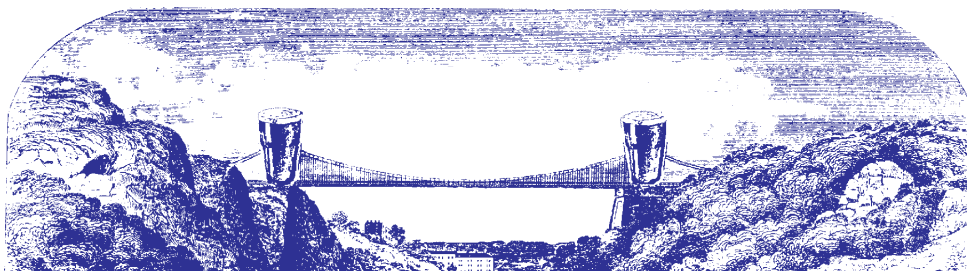




CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE

AWARD-WINNING



[www.camrabristol.org.uk](http://www.camrabristol.org.uk)

No. 74  
Summer  
2007

CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE

# PINTS WEST

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

## Arbor Ales



### Bristol gets a new brewpub

THE Old Tavern in Stapleton has not only reopened after a massive refurbishment, but has become the home to Bristol's latest brewery, Arbor Ales.

As well as serving their own Arbor Ales, the pub intends to be a showcase for beers from other local breweries. In fact "local" is the buzz word here, with all the real ales and ciders, and the food ingredients, where possible, sourced locally.



## Albert rescued from developers



AFTER an uncertain period during which the famous Albert in Bedminster remained closed and under threat of development into flats, in steps a saviour in the form of Carl Warmington, owner the Rising Sun in Windmill Hill.

Carl has rescued the Albert from the clutches of the developers and, following a refurbishment, will be reopening the the pub as a real ale venue, and reintroducing live music on an occasional basis.



## Pub of the Year

TWO local pubs have recently been crowned as CAMRA Pub of the Year award-winners.

The Hillgrove in Kingsdown and the Royal Oak in Oldfield Park have been named Pub of the Year by the CAMRA Bristol & District and Bath & Borders branches respectively. Both are worthy winners and our congratulations go to both of them.

See inside for more details on these and many other stories.

# Pints West scoops top award yet again

THE Bristol and District branch newsletter, Pints West, has added to its existing tally of awards by being declared overall winner – for the second time – in the CAMRA branch newsletter of the year competition.

The award was given at the national CAMRA Members' Weekend and AGM held in Wolverhampton in April.

Although somewhat tired and emotional, Pints West editor Steve Plumridge extended his thanks and congratulations to all those people who contribute to the newsletter and without whom there would be no Pints West.

And of course we mustn't forget the people that deliver thousands of copies to pubs in our branch area and beyond.

*Richard Brooks*



## Rest of the media missing out on seven million beer fans

BEER is the drink of style of sophistication, finds new research into Britain's drinking habits. And there are now over 7.2 million people who want to read more in the media about beer, an increase of over one million since the research was first undertaken in 2005.

Beer fans shatter the stereotype many have of beery people. Half a million of them are women. They are upmarket, affluent, and tend to be aged 25 to 44, finds the research commissioned by the British Guild of Beer Writers.

Beer fans, broadly speaking, are people who drink a wide variety of beer styles (not just lager), and are interested in quality beer and new flavours, says the report **Beer in the Media** which was undertaken by drinks' marketing consultancy, Storm Lantern.

British Guild of Beer Writers Chairman,



Tim Hampson, said: "The research buries the myth that only wine is the drink of sophistication. Beer is not only an equal to wine, it clearly deserves greater serious coverage by the media – especially among those papers trying to appeal to people in the 25 to 44 age group.

"Beer fans are into beer because they are interested in food and drink generally. They also enjoy drinking good quality wine, like new recipes, new food products and exotic dishes. And better still they are avid readers of broadsheet press and magazines."

Storm Lantern's founder, Pete Brown, said: "This research proves emphatically that having an enthusiastic appreciation of beer is mainstream – most of the people drinking specialty beers and real ales do so not because they're beer geeks, but because they are more

discerning about all food and drink.

"They actively search out information from quality magazines and broadsheet newspapers. Brewers are obviously aware that these are the media their drinkers read because these are the media they regularly advertise in. More editorial content about beer would surely be welcomed by readers."

The research was undertaken using TGI, the largest research database in the UK, interviewing 25,000 people a year and asking about all their purchasing behaviour as well as lifestyle, attitudes and media consumption data.

*Tim Hampson*

*(www.beerwriters.co.uk)*

**Where would we be without the likes of Pints West to fill the gap? Ed.**



# Pub of the Year

EVERY year Bristol & District branch CAMRA members get to nominate their favourite pubs and a team of judges then assess them to find the winners. A number of factors including the quality of the beer, cider and perry served, the atmosphere, style and décor of the pub, and the service and welcome offered by the bar staff are all considered.

**The Hillgrove Porter Stores in Kingsdown, Bristol is the winner of the 2007 Pub of the Year competition for the Bristol & District branch.**

The runner-up is the **Hunter's Lodge** at Priddy. The presentation of the runner-up certificate was due to take place after the date that this edition of Pints West went to press, so we'll have more on that in the next edition.

Located at 53 Hillgrove Street North, on the corner with Dove Street, the Hillgrove Porter Stores is situated high on a hill in Bristol. It is a friendly free house with varied clientele and relaxed atmosphere. A mix of changing guest beers join some regulars from independent South West breweries making up a choice of seven real ales for the discerning customer.

The Hillgrove is now a popular local and although slightly tucked



away it is definitely worth seeking out. Recently refurbished (and some would say rejuvenated) the pub has a comfortable, traditional feel and a small beer garden at the rear. It held an Irish-themed beer festival over the weekend of Saturday 17th March (St Patrick's day) that featured 18 rare cask ales from five Irish brewers and it has been actively supporting CAMRA's Mild May promotion.

The pub is one of three now owned by Glen Dawkins. The other two are the Miners Arms in St Werburghs and the Victoria in Southleigh Road, Clifton. All of these pubs are now pleasant free houses offering a range of real ales.

Of course the Hillgrove Porter Stores isn't alone in Kingsdown. A few yards along the road is the excellent Hare on the Hill, so there are two very good reasons to make a trip to the area.

*Richard Brooks  
words and photos  
(except the one he appears in)*



Hillgrove licensee Marianne White receiving her certificate from Bristol & District branch Chairman Richard Brooks



A beaming Glen Dawkins

**DAWKINS TAVERNS**

**PUB OF THE YEAR**

**CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE 2007**

**THE HILLGROVE**  
Kingsdown  
Dove Street, Bristol BS2 0117 9444780  
hillgrove@dawkins-taverns.co.uk  
Open Mon-Sunday 4pm-Midnight

A big thank you to all CAMRA members who voted us the Champions!

**SUMMER BEER FEST**

**THE MINERS ARMS**  
St Werburghs  
Fri 3rd-Mon 6th August 2007

Friday	4pm-Midnight
Saturday	Noon-Midnight
Sunday	Noon-11pm
Monday	4pm-11pm

**30 GREAT REAL ALES**

Mina Road, Bristol BS2 0117 9556718 miners@dawkins-taverns.co.uk

**THE VICTORIA** Southleigh Road, Clifton  
Bristol BS8 0117 9745675

**Cider festival**  
August Bank Holiday Weekend  
Sat 25th-Mon 27th Aug 2007 from Noon



# The painter and the publican

I FIRST met Ian Cryer in 1995, when I was struggling to make a go of a 'down on its luck' country inn, and he had just been commissioned to do artwork for the *"Last Guide to Avon's Ale"*. Brian Rides, then one of the partners in Wickwar Brewery, was a rugby-playing friend of 'Noddy' Cryer's, and had suggested to him that a picture of our pub could be a candidate for inclusion in the book.

Ian consequently came out to the Beaufort Arms and immediately persuaded me that it had potential for inclusion. Furthermore, although I wouldn't have the copyright on it, I could use the picture for promotional purposes (and he say's he's not a businessman!).

This first meeting blossomed into a great friendship, and we've been through many scrapes together since; from a Beaufort pub trip to see Ian's exhibition at the Bass Museum, to commissioning him to do more contemporary art work that shows our rapidly disappearing pub culture.

Just prior to this, Mark and Sara Dyer had surveyed the Beaufort for inclusion in the Good Beer Guide (the first Hawkesbury Upton pub ever to be so honoured) and, with this in mind, any recognition was eagerly accepted. Hand on heart, if it hadn't been for the support shown to us by people like CAMRA, we wouldn't have lasted three years in the trade, let alone the thirteen years we've currently clocked up.

The *"Last Guide..."* was put together by a dedicated band of enthusiasts who, at the time, went under the collective name of



CAMRA Avon Branch and Bath & Borders Branch, and was published in early 1996. Mark and Sara have now left the branch, but some of the other compilers, like Richard and Phil Brooks, Alison and Pete Bridle, Steve Plumridge, Vince Murray, Colin Pursey and Pete Tanner, are still battling away.

The guide book followed on from a late 1970's CAMRA booklet entitled *"Real Ale and Cider in Avon"*, another in 1984 entitled *"Real Ale and Cider in the Known Universe"* (that known universe being Avon), and another entitled *"Avon Ale"* in 1992 – all four books being wonderful pieces of research which, just a few years on from their original publication, are superb reference works. Although very different in style, I recommend them to anyone with an interest in social history. Reading them will also make you realise how much we've lost in such a short space of time.

Along with the demise of Avon county came a change in the name of the branch, which rapidly became "Bristol and District". It's such a shame that other groups in our area weren't as quick to follow as we must have the most confusingly named organisations in any part of the country!

In recent years our whole pub-going culture has been turned on its head, and community locals are disappearing as fast as petrol stations. Not only that, traditional pub games and activities are getting marginalised; nowadays even darts teams are an endangered species.

After the publication of *"Last Guide..."*, Ted Bruning, then editor of *What's Brewing* (CAMRA's national monthly newspaper), suggested that Ian should become "CAMRA's official war artist", and he's not the only one who thinks highly of his work as his career has blossomed. Since 1995 he has exhibited at places like the aforementioned Bass Museum,

the Royal West of England Academy and the Royal Society of Portrait Painters, and currently he's a member of the Royal Institute of Oil Painters.

Over the years I've commissioned Ian to do many pictures, mostly concerning my main interests in life, which tend to revolve around pubs and Bristol (just ask my wife), and looking back, they've now become documentary evidence of our fast-changing times.

The most recent was of Mr George Steeds, President of the Keynsham and District Shove Ha'penny League. It shows him in one of the 'chalkers' positions, and was painted in The Ship, Temple Street, Keynsham – headquarters of the league. It has to be one of Ian's most successful works, barring those hanging in the House of Lords. In 2006 it was exhibited in the main hall of the Mall Gallery in London, and then went off to Newcastle to be shown there.

The picture happens to be that of my Dad, who was well chuffed to find himself next to the Pope and only ten pictures away from the Queen! Not bad for a Barton Hill boy who used to regularly exercise his tonsils at the 'Top House' in Henry Street (officially known as the Beaufort Arms and pulled down in the 1950's). Incidentally, one of the favourite domino sayings in the Top House was "Tin a\*\*\*holes for tin teddy bears" – does any Pints West reader know what this means?



Finally, it's appropriate to mention shove ha'penny as it's another of those pub games which is dying out, and the Keynsham and District League is a point in case. Over the last few years it's shrunk and shrunk, just like its counterparts in Bath and the Chew Valley leagues. If anybody would like to submit a team for this coming season, please telephone Bill Payter on 0117 9861460 or 07802 431528.

If you would like more information on Ian Cryer and his work, please visit his web page at [www.iancryer.com](http://www.iancryer.com).

Mark Steeds (publican)

# We found the Hidden Brewery!



Found – so many Hidden casks!



Hidden brewer Gary Lumber tests the latest batch



My certificate proves I found the Hidden Brewery!

HIDDEN Brewery is just what it says: hard to find unless you know where to look. It stands on a hilltop overlooking the Wylde Valley in Wiltshire, concealed from the road by the trees that surround it. The building used to house thousands of battery hens, and looks to have plenty of room for expansion if need be. Thirty members of Bristol and District CAMRA were lucky enough to visit it on a bright, showery day in March.

Head Brewer Gary Lumber welcomed us and gave a most illuminating talk about what he does and how he does it. He has plenty of experience, having been the brewer at the now defunct Oakhill Brewery before he moved to Hidden.

Like many small brewers, Gary has an obvious love for beer, and an enthusiasm for trying new things. We were privileged to sample no fewer than seven different brews, including a couple we had not seen before in Hidden's pub in Bristol, the **Cornubia**. They included his latest creation Hidden Strength, which has plenty of flavour for its 3.4% alcohol, as well as more familiar favourites like the 4.2% ABV Hidden Quest and the dark porterish Hidden Depths.

After a very enjoyable couple of hours listening and sampling, we moved on to the brewery's first tied house, the **Bell at Wylde**, where we sampled more of the excellent beers with our lunch.

On the return journey we made a slight detour to visit another hidden delight, the **Beckford Arms** at Fonthill Gifford. This remarkable pub was built around 200 years ago as part of the landed estate of a very wealthy man, William Beckford. He inherited a vast fortune and had a grand country house built, together with a long drive through landscaped grounds, a large ornamental lake and woods. When he decided later to sell up and move to Bath, the new owners built a new house some distance away and let the original one fall into disrepair. Thus the remaining buildings, including the pub, now have much grander surroundings than the average country pub. When we were there, they had beers from the recently established **Keystone Brewery** at nearby Berwick St. Leonard as well as one from Hidden.

Altogether a grand day out – and the only shower happened while we were in the pub!

*Norman Spalding (two of the photos by Lesly Huxley)*

## Paradise found

OTTER BREWERY

[www.otterbrewery.com](http://www.otterbrewery.com)  
Relax with an Otter

Found Paradise too from the Otter Brewery



# Prague in a long weekend

WHERE better for five beer lovers to go for a special birthday treat? Prague offers architectural and beery splendour in spades, even on a slightly chilly weekend in February.

CAMRA's new **Guide to Prague and the Czech Republic** had not yet hit the bookshops, so we had to work out our own pub and heritage tours from the guidebooks and tips on the web. If you're heading to Prague, you might find our own experiences a useful complement to the Guide.

**Saturday:** A shared taxi from the airport whisks us into the city centre and the Hotel Maria Prag on Opletalova in around half an hour. A stylish, contemporary conversion of an old building just off Wenceslas Square (which isn't actually square or anything like it), the hotel offers a refreshing glass of Budvar in the bar, just the thing to put us in the mood for lunch and a wander. We cross the top of Wenceslas Square with its amazing collection of shopfronts, hotels and secession houses to enjoy the hearty lunch menu on offer at the **Privní Novometský** (New Town Brewery) at 20 Vodickova, a place of many rooms, some non-smoking, on various levels and somewhat difficult to find. It's actually next to a (tasteful) lingerie shop, reached via a labyrinthine turn-of-the-century shopping arcade. The cellar room we eat in is decorated with a colourful mural ... of people eating and drinking. The beer is dark or light, and we try both. We finish our meal and head for **Kyvadlo** on V Jámě 5 just round the corner.

This is a long, narrow, bistro-style bar and restaurant with lovely curved glass frontage, easy to miss. On offer here are the fairly rare Bernard beers, ranging from the very dark, luscious 13° (5.1% ABV), through the light amber 11° (4.5%)



Two views of U Medvídku



The bright copper kettles in Pivovarský Dum

to the traditional Czech lager at 10° (3.8%). Dave gives us his tasting panel opinion on the 13°: "it's a stouty type of lager with licorice notes". We like the atmosphere here (including the odd, shuddering pendulum – Kyvadlo in Czech – above the bar) as well as the beer, so order a second round of Svetlý Speciální 14° (5.8%). Peter flaps his hands and makes pigeon noises when the waitress tries to take his glass away. Waiting staff are very keen to clear glasses and plates almost before you have finished, as we find throughout the weekend! It's a bit chilly by the bar (people keep coming in for some reason!) and we are about to get the bill when Abba comes on the radio, so we order some Ferdinand beers. Pete says of the bar that "it looks like you're drunk before you are, unless I am!" Time to go.

We leave with a warm glow to seek out a place to have dinner and are very pleased to find the **Pivovarský Dum** on the corner of two unpromising looking main roads, Jecná and Lípová. This is a large and welcoming brewpub and restaurant with expansive glass frontage and an equally expansive range of its own unpasteurised, unfiltered beers. We sit near the copper kettles overlooking the fermenting vessels behind glass at the end of the upstairs (non-smoking) bar. Before, after and during dinner we enjoy, between us, a luscious black Blueberry Wheat beer, the bright green and slightly gimmicky Nettle beer, the alcoholic espresso Coffee beer and delicious Kriek-like Sour cherry. Alison and I share a bottled Šamp Pivní Sekt, a dry, light champagne-style beer which at 60kc for a 0.3cl bottle is expensive but lovely all the same. Groups of fellow drinkers take advantage of the 'Giraffe', a splendid contraption which holds four litres of the brewery's light or dark

lager in its tall glass neck, served via a tap in the copper base.

**Sunday:** We stock up on an excellent and healthy breakfast at the Maria Prag and step out into the weak winter sunshine to follow a city walk in Alison's Cadogan's Guide. The architecture in this city is quite stunning, and just when you think you must be about to hit some concrete block suburbs, yet more beautiful buildings come into view. In contrast, the performance of the medieval astronomical clock in the old town square is somewhat underwhelming. After wandering through Havelská Market we stop for a hot chocolate to ward off the cold. We continue our walk ending up on the famous Charles Bridge where we witness our first washboard solo in a group of jazz buskers. Our first beer stop of the day is at **U Medvídku**, Na Perštýně 7, with its vaulted ceilings stamped with the Budweiser Budvar logo, wooden tables and panelled walls. Copper pipes and canopy grace the bar, where there is a large silver font topped with silver bears. Budvar light and dark are on draught and food is of the hearty kind with dumplings, tinned veg and chips to the fore. The fried cheese is surprisingly tasty. The building houses a brewery and beer shop (neither open during our visit). We work our way back to Havelská and stop at **U Radnických**, a pleasant bar in an atmospheric location, but none of the Bernard beer we had hoped for, although the Pilsner Urquell and Kozel dark 10° are fine.

We continue our architectural tour until we reach the **Pivnice U Zlatého Tygra** (Golden Tiger). This is very much a locals' bar, lots of dark wood, stained glass windows to the front, bar taps just inside the door and colourful in clientele and the 1970s football paraphernalia



Alison toasts her birthday with champagne beer at Pivovarský Dum

adorning the walls. We are allowed to sit at a reserved table for an hour in a lino-floored cubby hole at the back of the bar. There's no need to order, light lager beers are delivered in 0.5cl glasses without much ceremony. Food is available, but we're not yet ready for more dumplings. En route to the hotel to rest our feet before venturing out for the evening, we try two bars nearby, The **Moskyt** darts bar and the **Ferdinanda**, both in Opletalova. In the latter we find the Ferdinand beers a bit 'muddy' and the 'art' graffiti decorating the bar a little too bright.

That evening we visit one of the most famous beer halls in Prague, **U Flecku**, just to say we've been there. With several large rooms, long refectory tables and an outside area, it's a lovely place, but the waiters are keen to 'offer' shots of spirits which are then charged for. (The response when we decline the 'offer' is, "It's not poison!") We drink U Flecku's own dark brew, again delivered without order but in 0.4cl glasses at three times the price of 0.5cl beers elsewhere ... and it doesn't seem anything special. (And at 324kc for five beers does not quite add up!) We quickly move on to **U Bubeníčku** at Myslíkova 8, an L-shaped bar with vibrant, modern murals and Kožel and Pilsner Urquell beers. We hope for food, but the menu offers meat in many forms, but nothing at all for vegetarians, not even the ubiquitous fried cheese. We give up on food and return to **Pivovarský Dum** to try more of their beer range before retiring for the night.

**Monday:** Alison's birthday, a bitterly cold day and time for another long walk, this time to the castle and St Vitus cathedral. We warm up with hot chocolate and mulled wine in the castle café, then walk further uphill to try to find a recommended brewpub near the monastery. Views over Prague are fabulous from here. We eat and drink at **Velká Klášterní Restaurace**, a huge beer hall and restaurant hung with wrought iron chandeliers – it is nearly empty, unlike the vast platters of 'pie' on offer.

Roger Protz's **300 Beers To Try Before You Die** features St Norbert, and the Svatý Norbert Tmavé 14° has much to commend it. Czech 'pie' is a form of pizza, slightly less crispy and about three inches diameter smaller than the actual pizzas on the menu. Ocean Pizza is laden with king prawns rated "very fine" by Dave. However, on leaving and turning right to continue our walk, we find the place we were actually aiming for: **Klášterní Pivovar Strahov**, the brewery that is home to St Norbert beers. This is a smaller and more intimate affair, with copper kettles just inside the door, plenty of breweriana on the walls, and copper pipes around the bar. The menu looks more interesting ... we'll know to walk a bit further another time.

We walk back to the hotel to rest, change and take taxis to a fine restaurant with panoramic views over the city for Alison's birthday meal. **U Zlaté Studně** serves fine foods and

wine; our extravagance in ordering brandies to follow more than triples our food and drink bill for the weekend (though it still falls short of expensive meals out at home).

We leave the following morning after a quick tour of the Jewish cemetery, a quite extraordinary site with more than 12,000 tombstones dating back centuries, and an even quicker return visit to **Privní Novometský's** shop and a couple of bottled beers as souvenirs.

Prague is a compact city crammed full of lovely and interesting buildings, helpful people and some really great bars and beers. Bar food is like bar food in many places, on the hearty and unimaginative side, but the range and taste of the beers provide a welcome contrast. Now that the new CAMRA Guide is available, we shall probably need to make a return visit to check out places we missed.

Lesly Huxley

## NEW from CAMRA Books

### GOOD BEER GUIDE PRAGUE & CZECH REPUBLIC Evan Rail

**Available from CAMRA from 17 May**

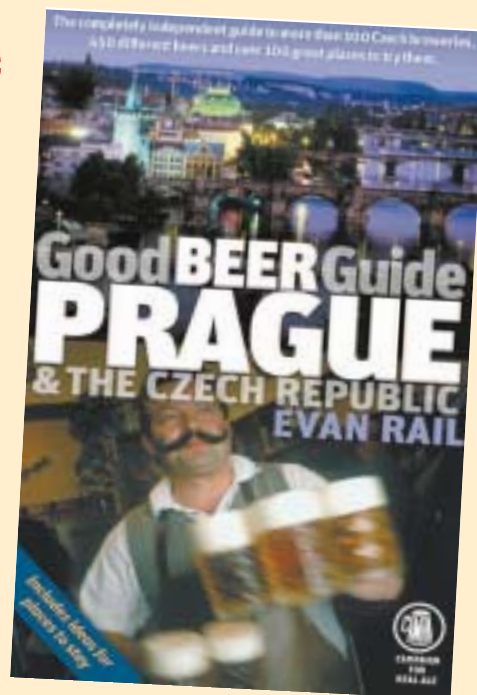
A fully updated and expanded version of a collectable classic. The first new edition to be produced by CAMRA for 10 years! An authoritative and entertaining guide to the breweries, beers, bars and pubs of the Czech lands, written with an insider's eye for detail and a beer-lover's thirst for great pivo, the Czech national drink.

This unique volume features a comprehensive portfolio of the best beer-bars and pubs in the capital city of Prague, now a major tourist destination visited by over 12 million people each year. Also lists brewery-hotels and regional attractions for planning complete vacations outside of the capital. International travel writer Evan Rail has devoted six years to tracking down the best beers throughout the ancient kingdoms of Bohemia and Moravia, the two halves that make up today's Czech Republic.

**Price £12.99**

**CAMRA Members' price just £10.99**

**POSTAGE AND PACKING:** UK orders – please add £1.50 per total order, plus £1 per book if ordered. EU orders – please add £2 per item or £4 if you are ordering the Good Beer Guide. Rest of the world orders – please add £4 per item or £7 if you are ordering the Good Beer Guide. Orders can be placed by sending your card details or a cheque made payable to CAMRA to: CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 4LW. Orders can also be placed over the phone on 01727 867201, or via our website [www.camra.org.uk/shop](http://www.camra.org.uk/shop) where you can see the full range of books, clothing, and merchandise. We deliver your order as soon as possible. We will normally send your order within 10 business days. This could extend to 15 days in peak periods.





# Bristol Beer Festival



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

The event, although somewhat stressful for some of the organisers, was another huge success. There was a very wide range of real ale, cider and perry on offer, with 76 different real ales still available when the festival closed at the end of the final session on Saturday night.

A record amount of money was raised in charity donations, and once people were inside they all appeared to have a great time. In fact so generous were the visitors feeling as they left that a grand total of £1,947 was collected for the Bristol branch of Guide Dogs for the Blind.

This year some problems were experienced with postal ticket sales as the demand for tickets massively outstripped the number we can sell. This meant that two out of three applicants were unsuccessful and there was an awful lot of paperwork to get through. We will be reviewing how tickets are sold for the next festival.



No more tickets were sold this time than for the previous beer festival. However, a number of factors seem to have combined to

mean that this year there were periods when some customers had to wait to gain entry as the event appeared to be on the fire limit. Although this does occur at other popular beer festivals, the organisers of the Bristol event will be reviewing procedures for next year to endeavour to stop this from happening in future.

These issues aside, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive from happy customers who appreciated the hard work put in by the volunteer staff to make it all happen. Indeed many attendees seem to already be counting the days till the Bristol Beer Festival 2008.

The results of the Beer and Cider/Perry of the Festival competitions were:

## **Beer of the Festival:**

- 1st - Bristol Beer Factory Milk Stout,**
- 2nd - Cairngorm Trade Winds,**
- 3rd - Bath Ales Rare Hare.**

## **Cider/Perry of the Festival:**

- Winner - Holders Perry,**
- Runner-up - Wilkins Sweet Cider.**

*Richard Brooks  
(words and photos)*





# Thank you Bristol Beer Factory success



The Bristol fund-raising branch of Guide Dogs for the Blind being presented with a cheque for £1947 from Richard Brooks of CAMRA

## From Jackie Tovey, Treasurer of the Bristol Guide Dogs for the Blind:

"On behalf of the committee I would like to thank the participants of the Bristol Beer Festival held at the Brunel Passenger Shed at Temple Meads in March who gave generously to support this year's charity, Guide Dogs for the Blind.

"The Bristol fund raising branch of Guide Dogs have members who have been raising funds in the Bristol area for over twenty years or more. The funds will be used to help finance a guide dog from a puppy through to a well deserved retirement. The committee has members who are guide dog owners themselves and are proof that a guide dog is invaluable in helping a visually impaired person lead an independent life.

"I would also like to thank the hard work of the CAMRA members who worked at the Beer Festival supporting Guide Dogs for the Blind."



BRISTOL BEER FACTORY MILK STOUT was voted champion beer of the Bristol Beer Festival 2007. This makes it an incredible second win in a row for Simon Bartlett and Chris Thurgeson, who are pictured here receiving the certificate from Bristol & District branch Chairman Richard Brooks. In addition to this, Milk Stout also won bronze at this year's Tuckers Maltings Beer Festival in the Stout & Porters category. There are plans to put it in bottles later in the year, so that it can be enjoyed all year round.

## First boat

The other big news for Bristol drinkers from the BBF is that they will be opening their first outlet in Bristol in early June. The **Grain Barge** (formerly Shoots restaurant) will offer up to four ales (including one guest), traditional ciders, and three European lagers, including a guest tap for lagers. (*A brewery opening its first pub in a boat – is this in itself a first? Ed.*)

The Grain Barge will have two bars. The main bar, which will be open all day, will give the customer a full 270-degree view of the harbour with access to an outside top deck. The lower bar will open in the evenings and will provide music, both live and recorded. The lower bar is intended for folks to really have a party. Drive or stroll by Hotwells and check it out – it'll be the place to be at the Harbour Festival!

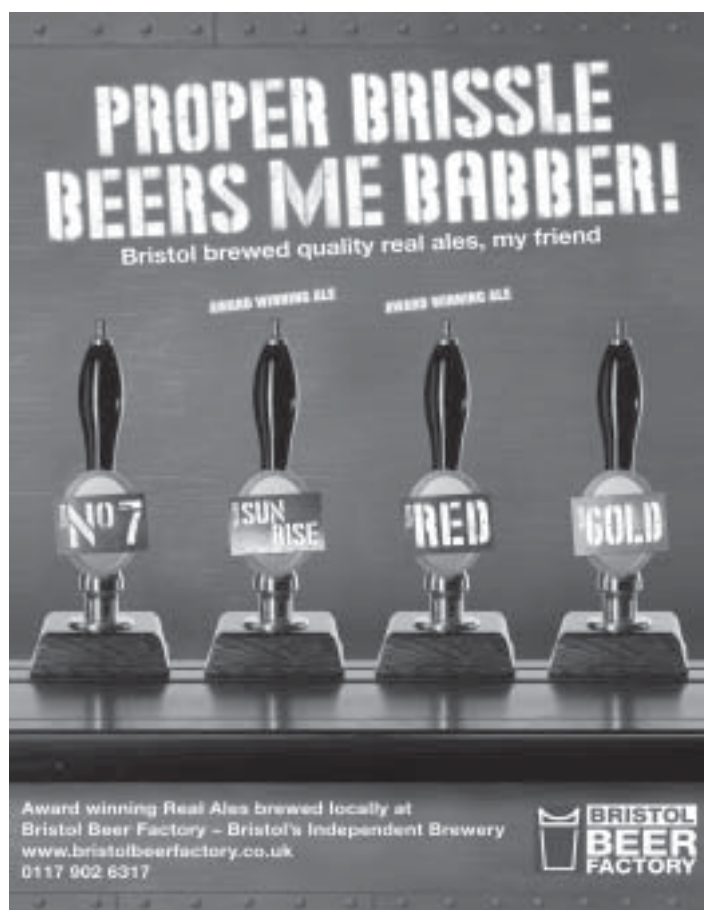
## On yer bike!

Bristol Beer Factory are sponsoring Sustrans this year at the 'Party on the Path' on Castle Green on July 7th. The Party on the Path is being held to celebrate Sustrans' 30th birthday and will involve a bar (obviously) and many other attractions

And finally, BBF will be bringing out the topically named "Old Smokey" on July 1st.\* Brewed with locally smoked malt it will allegedly offer some relief for those craving a smokey tang whilst still inside a pub!

Richard Brooks

(\*The day the smoking ban comes into force.)



# Watering Holes in the Desert

news from Weston-super-Mare

## A Round with Robin

I SUPPOSE I should have realised that the more small beer festivals I went to, the more I would have to write about, but there you are dear reader, that is what takes the bulk of my Round.

Briefly though, before embarking on this, did you happen to notice the Bristol connection in *Private Eye* about Whiteladies Road and Blackboy Hill, and I refer to the subsequent letter in *Eye* 1182, which has a new gruesome slant on the article on inn signs in CAMRA's May edition of *Beer*. The article is called "What's in a sign?", and the letter from Pip Jones in *Private Eye* states: "...Nearby Blackboy Hill, far from being named for the black boys sold to white ladies, was named after a public house originally called 'The Blackamore's Head'. This may date from the time of the crusades when crusaders had trouble finding suitable souvenirs to bring back and sometimes settled for a severed Moor's head. This is what may be an urban myth that some of these heads were actually used as inn signs."

It seems a long time ago now, but when the last issue of the award-winning *Pints West* first hit the pubs, and the Bristol Beer Festival, Weston sub-branch had been on a fact-finding pub crawl on the Mendips which would have not been reported in that issue. To put things right (or should it be write) we went to the **Waldegrave Arms**, the **Plough Boy** at Green Ore, the **Hunters Lodge**, the **Castle of Comfort**, and the **Crown** at Churchill in a fun-filled evening by minibus. Fourteen different beers were to be found at the first four pubs and eight more at the final stop. My favourite beer of the evening was the Matthews 40 Yard at the Hunters Lodge; I found the Waldegrave the friendliest pub; and the most informed landlord was at the Castle of Comfort, who asked us if we could identify the two beers which were coming on line the following day from samples he took from the cellar – these were Exmoor Hound Dog and Palmer's 200. Part of the cost of the min bus was met by the prize money from the CAMRA summer skittles team, held at the **White Hart** in the summer of 2006!

Incidentally, having mentioned the Bristol Beer Festival, my apologies to all whom I served on the Cider & Perry Bar on Saturday for my initial ignorance on most things "ciderish". It was a new learning curve for me, but after sampling the perries I found one that I could recommend, consequently the Holden's Oldland was an early "sold out"!

So on to the first Spring beer festival at the

**Old Inn** at Clevedon held on the last day of March, as mentioned in *Pints West*. The pub has got into the 2007 Good Beer Guide so they thought a festival would be a good idea, but when Tony and I got there at midday we were informed it might not start until 2pm. Disappointed, we had a super Otterhead from the bar, only to be told 20 minutes later that the festival bar was now open, and that Otterhead was there on gravity for 80p cheaper than we had paid for it at the bar! We were joined by Mike and Graham who had been walking Poet's Walk in Clevedon.

Eight beers were on including two from each of Cheddar Ales, Bristol Beer Factory, and Moor Brewery, with Sharp's Special making the eight. Old Freddie Walker was my favourite of the day – a snip at £2 a pint. There was also a young but enthusiastic Thin Lizzy tribute band, who played loudly by the serving area, so we sat in the pub like the old men that we have become.



The previous weekend saw us at the **Weston Cricket Club's** first beer festival, well organised and with good tasting notes. The sub-branch of CAMRA supplied some of the bar staff, myself included, and the beers, all sourced by RCH, came from Scotland, Essex, Cornwall and points in between. The beers, all on gravity, were £2 a pint, and it was open to all comers, not just members of the club. Unfortunately the advertising was just not good enough so there were not really enough drinkers. This was a pity as the beers were mainly superb. The Hadrian & Borders Ceres beer was fairly unique, and the Skinner's Cornish Knocker was not surprisingly the first one to run out (but not until midway through Sunday afternoon).

Easter weekend saw a rash of mini beer festivals across the country and I opted, with Graham Teague and Mike Coleman, to once again walk from Bridgwater to Middlezoy (no public transport on Good Friday) to attend the **George Inn** where 16 ales, 12 on gravity, were on offer. Most were sourced locally, so no great surprises, but the Hopback Dragon's Breath was unusual and the Brakspear Organic Blond was perfect for the hot weather. We stayed just a couple of hours then walked to the **Old Pound Inn** at Aller where they were having an O'Hanlon's beers weekend. Here my companions had a meal (I'd eaten my sandwiches as we walked) and we enjoyed the Port

Stout and Firefly ale. We had to leave by 6pm to catch the last of the evening light as we walked to Langport by the River Parrett to catch the last bus to Taunton.

The following day, I went to the **Crown Inn** at Axbridge for their themed beer festival. This year it was a "head to head" Sharp's versus Cotleigh, with seven beers from each brewery, and score card provided. Once again a reasonable price of £2 a pint, with Cheddar Potholer on the bar if you needed a change from the others. The Cornish Coaster was very thirst quenching, but in Mike and my opinion the Cotleigh beers won hands down with Kookaburra, Seahawk and Snowy all flying high. Just down the road at Cross, the **New Inn's** beer festival tempted us, so we strolled there (on the way I had a half of excellent Everard's Tiger at the **Lamb Inn**) to find 14 beers from almost as many counties. My favourite there was the Cotswold Spring Old English Ale, but the Bath Ales Wild Hare was a close second. However as their beers were £2.80 a pint, we only had a short while there, and were joined by Richard walking back to the Crown for a couple more before getting the bus home.

On Easter Day, Graham Teague and I went by bus to the **Inn On The Green** at Horfield, arriving just as the doors opened at midday. Having found a comfy place to sit betwixt the band and the beer tent, and in bright sunshine, we made a good start on the "outside" beers. We were disappointed not to be able to try any from the inside of the pub but these were served after 6pm (we left by 5pm). However the beers on offer included some old favourites such as Hambleton's Nightmare Stout, Bristol Beer Factory Milk Stout, and Castle Rock Black Gold. The Hadrian & Border beers were all very good – Legion at 4.2% being my bitter of the festival, whilst the Beartown Pandamonium 4.8% was the best play on words (Panda) and the best stout. The band – Harpin' On – was as good a blues band as I've heard in recent years with some well played Sonny Boy Williamson numbers.

Earlier in April the **49 Club** in Weston hosted an Archers beer promotion for the benefit of the Licensed Victuallers Association, but to which the public were invited too. Naturally CAMRA advertised this event and as the beers were only 80p a pint, you can imagine that the members of the 49 Club had a good time. Many though were generally only sampling the 14 Archers beers by half pints (when was the last time you paid 40 pence for half a pint of beer?) and it was agreed that the



Ocelot 4.0% and the Iron Duke 4.8% were probably the best. It was a pity there were no dark ales to be had but the 49 Club and Archers did agree to put the Strong Mild on in May for the sampling by both 49 Club members and CAMRA.

On the pub front in Weston-super-Mare, I'm please to be able to say that despite the recent price rises all over the town, the **Regency** has kept the Flowers IPA on at £2 and Colin at **Off The Rails** has the RCH Hewish IPA at £1.90. The **Raglan Arms** has risen like a phoenix due to Freddie's persistence in real ale, sometimes selling five beers on handpump and replacing the Budweiser with Butcombe Blonde. Also Freddie has adopted the same strategy as the **White Hart** in not having regular ales, so you never know what you'll get until you step into the pub. And on the snuff front, four pubs in Weston as well as the **Lamb** at Worle now have free snuff for customers; they are **Off The Rails**, the **Raglan Arms**, the **White Hart** and the **Red Admiral**. I expect this list to grow after July 1<sup>st</sup> when the smoking ban comes into force. The Butcombe pub, the **Woolpack** at St. George's, is very popular with families and beer drinkers alike. Not only is the food good, (especially when the Chalice Morris Men dance there) but the Butcombe beer is very well kept along with two guest ales.

The final two beer festivals I'll touch on are the **Bag O'Nails** and **Wetherspoon's**.

They may seem strange bedfellows but the system is the same, you have up to ten beers on and when one runs out you replace it with another. That way you can have a long list but unless you are a local the chances of getting all the beers on the list is very remote. This aside, when I went to the Bag O'Nails twelve beers came on during the afternoon, only three of which I'd had before. From those tried I'd pick the Leekenbrau from the Leek brewery (with a delicate elderflower aroma) and the Burning Bride from Bridestone as being two of the best, and the Pictish Centennial (sic) was as good as I've ever had it. At Wetherspoon's **Dragon Inn** in Weston-super-Mare, I missed out on a few of the beers, but was able to sample (by making use of the third-pint glasses) some 15 beers over the course of the first week, with the Elgood's Black Dog mild being the favourite.

Long-time readers of this column are surprised at my intake, but I have to point out that the events have taken place over a three month time-slot; it is only exceptionally (like at the Easter weekend) when many things converge that means I have to sample less than I would at a normal festival. Also I try to give the liver a rest at least two days a week! As I am going again to the Isle of Man this summer another report from that island on its pubs and beers will be forthcoming; however I was delighted to have some Mannish Okell's IPA recently at the **White Hart** in Palmer Row, Weston-super-Mare.

Robin E Wild

# Weston Whispers (pub and beer news)

SEVERAL Weston CAMRA members enjoyed the remarkable Archers Brewery festival held at the **49 Club** on Baker Street on Monday 2nd April.

Even though this was just a one-day affair, visitors were welcomed by the sight of 14 casks racked along the back of the club. There were five beers from Archers permanent range and nine of their April monthly specials. The other reason for it being remarkable was the prices, with all the ales at a mere 80p a pint! The "bonhomie" triggered by all the cheap beer resulted in the branch organizing a Mild Social at the club on 9 May, supporting CAMRA's efforts to promote this endangered beer style.

The 49 Club is a very pleasant place to visit. There are always three real ales on. These are Butcombe Bitter, Theakston XB and a guest beer, usually from the Archers range. Excellent value snacks are available. There is also pool, skittles, Sky Sports and live entertainment most weekends. Social membership is only £7 and the attractive beer prices will soon make the membership pay for itself.

Freddie is now at the helm at **The Raglan**. There continues to be an excellent beer range, particularly around the weekend. Recent highlights have included Hambelton brewery's wonderful Nightmare porter.

Happy to give a first mention in Pints West to **The Observatory** on Becket Road in Worle. Mike Flaun, the manager of this Marston's pub got in touch to let us know that he had recently been given Cask Marque accreditation for the quality of cellarmanship and beer dispense.

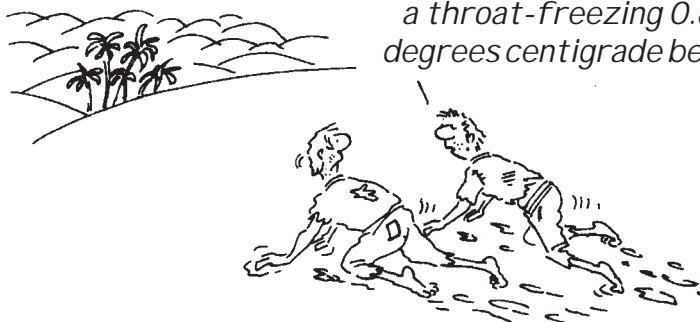
Beers available are Marston's Pedigree and Banks's Bitter and both were in excellent condition on my recent visit. A guest beer from the Marston's range is added during winter months. Mike has been at the pub since October 2005 and he says that real ale sales have grown considerably since he has been at the helm – all down to the way he looks after his beer, Mike assures me!

The beer festival held at **Weston Cricket Club** at the end of March was well supported by local CAMRA members. Ten various nice ales were on offer including Pitchfork and East Street Cream from RCH, Grainstore Cooking Bitter, Mighty Oak Maldon Bitter, Skinner's Cornish Knocker, Atlas Latitude, Summerskills Best and Exe Valley Dob's Best Bitter

Much amusement over Wetherspoon's new policy of advertising the temperature of their keg beers. **The Dragon Inn** is now boasting that it serves "the coldest beer in town" and apparently proves this with a sign that constantly monitors and advertises the beer temperature. During a recent visit this was a throat-freezing 0.8 degrees centigrade! I have no idea whether there really are drinkers who will seek out the coldest available beer, but I do know that the colder the beer, the less chance there is of any flavour surviving (I suppose this is not much of an issue with keg beers as they have very little flavour to start with). I must stress that the new ice-cold policy does not apply to the real ales and the Dragon has been offering an excellent range of late.

Tim Nickolls

*Even here I wouldn't want  
a throat-freezing 0.8  
degrees centigrade beer*



# CAMRA launches Beer Club to increase knowledge of beer styles

**CAMRA is delighted to announce the launch of the CAMRA Beer Club – a new scheme that will deliver a case of 20 top-quality bottled real ales direct to your door for just £39.99 a month plus postage and packing.**

This new initiative is a major step forward in our promotion of real ale in a bottle and in offering greater benefits to CAMRA members.

As a member of the CAMRA Beer Club you will discover and enjoy a whole range of specialist beers that are currently not widely available in supermarkets or pubs. Every British beer is bottle-conditioned and some collections will feature authentic 'World Explorer' beers. It's a great way to expand on your knowledge of beer!

Every three months the CAMRA Beer Club will put together a collection of five different beers (four bottles of each). You will also receive tasting notes written by our resident guest experts.

All those chosen will be high-quality examples of their type, will have distinctive character, and will come from brewers who are

committed to diversity and quality.

CAMRA Chief Executive Mike Benner said: "CAMRA would always prefer that people enjoy a cask ale at the pub. However we also accept there are many occasions when people do drink at home. In these instances we would prefer that people drink real ale in a bottle rather than canned beer products.

"CAMRA's policy is also to promote real ale in a bottle (British bottle-conditioned products). We believe that this is the next best thing to cask ale that you enjoy at the pub. The club aims to make available beers that might have not previously or easily been available to CAMRA Beer Club members in bottle form.

"By increasing people's knowledge, and by widening their awareness of different beer styles, we hope that they may also have the confidence to try different styles of cask ales at the pub."

Many of the beers selected will be previous CAMRA award-winners or champion beers.

Each case is hand-picked by a panel of experts from both CAMRA and our partners,

the Beer Club of Britain. We ensure beers are of the highest quality, by having brewing experts on hand to advise.

Every beer is selected for its consistency, quality and diversity. In future cases there will be opportunities for Beer Club members to make their own personal recommendations to the Club.

As a member of the CAMRA Beer Club you will receive details of the latest selection. If you decide to accept it, you need do nothing more – delivery to your door is automatic. Of course, you're not obliged to take any of the CAMRA Beer Club's cases. You can 'miss' as many cases as you like, or if you decide the CAMRA Beer Club is not for you, you can cancel at any time – just tell us.

You can order with complete confidence because every bottle is covered by our full, money-back guarantee. However this offer is limited, so be quick to secure yours.

Non-CAMRA members can join the CAMRA Beer Club for £44.95 (plus p&p).

For more information on how the Beer Club works, to place an order, or view our current case, visit [www.camrabeerclub.co.uk](http://www.camrabeerclub.co.uk).



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# Brewery news

## Taunton Brewing Company

Many CAMRA members will have fond memories of beer from the Somerset Electric Brewery, a four-barrel plant set up in the New Inn at Halse in 2003.

The New Inn was CAMRA South West Pub of the Year in 2005, but the brewery ceased production when the pub was sold later the same year. Now the brewery is up and running again, with a more conventional name – the Taunton Brewing Company. The pub's website is [www.newinnhalse.com](http://www.newinnhalse.com). Unfortunately, the only information on the website concerning the brewery states that "the New Inn has a long tradition of brewing its own ales,



The New Inn at Halse

which are all brewed from special recipes on the premises have [sic] won many awards from woolly jumper wearing men with beards."

Despite this rather unfortunate turn of phrase, Taunton Ale, a 3.9% ABV bitter, the first offering from Halse, is eminently quaffable. Head brewer Colin Green, previously head brewer at Exmoor Brewery, describes it as "a copper-coloured, crystal clear, cask conditioned ale, leaving a pleasant hoppy aftertaste."

## Odcombe

We'd heard about a microbrewery at the Masons Arms at Lower Odcombe, a couple of miles north-west of Yeovil, that only brewed beers for the pub, so being in the area we dropped in for lunch. It proved a worthwhile stop. There were two excellent ales on offer - Odcombe No. 1 (4.1% ABV) and Odcombe Spring (4.3% ABV).

The microbrewery, then known as Odcombe Ales, was set up in January 2001 but ceased production in 2005 when the pub was sold. In November 2005, the pub was taken over by Paula Tennyson and Drew Read. As well as being head chef, Drew also set himself up as brewer, reopening the brewery under the name of the Odcombe Brewery.

Unusually for a Somerset brewery, malt comes not from Warminster but from Murphy's of Old Basford near Nottingham. The two regular beers are supplemented by seasonal offerings, such as Festive Cheer, a Christmas beer with an ABV of 4.3%, brewed with cinnamon and cloves. A honey beer is planned for this summer. The food is excellent, accommodation is available



The Masons Arms at Odcombe

and there is a campsite at the back. Check out the website at [www.masonsarmsodcombe.co.uk](http://www.masonsarmsodcombe.co.uk).

## Westbury Ales

This 2.5-gallon brewery, set up behind the Horse & Groom in Westbury in 2004, ceased production in autumn 2006. The plant has been sold to the new Arbor Ales brewery at the Old Tavern in Stapleton ([www.arborales.co.uk](http://www.arborales.co.uk)). Westbury Ales are now being brewed by Wessex Brewery at Longbridge Deverill near Warminster.

## Cheltenham

A new brewery opened on the Kingsditch Trading Estate in Cheltenham in March. The Festival Brewery, a ten-barrel plant set up by Andy Forbes and Pete Jobson, can be contacted on 01242 521444 / 077 6888 8088 or at [info@festivalbrewery.co.uk](mailto:info@festivalbrewery.co.uk).

## Stratford on Avon

A tad distant, I know, but get this: in October 2005, Derek Hawyes set up the 2.5-barrel Shakespeare's Brewery at Bidford on Avon, a few miles from Stratford. Twelve months later, after legal threats from an Austrian company which has registered "Royal Shakespeare" as a trademark (you'd think the Royal Shakespeare Company would have something to say about that!), he decided to change the name to Bard's Brewery. Tempest, a 5.5% porter, won Gold at the SIBA Midland Beer Competition in 2005, while bottled versions of his beers feature in CAMRA's Good Bottle Beer Guide. Sadly, the brewery closed in January 2007.

## North Curry

Rumours are circulating of a microbrewery at this village on the edge of the Somerset Levels. No further news at present.

*Andrew Swift*

# Selling England by the Pint

IF you need further evidence that drinking is becoming increasingly politicised, consider this: at present, you have the option of signing two online petitions to the Prime Minister concerning your pint.

First off is an appeal to stop the introduction of plastic glasses. There is growing concern at the number of police forces trying to impose blanket bans on the use of glass, and forcing venues with no history of violence or disorder to use plastic. While no one in their right mind would oppose a glass ban on venues with a history of glass-related incidents, blanket bans would force drinkers in trouble-free pubs, bars and clubs to consume their drinks out of vessels that simply are not as good as what they are using at present, compromising and cheapening the experience of drinking good quality ale or cider.

One of the latest police forces to push for a ban is just over the bridge in Newport. They have applied to the Community Safe partnership for a £10,000 grant for "polycarbonate" glasses, which licensed premises will be asked to use after 8pm. Inspector Talbot Thrush (I promise I'm not making any of this up) admits that the police will initially not be able to force premises to use plastic glasses. However, he hopes Newport City Council will include the mandatory use of plastic glasses as a licensing condition when it reviews its licensing policy in 2008.

CAMRA is in the forefront of opposition to a blanket ban, calling for pubs to be properly controlled, and for plastic glasses to be the exception rather than the rule. It also suggests that serving bottled beers without a glass should be discouraged, pointing out that a bottle is potentially more lethal, in the wrong hands, than a glass.

From my point of view, not being a

habitué of the sort of establishment where glasses are likely to be used for anything except drinking out of, the main glass-related problem seems to be the bottles bought, largely by under-age drinkers, from supermarkets and off-licences, and drunk and then smashed on the street. That seems to be something that really should be cracked down on.

You can sign the petition against blanket glass bans at [petitions.pm.gov.uk/plasticglass](http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/plasticglass).

Then there's the petition for full pints. In case you haven't been following the debate surrounding this issue – and I can't imagine, given the amount of coverage CAMRA have given it both locally and nationally, that you aren't aware of it – this concerns the government's apparent unwillingness to protect consumers against landlords who serve short measures (or, as they're known in Bath, Combe Downers). Current legislation falls so far short that nine out of ten pints served don't measure up, with around a quarter being over 5% short. The government, which a few years ago pledged to plug the loopholes that allowed landlords to serve short measures, is now minded to redefine a pint as "not less than 95% liquid." This would, of course, make matters worse, not only giving rogue landlords the green light to go on short-changing their customers, but also giving them extra leeway – after all, if 95% is legal, then nobody's going to bother too much about 90%, are they?

To stop this large-scale rip-off being enshrined in law, lobby your MP to support CAMRA's campaign for a full pint and sign the petition at [www.takeittothetop.co.uk](http://www.takeittothetop.co.uk).

Until a couple of weeks ago, there was a

third petition concerning the phasing out of Imperial measures. EU directive 80/181 would have made it illegal, from the beginning of 2010, to use or refer to Imperial units such as inches, gallons, pounds, etc. The ban would have applied not only to shops, but also to packaging, books, magazines, catalogues, internal business memos, and the rules of sport and games.

This directive clearly had far-reaching implications. Would McDonald's, for example, have had to rename its Quarterpounder the 113grammer? Would *The Who*, at their next reunion, have had to sing about seeing for kilometres and kilometres? Would a team of scholars at the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford on Avon have had to come up with a way for Shylock to ask for his 0.454 kilos of flesh in iambic pentameters?

There were going to be a handful of exceptions to the EU ruling: miles could still have been used in relation to transport matters; acres could still have been used in relation to the measurement and sale of land; lastly and most crucially, beer, cider and milk could still have been sold in pints.

But, as the saying goes, if you give some people 2.54 centimetres they'll take 1.609 kilometres. Last year, Lord Howe, the former Tory Cabinet Minister (whom Denis Healey once likened to a dead sheep), launched the UK Metric Association, with the aim of forcing the government to go the full nine yards – sorry, the full 8.23 metres – and change over to metric completely, consigning pints of beer to the dustbin of history.

In an unexpected, but very welcome, change of heart, however, the EU has given Imperial units an indefinite stay of execution, so they can continue to be used along with metric units for the foreseeable future. The UK Metric Association, one suspects, will not be at all happy about this turn of events, and will be lobbying even harder for a complete changeover to metric. Meanwhile, the rest of us can raise our pint glasses and drink to a rare victory for common sense.

Andrew Swift

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# Island in the sea

By your Nailsea correspondent  
Laurie Gibney

## The Moorend Spout

THE £160,000 refurbishment of the Moorend Spout was completed during April 2007 and the pub's future is assured, which was not the case a few years ago when it looked as if it might join the fifty or more pubs closing every month. Bass, Butcombe Bitter, Marston's Pedigree and Thatcher's Premium Cask Cider are the real ales and ciders on offer, and are kept in excellent condition by Terry and Sharon Beardshaw, who have really turned this place around and into a food-led pub with a competitive menu of real food, real ales and real cider.

Entering by the back door from the car park and garden you used to turn hard right into the restaurant – that route is no longer available but the no-smoking area there has been refurbished. To get to the restaurant customers walk a little further in front of the bar and down a passage-way which used to lead to a front entrance that is now closed. The old front entrance on the roadside corner leading into the bar has been reopened. Confused? Then pay the Moorend Spout a visit and see for yourself.

It is a bit of a climb to the large upstairs room which has now been reopened as a quiet function room and extension to the restaurant at busy times. Regrettably the listed building could not be provided with disabled toilets as part of this refurbishment, although provision has been made to take wheel chairs into the main restaurant. Some new carpets, tables, chairs and attractive lighting, together with period features, have made this one of the most attractive pubs in the area.

## The Star at Tickenham

In mid-February we said cheerio to Hugh and Kim Dash who left the Star at Tickenham which closed for a £250,000 face-lift and was due to reopen on Monday 21st May. It is now in the care of Robert and Yvonne Hulls of "Kianti Foods and Fine Wines" fame. They will be stocking various ales and ciders subject to demand, are very much interested in bringing the drinkers back to the pub. They found that previously there was no identified area for drinking, so have created an area just for this.

Rob told me, "I am very much interested in the real ale side. We had an association with Harveys of Lewes when we reopened one of their pubs and I was very much a fan of their organisation. Courage Best will be the mainstay but we will seek out other breweries and have a rolling stock of different real ales, complemented by bottled ales.

"Wet and dry stock will be sourced locally, we certainly aim to keep the small man going and have done so at our other Bristol pub, the Good Intent, which is widely recognised for its home-cooked food and good entertainment and which we have run for twelve years."

The menu will be split, and will obviously change according to demand. Fair prices, good food, warming atmosphere, traditionally English – that will be the house style. A new family area will be introduced with its own menu. The new family indoor area will pitch at the 3 to 8 year-olds and the outside area to the 5 to 12 year-olds. An *à la carte* menu has also been created which will change on a regular basis: a set menu with four starters, four mains and four sweets and for a set price. The Star will also carry on with the fresh-fish menu. Rob and Yvonne have produced a wine list of about 25 to 30 wines priced from £10 to £30 and have draught wine and mini bottles. They also have a scotch corner with about ten malt whiskies. Food will be served mornings from 7.30 (8.00 on Sundays) to 10.00 for breakfasts, and from 12 noon until 9.30 in the evening for the full menu.

The Star will be non-smoking indoors throughout from opening day. A seventy-seater heated decked area covered with parasols and a covered area next to the family room will be new smoking areas. When reopened (which it should have done by the time you read this) the building will have completely changed. Refurbishment has taken the old building back to the brickwork to start again. The five letting rooms have been refurbished to a good standard with TV, tea- and coffee-making and en-suite facilities, and have their own entrance. A toilet for the disabled



Back to the brickwork at the Star at Tickenham

has been provided.

Rob and Yvonne will bring twenty years experience in the pub business to the Star, and pride themselves on "providing good hospitality and creating an excellent atmosphere amongst staff and customers". Occasional entertainment will be introduced with bands and singers tried and tested at their other pub, the Good Intent. Ask them about their "house charity". Rob and Yvonne, who have lived in Wraxall and Nailsea, now live in Portishead with their ten-year-old son, and plan to make the Star a family friendly venue.

THIS is the last Pints West before smoking in pubs, clubs and restaurants becomes illegal in England on 1st July. Most licensed premises in Nailsea and district have space to provide an area for smokers in their gardens, therefore they are less likely to suffer any initial loss of trade compared with some urban pubs and young persons clubs/pubs that have no garden or yard where smoking may take place more than the required distance from doors and windows. There are heavy fines for not displaying "No Smoking" signs inside and outside of premises, so we will have to get used to a change in the appearance of our favourite pubs as well. Licensees are being encouraged to run special promotional events to attract new non-smoking customers back to the pubs and clubs, and maybe traditional pub games will reappear.

## And finally ...

Away from Nailsea, a pub crawl of Bath started at the **Old Farmhouse** on Lansdown, a short journey from the bus station, and the crawl was all downhill from there!

It was our first visit to the Old Farmhouse since the change in management and the change-over and make-over seems to have worked without losing the character of the place. The Wadworth beers, including a house beer, were fine but it was a pity that they were not allowed to sell any beer from Abbey Ales, brewed round the back of the premises.

What did stand out was the food menu, and we did enjoy our meal which was well presented and prepared in interesting ways, even a baked carrot! The prices reflected that this is no ordinary "pub grub" but for their style were value for money. Starters ranged through six options, from tomato soup with pesto at £3.90, to wild mushrooms and truffle on toasted brioche with parmesan and olive oil at £5.95. Main courses started at £8.50 for deep-fried cod in Farmhouse beer batter and at £16.50 one could enjoy char-grilled fillet steak with fried mushrooms, cherry tomatoes, red-wine sauce and chunky chips. I enjoyed beef and oxtail pie with new potatoes, roast carrots and green beans at £9.50. My son Steve and nephew Mark decided to try one of the six deserts, but the white chocolate and Cointreau mousse with dark chocolate mousse and shortbread at £4.50 had them defeated!

## Cheddar Ales update



Cheddar Ales, which opened for business in 2006, have already won their first major award – a silver medal for Potholer in the Best Bitter class at the SIBA (Society of Independent Brewers) South West festival at Tuckers Maltings in Newton Abbott.

To win such an award from your peers so soon after starting up is a wonderful achievement, and brewer Jem and the staff are “chuffed to bits”.

Potholer is now available in bottle-conditioned form and is “flying out of the door”. Various other brewery merchandise is also now available such as T-shirts, polo and sweatshirts, and fleeces.

There are plans in the future to produce other beers but no details as yet.

Vince Murray

## Millions will return to the pub after the smoking ban

**CAMRA research suggests seven million people are likely to visit pubs more often after the ban.**

A recent survey by the Campaign for Real Ale has revealed the public’s attitudes to the forthcoming smoking ban. The sample survey’s key findings indicated that:

- 6.2 million people (17% of all adults in England and Wales) who visit pubs regularly are likely to visit pubs more often. Of that group 97% were non-smokers.
- 840,000 people who currently never go to a pub said they will after the smoking ban. Added to the figure for people who currently visit regularly that is a total of 7,040,000 people who will visit pubs more often.
- 93% of real ale drinkers said they would be more likely to visit pubs more often or that their visiting habits would not be changed by the ban.
- 68% of regular smokers say it will not

change their pub visiting habits at all.

- 69% of all adults said it would not affect their visits to pubs at all, and only 3% said they would not visit pubs at all as a result of the ban.

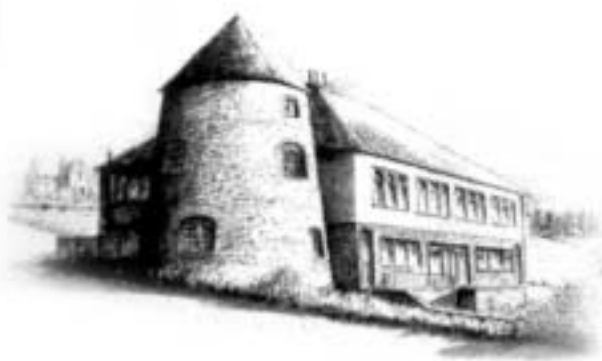
- Smokers are typically lager drinkers (43% of lager drinkers said they smoke).

CAMRA Chief Executive Mike Benner said: “This survey shows that non-smokers will be attracted to pubs after the ban comes into force, and many of them would like to find a real ale waiting for them when they get there.

“The smoking ban will be a difficult transition for licensees, but it is encouraging that only 3% of people surveyed by CAMRA said they would not visit pubs at all as a result of the ban. The key will be to ensure that other factors such as quality of real ale, food, atmosphere and welcome are all superb. If this is the case then the traditional community pub will have a bright and healthy future.”

### The Windmill Inn

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# News from Bath

## Cry God for Abbey

Concerned that St. George's Day is not celebrated in the same way as St. Patrick's or St. Andrew's Day (i.e. by drinking copious amounts of alcohol), Alan Morgan, MD of Abbey Ales, went out of his way to ensure that his brewery's two pubs – the Star and the **Coeur de Lion** – were liberally bedecked with the flag of England's patron saint for the big day. Hats adorned with red crosses were also on hand (or should that be on head?) and, at 10.45pm, customers were invited to pick up their glasses and, to paraphrase the immortal bard, cry God for Abbey, England and St. George.

## All change at the Foresters

**The Foresters' Arms** at Combe Down, which last appeared in the Good Beer Guide in 1999 and was very much a local's boozer, has been transformed by its new landlady, Louise Flower, into a stunning new gastropub called the Forester & Flower. I use the word stunning advisedly, not having tried the food (which, by all accounts, is packing them in). Whoever was responsible for revamping the interior has produced something that, while defiantly modern, harks back to the last days of the Raj and is quite simply extraordinary. Real ale (Butcombe on a recent visit) is on offer – but this isn't your average boozer – nor your average identikit gastropub. If you remember the Foresters' as it was, a trip to see how totally it's been reinvented is certain to be an eye-opener. (With the lighter evenings upon us, a visit to the Forester & Flower could be combined with a visit to three other traditional pubs – the Hadley Arms, the King William IV, and the Horseshoe – all just a few minutes' walk away.

## The other Royal Oak

**The Royal Oak** on Pulteney Road (not to be confused with the Royal Oak on the Lower Bristol Road) reopened on 24th February after extensive refurbishment. The new landlord is Simon Wynne, previously landlord of the Good Beer Guide-listed Ram in Widcombe. There's a nice new beer garden at the back, the old place has been smartened up no end, and there's a decent range of real ales on offer as well. If you'd like to give it a try, the Royal Oak's five minutes from the traffic lights on Bog Island by Lambrettas Bar. Walk over the bridge to the end of North Parade Road, turn right and you'll find it on the left.

## Pub closures

**The Dark Horse** in Northampton Street, just off Julian Road, closed in May. It is believed that it will be converted into residential accommodation. The market for property in this street of Georgian terraced houses is extremely buoyant, with houses changing

hands for around £700,000. There are also plans to build a block of flats next door on a site once occupied by a house destroyed in the Bath Blitz.

The Dark Horse, originally known as the White Horse, opened as a beerhouse in the 1830s and had its own brewery until around 1900. It was badly damaged in the Bath Blitz and was threatened with demolition in the 1970s. It may not have been one of Bath's best-known pubs, but it was a good traditional little boozer, and a bolt hole for the few dozen regulars who used it. Now it's gone, and another bit of Bath's pub history has been chipped away. Although there are three other pubs nearby, the **Chequers** and the **Marlborough Tavern** have both been revamped as gastropubs in the last years or so, leaving only the **St. James's Wine Vaults** as a traditional boozer.

**The Crown & Anchor** in Upper Weston, on the western edge of Bath, was opened in 1833 as a beerhouse by a stone mason called Solomon Slingo in 1833. Famous for having the most elaborate inn sign in the city, at least part of the pub has now been converted to an Indian restaurant.

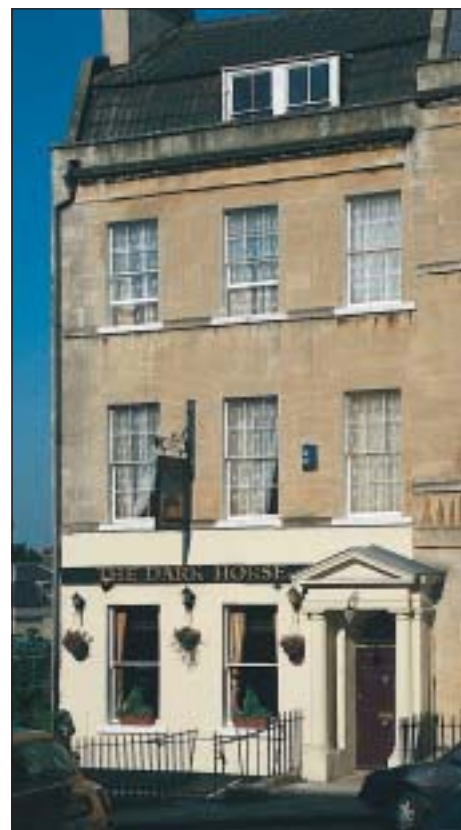


Crown & Anchor

## Hot Fuzz

The Crown in the Market Place at Wells is suddenly the best-known pub in the West Country, thanks to a starring role in the cult film, *Hot Fuzz*. Although the film's hero received a cheering response when he asked what wine was available – “red ... or white” – he then rather blew it by opting for a pint of lager. Lager was definitely the order of the day in the Crown, with just about everybody drinking it. A Bath Ales beer mat was spotted on one of the tables, and Gem appeared to be available on a handpump, but that was as far as it went.

Anyone nipping down to Wells to visit the bar where one of the most hilarious shoot-outs of all time took place will be sadly disappointed, however. The film makers didn't use the minimalist interior of the Crown, opting instead for the timeworn rusticity of the Royal Standard of England at Penn in faraway Buckinghamshire. I've no idea what sort of tippie is on offer at the Royal Standard (*beers from the Rebellion brewery in Marlow - Ed*),



The Dark Horse

but visitors to the Crown will typically find three real ales on offer – Butcombe, Sharp's Doom Bar and a guest beer such as Rucking Mole from Moles – oh, and lager, of course.

Andrew Swift

## News you may have missed: No. 1

ALCOHOL – clinically proven to be more dangerous than LSD, ecstasy, amphetamines or tobacco!

No, not a paranoid spoof dreamed up after an all-day session in the Bear and Blanket: this is the alarming conclusion reached by the Academy of Medical Sciences and published in the Lancet in March. A team led by Professor David Nutt of the University of Bristol and Professor Colin Blakemore, chief executive of the Medical Research Council, have looked at current drug classification in the UK and found it way off kilter.

“The current system,” according to Professor Nutt, “is not fit for its purpose. We should have a much more considered debate about how we deal with dangerous drugs.”

Home Office Minister Vernon Coaker has tried to allay fears about a crackdown on alcohol by stating that, “we have no intention of reviewing the drug classification system.” But with reports like this from professional bodies on top of calls for decisive action on Britain's binge drinking culture, it may be just a question of time before they start feeding into the political agenda.

Andrew Swift

# Maximum stars for Dorothy

BRITAIN'S top beer writer, Roger Protz, had only ever given one beer the top rating of five stars on his website [www.beer-pages.com](http://www.beer-pages.com) until he recently tasted Dorothy Goodbody's Wholesome Stout from Herefordshire's Wye Valley Brewery – and awarded it a top five status!

Said Roger, on a visit to the Stoke Lacy brewery to see for himself how the stout is brewed, "It's superb. I love it. It has all the characteristics of a classic stout, a roasted, liquorice coffee taste and nice and hoppy as well. The Dorothy Goodbody Wholesome Stout really did stand out from all the other beers I have ever tasted and was truly worthy of a five star rating, only the second time I have awarded the maximum."

Roger Protz, who is the editor of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide, said there was a growing interest in this style of brewing, especially in the international market with the Russians particularly liking dark beers.

He was shown around the brewery by Managing Director, Vernon Amor and Head Brewer, Jimmy Swan, and commented on the professional standards of the traditional style brewery founded by Peter Amor 21 years ago, and now employing 21 people producing the award-winning range of Wye Valley beers, including Wye Valley Bitter, Butty Bach and HPA.



# Keynsham Brewery update

I AM pleased to report several positive developments at Keynsham brewery. John Firth put out a discreet appeal to local CAMRA members earlier this year for help with investment in the brewery. As a result of this, brothers Mike, Steve and John Wilson have come forward and become partners in the business. Together with John, they have purchased the brewery from the previous owner (Colin Brook of the Old Bank at Keynsham), who had indicated a wish to sell.

The partners are now working on the future strategy for expansion of sales and production. Mike in particular is a long-time keen home-brewer and is looking forward to adding his experience and ideas into the company. Work on installing a new cask-washing system has already started.

The winter-only beer, Stockwood Stout, has been appearing in pubs and at festivals over the last few months, along with the two all-year-round beers, Somerdale Gold and Pixash.

Another beer is also being added to the portfolio and will be called Chew Valley Blond. It is being brewed to a strength of 4.3% ABV and is described as: "A pale gold refreshing best bitter perfect for summer drinking. The combination of wheat and pale malts with three different hops give a lime-citrus and green apple flavour to this clean-tasting and thirst-quenching ale."

Vince Murray

# Ale Connors

AN article in CAMRA's national newspaper *What's Brewing* piqued my interest recently. A discussion of pub signs mentioned the historical role of an 'ale connor' and I decided that I had to investigate.

A bit of digging around has found the following:

In days of old, pub signs were necessary because very few people could read. In the late 1300s, Richard II passed a law that all ale houses should display signs so that the ale connor would be able to recognize them instantly and carry out his inspection. Shakespeare's father was an ale connor. An ale connor would test the purity of the beer by pouring a bit onto a bench and then sitting on it; low-quality beer would be sugary and would glue the connor's leather breeches to the bench. People who had been drinking this low quality beer were said to have been "conned".

It appears that the role of Ale Connor still exists in some areas, though I'm not sure how official it still is. I have found a record of the South-East London branch of CAMRA granting their 'Pub of the Year' 2003 award to the Royal Oak in London SE1, and the local Ale Connor Peter Gadbury duly approved their ale quality!

It turns out that a councillor in Gloucester has also revived the traditional role. They have an annual 'Sheriff's Assize of Ale', which is this year being held on 14th July (I think). The Sheriff, plus his Sergeant at Arms and a band of followers dressed in medieval costume tour city centre pubs to carry out a test.

Thanks to:

[www.historylearningsite.co.uk](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk)  
[www.britainusa.com](http://www.britainusa.com)  
[www.london-se1.co.uk](http://www.london-se1.co.uk)

Conor O'Neill

**WYE VALLEY BREWERY**

**THREE GOLDS FOR WYE VALLEY**

**HPA** - Awarded West Midlands CAMRA Bitter of the Year 2006

**Butty Bach** - Awarded West Midlands CAMRA Best Bitter of the Year 2006

**Dorothy Goodbody's Wholesome Stout** - Awarded West Midlands Bottled Beer of the Year 2006

ALSO

**HPA** - Silver Medal winner at West Midlands CAMRA Beer of the Year 2006

Wye Valley Brewery, Herefordshire  
[www.wyevalleybrewery.co.uk](http://www.wyevalleybrewery.co.uk)



# News from Bath Ales

THE **Live & Let Live** at Frampton Cottrell has now been fully refurbished. Open from noon to 11pm each day, the usual range of Bath Ales beers are available. The kitchen is open noon to 2.30pm and 6pm to 10pm in the evening. Sunday lunch is also served. Where possible Bath Ales are sourcing local ingredients for their pubs' kitchens.

Good news for visitors to the **Swan** at Swineford, too – a new car park is now open. An adjacent field to the pub has been purchased and turned into a car park for approximately thirty cars. Additionally, by 1<sup>st</sup> July further improvements will be completed, which will result in a children's play area and a petanque piste.


At the **Hare on the Hill**, the Silent Movie night is proving a great success – these take place on Monday evenings.

Look out for Bath Ales at local festivals throughout the summer. There will be bars at WOMAD and at Ashton Court, assuming the latter goes ahead. The Bath & West show at Shepton Mallet will also have a Bath Ales stand, located next to Heck's cider – a difficult choice which to visit first! An Organic Fair will also have a stand.

The Whole Foods Market chain, who are dedicated to local produce and organic products, are stocking Bath Ales beers – their local store is Fresh & Wild at Queen's Road, Clifton. Soon they are to open the UK's largest food retail space in Kensington High Street, London, with 80,000 square feet of retail space!

The state-of-the-art bottling line at the brewery is now up and running. This unit, designed in the Czech Republic, features a 12-head filler and state-of-the-art fine filtration and carbonation. Already there has been much interest near and far from interested breweries, and for the first time Bath Ales are exporting their bottled beer – to Finland!

*Phil Cummings*



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](http://www.bathales.co.uk)

# A celebration of two centuries of brewing in Wiveliscombe

TWO hundred years ago in 1807, William Hancock began brewing in Wiveliscombe. By the 1950's the Arnold Hancock Brewery was producing seven million pints of beer a year and owned up to 80 pubs. It was finally closed in 1959 following its 1956 purchase by Ushers of Trowbridge.

In 1980, by extraordinary coincidence, two breweries, namely Cotleigh and the Golden Hill Brewery, took up space in William Hancock's old brew house. In 2007, Cotleigh Brewery finds itself half a mile down the hill and the Golden Hill Brewery is known as Exmoor Ales. The two breweries between them are currently selling almost seven million pints per annum.

The Jim Laker Fund, in association with Cotleigh Brewery and Exmoor Ales, will be holding a beer festival on the Recreation Ground and the Rugby Club on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> August bank holiday weekend. The beer festival will be officially opened at mid-day by Mr William H. J. Hancock, a direct descendent of the original William Hancock!

This promises to be the biggest event to be held in Wiveliscombe for many a long day. All proceeds that are raised from the event will go to the Jim Laker Fund which supports local charitable organisations. It is worth mentioning that this year is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the JLF and in that time the fund has donated in the region of £15,000 to local worthy causes.

On both days the event will run from noon till midnight. The two breweries between them will be supplying 20 different beers. Sustenance will be provided by excellent local mobile food suppliers. Live music will be provided throughout the two days by a diverse range of local bands and musicians.

Local organisations who have received donations from the Jim Laker Fund are welcome to have a free site for a fund raising stall for themselves. This will be a family weekend and so we will endeavour to provide entertainment that will appeal to all ages.

Jim Laker was previously Managing Director of Exmoor Ales and passed away 11 years ago. The Jim Laker fund was set up in his memory.



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## 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](mailto:steve.plumridge@bristol.ac.uk)

Dear Editor,

I have attended the Bristol Beer Festival for the last ten years, ever since it originally started at the Council building on College Green in 1997, prior to relocating to its current site at Temple Meads.

This is an ideal venue to hold the Festival, not only for its good location, but also for its large capacity.

Each year I am very impressed with the way the whole event is organised and run by the dedicated CAMRA volunteers giving up their spare time to support such a worthy cause.

A vast selection of beers, ciders, perries and even the odd real lager is laid on to cater for all tastes. So how, as a punter, do you choose which beers to sample?

Personal choice may be based on many things. Do you go for the tried and tested varieties, or the ones with clever or witty names?

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to try many varieties of beers of varying strengths and flavours. I have tasted some excellent beers, but I must admit that many are not to my liking – in fact some I find quite awful.

I am told that beers get their individual character – that is flavour, aroma and colour – from the various ingredients used, the preparation and method of brewing.

I have come to realise that the beers I find most preferable are what I would describe as 'beer colour', i.e. not too dark or too light, but a RICH REDDISH COPPERY colour. In fact I would say that colour now plays a major factor in my choice of beer.

I have put this theory to many friends and acquaintances, and most would seem to agree.

There are of course a few exceptions to this rule, such as Adnams Broadside, which is a very dark colour (currently one of my favourite beers) and which I must add has not been available at the Bristol Beer Festival in recent years.

I would like to hear your views, and maybe get some comments from your readers on this subject of COLOUR.

Roy Plumridge,  
Downley,  
Bucks.

Dear Steve,

It wasn't until after I had thoroughly enjoyed reading the Spring edition of Pints West, and reflecting on what a good quality

magazine it was, that your letter of 23rd April detailing the CAMRA Newsletter of the Year award for the second time was put in front of me.

I am not in the slightest bit surprised that this is the case and you and your colleagues should be congratulated for producing this thoroughly informative and enjoyable publication. You set a very high standard!

With kindest regards.

Yours sincerely,  
Simon Theakston,  
Executive Director,  
T&R Theakston Ltd,  
Masham, Rippon,  
North Yorkshire.

Dear Steve,

Many congratulations on winning the "Newsletter of the Year" award again. You fully deserve it.

Cheers,  
Mark Steeds,  
Beaufort Arms,  
Hawkesbury Upton.

Hi Steve,

Thought you might like to know that I picked up a copy of Pints West in the **Salamander** in Bath while accompanying my wife on a pre-Christmas shopping trip – a couple of pints of Wild Hare was my reward for putting my hand in my pocket all morning. Pints West provided reading matter for a good bit of the train ride home to Weymouth.

More importantly, I found the account of a trip to Krakow (and Berlin) very useful as we went there in early January. **CK Brouwar** (easily found under the Elephant department store) was excellent, especially for the ginger beer. The same article mentioned the *europeanbeerguide* website, which was also helpful when we moved on to Warsaw. As the guide suggests, Warsaw is not great for a pub crawl. There is some good beer in a couple of brewpubs, but these are in modern retail premises – a bit like drinking in a cross between Brewers Fare and Currys Digital.

Another Pints West article introduced us to the **Maltsters Arms** at Tuckenhay near Totnes. Spent a night there after visiting the **Tuckers Maltings**

**Beer Festival** in Newton Abbot – £2 entry for CAMRA members and 250 or so beers, mainly SIBA brewers in the South West, almost all still available on day three of the festival. I'd definitely recommend it.

Went back to Bath earlier in the week and my reward this time was the **Star Inn** for a pint of Bellringer – really enjoyed the pub and the beer, although I had to stick to one pint as I was driving. The Star was recommended to us by a couple from Bristol we met in a Weymouth restaurant. If any of your guys fancy a train ride to Weymouth, they should be sure to visit the **Boot** (a Ringwood tenancy with the full Ringwood range plus an ever changing guest ale) or maybe make a trip to our **Octoberfest** in the former Devenish brewery (now a shopping arcade and theme park with Dorset Brewing Company still operating on the site – try Durdle Door if you get the chance).

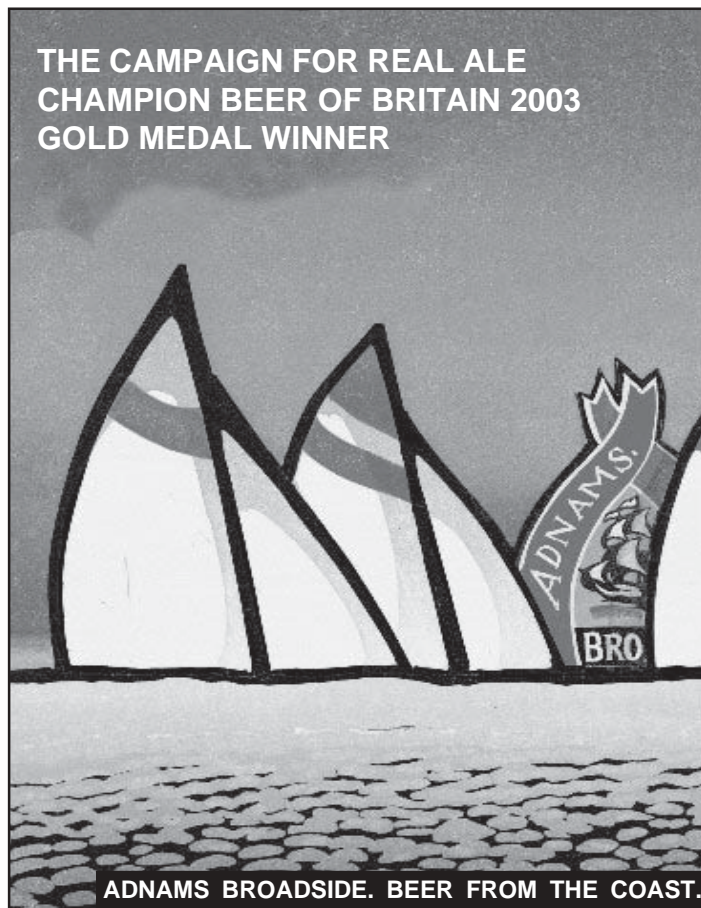
Regards,  
Kevin Lauder  
West Dorset CAMRA.

Dear Steve,

Thanks to your newsletter our interest in South-West pubs and breweries has grown, so this year we had a week's holiday in Weston ending at the Bristol Beer Festival on the Friday lunchtime. Wonderful festival! Wonderful newsletter! Keep up the good work.

Alan Power,  
Kingsthorpe,  
Northampton.

## THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE CHAMPION BEER OF BRITAIN 2003 GOLD MEDAL WINNER



ADNAM'S BROADSIDE. BEER FROM THE COAST.



# Portishead pub update

## The Royal Inn, Pier Road

This is the closest pub to the new Marina development. It can be reached by taking a set of steps up from the pier or, for those arriving by car, it can be found at the end of Pier Road. Surrounded by woodland and overlooking the coast, this place is in a spectacular position but has, until quite recently, been undiscovered by many until the present owners sparked it into life.

Originally built in 1830 by the Corporation of Bristol as a hotel to support the development of Portishead as a genteel seaside resort, holidaymakers arriving via rowing boats from steamers, and then via the railway, the hotel also saw activity from the transatlantic tourist trade. More recently it was surrounded by the industrial life of the town which was based predominantly where the Marina housing is now and there was a particularly ugly power station until it made way for that building work. Bass brewery took over the pub some years ago and spent a lot of money trying to engineer a rebirth with various management teams.

The pub is now owned and run by the Pelengaris family and is well and truly reborn as a free house. This is the family's first pub, being in the restaurant business before.

I met Mike Pelengaris recently. Mike runs the bar and showed off the three real ales available for my visit – Sharp's Doom Bar and Butcombe Bitter being the "regulars" and Black Sheep Bitter the "guest". I sampled the Black Sheep and Butcombe and can give them both the thumb's up! The Doom Bar didn't need my support – it's the best seller of the three. Additionally, Butcombe Blonde is on nitro-keg and Thatcher's looks after the cider-lovers but interestingly was represented by their Gold offering for a change.

Not surprisingly, given the family background, the pub is earning a reputation locally for their food which seems particularly well presented.

Opening hours are 11am to 11pm every day except Sunday which is noon till 10pm. Food is served 12 till 5 and then 6 till 9.30 every day except Sunday which is 12 till 3.30. Tables can be reserved for food. There are function rooms available upstairs and a large beer garden outside.

## The Albion, Bristol Road

The recent refurbishment seems to have gone swimmingly. The place was buzzing when I dropped in from my day job the other day, early in the evening. True to their word, the new landlord and lady, Andrew and Dawn, have introduced a changing guest ale via a cask behind the bar – when I visited it was Rev James (4.5% ABV) from Brains. This went

down a treat. Here's hoping for more beers from over the water – how about Brains Dark, Andrew? Even more pleasing in my little world is that, for a nice change, there is a changing guest cider and when not driving I usually plump for this and haven't been disappointed yet when it's been Black Rat. When added to the Greene King real ale range of IPA, Abbot Ale and Old Speckled Hen, I can see me becoming a regular dropper-inner.

## The Windmill, Nore Road

I can report that the Easter Weekend Beer Festival was a success. Liam, who organised it, mentioned that 25 different guest beers were used over the long weekend. All were sourced from local independent brewers. Beers which come to mind as moving particularly quickly and getting good reviews were Butcombe's Brunel IPA, Newman's Wolver's Ale and Cheddar Ale's Best Bitter.

## Clarence House, High Street

Located next to the Spicy Aroma Indian restaurant, with its own large car park, is this pleasant social club which sells two regular real ales in the form of Courage Best and Butcombe

Bitter. I'm pleased to say the Butcombe was extremely drinkable and warranted seconds. All in all, well worth the visit.

## The Poacher, High Street

This pub has a fascinating history originating in the 1670s from two cottages knocked together, and is the oldest functioning pub in town. Originally called the Blue Anchor, then the Gordon Arms (after the local Squire), it changed its name from the Anchor in the early 1970s. The pub had been in the George's stable, then Courage's and is now an Enterprise Inn. Ron Hazelton had been landlord from 1986 to 2004 when he retired and his son, Mark, took over. The pub has a well earned reputation for good, home-cooked food and is earning a growing name for real ale under Mark's stewardship – Courage Best, Butcombe Blonde and Sharpe's Doom Bar are the regulars but there is also a weekly changing guest ale (Hobgoblin is on the way soon).

The Poacher is certainly not now known for being "rough" but, when it was the Anchor, it was a local cider house and some of the older local residents will have memories of fights then breaking out on a regular basis. Now, the Poacher is established as a friendly, honest local halfway down the High Street with a large car park and excellent beer. Try it!

*Neil Ravenscroft*



## Meet the Landlord

**Name:** Mark Hazelton, landlord of the Poacher for three years.

**Nickname:** "Nutsie."

**Age:** 39.

**Where from:** Born in Norwich, but living in Portishead for 19 years now. Obviously keen on a fast pace of life.

**Interests:** Playing rugby for Gordano RFC, nursing his injuries, drinking beer and spending time with his children.

**Memorable moments:** Most of these involved the antics of one of the town's most missed recent "characters" – Carlos the hairdresser. Mark mentioned he had once bought the same box of logs in a charity auction and he didn't possess a log fire.



**Previous pubs:** This is his first pub as landlord. Many years ago he was a barman in Yesterdays Club, King Street, Bristol. Before taking over from his Dad, Ron, when he retired, Mark was a barman here for seven years.

**Other jobs:** Insurance salesman.

**Best thing about being a landlord:** Working with the best looking women in Portishead.

**Worst thing:** Working with the wife (Sue is in charge of the food).

**Favourite other pub:** Royal Oak, Clifton, which is run by his mate, Simon.

**Average hours worked in a week:** 90.

**Last holiday:** Tenerife.

*Neil Ravenscroft*

# National Mild Day – mild ales pub crawl

SATURDAY 5th May – National Mild Day – started heavily overcast, windy and quite cold. The uncertainty about possible rain did not bode well for a pub-crawl.

When I arrived at the **Victoria** in Southleigh Road, Clifton, Laurie Gibney was already ensconced in a window seat. We were welcomed by manager Fran Arnold and proprietor Glenn Dawkins and soon sampled the two mild ales on offer. These were **Hanby Black Magic** (4.0% ABV) and **Church End Gravedigger's** (3.8%), both delicious. By the time we were ready to leave for the next rendezvous our number had swelled to seventeen.

As we walked along the leafy by-ways of

East Clifton and through the Royal Fort Gardens, birds were singing and the sun came out as we reached the **Robin Hood** on St. Michael's Hill and we were joined by three more participants. This Wadworth pub regularly stocks **Pint-Size Mild** (3.3%), a wonderful example of the species packing a flavour-punch far above its alcoholic strength. Today it was in perfect condition. It was also heartening to observe that landlord Barry had placed a board on the pavement in front of the pub advertising the "Mild Ales Pub Crawl". Many of us enjoyed the lunches we had ordered in advance and after sitting in the newly opened 'garden' (clearly intended as the smoking area) we moved on.



The mild trail kicks off at the Victoria

Two of our number had decided to call in at **Micawber's** further down St. Michael's Hill to try the excellent Wychwood Hobgoblin – not a mild (tsch, tsch!) – the rest proceeded to the **Ship** in Lower Park Row, who generously offer CAMRA-card-carrying members a 10% discount. Another regular mild outlet, this pub has **Theakston's Traditional Mild** (3.5%), a typical dry-but-fruity Yorkshire example of the caramelized genre. More people joined us before it was time to leave.

The next venue, J.D. Wetherspoon-owned **Berkeley** in Queen's Road, was a disappointment. In spite of repeated assurances, made by various 'duty managers' on earlier occasions that a mild would be available, we were told that they had 'sold out'. Perhaps no-one had thought to order a couple of spare casks beyond what they would have received for their own national beer festival. Still, on the positive side, I suppose it proves that mild is a popular beer style that can sell out quickly!

The next pub did us proud, as promised. The **Hope and Anchor** in Jacobs Wells Road offered three milds. **Theakston's Traditional Mild** (3.5%), **Hidden Hops** (3.2%) and **Moorhouses Black Cat** (3.4%) were all excellent. We were joined by four more people, and several participants took advantage of the excellent food on offer.

A few yards down the hill, the **Bag O'Nails**, while sporting the usual range of up to eight regular and guest ales, offered us one mild. The relatively well-hopped **Springhead Black Tom** (3.8%) turned out to be a brown beer more akin to a bitter ale in spite of the brewer's description of it as a mild ale. As a keen taster of 'new' beers I must confess to trying four other ales – it seemed churlish not to!

On the way to the Centre, some of us called in at the **Bunch of Grapes** in Denmark Street – just in case any mild was on offer. There wasn't, but there was one in the cellar waiting its turn.

At the **White Lion** we were greeted by some fresh 'crawlers', including Nik Milo, the brewer at Cotswold Spring Brewery. Landlord Les and barman Kalman welcomed us with two more superb milds, **Wickwar Penny Black** (3.9%) – surely one of the most felicitously named real ales of all time – and

GRANDAD was *always*  
a bit of a practical joker.

So I should have known better when he took me down his local. Especially when he blindfolded me. Hand on elbow he steered me to a chair and sat me down. "Here, sup on this," he ordered, holding a glass to my lips. "What is it Grandad?" I CHUNTERED, apprehensively. "Never you mind," was the stern reply. "Just get it down you." I sipped, timidly, then again, bravely.

Then again, with NARY a care in the world. It was smooth, hoppy and dry. "It's delicious!" I exclaimed, ripping the blindfold from my eyes to reveal my Grandad's laughing face. "Theakston's Mild," he chortled. "I can tell it with my eyes closed. Now you can too." "But, even my dad says Theakston's Mild is only for pensioners," I protested. "Aye, your father's just not old enough to appreciate it," said Grandad, his eyes twinkling merrily. "But I reckoned his son would be."



PECULIERLY  
FINE COMPANY



**Milestone Classic Dark Mild (4.0%).**

Two minutes' walk away was the **Commercial Rooms**, Bristol's most reliable Wetherspoon outlet as regards both beer quality and variety. Here any criticisms of JDW management, as expressed over the Berkeley disappointment, were dispelled at the sight of no less than four contrasting mild ales on tap. Many of us took advantage of Wetherspoon's third-of-a-pint glasses in order to taste all four of them. They were **Elgood's Black Dog** (3.6%), **B&T Black Dragon Mild** (4.3%), **Burton Bridge XL Mild** (4.0%) and **Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild** (6.0%). Some of the six-strong group from Weston-super-Mare had their faith restored in JDW on that day and will no doubt visit the Commercial Rooms again while Steve Binns is in charge!

I decided to pay a quick visit to the **Old Fish Market** on Baldwin Street in advance of the main party. I found that the only mild on tap was the Springhead Black Tom previously found at the Bag O'Nails. Fuller's were however unable to supply either the seldom-seen Hock (3.5%), a light mild, or Gales Festival Mild (4.8%), both of which had been requested. The Black Tom was "all that we could get from Waverley BS" (the wholesaler) I was told.

Ross and Karen at the **Cornubia**, Temple Street, offered three milds, as well as hot steak & kidney and steak & ale pies. The milds were **Hidden Hops**, **Milton Minataur** (3.3%) and **Moor Miss Millie's Mild** (3.9%).

Thus in the early evening the 'official' pub crawl ended. It had been quite successful, upwards of thirty people joining and leaving from time to time. There were at least a half dozen of us stalwarts who had stayed the whole course.

From the Cornubia, some chose to negotiate the hill to sample the Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild at the **Hillgrove Porter Stores**, Hillgrove Street North, while others went to the **Naval Volunteer** in King Street where the four guest ales did not include a mild. Nik Milo and I chose the latter option, having visited the **Seven Stars** on the way. After a return visit to the Commercial Rooms for a meal we caught the 48 bus to my local, the **Cross Hands**, Fishponds, where we found more mild among the eleven ales on draught, after which Nik caught the 342 bus back home to Yate.

During the day we had encountered a total of fifteen mild ales of differing strength and tastes in the ten pubs on the 'official' crawl. Counting the duplications, these outlets offered a total of eighteen mild ales simultaneously, demonstrating that what the international brewers regard as a 'dead duck' is alive and well. Many converts to mild have discovered that its fresh, easy-drinking, uncomplicated style – as well as usually low alcoholic strength – make it an ideal session drink. And with somewhere near 150 mild ales available all year round in Britain, long may it remain so. Cheers!

Henry Davies  
(photo by Tony Durbin)

# BADRAG launched

**"BADRAG" is a new campaigning group within the Campaign for Real Ale's Bristol and District Branch.**

The **Bristol and District Rare Ale Styles Group**, or BADRAG for short, was launched during the 2007 Bristol Beer Festival, in the unique setting of the Brunel Passenger Train Shed at Temple Meads.

This new group seeks to campaign for bar and cellar space to be given to real ales of the less commonly seen styles: **stouts, porters, milds, old ales, barley wines and low-alcohol bitters**. Often such ale styles are only found at beer festivals where they sell very quickly, but are rarely found in the majority of pubs and bars.

Everyone is invited to assist with this campaign by telling the local CAMRA branch if they buy, brew for sale, or sell rare styles of ale in pubs and other outlets in the Bristol and District area (basically the old Avon county area). This will provide information for BADRAG to make available on the CAMRA local branch web site [www.camrabristol.org.uk](http://www.camrabristol.org.uk) so that we may all support bars that sell such ales.

To enable you to tell BADRAG about sightings of rare styles of ale CAMRA has set up a special email address **BADRAG@camrabristol.org**. The group would like to be known the name, style and strength (ABV) of the ale, its brewer, where and when it was

sighted, and also whether it is available as a regular or an occasional ale, and if the latter, when it is available.

The group usually meets at 8pm on the second Thursday of each month for a friendly chat about advancing the campaign, in pubs which support the campaign. Dates and venues are listed in the branch diary elsewhere in Pints West, and also on the branch web site.

To date, the group has met in Bristol at the **Ship**, Lower Park Row; the **Commercial Rooms**, Corn Street, which included a cellar visit; the **Hillgrove**, Dove Street; the **Robin Hood**, St Michael's Hill; and the **Cornubia**, Temple Street.

Future meetings are planned in June at the **Old Tavern**, Blackberry Hill, Stapleton, which will include an Arbor Ales brewery visit, and in July at the **Cross Hands**, Fishponds. There will also be a BADRAG social gathering during the Great British Beer Festival at Earls Court in London on Thursday 9th August.

*BADRAG supports the national CAMRA Light and Dark Supporters Group and its "Endangered Beer Styles" campaign, details of which are available on the web at [www.camra.org.uk/page.aspx?o=lads](http://www.camra.org.uk/page.aspx?o=lads), but after some months of discussion decided that the Bristol & District group would campaign under the alternative banner of "Rare Ale Styles", hence the acronym BADRAG.*

Laurie Gibney

## A stout definition

ON page nineteen of the last *Pints West* there was a definition of stouts that I felt required further clarification. The article said that stout was "usually a very dark, heavy, well-hopped bitter ale, with a dry palate, thick creamy head, and a good grainy taste." Almost a perfect description of the Irish national drink, Guinness! But not all stouts are "well-hopped bitter ale, with a dry palate". English-style stouts are traditionally not noticeably dry and bitter.

In the national CAMRA *Beer* magazine dated December 2006, one of the world's leading beer writers, Roger Protz, states:

"The main difference between an English stout and porter and the Irish is the former should be less bitter. Guinness in Dublin in the early 19th century started to use some unmalted roasted barley as duty was levied on the malt content. Roasted barley was not taxed and Guinness as a result paid less duty.

"Dry Irish stout may have been born as a result of a tax dodge, but British brewers continued to make stouts and porters using dark malts and generous amounts of hops but tended to avoid the acrid bitterness that came from charred roast barley."

So, there are two styles of stout, a dry Irish style of "unmalted" stout dominated by

keg Guinness, and a British style of "malted" stout that is less dry and some of which is almost sweet, such as Bristol Beer Factory's Milk Stout that won Bristol's Beer of the Festival in 2006 and 2007. If you think you don't like stout because it is too dry and bitter, you may have been duped by the dominance of Guinness. The next time you are invited to try a stout, ask if it is British or Irish style, but beware as some British microbrewers brew Irish-style stout and confuse you, so ask for a taster if in doubt. Scottish stouts and ales are usually not very bitter, because the Scots did not like paying the transport cost of bring hops from Kent. The accountants have got a lot to answer for!

Laurie Gibney

**WARNING**  
From the Management of the  
**HOPE & ANCHOR**  
Exceptional Public House  
**SPILL BEER**  
**DON'T**

# Hooray, hooray, the first of May, Colin and Pennie go out to play

IT was a warm Tuesday evening, and after spending a hot day in the Welsh sunshine (something rarer than dinosaur poo) we didn't fancy a night in front of the telly watching Liverpool and Chelsea play football. It was time for a change, to do something different, to explore our own back yard, once again!

It wasn't difficult to decide on an area we hadn't been to for many a year – St. John's Lane, Bedminster, a road that runs through an urban



Star and Dove

valley surrounded by the rows of terraced houses climbing the steep slopes of Totterdown, Windmill Hill and Lower Knowle at one end, and Bedminster's West Street at the other, with the Malago carving its flood plain through the middle.

Scrounging a lift from our son Martin to the end of St. John's Lane, we walked into St. Luke's Road where the **Star and Dove** (ex Cumberland) had recently been refurbished. Situated at the bottom of the western side of Totterdown, the pub, which dates from 1871, has been decorated in a clean and refreshing colour scheme giving it a bright and spacious feel. Food is served Wednesday to Sunday in the restaurant upstairs or in the bar. There were two ales on – Hook Norton Old Hooky and Bath Ales Gem – but regrettably on this occasion the Gem was a bit tired and the Old Hooky was sent back.

Moving on, we strolled along the edge of Victoria Park under a very large full moon. The city councils' sanitary committee purchased this open space in 1889 for £20,678 (most of the 51 acres belonged to the Smyth's of Ashton Court). Progress to convert it into a park was rapid with a bandstand and fountain erected one year later, but the large area of grass posed management problems, so the committee let the park for the grazing of sheep at £50 a year. For a long time a huge Crimean War cannon dominated the Somerset Terrace entrance, which became a focal point for the park until, along with all the other iron objects in Bedminster, it was melted down for munitions in World War 2. The park spurred on developers to develop the surrounding streets to produce quality houses with views over this open space. There used to be a row of stone markers running through Vicky Park (parallel with Hill Avenue) that marked where the water conduit to St. Mary Redcliffe church flows. This ancient conduit brings water from the slopes of Lower Knowle, across Victoria Park, under the railway embankment and down Spring Street before crossing the cut for St. Mary Redcliffe.

Turning along Park Avenue back onto St. John's Lane where, just off Redcatch Road in Beckington Road, the biggest unexploded bomb dropped on Bristol during the Blitz was found. Named Satan, it was dropped on 3rd January 1941 and lay undiscovered until April 1943 – it was 8 feet 11 inches long and contained 4000 lbs of explosives.

We reach the **Park House** on St. John's Lane, which is a local

community pub built in 1904 and serving Courage Best at £2.10 pint. It was a bit cold but in good condition.

Climbing up Raymend Road we come to the **Raymend**, a large friendly pub near the top of the Windmill Hill with lots of sports screens and a large steep rear garden that looks towards Ashton. The Courage Best had run out. We discussed whether we should continue the St. John's Lane crawl or carry on over the top and down past the Rising Sun and Windmill pubs in Windmill Hill. We'd had enough exercise for one day, so opted for the **Brunel** on St. John's Lane as it was downhill from here.



Park House

This part of St. John's Lane was badly flooded in the 1968 floods, along with much of Bedminster that nestles in the Malago Valley. On 11th July 1968 this area, from Bedminster Down to the New Cut, looked like an enormous lake with the tops of trees and houses poking up and for years you could still see the tide marks on the side of houses in St. John's Lane.

The Brunel (previously the Engineers Arms/House That Jack Built) was taken over by Greene King a year ago and has been tastefully refurbished



Raymend





Brunel

despite the large number of sports screens showing Liverpool beat Chelsea. The IPA and Abbot Ale were both in excellent condition. Food is still a big feature here.

We leave the Brunel and stroll past the new housing estate built on the Robinson's Sports Ground. This was one of several Bedminster sites where showmen used to set up their showyards to attract many people in with the noise of the steam organ and the polished glitter of the Noah's Ark and roundabouts. However, this area is probably more renowned as the original home of Bristol South End football team that formed in 1894. In 1897 they changed their name to Bristol City and got elected to the Southern League. Three years later they amalgamated with rivals Bedminster and, although games continued to be played on the St. John's Lane ground, the preferred Ashton Gate location with its stand became the teams permanent headquarters. One hundred and ten years later they are now in the championship.

With the Enterprise on Hartcliffe Way now demolished for flats, we cross the Malago and continue under the railway bridge carrying the Bristol to Weston line, into Sheene Road, where the **Albert** is being done out ready to reopen in July – a phoenix rising from the ashes. The Albert was rebuilt before, around 1890, when the old Spotted Horse was demolished and the new building was renamed the Albert Hotel.

Across the road from here was the tramways depot (where McDonalds now stands) that was destroyed in the Blitz when it took a direct hit in 1941 spelling the end of the tram system in Bristol.

Just behind McDonalds, past the front of the Cameron balloon factory that now occupies the old ES&A Robinson printing and paper bag factory,



Robert Fitzharding

is the site of the old St. John's churchyard.

St. John the Baptist church was built in the reign of King Ethelred in 1003, and it is thought to have its origins as a Minster church at the centre of a large estate, and was the mother church to St. Mary Redcliffe. Prince Rupert burnt it to the ground in 1645 as his troops did a runner from the roundheads during the English Civil War. It was rebuilt in 1662, and then replaced by a much grander building in 1853 as Bedminster's prosperity grew. In 1941 Adolf turned it into a burnt-out ruin with a stick of incendiaries, and in 1966 the site was cleared and a small park created. The only part left here of this once important church is a massive stone head.

It's still quite early in the evening, so we decide to round it off in the **Robert Fitzharding**. As it's the Wetherspoon's beer festival we know we should get a good choice of ales, and with their third-pint glasses we can try three beers for the price of a pint. Tonight we just opt for a pint of the Evans Evans Mayfly and the Anker Gouden Carolus Ambrio at 8%.

Colin & Pennie Postlethwaite

# The Bag O'Nails

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*Lorna and her team warmly  
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# Beer Festivals

## Chipping Sodbury

The weekend of the 13th and 14th of July sees the return of the South Cotswold Beer Festival. In its twelfth year now, this is organised by the Yate and District Rotary Club in association with the Chipping Sodbury Rugby Club.

This is a big event held at the rugby club's grounds with lots of real ales available in the marquee and plenty of entertainments laid on. There is even free camping available (you must book first) so those of you who live some distance away can stay overnight it. However, at the time of writing it would seem the Saturday camping passes have all gone.

Tickets, which will not be available on the door, should be on sale at:

- Yate: Any Sports, North Walk;
- Chipping Sodbury: Tourist Information Centre;
- Wotton-Under-Edge: Wotton Tyre & Exhaust Centre, Tabernacle Road;
- Hawkesbury Upton: The Beaufort Arms, High Street.

You can also write off for them at the address in the advert below. Visit their web site at [www.bs37.com/beer](http://www.bs37.com/beer) for further information.

The annual beer festival is the club's main fund-raising event, with profits going to worthy charities.

## Bitton

Organised by the Avon Valley Railway, the fourth annual Bitton Beer Festival takes place from Friday 8th to Sunday 10th June. You should be able to enjoy a pleasant weekend supping fine real ales in the nostalgic surroundings of the 1860s heritage railway station, taking the opportunity to view and ride on their steam and diesel locomotives in their natural home on the rails.

Check out their web site at [www.avonvalleyrailway.org](http://www.avonvalleyrailway.org) (following the "events" and "real ale festival" links) for more information.

## Nailsea and Backwell

Nailsea and Backwell Rugby Club are this year raising money for CLIC Sargent as they host their fourth annual beer and cider festival.

The dates for this year's event are Friday 13th to Sunday 15 July, opening 6 to 11pm on the Friday, noon to 11pm on the Saturday, and noon to 8pm on the Sunday.

There will be plenty to attract the punters, with around 50 real ales and 30 ciders and perries on offer. Plus live music all weekend.

Advance tickets are £6 for which you'll get a commemorative glass, tasting notes, and your first beer or cider. They are available from the Rugby Club and local outlets. See the web site at [www.applefest.co.uk](http://www.applefest.co.uk) for more details.

## St Werburghs & Clifton

Following on from the successful beer festivals held at two of the three Dawkin's Taverns – at the Hillgrove (newly crowned Bristol Pub of the Year) in Dove Street, Kingsdown in March, and at the Victoria in Southleigh Road, Clifton in April – the **Miners Arms** in Mina Road, St Werburghs will be holding a "Summer Beerfest" from Friday 3rd to Monday 6th August.

Three weeks later the **Victoria** will be holding its first **cider festival**, from Saturday 25th to Monday 27th August.

## Pucklechurch

The Pucklechurch beer festival takes place on Friday 15th and Saturday 16th June next to the Star Inn in Castle Road, 7.30pm to midnight both days.

There will be a selection of approximately 20 to 24 real ales and 6 or 7 ciders. Local west country breweries are going to be featured, along with musical entertainment from *Razor* and *She Said*.

Tickets are £5 Friday, £7 Saturday or £10 for a limited number of two-night tickets, and are available from the local Pucklechurch social club, the Star Inn, the post office, or email [whiskyman@gbate.fslife.co.uk](mailto:whiskyman@gbate.fslife.co.uk) with details. Check the web site at [www.pucklechurch.org/html/2007\\_beer\\_festival.html](http://www.pucklechurch.org/html/2007_beer_festival.html) for more details.

## Claverham

This year's Claverham beer festival, their fifth, is to be held from Friday 22nd to Sunday 24th June in the Claverham Village Hall. The theme this year is "Celtic Brews".

Entertainment includes *Acoustic Rooster* headlining our Saturday evening slot and comedian Stoney Garnett to fill in the gaps in the music. Sunday has *Jeremy Huggett's Band of Gold*, and the Mendip Morris appear in the Saturday afternoon folk slots.

## Chew Valley

The fifth Chew Valley Beer Festival takes place on Friday 14th and Saturday 15th September in Ubley Parish Hall. There will be 30 real ales, five ciders, and two live bands (evening sessions), plus a range of pub games such as shove ha'penny, dominoes, cards and table skittles in the quiet room. Tickets are £6 which includes entrance plus a commemorative gold-etched pint glass. Sessions are Friday evening 7pm to midnight, Saturday afternoon 12 noon to 4pm, and Saturday evening 7pm to midnight. There will be no sale of tickets on the door. See [www.chewvalleybeerfestival.co.uk](http://www.chewvalleybeerfestival.co.uk) for more details or call chairman Steve Blanchard on 01761 462468.

## Devizes

The eighth **Devizes Beer Festival** takes place on 7th July, 11.30am to 11pm. This CAMRA-run festival is held under canvas at the Wharf, beside the Kennet & Avon Canal.

Over 50 real ales will be available, along with cider and food. It is a mainly out-doors, family event with various entertainments all day, including live music and children's entertainment.

Admission is only by advance ticket at £6 (includes souvenir glass). Send a stamped, addressed envelope, plus a cheque made payable to 'Devizes CAMRA', to David Rapley, 9 Walden Lodge Close, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 5BU.

CAMRA members get a £1 concession in the form of tokens – please bring your membership card.

### YATE & DISTRICT ROTARY CLUB

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

## TWELFTH SOUTH COTSWOLD BEER FESTIVAL

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**FRIDAY 13 JULY 2007 & SATURDAY 14 JULY 2007**

**6 pm to 11.30 pm**

**12 noon to 11.30 pm**

**Advance ticket admission only - £7.00 per person.**

OR at £6.50 if applied for by post before 1st June, by writing to:

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

enclosing P.O. or cheque made payable to Yate & District Rotary Club

indicating which day (Friday or Saturday) also enclosing a S.A.E.

**Visit [www.bs37.com/beer](http://www.bs37.com/beer) for further information.**



## Worcester

Organised by the Worcester branch of CAMRA, the ninth **Worcester Beer, Cider and Perry Festival** takes place on Thursday 16th to Saturday 18th August.

The event is held on the Racecourse, Pitchcroft, 10 minutes from bus and train stations (Foregate Street). There should be over 200 beers and 150 ciders and perries.

Opening times are Thursday 5pm to 11pm, Friday and Saturday 11am to 11pm.

Hot food will be available, plus entertainment at all sessions. There will be a discount (in the form of extra tokens) for CAMRA members. Tickets are available on the door, or from the credit card hotline 01905 611427, and are strongly recommended to guarantee entry for the Friday evening.

For more information, see the web site [www.worcesterbeerfest.org.uk](http://www.worcesterbeerfest.org.uk).

"As there is a direct rail service from Taunton/Bristol to Worcester albeit a bit limited we thought that punters from your area may be attracted to our festival." (*John Maiden, Worcester CAMRA.*)

S.P.

## BATH...

### Folk at the Oak

Thursday 28th June to Sunday the 1st July sees the folk and beer festival at the Royal Oak in Oldfield Park, Bath. This splendid occasion is the second such festival, the first having being held during the summer last year. The event is being held courtesy of sponsorship from Roper Rhodes, Akeman Press and 'Arts & Business', plus the all important local breweries Blindman's, Bristol Beer Factory, Downton and Matthews, and profits are being shared with the Bath City Farm charity.

Music is planned to be an eclectic mix ranging from French to Scottish to Arabic and there will be numerous artist(e)s producing original material; approximately 14 acts are expected during the extended weekend. Mick will be doing a hog roast at some stage during the events.

There are now twelve beer engines at the pub which has just been awarded the Pub of the Year award for the CAMRA Bath and Borders area. Two of the pumps are reserved for serving a cider and a perry, but the remaining ten will be cycling through the festival beer list.

The beer list is intended to be approximately 50 ales from microbreweries. At this stage it has not been finalised and anyway it would be too long to reproduce here, but it is hoped that there will be festival specials. If previous Royal Oak festivals are anything to go by, there *will* be festival specials there. Wednesday night is the regular Irish session night so there is a risk that festival beers may be appearing a day early.

Be there or ..... er, don't be there!

*Phill the Pint*



The White Horse at Twerton

## Cornish Beer Festival

One of the most eagerly awaited events in the Bath beer calendar hits town on Thursday 5th July. The annual Cornish Beer Festival at the **Star Inn** on the Paragon is a chance for one and all (or, as they say in Cornwall, "onen hag oll") to celebrate the best that Cornwall's breweries have to offer. The traditional "pasty and a pint" menu will once again be on offer, and time-hallowed Cornish pub games (most of which involve the consumption of alcohol) are also likely to be on the agenda. Cornish costume is optional, as is participation in the rendition of Cornish ballads. Paul Waters, the landlord of the Star, who hails from the Delectable Duchy, is planning to introduce some new Cornish brews to the pub, as well as bringing back favourites from previous years.

The festivities kick off at 5.30pm on the Thursday and continue throughout the weekend. The evening session on Friday also starts at 5.30pm, and the Star is open all day from noon on Saturday and Sunday.

### First festival for White Horse

Jacqui Clarke, the landlady of the **White Horse** at Twerton, has introduced free computer courses at the pub, in association with Bath & North East Somerset's Community Learning Service. Taster sessions

proved so popular that a full five-week course aimed at beginners started in mid-May.

As well as holding a mini-beer festival from 28th June to 1st July, in conjunction with the festival at the Royal Oak at Oldfield Park, the White Horse is holding another beer festival from 13th to 16th July, with over 20 beers from local and national brewers. Entry will be free and there will be barbecues and live music throughout the festival. If you've yet to discover the White Horse, it's about ten minutes' walk from the Royal Oak on the Lower Bristol Road. Carry on along the Lower Bristol Road away from Bath, turn left opposite the Golden Fleece (another pub whose real ale quotient has increased of late), go under the railway and up the hill and the White Horse is in front of you.

*Andrew Swift*

## Nailsea and Backwell Beer and Cider Festival

*returning for a fourth successful year at  
Nailsea & Backwell Rugby Club*

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# Albert rescued from clutches of the developers

ANYONE travelling along West Street in Bedminster during the past year wouldn't fail to notice the boarded-up Albert Inn on the corner with Sheen Road. Many too will remember the fight to "Save the Albert" from developers who wanted to convert it into flats.

But now we can report a success story. The Albert has been rescued from the clutches of the developers and will reopen as a real ale pub!

The Albert is the second Bedminster pub to be rescued from oblivion (the Fussells in East Street reopened as the Assembly last year) despite many other Bedminster pubs going into the developers' skips ... the General Elliot, Enterprise and Plough in the last six months.

Carl Warmington, who owns the Rising Sun in Windmill Hill, has purchased the Albert and rescued it from the hands of the developers. This is the second time Carl has saved a pub from the threat of destruction. The Rising Sun in Windmill Hill was due to be converted to flats four years ago, until Carl stepped in and reopened it as a community pub.

The Albert is currently undergoing refurbishment after years of rot and neglect. The roof has now been finished using the original reclaimed tiles, and the collapsing window lintels have been replaced by Bath stone lintels. Inside, the small snug has been opened out into the bar and the old false ceiling taken back to its original level above the windows. The garage on the West Street side of the pub will become a covered smoking area with the wooden garage doors replaced by metal gates (similar to the Ropewalk on Bedminster



Parade). The function room upstairs has also been enlarged.

The decoration is designed to encompass the new and the old, so that some of the original character is maintained whilst brightening up the inside.

Carl expects to have the Albert open around the end of July, and hopes to hold a beer festival within the first one or two months of opening. The beers have yet to be decided, but as it's a free house Carl will be guided by what the locals want to drink. Live music has yet to be decided (subject to licence) but the idea would be to have one or two good bands on a month.

Colin Postlethwaite



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# Brewdoku

## one

Complete the grid below so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contain each of the following nine breweries: **Abbey Ales, Blindmans, Butcombe, Cotleigh, Hop Back, St Austell, Wadworth, Wickwar, Wye Valley.**

Send your solutions to the editor. The first correct answer drawn at random after 1st August 2007 wins a copy of the CAMRA Good Bottled Beer Guide.

			St Austell		Hop Back			
	Butcombe	Abbey Ales		Wye Valley			Wickwar	St Austell
St Austell	Wadworth		Wickwar	Blindmans			Butcombe	
		Butcombe					Hop Back	
Blindmans		Hop Back		Cotleigh	Wickwar	Butcombe		Wye Valley
	Wickwar		Hop Back			St Austell		Blindmans
		St Austell		Wickwar	Cotleigh		Blindmans	Hop Back
Abbey Ales				Wadworth		Wickwar	Cotleigh	
	Cotleigh		Butcombe		Blindmans			

# Brewdoku

## two

Complete the grid below so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contain each of the following nine Clifton pubs: **Albion, Coronation, Grapes, Greyhound, Hop House, Mall, Portcullis, Quadrant, Roya Oak.**

Send your solutions to the editor. The first correct answer drawn at random after 1st August 2007 wins a Butcombe keyring.

Mall		Grapes	Quadrant			Coronation		Greyhound
		Hop House			Albion	Royal Oak		
Royal Oak			Hop House	Greyhound		Grapes		
Greyhound			Albion				Coronation	Portcullis
Hop House			Greyhound		Portcullis			Grapes
Albion	Mall				Coronation			Quadrant
		Greyhound		Albion	Hop House			Coronation
		Mall	Portcullis			Albion		
Portcullis		Albion			Grapes	Quadrant		Hop House

# Return to Belgium

HAVING fallen in love with Belgium and its wonderful beers and cafes, I became a regular visitor to this underrated country throughout the late 1990s and beyond – more than a dozen trips in fact! Many of these trips were written up for Pints West. When Easyjet started expanding with more direct flights from Bristol in the last few years, I found myself using up my precious holidays in the likes of Krakow, Berlin, Prague and Budapest. Very nice they were too but I suddenly realised that I hadn't been to Belgium for two and a half years. The other factor was that I was down to my last half a dozen bottles of Belgian beer, brought back in 2004! Definitely time to go back.

Searching for a cheap crossing led me to Norfolk Line Ferries on the internet. I secured a crossing for our car and up to five people at civilised times for only £53 return. They run from Dover to Dunkerque every two hours, with a crossing time of an hour and three quarters. The ferry only takes cars and trucks, no foot passengers. Truckers have their own lounge on board. We were a little nervous of what to expect not having used ferries for some years (Eurotunnel had become our preferred route but wanted £120 this time). We need not have worried as the ferries were superb – large clean and extremely comfortable with a very uncrowded and relaxed feel. The food and drink on board was also good and very fairly priced too. There is little in the way of facilities at Dover once checked in and nothing at Dunkerque at all, so my advice is not to check in too early.

Three of us made the trip – Phil Cummings, my wife Marilyn and myself. We had found the *Hotel Mantovani* in Bruges via another excellent website (Belgium-Bookings.com). This was well located not far from the centre with free parking nearby (a rarity in Bruges) and fairly priced. It proved a good choice.

We were of course armed with street maps, the latest edition of Tim Webb's indispensable *Good Beer Guide to Belgium* plus on this occasion *Around Bruges in 80 Beers* by Chris Pollard and Siobhan McGinn. You are strongly advised not to visit Bruges without at least one of these books as you will miss out on so much if you do.

The hotel was only a few hundred yards from *Dickies* bar in the popular T'Zand square, which had an impressive funfair in place. This pleasant bar always stocks around 60 to 70 beers and we opted for several from Alvinne, a new brewery that we had heard good things about. We were only moderately impressed with these though. Without further ado it was on to the world famous (and rightly so) *Brugs Beertje* (pictured) in Kemelstraat, halfway from T'Zand to the central main



Brugs Beertje (Bruges Bear)

square. I am very happy to report that nothing has changed here and it remains my favourite bar ever. It serves 250 or so beers, has impressively efficient service and oozes atmosphere. What makes it truly exceptional though is the fact that you always meet such nice people of all nationalities there. People do not stumble across this place – beer lovers seek it out.

After three beers at the Beertje, including two wonderful new ones for us from the newish *Rulles* microbrewery, we managed to drag ourselves away and onto the centre. A couple of old favourites were visited next. *Hotel Erasmus* in Wollestraat has become very famous for having the best range of beers on draught in the whole of Belgium. It did not disappoint and we felt compelled to visit on all three evenings. This is a swish modern hotel with bar and restaurant. The owner specialises in getting beers on draught that you will almost certainly never see anywhere else again. No less than 16 ever-changing guest beers are on at a time, plus over 100 quality bottled beers. On this occasion the draught ones included the mighty *Bush 12* and *St Bernadus Abt* – both weighing in at 12% ABV but drinking like 5%. On the third and final night we decided to live a little and eat here – we will be doing so again – the food was sensationally good and not that expensive at 27.50 euros for three courses. Next up was *Garre* in De Garre an alley just off the main square. A wonderfully chilled place to enjoy a beer from their excellent range of 120 or more – no food here and no standing allowed – if you cannot secure a table you need to try later!

We were aware of a new café just about 100 yards away claiming to offer 400 beers – the *Cambrinus* in Philipstockstraat. It was easy to locate. On the first night we had neglected to eat properly and were impressed that we could still order a full meal at well after 10pm on a Monday night. It does indeed offer about 400 beers on a menu that must be the most cumbersome and hard to use document of its type! The food was decent and not very expensive. To our amazement they actually had all three beers from the almost impossible to find *Westvleteren* Trappist brewery in stock. Ever since "Ratebeer", an American website, declared these beers to be "the best in the world" they have become very hard to find. We had tried them before and did not disagree with Ratebeer. Sadly *Cambrinus* were selling them at double the price – seven euros for a small bottle – and the beer fell miles short of expectation – the mighty Abt at 12% was particularly poor. Back to the Beertje for a nightcap until it closed at 1am.

Over the next few days we checked out a number of other bars – including the following:

*De Kelk* in Langestraat – 120 beers, good list, in very scruffy building but very friendly.  
*De Kuppe* in Kuiperstraat – 100 beers from not so great a list, and smoky.  
*De Zolder* Vlamingsstraat – 60 beers, almost all excellent choices – this is a cellar bar where you should watch your head on the low wooden beam on the way out, unlike me!  
*Bargehuis* in Bargeweg – 180 beers, not many great choices, and always seems empty and dingy – probably better in summer with its





**T'Apostelken (Apostle), Aalst**

sun terrace and kids' facilities.

**Terrastje** in Genthof – nice small café with 46 beers and friendly service.

We thought a boat trip to the village of Damme might be nice – sadly the trip was low on scenery and Damme had little to offer in the way of shops or sights. Don't bother, especially as the main beer café has withdrawn most of its beers.

If you want a few really high quality beers to take home and glasses to drink them from, try the **Bacchus Cornelius** shop almost next door to the Cambrinus in Philip Stockstraat. This was particularly good for buying rare Lambic beers. Fascinatingly, it is run by the wife of the man who runs the chocolate shop next door – the cheapest of the choccy shops that we found and very good too.

If you want beers such as **Orval**, **La Trappe** and **Westmalle**, supermarkets such as **Smatch** in Langestraat sell them at seriously attractive prices – about 65p a bottle!

For our final day we decided to visit the small city of **Aalst**, between Ghent and Brussels, as none of us had been there before. We took a train there and found our way to the main square where a "death metal" concert was taking place at 1.30pm on a Wednesday in front of ten kids, five grannies and a dog – I kid you not!

Tim Webb had provided a few ideas for bars to visit and we managed to check out three of them. First up was **Kastanjehof** in Keizersplein. This was a brown café full of an amazing array of clutter, and a surly non-English-speaking owner/barman. The beer list of about 50 had few highlights. Bizarrely, for a place that doesn't do food, it opens at 8am weekdays and 6.30am on Saturdays – can't

imagine whose benefit that is for. It would however win an award for one of the strangest and darkest unisex toilets in a country of bizarre toilets!

Next we made a long trek out to the new bar café called **T'Apostelken** (pictured) at 1 Apostelstraat, on the ring road (not yet in the guide books). Later we discovered that the number 4 bus from the station passes right by this bar and that the one day passes (6 euros) that we bought in Bruges work on all buses and trams across the country – what a bargain! The café is a wonderful new find – very impressive over two floors with an outside sun

terrace. The friendly and efficient staff spoke good English and enjoyed discussing the 150-plus quality beers on offer. The food looked good too but time was a bit tight. We liked this place a lot.

The bus took us back to the station, and the **Bergenhof** bar opposite. A plain simple bar with 75 beers of high quality, and with friendly service – a great spot to wait for (and even miss) your train. Then back to Bruges, and on to Erasmus again – sadly the Beertje closes Wednesdays.

Our mission on the Thursday was to get to a proper beer warehouse and completely fill the boot with beer to take home – the main reason for taking the car in the first place. Tim had suggested that **Vanuxeem** at **Ploegsteert** (known as "Plug Street" by WW1 soldiers) near the French border south of **Iepers** (Ypres) was worth a look.

It took a little finding but was well worth it. It claims to sell 850 different beers and may well be telling the truth! You need a couple of hours to get round at a sensible pace, and it accepts cash or cards – not always the case in Belgium. It also has plenty of wine and other drinks at great prices. All of the beers were wonderfully cheap. We found almost all of the ones we were seeking. With the boot sagging we headed into Iepers for a quick drink at the **Posterie** in Rijselstraat – a lovely café set back from the street with the feel of an English country pub. From there a quick dash to Dunkerque and the ferry home. I really must not leave it so long next time!

Vince Murray  
(photos by Phil Cummings)

#### Travel information

Norfolk Line Ferries [www.norfolkline.com](http://www.norfolkline.com)

Hotel Mantovani [www.mantovani.com](http://www.mantovani.com)

Other hotels [www.belgium-booking.com](http://www.belgium-booking.com)

## Janet's Jungle Juice is Champion Cider of Britain

JUDGING for the National Champion Cider and Perry took place at the Reading Beer and Cider Festival recently and, after a sampling over 140 ciders and perries, Janet's Jungle Juice from West Croft Cider of Somerset was declared the overall champion cider.

The Harris family of Brent Knoll in Somerset have been producing cider since 1994 and source their fruit locally. In 1997 they planted an orchard which is maintained free from chemicals and it is the fruit from this orchard which is included in this award-winning blend of Janet's Jungle Juice.

On hearing the news John Harris of West Croft Cider said: "I'm very pleased to have the quality and skills which go into our cider recognised nationally. I last won Gold in 1996 and am delighted to win again."

The full results from the competition are:  
Cider

**Gold - West Croft Janet's Jungle Juice**

Brent Knoll, Highbridge, Somerset (01278 760762)

**Silver - Cornish Orchards Dry** - Liskeard, Cornwall (01503 269007)

**Bronze - Green Valley Cyder Vintage**

**Farmhouse** - Clyst St George, Exeter, Devon (01392 876658)

Perry

**Gold - Hartlands** - Tirley, Gloucestershire (01452 780480)

**Silver - Newton Court** - Newton, Leominster, Herefordshire (01568 611721)

**Bronze - Gwatkin Malvern Hills** - Abbey Dore, Herefordshire (01981 550258)

**Highly Commended - Minchews**

Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire (07974 034331)

# New CAMRA web site devoted to the best pub interiors

The Campaign for Real Ale has recently launched a new website devoted to the most important and unique pub interiors in Britain.

The site celebrates those pubs which remain wholly or largely as constructed.

They range from simple rural pubs to late-Victorian extravaganzas, from the genuinely old to the aggressively modern, from urban back-street boozers, through suburban estate pubs and picture-postcard rural idylls. Every architectural style is represented, be it Art Nouveau or Art Deco, High Gothic or post-war Brutalism.

The centrepiece of the site is CAMRA's National Inventory of pub interiors of exceptional historic or architectural importance. The website offers descriptions, and in many cases photos, of the 254 pubs currently on the National Inventory. Visitors to the site can easily locate entries in particular parts of the country or in whole regions.

There is also a general overview of the heritage pub scene, a guide to pubs as listed buildings, a glossary of architectural terms and a list of "pubs in peril" – important interiors where the threat of unwanted development is very real. The site also has information on the Regional Inventories, which list those pubs that are precious survivals in local areas.

Paul Ainsworth, Chair of CAMRA's Pub Heritage Group, said, "Most discerning pub-goers enjoy and appreciate unspoilt traditional pubs and we hope our website will help them find examples of such interiors both locally and on their travels. We also hope that the site will highlight the importance of these interiors, given that they now represent a tiny fraction of the nation's pub stock. Many are under real threat and once they're gone, they're gone. They are there to be enjoyed but also need protection and CAMRA is fully committed to that cause"

Visit the site at [www.heritagepubs.org.uk](http://www.heritagepubs.org.uk).

# The Orchard Inn



AFTER nearly 18 years at the helm, yachtsman Rob Merchant, former landlord of the Orchard Inn on Spike Island, has moved on to pastures new.

The popular Bristol harbourside watering hole has been sold to business partners Geoff Iles and Colin Black who had worked together since the early 1980s in their computer software company, Systems Team, and have now joined forces again in a completely new venture as publicans. They have long been customers of the Orchard – it was known as the "other office" from their Wapping Wharf premises on the waterfront near Prince's Bridge. Responsibility for the day-to-day running of the pub has been given to the new manager, Hugh Black, pictured here enjoying a drop of cider outside the front of the pub.

The new owners say they have no plans for significant changes – other than a few "improvements". One of the few remaining freehold and free-of-tie privately owned pubs, the Orchard specialises in both traditional ciders and cask-conditioned ales, and is well worth a visit. It can be found in Hanover Place (that's Hanover, not Hangover!) off Cumberland Road – just follow the signs to SS Great Britain.

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# Newman's Brewery visit

ON a pleasant mid-April evening, Bristol CAMRA members paid a visit to Newman's brewery, now situated in Yatton.

The move from Tom's garage in Banwell has given him both the challenge and opportunity to manage and expand his business. Adapting the premises and setting up the equipment, whilst also undertaking work on his own house alongside, has required considerable dedication and determination, shown, not least, by his 4am start to the day and his stringent attention to detail in implementing very strict sterilisation processes to avoid any possible contamination.

Tom had purchased the ex-Smiles mash-tun, but then had the problem of extracting it from the former brewery. Due to a preservation

order on the building, he was facing a potentially huge bill from an engineering company, for this work. His own engineering experience and that of a friend, however, enabled them to carry out the work themselves, saving the day and avoiding financial disaster.

There were four beers available for sampling on the evening of our visit – namely Wolver's, Red Stag, Cave Bear Stout and then new Mendip Mammoth. They were all very favourably received. Tom's Polish helper, Pawel, also contributed to the evening by barbecuing both Polish and the more traditional British sausages, accompanied by his own version of a complementary sauce. Very good it was too!

Along with the support of his wife, Becky, Tom has taken on a new member of staff, Amanda, to handle the sales side of the business. We wish him well in the future.

Margaret Evett (photos by Tony Durbin)



Pawel and Tom pose next to the sampling casks



The group of visitors enjoy their Newman's beers



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## THE WOOLPACK INN

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super-Mare 01934 521670

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## THE LAMB

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# Pints & Politics

DRINKING – and the issues surrounding it – is higher on the political agenda than at any time since the First World War, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the city of Bath.

If you followed coverage of the local election results, you may recall that one of the biggest upsets in Bath was the unseating of two long-standing Tory councillors by two Lib Dem students, Nicholas Coombes and Armand Edwards. Block registration of over 2,000 students on the University of Bath campus, which lies in the Bathwick Ward, was followed by the Lib Dems selecting two student candidates who proceeded to romp home in a three-way contest between Conservatives, Lib Dems and Independents.

Naturally, Nick and Armand were keen to



win the votes of their fellow students, and, while the election literature posted through the doors of Bathwick residents showed them in jackets and ties making pledges to crack down on pubs and clubs serving underage or drunk customers, the literature distributed on campus had a somewhat different emphasis. A poster showing them dressed in kung-fu gear and adopting combative poses – and looking more like an ad for a Pet Shop Boys tribute band than an appeal for votes – carried the message: “SAVE OUR NIGHTLIFE! We all enjoy a night out – except the Conservatives. They want extra powers to control Bath’s pubs and clubs and restrict their licences. The only way to stop them is to support Armand and Nick. Your drinks are at risk!”

Which is a bit ironic when you turn to Hansard for 25 January 2005 and read what Don Foster, Lib Dem MP for Bath, had to say about the 2003 Licensing Act, the Second and Third Readings of which his party had voted against: “During the passage of the Act, we had some concerns about the Government’s motivation for introducing the proposals. We wondered whether the motivation was to garner the youth vote, rather than to address the real problem of binge drinking that afflicts the nation.”

All of which is a bit confusing – but, if you look at what’s been happening at one of Bathwick’s top real ale pubs, you may concede that the students may have had a point. The Pulteney Arms is a cracking little boozer, where Bath Rugby fans gather before and after games, with a loyal band of regulars, and, in Ash

McMorris, one of the nicest landlords you’re likely to meet. If you wanted a typical example of a community pub, it would be hard to beat. Ash and his wife worked at the Pulteney Arms when they were students. They loved the place so much that, after spending over 10 years working away from Bath, when the opportunity to take the place over came up, they jumped at it.

Last October, Ash applied to the licensing board to increase his opening hours to 10.30am–11.30 on Mondays to Wednesdays, 10am–midnight on Thursdays to Saturdays, and noon–11pm on Sundays. He also applied for an extension till 1am on 26 Fridays and 26 Saturdays a year, and for the performance of live music from noon to 9pm. The application,



The Pulteney Arms

extremely modest by the standards of many other licensed premises in the city, was granted.

At which point a group of local residents got together to appeal against the new licence. Bearing in mind that the pub is over 200 years old, and was therefore trading long before any of the residents decided to go and live near it – and bearing in mind that Derek Alsop, the 86-year-old ex-lawyer who represented the residents, admitted that the current licensees were not “difficult people” and that there had been no problems during the previous licensees’ 27-year tenure – you may wonder why. One of the residents was even quoted in the Bath Chronicle as saying, “I look forward to peace and quiet when I get home and that is why we chose to live in Daniel Street.” Which seems reasonable, until you realise that they might as well have said, “I look forward to peace and quiet when I

get home and that is why we chose to live near a pub.”

To cut a long story short, the appellants won: the option of opening till 1am on 26 Fridays and 26 Saturdays – an option Ash had always said he would only use occasionally – was withdrawn, and the performance of live music was restricted to 5pm to 9pm.

This case highlights a worrying trend. While everyone in their right mind condemns binge drinking and the anti-social behaviour fuelled by alcohol, it is clear that cracking down on pubs like the Pulteney Arms will have absolutely no impact on these problems. There seems to be a growing tendency, on the part of those most vociferous in their condemnation of the binge-drinking culture, to lump all licensed premises, and by extension all drinkers, together. The trouble is that going for soft targets – always a tempting option when people feel that “something must be done” – may, in the long term, actually be counterproductive.

Bath is a unique, or at least a very unusual, city, and not just because of its wealth of Georgian buildings. The centres of most large towns and cities – or at least the parts of them where pubs and clubs are concentrated – have few residents. Those who do live there are generally young, living in bedsits or small flats, and want to be handy for the nightlife.

It’s very different in Bath. The part of the city centre with most of the pubs and clubs is also jam-packed with stunning Georgian terraces, where flats change hands for hundreds of thousands of pounds, and where many of the residents seem intent on recapturing something of the spirit of genteel refinement captured so charmingly in the novels of Miss Jane Austen.

To say there’s a conflict of interest here is something of an understatement. Behaviour which in other towns and cities would pass without comment, in Bath is taken as a sign that civilisation as we know it is about to come to an end. Without wanting to state the obvious, city centres are noisy. They always have been and always will be. People will get drunk. Maybe they shouldn’t, but they do. The obvious question to ask is: if people don’t like noise, why do they choose to live in a city centre?

Spokesmen for various residents’ associations have suggested that much of the city is a no-go area at night, with streets given over to gangs of drunken teenagers. From my own experience, which includes taking groups of tourists round the city at night on dozens of occasions, this is nonsense. While there are isolated violent incidents, these are very much the exception, and fortunately I have yet to witness or be involved in one. High-spirits there certainly are, as is right and proper, but to find these threatening seems perverse. Having seen many other town and city centres throughout the country at night, I have no hesitation in stating it to be the safest I have yet to come across.

With control of Bath & North East Somerset Council having passed, in the wake of the elections, to a minority Conservative administration, the introduction of a “saturation policy,” which many have been calling for, has become part of the political agenda – hence the “drinks at risk” campaign by the uni boys. Its



aim is to stop any more pubs or bars opening in Bath and “encouraging” some – especially the big ones – to close, so that residents “do not lose control of the city centre at night.”

Leaving aside the question of where all the displaced drinkers would go if some of the city’s larger bars were “persuaded” to close (and if you’ve tried to find a quiet bar on a Saturday night after a Bath Rugby home game you’ll appreciate that I don’t leave it aside lightly), this idea of a saturation policy seems to be tackling the problem from the wrong angle.

For a start, much of what actual trouble there is – in the city centre and in the suburbs – stems from under-age drinkers buying high-potency booze from supermarkets and off-licences – often at absurdly cheap prices – and wandering about the streets drinking it – as the prelude to “a bit of action,” such as smashing the bottles it came in. Thankfully, there are signs that this problem is being taken seriously. In April, three stores in the city had their licences revoked after a police surveillance operation revealed that under-age drinkers were buying alcohol there. This may only be a start, but it is a step in the right direction. More important, it sends out the right sort of signal. Tackling convenience stores selling alcohol to youngsters is one thing, however; tackling the far more intractable issue of booze sold by supermarkets at knock-down prices will require intervention at national level. Given the power of the supermarket lobby, it will be interesting to see if any government will have the bottle to take them on.

Andrew Swift

## Pub news

**The Bell** on Bell Hill Road in St George has been closed for some time with no sign of activity.

**The Lord Rodney** on Two Mile Hill Road, St George has been closed for refurbishment and was due to reopen on Friday 25th May with “real ales”.

**The Live and Let Live** at Frampton Cotterell, formerly a Young’s pub (and before that a Smiles pub) has reopened after refurbishment as a Bath Ales pub.

**Horts City Tavern** in Broad Street, Bristol is selling Bath Gem, Marston’s Pedigree and St. Austell Tribute as well as beers from Wells & Young’s, and is due to have a beer festival starting on 29th June with beers from “all Bristol’s breweries”.

**The Bordeaux Quay** restaurant on the harbourside in Bristol is selling Bath Gem and Wild Hare on handpump.

**The Bag O’Nails** on St George’s Road in Hotwells, Bristol is now being run by a third member of the Dean family, Paul, and his partner Amanda. They have taken over from Paul’s nephew James, who took over from his father Alan when Alan moved to Ireland.

**The Portcullis** in Clifton has reopened after some refurbishment, with the upstairs room being made into a restaurant area.

Norman Spalding

# Down with the Fem-Ale

## Do women like different beers from men?

Certainly some articles, including on certain CAMRA websites, would have you believe that they do. Some companies have gone out of their way to produce “women’s beers”, often with a very low alcohol content or fruity flavours. Nearly every (male) writer seems to be convinced that women will prefer light beers to dark ones. The British Beer and Pub Association even suggested that it might be a good idea to serve beer to women in a wine glass with just a third of a pint therein – a pint glass, said one spokesman, is a very large glass. I suppose they thought the poor frail little women couldn’t get their hands round it. They obviously haven’t been down the Bell in Walcot Street in Bath on a busy night, when you’ll see women sinking pints like there is no tomorrow.

I must admit I was almost convinced. My personal dislike of Pitchfork was explained by some people as being because I was a woman and Pitchfork is a manly kind of beer. Only then I discovered women for whom it is their favourite tipple, and who also can’t understand why I don’t like it. Equally, I was finding men who don’t like its pronounced hoppiness any more than I do.

I also like many dark beers, which flies in the face of the marketing men’s theories. But not all dark beers. Popular though Mr Perrett’s Traditional Stout from Wickwar may be, it’s not on my wish list. Downton’s Chocolate Orange Stout certainly is. “Aha!” I hear the marketing men cry, “That proves that women like sweet beers.” Except that I’m not at all fond of kriel beer, so the theory falls on its face again.

I’ve become so intrigued by this that I’ve started to accost women drinkers in pubs like the Old Green Tree and the Royal Oak and ask them about their views on beer. And sure enough, their tastes vary wildly. To return to Pitchfork, I’ve discovered that its aficionados are as loyal among women as they are among men. Most women I’ve talked to are delighted that someone is interested enough to ask them what they think. As a result of this research I’ve come to the conclusion that the marketing men are simply wrong.

I’m supported in my view by landlords. One laughed uproariously at the idea that there was a difference. So why is this view still propagated, sometimes by female beer-drinkers themselves? In 2003 Paula Waters, national chairman of CAMRA, came out with this mystifying remark: “Someone in the industry needs to lead the way by launching an all-new beer aimed at women – the world’s first fem-ale.” When someone in her position comes out with such a statement, why blame the chaps if they get it wrong?

Here’s another good story from the same year. “Banana beer top fem-ale” was the headline on [www.realbeer.com](http://www.realbeer.com)’s report on the Great British Beer Festival. From their article you would think that only women tried this. But that wasn’t the case. It was just as popular with men. It so happened that, inspired, presumably

by Ms Waters’ comments, CAMRA took leave of its senses, selected ten beers for women, presumably on the grounds that they couldn’t do it for themselves, and asked them to choose their favourite. The winner was one made from banana bread. But would the result have been same if women had been able to make their own selection, not those that CAMRA decided were women friendly? Well, it might have been, but equally it might have been something entirely different. As a result of this pointless exercise CAMRA spokesman Mike Benner enthused: “I doubt that many women tried all of the top ten beers for female beer virgins, but the fact that so many chose to try Banana Bread Beer shows that women visitors were attracted to something so tasty and different.” I’m sorry, but I think that’s complete tosh.

What I do think is important is the actual marketing. Let’s face it, some pump-clips are laddish. I’m sure the Dorothy Goodbody beers are wonderful, but the pump-clips put me off. Yes, I know it’s silly and illogical. But they do. I’m not wild about the name “Pressed Rat and Warthog” even though I know which song the name comes from. There’s no doubt that, whichever sex you are trying to sell to, a good beer will struggle if the name’s wrong and the pump-clip isn’t eye-catching. Downton’s spring beer, Apple Blossom, is delightful (well, I think so) but I could imagine that its rather pretty pump-clip might be a turn-off for a thirsty rugby-player – male or female. Nor can you see the brewery’s name very well. And yes, it can work the other way. Taken in by an eye-catching pump-clip or a tempting name, I have had some rather unexciting beers before now.

So come on, you CAMRA chaps, and indeed some of you CAMRA women who seem to think that other women haven’t a clue when it comes to choosing beer. Accept the fact that women’s tastes range as widely as men’s, stop picking what you think are girly beers, and just go out and market the stuff. How about promoting some beer-tastings in the same way that wine merchants promote wine-tastings? Take a leaf out of Stuart Matthews’ book, and have a beer-tasting with appropriate food to go with each beer. The Matthews’ Brewery birthday bash will long remain in the memory of those who went for that very reason. And above all, remember there is nothing women hate more than being patronised. And telling us we need a “fem-ale” is just about the most patronising thing I have ever heard. Down with the fem-ale, say I.

Kirsten Elliott

( CAMRA is trying to promote real ale to all possible consumer groups. The female initiative was very successful and popular with the subject audience at which it was aimed. There are many women who have never tried real ale and as such, many welcomed this promotion. Of course there are many women who enjoy real ale already, including the national Chair(man/woman). However, surely there is no harm in trying to find potential new members of the public who may well find they enjoy this great beer – in all of its styles. We are after all, the CAMPAIGN for real ale. SO WHAT DO READERS THINK? )

# Take it to the top

## Sign CAMRA's full-pints petition to PM

PUB customers were robbed of £481 million in 2006. Beer drinkers are being mugged of £1.3m a day! How and why are these crimes against beer drinkers happening?

The answer – short measure.

Recent CAMRA surveys of local authorities' trading standards departments have revealed that 26.6% of all pints are served over 5% short. And the worst example found by officers was 13% short.

CAMRA is calling on the Government to stop this legalised robbery. 76% of pub-goers want the Government to stick to its promise, made in 1997, to ensure that drinkers get a full pint. Since Labour made that promise beer drinkers have lost an estimated £4.5 billion.

CAMRA's chief executive Mike Benner said, "It is a disgrace that up to a quarter of all pints served in the UK are less than 95% liquid when customers are paying for a full pint. The inaction of the Labour government in allowing this unfair practice to continue has cost beer drinkers billions of pounds".

CAMRA is launching a national petition calling on Government to define a pint of beer as a pint of beer and to require licensees to endeavour to serve a full pint everytime. Beer drinkers can sign up by clicking on the web

site [www.takeittothetop.co.uk](http://www.takeittothetop.co.uk). CAMRA has also produced eye-catching posters and petition cards that drinkers can sign and return for the PM's attention. Credit card-sized short-measure cards are available so drinkers can get an immediate check by how much they are being short-changed.

It is not just real ale drinkers that get regularly mugged at their local, lager and Guinness drinkers also suffer from short measure. Pub managers are often under pressure from their bosses to squeeze extra pints from their casks and kegs. The training manuals of some pub companies advise licensees to serve 95% pints.

The current code of practice issued by the trade body, the British Beer and Pub Association, recommends that its members serve a 95% pint to customers but advise that if they ask for a top up it should be given and given with good grace. But when was the last time you shopped for a kilo of potatoes or a dozen eggs and had to ask the shop keeper to give you more because they had originally given you short measure?

So let's end this short measure disgrace. Visit [www.takeittothetop.co.uk](http://www.takeittothetop.co.uk) and sign up to the petition.

**"1 in 4 pints contains less than 95% beer"**

*Let's do something about it!*



visit [www.takeittothetop.co.uk](http://www.takeittothetop.co.uk) and sign our online petition

## Brewing excellence from the Heart of Somerset since 1979

It has been 28 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 amaran 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 Seahawk Premium Beer 4.2% abv

Brewed at Cotleigh for 16 years as 'Golden Eagle', this is a bright golden coloured premium beer.

### 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](mailto:sales@cotleighbrewery.com) [www.cotleighbrewery.com](http://www.cotleighbrewery.com)**



# The proprietor, two pubs and great beer

RAB CLARKE has been on the local real ale scene for a few years now. He is probably best known as the guy who runs the **Bridge Inn** in Passage Street, central Bristol (near to the Central Health clinic and opposite GWR). However, there is more to Rab than that and, for those of us who like our real ales in good condition in excellent pubs, we are rather in his debt.

We may be in Rab's debt but it was some financial debt that he incurred to bring us the delights we have come to expect – but not just from the Bridge as Rab explains; "When you are a rather sad mid 30's bar manager for Bristol Polytechnic, as I was, there is only one career option – buy a pub. So remortgaging myself to the hilt, and with a brewery loan (not as attractive as first appears) I bought a free-of-tie lease – the Bridge Inn. This was back in the late 80's just before the 'beer orders' which effectively cut the value of the lease by half. Hmm, maybe some research would have been in order".

Since that time, the Bridge has turned into one of the most reliable pubs in the Bristol area, consistently serving great real ales. To further clarify its position, the Bridge is very close to the former Courage brewery and used to be a regular haunt for the brewery workers.

The Bridge is small, very small. As you enter through the narrow doorway at the front of the pub, the serving area is straight ahead with a small number of bar stools in front. To the right is a small seating area. There are photos of old footballers and football memorabilia on the walls. Outside, courtesy of a traffic-calming scheme, there is an enlarged pavement which has presented the opportunity of a seating area. This could be popular with the smoking ban in indoor areas upon us. The pub is very popular with local office workers both lunchtimes and after office hours.

It is believed that the building is approximately 100 years old. However, the cellars are older than the footballers featured on the pub walls – in fact, it is believed they date back to the 16th century or possibly before.

The Bridge sells a selection of Bath Ales' beers in good condition, including seasonals such as Rare Hare and Festivity. Pub food is also served much of the time and some decent music is played on the background music system. This pub is a regular feature in the Good Beer Guide.

Rab had a dabble at running the Palace Hotel in Old Market (better known as the Gin Palace) a few years ago. Sadly, the trade didn't really take off and that project was abandoned.

However, undeterred and this time raising funds through his pension scheme, Rab acquired the wonderful **Eldon House** about a year ago. Rab had started drinking in the Eldon when he first got together with his now wife –



The Bridge Inn (photo by Phil Cummings)

she lived a few doors up. An interesting ex-sailor called Ray was running it. He had a running battle with the pub company, Innspired, which featured in the trade papers as well as Pints West. The net effect of this drove down the rental value of the property and hence the value of the freehold when it was sold.

The Eldon dates from the 19th century and has a charming interior with three distinct drinking areas: a small main bar, a lounge and a more private area round the back. John, who runs the pub on a day-to-day basis with the able assistance of Emma, is also the chef. The Sunday dinners are excellent. Emma runs an eclectic music night on Sundays, well worth checking out. Oh, and of course, it serves the wonderful Bath Ales.

The Eldon House is situated just off Jacob's Well Road, very near the "West End" car park on Lower Clifton Hill. It's a lovely pub with a very intimate feel to the place.

Rab has a small involvement with Bath Ales. He assists in the running of bars at



The Eldon House

outside events so you may well find him serving you a pint at any number of outdoor functions.

The Bridge and the Eldon House are two small pubs – the sort of pub that we are losing in such high numbers currently. So, please use them, take your friends and work colleagues to these and other similar small Bristol pubs, and maybe some of them can survive and indeed thrive, giving us all a better choice of where to enjoy our beer.

Pete Bridle

*The Bridge Inn, 16 Passage Street, Bristol BS2 0JF - Tel 0117 9499 967*

*The Eldon House, 6 Lower Clifton Hill, Bristol BS8 1BT - Tel 0117 922 1271*

## Ship ahoy!

Hopes and aspirations set sail in Keynsham recently, as local couple, Bob and Jeanette Evans, 'took the helm' of the Ship Inn in Temple Street. The couple plan to run the pub as a family venture with crew, sons and daughter, Mark, Adam and Laura.

The Ship Inn is a Marston's pub, with regular ales which include Pedigree and Burton Bitter. Monthly specials have so far included Thwaites Thoroughbred, Banks's Bitter and Red Brick Double Barrel.

The pub is one of Keynsham's oldest buildings, apparently listed in the Domesday book; it was originally a coach house on the Bristol to Bath road and has many original features including 'hay troughs' in the restaurant area and an open fireplace in the lounge that dates back to 1636.

Bob is a well-known figure in the local rugby fraternity for his long service as a referee with Keynsham Juniors and the under-twelves



Graham Coleman Photography

league. Prior to this Bob played for Imperial RFC.

Bob and Jeanette aim to continue supporting various sports and activities that have become associated with the pub in recent years, including darts, shove ha'penny, charity quiz nights and even petanque (French boules). The gardens of the pub, which overlook Keynsham Park and the River Avon, contain a full-size petanque piste, or pitch, or court, or whatever one calls such a thing.

Graham Coleman

# PINTS WEST

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

**LETTERS:** please email any correspondence to: [steve.plumridge@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:steve.plumridge@bristol.ac.uk) or post it to:

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

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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](http://www.camrabristol.org.uk).)

○ **Tuesday 5 June** - Explorer trip. PLEASE  
NOTE: this is a change in date from the entry  
in *What's Brewing*.

○ **Saturday 9 June** - Visit to Bitton Beer  
Festival and Queen's Head at Willsbridge by  
public transport.

○ **Tuesday 12 June** - Trip to Butcombe  
Brewery. Depart from the Cornubia, 6.45pm.

○ **Wednesday 13 June** - Branch committee  
meeting, Old Fish Market, Bristol, 8pm.

○ **Thursday 14 June** - Bristol & District  
Rare Ales Group (BADRAG) meeting, Old  
Tavern, Stapleton, 8pm (including a look at the  
new Arbor Ales brewery at 7.30pm).

○ **Wednesday 20 June** - Trip, destination  
TBA.

○ **Saturday 23 June** - The annual summer  
cider saunter. Start time will be 12.30 at the  
Apple, Welsh Back, followed by the Orchard,  
the Avon Packet, and probably finally the  
Coronation.

○ **Wednesday, 27th June** - Branch meeting,  
Commercial Rooms, Bristol, 8pm.

○ **Saturday 7th July** - Trip to Moor  
Brewery. Depart from the Cornubia, 10am.

○ **Wednesday 11th July** - Branch committee  
meeting, Cornubia, 8pm.

○ **Thursday 12th July** - Bristol & District  
Rare Ales Group (BADRAG) meeting, venue  
TBA, 8pm.

○ **Wednesday 25th July** - Branch AGM,  
Horts, Bristol, 8pm. Please bring membership  
cards.

○ **Wednesday 8th Aug** - Branch committee  
meeting, Old Fish Market, Bristol, 8pm.

○ **Thursday 9th Aug** - Coach trip to the  
Great British Beer Festival in London.

○ **Wednesday 22nd Aug** - Branch meeting,  
Old Tavern, Blackberry Hill, Stapleton, 8pm.

○ **Wednesday 12th Sept** - Branch committee  
meeting, Cornubia, 8pm.

○ **Thursday 13th Sept** - BADRAG meeting,  
venue TBA, 8pm.

○ **Wednesday 2th Sept** - Branch meeting,  
Commercial Rooms, Bristol, 8pm.



# Weston diary

○ **Wednesday 20 June:** Beer & Skittles at  
the White Hart, Palmer Row. 8.00 start.

○ **Wednesday 18 July:** Three-venue  
social. 8.00 Dolphin, Uphill; 9.00 Ship,  
Uphill; 10.15 Weston-super-Mare Cricket  
Club, Devonshire Road.

○ **Friday 3 August:** Bath Crawl.  
Train from Weston 1814. Visiting 5 or 6 Good  
Beer Guide pubs.

○ **Wednesday 15 August:** Two-venue  
social. Major From Glengarry 8.00, The  
Raglan Arms 9.15.

○ **Saturday 18 August:** Walking and  
Drinking Day in Freshford and Bradford-  
on-Avon. 10.10 train from Weston station.  
We will be visiting the Inn at Freshford and the  
Cross Guns at Avoncliff (both owned by Box  
Steam Brewery) and various pubs in Bradford-  
on-Avon, including 2007 Good Beer Guide  
entries the Bunch of Grapes and the Rising  
Sun. Anticipated train back gets to Weston at  
21.18. Return train fare is £12, but group  
travel should reduce this considerably.

Non-members welcome at all of the  
above events.

# Weston contact

Tim Nickolls – 01934 644925 (evenings)  
or email [tim.nickolls@virgin.net](mailto:tim.nickolls@virgin.net)

## THANKS TO THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS

Pete Bridle  
Richard Brooks  
Graham Coleman  
Phil Cummings  
Henry Davies  
Tony Durbin  
Kirsten Elliot  
Phil Emond  
Laurie Gibney  
Tim Hampson  
Lesley Huxley  
Dave Jane  
Vince Murray  
Tim Nickolls  
Conor O'Neill  
Colin Postlethwaite  
Pennie Postlethwaite  
Mark Steeds  
Andrew Swift  
Richard Walters  
Robin E Wild  
Editor: Steve Plumridge

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I enclose a cheque for .....

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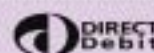
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# Wickwar happenings

WICKWAR brewing all started in 1990 when Ray Penny took the brave step of opening his own brewery on the site of an old coopers' shop, Arnold's Cooperage, in Wickwar, Gloucestershire.

Before setting up the brewery in Wickwar, Ray meticulously learnt his trade through an extensive apprenticeship to become the craftsman he is today. He then set about brewing his own recipes to create what has proved to become a very popular range of ales.

A few years ago it became apparent that they were outgrowing their original premises. Such has been the success of brewing at the Arnold's Cooperage that it was decided to move – lock, stock and many barrels – to the site of the original Arnold, Perrett & Company

Brewery ... literally just across the road and next to Brunel's original broad-gauge Gloucester-to-Bristol railway.

That was two and a half years ago, and the larger premises also allowed for the creation of an on-site brewery shop. As it happens, there are currently vacancies for two part-time brewery shop assistants and brewery tour guides, as well as for a field sales person.

Wickwar produce half a dozen regular traditional cask beers, plus a number of seasonal specials. The core brands, in order of strength, are Coopers' (3.5% ABV), BOB (4.0%), Cotswold Way (4.2%), IKB (4.5%), Mr Perrett's Tradition Stout (5.9%) and Station Porter (6.1%).

Cotswold Way, a "rich, amber, smooth, well-balanced beer with a terrific hoppy finish", also available in bottles, has been chosen by **National Trails** (see [www.nationaltrail.co.uk](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk)) and **Natural England** ([www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)) as the official beer of the Cotswold Way. Later this year Ray plans to change the bottle label and the pump clip to reflect the National Trails colours.



Ray Penny in the Wickwar tasting room

Wickwar are also the main sponsors this year of the Wychwood Music Festival ([www.wychwoodfestival.com](http://www.wychwoodfestival.com)) which is held every year at Cheltenham race course. Wickwar are supplying all the real ale, which will include, BOB, Cotswold Way and a special festival beer 'Stage Fright'. It is taking place on 1st to 3rd June however, so may well be over by the time Pints West hits the streets (or rather the pubs).

Ray points out: "All our brewing and fermentation is undertaken and overseen by our vastly experienced head brewer, Philip Downes, previously of Riddleys."

And he goes on – for the technically minded amongst you – to say: "We have a special way of sparging in our new plant and it is what we call virtual atomisation. This cuts down the amount of protein over-runs and makes for a more stable clean and clear beer."

What more can I add?

SP



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- Their own vehicle
- Self-motivation
- Be a team player
- A 3-month probation period

To register your interest please contact:

Dominic Hale on 0870 777 5671

or send him your C.V.

Wickwar Brewing Co, The Old Brewery,  
Station Road, Wickwar, Gloucestershire GL12 8NB



## Part-time Brewery Shop Assistants/ Brewery Tour Guides

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To register your interest please contact:

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# Wickwar in pictures



"Mashing in with Madge the Mash Tun"



Wickwar casks being washed



The Wickwar fermenting vessels



Inside the Wickwar brewery shop



Wickwar office entrance



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NOTED BEERS

**THE  
BREWERY  
SHOP**



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# The Brewer and the Commercial Rooms

WETHERSPOON'S pubs are a mixed bag. Some I have been to have had poor beer quality and one I visited up North had no beer at all! There are none of these problems at the Commercial Rooms in the centre of Bristol.

The pub is situated in the old Merchant Venturers' hall and has some great architectural features (shame about the décor though!). Manager Steve Binns has a strong passion for keeping real ale in excellent quality. The recent Spring real ale festival in early May was the showcase for some excellent beers from around the country and some from further afield, such as beers from Belgium and Germany.

To further enhance the beer festival Steve introduced six "Meet the Brewer" evenings. This was an innovative idea of the manager and provided an opportunity for Wetherspoon's customers to sample different beers and find out more about the breweries that make them. The breweries represented were:

- Monday 23 April - Bath Ales.
- Tuesday 24 April - Cotleigh.
- Monday 30 April - Exmoor and Archers.
- Tuesday 1 May - RCH.
- Wednesday 2 May - Butcombe.
- Thursday 3 May - Cottage.

It all started with Richard Dempster of Bath Ales giving an informative talk about the history of the brewery and illustrating how the ingredients impart the distinctive flavours of their beers. Participants had the chance to sample the malt and hops ingredients, as well as a range of Bath Ales beers.

The following evening Stephen Heptinstall of Cotleigh also presented a history of the brewery and discussed their bottled beers and how this has become a highly profitable part of their business. Again a number of their beers were available behind the bar and free samples were generously provided.

Paul Davey too gave an informal talk about how RCH came about and details of the wonderful beers they produce, a number of which were available to sample on the night.

During Butcombe's presentation, Martin Love, their sales director, gave



a brief history of the brewery and their beers, along with plans for the future.

All of this activity in support of real ale is extremely impressive and it was noteworthy that Wetherspoon had a leaflet in their festival programme with a generous offer of free beer for those joining CAMRA. The festival has now ended but Steve, the manager, has maintained a fantastic choice of real ales with rapidly rotating guest ales (makes you dizzy just thinking about it!). It is also heartening to see that Steve is supporting "BADRAG", Bristol CAMRA's campaign to promote rare ale styles such as mild, stout and porter.

So well done to Steve and his staff and may his reign at the Commercial Rooms long continue!

*Dave Jane  
(Photos by Richard Brooks)*





# The Rise and Rise of the Royal Oak

THE news that the Royal Oak on the Lower Bristol Road in Bath has been voted Pub of the Year by the Bath & Borders Branch of CAMRA will come as no surprise to anyone who has visited this temple to the brewers' art over the past 18 months.

So firmly established has the Royal Oak become on the real ale scene, it is easy to forget how much John and Becky Whinnerah have achieved in such a short time. Two years ago, the Royal Oak was a grim, boarded-up shell. Closed for over six years, and remembered by most people as a cider house with a dwindled constituency of regulars, there was little to indicate it was about to experience a dramatic reversal in its fortunes. Unlisted and unloved, it seemed only a matter of time before the bulldozers moved in and flats or offices rose on the site of another of Bath's lost pubs.

But, as the dog days of summer drew on, news filtered through that the old place had new landlords. John and Becky Whinnerah had taken it on, and were pulling out all the stops to get it open in just a few weeks.

Initially, all efforts were concentrated on getting the bar, cellar and toilets ready. Luxuries like living accommodation had to wait, meaning that the Whinnerahs had to spend the first six months in a caravan at the back. The logistics of this are even more mind-boggling when you take into account that their first daughter, Zoe, had been born only a few months earlier.

Came the opening night, and work to prepare for the influx of eager drinkers carried on up to the last moment, with handpumps – ten in total – being slewed into position just hours before the first pints were pulled through them.

Although many improvements have been made since then – the opening of a secluded beer garden, the introduction of superb home-cooked lunchtime and evening food, regular Irish music sessions – as far as the beer was concerned, John and Becky started as they meant to go on. From the opening night, the range was extraordinary, the quality impeccable. Even for a city like Bath, with so many good real ale pubs, many drinkers found what was offered at the Royal Oak a revelation. Despite having twelve handpumps, there has never been a regular beer, and the range is constantly changing. Local beers feature prominently, but so do beers from much farther afield, including Scotland and Ireland. If a brewery opens anywhere in the South West, John will do all he can to get their beers in, and if he hears of an existing brewery trying out a new brew, he'll try to get that as well.

A visit to the Royal Oak really is like visiting a beer festival. Even the most assiduous taster is almost certain to find something they've not tried before. When I was putting this piece together, I dropped into the pub one Tuesday afternoon. One of the scraps of information I was after – the number of different beers sold since the pub reopened –



John Whinnerah (left) receives his Pub of the Year certificate from Bath branch chairman James Honey

wasn't available. John and Becky simply haven't had time to keep track of them all. But to give some idea of their turnover, suffice it to say that six of the beers were new since I'd been in the pub the previous Saturday. Four of them I hadn't tried before.

Holding beer festivals at the Royal Oak may seem a little like gilding the lily, but there has already been one this year. The Winter Beer Festival took place on 1st to 4th February, with around 40 beers in total and up to 20 on offer at any one time.

Next up is a Summer Beer and Folk

Festival, which runs from Thursday 28th June to Sunday 1st July. Building on the success of last year's folk festival, this one will be bigger and better, with a full programme of sessions, gigs and workshops, a pig roast in the garden, and, of course, a great selection of beers. It's being run in conjunction with the White Horse up the road, who are holding their own mini-festival. There will be evening music sessions at the White Horse for musicians who've taken part in afternoon workshops at the Royal Oak and want to carry on playing.

*Andrew Swift*

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# Twenty years of Humpers

Michelle Murray recently completed twenty years as owner of Humpers Off Licence in Staple Hill. An outstanding achievement, and congratulations on still being the only dedicated real ale and cider off licence in Bristol and the surrounding area (unless anyone else knows of another).



The celebration was marked by a specially brewed bottle-conditioned real ale, Humpers Celebration Ale, which was commissioned from Keystone Brewery in Wiltshire, with a label featuring a picture of her Rottweiler dog, Pepper. Having tried it myself, I can certainly

recommend it!

Michelle has recently started a new enterprise, where she offers personalised beer bottle labels which people can order to celebrate special occasions; there would of course be a minimum quantity required for the purchase of these! In addition, she sells up to five real ales, including several guest ales, often including beer from the splendid personal favourite of mine, RCH brewery. The increasing popularity of cider is also recognised, with barrels of Thatcher's Dry and Cheddar Valley, Weston's, and often at least one guest cider which can include championship-winning West Croft Janet's Jungle Juice, varieties of Hecks (Port Wine Of Glastonbury was recently spotted) and other specialities.

With summer on its way, Humpers is obviously the ideal place to stock up for those outdoor parties and barbecues, and prices are kept at well below pub prices, with the Thatcher's cider still available at under a pound a pint. It is easily located, being on the main road between Staple Hill and Kingswood, at 26 Soundwell Road.

A regular in the Good Beer Guide for the



last fifteen years, let's hope the next twenty years are equally successful!

Richard Walters  
(Photos by Phil Cummings)

# Bussing to pubs in Somerset

HAVING been a member of Somerset branch of CAMRA for about 15 years, and working for the local bus company, my job brought me in contact with Somerset County Council's transport department and it did not take me too long to suggest that we could produce one or two bus/ale trails.

I was asked to submit ideas and after some months was told that something was being put together so could I submit all the pubs in Somerset that Sunday and bank holiday services run past.

That request came as a shock and took some time to sort out despite my knowledge, but with the help of Alan Walker, our branch chairman and schedules officer at work, it was soon sorted. That was back in 2000, and since then six editions have been produced by Somerset County.

Every September, when the new CAMRA Good Beer Guide is published, I work out the changes and send them to County Hall and look forward to its publication. Somerset is the only County to publish a guide of this type in the UK and up to 10,000 copies are published each year.

The guide includes a large, easy-to-follow map showing bus routes and pub locations, as well as a comprehensive bus timetable. Thirty-seven Somerset pubs offering great real ales are featured.

Anyone who would like copies will find Somerset County only too pleased to send them to you – phone 0845 345 9155 or email [transport@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:transport@somerset.gov.uk). I hope you enjoy visiting the great pubs listed in this guide.

Phil Emond

## Sunday and Public Holiday Bus Services 2007

**Transporting Somerset**  
Valid from April 2007

### SUNDAY AND PUBLIC HOLIDAY BUS SERVICES IN SOMERSET

Welcome to the ninth edition of the Sunday and Public Holiday timetable leaflet. Produced by Somerset County Council in conjunction with CAMRA (Campaign For Real Ale), this leaflet provides timetable information for all Sunday and Public Holiday services throughout Somerset. In addition, 37 CAMRA pubs and 19 Somerset tourist attractions are listed - a great way to discover Somerset by bus!

Almost all listed services have weekday equivalents. Please see also timetables produced by Somerset County Council for the following areas: Mendip, Sedgemoor, South Somerset, Taunton and West Somerset. These are available upon request from the Somerset County Council contact address below. If you have any enquiries, comments or suggestions about this leaflet or any other services, we would also like to hear from you.

**Transporting Somerset,  
Somerset County Council, Room A1,  
County Hall, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4DY**  
Tel: 0845 345 9155  
e-mail: [transport@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:transport@somerset.gov.uk)

OPERATORS AND ENQUIRY NUMBERS	
Eurotaxis	0871 259 3333
First (Weston-s-Mare)	0845 606 4446
First (Taunton)	01823 272033
Mendip Community Transport	01749 330100
Quantock Motor Services	01823 251140

**traveline**  
public transport info  
0870 608 2 608

All CAMRA information has been reproduced with kind permission of the Somerset Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale. For further information visit the CAMRA website at [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk) or 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 4DW. Tel: 01727 867281

This document is also available on request in Braille, large print, tape or disc and can be translated into different languages. We value diversity. We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and fair access to services based on need.

**RNID typetalk**



# You're never stumped for a good pint with the new CAMRA book for beer and cricket fans

BEER and cricket have gone hand in hand since the birth of the game, and the Campaign for Real Ale is proud to release **The Beer Lover's Guide to Cricket**, the first book to explore this happy partnership.

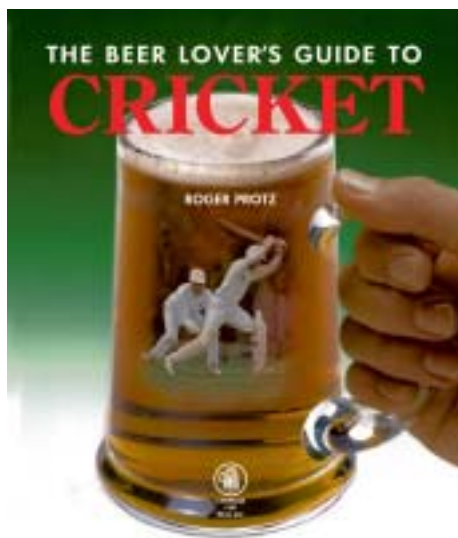
*The Beer Lover's Guide to Cricket* is launching at a time when there has never been greater interest in the national summer game – and fans that have been enjoying a few pints during the World Cup will be looking forward to the forthcoming Test Series against the West Indies.

Written by award-winning writer Roger Protz, *The Beer Lover's Guide to Cricket* contains profiles of all the First Class County Grounds and the best pubs for real ale near each ground.

Roger Protz says there has always been a close association between beer and cricket, continued today with Marston's sponsorship of the England team.

The inspiration for the book came when he paid a visit to the world-famous Bat & Ball pub in Hambledon, Hampshire, renowned as the birthplace of the modern game.

Roger Protz said: "When cricket was first played on Broadhalfpenny Down across the road from the pub, the wicket was made up of



two tiny stumps, bats were curved like hockey sticks and the ball was rolled along the ground. By the time the game moved from Hambledon to London, it had evolved to being closer to the game we know today, but the joy of a good pint while watching a few overs has never changed."

Whether the sun is shining or rain stops

play the book shows that spectators are never far from a good pub serving tip-top real ale.

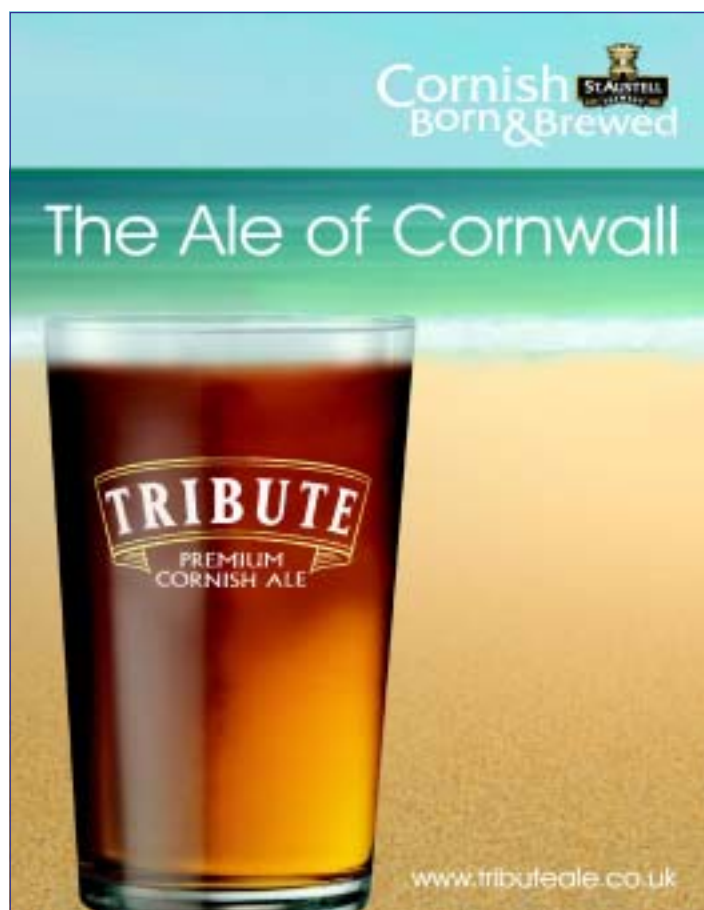
*The Beer Lover's Guide to Cricket* includes details on:

- ⚙ Real ales served at pubs near the ground,
- ⚙ If the pub serves food,
- ⚙ Public transport information,
- ⚙ Car Parks,
- ⚙ Accommodation at the pub.

Protz added: "The book includes profiles of the First Class grounds and their museums that trace the histories of the counties and details of such memorable games as the Edgbaston Test of 2005, Ian Botham's demolition of the Australians at Headingley in 1981 and, with a history of the game in Scotland, a reminder of Douglas Jardine's infamous Bodyline tour Down Under in 1932-33.

"For any fan of beer and cricket, this book is a great all-rounder!"

*The Beer Lover's Guide to Cricket* is available in all good bookshops or direct from CAMRA priced £16.99. Call 01727 867201 or go to [www.camra.org.uk/books](http://www.camra.org.uk/books).



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# Exciting developments at the Old Tavern

**AT the end of March the Old Tavern on Blackberry Hill, Stapleton, reopened following a massive refurbishment by the new landlords Paul Comer, his partner Rachel and sister Karen.**

**A month later saw the launch of the Arbor Ales brewery in a building out the back, making this Bristol's second brew-pub (the other being Zero Degrees at the top of Christmas Steps) – exciting news for Bristol's real ale drinkers.**

The pub reopened with a range of guest ales from local brewers Keynsham, Bath Ales, Moles and Wickwar. This local theme has continued with beers supplied from other local breweries such as RCH and Cotswold Spring. Paul is a keen real ale enthusiast and wants to show his "local" commitment by getting his ales from local brewers. This follows on from Paul's training, where his dissertation to his International Tourism & Management degree was in "locally-produced produce" and which he is putting into practice at the Old Tavern.

The Old Tavern has four handpumps for real ale at present with Moles Black Rat cider on a fifth. In the large cellar beneath the pub, Paul has moved the stillage so that it is directly beneath the handpumps, thus reducing the distance the beer travels to the pump and removing the need for air-flow jets.

Their own Arbor ales started making an appearance on the bar during mid April (although the official launch wasn't until 27th April) amid wide acclaim from local drinkers. It is intended that their Trendlewood and Old Knobbly will be on all through the summer months, along with other guest ales. The interesting wooden pumpclips with their pyrographic etching were all designed and made by Rachel.

The pub's restaurant opened for the Easter weekend with a range of lunchtime snacks and main course meals. As the weeks have progressed, new meals have been added to the menu, such as steak & Arbor ale pie at £7.95, along with steak nights and Sunday lunches. Karen, who is in charge of the restaurant and does most of the cooking, insists that the food, where possible, should all be produced locally.



Wednesday and Sunday evenings are music nights and there is also a function room upstairs that can be hired out. Part of the inside of the pub dates from the 18th century, although this part is all inside, and the outside dates from the 1870s.

The Old Tavern is keen to support CAMRA's aims, and during the month of May they were supporting our Mild campaign by having a mild ale on permanently. The first was the Banks & Taylor Black Dragon Mild, followed by the Burton Bridge XL Mild.

*Colin Postlethwaite  
(photos by Richard Brooks)*





# New brewery launched



**ARBOR ALES, Bristol's latest micro-brewery, was officially launched on the weekend of 27th to 29th April at the Old Tavern on Blackberry Hill, Stapleton.**

Arbor Ales is a two-and-a-half-barrel brewery, the equipment for which was purchased from Westbury Ales last winter, and installed in one of the refurbished buildings at the rear of the pub during March.

Jon Comer (the brewer) and brother Paul (his business partner in the brewery) quickly had the first test brew going. It was intended to create a true IPA in the old tradition, but due to teething problems with the equipment, the result was not what Jon was after.

However, upon tasting it, it was decided that it was far too good an ale to pour down the drain, hence the name – **Knot IPA** – a 5% ale that's good but not quite an IPA. Jon's problem then was that this well-balanced malty beer was so popular that drinkers are hoping that he will be able to reproduce it again in the future.

Arbor Ales intend producing two regular beers, **Trendlewood**, which is named after the local housing estate, and **Old Knobbley** named after a famous oak tree. **Slumberjack**, named

because of its alcoholic effect, will be brewed occasionally as a special.

The Trendlewood is a light golden, fruity and hoppy best bitter with a strength of 4% alcohol by volume. Old Knobbley is a deep ruby, malty and complex bitter with caramel hints at 4.5% ABV. Slumberjack is a dark, strong and mellow ale resembling porter in character, and weighing in at 6.9% ABV.

TO CELEBRATE the launch of the pub's brewery, the Old Tavern put on its first beer festival, showcasing 25 different ales from 13 different breweries, and five ciders. Pub landlord Paul Comer said they not only wanted to launch Arbor Ales, but show their commitment to local real ales.

The launch kicked off on the Friday, with four Arbor ales on the bar handpumps downstairs, and the other 21 ales in the function room upstairs, on a stillage loaned from Bath Ales.

The drinks weren't the only attraction though, as there was music over the weekend provided by *Clumsy*, an acoustic Latin rock band, and a 14-piece soul, funk and jazz band called *Bring Down the House* which drew large crowds. Saturday also saw a barbecue during

the day. We enjoyed our lunch of hot dogs and burgers in the garden, sitting in the glorious sunshine and washing it down with some superb ale.

Of the festival beers, there was an excellent mix of different styles and strengths with many dark beers that are not often seen together, except at larger CAMRA-run festivals.

The festival went very well, with Old Knobbley being my favourite of the Arbor Ales beers, and the Cottage Golden Arrow at 4.5% was for me the beer of the festival – a light golden, floral bitter that was very refreshing in the Saturday afternoon sunshine.

Apart from the Moles Black Rat in the bar, there were four other ciders on the stillage – Hecks Kingston Black, Old Rosie, Rich's Farmhouse Dry and West Croft Cider's award-winning Janet's Jungle Juice.

*Colin & the Pennie Postlethwaite*

Contact details:

Arbor Ales Ltd, The Old Tavern,  
Blackberry Hill, Stapleton, Bristol BS16 1DB  
Tel. 07930 454912

Email: paulcomer@arborales.co.uk or  
joncomer@arborales.co.uk

Web site: www.arborales.co.uk

# Great British Beer Festival 2007



**The Great British Beer Festival will be hosted this year at Earls Court between 7th and 11th August.**

The Great British Beer Festival was held at Earls Court for the first time in 2006 and was the biggest festival so far with over 450 real ales and over 65,000 visitors. Also known as the Biggest Pub in the World, the festival played host to a wide range of beers and real lagers from the UK and around the world.

**IMAGINE** a pub the size of an aircraft hanger, one that serves every type of beer you can think of, and even some you probably can't. It's staffed by people who are knowledgeable and passionate about their beer, who can recommend the perfect drink for both connoisseurs and the enthusiastic amateur.

**There are over 750 types of beer for sale, featuring over 450 of the best British ales, along with the 'Bieres San Frontieres' bar where you can sample some of the great beers from all around the world. For even more choice, there is also a real cider and perry bar serving these wonderful fresh and increasingly popular drinks.**

**With live music, auctions, and good grub, coupled with a festival atmosphere ... come along and visit Britain's biggest beer festival under one roof!**

## Opening Times & Prices

Save money, avoid the queues.  
Book your tickets for the festival in advance and save typically £2 per ticket!

**Tues 7 Aug : Trade Session noon-5pm**  
Admission to trade by advance ticket only

**Tues 7 Aug 5pm-10.30pm**  
Admission £6, CAMRA members £5

**Wed 8, Thurs 9, Fri 10 Aug noon-10.30pm**  
Admission £6, CAMRA members £5

**Sat 11 Aug 11am-7pm**  
Admission £5, CAMRA members £3

Season tickets are available at £18 for members and £20.50 for non-members – these tickets will give access to all sessions at the festival including the trade session on Tuesday afternoon.

The above are the advance ticket prices. Please note that tickets purchased on the door are priced at £6 for members and £8 non-members Tuesday to Friday, and £4 for members and £6 for non-members Saturday.

CAMRA members will receive a free programme as part of their entry to the festival.

If you're not a member already, why not join using the application form in this copy of Pints West to take advantage of these offers?

For details of how to purchase tickets online please visit [www.gbbf.org](http://www.gbbf.org), or call our booking hotline on 0870 380 0150.

