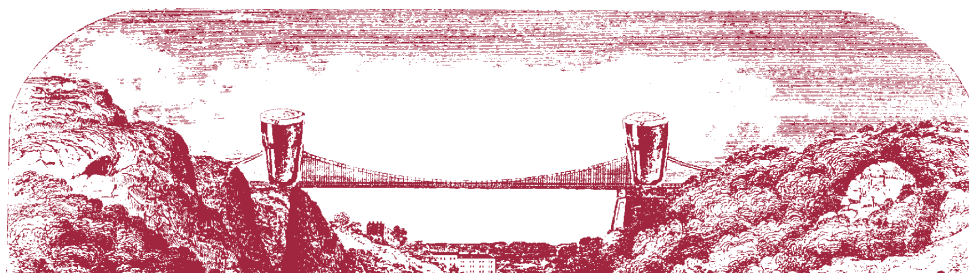




CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

AWARD-WINNING



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Winter
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CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

www.camrabristol.org.uk

PINTS WEST

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

Tenth Glorious Year



Photo by Richard Brooks

Bristol Beer Festival 2007

EVERY year we wonder how it can possibly get better, and every year it does!

March 2007 sees the fabulous Bristol Beer Festival reach its tenth year (and its fourth in the amazing Brunel Passenger Shed at Temple Meads). If this were a wedding anniversary, ten years would be celebrated with tin (apparently) but the 4,000 customers who join us for the two-day event will have to make do with a Festival glass to sample a selection from the more than 120 different real ales and 40 real ciders and perries on offer.

Our first Festival was a more modest affair, launched in February 1998 in the

Council House on College Green with just 50 real ales and less than 20 ciders and perries. Small but beautifully formed, it was a major achievement for the volunteers from Bristol and District CAMRA who spent the previous year planning and organising, and for the many more from around the UK who helped us serve an enthusiastic crowd of around 1,800 people thirsty for a taste of the real stuff!

We've seen a lot of change in ten years, with pub and brewery closures and, thankfully, some new additions. Your thirst for good quality 'real' drinks has continued to grow over the years and the Festival has grown in quality and quantity too. Whatever

your favourite beer style (dark, golden, the increasingly rare 'brown' or even a real lager), we have something for you. You'll find familiar local beers as well as those from further afield that rarely make a visit to pubs in the area. We also now offer one of the largest ranges of real cider and perry of any South-West CAMRA festival.

It's easy to see why the Festival has been a sell-out success from its very first year and that's unlikely to change for 2007. Tickets go on sale from 1st January (see page 2 inside for details) – whether you're a regular visitor, or want to try something new, come and celebrate our tenth anniversary at the Bristol Beer Festival 2007.

Lesly Huxley

Bristol Beer Festival 2007

THE tenth annual Bristol Beer Festival will take place at the Brunel Passenger Shed, Temple Meads, Bristol, on Friday 2nd and Saturday 3rd March 2007.

There will be approximately 120 real ales and 40 ciders and perries. Food will be available at all sessions. The ticket price includes admission, programme and a commemorative glass. Card-carrying CAMRA members will receive a voucher for a free half-pint of beer, cider or perry. Admission is by advance ticket only:

Friday:	11.30am - 4.00pm	£4.00
Friday:	7.00pm - 11.00pm	£5.00
Saturday:	11.30am - 4.00pm	£4.50
Saturday:	7.00pm - 11.00pm	£4.00

Tickets go on sale from 1st January 2007 (not before) at the **Bridge Inn**, Passage Street, Bristol; the **Hare on the Hill**, Kingsdown; the **Inn on the Green**, Horfield; and **Off The Rails**, Weston-super-Mare.

Postal ticket applications (no personal callers) with stamped, addressed envelope to: **CAMRA c/o 7 Kellaway Court, Kellaway Avenue, Golden Hill, Bristol, BS6 7YP**. Cheques should be payable to "Bristol & District CAMRA". Please ensure that you provide a contact email address or phone number with your application in case of any queries.



Please note that there is a maximum of 10 tickets per application.

Tickets are strictly non-refundable. The event sells out every year and we need to ensure that the tickets go to people who will actually turn up!

For information and updates on the beer festival, as well as branch meetings and other activities, keep an eye on the branch web site www.camrabristol.org.uk.

The Cornubia and Brewery Tap: the mystery deepens

MONTHS have passed since July when the award-winning interior of the Smiles Brewery Tap was shockingly gutted and the Cornubia was closed without warning.

Sadly the future for both pubs remain a cause for considerable concern. There is still no sign of the promised micro-brewery on the site of the Smiles Brewery Tap, giving unwelcome credence to the rumours that there was never any intention of this plan going ahead. Indeed, at the time of writing the pub area of the site remains an empty shell.

More surprising is the fact that the Cornubia has remained closed, particularly as there was a high level of interest from various parties in taking on the pub and it appeared to be common knowledge that there had been a successful bidder for the lease.

The loss of one of these pubs would have been a blow for Bristol, let alone for them both to disappear. We are left hoping for some positive news to come out of the shambles that was the final collapse of Smiles, once a Bristol brewery that was held in high esteem along with its award-winning pubs.

Richard Brooks

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COMMUNITY PUBS WEEK
17th-24th February 2007

Community Pubs Week
17th-24th February 2007 support your local
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CAMRA announces new campaign to boost community pubs

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) has announced plans for a national week of action in February 2007 to help preserve and promote pubs that serve as an irreplaceable asset to their local community yet are closing at a frightening rate.

CAMRA research in 2005 showed that 26 pubs a month are lost in Britain. However, early indications from further research suggests that current figures may actually be much higher – and it is not theme pubs or chain bars that are under threat but pubs at the heart of the local community.

The first ever Community Pubs Week will take place from 17th February to 24th February in order to raise the profile and importance of pubs in the community and encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to support this valuable community amenity.

CAMRA defines a community pub as a pub which appeals to a wide cross-section of the local community rather than being predominantly targeted at particular social or age groups.

CAMRA Chief Executive, Mike Benner said: "All soaps on TV and radio have community pubs – The Bull, The Rovers Return, The Queen Vic, The Woolpack – but

sadly many real communities in rural and urban areas are in danger of losing or have already lost their community pub.

"Community pubs, particularly those in more remote rural areas, are often the hub of the lives of the local people. None of us want to be in a situation where the only way we speak with our neighbours is through a car window or a stolen conversation at a supermarket many miles away. However an increasing number of these pubs are being permanently lost."

"The smoking ban in place or coming into force shortly in different parts of the UK means pubs face a difficult time in 2007. People need to realise that their local is a valuable asset that must be protected."

"We know people care about their communities as, in a terrific show of support, four million people recently signed a petition calling for the Government to do more to save rural post offices. The threat to the community pub is extremely dire and unless we do something to curb the trend CAMRA fears many communities will find their local pub torn from them."

Throughout Community Pubs Week CAMRA members across Britain will be asking local licensees to get involved with the campaign and put on events and promotions for people in their communities to enjoy.

These will feature on CAMRA's website www.camra.org.uk/communitypubsweek.

Promotional beer mats, posters and advice sheets from CAMRA will be available for pubs that wish to take part in the campaign from the beginning of December 2006. Pub companies and breweries that wish to take part are asked to place a single order for promotional material to distribute centrally. Promotional material will be available by contacting CAMRA on 01727 867201 or by emailing cressida.feiler@camra.org.uk.

Further details of events during Community Pubs Week should be appear on our website www.camrabristol.org.uk in early 2007.

Arbor Ales is coming

BRISTOL is about to get a new brewery. Jon Comer is launching Arbor Ales in an outbuilding behind the Old Tavern in Fishponds, which he's hoping to get into in the first week of December.

It needs quite a bit of work so realistically he's looking at opening the brewery mid to late January, with a first brew out in early February. Jon has gone for a 2.5-barrel plant, so he's keeping it a fairly small operation.

Paul Comer, brother of Jon, is taking over the lease on the Old Tavern as a separate venture. Although it isn't directly part of the brewery, he will be regularly stocking a couple of Arbor Ales' beers along with other local brews.

Jon says he'll probably launch with three ales. There's one definite beer planned, which is a dark best bitter he's calling Old Knobbly. He did a test brew at Westbury Ales a few weeks back to see how the recipe scaled up and was quite pleased with the results. And it seemed to sell well (under a Westbury Ales pseudonym).

Jon has another 'best' that he's tinkering with at the moment to make it a 'special'. If it keeps its character when he increases the gravity he reckons it should be a winner.

For the third beer, Jon says it's a toss-up between a golden session ale and a traditional IPA, though he might keep the IPA for an occasional brew though as it's a strong beer at 5.7%.

Arbor Ales Ltd – Tel: 07823 335392
Email: joncomer@arborales.co.uk

SP

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The CAMRA Community Pubs Week
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Of losing at a rate of knots
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Pubs may be closing one a day
So something clear we must all say
If our local community
Is without hostelries not to be

Community pubs are for us all
Into whichever group we fall
And whether in town or in country
Our watering hole may be

Dr John

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Clevedon back in the Good Beer Bible

TWO Clevedon pubs have made it into the latest edition of the beer drinker's bible. The **Salthouse**, on the seafront, and the **Old Inn**, in Walton Road, are both listed in the 2007 CAMRA Good Beer Guide.

The guide praises both pubs for their welcoming feel, and although it is not the first time a Clevedon pub has appeared in the guide (the Little Harp, also on the seafront, was listed in 2001), the pair are the only pubs in the town which feature this time around.

Lesley Butler, landlady of the Old Inn, said: "I'm very pleased to be listed, particularly because this is my first pub. I was interested in putting on real ales and it's important to put on a good variety because not many pubs do that."

The Old Inn has Courage Best and Old Speckled Hen as regulars and also offers two guest ales, often changing twice a week, from a wide variety of West Country breweries. The Good Beer Guide describes it as a "Delightful old inn. One large beamed room that once served the carriage trade from Weston to Portishead. The current landlady's great-grandmother once ran the pub. A wonderful community feel is sometimes enhanced by piano playing or other jollity. The two guest beers are often adventurous or unusual. Tasty



The Salthouse landlady Sue Ellis, second from left, with, from left, Leanna Biddle, Tia Steele and Dianna Neath — seen posing with the keg fonts: the reason for their inclusion in the Good Beer Guide, the three real ale pumps, are just a few feet to the left. Photo courtesy of the *Clevedon Mercury*.

pub food is good value. The garden is also an added attraction."

The entry for the Salthouse reads: "Large pub with views of the sea and historic pier. A lovely round bar gives a relaxed ambience. Outside, a large patio overlooks the Salthouse field and its miniature railway." Manager, Sue Ellis, is also keen to support local breweries with Sharp's Doom Bar and Butcombe Gold as permanents and guest ales from the likes of Newman's and RCH.

Both pubs should be commended for using the SIBA scheme to support local breweries.

Pete Dommett

Butcombe update

BUTCOMBE are again brewing their **Brunei IPA**, which has now become their winter seasonal beer. If you didn't sample it first time round then why not give it a try? At 5 per cent ABV, it is a genuine, well-balanced IPA.

Minor changes have made more space available at the **Queen Victoria** in Priddy, one of Butcombe's recently-acquired pubs. This will be very useful at busy times, particularly when local festivals are in full swing. Their amended opening hours for the winter are noon to 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 11 or 11.30 p.m. Mondays to Fridays, and all day from noon on Saturdays and Sundays.

Butcombe's managing director, Guy Newell, accepted an invitation from Bristol CAMRA to attend their August branch meeting, when there was a good question-and-answer session. All members of CAMRA have the opportunity to participate in informative occasions such as this, so why not come along to our meetings?

Margaret Evett



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

The Bridge Inn

Passage Street, Bristol

The Swan

Bath Road, Swineford

Casks and beer boxes available for parties and functions
Contact bath ales on 0117 9474797 or email hare@bathales.co.uk
www.bathales.co.uk

News from Bath Ales

MUCH is happening at Bath Ales. As well as their owned pubs, and increasingly in the free trade, the beers are now available at the **Eldon House**, a pleasant two-room free house just off the top of Jacobs Wells Road, off Clifton Triangle. Good food is served also.

At the **Swan** at Swineford, the latest addition to Bath Ales pubs, there are plans to improve and extend the car-parking arrangements pending planning issues being resolved.

At the brewery the award-winning 5% dark ale **Festivity** is now being brewed for the winter, and in the New Year a sixth fermenter will be added at the brewery to increase brewing capacity, and conditioning tanks will also be installed for the first time. These will particularly be handy when the brewery takes over the bottling of all of its beers with the installation of a state-of-the-art bottling line. This is being made especially for Bath Ales in the Czech Republic and should be installed early in 2007.

With the Christmas holidays approaching, Bath Ales have attractive offers for those looking to take beer home for Christmas: buy three 9-pint micro-casks of **Gem** for only £38! This offer is available through Bath Ales' pubs and at the brewery shop at Tower Road North, Warmley. Also available will be bottled beers and 20-litre polypins.

The shop is open from 8 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Mondays to Fridays, and 9 a.m. to midday on Saturdays. It will also be open on the 23rd and 24th December – please ring for opening times.

Organic **Wild Hare** is also currently on special offer to shoppers at ASDA supermarkets.

Phil Cummings

Pub News

FIRSTLY, a correction and apology from me. In the last issue of Pints West, I stated that the **Star** in Pucklechurch had stopped selling Bass drawn straight from the barrel. Hopelessly wrong! I have been back several times in the last few months and on each occasion Bass has been available and as good as ever. Ruddles County and Courage Best also available, plus Thatcher's Cheddar Valley and Dry ciders. My apologies to everyone at the Star for this mistake.

The **Huntsman** in Downend has undergone a major refurbishment. The old back bar cum function room has been knocked through to leave a large spruced-up single bar offering a carvery to go with your pint of Pedigree or Banks's Bitter.

Also undergoing the make-over treatment is the **King George VI** at Filton. As we went to press, this Enterprise Inn wasn't quite open, so we'd welcome your reports for the next issue.

Over in Hotwells, the Spring Gardens (also called Durty Nelly's a while back) has now reopened as a 'bistro' called **La Demi Lune**.

A change to the beers on offer at the **Old Post Office** in Fishponds. Sadly on a recent visit the Wye Valley beers seemed to have gone, with Courage Best and St Austell Tribute available when I popped in recently.

The **Bee Hive** in Henleaze has recently been offering Brakspear Bitter as well as Courage Best and Bass.

Kevin Wright at **Racks** in Clifton has added a monthly guest ale to his regular Bristol Beer Factory No 7. The guests will tend to come from local breweries.

A new pub is opening in Yate. Just along the road from the Outdoor Sports Complex is a new building called the **Fox**. It was due to open on November 27th so we'll have more news next issue.

Sadly, the **Hollybush** in Brislington is currently closed and boarded up. We'll keep

an eye on it to see if it reopens soon.

Still in Brislington, the **King's Arms** is doing particularly well at the moment with Courage Best, Bath Gem and Bristol Beer Factory Number 7 all regularly available, plus a guest.

The **White Hart** near Bristol's central bus station, first licenced in 1672, has undergone a major redecoration. Landlady Rebecca Ellis still serves an excellent pint from the Greene King stable, including Abbot Ale, I.P.A., Old Speckled Hen and Ruddles County.

The **Royal Oak** in Clifton, near the Suspension Bridge, did, as suggested last issue, go ahead and put two barrels behind the bar for gravity-dispensed ale. Courage Best, Bass and a couple of ales from Sharp's are available, though not all straight from the barrel.

The **Pied Horse** in St George is now offering three different traditional ciders. Two from Thatcher's and one from Taunton, as well as Courage Best and a guest ale.

In Redcliffe, the **Ostrich** is now offering Bath Gem and Cottage Southern Glory alongside the usual Courage beers.

The **Bank** off the Bristol city centre, in John Street (round the back of Horts) is now doing well after a refurb just as we went to press last time round. Bass, Courage Best and Marston's Pedigree have been spotted there.

Duncan Shine

THE Victoria in Chock Lane, Westbury-on-Trym has a newly completed bar refurbishment. At long last the terribly claustrophobic and sixties-style canopy (*the landlord's words, not mine - Ed*) has been removed

opening up the whole pub and allowing their brand new teak (from sustainable wood, of course) back bar fitting to be shown in its full glory. It looks great and nicely complements the traditional feel of the Victoria. The

Wadworth beers are as good as ever.

They are also intending to offer all CAMRA members (on production of a membership card) a 10% discount on all real ales. There is also the germ of an idea to hold a mini-beer festival sometime next Spring – something to look out for.

SP

TIME CALLED AT THREE TOWN PUBS

IT'S time at the bar for three more of Clevedon's pubs as leases go up for sale and landlords move on.

Campbell's Landing, at The Beach; **The Crab Apple**, in Southern Way; and the **Bristol Inn**, Chapel Hill, will all see changes in the next few weeks and months.

The lease at Campbell's Landing is for sale and the Crab Apple, which celebrated its 25th year of opening this year, is moving from a managed house to a leased pub, although the owners will remain Punch Taverns. New landlords have recently arrived at the Bristol Inn.

Let's hope the changes will mean more real ale in Clevedon now the town – what with the **Salthouse** and the **Old Inn** appearing in the 2007 Good Beer Guide – is truly on the beer map!

Pete Dommett

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 Victoria

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RING O'BELLS

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THE SWAN

Rowberrow (off A38 south of Churchill) 01934 852371

THE PRINCE OF WALES

Stoke Lane, Westbury-on-Trym
0117 9623715

THE BELL

Hillgrove St, Bristol
0117 9096612

THE QUEEN'S ARMS

Celtic Way, Bleadon, near Weston-super-Mare 01934 812080

THE LAMB

The Square, Axbridge
01934 732253

THE WOOLPACK INN

St George's, near Weston-super-Mare 01934 521670

RING O'BELLS

Upper Road, Hinton Blewitt
01761 452239

THE QUEEN VICTORIA INN

Pelting Dove, Priddy 01749 676385

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PRIDE IN EVERYTHING WE BREW

A Few Swift Rambles

ON an overnight trip to Dover, we checked out two excellent Good Beer Guide-listed pubs. The **White Horse**, just off the dual carriageway leading to the docks, is one of the oldest pubs in town. Many surrounding buildings, including the 12th-century church next door, were destroyed by bombing in the Second World War, but the White Horse – complete with legends of smugglers, tunnels to the castle, and a hotch-potch of rooms on different levels – survived. Several of its walls are covered with signatures of cross-channel swimmers, for whom this was the first port of call after a quick photo-call on the beach. It's very much a locals' pub, although the beers tend not to be. Timothy Taylor's Landlord and Ringwood Forty-Niner, both in tip-top condition, are regulars; Pendle Witch's Brew from Moorhouse and Dark Star Original were the guests when we visited. There was also a barrel of local cider behind the bar.

As no food was on offer, we left (somewhat reluctantly) to find the second of our two pubs. **Blake's of Dover** is a one-off. From the street, it looks like a bistro-style restaurant – which it what it is. Downstairs, however, is a cellar bar that just happens to be local CAMRA Pub of the Year. After treating ourselves to a meal in the restaurant, which specialises in locally-caught fish, we headed downstairs to check out the bar. As well as four real ales – mostly from local micro-breweries such as Goacher's, Ramsgate and Hopdaemon – on draught, there was a selection of 52 malt whiskies, plus a choice of two cask ciders, including Thatcher's from Somerset. This, apparently, is one of Blake's top sellers, and the landlord was amazed when I told him it was virtually unobtainable in Bath (see my report on cider in Bath elsewhere in this issue).

There is no keg beer on offer at Blake's, lager comes in a bottle, and Guinness has given way to the superb Goacher's Crown Imperial Stout from Ramsgate. Needless to say, after sampling the ales on offer and some unfamiliar malts – and joining the landlord in a (possibly ill-advised) toast to Somerset cider – the walk back to our hotel took somewhat longer than the walk there. The good news is that Blake's has accommodation upstairs. I know where we'll be staying next time we have to spend a night in Dover.

The reason for our stop-over in Dover was a business trip to Belgium which, being Belgium, we decided to combine with pleasure – and a visit to a beer supermarket. Accordingly, a late lunch was scheduled at one of the quirkiest pubs you're likely to find anywhere. In a country stacked with great pubs, **Het Labyrinth** at Kemmel is outstanding. A nearby hill was the scene of some of the bitterest fighting in the Great War; today the village, its houses clustered round a green, looks as though it could have been transplanted from Kent. The pub's called the Labyrinth because there's a maze – a very

good one – in the back garden, along with a range of adult-size games. Inside, there's an impressive museum of toys and games extending over two floors; there's also a toy shop next door. The ground floor, where the serious business of eating and drinking takes place, looks as though it hasn't changed since the 1920s. There's a superb range of beers, enormous helpings of home-cooked food, a different game at every table, old posters on the wall ... and one of the largest collection of plaster Christs you're ever likely to see. Although my intake was limited to one (untypically weak) glass of beer, it was good to revisit one of the world's most unusual pubs. A quick trip to Ploegsteert to stock up at the excellent Vanuxeem supermarket and it was back to Calais and the ferry home.



JUST CLOSE YOUR EYES and imagine for a moment that CAMRA was never founded, that the keg revolution swept all before it, and that, eventually, Britain's drinkers were faced with a choice of less than half a dozen beers, all of which tasted much the same.

Then go one step further. Imagine that an enterprising landlord, fed up with this state of affairs, decided to open a brewery to produce cask-conditioned ales. And that you made a pilgrimage to this holy of holies, only to find that everybody else in the bar was drinking keg beer or Magner's cider.

Unthinkable? Of course – but it's all too easy, given CAMRA's success over the past 30-odd years, to assume that the buoyant state of real ale in England today was inevitable. In reality, it was no such thing. It is the result of hard lobbying; in the face of the unrelenting onslaught of keg, real ale survived by the skin of its teeth (if you'll pardon the expression), as the following cautionary tale from Ireland demonstrates.

At first glance, there is little to distinguish the **Biddy Early** pub in the village of Inagh, County Clare, from hundreds of others throughout Ireland. A large and fairly modern building, with a well-appointed restaurant, it doesn't fit the stereotype of the Irish boozer, with thatched roof and peat fire, doubling as the local store. It's very much a community pub, though, well off the tourist trail, with most of the customers being regulars. But, despite all appearances to the contrary, the Biddy Early is unique.

In 1995, Dr Peadar Garvey, an industrial chemist, who happened to own the Biddy Early, decided to call time on mass-produced beers and start up his own brewery. Over a decade later, and with a raft of awards and

commendations under his belt, the brewery has grown ten-fold. Last October, world-renowned beer writer Michael Jackson selected its honey beer (Buzzy Biddy) as beer of the month for his *Rare Beer Club*. Stephen Beaumont, one of Canada's top beer writers, recently selected Red Biddy as his beer of the month. And, having visited the Biddy Early a few months ago, I can confirm that its beers can stand comparison with anything produced this side of the water.

But in Inagh itself, the locals – with one or two exceptions – won't touch it. We made two visits earlier this year. On each occasion, the bar was reasonably busy, but the drinks being downed were the usual mixture of Guinness, Bulmer's Cider (sold in England as Magner's), Jameson's and lager. Nobody was drinking any of the four draught beers on offer. The landlord, who was more than happy to chat about the brewery, explained that, despite attempts to convert the locals to real ale, giving away samples and extolling its merits, there was an ingrained resistance to it. For real ale drinkers from England, however, the Biddy Early is an oasis in a desert of Guinnessness. And, should you find yourself in County Clare, a pilgrimage is definitely recommended.

More details on the brewery can be found on their website, www.beb.ie.

THE **Clytha Arms**, near Raglan in Gwent, has recently been voted South Wales Pub of the Year. It's been about four years since we visited the Clytha, but it's good to see it still ranks as one of the best pubs within an hour and a half's drive of Bristol.

Like many superb pubs, it's in the middle of nowhere; unlike most of them, you can stay overnight. Although not cheap (a double room will set you back £80), it is very good value: breakfasts include not only black pudding but also laver bread and cockles, and, unless they've changed their policy (due to my shameless taking advantage of the facilities), you get a complimentary tub of chocolate biscuits in your room. Plus it's set in the midst of glorious countryside and the beer – and the company – is great.

TALKING of real ale pubs with accommodation, you may have heard of the **Maltster's Arms** in Tuckenhay. It was once owned by Keith Floyd, the "flamboyant" TV chef. He even renamed it Floyd's, but it's ten years since he moved on, and it's long been back to the Maltster's Arms.

Although we had some reservations about staying in a pub once owned by KF, visions of extortionate prices, poncey food and hooray henries in yachting caps were soon dispelled when we turned up, after a hair-raising drive down a maze of narrow lanes from Totnes just in time for lunch. Whatever else this was, it was clearly a proper pub, with four real ales on offer, a plethora of old pump clips behind the bar and a couple of local ciders.

Princetown IPA is the regular tipple; on this occasion it was joined by Cain's Sundowner, Exmoor Gold and Black Sheep. The two ciders, from Heron Valley at



The Maltster's Arms in Tuckenhay

Loddiswell, were Ruddy Turnstone and Yarde. Devonshire cider, as far as I'm concerned, takes some beating, and these two organic offerings were among the best I've tasted.

The setting of the Maltster's Arms is unbeatable too – on a tidal creek which at low tide dwindles to a glistening expanse of mud, but at high tide not only accommodates pleasure cruisers out for the evening from Dartmouth, but also floods the car park. A two-mile stroll from the pub will bring you to Sharpham Vineyard, where, for £3.95, you can wander round the estate, set on one of the most attractive peninsulas in South Devon, before sampling a selection of wines.

Like the Clytha, staying at the Maltster's isn't cheap, but for a special break with good food, in a superb location, and in a great local boozer, it is certainly recommended. And there is a 10% discount on accommodation for CAMRA members.

Andrew Swift

Discovering Cheddar Ales



A November afternoon visit to a friend's house for birthday celebrations entailed walking through the centre of Bath – an activity that is invariably made more pleasant by the inclusion of an esteemed hostelry in the itinerary.

In this case, the establishment selected was the Old Green Tree. It was a fortuitous visit, for a new beer from a new brewery had gone on that very afternoon. I'd been wanting to try beer from Cheddar Ales ever since I heard the brewery was starting up, and here was my chance.

Cheddar Best Bitter (4% ABV) lived up to its name (the bitter part of it that is – I'd like to make it quite clear there was absolutely no hint of cheese, Cheddar or otherwise, in either nose, palate or finish). Its tartness, backed with a strong hint of citrus, was balanced by a fine malty substratum, making this gold-coloured beer a very satisfying tippie. The pump clip, plain but elegant, bore the legend "simply gorgeous." When I pointed this out to the barman and commented that it was rather unusual, he informed me that it referred to the bar staff. Just the sort of comment that's made the Old Green Tree

famous for the quality of its repartee.

After said birthday celebrations, enlivened by a couple of (smallish) glasses of Heck's Cider, we wended our way homeward via the Royal Oak, always to be relied upon to have something new on offer. On this occasion, it was, as luck would have it, another beer from Cheddar Ales – **Potholer** (4.3% ABV), a fine golden ale, maltier and sweeter than the Best Bitter, yet just as drinkable.

Cheddar Ales, with a 20-barrel plant rescued from a village near Dublin where it had lain for six years after the failure of a project to establish a brewery there, looks set to be a major player in the local brewing industry. It was established by Jem Ham, who spent 15 years as a brewer at Butcombe. It's not too surprising, perhaps, given Jem's background, that the beers are reminiscent of Butcombe's; not too surprising, either, that their quality is top notch. That said, Best Bitter and Potholer – the first two beers from the new brewery – certainly don't taste like Butcombe clones. They have their own distinctive character, and one I look forward to seeing developed as the brewery gets established and starts producing seasonal brews.

For more information, or to place an order, phone Cheddar Ales on 01934 744193 or email jem@cheddarales.co.uk.

Andrew Swift

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Tea in the Garden



ON a mid-October Sunday afternoon, what better way to spend your time than taking your afternoon tea sitting in the garden – in this case a pint of Hogs Back T.E.A. (Traditional English Ale) at the **Beeses Tea Gardens** beer festival.

Beeses Tea Gardens is situated in Brislington on the edge of the river Avon in a small wooded valley and can be reached by river boat from the city docks during the summer. The Conham Ferry brings people from the river park opposite (there is a car park there) and runs most of the year except when the Avon is in flood. We arrived by car

from Brislington, and it took a while to find it, as it's down a small drive between the houses in Wyndham Crescent. Once through, it opens into a rough track that winds, bounces and scrapes between the trees on the steep valley side (Pennie nearly bailed out at this point) and then we reached the grass car park.

Beeses has been under new ownership for the last few months, and they are keen to always have at least one real ale on during

the winter months, when they will be open Fridays to Sundays. Phil Leahy, one of the owners, told us he hopes to have several mini-beer festivals during the year.

The festival itself was laid out in the garden alongside the river bank, with a beer tent covering the stillage where seven ales, two ciders and a perry were set up, and another tent covering the barbecue. There was a musician in the function room, playing 60's songs on an electric guitar, who was kept well oiled as pints were passed through the open window to the stage. The beers were from local(ish) breweries and Badger Ales First

Gold was my favourite festival beer, made solely from hops of the same name. Also on offer was Badger's Fursty Ferret, Bath Ales Gem and Wild Hare, Butcombe Bitter, Wickwar BOB, and Hogs Back TEA with Weston's Bounds Brand Scrumpy and Herefordshire Country Perry and Thatcher's Draught Cider. The food was great too.

A successful weekend mini-festival enjoyed by all, and offering potential as a new real ale venue. Our thanks to Phil and his staff for a warm welcome and we wish him every success for the future.

Colin & Pennie Postlethwaite



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Top packaging award for Wye Valley Brewery

TO mark its 21st anniversary this year, Wye Valley Brewery restyled its corporate and brand logos to present a new unified image to the consumer – and the design has just won a top national award.

The Stoke Lacy-based brewery won the award for the Best Packaging Initiative at the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) 'Local Brewing Business Awards' in London, with chairman, Peter Amor collecting the award.



Peter Amor (left) receives the award from SIBA chairman Keith Bott

The entire range of Wye Valley brands – Wye Valley Bitter, HPA, Butty Bach and Dorothy Goodbody Golden Ale – from pump clips to bottle labels, was redesigned to achieve a sharper, yet traditional image for the award-winning beers. The judges were especially impressed with the innovative idea of using back labels to match an individual beer with an appropriate food. Did you know, for example, that a glass of Dorothy Goodbody Christmas Ale, a strong, rich ruby ale, is the perfect complement to Christmas pudding? Just one



little gem of information to be found on the revamped back labels of the Wye Valley range.

The judges said of the new designs: 'A well-executed, comprehensive and coordinated approach. In particular, Wye Valley succeeded in achieving the difficult task of contemporising traditional imagery'.

Said Vernon Amor, Managing Director, "Coming up with new designs to complement the natural and traditional art of brewing, whilst reflecting the modern appeal of real ale to each new generation, was a huge challenge, and to have our efforts recognised as the very best in their field is an outstanding achievement."

The new look labels have certainly caught the attention of the consumer, with the Labologists Society, the international society for label collectors, awarding Wye Valley two Gold Medals: for 'Two Swans', the beer celebrating 60 years of the Wetlands Trust, in the commemorative label category; and in the set of labels category the Dorothy Goodbody range won the top award.

The Landmark Sunwest Festival

"COME DOWN AND STAY," the handwritten note on the back of the Landmark Sunwest Festival flyer suggested. Our friends, new residents in Ilfracombe, knew we enjoyed the beer festivals in Bristol, Chippenham, Devizes and London most years, so this was a good opportunity to catch up with our old ex-pat Bristolian mates.

Saturday afternoon, en route to a hilltop barbecue (at another ex-Bristolian's summer residence), we lunched on baguettes oozing with fillings (£5.95) at the Manor in Croyde. My accompanying Thatcher's Gold on draught washed it down very well. Andy's St Austell Tribute was the usual high standard from that brewery. At the party I found a bottle of splendid Cotleigh Golden Eagle and was astonished to see how quickly I needed another. Time for the beer festival.....

Disappointment probably showed when we arrived at the Landmark Theatre, venue for the festival. This wasn't a CAMRA festival, and the usual array of casks seemed shrunken somewhat. Nevertheless, there were 38 different ales and ciders, most costing £2.30 a pint, helpful staff who let hesitant friends try samples, and some interesting brews to try. Chris Franks of Combe Martin had supplied it all. He told me that the August festival started a couple of years ago with just nine casks and has grown so that perhaps CAMRA will be involved in the future – he will provide tasting notes also.

Andy started with Sarah Hughes 'Dark Ruby Mild' (6%), an old favourite. I chose 'Old Appledore' – a good, light starter at 3.7% from the Country Life Brewery, near Bideford – described as a bitter session beer. Drinking outside with the seaside town as backdrop and the bluesy harmonica of the band Spoonful playing inside ensured we were in for a good night.

My next choice was 'Church House' from Exe Valley (4.1%), another pleasant drink. This I followed with Country Life Brewery's 'Country Bumpkin'. I like dark beers, and this 6% dark and slightly sweet beer I could have downed by the jugful. My last beer (four of us had got through seven bottles of wine 'chez amis' the previous night) was RCH 'Old Slug Porter' – another dark, tasty drink (4.5%).

A short walk to Maddy's Chippy and our little group found nourishment in bags of chips. The sound of the waves lapped against the shore as we sauntered along the front.

Most Bristolians can remember day trips to the Devon coast. My parents' generation honeymooned in Ilfracombe (a colleague claimed she was conceived there!). I was pleased to find that, apart from the festival venue appearing like Didcot Power Station-on-Sea, the little town is unchanged. It appears much loved and cared for, with the added delight of alfresco cappuccino available in the 21st century.

Maggie Wilkes

Seasonal Flavours with Hidden Depths



THE award-winning Hidden Brewery has launched a seasonal real ale for 2006. Hidden Depths is a very deep ruby stout, its autumnal tones coming naturally from roasted barley and chocolate malt. Gary Lumber, Hidden's brewer, says "Hidden Depths is an aromatic stout with a hint of liquorish, which is rich in colour and perfect for drinking in warm cosy pubs as the days get colder".

The Hidden Brewery is barely three years old but growth has been rapid and Gary (formerly Head Brewer at Oakhill) and his business partner Michael Woodhouse now supply over 800 pubs and clubs in the South and South West. They recently took delivery of new nine-gallon casks (known as firkins or nines) that will double the brewery's cask population to 4,000. Four core beer recipes are brewed and a further four or five are created seasonally for the guest ales market. Several have picked up awards from CAMRA and SIBA competitions.

Hidden Potential is one such recent award-winner, having been voted Beer of the Festival at the recent Bath Beer Festival. At 4.2%, Hidden Potential is described as a clean tasting, well-rounded, traditional beer with slight citrus tones and a balanced malty flavour.

The brewery is indeed 'hidden' in the heart of the Wiltshire countryside, its intriguing name reflected in the mysterious 'eyes' on its pump clips and its range of 'Hidden' ales such as its first brew Hidden Quest and the more recent Hidden Pleasure and Hidden Depths. Launching Hidden Depths, Gary explains: "We pride ourselves on brewing premium real ale, using traditional brewing techniques and quality ingredients. We've had a great response to Hidden Depths at our pub, the Bell Inn at Wylde, and we look forward to rolling it out to pubs and clubs in the region as the days draw in."

So whilst few may know where the Hidden Brewery brews its ales, many will find them at the bar this winter!

Lesly Huxley

The day we had Butcombe at the airport

MANY of us have long bemoaned the lack of any real ale, or anything else very tempting, to drink in the departure lounge at Bristol Airport. We were therefore pleased to notice that a Butcombe Bitter handpump had appeared in one of the bars sometime earlier this year. However, all was still not well as every attempt to buy some was thwarted by being told that it was not available. On one occasion I was told "sorry the barrel needs changing" so I said I would wait only to be informed "Oh it will be next week before we change it!" Your editor tried on many occasions too and was once told "We don't like to put it on because it keeps going sour!"

I had pretty much come to the conclusion that the pump was actually an ornament and just for show, until the morning of 11 September 2006 when we asked again and it was ON! Despite it being 6 a.m. it just had to be tried. We were delighted that it seemed in very good condition too.

Perhaps readers would care to let us know if they have ever found it available too? Rumour has it that it may soon be replaced by the new cold-filtered Blond which would be a shame, if perhaps understandable given the apparent indifference of the people who run the airport bars.

Vince Murray

Royal Oak closes

BAD NEWS: Royal Oak closes.

GOOD NEWS: only for one night and in a good cause!

Since John and Becky Whinnerah took over the Royal Oak in Bath, the pub has become a second home for many regulars. So if any turned up on the evening of 5th October to find it closed to the general public, they can rest assured this is not something that is likely to be repeated.

John is very strict about keeping the pub open, and even when we launched our book *The Lost Pubs of Bath* there, he was adamant that the bar ran as normal. So when Andrew and I were looking for somewhere to have a party to celebrate our wedding, we regretfully ruled out the Royal Oak. We were discussing plans over a pint out there, and explained to John we would have loved to have it there, but we fully realised how he felt – and were delighted when he said that on this one occasion, he would bend the rules. Having done so, he then threw himself into the organisation, and assembled a fine selection of beers for the party, while Mick, the chef, went off to plan some interesting canapés.

Among the beers was Dr Hexter's Wedding Ale (4.1%), from West Berkshire Brewery, Pressed Rat & Warthog from Triple fff (3.8%), Ben Nevis 80/- (4.0%) from Bridge of Allen and Pardoe's Rowley Rag (4.9%) from Olde Swan. I was sad that one of my favourite beers, Village Elder from Cheriton, is now no longer available, but the excellent Downton Brewery has risen to the challenge of filling the gap with Elder Quad (3.9%). Meanwhile our friends at Blindman's had gone off to create a special session beer for

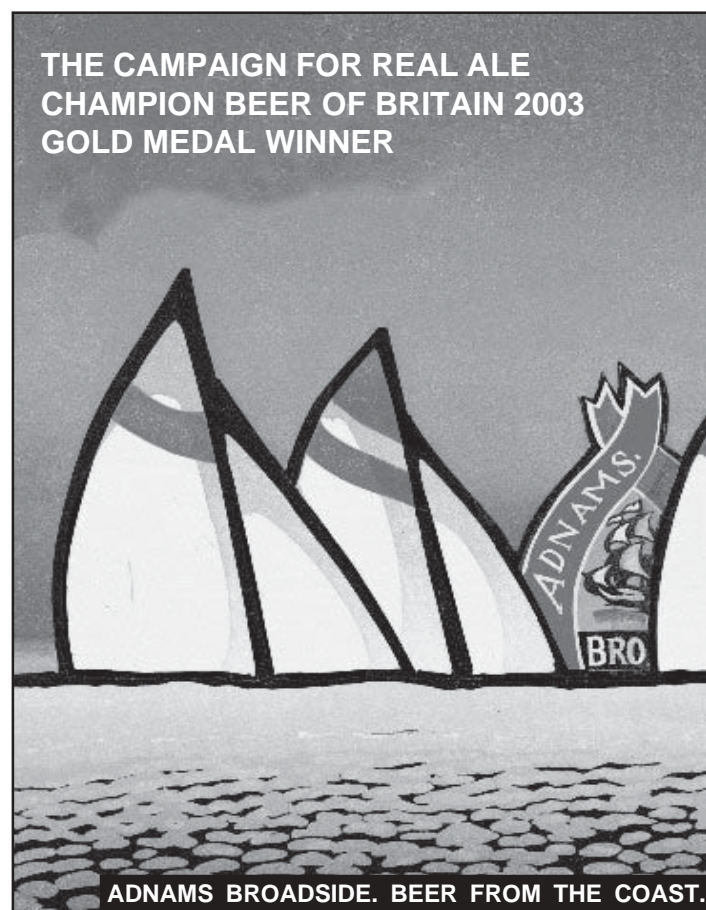
the occasion, and came up with Love Story (4.3%). It seems that it was a love story with the party-goers for the nine gallons ran out long before the evening was over.

Such a good time was being had by all that, try as we might, we can't remember the other beers, but everyone seems to have thought it was a splendid selection. The bands were great and thanks go to Skiffle Haze, Cavalier, Bill Smarme and the Bizness as well as the guest musicians who then took the mike. Phill the Pint added some more to his new beer tally, the food kept coming, including some retro canapés to go with Skiffle Haze and Bill Smarme, guests were greeted by Martin the Pumper (and it's spa water, not beer, that he pumps) in a splendid 18th century costume, while Dutch Maarten was a kindly bouncer (whose bouncing skills were, thankfully, not tested).

On a serious note, the more attentive among Pints West readers will have noticed that none of the beers mentioned hit 5%. We felt that we wanted beers that people could drink happily, and that a high ABV was not necessary even for the hardest beer-drinker – and so it proved. Flavour, it seems, has little to do with the alcohol content, and a great deal to do with thoughtful, skilful brewing.

Our particular thanks for this enjoyable evening go to the Whinnerahs, and once again, we apologise to any regulars who couldn't get in. It won't happen again!

Kirsten Elliott



Sedum and reap

SUFFOLK brewer Adnams has gone underground. For the company's new distribution centre at Reydon, just outside its home town of Southwold, has been roofed with turf planted with sedum in one of the most environmentally-friendly industrial developments in history.

The turf roof, which covers more than an acre, helps the new building blend in with the surrounding countryside. It's also an insulator that maintains an even temperature all year round at very low cost in energy; it's a habitat for wildlife on the 85 acres of old gravel pits that Adnams bought 10 years ago; it helps filter pollutants out of the air, and it recycles rainwater for washing lorries and flushing loos.

But there's more than just a green roof to the centre, which opened in September. The walls are built of 90,000 blocks of locally-grown hemp and Derbyshire lime; the roof is supported on 65-metre glued and laminated beams of sustainably-sourced timber; and the parking areas are paved with golpla, or reinforced grass.

It adds up to an unprecedented level of energy, carbon dioxide and water efficiency that has been achieved without compromising business efficiency. And it will cut traffic in Southwold by 60 lorry and 20 van deliveries a day.

Adnams Managing Director Andy Wood said: "Adnams evaluates all areas of the business to find ways of lessening its impact on the environment. When the growing business required a new, modern distribution centre, Adnams applied this philosophy to ensure that we took every measure possible to create a pioneering, environmentally conscious development.

"The environmental option came at a premium, but it is a sustainable investment for the future. As energy prices soar this building will make us substantial savings.

"I believe that Adnams is shaping the path for other businesses to follow".

(Article from What's Brewing)

Celebrating with Matthews

THURSDAY 8th November and it was off to Timsbury to join in celebrations marking the first anniversary of Matthews Brewery. Driving into the industrial estate where the brewery is situated, we passed a car containing, among others, Phill the Pint, who's written some sterling stuff about Matthews in the past and was due to do the honours once again. Winding the back window down, however, he called across asking if I wouldn't mind covering the celebrations instead. A second voice added that this would be a very good idea, as the aforementioned Mr the Pint had participated so wholeheartedly in the festivities he couldn't remember anything about them.



Stuart Matthews checks the specific gravity

Wandering into the brewery, it was immediately apparent that, if I was to carry away intelligent memories of the evening, I would have to keep a tight rein on myself. Matthews may only have been going for a year, but they've produced some damn fine beers in that time. Sampling them together also brought it home how adventurous Stuart Matthews has been in his brewing policy.

Matthews' two regular beers are *Brassknocker* (3.8% ABV), a golden, citrus-flavour session beer, and *Bob Wall* (4.2%), a chestnut-coloured best bitter. Seasonal ales, to date, have included *Pit Pony* (5.5%), a dry, full-bodied stout; *40 Yard* (5%), a strong bitter brewed with mild ale malt; *Davy Lamp* (5%), a wheat beer flavoured with coriander and orange zest; and *Midsomer Pale* (4.5%), an amber-coloured pale ale. For the anniversary celebrations, there was a new addition to the range – *Birthday Ginger* (4.8%), a pale ale flavoured with root ginger. Stuart admitted that he'd originally wanted to include lime as well, but found, after he'd brewed a trial batch, that the flavour was too overpowering. Never content to follow in other's footsteps, he's currently working on a seasonal brew for Christmas, subtly flavoured with pine needles.

Half-pint glasses and tasting notes, beer festival style, were available at the door, and

there was a display, with explanatory notes, of the different malts and hops used in the brewery. Malt comes from Warminster, while hops are supplied by Charles Faram & Co from Herefordshire. Stuart was also on hand to explain about the brewing process and equipment.

The five ales on offer at the celebrations were each accompanied by nibbles to complement each beer style. Stuart had teamed up with Yummy Foods of Bath to give an idea how different beers can be used to enhance a range of different foods:

- *Brassknocker*, excellent with spicy foods and curry, was accompanied by Creamy Chicken Tikka.
- *Bob Wall*, ideal for meat dishes, was accompanied by sausages made by the Apple Tree at Croscombe (an excellent country boozier) and flavoured with *Bob Wall* beer.
- *Birthday Ginger*, excellent with Thai food, was accompanied by spicy coriander prawn crostini.
- *40 Yard* was accompanied by pan-fried Aberdeen Angus Steak produced on the farm next door. Spent mash from the brewery is used to feed the cattle: they like it so much it's used as bait to move them from one field to another!
- *Pit Pony* was accompanied by a superb dark bread made with *Pit Pony* and Cheddar cheese from Greens near Glastonbury.

The chance to sample a superb range of locally-produced food, as well as a superb range of beers, made the celebrations a truly memorable occasion, and demonstrated that Stuart's desire to push back boundaries doesn't stop at brewing beer: he's also keen to change the way people perceive and drink it as well. Serving different beers with different types of food is part of the culture in Belgium; with people like Stuart on the case, it may well soon be second nature here as well.

Stuart Matthews and Susan Appleby set up the five-barrel plant on the site of the old Hayeswood Colliery (hence the preponderance of colliery-related beer names) last October. Stuart, a former software engineer who had been a hobby-brewer for almost as long as he can remember, was thinking of a change of career when a friend told him about an empty industrial unit at Timsbury, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Twelve months on, Matthews beers can be found in over 40 local pubs and clubs, mostly in Bath, Bristol and the Mendips, but also as far afield as Hampshire. Direct delivery can be arranged anywhere within a 50-mile radius, and the brewery also works with wholesalers who distribute more widely across the UK. In June, the brewery registered with SIBA's Direct Delivery Scheme, which allows pubs from some of the bigger pub companies to have access to beer from local producers. Plans for the next twelve months, apart from expanding the local customer base and brewing more seasonal specials, include introducing bottled beers.

If you've not tried Matthews beers, then



Birthday Ginger with spicy coriander prawn crostini

you're in for a treat. Trying five of them at the same time brought home how varied – and how consistently good – their beers are. And with the promise of lots more seasonal brews to come, there's lots to look forward to. Myself, I can't wait to try the one with pine needles in. Happy Christmas ... oh, and cheers, Phill – it was a great evening.

Andrew Swift

Matthews, who also supply direct to the public, can be contacted on 01761 472242 or by emailing brewery@matthewsbrewing.co.uk. Details of the SIBA Direct Delivery Scheme can be found at www.siba.co.uk/ddsf/. Yummy Food can be contacted at www.yummyfood.co.uk.

Exeter Festival of Winter Ales

The CAMRA Festival of Winter Ales will once again be held in the Coaver Club, Matford Lane, Exeter (behind County Hall) on Friday 12th and Saturday 13th January 2007.

The festival will open from 6pm to 11pm Friday and 11am to 11pm Saturday. There will be over 50 winter-only brews and 'Festive Cyder'. Other attractions will include a tombola and products stand, and entertainment on Saturday evening.

Admission is £3 for CAMRA members and £4 for non-members, the price including a commemorative glass sponsored by O'Hanlon's Brewing Company.

Check the East Devon & Exeter CAMRA website at www.projects.ex.ac.uk/eedcamra/fest/fowa for more details. Further information can also be had from Phil Roberts on 01884 33115 (home) or by emailing him at phil@exetercamra.org.uk.

Shine on Keynsham

Every issue we ask *Pints West* readers to let us know if there is a part of Bristol (& District) that you would like to see featured in this column. Then, when no-one writes in, we decide for ourselves. This issue, we're having a look at Keynsham.

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

PICTURE THE SCENE. You're doing a little bit of shopping just off the Bath Road in Brislington, looking for a few Christmas presents for friends and family. You've decided to really make an effort this year as very few of them appreciated the bag of charcoal you gave them last year, except possibly your three-year-old nephew who thought it was far tastier than the *Werthers Originals* his Grandad bought him.

While you're browsing, who should you bump into but former Python funnyman and Traveller Extraordinaire Michael Palin. Just as you start to say how much you liked *Ripping Yarns*, he turns and lets fly a terrible tirade of expletives. Now, Michael Palin is officially the nicest man in the world so you feel obliged to ask why.

"BBC cutbacks! That's why. After all I've done for them. I've been *Pole to Pole*, *Full Circle*, done *Sahara* and the *Hemingway Adventure*. And now they tell me they need to save up for Bruce Forsyth's expenses (including a large quantity of glue) on *Strictly Come Dancing*, so the next travel series will have to be a little less expensive."

You try to comfort him, but he's really cross.

"So, I've got to film a major ten-part series, with a book and video to go with it, and we start shooting tomorrow. I just don't see how *Michael Palin's Keynsham Odyssey* is going to be a hit. You can't talk about that pools advert for ten weeks, and there aren't even any decent pubs!"

At this point, a shambling, slightly jaded looking figure is sat doing a Sudoku puzzle. He doesn't clear his throat. You nudge him a couple of times, and he looks up, apologises



The Crown Inn

and clears his throat.

"Actually, you're wrong there Michael. There are a dozen or so pubs in Keynsham, many of them well worth a visit".

The first pub you visit is the **Crown**. It is a pretty one-bar pub opposite the local football club on the Bristol Road. In the summer the family garden to the rear is lovely. The pub is welcoming and friendly. Courage Best is the only real ale on offer, so Michael Palin throws a hissy fit and you soon have to move on.



The Pioneer

Next you head into Keynsham and turn left down Station Road. The **Pioneer** is on your left, overlooking the bypass. Very much geared towards watching English teams lose at sport, the Pioneer does not currently appear to offer any real ale.



The Brass Mills

Further down the road, past the station, is the **Brass Mills**. A Brewer's Fayre pub, the Brass Mills nonetheless offers a good choice of real ales by the river. You have the Flowers Original, your guide the Butcombe Bitter and Michael Palin is just tucking into an excellent pint of Wadworth 6X when he launches into another four-letter invective.

This time, you can tell why he's so cross. In the family play area, moving quietly through the ball-pit dressed in khaki, is Sir David Attenborough who, after *Life on Earth* and *Life In The Freezer*, is now busy filming *Life Between Bristol and Bath*. He whispers. "Here, among the ancient ball-pits of Keynsham, we see the eternal struggle of a mother and her young. Bradley has lost one of his socks and Hallie has been sick on the slide. And the journey back to their new house on



The Lock Keeper

the road to Bitton will be treacherous".

You leave Attenborough behind and head on to the **Lock Keeper**. A former Smiles pub now in the hands of Young's brewery, this pub is in a fantastic location by the lock, with a suntrap conservatory area. The entire range of Young's beers is on offer. The Waggledance is simply divine, and Michael is much happier because he got to film a hilarious sing-song with a local rugby team. Young's Bitter, Special and a seasonal beer are also available, and all in typically good nick.



The Old Bank

From the Lock Keeper it's back to the High Street and the **Old Bank**. On your visit, there are old pictures on the walls, barrels doubling as tables and Judith Chalmers sat in the corner filming *Wish You Were In Keynsham*? "Keynsham, that's K-E-Y..." she begins and Michael Palin furrows his brow in contempt. He is cheered, as is the whole party, by the choice of beers: Sharp's Doom Bar and the excellent but less common Atlantic I.P.A., as well as Bath Gem and Bath Spa. The cellarman'ship in this pub is excellent and all agree to recommend it to their friends.

Just across the road is **Bar One Nine**. You pop in to find a camera crew already ahead of you to film Michael Palin's entrance. You ask him how they knew he was going there and he just shrugs and says it is the magic of television. Bar One Nine is an upmarket café bar, but sensibly offers a real ale as well. It's London Pride from Fuller's and very nice too.

A detour off the High Street takes you down to Bath Hill East and the **New Inn**. Michael is keen to try a disgusting and unusual local delicacy so everyone can be impressed by how brave he is to eat it. He is offered a pack of pork scratchings but it's not quite the same. Bass and Butcombe Bitter are in here though,



The New Inn

and again excellent quality.

Just along the Bath Road is the **Talbot**. Michael is keen to go in until he sees Bill Oddie stalking across the car park in camouflage filming a segment for *Keynshamwatch*. He's worried that Autumn has arrived late this year and so the Christmas Light harvest may be poor. The beers in the Talbot are from the Scottish Courage stable.



The Talbot

Back towards the High Street and left into Temple Street. Here, on the right, is the estimable **Trout Tavern**. The atmosphere inside could only be described as rumbustious. Michael wants to call it an indigenous Somerset watering hole but Caroline behind the bar objects. Worthington Cask Ale and Marston's Pedigree are supplemented by a stunning pint of Thatcher's Traditional.

To be honest, Michael Palin is starting to get a little tipsy by now. He says that Fawlt Towers was his idea and he did most of the colouring in for Terry Gilliam's drawings.

Next stop is the **Ship**, also on Temple Street. The name confuses Michael and, while he spends half an hour at the bar trying to buy a third-class passage to Kamchatka, you and your guide sample the wide range of ales



The Trout Tavern



The Ship Inn

available. On the day of your visit there's Marston's Bitter and Pedigree, Banks's Bitter, Bath Gem and a splendid pint of Bomber. This is another lovely old pub on the hillside. You step down from the street and it's just the sort of place you could easily while away a winter's evening.

"Two more to go" says your guide.

"These two pubs are not pubs you would find



The Charlton

by accident". The **Charlton** is out on Longmeadow Road, about a fifteen-minute walk away. You explain that you don't fancy



The Wingrove

a fifteen-minute walk but Michael just winks at you, and holds a board saying "Fifteen Minutes Later" in front of the camera. As he takes the board down again, you find you are in the Charlton, an estate pub built in a 50s/60s style and with a genuine community feel. You knock back a pint of Courage Best before another quick dash through residential streets to the **Wingrove** on the Queen's Road.

Another estate pub, the Wingrove has a small front bar and a much larger rear drinking area where the pool table, darts and telly are. The real ale is Courage Best but you and Michael are drawn to the Thatcher's Traditional Cider. It is so good you opt for another.

The next thing you know you are waking up on a dirty smelly barge, your head thumping. Michael is sat at the stern talking to a man with his hand on the rudder. The man is saying "Yes, Michael, that's right, just up here. First Salford, then Kamchatka."

We have been asked to point out that none of Michael Palin, Sir David Attenborough, Judith Chalmers or Bill Oddie has any plans to film in Keynsham. Ms Chalmers would, however, be prepared to consider Willsbridge if the money was right.

Duncan Shine

Good new from East Bristol

THINGS are looking up for those of us who live on the east side of Bristol. The tremendous beer range now being offered at the **Cross Hands** in Fishponds, was featured in an earlier *Pints West*, but there is more good news.

A chance visit to the **Red Lion** in Staple Hill a few months back helped me to discover an excellent pub within walking distance of my home. This is a Wadworth pub that has been run by a succession of licensees in the last few years, but has now fallen into good hands. A couple from Nottingham who obviously care about their beer are in charge and I have enjoyed quite a few visits recently. It is a proper two-bar pub with a comfortable lounge and larger public bar. A full-size skittle alley, pool table and beer garden also feature. There are always two beers from Wadworth and one or two guest beers on; on my first few visits they were from Castlerock brewery in Nottingham, but currently are from the rather less exciting Wolverhampton & Dudley portfolio. Quality has been consistently good and a friendly welcome can also be anticipated.

A pub that I had deliberately avoided since it opened a couple of years ago is the **Willy Wicket** on the Downend and Emersons Green border, adjacent to the A4174 ring-road roundabout. I avoided it because I expected it to be just another giant eating place selling a poor range of national-brand beers, in the Beefeater / Chef & Brewer way. A family meal there changed my opinion rapidly and I have now been back a few times. It is indeed a very food-oriented pub, but it also dispenses surprisingly good beer too. On my first visit Bass and 6X were in good form, but on my recent visit these had been replaced by St. Austell Tribute and Butcombe Bitter – both in top form. In addition they sell draught Erdinger (German cloudy wheat beer) at a reasonable £2.90 per pint – it is well over £3 usually. The food is reasonably priced and of a good standard, and service is very friendly. Despite its size, the pub does not accept reservations, but food is served all day every day. For the record, a Willy Wicket is a type of wading bird.

Vince Murray

News from Bath

ANOTHER time-worn old boozer reopens, after an extensive face-lift (i.e. gutting) as a gastro-pub. No change there then. Well, actually, yes. The **Marlborough Tavern**, an old Courage pub, had been struggling along for years, and, with the best will in the world, successive tenants found it impossible to turn its fortunes round. Faced with sky-high rents, and saddled with a pub that had had its guts ripped out of it in the 1960s, it was not surprising that the Marlborough failed to become what it should have been – a lively community pub.



Marlborough Tavern

The only thing to do was to start all over again, and that's what the new owners have done. The place was totally gutted before being sympathetically refitted. Although there's still a bar, and it still looks like a pub, what it doesn't look like is a pub the brewery got at in the 1960s. As well as the sofas, candles, wine and food sourced from local producers, there's also real ale. So far, there are only two pumps on, serving Courage and Wadworth 6X. That may not sound too exciting, but I had a chat with the landlord and soon realised that he was committed to serving good beer. He was also realistic about how much he was likely to sell – hence the two pumps policy. Not only that: coming from a wine-bar background, he was determined that serving real ale should not just be a token gesture. He contacted Wadworth, who sent somebody over to explain how to look after it. It seems to have worked: the pint of 6X I tried was the best I've had for ages. I'd originally asked for a pint of Courage's, but was told that it was past its best. There's not many gastropubs where you get that sort of service.

The **Roundhouse** in Stall Street, which closed earlier this year, has reopened as a *Pret à Manger* restaurant.

The **King William** on Thomas Street has made it to the Good Beer Guide for the first time this year. Taken over a couple of years ago by Charlie and Amanda Digney, this small street-corner pub has not only been transformed into one of the most interesting and adventurous real ale pubs in town, but has also won an enviable reputation for food.

Earlier this year, Charlie and Amanda also took over the **Garrick's Head**, next to the Theatre Royal, where they are pursuing the same policy of great beer and good food. With Burrow Hill Cider also on offer, it's one of the few



Garrick's Head

places in the city where Somerset's traditional drink can be sampled.

Also new to the Good Beer Guide this year is the **Raven** (formerly Hatchett's), the local CAMRA branch pub of the year. The two house beers, Raven and Raven Gold, brewed by the estimable Blindman's Brewery, are supplemented by a constantly-changing selection of at least four other real ales.

Not yet in the Good Beer Guide, but going from strength to strength, is the **Pulteney Arms** in Daniel Street (at the far end of Great Pulteney Street). Definitely one to watch out for.

Bath's other King William, the **King William IV** at Combe Down, appears in the Good Beer Guide for the second year running. However, the couple that took it into the Guide left at the end of last year.

THURSDAY 24 August was a black day for many of Bath's drinkers: the **Old Farmhouse** on Lansdown Road closed. The Farmhouse wasn't just a pub, it was an institution, known as Bath's Ronnie Scott's, and presided over for the last 30 years by John Bradshaw. Brad, as he was generally known, was a genuine character. Few people who knew him were without a ready anecdote or two, which they were happy to relate whenever his name cropped up in conversation – and when talking about Bath's pubs, his name came up more often than most. The walls – and ceiling – of the Farmhouse were plastered with memorabilia reflecting Brad's two passions, jazz and Bristol Rovers. Brad's face was familiar to people who'd never set foot in the



Pulteney Arms

Farmhouse. He held the unique distinction – at least in Bath – of appearing on his own pub sign.

Brad started off – in 1960 – at the **Bell** in Walcot Street. He was 29, and soon established it as the city's top jazz venue. The tradition of live music at the Bell still continues under the able stewardship of Ian Wood, and, with the closure of the Farmhouse, it is now Bath's premier music pub, although jazz only forms part of its rich and eclectic programme. Brad left the Bell in 1976 to take over the Farmhouse, then a traditional three-bar local, run by Dorothy Moore for the previous 39 years. Built in the late nineteenth century on the site of an old farmhouse which also served beer, it did not receive a full licence until 1957. A pub guide published shortly before Brad took over gives an idea what it was like: '*Cockles (22p a jar), cackle and camaraderie! Small simple working men's*



A model of the Old Farmhouse sign featuring John Bradshaw

(and women's) pub. Red rose plant on the bar has a note: "my sincere thanks to you all" it reads. It's that sort of pub. Simple cream and brown décor in public and smoking room, plus open fire and the supremely knowledgeable Mrs Moore (who calls everyone under 80 "lad") behind the bar, all complete the 1940's feel of the place. No music - just people.'

Brad wasted no time in opening the old place up and in converting a large low-ceilinged room at the back into a jazz venue. There are still those in Bath who remember Mrs Moore's 1940s-style kingdom and bemoan Brad's changes, but this was no corporate make-over: it was the means to establishing an institution that has itself now slipped into history.

The names of those who have played at the Farmhouse are a roll-call of jazz greats – Danny Sheppard, Bobby Mickleburgh, Earl Hines, Buck Clayton, Humphrey Lyttleton ... you never knew who might turn up. One memorable Sunday evening about five years ago, George Melly, who was staying in Bath, dropped by to join the Joe Murphy Trio in an impromptu session. Up-and-coming stars such as Jamie Cullum, Clare Teal and Zoe Schwartz also played at the Bell long before they became famous. And, if you were lucky, Brad, after firing a string of one-liners and repartee at the band, would get up and sing himself.

The last night was a sad occasion, reminiscent of all those closing nights in the 1960s and 1970s when so many of Bath's old boozers fell victim to the developers. The pictures and posters had been stripped from the walls, and, by the time I arrived, the pub was fast running out of beer. The place – and the stage – however, were packed. The Joe Murphy Trio were joined by other regular performers such as Geoff Nicholls and Brian Huggett, and, as the evening wore on, members of Metropolis, the regular Friday night band, joined in as well. It was a jam session to end all jam sessions, and, by any reckoning, a great send-off, but, as the instruments were packed away at the end of the night, everyone agreed it was a sad day for jazz in Bath – not just for established performers and fans, but for up-and-coming musicians who desperately need venues like the Farmhouse.

Brad is still around – he lives with his wife Mary in the house next door – and he looks forward to popping back into the Farmhouse after Wadworth have given it a make-over and found someone to take it over. It would be nice to think that they'll manage to find someone to revive it as Bath's premier jazz venue, but at the moment its future is unknown. The Farmhouse was what it was because of Brad's passion for jazz – and because of his larger than life character. Bath's drinkers will miss him – and not just because of the music. He's a very hard act to follow, and I'm sure I speak for all the Farmhouse's clientele when I wish him and Mary a happy and well-deserved retirement.

ANOTHER Bath institution passed away in September. If you visited the **Old Green Tree** in Green Street any time over the last few years, the chances are you will have come across a tall, white-bearded gentleman sitting at the corner of the bar, drinking Mr Perrett's Stout from Wickwar Brewery (possibly with a strawberry,



Peter Attenborough in the Old Green Tree

when in season, as a finishing touch). He may have been sporting a buttonhole, with a Panama hat or beret hung on a nearby hook, or he may have been in his working gear – generally a colourful, festival-style sweater. The chances are that he would have engaged you in conversation – although the subject matter, given the breadth of his knowledge and interests (and the length of time he'd been in the pub), was somewhat less predictable.

Later, walking through the Abbey Church Yard, you may have seen him playing a penny whistle, for he was one of Bath's longest-standing, and most respected buskers. His real talent, however, was as a potter. He was also a gifted teacher, inspiring generations of children to craft pottery. He had his own kiln at Swainswick (swept away when they built an unnecessary by-pass), and also set up temporary



Peter Attenborough with Daniella and Tim of the Old Green Tree

kilns at festivals such as Glastonbury. Twice he tried to establish an arts centre for young people in Bath, to include a pottery-making facility, but on each occasion he was outmanoeuvred by developers. Had he succeeded, those pious souls who complain about young people running riot on the streets of Bath would have to find something else to moan about.

Peter Attenborough was a man of many talents and many friends. He died suddenly on 15 September after falling down a flight of unlit steps whilst on his way to visit a friend in a

basement flat. His funeral in Bath Abbey was attended by nearly a thousand people, from all walks of life. Afterwards, a wake was held upstairs at the Raven, after which the celebration of Peter's life adjourned to the Old Green Tree. He was an extraordinary man. I, along with many others, felt privileged to know him. More tributes, and a video, can be found at www.bathbuskers.co.uk. The Old Green Tree is a sadder place without him.

DRINKING Thatcher's Cider in the Dover Branch Pub of the Year (see separate report), I had great difficulty persuading the landlord that it was virtually unobtainable in Bath. A quick flick through the recent CAMRA cider guide (handily kept behind the bar) confirmed that there were indeed no recommended cider outlets in the city. He found it incredible that a city in the heart of cider country should turn its back so resolutely on real cider.

With the **Old Farmhouse** (a Black Rat outlet) currently closed, the number of pubs selling genuine Somerset cider in the city has dwindled even further. The **Ram** in Widcombe and the **Belvoir Castle** on the Lower Bristol Road still have a staunch Thatcher's cider drinking fraternity; the **Garrick's Head** in the Sawclose sells cider from Burrow Hill. Broadoak, a filtered cider from Clutton, is available on draught in the **Old Green Tree**, while a guest cider or perry can always be found at the **Royal Oak**. The **Volunteer Rifleman's Arms** serves Black Rat, and the **Salamander** serves Ashton Press.

But, compared with the quantity of Magner's that now gets swilled in Bath (the power of marketing!), Somerset cider comes a very poor second. Weston's from Herefordshire, in bottled form, is also very popular in pubs such as the **Bell** and the **Old Green Tree**, but anyone looking for unfiltered local cider is likely to be disappointed. It is sad that, in a city with so many pubs dedicated to furthering the cause of real ale, the cause of Somerset's unique contribution to alcoholic imbification should be so neglected.

Now that Bristol, with no shortage of decent cider houses, has the **Apple** boat-bar at Welsh Back, introducing the likes of Old Bristolian, Old Rosie, Heck's Kingston Black, Thatcher's Traditional, Rich's Medium and Oliver's Perry to a new and appreciative audience, the idea that cider is the preserve of red-nosed crusties with a dubious line in surrealist monologue seems to have been quashed once and for all. But how long will it be before Bath catches up with Bristol, and gets a state-of-the-art cider house? And how long before Somerset's traditional tippie gets the recognition it deserves in the county's biggest city?

A NEW company called **Beer Drinkers Choice** has been set up in Bath, supplying bottled beers and ciders from Britain and Europe. It's not necessary to buy a whole case of a particular beer, as there is the option to buy mixed cases. Their address is Unit 10, Brassmill Enterprise Centre, Brassmill Lane, Bath BA1 3JN. Their website is www.BeerDrinkersChoice.co.uk and they can be contacted on 01225 469121.

Andrew Swift

Watering Holes in the Desert

news from Weston-super-Mare

Weston Whispers (pub and beer news)

THERE have been many changes in the pub scene in Weston over the past few weeks. As reported in *A Round With Robin*, the (ex) Elm Tree on Meadow Street has re-opened as the **Corner House** and shortly before going to press, Paul Davey from RCH brewery notified us that the Ancaster on Devonshire Road was about to re-open as the **Oak House**, selling RCH's PG Steam and their seasonal special Steam Carnival. This sounds like an exciting development, particularly if RCH beers are to be permanently stocked. More news on this in the next Pints West.

On the downside, the shutters are currently up at the **Red Admiral** in the centre of town. No one seems to know what the future holds.

The Wadworth-owned **Major From Glengarry** is again on the managerial merry-go-round. The local CAMRA branch visited the Major as part of our Seaside Summer Saunter in August and were greeted by the new managers – Pete and Karen – and also some superb Theakston's Old Peculier. Pete is a long-standing Wadworth manager. His previous pubs have included the much-missed Long John Silver in Kewstoke. The pub offers a changing guest beer alongside the Waddie's regulars. The guests have come from the likes of Skinner's, Tom Wood, Young's, Marston's and Archer's. The pub also does cheap food in the evenings.

Weston Cricket Club has a new face running the bar. Dave Unwin has previously worked at the Clarence House Club in Portishead and the Mizzymead Club in Nailsea. We wish him well. The club currently offers Butcombe Bitter and at least one guest beer. The club offers admittance to CAMRA members. There are plans to hold a beer festival in March – more details in the next Pints West.

Over in Milton, the "under new management" sign is up at the **Bristol House** on Milton Road. Very good value food here –

many choices of meals for less than a fiver. Unfortunately, the beer offering is still Courage Best and Bass. The latter was in very good condition on my sole visit to-date, but given that we now have 20 breweries in Somerset producing some great beers, it seems a shame that so many pubs can't offer anything that hasn't traveled at least 150 miles and isn't as good as the local produce.

The **Old Inn**, Hutton seems to have reduced its interest in guest beers (it has previously been offering two at a time – often rarely seen ones). Recent visits have seen the advertised "guest beer" as being Greene King Abbot Ale. Given that Greene King own the pub this seems a bit disingenuous.

In the last edition of Pints West I commented that £2.60 for a pint of Otter Bitter in the **Somerset & Dorset** pub in Burnham was "mind boggling." (*Consider yourself lucky – equivalent or even higher prices have sadly become the norm where I live. Ed.*) Luke Roberts from Otter Brewery has contacted me to point out that the beer on offer there is actually Otter Ale, which is 4.5% ABV, as opposed to their Bitter, which is only 3.6% ABV. He also points out that between the beer leaving the brewery and being pulled in the pub, those nice people at Enterprise Inns, not to mention the Belgians and Brazilians at InBev, need to take their cut, so the high price should not be seen as a reflection on Otter or the pub manager. The price still seems a bit steep to me, especially considering that the Somerset & Dorset has a competing **Wetherspoon** pub only a few yards away. However, Otter brew some very good beers and I would encourage anyone to give them a try – particularly the excellent strong ale, Otter Head, which sells for a mere £1.90 a pint in the aforementioned Wetherspoon pub in Burnham.

You don't have to go as far as Burnham to try an Otter beer. The **Woodspring** in Worle sells Otter Ale, along with Butcombe. The nearby **Old King's Head** normally sells

Newman's Wolver's Ale, although this is sometimes replaced with RCH Pitchfork. On Worle High Street, the **Lamb** continues to sell a good pint of Butcombe Bitter for a reasonable £2.10 a pint.

Still in Worle, the **Nut Tree** on Ebdon Road currently holds the distinction of being the only pub in North Somerset that has banned Pints West. This stemmed from a comment in this column a couple of years ago (PW no. 64) when I suggested that their prices seemed very high in relation to the strengths of the beers and also in comparison to some other pubs. The 3.6% Greene King IPA at £2.40 was specifically mentioned. I hadn't visited the pub since, but I recently decided to let bygones be bygones and was rewarded with an excellent pint of Theakston's Paradise, which was in superb condition. This beer was £2.45 a pint and is 4.2% ABV. This appears to be an improvement in value for money – only 2% dearer than the afore-mentioned GK IPA for a stronger beer and, of course, two years have passed when many people have been increasing their prices by way more than 2%.

Twenty minutes' walk to the north of the Nut Tree is the **Ebdon Arms** in Wick St Lawrence. Despite the acquisition of the pub by Marston's, Steve Beasley is continuing to offer as wide a range of real ales as he can. On my last visit, there were seven ales available. These included Marston's Pedigree, Bass, a couple from Butcombe and a very fine Old Timber from Lincolnshire's Tom Wood brewery. Our congratulations to Steve and Rose for their inclusion in the 2007 Good Beer Guide – the Ebdon only opened last year, so they have qualified in the first year of eligibility. These five pubs in the Worle area will be visited by the Weston CAMRA branch for our first social of 2007 on Wednesday 17 January. All are welcome to join us on this crawl – in particular the many Worle CAMRA members that we never see.

The **Ship** at Uphill is advertising in the local press as having ever-changing guest ales. On a recent visit these were Blindman's Mine Beer and Brains SA. Nice beers, but perhaps steep prices for their strength at £2.50 and £2.55 respectively.

Congratulations for Good Beer Guide inclusion to **Off The Rails** – a magnificent seven years in a row. Also, to the **Raglan Arms**. Some of us are still trying to get the sand out of our toes from the Raglan's beach party held over the August Bank Holiday weekend. Aside from a lot of sand, the lounge bar was filled with large beach umbrellas, inflatables, fishing nets, buckets and spades, an indoor barbecue and Caribbean-style music. Oh yes, and a beer festival.

Tim Nickolls



The musings of Dr John

AUGUST saw the Bristol Branch minibus visit, which started at the the Queens Arms, Bleadon, which had flowers outside but not inside. The Old Inn, Hutton was next. It has what appears to be a wicket gate and lamp-posts with bars. There is decking out front but all was quiet whilst we were there. Uphill was missed out, possibly because first gear could not be engaged. The Cricket Club was visited. They may be ordering holly for Xmas. It was the owners' night off at the Waverley, possibly for a Walter Scott reading, but the attention was as good as ever. Arrival at Off The Rails caused some consternation as it crashed the Quiz Night. The last port of call was the Woolpack, to end a good night had by all.

September was marked by the Thatcher's Cider Open Day, which over 1,500 people attended. The cider tent was dispensing unlimited free samples and the farm shop was well and truly open. Tours of the plant showed how it has been done for over a hundred years. The Cheddar Valley draughts were refreshing on a hot afternoon and had the flavour of ciders matured in oak vats. The Traditional draught is from a recipe that is also over a hundred years old and had the taste of a true Somerset cider. There was a fine selection of bottles to sample, including Gold, another Somerset cider with a true apple taste. Speciality ciders on show included a sweet Cox's, dry Katy and superb Spartan. All in all a most pleasant afternoon.

Dr John

A trip to the Wyvern Club Beer Festival

THE Weston CAMRA sub-branch travelled in two groups by train to Taunton for the Wyvern Club beer festival recently. Our travel group of four arrived at Taunton and grabbed a taxi to the Good Beer Guide-listed Eagle in South Street. We had an excellent pint of Western Arches from the Cottage brewery. Funny pub though – blue ceiling not quite in keeping with the purple curtains and multi-coloured carpet!

From the Eagle we walked to the Wyvern Club, under the guidance of Tim's trusty map, where we met other Weston CAMRA members. What more could we want? Good company, excellent beer and a brisk walk before settling down to the serious part of the evening.

According to the crib sheet there were 18 beers at the festival, in addition to the Club's usual beers. However we reckoned they were saving some for the rest of the weekend because on Friday night they were not all there. I started with Proper Job and Cousin Jack, both from the St. Austell brewery. Cousin Jack was the preferred drink of the two, Proper Job being too bright and light for me.

Then I moved on to Otter Bitter from the Otter brewery, followed by Barnstormer from Bath Ales. For me, no contest – Barn Stormer! I like Bath Ales wherever I find them: consistent and always tasty, never disappointing. And as a result newest member, Duncan, discovered and fell in love with Barnstormer.

Food too was quite good and reasonably priced. The Wyvern Club has a good atmos-

phere and we all felt very welcome.

Anyway it came to that time of the evening when we had to make the big taxi decision. Do we go early and stop off for a pint on the way or do we go direct to the train station? As usual our leader Tim sorted it all out. So we stood outside waiting for a taxi, one arrived and then said, 'We are not for you.' Next taxi arrived and four of us (or was it five) went to Harpoon Louies, opposite the railway station. What a great modern pub: Otters or Cotleigh Tawny – very nice.

And then to spoil a great evening Duncan got a smelly kebab! Our fun evening, that started by train, ended by a coach (thoughtfully equipped with a loo) back to sunny Weston due to the overnight engineering works on the railway.

Funny old world. If we had travelled by bus to Taunton the fare would have been more than by train. Yet when the train doesn't run they put on a bus which takes longer and costs more! Of course the coach had to go to Bridgwater (without the e) and other Highbury as well, so no chance for a late one as we got back to Weston well after midnight.

Once again we had a very enjoyable evening out. If you are not a CAMRA member and are reading this Pints West wondering what it is all about, well for me it is about great beers, good company and fun evenings; seeing pubs and clubs you might never otherwise go to; drinking beers you might never find at your local; and supporting the most successful consumer campaign ever. Why don't you join us?

Dave McVittie



“The great thing about Theakstons is that wind is never a problem.”

My companion wasn't noted for talking hot air, so I was curious as to his point. The curiously furrowed brow was cue enough for him to explain. *“It's the weather don't you know.”* I nodded, pretending, indeed, to know. He continued nevertheless. *“If you go to Masham, where they brew this GRADLEY ale,”* he paused to savour another taste of the aforementioned, *“every day at four o'clock you'll spot a chap outside the Theakstons' brewery measuring the temperature and the wind direction. Then he goes back inside and adjusts the temperature levels in the fermenting vessels accordingly.”* My ghost was flabbered. *“All that for a pint of beer?”* I asked, stupidly. *“Don't be stupid,”* he answered, *“When it comes to the forecast, I'd rather trust the Theakstons' head brewer than the weatherman anyway.”*



PECULIERLY FINE COMPANY

A Round with Robin

AS my last article finished with the impending re-opening of the **Elm Tree** in Meadow Street in Weston-super-Mare, I'd better inform you that it is now called the **Corner House** (and this town has had at least two pubs of that name in the last 100 years). The good news is that it is serving real ale, currently Young's Bitter and Boddington Cask, but the bad news is that virtually nothing of the Victorian décor remains. Despite its turbulent past it is at least still a pub, for which give thanks.

A few minutes' walk from there will bring you to the **White Hart** (also on a corner) where the beer range is always changing. In the last few months there has been a good selection of beers from Hidden, Archers, RCH, Goff's and other breweries. Lou has also built up a good working relationship with Church End brewery from Nuneaton. As a consequence of this we have just enjoyed their Stout Coffin, and despite the barrel lasting a week, the last drop was as good as the day it went on. More brews from Church End are programmed and by the time you are reading this I expect the infamous Wychwood Dog's Bollocks to be ready there.

The White Hart is a real locals' local supporting at least three skittles teams, a football team, pool, darts and a big screen for those important sporting events, and above all a friendly welcome.

It also has a quite interesting history; the first White Hart recorded in Weston was situated in Oxford Street where Thomas

Calcott was keeping this beer house in 1844. The current pub of that name, situated in Palmer Row, appears to have been built at the same time as the houses in Palmer and Hopkins Street and completed by at least 1861, as it is recorded in Kelly's directory then. Brian Austin, the local historian who has researched Weston's road names, reports that "Palmer Row was named after George Palmer 1820-1900, known as the Squire of the White Hart, Builder". The Victorian stables and stable yard was filled in by the time of the 1932 Ordnance Survey map, and this area is the skittle alley and much of the bar on your left as you enter. The pub has retained a few of its Victorian fittings but most of the interior is from the mid-20th century.

A Round with Robin in other local pubs has led me to frequent the **Castle** at Kewstoke, where the full range of Newman's beers have been showcased in an ever-changing sequence. In August the Mendip Mammoth was rampaging through the bar, but now the Bite is snapping at your heels. (Pure Dr John's style). The beer is of good quality but beware, the pub keeps the old opening hours and closes in the afternoons.

Coming around the coast from there, the **Captain's Cabin** (best known for its excellent food), has a very well-kept drop of Bass, and further south, the **Major from Glengarry** had Theakston's Old Peculier on sale recently, and very good it was too, though a mite expensive for this area of town.

The **Raglan Arms**, a stone's throw from the Major, never ceases to delight with its unusual mix of the local and not so local beers. Beers from Butcombe, St Austell, Archer's and Sharp's are regulars, but also Mauldon, O'Hanlon's, RCH, Skinner's and others appear from time to time with the occasional real surprise. A few weeks ago, on the usual Friday night music session, I had a great time quaffing the delicious Archer's Oyster Stout. The **Regency** has started to add a changing beer to its four regulars. Until a fortnight ago this was Marston's Pedigree selling at £2 a pint; I'm told Theakston's XB will be ready soon.

Slightly further afield, I visited Bristol on the 9th September for the Open Doors Day. After visiting

QEH, Industrial Museum and Redcliffe Caves, I'm afraid to say the culture disintegrated into a pub crawl. I made use of the Southville **Coronation's** Saturday afternoon pricing policy – £1.70 a pint for all draught ales – where I had (new to me) the Hop Back Moderation at 4.5% and the Hop Scotch at 4.2% before paying my first visit to the **Eldon House**, just off Jacobs Wells Road in Clifton. This pub, which came well recommended in a Pints West article recently, impressed me with its simple décor and friendly welcome, complemented by a superb pint of Bath Ales Wild Hare at 5.0% for £2.50. As it was a warm afternoon I was able to sit outside where two small tables on the pavement were well used. Despite the traffic being continuous in Jacobs Wells Road, the traffic noise was minimal, and soon I popped down this road to the **Hope and Anchor**. Here I sampled the Bristol Beer Factory's Sunrise at 4.4% (brewed less than a mile away as the crow flies) for £2.60. The beer was of good quality. Further down the road the **Bag O'Nails** had reasonably priced beers from "oop north", namely Caledonian Tattoo at 4.2% and Storm PGA Pale Ale at 4.4%. I was also mightily pleased with the Matthews Midsomer Pale at 4.5% which was almost my favourite beer of the day.

At the **White Lion** Late Summer Festival, I had a pleasant day roasting in the sunshine on 23rd September; it was apt therefore that my favourite ale of the day, from Hampshire, was Indian Summer, a very fruity and hoppy 4.2% beer. I was intrigued by the tasting notes describing E&S Elland's Moonbeam Rider as a traditional lager; this set my mind to my walking up the hill to **Zerodegrees**, which I hadn't been to before. It was hard to picture it as the old Bristol Tramway terminus, but I enjoyed a pint of Pale Ale, tasty but somewhat fizzy, whilst sitting on the veranda overlooking the spires and chimneys.

On my way back to the railway station I called in at the **Seven Stars**, (now under new management) where I had a decent pint of Barnstormer. Alas I could only look at the outside of the **Cornubia** (now closed in case you hadn't heard).

Having had my first draught St Austell's Proper Job earlier in 2006 at the **Crediton Inn** in Crediton, on my return in October I was able to sample another first for me, the Fat Catz (4.8%) from Highgate. Their first major beer festival since redesigning the interior of the pub takes place before Pints West goes to print, but I will report on it in the next issue. Suffice to say that on the programme of "included" ales are six I've not seen before.

With other members of the Weston sub-branch I visited the 5th **Wyvern Club Beer Festival** in Taunton. Most of the beers on were not new to me, those which were did not come on until the following day. It was a disappointment not to see them using lined glasses at what appeared to be a CAMRA-supported festival; Phil Edmonds, who is the Somerset CAMRA travel officer, was working the racked beer bar and told me he'd welcome help from other CAMRA members for future



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festivals.

If you are passing through Bridgwater you should visit the **Cobblestones Hotel** in Eastover, just off the A38 Broadway. It is a real oasis (Commercial Inn excepted) in a town that used to have three entries in the Good Beer Guide but now has none. I was fortunate to be Morris dancing at the Cobblestones first beer festival on August bank holiday where a dozen beers were racked in the bar and more on gravity in the cellar. Cotliegh, RCH and Bath Ales were all well represented, with others from Cornwall and Devon too. Their policy is of two regular ales and one guest which is not repeated except by public demand! I was looking at the YHA magazine *Triangle* and noticed that they had the cheek to put on the front cover "YHA is pioneering the real ale revolution – and it tastes good." What do they think CAMRA has been doing all these years? However, credit to YHA that at least eleven of their hostels now have real ale bars.

With three other chaps from Weston CAMRA I visited Belgium for the first time. We went to two breweries, **Cantillon** in Brussels and **Vapeur** in Papaix, which is not far from Mons where we visited six bars, two particularly good ones. We also went to the amazing **Delirium** bar in Brussels which has over 2,000 bottled beers from around the world in stock, as well as 14 draught beers. Selection is made from a book the size of a telephone directory! At the Vapeur brewery we had a buffet-style meal where all the food had beer in the preparation of it: smoked salmon, smoked ham, cheese and even the bread was made with Vapeur beers!

I'd like to finish this article with a letter from *The Times* which reads:

Sir, Perhaps Jamie Oliver should have a word with the borough of Trafford. Its "new exciting menus" for schools include the dessert choice of "a glass of cold mild." From Bob Greaves, Altrincham, Cheshire.

Robin E Wild

Backwell Beerfest breaks new ground

AFTER a summer of supping *al fresco* at festivals in glorious sunshine was there room for a small autumn beer festival in a village club with limited space, off the main road, and whose members have, shall we say, well-defined ideas about what beer they like?

That was the question confronting Backwell Village Club's chair Martyn Howell and vice-chair (myself) in contemplating a repeat of last year's inaugural bash. The answer seems to be a definite 'yes' with every prospect when the sums are complete of the club making another large donation to local charities.

"First and foremost the brewers were fantastic," enthused Martyn, whose abilities in the 'birds from trees' department extended to getting a number of discounts and free barrels. And the usual generosity of Backwell and Nailsea businesses in sponsoring everything from beer and glasses to food and live music ensured that the club treasurer resumed sleeping nights even before the doors opened.

"And the beers?" I hear you ask. Well, the theme was 'Beers never before seen at the Club', and without a wholesaler in sight a balance of classics and newer brews appeared from as far afield as Cockerthorpe and Cornwall as well as 'you know what' from Crouch Vale in Essex, which naturally went well. But the organisers were concerned about BVC members' traditional resistance to dark beers. They needn't have worried. Jennings' classic will lift a few sneaks in Backwell from now on, Bath Ales' *Festivity* lifted many a spirit and Cotleigh's *Buzzard* swooped down a few necks over the weekend.

This year instead of getting popular ciders from the brewers the club asked one of its members, Stewart Marshall, to source a

selection from local farms and orchards, including Backwell-grown apples! The most popular were Heck's Kingston Black and Tick'num Tipple, our most local brew. As a result we may well be seeing some new scrumpy at the club.

It was great to see locals Butcombe and RCH getting involved this year with their *Brunel IPA* and powerful *Firebox* respectively alongside Matthews' *Bob Wall* and Berrow *Carnivale* with a fascinating contrast in styles between Skinners' *Cornish Knocker* and its neighbour *Doom Bar Special* from Sharp's. Rhymney's *Premier Lager* seemed to fall between two stylistic stools, but *Solar Power* from the Isle of Purbeck avoided that trap.

What did we get from it? Apart from charity funds, BVC made a number of new friends (40 of whom have applied for membership), the range of guest beers and ciders will continue to grow – and sales of aspirin showed a slight, temporary upturn!

John Merriman

Pub news

HAVING just had a successful first beer festival recently, Steve Jones of the **Rhubarb Tavern** in Queen Anne Road, Barton Hill is now planning the follow-up. His next festival will be taking place on 24th and 25th February 2007.

At the time of writing, the **Bag O'Nails** in Hotwells was in the middle of another of its popular twice-yearly beer festivals. These take place each April and November. With the current one not even over, the next one is already being planned for April 19th to 22nd 2007. The Bag's festivals are always a good bet for people hoping to find examples of those elusive dark beers.

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Cry Freedom, Cry Seven Stars!

DURING Bristol's Radical History Week (28th October to 5th November) at the appropriately named **Spyglass** restaurant, the **Long John Silver Trust** was twice invited to join in with the debates.

On the Wednesday evening, as a representative of the Trust, I spoke about the history of the **Seven Stars** pub in Thomas Lane, Redcliffe, under the heading of "*The Anti-Slavery Movement in Bristol*", and again on the Saturday afternoon for "*Bristol and the Revolutionary Atlantic*".



It was due to my interest in Bristol's pubs and breweries that I was able to join in on the Wednesday, where I was sandwiched between two really good speakers, Dave Cullum (who, to my amazement, didn't need any notes) and Madge Dresser. Here I spoke about the international relevance of the Seven Stars, its history and its background.

I talked about the earliest references to the

pub in the Bristol Record Office, mentioning Sir John Hawkins who, whilst buying what was to become the George's Brewery, acquired the pub in 1697 (it must surely be one of the country's earliest surviving tied houses). This new early date adds to the more commonly known history of the pub with its involvement in the anti-slavery movement.

When speaking about Thomas Clarkson's 'spying' work at the Seven Stars, which he carried out for William Wilberforce, Peter Linebaugh – one of the Radical History Week's star speakers – pointed out that in America, the Plough (which the Seven Stars represent) played a huge part in the freeing of slaves in the Southern States.

He then went on to say that the North Star (where the Big Dipper, as the Plough is called in America, points the way) is now known as the Freedom Star, and the ramifications of all this made the hairs on the back of my neck stand up.

Bearing in mind that the Seven Stars is such a rare survivor – it has survived the Blitz, post- and pre-war planners, not to mention new roads (such as Victoria Street) and all of the brewery 're-organisations' – it is incredible that its still here.

Also, doubly mind blowing is the fact that at that time the pub could have had any one of 850 other names, my two favourites from the Temple district being the *Yellow Anchor* and the *Crabs Well Inn*. I also like the *Admiral Hawke* (it used to be found on the Quay) named after the man Long John Silver claimed to have once sailed under.



Drawing of the Seven Stars from *Old Inns of Bristol* written by CFW Denning and published in 1943

If you look in "*Bristol Inns and Alehouses in the Mid-Eighteenth Century*", the most popular pub name was *The Ship*, of which there were 37 in Bristol. Other contenders from then include the *Double Headed Cat*, the *Bell and Coffee Pot* and the *Leg of Mutton and Cauliflower*. These, however, just don't seem to have the same ring to them, and the significance of the pub's name can't be overlooked.

Peter also mentioned the slavery song "*The Drinking Gourd*" in connection with the Seven Stars and runaway slaves, and as no one else there present had heard of it, I left the meeting determined to try and find out more.

Our piece on the second Saturday was to be on "*Pirates and the Long John Silver Trust*". Using a PowerPoint presentation, I was able to adapt it to fit in with the afternoon's proceedings, as you'll see below.

The first speaker was a young Dutchman by the name of Niklas Frykman, who did a fascinating talk on "*The Mutiny on the Hermione*", and he was followed by a detailed life study of Herman Melville ("*Moby Dick: Below Decks in the Pequod*") by Ruth Symister which was also top notch.

Then the star of the show, Peter Linebaugh, did his piece on "*Terror and the Commons in the Era of the Revolutionary*

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Atlantic". To give people a measure of how significant he is, this was actually filmed by the BBC at the event. The talk was long and varied, revealing, passionate and very intellectual. It frightened the life out of me.

In his speech he made passing remarks about Robinson Crusoe and Woodes Rogers, cornerstones of my talk, and made me, in a mad panic, change the running order of what I was about to say. Earlier in the week I had been impressed by the story of *"The Drinking Gourd"*, and decided to start with that.

The *"Drinking Gourd"* is yet another North American name given to the Big Dipper, and it formed the basis of the aforementioned song. It's a 'pilot verse' (or coded song) which means that, depending on your interpretation, it gives you directions. In former times it was a common device used by seamen in their sea shanties for centuries.

Our particular song though guided runaway slaves, at a particular time of the year, to freedom in the North of America and Canada. It guided people along rivers and trails, where it was difficult for hounds to follow, and across the Mason-Dixon Line. This became known as the Underground Railroad or the Freedom Train.

A legendary character named Peg Leg Joe (he was a sailor turned carpenter who had lost part of his right leg) went amongst the slaves in the South, and taught them the song. In fact he's the old man in the chorus. Amazingly, for the Trust, other songs of this ilk were about Long John and Old Riley who were also

escapees.

The chorus of the song goes as follows:
*Follow the drinking gourd.
Follow the drinking gourd.
The old man is a waiting for to carry you to
freedom if you
Follow the drinking gourd."*

The words "pivotal" and "epiphany" are perhaps overused a little these day's, but surely not in the case of Bristol's most important inn. Fifty years after Clarkson received help from a Bristol pub landlord named Thompson, the Seven Stars was in use again leading yet more people to Freedom.

I suggested that it was now more important than ever to mark next year's Abolition 200 commemorations with a CAMRA Historic Pub plaque for the Seven Stars, with perhaps the Harry Brown Sea Shanty men doing the unveiling honours with a rousing chorus from *The Drinking Gourd*.

I followed this with Daniel Defoe, Woodes Rogers and all the other Bristol references that perhaps influenced Robert Louis Stevenson when he set his "world" novel here, *Treasure Island*. The audience seemed to appreciate the talk and we had a few laughs.

There then followed another vibrant question and answer session, where it was put forward that we could have Long John Silver as the "Colossus of Bristol" – striding across the Floating Harbour – with his one good leg on one bank, and the tip of his crutch on the

other.

More ideas included having a cycle path named after Blackbeard, and a decent memorial to the Bristol Riots of 1831, possibly centred on the surviving entrance gate to the old "New Gaol" on Cumberland Road.

Dave from Clevedon (Union man and a great orator) asked that if a tiny place like Watchet – population 1,400 – could have a sculpture to the Rime of the Ancient Mariner, why couldn't Bristol – population 400,000 – have one for *Treasure Island*?

Sculpture talk must have been in the air, because I'd asked Madge Dresser on the Wednesday night what was happening with the eagerly awaited Bristol Monument to Slavery, but unfortunately she didn't know.

Bristol Radical History Week was put on by a very small team of enthusiasts and cost just £1,400 to mount. What a bargain! I'm sure if it were anyone else it would have been at least £14,000. It was funded purely by the goodwill of the people.

The two main venues were the **Spyglass** in King Street and the **Cube Microplex**, and both places had **Long John Silver bottled beer** available to keep the audience happy. In fact, the Cube is so pleased with the beer that they're thinking of keeping it on.

Many thanks to Roger, Ian and their dedicated team of helpers who put on such a great event, the Long John Silver Trust will forever be in your debt.

Mark Steeds

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Island in the sea

By your Nailsea correspondent
Laurie Gibney

Off with the Queen's Head!

THE name board of the **Queen's Head** came off the wall of the pub in the centre of Nailsea in September and shortly afterwards the name **Bragg's Wine Bar** went up, with a hanging pub sign exquisitely painted by the landlady Lucy King. There is no change to the real ale being served, which remains as Greene King's IPA at £2.40 a pint and Old Speckled Hen at £2.70 a pint.

The premises closed for a few weeks for the change-over, reopening on 15th September with the thirty-two-seat restaurant opening a week later. The pub company, Punch Taverns, have not contributed to the refurbishment and much of the work has been done by the landlord and landlady, who are on a ten-year running lease. The name Bragg's Wine Bar derives from the maiden name of landlord Richard Beaton's mother, who ran a restaurant boat *Will Claire* in Bristol's Historic Harbour. Richard's great-grandparents ran a hotel and restaurant in Chulmleigh, Devon back at the turn of the century, so the family tradition continues in the name Bragg's Wine Bar.

The restaurant is in what was the public bar and the bar is in what was the lounge bar. Both have been provided with access to the patios (look out for the pet rabbit) and toilets at the rear of the premises, and there is a small patio at the front surrounded by neat railings. At the time of writing the restaurant – from which customers may see Richard preparing their food in the kitchen through a glazed screen – is only open at lunchtimes. The menu is based on the old "*Berni Inn*" fayre of steaks (16- and 20-ounce T-bone, and 8-ounce fillet and sirloin), Dover sole, salmon, 8-ounce free-range chicken breast, and light bites. It is planned to open the restaurant in the evenings as custom develops, when there will be a monthly fish evening. Various coffees are always available. Phone 01275 819007 to book a table.

At some future date it is planned to move the cellar to the end of the old skittle alley and create a gravity-dispense real-ale bar in the existing cellar which is believed to have been the original one-room pub dating from between 1500 and 1600, the oldest part of the building. The pub expanded into two adjacent cottages in the Georgian era, which were replaced by the existing pub frontage in Victorian times.

The very popular original wine bar in Nailsea, the **Courtyard Wine Bar**, continues to provide real-ale drinkers with Bass and Marston's Pedigree. To maintain good quality of the real ale, only one of them is available at times in the summer or when lines are cleaned before any new cask is connected to the hand pumps. The small two-level cellar is beneath

the bar floor and apparently therefore a new cask cannot be put on when the bar is busy. Also available are a wide selection of wines, spirits and the odd foreign beer such as Hoegaarden. Coffee is served from early morning and a varied selection of excellent dishes are available at lunchtime. The Courtyard Wine Bar has been run by Maureen Buchaly since the business started thirteen years ago and is a true free house, which is a welcome change from the stranglehold which monopolistic pub companies have on most of our local pubs.

The ale which overwhelmingly won Beer of the Festival at CAMRA's Bristol Beer Festival last March – Bristol Beer Factory's Milk Stout – made a brief appearance at the **White Lion** in Nailsea over the weekend of 21/22 October. The landlady, Louise Thomas, was unable to obtain more than one cask from a limited brew run. Why a champion beer like this is in short supply is a question that many people who voted for it must be wondering. Milk Stout – which a lady lager drinker, when given a taster, said: "I could drink that!" – was to be followed by Wickwar's Rite Flanker. The long-awaited refurbishment of the kitchen, closed for some time, was expected to be completed in November. Asking someone serving at the Tobacco Factory recently (effectively the Bristol Beer Factory's brewery tap) if they had any Milk Stout, I was asked who brewed it – is this gorgeous ale doomed, I ask!

A recent visit to the **Olde Farmhouse** revealed that Adrian Boon has lost his business partner Mike Baxter who has become the first licensee of the **Lord Nelson** at Cleeve, previously a Greene King managed house. The Olde Farmhouse is tied to Badger beer and the real ale line-up was 'King & Barnes' Sussex Ale, Badger First Gold and Tanglefoot, all brewed by the Badger Brewery which owns the pub.

Pleased to see that Ron Peters at the **Sawyers Arms** is using his pub company's SIBA scheme to purchase real ales from local breweries. The scheme cuts out the distances beer previously travelled to and from warehouses, by having local small breweries deliver direct and bill through the pub company. I found Goff's Joust on tap at £2 a pint on a recent visit, in addition to the regulars Courage Best and Bath Ales Gem.

Look out for the Sawyers mini-beer festival in CAMRA Community Pubs Week (17th to 24th February 2007).

Welcome to Indi Bahra, the new manager of the **New Battle Axe** at Wraxall, who was previously involved in the Bristol club scene. He replaces Liz Giles, a temporary manager

seconded from the owner's Patco Supermarket at Totterdown. In February Des Oram, the previous manager and head chef for many years, moved on to the waterside **Admiral's Table** at Bridgewater Marina. Could there be any significance in the fact that the Admiral's Table and the Dew Drop Inn at Flax Bourton, just up the road from the New Battle Axe, are both part of the Eldridge Pope Pub Company's empire?

The head chef at the New Battle Axe is now Harry Brayne who has been on the team for twenty-six years. In addition to the carvery, a *la carte* menu and bar snacks, a new "two meals for £10" menu has recently been introduced, as well as "The Lords" classic Indian cuisine which is now buffet style. Opening times are Mondays to Thursdays 12 'til 3pm and 6 'til 10pm. On Fridays and Saturdays the same times apply except that closing time is 12 midnight, and on their busiest day, Sunday, the New Battle Axe is open from 12 noon until 10pm. The "Downstairs Pub" has reopened, where evening entertainment includes live bands on Thursdays, karaoke on Fridays and a disco on Saturdays. Real ales currently on the bar are Newnham's Wolver's ale and Courage Best which has returned.

The **Mizzymead Social Club** continues to provide a good selection of guest ales – possibly the most varied in Nailsea – to complement the regular real ales, Courage Best and Butcombe Bitter. During recent months guest ales have included Brain's SA, Bateman's Valiant, Butcombe Blond, Caledonian 80/-, Fuller's London Pride, Greene King Old Speckled Hen, Hop Back Crop Circle, Hop Back Summer Lightning, Marston's Pedigree, Marston's Single Malt, Okell's Dr Okell's IPA, Shepherd Neame Spitfire, St Austell's Tribute, Theakston's Best, Theakston's Black Bull Bitter, Theakston's Mild, Theakston's Paradise Ale, Theakston's XB, Thwaite's Lancaster Bomber and Wadworth's Summersault.

Away from Nailsea & District

Horts in Broad Street, Bristol has been closed for refurbishment and reopened during the Autumn. The décor is more up-market black-leather than previously, and the dedicated eating area at the back reminded me of when Horts was a Berni Inn, although I didn't frequent the restaurant as much as the Cellar Bar that has been closed for many years.

Calling in to check the real ale and cider line-up, and to book a table for a meal, I found six Young's real ales and only one Thatcher's

cider which was Traditional Dry. When I asked if they were having any guest ales I was told that they were getting in Charles Wells Bombadier as a guest ale – I chuckled to myself and left. For those who don't know, and obviously that included the member of staff who made the statement, Young's and Charles Wells have combined their breweries so Bombadier is hardly a guest ale in my eyes!

Our meal was very enjoyable – the sea bass and mushroom couscous were excellent, the pumpkin couscous was excellent also if a little light on pumpkin slices. The apple crumble and cheesecake that followed were "smashing". The prices are not unreasonable when you consider that they reflect the fact that a real chef cooks your meal to order from fresh ingredients on the premises, instead of a cook heating up something out of a freezer as is the case in many restaurants and pubs.

The **Ship Inn** in Lower Park Row, Bristol is a champion of dark ales and is the only pub I know in the Bristol & District area which has a mild and old ale permanently on the bar, in the form of Theakston's Mild and Old Peculier. The licensee is Tony Kirk and on my last visit it was managed by David Mularkey who hails from Galway and Huddersfield and Lauren Roussouw from South Africa – long may they provide a focus for local supporters of the CAMRA Light and Dark Supporters Campaign.

Welcome to new landlady Sue Wescott at the **Bird in Hand** in Long Ashton. Sue's real ales are Bass and Fuller's London Pride, with

Thatcher's cider also on draught. I am finding it difficult to do justice to Long Ashton's real ale scene, so if you would like to volunteer to write an occasional article and deliver Pints West to the pubs in Long Ashton each quarter, please contact the editor.

CAMRA welcomes David Chaplin, a publisher and now joint licensee with his wife Helen Lacey, an ex-teacher, who have taken the reigns of the **Cross Keys** at Combe Down in Bath. They have lived in the locality for twenty years. David and Helen have taken over from Mark and Caroline Palmer, who have "retired" from running pubs after eighteen years at the Cross Keys and before that twelve years in London. Mark and Caroline are "resting" in Frome for a while and considering running a delicatessen or similar business with more "regular" hours.

David and Helen have retained the services of assistant manager Keith Morris who also helps in the kitchen and is the pub's cellarman, the essential person looking after the real ales. These, by the way, may be reduced from six back to four or five to maintain quality. Real ales have to be selected from the Punch Taverns lists and include regulars Butcombe Bitter, Courage Best, and Wadworth 6X; guests may include Bass, Bath Ales Barnstormer, Brakspear Bitter and others. Pete Salsby has joined the team as chef and has revised the menu to increase the use of fresh ingredients and provide three or four specials each day. The only change to opening hours is that the Cross Keys now opens at 12 noon every day.

And finally

There is hope for John Smith's Smooth drinkers yet ...

Your scribe has been trying to encourage John Smith's Smooth devotees Roger and Sue Chappell to try some of the excellent real ales available at the **Mizzymead Social Club** without success.

Hearing that one of their old courting haunts, the **King's Arms** at Brislington, were holding a beer festival they sallied forth and entered the said pub for the first time in many years to find that it was still the friendly pub they knew and loved many years ago.


But... there was no John Smith's Smooth! Asking for a recommendation from the landlord, they tried and fell in love with Codrington Codger (an ale, not an old... person) from the Cotswold Spring Brewery near Chipping Sodbury.

Roger and Sue are now waiting to taste that ale again nearer home in Nailsea... Any offers?

Also, Wessex Water's staff magazine *Source* recently reported in its *Strange Water Tales* feature...

"Fancy a cold pint? A brewery in Greenland is producing beer using water melted from the ice cap of the Arctic island. Brewers claim the water is at least 2,000 years old and free of minerals and pollutants. Half-litres of Greenland Pale Ale are on sale in Denmark priced 37 kroner or £3.40."

Laurie Gibney



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Portishead pub update

The White Hart, Weston in Gordano

A couple of miles out of town on the Clevedon Road, you'll find this old, village pub. It has recently been taken over and completely refurbished inside – sympathetically in my view. The new landlord is Colin Royal, and he is aided by wife, Abby. Colin is the chef so you can expect that food will be high on the agenda although Courage Best and Butcombe Bitter are already available – with another ale expected soon. Thatcher's helps look after the cider lovers and nine wines can be bought by the glass.

The restaurant area is non-smoking and the menu will change regularly, with daily specials on the board, including fresh fish and a home-cooked pie. A two-course meal is available at £6.50 per person each weekday between noon and 3 p.m. To book a table, phone 01275 849478.

Colin is from Sunderland but no translator is required if you listen carefully.

The Poacher, Portishead High Street

Landlord Mark continues to offer a good range of draught ales, the latest being Hobgoblin from Wychwood Brewery. At 5% ABV, this is a wonderful, dark, strong beer, perfectly kept. On the cider side of things, by the time you read this, Ashton Press – made by Thatcher's for Butcombe Brewery – should be on tap. It might be keg, but this is one of my personal favourites – thanks Mark.

Brewsters, Gordano Gate

On the way in to the town from the motorway, you can find this fairly new development which includes accommodation at a Premier Inn and children's play areas.

Although the main business of this place is undoubtedly turning food over while keeping the kids happy, they do provide one real ale, Wadworth 6X. This was very drinkable when I visited. There is also a comfortable side area in the pub next to the entrance which is a good place to do your drinking if you want to hide from the little people.

The Ship, Coast Road to Clevedon

Just to start with, contrary to my previous report, lunch is available on Sunday lunch-times. Landlord Vic is still in good form and is well aided by the automatic tipping contraptions he uses in his cellar, which tip the barrels gently as they empty. When I last paid a visit, there were on show Bass, Butcombe Bitter, Theakston's Bitter and "Gale's" Trafalgar Ale (brewed by Fuller's now). The latter two were tried and both were lovely.



The White Hart, Weston in Gordano

Royal Oak, West Hill

Following up the previous entry, the Oak continues to offer sharply-priced beverages. On the cider front, draught Thatcher's was only £1.70 a pint. On the other hand, a lovely 500 ml bottle of Thatcher's Gold was a steal at £2. Will this be tempting to all those fashion-conscious faddies currently drinking bottles of Irish Cider? Sadly I doubt it.

A Sunday roast is available at the moment on a carvery basis.

The Black Horse, Clapton in Gordano

When appreciating the benefits of this great pub, it's impossible not to take into account its services to our local cider-drinking community. A number of draught ciders were available and sampled when a reformed shandy-lover and I visited in September, including Thatcher's Dry and Black Rat (made for Moles by Thatcher's). Black Rat was our favourite on the night but all were gratefully received.

Meet the Landlord



Name: Vic Long, landlord of **The Ship** in Portishead, a freehouse.

Age: 63.

Where from: Bristol, but moved to Portishead aged three (not by himself) and has lived there since.

Pub history: Built in 1973. The pub overlooks the Bristol Channel and there are numerous pictures of ships, particularly naval. Vic has been here since – with only occasional trips outside.

Previous pubs: The Kicking Donkey, Brokerswood, Wiltshire.

Other jobs: Rail and building industries.

Best thing about being a landlord: Working for yourself.

Worst thing: Red tape and paperwork.

Favourite other pub: He hasn't been to another pub in eight years. He's always working.

Average hours worked in a week: 90.

Last holiday: He hasn't got a passport and his last holiday was 21 years ago for his honeymoon, when the pub was closed for four days.

Neil Ravenscroft

Bath Beer Festival

OCTOBER 20th and 21st saw the Bath event of the year, the 29th CAMRA Bath Beer Festival.

As in previous years the event was held at the Pavilion, in the centre of Bath adjacent to the sports centre. Ticket sales were similar to last year with over 2,200 sold and the organisers were mightily pleased that nobody turning up at the door had to be turned away. As usual there were a few that did not show up but those who did were able to choose from a wide range of local, national and international beers and ciders. For some inexplicable reason though they were not so thirsty this year and only sunk 8,100 pints, just over three and a half pints per punter.

The range of ciders had been increased from last year and included the Champion Cider of Britain, Heck's Kingston Black. The ciders did very well and there was hardly any wastage at all. Gosh, I hope that the festival is not going to become the Bath Cider festival, it does such strange and inexplicable things to my mind and insides.

Internationally there were a number of bottled beers from Belgium and Holland and unusually there was a German cask beer from a home-brew pub in Monchengladbach called Stefanus. A pale beer called Kolsh (but with some dots in the name somewhere) from the Cologne region was also served.

Over 80 different beers were racked up for

the public from all over the British Isles, though regrettably not all survived the journey to Bath. Unfortunately one of these was a 'special' created just for the festival. Rumour has it that the 'special' did eventually clear in the cellar of a local pub. Local breweries were represented by the likes of Abbey Ales, Bath Ales, Blindman's, Bristol Beer Factory, Keynsham, Milk Street, Moles and Matthews. Matthews just missed the festival last year with their first brews hitting the streets just after the festival.

Another couple of breweries that I had not seen in Bath before were the Nailsworth Brewery and the Small Paul Brewery. Small Paul is a completely new micro that has just been started by Paul Smith of the Heart of Wessex branch of CAMRA. The 'Beer of the Festival' was Hidden Potential, up from the Hidden Brewery in Dinton, somewhere in darkest Wiltshire (almost local really). The head brewer is Gary Lumbar, who used to be at Oakhill before its demise.

Entertainment was provided during the two evening sessions. The Friday evening band was Soul Commotion, who have played the event for many years, and do the Commitments style of soul music. The band on Saturday evening was a new four-piece called Cavalier. They're regulars of the Royal Oak.

For me though it is not the bands, and it is not the undoubted pleasure of the hardened

and knowledgeable drinker that makes the event for me. What makes it is coming across the individuals who have never stepped away from the mass-produced lager or cider, who come and ask questions, and who try something new, and go away wondering why they have never tried it before. That's why I really enjoy helping out at beer festivals and long may they last. Next year's is already in my diary. It is on Friday 19th and Saturday 20th October, and if you can't wait that long go to the Bristol festival next March or look up other festivals on the CAMRA website.

Phill the Pint

Pub news

The Volunteer, New Street, St Judes, located behind the boarded-up Sevenways, has reopened after refurbishment and was selling Bath Ales Gem and Courage Best on hand-pump when visited at the end of October. It was previously a very basic scrumpy house and now with no draught cider is clearly aiming for a change of image.

The Old Lock and Weir, Hanham Mills has changed hands from Fairways to JWR Inns and is now run by local Hanham people Karen and Richard. The beer range has continued much as before but with the introduction of Otter Ale and Butcombe Bitter among the six real ales on offer. Addlestone's cider is still available on handpump.

Bob Ford

The Windmill Inn

PORTISHEAD

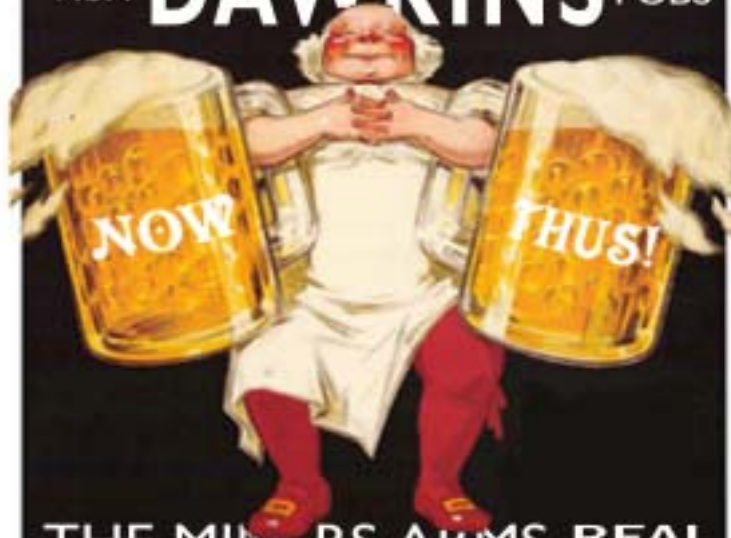


6 Real Ales in excellent condition including:
Courage Best, Bass, Butcombe Gold,
RCH Pitchfork and 2 other guest ales.

The Windmill Inn is situated next to the
Portishead Approach Golf Course on Nore Road.

To contact us please ring 01275 843677.

VISIT DAWKINS PUBS



THE MINERS ARMS

MINA RD, ST WERBURGH, BRISTOL 9556718
'VENUE' BEST PUB IN BRISTOL AWARD WINNER

THE HILLGROVE

DOVE ST, KINGSDOWN, BRISTOL 944780
CAMRA GOOD BEER GUIDE 2006 FREEHOUSE

New! THE VICTORIA

SOUTHLEIGH RD, CLIFTON, BRISTOL 9745675
FREEHOUSE NEXT TO THE OLD CLIFTON POOL

REAL
ALES
GUEST
BEERS



The Good Beer Guide 2007

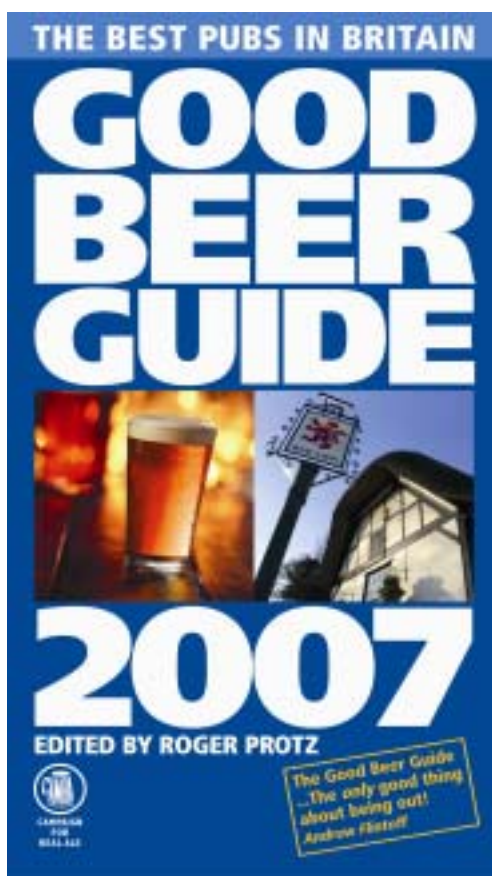
THE 34th edition of the Campaign for Real Ale's Good Beer Guide, edited by award-winning beer writer Roger Protz, is out now. The Good Beer Guide 2007 is the number-one guide to pubs selling fine quality real ale. From sophisticated city bars to cosy country inns, tiny off-beat locals to grand architectural gems, with the Good Beer Guide you are never far from a decent pint of real ale.

The Good Beer Guide 2007 features:

- County-by-county guides to the best real ale pubs.
- Descriptions of more than 600 real-ale breweries across Britain.
- 4,500 full pub entries to guide the reader to Britain's best beer and pubs, complete with beer listings, opening hours, pub food, family facilities, accommodation, and history.

The Guide is compiled by over 3,000 dedicated CAMRA volunteers. There are no fees for listings, and every pub is checked throughout the year.

Priced at £14.99, the Good Beer Guide 2007 is available from good book shops, or direct from CAMRA – order yours by calling 01727 867201, or order online at www.camra.org.uk (saving up to £4.99 if you are a CAMRA member).



The Guide features a number of informative articles on subjects including:

○ Guest Beer Right and “beer miles”

CAMRA is calling for the restoration of a *Guest Beer Right* allowing tenants and pub managers to order in a beer of their choice delivered directly by the brewer. This scheme would apply to all companies with more than 30 pubs and would boost consumer choice and reduce thousands of “beer miles” being traveled each year.

○ Loss of regional breweries and community ownership

The loss of regional breweries has reached worrying proportions in recent years as larger companies swallow up smaller competitors and mergers and closures become more common. The success of the micro-brewery sector is encouraging but the threat to independent family-owned breweries, their pub estates and beers cannot be ignored. CAMRA wants employees of breweries under threat of takeover or merger to be given the opportunity to purchase the brewery themselves through a co-operative.

○ Pub Food

Jean-Christophe Novelli, Antony Worrall Thompson, and most recently Gordon Ramsey – all are acclaimed and well-known chefs who have embraced pub food as the new premium dining experience.

○ National Inventory: pub interiors of outstanding historical interest

The Good Beer Guide 2007 features an updated list of CAMRA's National Inventory Pubs, a pioneering effort to protect the most important historic pub interiors in the country.

Bristol Beer Factory

SOUTH Bristol's very own beer festival, the **Factoberfest**, showcased 17 beers from local breweries recently.

The annual event aims to raise the awareness of the local public to the great locally-produced beers we have in the area. Breweries featured this year were the Bristol Beer Factory (of course, as it's their event!), Abbey Ales, Bath Ales, Cotswold Spring, Keynsham, Matthews, Newman's, RCH, Severn Vale, Stroud, Uley, Wickwar and Zero Degrees. The event is growing in scale and plans are already being put into place for next year.

The Bristol Beer Factory report that they had a record month in October and were very glad of their two extra fermenting vessels recently installed. This included another brew of their award-winning Milk Stout, which was again a complete sell-out. Fortunately they are planning to bring it out again over the Christmas period.

For anyone that wants to order something from the Bristol Beer Factory, they will be selling their core brands – in the form of an 18-pint and 36-pint “bag in box” and also a 5-litre mini-cask – during the run up to, and over, the Christmas period. Contact the brewery for



Factoberfest photo by Richard Brooks

availability and more details.

They will also be launching a new-look website that will be up and running in a couple of weeks (perhaps by the time you read this) and which will include a special offer on cases of their Brunale (while stocks last). Check it out at www.bristolbeerfactory.co.uk.

And finally, two local groups of artists commissioned the Bristol Beer Factory to produce a special ale for the *Totterdown Arts Trail* on 17th, 18th and 19th November, and also the *North Bristol Arts Trail* on 24th, 25th and 26th November. The ‘Trail Ale’ will have been available at the Shakespeare in



Totterdown from 9th November onwards and in North Bristol it was expected to be available at the Prom, Gloucester Road and at the Robin Hood's Retreat.

Richard Brooks

Brewdoko competition

THE winners of the brewdoku competition in the last issue of Pints West were CD Lovell from Keynsmham and GH Hobbs from Weston-super-Mare. Each receives a copy of *The Bristol Treasure Island Trail*, the book of the Long John Silver Trust.

Social ownership can help save threatened breweries

A CALL for new forms of social ownership for small breweries – including management buy-outs and co-operatives – is made by the editor of the Good Beer Guide 2007. Roger Protz says the cull of regional brewers must be stopped in order to ensure a good choice of beers for drinkers.

Protz said, “In the past year, Gale’s of Hampshire, Ridley’s of Essex and Hardy’s & Hanson’s of Nottingham have been taken over. Gale’s and Ridley’s have already been closed by their new owners, Fuller’s and Greene King, while the future of Hardy’s & Hanson’s in the hands of aggressively expanding Greene King is very much in doubt.”

“These companies could and should have been saved. They are of the right size to be run and owned by their management and workers or turned into community co-ops.

“Management buy-outs can succeed. Bass sold its Highgate Brewery in Walsall to its management in 1995. The Old Crown pub in Heskett Newmarket, Cumbria, and its small brewery were sold to the local community, who run both pub and brewery as co-ops.”

Roger Protz says that when breweries such as Gale’s and Ridley’s are family-owned, with no stock market involvement, the families should offer the companies in the first instance to their workforce.

Protz explained: “There are advantages to families if they sell to the employees and allow them to pay over a period of five years. Such an arrangement would mean the family could avoid paying Capital Gains Tax.

“If the family demands the full amount up front then the employees would have to raise the cash from loans or grants. They could seek support from their trade unions or from local authorities.

“When a brewery is quoted on the Stock Exchange the employees should buy a 5% stake in the company and start to build a bigger stake over time until they have a sufficient shareholding to influence company policies.”

An example of how successful the suggested practice can be is the John Lewis Partnership – which includes Selfridges and Waitrose. It is run and owned by its workers and is one of the biggest retail groups in Britain. The son of the founder of the group gave the company to its workers back in the 1920s.

Several professional football clubs have been saved from going out of business by their supporters. Brentford, Chesterfield, Rushden & Diamonds and Stockport County are now owned and run by their supporters, while a supporters’ trust is now part-owner of Lincoln City.

Protz added: “It would be naïve to suggest that running a professional football club is analogous to owning and controlling a brewery. But a common factor is that they both have loyal fan bases. Trusts involving both brewery employees, pub tenants and drinkers could play a crucial role in saving local breweries for their communities and protecting them from takeovers and closures.”

Top TV chefs cook up a storm in pubs

PUB grub is heading for the heights as some of the country’s top celebrity chefs are moving behind the bar, food writer Susan Nowak reports in the Good Beer Guide 2007.

Antony Worrall Thompson, Jean-Christophe Novelli, Heston Blumenthal, Phil Vickery and Roxy Beaujolais will soon be joined by Gordon Ramsay, who plans to run a chain of pubs that focus on good food.

Jean-Christophe Novelli left the swanky Auberge du Lac in Hertfordshire to run the White Horse in nearby Harpenden. He says in the Good Beer Guide 2007: “I think you are guaranteed to be more relaxed in a pub. I’m doing a lot of things I would not have permitted myself before, but cooking should not be to a formula.”

Two handpumps grace the bar of the White Horse and the cask ales accompany such “peasant dishes” as stuffed pigs’ trotters or oxtail braised with liquorice. Novelli’s menus are based on his experience in his native France and from cooking in Keith Floyd’s former pub in Devon.

Antony Worrall Thompson has a double mission: not only to improve pub food but also to save village and community pubs. He now runs the Lamb at Satwell in Oxfordshire and is also joint proprietor of the Angel in Heytesbury, Wiltshire and the Greyhound in Rotherfield Peppard.

In the guide he says: “So many pubs are being sold off as private houses and the centres of villages have been ripped out. I have Fuller’s London Pride as a house beer but I also like to support local breweries, such as Brakspear, Butler’s and Loddon.”

Worrall Thompson says he loathes the term gastro-pub and has told his chefs to be “less

poncy – more bistro”.

Ready, Steady, Cook! star Phil Vickery grew up on Shepherd Neame beers in Kent and says: “It worries me that the void between restaurant food in so-called gastro-pubs and the basic rubbish on offer in many pubs is so vast. What we miss is the simply-cooked, tasty, good-value-for-money food that was once the backbone of a great pub.”

Vickery is making his own contribution to improving pub food by holding master classes for pub chefs and designing beers dishes for Shepherd Neame, such as lamb and mint cobbler with Spitfire.

Australian-born Roxy Beaujolais has been chef to the Royal Shakespeare Company and now runs two London pubs, the Seven Stars in Carey Street and the Bountiful Cow in Eagle Street. She believes real ale is essential in a pub: “I like what a handpump signifies. It’s a real, live product. I like to stock Fuller’s and Young’s beers, Adnams from Suffolk and guest beers from such micros as Dark Star in Sussex.”

She offers such dishes as steaks and freshly-ground burgers, lamb steak with barley, Napoli sausages with belly pork, and potted shrimps with sourdough bread. Beer is used in such winter dishes as beef stews and game casserole.

Heston Blumenthal, renowned for his scientific approach to cooking, has taken over the Hind’s Head pub close to his famous restaurant, the Fat Duck in Bray. He says he wanted “neither a gastro-pub or some smart restaurant on a pub theme but traditional pub food listed on a blackboard.”

Typical dishes include pea and ham soup, and Lancashire hotpot, washed down with a choice of three real ales: Greene King IPA, a beer from the Rebellion Brewery in Marlow and a guest beer.

And now, with Gordon Ramsay about to burst on the pub scene, pub grub may never be the same again.

The local launch

THE Bristol & District branch held our local launch of the 34th edition of the Good Beer Guide at the Old Fish Market, Baldwin Street, Bristol on Friday 15 September. We would like to express our thanks to manager Ben (pictured left with branch chairman Richard Brooks) and his team for their assistance, Thai Tom’s excellent food and of course the fine Fuller’s ale that was on sale.

The GBG contains information about pub facilities for families and the disabled, history, architecture, food, accommodation, local places of interest and, of course, the beer: the best pubs serving the finest real ale in the country. Unique to the Guide is a list of every brewery in the country, large and small, with details of all the cask-conditioned and bottle-conditioned beers they brew, with professional tasting notes.



If you would like to assist us in our never-ending quest to find the best real ale pubs, please come along to a branch meeting. You can buy a copy of the Good Beer Guide from us at a branch meeting, from some good pubs and direct from www.camra.org.uk.

Richard Brooks

Temple Ale Quest

IT was the end of October and the Bath Beer Festival was over a week ago and now Halloween was upon us again. With the kids preparing for 'Trick or Treat' it was time for a treat of our own, in this case, a tour of the Temple area of Bristol. The area gets its name from the Knights Templar, who were granted the land in 1147 by Robert, Earl of Gloucester, son of Henry I.



Reckless Engineer

Our first stop was the **Reckless Engineer**, a pub situated at the bottom of the incline leading to Temple Meads station and a new entry in the 2007 Good Beer Guide. The pub was previously known as the Isambard Brunel, a name momentarily re-appearing when earlier in the year the pub sign was taken down during refurbishment.

The Otter Bitter (3.6%) and Butcombe Bitter (4.0%) were both fine, but the Dorothy Goodbody's at 4.2% was excellent – a golden coloured ale with a hint of caramel from the Wye Valley brewery.



Knights Templar

This pub hosts live music Fridays and Saturdays (with free entry to CAMRA members).

We cross Temple Gate at the lights. This road was named after the Civil War gate that was situated off to the left at the end of Temple Street in the Port Wall, and through which Kings and Queens would have passed on their way to Bristol. It was

demolished in 1808.

On the left as we climb the approach to Temple Meads station is the Empire and Commonwealth museum, situated in Brunel's original station and famous as the venue for the Bristol Beer Festival.

We cut through Brunel Shed to avoid platform 9¾ and head to the new commercial office blocks through the now deserted concrete plazas in search of the Knights Templar.

The **Knights Templar** was a society of soldier monks who defended the Holy Sepulchre and protected pilgrims on their journeys to the Holy Lands and have had a high profile of late, due mainly to Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code*, and more recently Raymond Khoury's *The Last Templar* and David Gibbins' *Crusader Gold*.

Thankfully it is also a Wetherspoon's pub and their October "Full Moon" beer festival is nearly over. It looks like the 10-day event was a success as the festival ales have almost run out, with only Everard's Pitch Black left from the original tasting notes. The Pitch Black is a rich stout, and having already tried it at the Commercial Rooms last week, we dive into the other ales brought in to bolster the beer list.

The Rooster's Special (3.9%) is a tasty straw-coloured beer that goes down well while we order a



Ye Shakespeare

hot baguette. The Hanby Ales Rainbow Chaser (4.3%), Springhead Oliver's Army (4.4%) and Campbell, Hope & King's Double Amber (4.6%) are also good and wash down an excellent cheese baguette.

We leave this commercial area of Temple and head down Victoria Street to the next concentration of pubs.

Ye Shakespeare in Victoria Street is an old inn that claims to have been first licensed in 1636 (according to FG Jones, the Bristol historian) although there is no mention of it in the 1775 directory.

In the premises at the back, the pub used to brew its own ale. This 17th-century house still retains an atmosphere of the past. It is a lively pub with loud music



King's Head

and was selling Marston's Wicked Witch and a nice drop of Greene King Abbot Ale.

Twenty yards down the road is the **King's Head**, another ancient building that survived the Blitz and the post-war council planners.

The King's Head has been in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide for as long as I can remember, and deservedly it is also on CAMRA's National Inventory of Heritage Pubs. The building appears 18th-century and the inside décor is probably 1920's.

The long narrow bar has a tramcar-shaped snug, but the most noticeable feature is the beautiful dresser casement behind the bar, where the polished glasses sparkle in the reflections from the old mirrors and each section is labelled "Jamaica Rum", "Mineral Waters", etc.

There are four ales on tonight, and all are in good condition – Bath Ales Gem, Wadworth 6X, Courage Best and Sharp's Doom Bar.

We leave the King's Head by the back door into Church Lane where the blitzed remains of Temple Church stand.

The first Temple church was round, and only its foundations exist. The earliest part surviving today is 14th-century, but the majority of the remains are 15th-century.

Although bombed in the war, the dramatic lean of the tower occurred shortly after it was built in 1460 due to the marshy ground of the area. The foundations were then strengthened and a further section added to the tower that leans at a different angle again. It is 1.64 meters out of vertical on the west face, but after a few drinks both towers appear to lean away from each other.



Seven Stars

The **Cornubia** in Temple Street is still closed. A casualty of the Smiles mess, this old pub was famous with real ale drinkers for the wide range of changing beers it sold. Hopefully someone will take on the lease of this pub soon.

It is suggested that the name Cornubia is of Cornish origin, and that it is a Latinised form of Cornwall, so maybe the first owner was a Cornishman.

The **Seven Stars** is situated in a narrow lane leading from St. Thomas Street to Redcliffe Street and is another old pub with historic connections. It was here in 1787 that the anti-slavery campaigner, Thomas Clarkson, conducted many of the interviews with the Bristol slave captains because the owner was sympathetic to the anti-slavery movement. There was so much of Bristol's money tied up in the trade that Clarkson placed himself at great personal risk in conducting the interviews here.

The current owners have been there for two months now, and are keen to promote the pub with some interesting guest ales due to make an appearance before Christmas. The Bath Ales Barnstormer and the Timothy Taylor Landlord were both good.

Colin & Pennie Postlethwaite
(Photos by Duncan Shine)



READERS' LETTERS

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

Dear Steve,

My daughter Kate and I have been licensees of the Prince's Motto in Barrow Gurney for three years and are avid supporters of CAMRA.

Whilst being in the Good Beer Guide, we seem to miss some of the visits of real ale pundits in the area. We are tenants of Wadworth and offer 6X, Henry's IPA, Bishop's Tipple (landlord's favourite) and Wadworth's seasonal beers such as Old Timer, Summersault and Malt 'n' Hops. We also offer Bass and Butcombe for which the pub has always had a great reputation, and also Weston's cider, traditional and organic.

We have improved the garden facilities and redecorated internally. Quiz nights are a regular occurrence and we have table skittles and darts. Home-cooked food is available lunch-times only between noon and 2.30, Monday to Friday.

Whilst we could turn the pub quite easily into a food house, we intend to stay with being very much wet led. You can be sure of a warm welcome and a good pint every time at the Motto, in between the A38 and A370.

Best regards,
Dave and Kate Dinham
Prince's Motto
Barrow Gurney.

Smoke-free pubs

Dear Editor,

I thought I should write to you. Even though I am well out of your catchment area and readership zone as I am living in Auckland, New Zealand, you may be pleased to know that a copy of your Spring 2006 magazine managed to pass my way today.

Referring to your lead article, "Real smoking ban" by Richard Brooks, we introduced the smoking ban (here in New Zealand) at the start of last summer and all the usual objections were raised by all, including me, and I am a non-smoker.

The mutterings of "this will never work", publicans declaring that they'll fight the legislation in the courts and on the beaches, punters claiming that they will defy the law and smoke where they want to and the analyst claims of the demise of the hospitality industry largely petered out to nothing.

Because of the timing of the law most kiwis were quite happy to stand outside in the sunshine and warmth supping a beer. In fact all the tired old beer gardens and pavements that were previously unused had been spruced up and with a great indoor/outdoor flow,

seating areas, and heaters the public spaces in the establishments not only got larger but were considered more comfortable that the conditions inside.

The funny thing is that many of the non-smokers now join their smoking cousins in the gardens and sometimes the balance of the patrons on a warm night is outside.

The ironic thing about the rule was that shortly after the smoking laws were introduced, people started to complain about body odour in the pubs and bars. This led to many establishments adding expensive air-conditioning systems or at least running their existing systems to the maximum capacity. Perhaps, if they had done this in the first place, then there would have been no need for a ban in the first instance.

Still we have great outside places to visit now.

Regards,
Lee Dare
(by email from New Zealand).

Guest ale rotation

Steve,

Many thanks for that small write-up in Pints West 70 (*the paragraph on Racks in the Shine on Sport article - Ed*). We are very appreciative of the recognition that we have always kept good real ale – even if our general clientèle prefer something colder with no taste!

On the back of interest raised by the article, we decided to offer a 'guest ale rotation' to our region's brewers – each brewery is offered a month's exposure, and we try where possible to select seasonal brews. This has been a great success (and gives me the chance to try something different as well!).

To date we have had beers including Wickwar Sunny Daze, Bristol Beer Factory Sunrise, Bath Ales Wild Hare, Sharp's Eden Ale, Otter Bright and Newman's Wolver's Ale. Also likely to appear will be beers from Matthews, and anything else interesting that

The Prince's Motto

Public House, Barrow Gurney

Real Ales:

6X

Henry's IPA

Bishop's Tipple

Wadworth seasonals

Lovely Bass

Beautiful Butcombe

Good honest home-cooked food
Monday to Friday lunchtimes

Give us a try

Dave & Kate Dinham
Prince's Motto, Barrow Street,
Barrow Gurney 01275 472282

comes my way. Bristol Beer Factory No. 7 is always available as well.

Once again many thanks, I'll keep you updated with anything else of interest.

Kevin Wright,
Racks, St Paul's Road,
Clifton, Bristol.
kevin@racks-bristol.co.uk

The ID state

Steve,

Not even our beer is safe from the ID state! Have you seen that Yeovil, Taunton and Swindon are among the places getting the ID state scheme to register pub-goers' names, addresses, dates of birth and finger prints?

See www.no2id.net/news/newsletters/newsletter.php?issue=58 for more details.

Best wishes,
MJ Ray
(by email).

Pints Away Up North

THE 2007 edition of the Good Beer Guide arrived at home the day before I set off for my planned trip to Yorkshire and Lancashire and was never far from the car seat behind me. I can say that the GBG descriptions of the pubs that I found were spot on, as were good ales such as Timothy Taylor's Landlord and Jennings' Cumberland Ale.

Just to mention two of several pubs I visited, the first was in the City of York, the **Minster Inn** at 34 Marygate, which was very welcoming and, because of the small size of the front bar, no one was excluded from the general conversation. It is very close to the Minster and City Museum, so well worth finding and joining in the chat of the day. I found myself chatting with a lorry driver and a philosophy lecturer as well as the genial host behind the bar. A thoroughly enjoyable visit.

The second pub I describe here is just off junction 35 of the M6 near Carnforth in the

village of Nether Kellet, the **Limeburner's Arms** and well worth a detour to find. The Limeburner's is a throwback to pubs of old. No frills, no food, no music, just good chat, dominoes and ales from the barrel behind the serving hatch. Not at all a family-friendly pub as many try to be these days, but full of character and characters. Two older men, both with much younger ladies in tow, were providing the banter with Joe the publican and local farmer who has run the Limeburner's for many years with his brother. The ceiling had been replastered that day, for probably the first time in the pub's history, and so the chairs and tables were all clean having had to be dusted in anticipation of evening opening time. I think there might be a slight typo in the GBG here as we are told that on Sundays the Limeburner's is open from 12 to 2am, but who knows, and I'm not likely to want to go there after midnight anyway!

John Phillips

A visit to Krakow and Berlin ... and a few

In late spring this year, Easyjet announced that it would be launching several new routes from Bristol in July. The one that caught my eye was to Krakow in Poland. I had heard that this was a wonderful city, and had yet to visit Poland. A few hours on the internet and a plan was formed!

I discovered that I could put together a twin-centre holiday by flying from Bristol to Krakow for three nights, then on to Berlin (also with Easyjet) for three more nights, before returning from Berlin to Bristol. Incredibly, all three flights came to almost exactly £100 each including all taxes and charges! A few phone calls later and we had a group of five people up for the trip. When we came to book the flights, departing Monday September 11, it transpired that the price jumped by about £60 a head if we flew home on the Sunday, so we settled for two nights in Berlin and a Saturday flight back. Amusingly we got an email about three weeks before the trip telling us the Saturday flight was cancelled and offering the Sunday one for the same price. Naturally we accepted! Even more amusingly we have since been offered a £25 voucher off of our next flight as compensation for the cancellation and two of us are off to Glasgow soon for £7.98 return as a result! Isn't it nice when things work out so well? Our party consisted of me, my wife, two Phils and Di.

Another trawl around the internet and we had come up with city centre apartments in both Krakow and Berlin that each slept five people. The Berlin apartment worked out at around £16 per night each, and the Krakow one a mere £10 each. Although you feel as though you are taking a bit of a leap of faith booking such places, I have now done this in Prague, Budapest, Krakow and Berlin without major problems (I'll let Phil tell you about a large hiccup in Berlin later in the article though!). It is no trouble to

take tea and coffee with you, and to buy some basic breakfast foodstuffs on arrival, and you do save a fortune over hotel bills.

Our flight departed at 08.00 and we were in Poland by 11.00 local time. We found our apartment via a train and taxi (both very cheap) and whilst it was much less modern and colourful than it had looked on the net, it served our purposes well enough. It was a flat on the top floor of an old-fashioned office block, but was only about four minutes' walk from the main square and close to bus and tram routes.

Before departing we had researched the local beer scene and found the best information on a website that I have used previously and find very useful. It is a very ambitious attempt to provide on-line beer and pub guides to all major European cities by an exiled Brit called **Ron Pattinson**, who lives in Amsterdam. Ron freely admits that much of the information is a bit dated and is delighted to receive updates from returning visitors. Indeed my name is now liberally sprinkled across his Krakow guide as proof!

To use his guide simply visit www.europeanbeerguide.net and select a city. All places have an interesting and informative introduction and plentiful photographs too. I simply printed the pages off and used it as a basis for our drinking in Krakow. Ron is also not one to mince his words – if he doesn't like something he makes it plain, which is something that all the best reviewers do.

Ron's guide had warned us in advance that Krakow's pubs were an odd bunch. He said that they all seemed to be in dark cellar-bars a long way below ground, and they almost all were. He said too that there seemed to be very few people over 25 drinking in them, and he was right about that too. Apparently before the 1980s there

were virtually no pubs in the city and no draught beer at all. Sadly many of the bars that he had singled out in his guide seemed to have reduced their range of draught and bottled beers, often introducing such delights as Carlsberg, Grolsch or Stella instead. Several had changed their names and images, and two seemed closed – not clear whether temporarily or permanently though. Polish beer is renowned as being of good quality and no little strength, but the bars of Krakow seem reluctant to promote it these days. In particular the strong porter-style beers that I had read much about were hard to locate. There were a few in bottles, but we only found one example on draught. This came in the **Fischer Pub** in Ul. Grodzka, a street just off the main square. This is where we finally located draught **Zywiec Porter**, a world famous black beer weighing in at around 9.5%. Several late night visits to this well-hidden deep cellar-bar followed and no sleeping pills were needed later! A truly wonderful beer worth seeking out. The Zywiec lager was pretty pleasant too.

We found a few other bars with half decent ranges, but no draught porters sadly. Surprisingly the many bar-restaurants in the main square seemed to carry a few good beers, whilst they hadn't yet developed the habit of doubling up prices just because they are in the touristy bit (unlike so many other cities throughout Europe). Indeed prices were very consistent at around 4 to 6 Zloty (about £1) for 500ml of any beer and anything from 15 to 35 Zloty for a decent main course. Hardly expensive for UK visitors. Service was also consistent – usually indifferent and often surly!

Saving the best for last though, there was one pub that stood out head and shoulders above all others – the **C.K. Browar** in Ul. Podwale 6-7. This was about two minutes' walk from the main square, not far from the impressive castle and next to a major tram junction. Situated in the basement of the "Elephant" department store, but only one short flight of steps down, this is a quite splendid brew-pub – the only one in town as far as we know. It consists of a bar, separate small restaurant and a nightclub. Four excellent home-brews are sold plus a couple of other beers. The beers were all tried with the Ginger beer ("Ingwer") being unanimously declared the best. A Pilsner, a Wheat beer and a Dunkel (dark) beer are also brewed. Amusingly you could attain a reduced price by buying a "Pipe" of any one beer. The pipe consists of an enormous contraption. With a heavy metal base and a very tall cylindrical glass container full of beer, which holds no less than 3.3 litres. It is dispensed via a beer tap near the base (see picture). In addition to great beer, the C.K. sells very high-quality meals at very fair prices – and you can eat in the bar if you prefer. The service was also by far the most efficient and friendly that we experienced in Krakow. We visited several times between Monday and Wednesday and the place was pretty busy (mainly with locals), in stark contrast to all of the other bars we tried which were quiet. I would imagine that



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it must be overrun at weekends.

Krakow really is a beautiful place and well worth visiting, but it is also within reach of several other places worth seeing. Phil had done some research and pre-booked us on a visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau former concentration camp complexes. This cost us around £18 each and included minibus travel on the 50 mile each way trip and a full guided tour with an English speaking guide. Whilst the subject matter is undeniably grim it really was a hugely absorbing experience which brought home the full horror of what took place there, in a way that no film could. We would recommend that you do this trip if you visit Krakow. We also visited the incredible salt mines at Wieliczka, a small town about 15 miles away. This time we ignored the official trips and found our way by train (about £2 return instead of the £15 asked by the minibus operators!). The mines are a truly incredible achievement – a whole practising cathedral and many other items have been carved out of salt around 600 feet below ground! There is also a concert hall, conference centre and fully operational bar and restaurant down there! A guided tour is compulsory at around £10 each, in English. You return to the surface via an amusing miners' lift but the walk down over 600 feet is gruelling at times. Another amazing experience though.

By the Wednesday it was time to fly on to Berlin and so it's over to Phil for part two of the trip.

Vince Murray



Marilyn was in charge of pouring

WE chose to stay in the Eastern centre of Berlin. At this point I have to admit that this location was influenced by the proximity of many of the cities best pubs and brew-pubs!

Berlin is a vast, dynamic city, but a word of warning to the visitor – it is basically a gigantic building site, the fall of the infamous wall and reinstatement of Berlin as Germany's capital presenting many opportunities to knock down crumbling buildings, many in the East.

Our apartment was two minutes' walk from Alexanderplatz, and would have been easy to find if the apartment's owner had informed us that the week prior to our arrival the whole street had been renumbered! Without this vital information we failed to find our apartment and

after several hours were becoming increasingly irate, not helped by the owner having giving us a wrong telephone number! We retired to nearby **Brauhais Mitte** to think over our situation when he finally contacted us, three and a half hours after we had arrived! Not withstanding this lack of the traditional teutonic efficiency from our host, the apartment was fine, excepting noise from the giant building site opposite!

So equipped with the excellent **CAMRA Good Beer Guide Germany**, we set out to seek refreshment, starting at **Alt Berliner Weissbierstube**, near the Rotes Rathaus (red town hall), where we tried the traditional Berliner Weisse, an unusual sour wheat beer, usually served red (with a dash of raspberry syrup), or green (with woodruff!) and then moved on to the delightful **Zum Nussbaum**, a recreation of Berlin's oldest pub, located in the Nikolaikirche, a recreation of medieval Berlin. Schulthies Black Lager was a particular treat here. Finally we popped into **Zur Letzen Instanz** (The Last Judgement), which is widely accepted to be Berlin's oldest pub – it's the place where foreign dignitaries are taken by the government to see traditional Berlin! It was very foody, but we visited late on as drinkers and were made welcome. We were pleased we were staying near the 368-metre tall Fernsehturm (radio tower), which provided an excellent orientation point on our travels!

The next day was mostly put aside for tourist stuff, and we started on a river/canal cruise, where we had Berliner Weisse and, of course, sausages! Afterwards we visited **Lindenbrau**, a brew-pub in the ultra modern and impressive Sony centre at Potsdamer Platz. Here we had a metre of the house beers – basically a long wooden tray with space for eight small glasses; we had two of each of the four house beers. We visited the Brandenburg Gate and the Reichstag, gaining excellent views from the roof and dome of the latter. Throughout our visit we were able to take advantage of Berlin's superb public transport – a day ticket allowing travel on bus, trams, underground and overground trains for £3.40 – another reminder of how shamefully we are treated in Britain and Bristol in particular.

So we trooped off to the intriguing **Berliner Republik**, just over the bridge from Friedrichstrasse station. Uniquely, after 6pm here the beer prices go up and down according to demand like on a stock exchange, the information being displayed on large video screens! Occasional price crashes enliven the scene! After polishing

of a litre of Kolsch (which immediately went up 3 Euros in price!) we moved on to nearby **Aufsturz**, with its range of over 100 bottled beers. Last stop was **Georgebrau**, near Alexanderplatz, a rather soulless and dull brew-pub we thought.

Our last full day commenced with a search for an emergency dentist for Diane, before we went our separate ways, Phil and I doing a walking tour of infamous Nazi sites, whilst Vince and the ladies went shopping. We reunited at **Brewbaker**, a very modern brew-pub with a gastropub-style menu, just outside Bellevue station. The friendly owner brought us out an excellent cheeseboard, and the beer was excellent; a sour wheat beer so impressed Vince that he still raves about it!

Brew-pub **Lemke** was our next stop; it is part of an astonishingly busy group of bars and restaurants built into the arches at Hackescher Markt station. Again like Brewbaker, the brewer is adventurous by German standards, and the Copper Ale in particular was much enjoyed, after a tortuously long wait for service at this very busy bar. The food was not such a success – many of the bars we visited including this one had English menus, but sometimes something seemed to be lost in translation, Vince's "Crispy Pork" being covered in fat and less than crispy!

Last stop again was close to home, after another visit to Mitte as we popped into **Marcus Brau**, a fantastic small brew-pub, again only a short walk from Alexanderplatz. A friendly atmosphere was aided by a large group of merry locals singing away. The home-made liqueurs brought the evening to a perfect close.

We had a fantastic three days, but really only scratched the surface of Berlin – we never really got into the west of the city at all, and there are countless other sights to see. So a flight home from Schönefeld next day, and we reflected that it seemed like two weeks since we had left Bristol for Krakow. If only more holidays could be like this.

Phil Cummings

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We have had many successes over the years which include:

- Being instrumental in allowing pubs to open longer to suit the local community.
- Running a powerful campaign that helped the introduction of small brewers' relief which enabled many small breweries to invest money into their operations and become more viable.
- Working with many local communities to save hundreds of community pubs from closure.
- Organising over 150 beer festivals a year including the Great British Beer Festival, which saw over 66,000 people visit this year at Earls Court.
- Having over 5,000 volunteers who give up their time to survey pubs, work at beer festivals and actively campaign for real ale and pubs.

To read about more of CAMRA's successes please visit www.camra.org.uk.

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If you are interested in purchasing a Christmas Gift Offer then please call 01727 867201 or visit www.camra.org.uk/shop. Please note that postage is free for these promotional offers.

About Bath

IT is strange sometimes how one gets to hear about snippets of news. Late this summer I got back from lunch to find a colleague admiring his new rugby shirt proclaiming **Abbey Ales** sponsorship. On closer questioning I found that it is the Bath Touch Rugby team who are the representative team of the Bath In2Touch League and entrants in this year's UK Cup in London. A most appropriate sporting sponsorship for a Bath brewer.

This reminded me of the amusing incident of the rugby shirt at the Royal Oak in Bath. Too many brain cells have gone to allow me to remember the exact event but the landlord John Whinnerah was pictured wearing the London Irish rugby shirt (may he not be forgiven, he keeps wearing it), which for those who know has a prominent Irish drinks manufacturer's logo. Much to our amusement this had strangely disappeared when the photo was reproduced in *What's Brewing*, CAMRA's national newspaper. John should be put in the stocks for wearing it around here anyway.

Also worth mentioning are the two beer festivals that are planned by the Royal Oak. From 11th to 16th December there will be an organic beer festival. As has been mentioned before the Royal Oak is experimenting with an idea that I first heard of at the Old Green Tree. This is to keep a firkin of strong beer for a year before opening. The Old Green Tree does this with a strong dark beer, I think it is Mr Perrett's, but the Royal Oak is trying Butts Coper. This is an organic beer and may well be broached during the festival. The second festival is planned for the new year and will be a winter beer festival during early February.

Happy daze.

Phill the Pint

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CAMRA Good Beer Guide: suggestions for future entries, and comments on existing ones, can be made to our GBG co-ordinator, Vince Murray, care of the editor (above).

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

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

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Diary

Diary of the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. (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.)

- Wednesday 6th December - Committee meeting, Old Fish Market, Bristol. Start 8pm.
- Thursday 7th December - Clifton crawl. Start Richmond Spring, 7.30pm.
- Sunday 10th December - Christmas Christmas Social, Cross Hands, Fishponds, from 6pm. There may be special travel arrangements laid on.
- Thursday 14th December - Bristol pub crawl. Starting point to be arranged.
- Wednesday 10th January - Branch meeting, Horts City Tavern, Bristol. Start 8pm.
- Sunday 7th January (probably) - Annual Westbury Wobble. Pub crawl in Westbury-on-Trym. Start noon - first pub yet to be decided.
- Tuesday 16th January - GBG Survey Trip. Depart from Cornubia, 6.45pm.
- Wednesday 24th January - Committee meeting, Old Fish Market, Bristol. Start 8pm.
- Tuesday 30th January - GBG Survey Trip. Depart from Cornubia, 6.45pm.
- Wednesday 7th February - Committee meeting, Old Fish Market, Bristol. Start 8pm.
- Wednesday 14th February - GBG Survey Trip. Depart from Cornubia, 6.45pm.
- Wednesday 21st February - Branch meeting, Naval Volunteer, King Street, Bristol. Start 8pm.

THANKS TO THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS

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Editor: Steve Plumridge

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

- Thursday 21 December - 8th Annual Seasonal Ales Crawl. Depart from Raglan Arms at 8.30 (get there as early as you like!) and visiting pubs in Weston town centre offering a Christmas or Winter beer. Bristol visitors very welcome - last trains back to Bristol from Weston at 22.26 and 23.32.
 - Wednesday 17 January - Worle Crawl. Ebdon Arms 8.00-8.45, then Nut Tree, Old Kings Head, Woodspring and Lamb.
 - Friday 16 Feb - GBG survey trip. Bus trip visiting six current/potential Good Beer Guide pubs. Trip will finish at the Crown, Churchill. Depart Off The Rails at 7.00 sharp. Book ticket in advance from Mike Coleman on 631441. Cost £6.
 - Wednesday 21 Feb - Highbridge Crawl. Train from Weston at 18.27. Approximate itinerary: 19.15-19.40 the Crossways Inn, West Huntspill; 19.55-20.45 the Royal Artillery; 21.00-21.25 Highbridge Social Club; 21.30-21.55 the George; 22.00-22.40 the Coopers Arms. Train back at 22.45.
- Non-members welcome at all of the above events.

Weston contact

Tim Nickolls - 01934 644925 (evenings)
or email tim.nickolls@virgin.net

Crowned at last



BETTER late than never was the sentiment when branch members headed to the Crown at Churchill on 1st November to make a slightly belated presentation.

Although the 2006 Pub Of The Year competition was won by the Inn on the Green, the Crown has once again achieved "runner-up" position, making it one of the most consistently popular finalists in recent years.

This consistent performance could well be down to the fact that Tim Rogers (pictured right receiving his certificate from branch chairman Richard Brooks) has now been successfully running the Crown for 22 glorious years.

Richard Brooks

The Coeur De Lion - a window on Bath's smallest pub

SITUATED in Northumberland Place, which leads off the High Street, just up from the Abbey and opposite the Guildhall is Bath's smallest pub, The Coeur De Lion.

Northumberland Place was originally known as Marchants Court, and was described by John Wood as "entirely new" in 1749.

A woodcarver called William Batt acquired a license to sell beer around 1860 at number 4 Northumberland Place (across the road from the Coeur). A few years later he named his beer house the Avondale Stores and we assume he bought his beer from the Avondale Brewery at Batheaston.

Around 1880, after many changes of licensee, it was re-christened the Coeur De Lion – a very unusual choice which has baffled many, as this is, as far as we know, the only pub of this name in the country, and possibly the whole of the UK.

In 1886 Stoffel and Co, grocers, who by then owned most of Northumberland Place,



– Devenish announced that it was investigating a possible disposal, placing serious question marks over its future as a public house.

However a new landlord was subsequently appointed and all seemed well under Stephen Shearing until Devenish announced three years later that the Coeur De Lion was to close. A large petition from the regulars and support from local MP Chris Patten, the Preservation Society, the Georgian Trust and the Council, saw plans to turn it into a shop rejected.

One of the striking features of this Victorian pub is a stained glass

front window which, ironically, features the name of Devenish, which was thwarted in its attempt to close the pub.

Today, the Coeur de Lion is now thriving under the ownership of the Abbey Ales brewery, operators of that other classic Bath pub, the Star Inn – and is still going strong.

Devenish, meanwhile, has ceased to exist.



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 in cask and bottle are now available in the Bristol area. Phone the brewery for details.

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 amaranth 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

The Apple barge comes to town



ON the evening of Friday 22nd September 2006, the Apple opened its doors for the first time. Moored on Welsh Back at the end of King Street, the Apple is a converted Dutch barge in the heart of Bristol's Old City. It has three distinct areas to enjoy – the quayside terrace, the upper-deck cafe bar and the lower-deck bar.

The team of local cider lovers who have made the Apple happen were gathered together by music promoter and bar manager Ed Gibson. In Ed's words, "Bristol is the undisputed cider-drinking capital of the world! It's the perfect place to launch a temple to cider! We wanted to give people access to the sort of range of quality ciders never seen before. We also wanted to give the new generation of cider drinkers a chance to enjoy cider in the kind of environment they're used to drinking in. Not a dark, dirty, smelly old cider pub, but a light and airy clean and comfortable place, in a unique and beautiful waterside setting,

with loads of outdoor space."

Alongside a stock of wines and spirits, the Apple offers up to 40 ciders and perries, with some on draught and the rest in bottled form. They have just done their first rotation of the guest ciders; at the time of writing the new range had just been confirmed as Wilkin's (medium), Janet's Jungle Juice (medium), Cheddar Valley (dry), Old Bristolian (medium), Rich's (medium), Weston's First Quality (medium dry) and Weston's Perry (medium).

In addition they have started hot mulled cider for the winter season, made to their own special recipe and available daily until March.

And if you're feeling peckish the Apple has started serving a menu of what they describe as "Traditional English Comfort Food" such as home-made stew, bangers & mash, Pieminister pies, home-made soup, jacket spuds, sausage sarnies and apple crumble.

Richard Brooks (words and photo)

Keynsham Brewery

KEYNSHAM Brewery has now been operating for just over a year. It is a one-man operation run by John Firth (pictured), a long-term local CAMRA member and activist.

John took over part of the premises vacated by the short-lived "Nursery" brewery in Stockwood Lane, Keynsham and commenced brewing around August 2005. Unfortunately John suffered a bout of ill health later that year, from which he has happily fully recovered now.

The first brew was *Somerdale Gold* at 4.5%, a pleasant and fruity full-bodied golden beer that has appeared on more than a few bar counters and at beer festivals throughout 2006. *Pixash*, a darker and maltier offering at 4.1%, followed soon after and has been well received when available. *Stockwood Stout*, at a more powerful 5.0%, appeared briefly last winter, including at Bristol Beer festival where it quickly sold out. It is about to reappear; indeed on a brief impromptu brewery visit recently we were able to see it happily conditioning in its tank! The fourth beer, *Chewton*, at 4.3%, made its bow in late summer 2006 and will also be back soon.

The brewery kit that John took over had been unused for some time and needed some attention. The necessary repairs are now complete and all three fermenting vessels are now serviceable for the first time. In addition, a large number of casks have been purchased facilitating expansion to meet demand.

We expect Keynsham's beers to become a much more regular, and very welcome, sight on a bar near you in 2007.

Vince Murray (photo by Tony Durbin)

