



**CAMPAIGN  
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**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**

# PINTS WEST

Multi-award-winning magazine of the Bristol & District Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale  
(incorporating the Bath & Borders Branch)



**Some contributions that, for  
whatever reason, could not be  
accommodated in the printed  
version of Pints West**

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

# 2011: A (Craft) Beer Odyssey

When I look back at the end of each year, I am always amazed at the awesome range of real ales I have had the pleasure of sampling and 2011 was no exception. It has also seen the emergence of so-called “craft” beer, and in this article I will attempt to debunk some of the myths associated with it, which has led to a heated debate within CAMRA. Please note that the views expressed in this article are those of the author; they do not represent the views of the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA nor those of CAMRA at the national level.

Real ale is defined by CAMRA as beer that, following the primary fermentation at the brewery, undergoes a secondary fermentation in the cask/bottle it is subsequently stored in due to the presence of residual fermentable material and yeast cells (hence the term cask/bottle-conditioned beer). This very precise definition was coined by CAMRA in the early 1970s to differentiate between the bland processed beers being pushed by the big brewers and the traditional beers whose very existence was under threat at the time. The definition of craft beer, a term that has its origins in the US, is much less precise. It is beer produced for taste rather than volume. Such beers, which include many real ales, are known for their quality, diversity and full flavour. Craft keg beer produced by the innovative BrewDog brewery in Scotland is beer fermented under pressure so the CO<sub>2</sub> in the final beer occurs naturally from the initial fermentation. The beer is then filtered very lightly to around 6 microns, which leaves yeast cells in the beer. It is then packaged in kegs, without any pasteurisation, and dispensed from a font rather than a handpump. So there is now a new way of packaging craft beers. Pioneered and perfected in the US craft beer revolution, now practised by leading craft brewers the world over. Does this make it real ale? Probably, but who really cares so long as it tastes good? In my humble opinion, good beer is good beer irrespective of the method of packaging and dispense. Now the technical bit is out of the way, I will swiftly move on to describe my beer odyssey in 2011.

The year started off as usual in January with two of my favourite winter ales festivals: the Exeter Festival of Winter Ales and the National Winter Ales Festival in Manchester. At the former, the Thornbridge Raven (6.6%), a black IPA, an oxymoron but still a fantastic example of the style, was my beer of choice. At the latter, Summer Wine Diablo IPA (6.0%), a brilliant example of a US-style IPA, was the beer I kept returning to. Neither of these are really winter beers but, hey, who cares!

February saw the launch of Arbor Ales Yakima Valley (7.4%) at the Three Tuns in Hotwells. Another US-style IPA packed full of hops, the recipe being heavily influenced by Ned Clarke (the landlord at the time who has now moved on to pastures new, pizzas actually, and a major loss to the local real ale scene).

February also saw a unique event at the Hillgrove Porter Stores hosted by Jamie and Elizabeth. This was the launch of four new single-hop IPAs in craft keg form by BrewDog under the banner of “IPA is Dead”. These 7.5% beers contained the same malt backbone and were brewed to 75 IBU. They were enthusiastically kettle-hopped and dry-hopped with four killer hop varieties from four different continents: Bramling Cross (UK); Sorachi Ace (Japan); Citra (USA) and Nelson Sauvin (New Zealand). It was amazing to try what was essentially the same beer hopped in four different ways. And if that was not enough, there were also available three cellar-conditioned strong cask ales for the CAMRA purists: Arbor Ales Black Eyed Pale Ale (6.5%) aged for 4 months; Dawkins Bittersweet Symphony (6.8%) aged for 10 months and Dawkins Scorpio (7.0%) aged for 6 months plus some session beers for those of a less adventurous nature. Needless to say, a fantastic time was had by all on the night and by myself subsequently in seeing off the four IPAs.

March saw the Bristol Beer Festival at the Brunel Passenger Shed, where there were too many excellent beers from far and wide to pick out anything in particular. The following month was the Maltings Beer Festival at Tuckers Maltings in Newton Abbot organised by the SW branch of SIBA, where there were again too many brilliant beers from

the SW of England to pick out anything in particular. April also saw the Reading Beer Festival, where the Steel City Beards & Guts Society (5.0%) was the stand-out beer for me; a mid-Atlantic pale ale, the name being a not so subtle dig at the stereotype of CAMRA members. This is from a cuckoo brewery in Sheffield which has a very apt slogan: “We Know What Hops are For”.

There was nothing much to report subsequently until June when the Solstice BeerFest took place at the Three Tuns. Blackima Valley IPA (7.0%) from Arbor Ales, a black IPA based on their Yakima Valley, stole the show for me.

The main event of the year was the Great British Beer Festival (GBBF) during the first week of August at Earls Court in London. On the evening before the festival opened, the Cask Pub & Kitchen in Pimlico held one of their regular “Meet the Brewer” events with the Kernel brewery in South London. This is where Evin O’Riordan creates incredible craft beers on a small plant under a railway arch. The brewery springs from the need to have more good beer, which forces you to confront and consider what you are drinking. Kernel is all about upfront hops, lingering bitterness, warming alcohols and bodies of malt; lengths and depths of flavour. Evin makes single-hop pale ales, IPAs and old-school porters and stouts. This is my favourite UK brewery at the moment and it was beer heaven for me to find ten of their beers on at once: five on cask and five on keg. Black IPA (7.0%) was available on keg and it even surpassed the excellent Thornbridge Raven; which was previously my favourite UK version of this beer style that is all about contradictions. Perhaps the Kernel is another Thornbridge in the making? Note that the Craft Beer Company in Clerkenwell, sister pub of the Cask Pub and Kitchen, opened during the summer of 2011, boasts 16 handpumps for dispensing cask beers from the UK and 20 fonts for dispensing craft keg beers from the UK and the rest of the world.

As for the GBBF itself, the 2011 event was probably the last at Earls Court which is scheduled for demolition after use as a venue for the 2012 Olympic Games. I purchased my usual season ticket, which enabled me to pop in whenever it fitted in with our family holiday in London. Other than the Thornbridge bar, the vast majority of my time was spent at the four Bières Sans Frontières bars (Belgian & Dutch, German & Czech, USA Cask and New World); where there was an incredible selection of beers from around the world. My perennial favourite is the USA Cask bar, because the American craft brewers have taken beer to a new level. They do not have our brewing heritage, so they have taken the main English beer styles (bitter, IPA, porter and stout) and added a modern twist by using large amounts of exciting new hope varieties. With IPA in particular, which is my favourite style of beer, they have revitalised and reinvented it; and then exported it back to the UK and Europe. Evolution and experimentation means that American IPA now comes in Double, Triple and Imperial forms; big boozy beers full of hops. This has inspired UK brewers such as BrewDog, Dark Star, Marble and Moor to follow suit; leaving the ubiquitous Greene King IPA (3.6%) now looking very much like the poor relation it really is. However, they did launch Very Special IPA (7.5%) at the GBBF. Locally, breweries such as Arbor Ales, Bristol Beer Factory and Dawkins are also producing some stunning IPAs. The New World bar was indeed new to the festival this year and featured beers from innovative breweries which are producing the most phenomenal beers from around the world. Beers from as far a field as Australia, Japan and New Zealand were featured; but my favourite discovery was the outrageous beers from the Mikkeller brewery in Denmark. Not Just Another Wit (7.6%) appeared to be a new hybrid style of beer – a combination of an IPA and a witbier – which was awesome.

Closer to home, the Minehead Beer Festival followed in September, offering a magnificent selection of beers served from a bar set up on the platform of this station on the picturesque West Somerset Railway. As usual, Somerset beers were the main feature; with the excellent Moor brewery providing 10 of the 100 or so beers. The evangelical Justin Hawke, their American owner and head brewer, was on hand on the Saturday afternoon to extol the virtues of unfinned beer; with Southern

Star (4.0%) available both fined and unfined to enable punters to make their own mind up on whether unfined beer is best for the beer and the consumer. In addition to the excellent Moor beers, personal favourites were Steel City Sheffield Hop Infusion Team (5.7%) and Buxton Axe Edge Double IPA (6.8%).

Joe at the Portcullis repeated his HopFest in October; which provided an opportunity for hopheads like myself to indulge in some of the hoppiest beers around. Especially for the occasion, Dawkins re-created Death Knocker (3.8%) based on a recipe developed by Ned Clarke the previous year. This is a turbo-charged version of their Brass Knocker, the standard pale and zesty beer simply hopped to death, and mighty fine it was too. October also saw the Great Northern Beer Festival in Manchester organised by SIBA, a northern version of the Maltings Beer Festival. Here I was able to sample the Offbeat Out of Step IPA (5.8%) and Red Willow Ageless (7.2%), both from new NW breweries; with the latter being a fantastic example of an US-style IPA.

The year came to a close with a trip to the latest BrewDog bar in Glasgow and the Autumn Beer Festival at the Three Tuns in November. There were 10 of the BrewDog craft keg beers available in their bar, which was ultra-modern and frequented by a very young crowd; it was not obvious to me whether the attraction was the excellent beer or the fact that this was the trendy bar of choice for this crowd. Meanwhile, at the Three Tuns, Achilles (4.5%) and Trees Come Down (4.5%) from Steel City were worthy of note, but some rather special beers from Arbor Ales were the headline-grabbers. These were Green Bullet IPA (6.5%), Dry-Hopped Alpha Ale (6.5%), 500 Minute IPA (10.7%) and Double Trouble (12.0%); with the 500 Minute IPA being their 500<sup>th</sup> brew and continuously hopped every minute for 500 minutes and the Double trouble being a hoppy barley wine brewed in collaboration with Art Brew.

So, there you have it – a whistle-stop tour of my drinking year. Returning to the issue of craft beer, I can honestly say that the best beer I have ever had is real ale in tip-top condition and I am yet to find a craft

keg version of a beer that is superior to the cask version. However, it is also fair to say that I have had a lot of bland and mediocre real ale in my time too. Contrast this with the fact that I have never had a bad or boring craft keg beer. In my opinion, craft keg beer has added a new dimension to the beer drinking scene in terms of innovative and full-flavoured products, which deservedly have their place ~~within it~~; whether that be ensuring good beer is available in outlets that cannot sustain real ale in good condition or providing an interesting alternative to real ale to capture a different market – both of which could result in more consumers trying real ale in due course. Many craft keg beers, particularly those from the US and a significant proportion of those from the UK and mainland Europe, are extremely strong and hence not really in direct competition with traditional real ales. As I said earlier, good beer is good beer irrespective of the method of packaging and dispense. I would like to think that real ale and craft keg beer can co-exist and be seen as complementary to one another rather than one being seen as the enemy of the other. The real enemy is in fact UK brewers who flood the market with bland and mediocre beer. Whether or not CAMRA could ever embrace craft keg beer is a moot point, but surely the real ale and craft keg factions should collaborate with each other in the wider interests of beer drinkers rather than adopt a narrow-minded and adversarial approach. I understand the concern within CAMRA that real ale brewers might turn to craft keg at the expense of cask ale. However, the evidence to date from the top craft beer bars in the UK such as the Grove in Huddersfield, the Port Street Beer House in Manchester and the Cask Pub & Kitchen/Craft Beer Company in London, and brewers such as Thornbridge who now provide their excellent beers in both forms, is that their commitment to real ale is undiminished and they just want to showcase for the drinking public how incredible the diverse range of good beer can be.

*Dave Graham  
30/11/2011*

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

Some counter arguments that have been made:

- \* CAMRA promotes real ale (plus cider & perry). Real ale does not, by definition, have any extraneous gas impacting on it.
- \* My understanding of what is currently called “craft beer” is that it does not meet CAMRA’s definition of real ale - and is therefore outside of our remit. This “craft beer” is keg.
- \* I find it a bit insulting that this “craft beer” movement is called as such. Is real ale - or lots of it - not “crafted”?
- \* As for “if CAMRA is going to survive” - membership is at an all time high of over 132,000 and growing at about 12% year on year.
- \* PROPER real ale breweries are growing at an amazing rate - about 100 new openings between the launch of the last 2 Good Beer Guides - on top of huge net growth in recent years.
- \* I do not think we should promote drinks that fall outside of what our policy states we should campaign for.
- \* By promoting these beers, it would weaken our campaigning for real ale and muddy the waters.
- \* If anyone wants to set up a separate organisation to promote keg beer - well, they are welcome.



# Wot I did on me holidays

I don't do foreign!

The idea of struggling to the airport, standing in airport queues and flying to find some sun leaves me absolutely cold if you would pardon the anachronism.

I would far rather spend time in blighty visiting pubs and beer festivals and taking ale with a few like minded friends. If a bit of the old English campanology can be thrown in as well then that is all the better but the ale is entirely sufficient.

It was thus with a relatively heavy heart that, as I remember in a moment of weakness, I agreed to accompany She Who Must Be Obeyed on a trip to France. Former experiences suggest that such trips are lubricated with wine, for which I have a significant distaste, and that beer, of any quality more often than not has been conspicuous by its absence. Maybe I was trying to win some Brownie points with the boss, or maybe it was because the trip had a couple of opportunities to harass the locals with my bagpipes, but I found myself at Dover with a car full of camping kit, literally to the brim. (*How does she find so much stuff to take for a camp?*).

As expected, after spending hours trying to get round Paris and god knows how many other hours driving the French payages, my heart sank as the first of many expected supermarket stops was called for. There was (not) after all enough room in the car for a half hundredweight (sorry 50 kilos) of assorted cheeses, pates, breads wines and the statutory box of 'Religieuse', a disgustingly sweet and sickly cake confection that is a staple diet for some. Personally I gravitated to the wines and beer aisles with hands in pockets and a hangdog expression. I was entirely lacking any expectation whatsoever. BUT I have to confess my heart was lifted when I found a shelf of bottled brown stuff with names hitherto unheard of by me. The brewery was called Brasserie de Sancerroise (I think that I have it right). Over the next few days we sat in the sun, which was far too hot by the way, and I drank them, and I found that they were good. The beer was typically around the 6% mark and had a number of interesting undertones and overtones which were well worth the experiment.

And so the weekend arrived and the whole reason for the trip, the music festival of Embraud. This little festival is situated beside the River Alier slap bang in the centre of France. The setting was lovely. It is a sort of Glastonbury Rural Museum establishment but just a little more inaccessible for us. The weather was lovely. The music being played was lovely. The bar was.....

Well it only to be expected I suppose.

I do not really have a word of French, always been hopeless at it and gave up completely when I bravely asked a group of Bordeaux quire girls whether they indulged in \*\*\*\*\* while seeking to establish whether they played any musical instruments. However, I must have been on my third H\*\*\*\*\* or S\*\*\*\*\* or whatever it was when I noticed that there were two sets of 'pression' pumps and one of them had a sign hanging over with the name 'Ouche Nanon'. How on earth does one say 'what is that?' en francais? I remember that peculiar stomach lurch that I always experience when trying to communicate in such situations and the fear of incomprehension when a long and rapid fire answer comes back with only one recognisable word.

But it was worth the effort. With some help from friends, who do have the ability to make themselves understood and actually understand the response, I established that Ouche Nanon is a new and local brewery, and would I like to meet the proprietor. Does the pope d\*\*p in the woods? Of course I would. And this is what I found:-

Ouche Nanon was set up in March 2010 by Thomas Mousseau who is the proprietor and brewer. He had been a hobbyist brewer for around 12 years but left his job with the Ministry of Agriculture to try and set up a profitable brewing concern. If I understood correctly Ouche Nanon is a village in Berry and means Anne's Orchard. The beers are not filtered and they are not pasteurised but the ones that I tried (all that were available) were most acceptable. They were:-

Ouche Nanon Blanche – This was a 5% straw coloured wheat beer. It was a very pleasant beer with interesting nuances that we English discussed for merry hours coming up with a slightly sweet caramel flavour with hints of peach and ginger and a bouquet (oops a French word) of

elderflower and ginger.

Ouche Nanon Rousse – A 6% darker beer with a fruity but much more bitter taste than the Blanche. We were somehow reminded of sherbet and chrysanthemum with this beer.

Ouche Nanon Blonde – 5.2% and again very pleasant. But by this time I must confess that I am my fellows were getting to the stage when notes were less common and frankly unreadable.

Thomas told me that they also do a Belgian style at 7% called Ambree but he had not brought any with him to the festival. He was also planning a dark beer which he intended to call Noire du Berry which I would have like to experience.

Apparently he brews about three times a month and the majority of the beer is sold at local festivals, organic farmers markets and in bottles. It strikes me markedly that products like this just do not seem to feature in bars at all, or have I just missed out on something? If the public house estates just do not take anything other than the very average run of the mill stuff that you can get everywhere else in Europe it must be pretty hard to get a brewing concern off the ground. Still, at least I tried my best to keep him going.

Phill the Pint



# Readers' Letters

## Reasons to be Cheerful, Part 1

I couldn't agree more with Andrew Swift's brief report on the state of real ale and pubs (*in Pints West no. 90, Spring 2011*). As he notes, while the relentless erosion of pub numbers shows no sign of abating, the good beer pub as championed by CAMRA for forty years now is more numerous and better than ever.

Hence the problem with the Good Beer Guide. While the early editions were understandably slimmer ones, there was presumably at some date a decision taken to restrict the number of entries so that now a pub such as our local, the Robin Hood on St Michael's Hill, which has been serving an outstanding range of local ales in excellent condition for a couple of years now, is likely to miss out on inclusion and all the benefits that would accrue. Either that or some equally worthy pub may have to be omitted while still being just as good or better than ever. Andrew suggests briefer, pithy abbreviated entries to allow more into the already slab-like GBG.

Over the twenty odd years I have been buying the guide, the most conspicuous growth has been in the breweries section which is now pretty much half of it. Could now be the time to split it into a Good Beer Guide and a Good Brewery Guide? The 'Good Pub Guide' title (*a commercial non-CAMRA publication*) is taken, albeit that a more accurate title for it would be the 'Good Annual Subscription Fee Paying Pub Guide'. But the increase in micro-breweries is so fundamentally intertwined with the rise of the Good Beer Pub that perhaps that is a separation that should be resisted.

One way or another, there needs to be a serious debate on this so the GBG can work as a guide to areas with which one is not familiar, without missing out dozens, or who knows hundreds of worthy pubs.

Tim Proudman describes his 'Day Trip to South Devon' in which he has an entertaining and pretty thirst-quenching day around Dawlish and Teignmouth without even patronising GBG listed pubs, and I have a sneaking suspicion he could have done that in many other areas too. In his preview of the 2011 GBG Vince Murray reported that several paragons such as the Cornubia had missed out not because they weren't good enough but because they wouldn't fit.

If the GBG is to omit so many eligible pubs it's not worth buying it.

Until such time as all the rubbish pubs have closed and the only survivors are all GBG worthy, I think we need to know which they are rather than those who simply get the luck of the draw.

Yours sincerely,  
Sam Kendon,  
St Michael's Hill,  
Bristol,  
7 July 2011.

*I didn't publish this letter in Pints West 91 as it was partly based on incorrect assertions. For instance, the Cornubia was not missed out from the last GBG because it did not fit, but because of timing. As Vince Murray had written: "Early in 2010, but just too late for the 2011 Good Beer Guide, Phil and Jackie took over the Cornubia in central Bristol." Furthermore, far from being "likely to miss out on inclusion and all the benefits that would accrue" the Robin Hood on St Michael's Hill had already been voted into the 2012 GBG with one of the highest number of votes recorded. But as there was an embargo on reporting what was in or out of the guide before it was published, I could not have made these points at the time. Ed.*

## Reasons to be Cheerful, Part 3

It is a shame your Summer issue (*Pints West no. 91*) did not take up the matter raised by Andrew Swift's article highlighting the problem of excellent pubs losing out on inclusion in the GBG. It is indeed paradoxical that at this time of declining pub numbers there are perhaps more good pubs selling good beer than ever. I note that the 2012 GBG includes 25% changes from the last one. It is hard to believe that these 25% (more than 1000 pubs) were not good in 2011, nor that those which have missed out are no good any more. Therefore Andrew's suggestion that maybe shorter citations would help is a good one. Or splitting the Guide in two. Or adding a "worth a try" section to each county, including all those listed in say the previous two years but not currently.

Pints West quite rightly gives coverage of good pubs and beer which

are not GBG listed, often in areas where the guide's maps are misleadingly blank. For the tourist and rambler, student of local history or anyone in unfamiliar territory this is a great shame and I think this is an important matter.

It would certainly be interesting to learn what other readers think.

Yours sincerely,  
Sam Kendon.

## Amiable meanderings on my day off

Dear Reader,

I have just had the most wonderful pub crawl day which I would like to share with you. I arose at 6am on a very rare day off from my job at the local hospital to meet my four friends, John McC, Mike, Dudley and Dave, at the no. 1 bus stop in Westbury-on-Trym at 11.30 (day rider £4). The bus was on time. We alighted at Clifton Down shopping centre and started at the Penny Farthing. High quality 6X, homemade picked eggs with chilli or curry. We try and stick to rounds of half pints on the whole unless we find something we really like. From there to the Highbury Vaults. Fond memories came back of the old student days. Bit of history and possibly a Banksy in the garden (I may be wrong on that). On the way down St Michael's Hill, the White Bear was next, where Shane served us – very welcome. Room upstairs had Edinburgh Fringe before it went there. As I do not have many weekdays off work, visiting these places uncrowded and in the daylight was a completely new and most enjoyable experience.

We then moved on down to the Colston Arms, where they are fans of the Rat Pack, Tom Jones and Welsh Rugby Union, to imbibe their superb Reverend James ales. Put our heads in the Scotchman and His Pack which serves a good Bombardier but sadly no longer Thomas Hardy.

Then on to Zero Degrees where the young lady that runs it made us most welcome and introduced us to Black Lager you can take home for £11.25 for approx 9 pints. Happy hour 4-7pm.

I nipped out to suss out the Bloom and Curll bookshop where I encountered a chap called Jason and purchased an old unabridged copy of Treasure Island which I saw the theatre version at the Bristol Old Vic last Friday. I shall return to see if he can find me a copy of the Bats by Guy N Smith.

All that I can say is that a most pleasant day was had by all. The no. 1 bus saw me safely back home. Nobody died or was even unpleasant. Just a day of complete and utter chilling out and socialising. What more could a man ask for.

I write this 50 minutes after I got off the bus where the Drive said thank you when I said cheers Drive. As a Brummie of old used to being treated quite differently this was icing on the cake.

It is 19.30 now and I have a weak gin and tonic (with a squirt of jif lemon) and ice on go listening to Mark Shrieve - Legion.

Days really do not get much better than this.

Thanks for publishing (?) or at least taking the time to read.

May these be the worst of our days.

Usque ad mortem bibendum.

Paul Tipton,  
Henbury,  
Bristol,  
August 2011.

# A visit to the Sandgrounder Southport Beer Festival

As one of over 100,000 members of the Campaign for Real Ale, I receive my copy of *What's Brewing* each month. One of the many topics I read is the festivals section informing people of the branches that will be holding their beer festivals within the next couple of months, along with the dates, times, venues, etc.

From that I found out that on the week ending 10-12 September this year (2009) it was going to be the Sandgrounder Southport Beer Festival, held at the Arts Centre on Lord Street and hosted by the Southport and District branch of CAMRA.

Coming up towards this time I felt like getting myself away for a couple of days, so that's what I did. On Thursday 10th September 2009 I set off. Living on the outskirts of Bristol (Keynsham), I got a bus to Temple Meads station and caught the 9.30am train to Birmingham station, where I changed. I caught the 11.20am to Wigan where I changed again for Southport, arriving at 1.35pm.

It was a nice warm sunny day. Southport is a town in Merseyside on the Irish Sea about 18 miles north of Liverpool, a holiday resort with a population of about 95,000 situated south of the Ribble estuary. For any golf enthusiasts, Royal Birkdale is nearby. Southport also has its own brewery, Southport Brewery, on Russell Road. Amongst their brews they have Golden Sands, 4.1%, a golden hopped bitter with a citrus flavour, that won a Gold award in the Best Bitter category at the Great British Beer Festival at Earls Court in August 2009.

After walking out of the railway station into the shopping area, the first place I wanted to get to was the tourist information centre to get a street plan map. After a walk around I felt it was time for a drink. All the public houses I'm going to be drinking in while in Southport are strictly only the ones that are Good Beer Guide listed. the nearest one to where I was at this time was the **Windmill** on Seabank Road. I had a pint of Moorhouse's Pendle Witches Brew (4.1%) in their tidy fairly spacious public bar. The landlord here claims to be the longest serving publican in town.

After another walk around, after I had got my accommodation sorted, and a wash and freshen up, I was off out again for another walk around. It's now later on in the afternoon. I had a walk out onto the sea front for a stroll along Marine Drive. The area around here was rather modern, in recent years you can tell that there's been a lot of money spent building this part of the town up. As I walked north of the pier (the oldest and second longest iron pier in the UK at 3,600 feet long, dating back to 1860) in the distance the Blackpool tower could clearly and visibly be seen. After walking around along the promenade back into the main area again, it's now time to go to the beer festival at the Arts Centre.

At this festival they had a Wars or the Roses theme, with most ales coming from Lancashire or Yorkshire. along with Merseyside, a separate counter on the end with beers from Southport Brewery. About 60 beers with a small cider bar. As normal at CAMRA beer festivals there was a good selection on offer. It's always enjoyable going to these festivals where you can sample, try and taste something new.

During the early part of the session the awards were presented. Then something that I liked. What I was impressed with was that their local MP for Southport, Liberal Democrat Dr John Pugh, gave us a short

speech. He's obviously a member of CAMRA and very much in support of us. He gave his supportive views of what he thought as regards the work we all do in CAMRA and what a good job we do. It's always good to see Members of Parliament giving us the support in what we do for the cause of what CAMRA stands for.

The following morning after a hearty breakfast, after my departure from the B&B, I had a morning having another walk around, on another nice sunny day. I wanted to go to the model railway village. Unfortunately it was closed on a Friday.

Come 1pm it's now time to have a drink. My first port of call was the **Barons Bar** in the **Scaribrick Hotel** on a side entrance on the first floor. Eight ales on handpump, many from small and micro breweries, and two real ciders. I supped a pint of Clarks Blond (3.9%), hoppy flavoured with a grapefruit aroma. A lot of music from the Beatles being played here.

A short stroll along Lord Street to the Wetherspoon's **Sir Henry Seagrove**, with about a dozen ales on. I had a pint of Saltaire Raspberry Blonde (4.0%), refreshing and raspberry tasting.

A short walk about a block inwards onto King Street to the **Cheshire Lines**. A Tudor style half timbered building, a public bar area as you entered, the rest especially the room to the rear was mainly for the diners.

I then proceeded to the **Volunteer Arms** at Eastbank Street. two ales on offer here from Thwaites. Lancaster Bomber. I had a pint of Wainwright (4.1%), a malty sweetness to this one. A laid back bar with a friendly atmosphere. It seemed like a lot of live music being played on the weekends.

Next I went to the **Bold Hotel** back on Lord Street. Three ales to choose from. London Pride. Old Speckled Hen. I had a quick half of Flowers IPA (3.6%).

I then walked over to the Promenade, to the **Lakeside Inn**. On the outside it said "The smallest pub in Britain". I'm not going to say anything else on that matter other than it might be. I would say according to what is generally believed or supposed. Two ales on tap. Tetley Cask. I had half a pint of London Pride (4.1%). A mirrored type of pub, the outside seating out the back overlooking Marine Lake. Nice on a warm sunny day like this. A nice man and lady running the pub.

My final inn visit was the guest House on Union Street, and Edwardian style pub with wood panelling. A gem. A real drinker's delight. I counted ten ales on handpump. I started off with half a pint of Cottage Hot Dog (3.9%). With a half of Bradfield Farmers Blonde (4.0%), citrus and fruity aroma. Followed by half of Jennings Cumberland Ale (4.0%). Finishing off with half of Phoenix white Tornado (4.3%).

I noticed amongst the selection here there was one from the Southport Brewery, Sandgrounder. I think this was the only pub I went to with any of their beers on. I had already sampled some of theirs the night before at the beer festival.

It was now coming up towards 6pm nearing my departure time for the 6.17pm train back home, going back the same way as I came, arriving back at Temple Meads at 10.40pm.

I quite enjoyed my short stay I had in Southport, having a walk around, going to the beer festival, and visiting the pubs.

Anthony Gazzard