. Wetherspoon are insisting that their outlets stock more and more must-sell items from the bigger brewers, leaving less and less choice from smaller brewers. So it is vital that our free house pubs continue to be viable, to remain out of the clutches of the pubco.

It is all very well CAMRA applauding the birth of a new brewery, but unless they are big enough to play with the massive pubcos (between them Punch and Enterprise control almost 20,000 pubs) where are they going to sell their beers? If they are unable to sell their beers how are they going to survive? On that point, there is an obligation for the pubs that can stock a beer from a local brewery to do so, and not to just chase volume-related discounts from the large brewers/pubcos. I feel it is ridiculous that a pub that has the option of a guest beer takes the decision to have, let's say, Courage Best as their guest beer so as to have the volume taken into consideration for retrospective discounts, when that beer is available to them anyway. And let's face it, us smaller brewers produce a far more wholesome beer anyway and in most cases the licensee would make more from offering a small brewer's beer than a run-of-the-mill, mass-produced beer.

There is no legislation to protect the consumer from being corralled into drinking what the pubcos offer them to drink. Once upon a time there were the beer orders to insist that any brewer with over 2,000 pubs must allow their lessees to sell a cask-conditioned beer from an independent supply. The beer orders have now been abolished after, as they said, "having done what they set out to achieve". What rubbish – the market is now tied up tighter than before, and no legislation has been put into place to replace the old beer orders.

Why is it we see more and more pubs putting food way before the beer? Maybe it is because they can make more profit on food than they can on the beer. Why? Well they are possibly not tied on the supply of food as they are on beer. Their landlord (pubco) owns the property and they have to buy the beer supply through the landlord at greatly inflated prices. Beer has become secondary in those pubs. How can they call them pubs? I have seen in certain publications many reviews of pubs, with vast lines of print dedicated to the menu and the qualifications of their chefs and at best the real ales, if they have any, are either



not mentioned or are the same boring ones that you will see in any Brewers Fayre or the like. Surely they wouldn't like to be compared to a Brewers Fayre, so why have the same selection of beers? Perhaps real ale is not that important, because they are really a restaurant and not a pub. So why call it a pub? This could happen to your free house tomorrow.

The moral of this story is simple: support your real ale pub now! It will be too late when the doors have closed. So I hope to see a lot more of you all at the forthcoming mini beer festival at The Princess of Wales, Westbourne Grove, Bedminster, Bristol.

Whilst writing, myself, my wife Debra, and Les and Carol of The White Lion, Colston Avenue – the real ale pub on the Centre – would like to thank all of you who have made it the success it is today.

Ray Penny,
Founder & Managing Director,
Wickwar Brewing Co.

THE COOPERS ARMS USE IT OR LOSE IT

Dear Sir,

I write as one of a group of people who use the Coopers Arms in Highbridge on an almost daily basis and have done so for at least sixteen years and as such I feel more qualified to comment on what goes on in the pub than Vince Murray who wrote his comments in the Spring edition of Pints West based on second hand information and not the evidence of his own eyes and taste buds.

We regulars were naturally concerned when we heard that our beloved pub had been sold to, horror of horrors, a national brewery chain and we had mental images of family dining areas, children's ball pits and kitsch all over the walls. We were therefore relieved on meeting the new landlord (who continues the 30-year tradition of the licensee being a John) and learning that not a lot would change: no food (just the superb rolls at lunch time), no children, and most importantly, real ale and a good variety of it too.

As can be expected with a new cellar system, there were some teething problems but things have settled down and I can confirm that on our (slightly wobbly) return from the Bristol Beer Festival yesterday (three cheers for that event by the way), there were eight real ales on the board. Furthermore John is as good as his word and has altered ScotCo (Scottish & Newcastle) policy and is getting RCH beers back in the pub.

I am no fan of the big brewers but ScotCo seem to have kept faith with the real ale drinkers at The Coopers Arms. I understand that there were twelve parties interested in buying the lease of the pub. Eleven of them were going to introduce food and totally change the character of the pub and the one who got the Coopers wanted to maintain it just as it already was.

The message is that if we want to keep the Coopers as a real ale pub we have to keep using it and those readers put off by Vince Murray's comments should come and try it for themselves and make their own minds up. I think we can all guess what will happen if

trade falls off and the lease becomes available again.

The comments made in Pints West were a bit premature, the new regime had only been in place for a few weeks and more of a chance should have been given. I (and the friends that I drink with at The Coopers) will be grateful if you will print this letter by way of balance and helping us to keep our pub the way that we like it.

Yours faithfully,
Ian McLaren,
Biddisham,
Axbridge, Somerset.

Vince Murray replies:

Since Ian sent in this response to my article, I have exchanged a number of very constructive emails with him on the subject. I have also heard from a couple of other locals too.

The gist of the correspondence seems to be that most of the regulars are relieved that there now is still a good choice of beers available. Apparently the range that I described in Pints West was temporary and up to eight or nine beers are sometimes available now – including from RCH brewery. The RCH beers are apparently selling well – which seems to make my point about owners Scottish & Newcastle initially removing them as soon as they took over.

I can only report the views of others as I have still not visited since the change of ownership. I offered (via Ian) to meet the landlord to discuss my earlier comments, and feed back his views and future plans to Pints West readers. Disappointingly he declined and I got the feeling that I would be unwelcome in the pub (that I had frequented for over 26 years). So I have so far stayed away.

I must say that I am bemused by this as all I did was criticise the decision to remove the previous beers and replace them with widely available big brand ones. That decision was not even down to the landlord, about whom I made no comment.

John Sinclair, landlord of the Coopers, went on to state:

RCH was always going to be a feature of the Coopers Arms. However before this could take place and RCH could be reintroduced, certain contracts and logistics had to be put in place. It takes time to close and open accounts, arrange delivery schedules, direct debits, etc, and so, yes, there was a small gap before customers could again sup Firebox, Double Header and Santa Fe. If Mr Murray thought that RCH and high gravity beers might be gone forever and the Coopers Arms was not worth a visit, I can assure him that is not the case.

I would also like to point out that London Pride is the best selling cask ale in the Coopers: a point which John Hayes (the previous landlord) made very clear to me prior to hand-over. As a regular user of the pub for so many years, Mr Murray would have known this.

The selection of cask ales that have been introduced since takeover has been outstanding according to local CAMRA members and other real ale drinkers. The list of beers available changes on a daily basis and very few are big

brand ales. The vast majority are from small independent brewers up and down the country from Cornwall to Scotland.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating and the real ale drinkers in the Coopers are being well fed! So sometimes the regional brewers do get it right by listening to the locals with regard to their concerns and drinking habits.

RCH AND PITCHFORK

Dear Editor,

Congratulations on a double-page spread in the last edition of Pints West singing the praises of the RCH Brewery (based in West Hewish, just outside Weston-super-Mare) and reporting on the considerable difficulties maintaining an independent brewery in Pubcoland.

In a section headed "Where To Get Them", Tim Nickolls reports on a comprehensive guide to pubs in Weston where RCH beers are dispensed. However, the Boar's Head in Tyle Garw, Glamorgan, Wales (about quarter of a mile from Pontyclun station, 40 yards from the level crossing, seven hand-pumps) takes pride in that Pitchfork is a regular house beer, where the locals keep coming back for more.

In fact, Pitchfork is described as "...hops predominate in a full-bodied taste, which is slightly sweet." I had noticed, and so had the regulars, that Pitchfork stands out among all the beers for being the bitterest – or does it mean that Pitchfork travels excellently?

You can perhaps imagine how avidly we were reading Pints West to see the latest news of Pitchfork in our far outpost. Can you thank Tim Nickolls for doing a great job?

(I was a journalist who spent 19 years working for the South Wales Echo in Cardiff – I even made it to Chief Sub Editor. Then I commuted and worked on the Bristol Evening Post in Temple Way – great paper! I took a job on the South Wales Argus, then fell ill with a serious stroke.)

If Bristol CAMRA members (or any of your readers) want to drink a pint of Pitchfork at the Boar's Head, they should take a train to Cardiff from Temple Meads (occasional services stop at Pontyclun.) It's just a short walk down the footpath and over the level crossing, and you can be assured of a warm welcome when you get there.

Yours sincerely,
Mick Tems,
Talbot Green,
Pontyclun.

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READERS' LETTERS

NEW BREW PUB

Steve,
During a visit to Neath I visited a new brew pub based at the *Borough Arms* at 2 New Henry Street, just ten minutes' walk from Neath Railway Station (London-Swansea line). It is called the *Eagles Bush Brewery* and is run by a Bristolian. It has just recommenced brewing due to expansion and is well worth a visit. When I visited its own beers were not on but they were due on any day as they were just settling in the cellar. The pub is a genuine freehouse and had three guest beers on in top-notch condition, plus a real cider.

Cheers,
Glynn Williams,
Hanham,
Bristol.

OLD FOX

Dear Steve,
I live down the road from the Old Fox in Easton and it is my sad duty to inform you (if you weren't already aware) that builders have started to rip out the heart of the pub. The bar was one of the first items into the skip. I have only recently moved to Easton from St. Werburghs. I was spoilt to have the Duke of York as my local there so I never ventured over the motorway to the Old Fox but was looking forward to having it as my local when I

moved. I was gutted when I found out that it had closed.

It is typical of Bristol's lack of respect for its cultural and architectural heritage. I just feel I must express my frustration at the destruction of historical sites in favour of quick money-making schemes that seems to happen so often in Bristol. I guess my frustration should be aimed at the council more than anyone.

Had I been a local and known in advance about the closure I certainly would have made more of an effort but it's hard to know what people could have done. It would have been nice if the locals could have got together and run it as a co-operative but in this fairly poor part of town I think people probably feel powerless against big businesses.

Jez Toogood
(by email).

GUIDE ME

Dear Sir,
Over the years, I have found the "Last Guide to Avon's Ale" an invaluable guide in planning a day's or weekend's drinking. Pubs close down, change their names, change landlords and various other things happen, and I was wondering if there were any plans to update and reprint the guide.

Yours,
Tarquin Reece-Jones,
Yate, South Glos.

We have no plans to produce a new guide at the moment. Perhaps I can direct you to the on-line pub guide at www.britishpubguide.com, Ed.

BUTHAY SAFE

Sirs,
As you may know The Buthay, Wickwar closed its doors on Friday night (20 May)... however the good news is that it will re-open shortly (we hope within ten days) in the hands of Dave and Alix McKillop who also run the Cask Marque accredited pub, The New Inn at Mayshill. (They will also continue to run the New Inn).

As a long standing CAMRA member and cask ale enthusiast, the future of 'real' beer at The Buthay is safe, and this closure between licensees is merely a small blip.

The only fly in the ointment is that the new lease on the premises does not include a guest ale provision or access to the SIBA ATM scheme enjoyed at The New Inn. This in the short term will see the demise of BOB at The Buthay. However we hope to be able to work with the Wickwar Brewing Co. in gaining a full listing with Interbrew for Enterprise pubs.

We only came on board for this property late on Thursday last week when the original purchaser pulled out and the sale fell through so we are a little up in the air at the moment, but we hope this information helps.

Regards,
Dave & Alix McKillop,
Dallyins Limited.

CYRIL FOR MAYOR

Dear Steve,
I am writing to you to inform you that Mr. Cyril Standbridge, formerly the Bar Manager at the Plume of Feathers in Hotwells, has now taken over the Mayor's Arms in Redcliffe.

All the customers and staff at the Plume of Feathers would like to take this opportunity to wish him well in his new venture.

I would be most grateful if this information could be passed on in the next Pints West editon if possible.

Many thanks and best regards,
Mark Farrell,
Landlord of the Plume of Feathers,
Hotwells,
Bristol.

Steve,
Sadly, as I sure that many of you are already aware, Cyril has left the Plume Of Feathers in Hotwells. I am sure that we will greatly miss Cyril (the squirrel).

Geoff Larsen,
St George,
Bristol.

Dear Steve,
Way back in Spring 2004 information came out about the "Bristol Pub Guide". Having gone around all the bookshops, including Waterstones and WH Smiths, I can't find a thing. I enquired down at the Cornubia recently and they didn't know about it, and I was told to contact you. Is it available yet, and if so where do I get it?

Yours,
Dennis Richards,
Stoke Gifford,
South Glos.

Duncan Shine replies: Sadly, the Bristol Pub Guide was never published due to funding issues. There are plans to publish it at the end of the summer. Contact Duncan.shine@britishpubguide.com if you want to know more.

Pub news

Rohan Shadbolt, who used to run the Smiles Brewery Tap, recently took over the tennacy at the **Shakespeare** on Prince Street in Bristol.

The Swan, Conham Hill has been selling Bristol Beer Factory No. 7.

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In the Market for Success

A profile of Fuller's Old Fish Market pub in central Bristol



I WELL remember the sense of anticipation in the late 1990s when London brewer Fuller's first announced that they were to open their first Bristol outlet. Those of us familiar with their award-winning beers were delighted that we were to have a regular supply of Chiswick Bitter, London Pride and ESB on our doorstep. The Old Fish Market at the Bristol Bridge end of Baldwin Street is, as the name suggests, a pub built on the original site of Bristol's main market specialising in fish. Fuller's name has long been associated with high standards in both pubs and real ale. For reasons that I will outline below, we have been sadly disappointed with the place since it opened – but I am glad to say that there are now very good reasons to believe that things have changed for the better and it is developing into the excellent pub that we had all expected.

The first problem that we encountered was that when the place first opened, and for several years afterwards, all of the real ale was sold at ridiculously cold temperatures, well below the recommended level for real ale. The problem with too cold real ale is that all the subtleties of flavour become masked by the coldness and the beer tastes bland. The problem was so acute that it is only a slight exaggeration to say that it was difficult to distinguish between drinking London Pride at 4.1% and ESB at 5.5%! As a result the Fish Market became known mockingly as the "Fridge Market". This coldness, coupled with prices that seemed very high at the time, dissuaded many of us from calling in, although the place was often very busy.

After a couple of years, and several consultations between CAMRA and Fuller's, the extreme coldness seemed to be less evident but other problems emerged. The general availability and quality of the beers became very patchy and the temperature ranged from too cold to too warm and all points in between. I remember a period when it was not unusual to find only one, or sometimes no, beers available with all other pumps out of action. I also recall feeling hungry one afternoon about 5 pm and being enticed in by the "food all day" signs outside and on the bar top. I bought a pint and tried to order a meal only to be told, "We don't do food until the chef starts at 6.30"!

About two years ago the place was being run by a team of staff that seemed to specialise

in being unfriendly and surly. A particularly annoying trait was to serve you a pint right up until 10.59 pm and then start hassling you to "drink up and leave" at about 11.03 pm! Many bus services stop right outside the door and my last bus home leaves at 23.13, making it an ideal last

stop of the night – but this was spoilt by being ejected by burly bouncers at 11.05 as all chairs were placed upside down on the tables as you tried to drink. This kind of behaviour is not only rude it is highly irresponsible in encouraging someone to drink a strong beer too quickly before exiting onto the street – something akin to unintentional binge drinking. By this time our visits were becoming few and far between and the pub was becoming noticeably quiet and often empty – clearly others shared our feelings.



Now for the good news – things have become massively better over the last nine months or so. Frankly, we had stopped going in apart from the odd occasion to watch a televised football match or other sporting occasion. It is one of the very few places in central Bristol to offer both a good range of real ales and a good location to watch the sport (a plasma TV near the bar and a bigger screen at the rear). In mid 2004 a temporary landlord appeared "on loan" from the South East and it was immediately clear that he took the quality of the real ale on offer, and of service offered, much more seriously than the previous management teams. All of the beers were usually available and now in pristine condition. All of Fuller's seasonal beers were sold when available, and Butcombe Bitter and Smiles IPA too. Slowly but surely we regained confidence in the pub, as did many other people – it was getting noticeably busier again. Unfortunately he made it clear all along that his tenure was temporary until a permanent manager was in place.

This precluded the Old Fish Market from consideration for inclusion in the 2006 Good Beer Guide, which was decided in March/April 20005.

In March 2005 a new manager was appointed – Mr. Jauma Escoriza who is an Englishman despite the name! Shortly afterwards came his assistant Ben Reidy (pictured) who is Australian. Ben assured me that they plan to stay for the foreseeable future and are committed to carrying on the great work done by the previous manager. So far they are certainly as good as their word – the beer has been tremendous on recent visits. The current range is London Pride (£2.30), ESB (£2.55), Discovery, a brand new 3.9% golden brew (£2.30), Smiles IPA (£2.40) and Butcombe Bitter (strangely overpriced at £2.60, as it is a lot weaker than ESB). In addition one of Fuller's range of seasonal beers is offered as available. These have included Hock (a mild recently reintroduced), Jack Frost, Honeydew, Red Fox, Summer Ale, and the utterly magnificent London Porter at a whopping 5.4%. The porter, until this year only available for about two weeks every November, was on for two to three months as a result of popular demand. Ben says that they sold "a lot" of it too. The one big disappointment is that Fuller's Chiswick Bitter (their excellent weaker session beer) has not been served for several years now – my theory is that the quality issues that I have outlined earlier caused a lack of trust in the beer amongst drinkers, and that it would be well worth trying to reintroduce it now that it would be better kept.

Two parts of the pub are undergoing refurbishment currently. The little used courtyard to the left of the entrance is being fitted out to become a no-smoking dining area and the gents' toilets are to be changed. Currently they must qualify as amongst the quirkiest around. An unfeasibly long walk from the bar into the basement of the pub brings you out into a very large square room which contains just three urinals set at below knee height and a cubicle, plus a lot of empty space – perhaps it was designed by a drunken short person?

The food service at the pub was recently franchised out to "Thai Toms" who offer a full menu of Thai food daily from noon to 10.30. A glance at the menu showed that starters ranged from £4.50 to £7.50 and main courses £7.50 to £8.50 plus rice and sundries. A "Thai banquet" at £17 per head for a minimum of two people also features. The pub is air-conditioned making for a pleasant environment. A quiz is held each Sunday at 8 pm.

If, like us, you stopped visiting the Fish Market after less than great experiences in the past, you could do worse than to give it another try – I believe that you will be pleasantly surprised. Beer range and quality is massively improved, at prices broadly in line with most other pubs. The service is much more welcoming and friendly and you will not be forced out at 11.05 any more. If you travel home on the 507, 506 or 536 buses then it is the perfect last stop of the night. It also remains a very good location for televised sports events.

Vince Murray (outside photo by Phil Cummings)
The Old Fish Market, 59-63 Baldwin Street, Bristol.
Open 12-11 Mon-Sat, 12-10.30 Sun.

Shine on the Centre

Having spent the last few issues exploring the length and depth of Bristol, Duncan Shine has ventured to the very heart of the City, to give us his views on the Real Ale scene in Bristol City Centre.

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

THE shambling, slightly jaded looking figure – our Guide over the last couple of years – is currently in Fiji, where he is first reserve for *Celebrity Love Island*. So I'm afraid you're stuck with me this time around.

Right, find some good real ale in the Centre of Bristol. That's gotta be easy, right? Well, it depends what we mean by the Centre. For the purposes of this visit, the Centre includes Corn Street, Small Street, Broad Street, Baldwin Street, King Street and the Centre itself. We are not visiting the Watershed bars today, and excellent pubs like the *Cornubia*, *Bridge Inn* and the *Bag O'Nails* all fall just outside my remit for the day.

By the way, has anyone else noticed the piece of graffiti on the old Bristol & West Building in the Centre? It reads "We are living in a hippocracy!". Now, I can't work out whether the graffitist has done it on purpose, but I think he meant to say "hypocrisy", meaning that all our leaders are dishonest. However, what he's actually said is that our great nation is being ruled by horses (that's what "hippocracy" means). I was tempted to write something clever underneath, like "Yes, but there's no point nagging about it; we're saddled with it and can't just change it on the hoof". Then I decided that would make me both a vandal and a smart-arse, so I settled for finding an excuse to mention it in a future article. So at least I'm no vandal.

Anyway, back to the pubs. First stop this time around is the **Three Sugar Loaves**, that beautiful and historic establishment at the bottom of Christmas Steps. With its lovely nooks and crannies spread over three levels, this pub should be on any heritage tour of the city. Currently the real ale is Sharp's Doom Bar Bitter. Some people have noted that the quality of Doom Bar has dropped as Sharp's brewery's massive expansion has kicked in, but on my visit it was as good as ever.

From there, it's a short stroll in the rain to the Centre (at least it was raining when I did it) and to *Yates's Wine Lodge*. No real ales there (you'll get used to that phrase by the end), so straight on to the



Three Sugar Loaves

Horn & Trumpet. No real ales there (see, there it is again...) so swiftly down Denmark Street to *Encoré*. Although strongly linked to Brain's brewery, the pumpclips were all reversed on my visit so 'no real ales there'.



A Bunch of Grapes

Next, then, is the theatre-goers' haven the **Bunch of Grapes**. A lovely little pub, with ornate exterior and a welcoming, L-shaped drinking area with a long bar down the left hand side and posters of famous actors on the walls. Best of all, there is a top selection of four or more real ales, usually including something from Bath, something from Wickwar and a couple of others. If you haven't sought out this place before, give it a go.

Next, across the Centre – and, yes, I think the little fountains look ridiculous too – past where the *Sedan Chair* used to be (now sadly converted to office and residential use) and right past the graffiti and on to King Street.

Delighted that the **Bunch of Grapes** here is back to its traditional name. Morland Old Speckled Hen is the only real ale on offer here, another brew that has suffered from massive expansion of its range, not to mention the change of brewery to Greene King. However, again the pub is doing its bit, keeping it very nicely thank you.

Brief mention for the *King William Ale House* across the road. No real ales there (that's four and counting) but as keg beers go, the Ayingerbräu Hefe Weisse is



Another Bunch of Grapes

more interesting than most.

The **Naval Volunteer** (or the *Famous Royal Navy Volunteer* as it is rather unnecessarily sometimes called) is like an old but tired thoroughbred given a new lease of life. Tastefully decorated, though



The Naval Volunteer

I confess I miss the old gnarled wood, grizzled customers and piano that used to grace the 'Front Room' as it is now called. Excellent real ale selection, though. On my visit there was Palmer's IPA, Jenning's Golden Host, Smiles Best and 'Slap & Tipple'. I confess I've gone off Smiles since it moved to Highgate (personal choice, of course) so went for the Golden Host, which was a smashing summer ale, perfect accompaniment to the hailstones that had started to pound the cobbles outside.

Next, along past *Brownstone* (no real ales there) to the **Llandoger Trow**



The Llandoger Trow



The Old Duke

(Morland Old Speckled Hen and Greene King I.P.A.). Architecturally very important, with its literary connections and beautiful frontage, the Llandoger is also a heritage 'must', even though it just fails to make my top five for beer this time around.

We bypass the *Bed* bar, *Bar Med* and the *Zee Bar* – three more 'no real ales there' establishments – and follow the sound of chilled-out jazz music into the **Old Duke**. Now, we all know Old Duke's magnificent and continuing contribution to the live music scene in Bristol, but it is often easy to overlook the excellent real ales available here. The *Courage Best* and *Directors* are not exactly my cup of tea – though there have been times when *Best* has tasted like it – but excellent pints of *Doom Bar* and *Bath Gem* are also to be found here.



The Old Fish Market

Next stop, along to the end of Queen Charlotte Street and across to the **Old Fish Market**. This pub is featured in depth elsewhere in this edition of *Pints West*, so suffice it to say here that the full range of Fuller's beers, including the new *Discovery*, are available and very well kept.

Cut into St. Nicholas Market and you are met by a whole world of 'no real ales there'. *Seamus O'Donnell's*, *Revolution*, *Fiesta Havana*, *Legends*, and the *Manhattan Bar* have all chosen not to offer real ales. Their decision, of course, but a shame nonetheless. *Condell's Ale* house is still closed and boarded up. *Romeo Brown's*, *Edwards*, the *Hard Rock Café*, the *Slug & Lettuce*, *Walkabout* and *Toad* (soon to become *Que Pasa Bar*) have formed the same view. Only the **Crown**,



The Commercial Rooms

with its Fuller's London Pride, bucks the trend.

On, then, to the **Commercial Rooms**. Now, the Commercial Rooms has an advantage in that, on the day I visit, they are in the middle of the Wetherspoon's beer festival, and are offering a staggering 14 different real ales. Watch out for these bi-annual festivals, as they do seem to get some unusual brews in. However, even when there isn't a festival, there's always a good selection, and the quality here is as good as in any of the Wetherspoon's outlets around the city.



All Bar One

All Bar One on the corner offers a decent pint of Fuller's London Pride, while the Assize Courts round the corner has now become 'La Cantina', a Mexican-themed bar restaurant with, you've guessed it, no real ales there.

Nearly done, but not before we pop into **Horts**. A newish pub in an old building. It seems quite small from the front entrance but stretches back so far



Horts



The Hog's Head

that before you reach the back of the pub you wonder if you are now in Narnia. Beers here are *Young's Bitter*, *Special* and *Waggledance*, alongside *Smiles Best* and *Bristol IPA*, plus a guest ale (*St. Georges* on my visit) and two traditional ciders (*Thatcher's Cheddar Valley* and *Taunton Traditional*). This place is something of a gem, if you ask me.

Right, back onto the Centre, where *Bar Excellence* is another 'No Real Ales There', but the **Hog's Head** offers table service and a fine pint of *Caledonian Deuchar's IPA*, alongside the *London Pride*.



The White Lion

Finally, we pay a visit to the small but perfectly formed **White Lion Hotel** in the corner of the centre by the old *SWEB* building. A *Wickwar Brewery* oasis, and charming establishment, the *White Lion* offers *Mr Perrett's*, *IKB*, *BOB*, *Spring Ale* and *Cotswold Way* on our visit. I am a bit of a fan of the *IKB*, and it is in tip-top condition as I sit quietly and listen to the rain pound down outside. There's something quite relaxing about sitting in a feature window of a pub watching the world scurry by trying to keep their clothes dry during a flash flood.

Duncan Shine



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

Literary pub trail

HAVE you ever looked on the fantastic Bristol's Lost Pubs website and wondered why two former Bristol pubs were named "The Antelope"? Well one of the reasons might be Jonathan Swift's classic novel "Gulliver's Travels", where the hero of the piece set sail from Bristol in a ship called "The Antelope". Another pub to look out for is the former Bush Inn & Tavern in Corn Street (now Lloyds Bank) which had strong links with Charles Dickens. Incidentally this pub also featured Bristol's most famous real life landlord, John Weeks, whose Turtle Soup and Bill of Fare was known throughout the Empire.



The Admiral Benbow
Reproduced courtesy of Redcliffe Press
and Frank Shippides

These are just a couple of examples of the many great literary links that exist with Bristol's pubs, ones that go back many centuries. Do Pints West readers know that "Simon the Cellarer" was based on a Bristol character for instance? To celebrate yet another historical literary link, a group of local people have got together to form the Long John Silver Statue Trust. The Trust's aim is to try and put the past on parade by taking Robert Louis Stevenson's classic story of *Treasure Island* and re-telling it in a series of high quality, high visibility sculptures – every one sighted sympathetically against the backdrop of Bristol's surviving historic streets and inns, prominently placed with a good view from the floating harbour.

This last point is paramount in our thoughts as we intend to have *two* trails for people to enjoy, one for land-lubbers, and one for ferry-passengers. Taking the idea a stage further it might even be possible to commission a specially built ferry for those amongst

us with special needs.

It is proposed that the trail should start at the bottom of King Street with that most sinister of characters, Blind Pew, tip-tapping his way past the Llandoger Trow, and on to the Admiral Benbow pub (now unfortunately absorbed into "The Volley"), bearing his black spot for the hapless Billy Bones.

At this point the trail splits up, with ferry passengers proceeding to the Grove whilst land-lubbers can cross beautiful Queen's Square (where Bristol's most successful privateer Woodes Rogers lived), before moving on to the Hole in the Wall pub.

Here the trail comes together again and we meet Stevenson's greatest creation, the anti-hero Long John Silver, one of the most complex characters ever created in fiction. Allegedly crippled in the service of the King under Admiral Hawke, the world's most famous pub landlord enjoyed a mixed-race marriage (unheard of in 1883!) and was crucially misunderstood by confirmed bachelors Dr Livesey and Squire Trelawney (they thought he was trying to escape his wife – not pursue treasure). He was described recently as the ultimate businessman and politician. He is surely the star of *Treasure Island*.

If Silver was portrayed on a large chunk of Red Cliff he would be seen easily from the water and would also be looking out towards Redcliffe itself. This is important as Redcliffe is the recognised birthplace of Blackbeard who happens to be LJS's spiritual ancestor. Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum was one of his "tricks" and a recurring theme throughout the book.

The third subject in our series would be Jim Hawkins, set up across the water from Silver on Redcliffe Wharf, and looking up apprehensively at him, whilst leaning against some apple barrels. This is another vital aspect of the story as it was here that Silver and his cut-throats betrayed their true colours by being overheard.

It has been suggested that if some of the barrels were hollow, children could climb on them and replicate Jim's actions by overhearing those around the sculpture – or just popping out and frightening them. Land-lubbers would have to cross Redcliffe Bridge to reach Jim, but ferry-passengers can just look between the two.

Carrying on along Redcliffe (or Phoenix) Wharf, you come to the popular Redcliffe Caves and here the Trust proposes to put artwork number four, Ben Gunn. Just as much based on Alexander Selkirk as Robinson Crusoe was, Ben Gunn is yet another reason as to why RLS chose Bristol as the backbone for *Treasure Island*.

As most Bristolians know, Selkirk was rescued from four years and four months of solitary hell by Woodes Rogers and his party (part-sponsored by Sir John Hawkins, Bristol

brewer and Lord Mayor), and by capturing a Spanish Treasure Ship together they returned to Bristol wealthy men. Afterwards, whilst Rogers was attempting to procure a fleet for the South Sea Island Company, Selkirk stayed in Bristol for nearly two years, sometimes parading around in his goatskins to the amusement of passers-by.

Whilst Selkirk lived in the Cock & Bottle, local legend states that he met Daniel Defoe in the Star a few doors away in Cock & Bottle Lane. He might even have stayed in Bristol longer had he not beaten up a fellow sailor in a drunken brawl and then absconded. Selkirk's favourite tippie apparently was egg-flip!

I digress: Ben Gunn was critical to the plot of *Treasure Island*, as he essentially rescued



The Cock & Bottle Inn
from an 18th century print

the goodies and thwarted the baddies, ultimately moving the treasure to his cave, and Gunn's little coracle was what Jim used to board the *Hispaniola* (then in pirate hands).

If we move along the quayside we come to another famous Bristol Inn, the Ostrich, and here we propose to erect a ship's mast and portray Israel Hands crashing to his death. This was yet another key point in the story: Israel Hands was Jim's nemesis, and by killing him, young Hawkins secured the *Hispaniola* for the goodies, as well as ridding himself of an arch enemy.

In real life Israel Hands was Blackbeard's navigator and only happenstance saved him from Execution Dock. Just before Blackbeard's ship, *Queen Anne's Revenge*, did battle with the Royal Navy, they quarrelled and Hands' life was saved because he was ashore recovering from his wounds.

If you carry on into Bathurst Basin you can glance up Guinea Street to a cracking little

Smoking – or not – in pubs

With the Government's proposals to ban smoking in the vast majority of work places within the next three years, the issue has got a lot of people talking about how this will impact on pubs.

Broadly speaking, the current proposals for pubs are that those that serve meals will have a total ban on smoking. Those that only serve drinks with perhaps filled rolls, crisps, nuts and similar will be permitted to have a smoking policy. This begs the question – why do customers who do not require a meal deserve less protection than those who want to eat?

Surveys of the general public regarding a ban in the work place indicate that the majority of us would prefer to see a total ban. However, pubs are not like other places of work and a survey of adults revealed that 50 per cent disagreed with a total smoking ban in pubs.

There is clearly a very serious health consideration regarding smoking, both for smokers and non-smokers. However, smoking is not an illegal pursuit and people who choose to indulge must all surely know of the potential risks involved. As for non-smokers, is it unreasonable to allow them the comfort of a smoke-free environment wherever possible?

And here is my point – can we not find a way to accommodate both smokers and non-smokers in some pubs, and let the others decide if they want to go down the smoking or non-smoking route, depending on customer demand?

The fact is, we are losing pubs at a very alarming rate. By banning smoking in the vast majority of pubs, we risk alienating a massive number of regular pub users. Do we really believe these people will be replaced by equal numbers of non-smokers who are not currently in the habit of using their local? I doubt it.

It is interesting to note that in Ireland, where a smoking ban has been in place for some time, the level of community pub closures has not reduced. Statistics from New York, which also has a smoking ban in bars, are difficult to interpret. It's been stated that some bars have seen an increase in the last couple of years – however, given the considerable drop off in tourism to the Big Apple in the two years or so post "9/11", that is hardly surprising as tourism now picks up.

Then there is the JD Wetherspoon experience. The pub chain, which has several pubs in the Bristol & District area, has said that profits at its non-smoking outlets have come under pressure in the 17 pubs concerned. Beer sales in these pubs had dropped when 'Spoons made their statement in late April. Finance Director Jim Clarke said, "We have lost some beer sales as there are those smokers who leave us on day one". Have these drinkers moved on to other pubs or are they now drinking at home? If ultimately the overwhelming number of pubs are non-smoking, will this therefore result in a huge part of the pub-using public being lost to the trade?

I care about community pubs, be they rural, suburban, urban or town and city. My concern is that we will lose even more unless

both smokers and non-smokers can be accommodated. Wherever possible, why not let those pubs with more than one room have a smoking and a smoke-free room? This can be aided by air-conditioning and extraction. Where pubs only currently have one room, many of these are former multi-roomed pubs and perhaps walls can be reinstated. If this is not possible, then pubs, based on consumer demand, can choose a smoking or non-smoking way forward.

There are strong feelings on this issue. I believe that some middle ground needs to be found if we are not to see the rate of pub closures accelerate or pubs turn into restaurants, but most likely both.

I do wonder how many people who demand an outright and total ban on smoking in pubs drive a motor vehicle. The pollutants from transport are mostly air-borne and the effects on health from benzene, nitrogen oxides, hydrocarbons, tropospheric ozone, carbon monoxide, etc., are many and varied. There is no choice when it comes to breathing in these when simply wandering around town. Would they support a total ban on motor vehicles? To be honest, I am more worried about car exhaust fumes than passive smoking – particularly in Bristol where there are so many cars per head of the population.

Let's have real choice, encourage facilities for all, and help save not only our pubs but also the many breweries that supply them. Fewer pubs will equal less choice not only in the pubs themselves but the beer choice.

Peter Bridle

An ex-smoker and current car owner

Literary pub trail...

pub named after, and depicting, a Golden Guinea. This coinage was even more desirable to a pirate than "pieces of eight".

Come out of the Basin and resume your way along the floating harbour and you will come to the final sculpture, just before Princes Street Bridge, on Merchants Wharf, depicting one of the survivors of the quest, dragging a Treasure Chest behind him in the direction of the new museum of Bristol – worn out after all his adventures.

There you have it – from Bristol Bridge to Princes Street Bridge, a portrayal of our turbulent past using one of the greatest fictional novels ever written. It's an opportunity for Bristol to put itself on the literary map of the world, a unique and innovative way to show off our culture in a totally inclusive fashion. You could start where you wanted and the story would still unfold. It would be one of the best free attractions ever.

Now's your chance to comment on the proposals. Do you think them good or bad and how can the Trust improve on its ideas? Please let the Trust know by ringing the author on 01454 238217 or by email on mark@beaufortarms.com.

Mark Steeds

● Carbon Monoxide (CO)

This is produced when the fuel in the engine does not burn properly. In the U.K. road traffic produces 91% of all CO emissions.

Problems caused: When you breathe it in it reduces the oxygen-carrying capacity of your blood and can cause headaches, fatigue, stress, respiratory problems and, at high levels, death.

● Nitrogen Oxides (NOx)

These are produced from the burning of fuel in the engine. In the U.K. road traffic is responsible for 49% of all NOx emissions.

Problems caused: NOx emissions help to make 'acid rain'. They also combine with hydrocarbons to form low-level ozone pollution and may contribute to lung disease.

● Hydrocarbons (HC)

These are compounds of hydrogen and carbon and are present in petrol and diesel. Benzene is an example. Petrol in the U.K. contains about 2% benzene. In the U.K. road traffic is responsible for about 35% of all HC emissions.

Problems caused: HCs react with nitrogen oxides to produce a number of pollutants, including ozone. Benzene can cause some forms of cancer.

● Smoke (particulate matter or PM)

Smoke is made of fine particles of carbon coated with organic chemicals. It is produced

when fuel is only partly burnt in the engine. *Problems caused:* Increases in smoke levels are associated with increases in death from heart and lung disease and may cause lung cancer.

● Ozone

Ozone is made when some pollutants from vehicles combine together in the sunlight. This happens some time later and can be much further away from any vehicles, so 'hot spots' of ozone pollution do not usually occur.

Problems caused: Ozone can affect human health and also causes plant damage

The above is taken for a government web site at www.elmbridge.gov.uk/services/environment/pollutants.html.

See the following BBC web site for a discussion of smoking versus car fumes: news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/3590578.stm.

The article claims that smoking is more toxic than car fumes. But note in this article they are looking at particulate matter not gases such as nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide and hydrocarbon vapours such as benzene which is carcinogenic. Also they are looking at the best possible fuel they could use – is the average car owner that bothered about what fuel they use?

See the following BBC web site for more health implications of car exhaust fumes: news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/1867616.stm.

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Free beer!

BRISTOL & DISTRICT CAMRA are very grateful to Glen Dawkins, the proprietor of both the Hillgrove in Kingsdown (just along from the Hare on the Hill) and the Miner's Arms in St. Werburghs. Glen kindly donated vouchers for free beer at his two pubs to be offered as tombola prizes at our beer festival.

The good news for people thinking of joining CAMRA for the first time is that Glen has kindly agreed that we can offer the left-over vouchers as prizes through Pints West.

Therefore, we will be pleased to offer vouchers for four pints of real ale each to the first two new members who join CAMRA with the application form in this newsletter (joint members count as one as far as this offer is concerned). We will send you the four vouchers which you can then exchange – one voucher equals one pint of real ale – at either of Glen's pubs. In the event of envelopes arriving on the same day, the prize will be given to the first envelopes opened.

Still Smiling

The Royal Naval Volunteer in King Street, Bristol, will be holding a Smiles "beer festival" from Monday 20th June to Sunday 26th June, when one and all are welcome to sample the Smiles product range. Neil Bain will be present on Thursday 23rd June to present a "meet the brewer evening" and will be available to answer any related questions.

The Smiles Pub Company have confirmed they are including a brewpub facility in the redevelopment plans being drawn up for The Brewery Tap and whilst it will not be on the scale of the former facility it will brew one of the four core brands to be available all year, to start with at least.



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Past editions of PINTS WEST on-line and in colour

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

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

PINTS WEST ~ brought to you entirely by unpaid volunteers . . .

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

Letters: please send any correspondence to *Pints West Editor, Steve Plumridge, Garden Flat, 6 Royal York Villas, Clifton, Bristol BS8 4JR*

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Advertising: contact Steve Plumridge (details above) or call – evenings or weekends – (0117) 9743242. Current rates are:

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Subscriptions: to be put on a mailing list (for UK addresses) send a cheque for just £2.50 to the editor, *made payable to "Steve Plumridge"* (or some 2nd class stamps up to that value).

CAMRA Good Beer Guide: suggestions for future entries, and comments on existing ones, can be made to our GBG Coordinator, Richard Walters, care of the editor (above).

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

Trading Standards Officers: contact numbers for problems such as consistent short measures, no price lists...

Bristol: 0117 9223444
 S. Glos: 01454 624000
 Glos: 01452 426201
 N. Somerset: 01934 632026
 B.A.N.E.S.: 01225 396755



Diary

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

Sat 4 June - Pub crawl of central Bristol with Bath & Borders branch. Start King's Head, Victoria Street, noon.

Wed 8 June - Branch committee meeting at the Cornubia, 8pm.

Tues 14 June - North Somerset Explorer. Leave from Cornubia, 6.45pm.

Wed 22 June - Branch AGM, Horts City Tavern, Broad Street, 8pm. Please bring membership cards.

Tues 28 June - Mendips survey trip. Leave from Cornubia, 6.45pm.

Tues 5 July - Trip to Butcombe Brewery. Leave from Cornubia, 6.45pm.

Wed 13 July - Branch committee meeting, Cornubia, 8pm.

Tues 19 July - Chew Valley Explorer. Leave from Cornubia, 6.45pm.

Wed 27 July - Branch Meeting, Mayor's Arms, Clarence Road, Redcliffe, 8pm.

Wed 9 August - Branch committee meeting, Cornubia, 8pm.

Tues 15 August - Pub survey trip. Leave from Cornubia, 6.45pm.

Sat 20 August - Pub crawl of Bath. Start Lambrettas, 12:00.

Wed 23 August - Branch meeting, Horts, Broad Street, 8pm.

For more information on local events either attend our branch meetings or check the diary section on our web site at www.camrabristol.org.uk

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Views expressed in Pints West are those of the individual authors and not necessarily supported by CAMRA. Inclusion of an advertisement does not imply endorsement by CAMRA.

RCH's 21st birthday party

RCH BREWERY celebrated its 21st birthday in style with a party on 21st May 2005, to an accompaniment of torrential rain, thunder and lightning, entertainment from Fred and Doris Bloggs and the Mendip Morris, and some very, very good beer.

Bristol & District CAMRA were amongst those welcomed to a marquee on land next to the brewery to help RCH cut the cake and toast this family brewery's success for at least another 21 years to come. A mouth-watering selection of eight of RCH's beers were available on the stillage, including the 21st Anniversary Ale, favourites such as PG Steam (3.9%) and Pitchfork (4.3%), and one I'd not seen before, Steam Pole. I saved the Old Slug Porter for the last hour or so – a great beer for a damp May day (and any other day really!).

Fred and Doris helped get the party going and bring a smile to everyone's lips with covers of music from the 60s onwards, delivered with a humorous twist and choruses made for joining in. Even the trek across soggy grass to the portaloos couldn't dampen our spirits.

Many thanks to RCH for their hospitality and for continuing to provide an excellent range of beers. And of course, many happy returns!

Lesly Huxley



Fred Bloggs



Anniversary Ale



Lots and lots of casks



The birthday cake



Mendip Morris Men



Photographs by Lesly Huxley, Tony Durbin and John Firth