



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

AWARD-WINNING



www.camrabristol.org.uk

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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)

‘Beer and Buildings’

Announcing an exciting new
pub trail





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CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

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LETTERS: please email correspondence to the editor at:

Steve.Plumridge.PintsWest@gmail.com

or post it to:

Pints West Editor, Steve Plumridge,

Garden Flat, 6 Royal York Villas, Clifton, Bristol BS8 4JR.

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Steve.Plumridge.PintsWest@gmail.com

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Thanks to this issue's contributors

- | | | |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Andy Gray | Michael Bertagne | Richard Harman |
| Bill Barns | Mike Jackson | Robin E Wild |
| Dave Graham | Nicky Cornock | Ross Hayward |
| Duncan Shine | Nigel Morris | Roy Sanders |
| Eddie Taberner | Norman Spalding | Stephen Edmonds |
| Graham Walker | Pete Bridle | Steve Hunt |
| Henty Davies | Pete Cornock | Steve Plumridge |
| Ian Beckey | Pete Taberner | Tom Chapman |
| Jan Deverell | Phil Cummings | Tony Durbin |
| John Gatty | Phill the Pint | Trevor Cromie |
| Martin Farrimond | Richard Brooks | Vince Murray |

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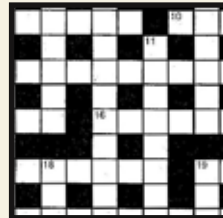
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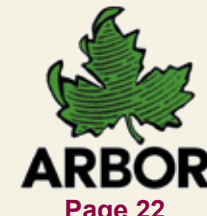
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Liberation Group acquires Butcombe Brewery

“Business as usual for Butcombe with added opportunities”



In early January this year it was announced that the Liberation Group had acquired Butcombe Brewery, bringing together two independent brewery and pub companies which will now have 94 pubs, bars and eateries, two breweries brewing over 30,000 barrels of award-winning beer, and retail and wholesale operations employing more than 750 staff.

What will this mean for drinkers and pub-goers? Will there be any changes to the Butcombe pubs and their beers? And who or what is the Liberation Group?

Tom Newell of Butcombe was quick to tell us more. “The Liberation Group, based in the Channel Islands, acquired all shares in Butcombe Brewery in December 2014 with the move being announced in early January. The Liberation Group is primarily a ‘pubs and eateries operator’ in the Channel Islands with two subsidiary wholesale operations and the Liberation Brewery forming the rest of the group. The group previously had no business interests over here and has acquired Butcombe to spearhead their expansion onto the mainland.”

Tom was keen to reassure us that all of Butcombe’s processes, personnel and indeed the trading name ‘Butcombe Brewery’ will remain 100% intact. Liberation, he said, has bought a growing, successful business in Butcombe and has no desire to change the fundamentals of why that has been the case. “We have very much been left to get on with business as usual while the guys at board level in both companies discuss the larger-scale opportunities, namely the potential for further acquisition of pubs (Liberation already owned 75 pubs so, with our 19, the group now owns more than 90 pubs).”

He went on to say: “Liberation’s experience in wholesaling can help Butcombe as we move towards an increased range of products in March 2015 before the full move to sell wholesale wines, spirits and soft drinks later in the year.”

Tom allayed fears by confirming that Butcombe beers will continue to be brewed exclusively at Butcombe Brewery in Wrington, as they have been for the



Guy Newell, Managing Director of Butcombe Brewery

past 10 years (the anniversary of this the largest new-build brewery in the UK for the last 40 years took place on February 19th). Liberation beers will continue to be brewed at Liberation Brewery in Jersey but there will be a chance for Channel Islanders to try Butcombe beers and for us in the West Country to try theirs. The first pallet of Butcombe beers has already arrived in Jersey and Liberation beers will soon be available in selected Butcombe pubs.

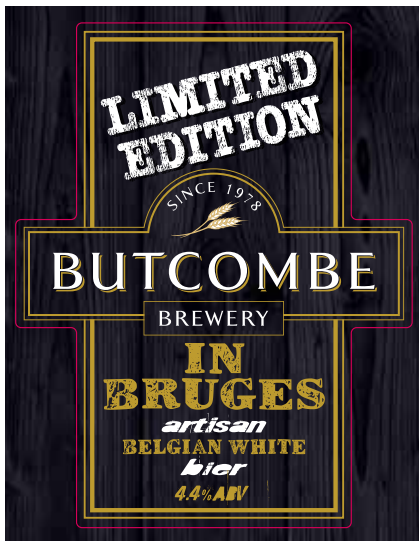
Guy Newell, managing director of Butcombe, stated: “We have had significant interest from several UK pub and drinks businesses, but for us Liberation Group was by far the best fit with our business. They share our ethos for high quality products and service and have proved, as we have, that being independent does not necessarily prevent you from being recognised for excellence alongside some of the biggest global names in the industry.”

Guy concluded by saying, “The whole team at Butcombe would like to say many thanks to Pints West readers for their continued support as customers and consumers,” and reminded us to “Keep drinking the Butcombe!”



Mark Crowther, Chief Executive of Liberation Group

News of the brews from Butcombe



The 'Limited Edition' range of beers

The first of Butcombe's *Limited Edition* brews was their **Belle Saison** at 5.0% which proved very popular at the relaunch of the **Yard** (formerly known as the Colston Yard) and also throughout the West Country in September.

Bohemia is a cask-conditioned Czech-style pilsner that has gone down even better; the beer should be available throughout the region from late February.

February has also seen the arrival of Butcombe's third *Limited Edition* brew, the 4.4% "artisan Belgian white bier" **In Bruges**.

Look out for more *Limited Edition* beers, including a dark saison style beer, appearing at various times throughout the year.

Seasonal beers

2015 looks set to be a mix of old and new in Butcombe's seasonal range with two new



beers featuring alongside the "best from previous years" seasonal beers.

February and March feature **Brunel Atlantic IPA** (4.1%), a chestnut-coloured beer with five different US hops, and **Haka** (4.5%), light gold in colour with Nelson Sauvin hops dominating.

April to June will see the return of **Crimson King** (4.3%), a big red beer debuted in 2014, and also a new version of **Great Grey Owl** (3.6%), an American pale ale that will feature a new hop profile this year.

July and August will see the debut of a brand new beer named **Big IPA** at 4.8%, and the return of last summer's huge winner, **Yeti** (4.0%), a US-hopped blond.

September will bring another new beer in the form of **Chinook** (4.2%), and the return of **Haka** in time for the Rugby World Cup.

Permanent beers

Butcombe Bitter and **Gold** are as popular as ever but it is **Rare Breed** that has really stolen the show of late. Since moving the beer down from 4.2% to 3.8% last year and redesigning the artwork to the orange with black bull, sales have increased by more than 85%.

Butcombe state: "We are producing more cask beer than ever and we believe our permanent beers taste better than ever ... and the calendar for 2015 is more diverse and exciting than ever."

For those attending the Bristol Beer Festival this year (taking place soon after publication of Pints West) there will be a chance to sample not only the **Haka** from Butcombe, but also the Liberation Brewery's very own **Liberation Ale** (the Liberation Group having just taken over Butcombe Brewery).

Other news from Butcombe

"Bristol sport fuelled by Butcombe" goes the strapline. Butcombe say they are delighted that, since becoming the official beer of Bristol City, Rugby and Rovers at the start of the 2014/15 season "all three teams are thriving and spectators are finally enjoying some great locally produced beer." At the time of writing, all three are top or second in their respective leagues so here's hoping for a much-needed up-turn in the fortunes of Bristol sport.

For beer and more, the Butcombe Brewery shop in Wrington is open weekdays and Saturday mornings, or you can also buy online. For more information you can visit their web site at www.butcombe.com or follow Butcombe-Brewery on Facebook or Twitter @ButcombeBrewery.

Nigel Morris

Cooking up a storm!

Cooking with Beer & Cider
Ian Salisbury & Butcombe Brewery

With contributions from Josh Eggleton & Adam Henson

MATTHEW PALE ALE
Santalously Fresh 2013

BUTCOMBE BREWERY
SINCE 1978
BITTER
4.1% ABV

RARE BREED PALE ALE
3.8% ABV

BUTCOMBE BREWERY
SINCE 1978
GOLD BITTER
4.5% ABV

Blend
Premium Cider
4.5% ABV

BUTCOMBE BREWERY
SINCE 1978

ASHTON PRESS
PREMIUM QUALITY
CIDER
4.5% ABV
MEDIUM BKT

Butcombe Brewery, Cox's Green, Wrington, Bristol BS405PA
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www.butcombe.com
Join us on Facebook - BUTCOMBE BREWERY & Follow us on Twitter @ButcombeBrewery

PRIDE IN EVERYTHING WE BREW

Marking the Steam Crane's first birthday

When Bar Salt in North Street, Bedminster, described by the police at the time as a "hotspot for violence and drink-fuelled disorder", was closed by the police and City Council in 2010, few would have imagined that the same premises would five years later be joyously hosting a party to mark the first anniversary of its new incarnation as the Steam Crane – a pub that is now considered by many beer drinkers and diners alike to be one of the best of its type in the city.

The building, on the corner of North Street, Dean Lane and Cannon Street, has a varied and interesting history, being originally a courthouse, where the first man to be sentenced to death by hanging at the New Bristol Gaol in 1821 was tried. Shortly after this, the building became a pub for the first time as the Bull, where an enterprising landlord purchased a caged, live tiger at the docks and brought it to the pub in an attempt to increase custom. To attract even more customers, it was advertised that a man would be placed in the tiger's cage one day, and while this did indeed draw in the crowds, this was of little consequence to the poor man in question, who met with a quick and grisly death.

The Bull changed its name to the Star around the turn of the twentieth century, and has since been known by a number of names, including the Florikan & Firkin, the Aurora, Bar Salt and the Bay Bar, before its current guise as the Steam Crane, named after the last remaining Fairbairn Steam Crane in the world, which can be found on the quayside on Princes Wharf, outside the M Shed.

It became the Steam Crane following its sale by Mitchells & Butlers to its current owners, led by Stephen Wallace, who already owned the **Golden Guinea** in Guinea Street. Stephen is perhaps an unlikely candidate to be a landlord, having begun his career in sales with Apple, but perhaps his experience of spending time in bars as a senior account manager for the global technology company sharpened his instinct for how a good pub should be run and should look. It is fair to say that not many other pubs look like the Steam Crane from the inside, with antique typewriters sitting atop an Indonesian hardwood, hand-carved sideboard on one side of the pub, while second-hand chandeliers hang from the ceiling, with the walls displaying pictures from around the world alongside

both real and artificial antlers, all while each wall of the pub is covered with a different type of traditional design wallpaper. Although this may not sound as if it would be to everyone's taste, Stephen has managed to ensure that each aspect complements all the others to create an uniquely eye-catching yet warm and welcoming environment.

Offering 12 guest beer lines of both cask and keg ales as well as 50 to 60 bottled beers from across the world, CAMRA members are able to get 10% discount on both food and drink on production of a valid membership card, whether they are dining in the pub or the private dining room upstairs, enjoying the varied selection of live music that is on each weekend, or simply stopping by for a quick pint.

Looking forward to the next year at the Steam Crane, there are plans to have around eight more of the 'tap takeovers' that have proved so popular in the pub's first year, as well as co-hosting a beer festival with its North Street neighbours the **Hare** and the **Old Bookshop** sometime in 2015.

Stephen is also exploring the possibility of finding a brewing partner to use one of the barns at the back of the Steam Crane, allowing the brewer to create beers that would be sold both in the pub and further afield. At the time of writing, the search for a perfect partner is still ongoing, and Stephen would be keen to hear from anyone who wishes to explore the possibilities further. Plans are also well underway to create



a beer-buying 'co-operative' with other like-minded pubs in the city, in order to increase the buying power of Bristol pubs in order to expand the range of beers on offer to drinkers.

In addition, both the external paintwork (currently a not-too-fetching shade of battleship grey) and toilets are due for welcome refurbishment and upgrades in the coming year.

With these plans for 2015 and beyond, the loyal and growing regular clientele are looking forward to the Steam Crane's second year, confident that this community-focussed pub purveying good food and good beer will continue to go from strength to strength while staying true to Stephen Wallace's original dreams for the once-maligned historic building.

Stephen Edmonds



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Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2015

Elland 1872 Porter named 'Champion Winter Beer of Britain' for second time in three years

Elland 1872 Porter has been crowned CAMRA's Supreme Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2015 by a panel of judges at the National Winter Ales Festival in Derby. The winning 6.5% ABV beer is described in CAMRA's 2015 Good Beer Guide as a "creamy, full-flavoured porter with rich liquorice flavours and a hint of chocolate from the roasted malt. A soft but satisfying after taste of bittersweet roast and malt."

Mike Hiscock, Elland Brewery Manager, had this to say on the win: "It's absolutely fabulous to win the Champion Winter Beer of Britain. We know it is independently judged so for it to come out on top again is testament to the depth of flavour and complexity that we get into the beer. This really is fantastic news."

The Champion Winter Beer of Britain competition judges the best of the best in terms of classic winter warmers – from thick, rich, dark porters and stouts, to sweet and strong barley wines.

A panel of beer writers, members of the licensed trade and CAMRA members judged the competition. Elland 1872 Porter will now go forward to compete in the overall Champion Beer of Britain competition at the Great British Beer Festival this August. Nik Antona, Champion Winter Beer of Britain Director had this to say on the importance of the

competition: "Elland 1872 is a fantastic example of what a traditional porter should taste like and has been hugely popular for many years, particularly it seems with competition judges, who have named it Champion Winter Beer of Britain twice and overall Champion Beer of Britain once in the last three years – a huge achievement."

Closer to home, Bath Ales won joint silver in the porter class with their Festivity.

The results in full

Old Ale/Strong Mild Class

Gold: Purple Moose – Dark Side of the Moose

Joint Silver: Ulverston – Fra Diavolio

Bronze: Castle Rock – Midnight Owl

Porter Class

Gold: Elland – 1872 Porter

Joint Silver: Bath Ales – Festivity

Joint Silver: Fuller's – London Porter

Bronze: Blakemere – Deep Dark Secret

Stout Class

Gold: Dancing Duck – Dark Drake

Silver: Plain Ales – Incognito

Bronze: Highland – Sneaky Wee Orkney Stout

Barley Wine/Strong Old Ale Class

Gold: Lees – Moonraker

Silver: Orkney – Skullsplitter

Bronze: Darwin – Extinction Ale

OVERALL CHAMPIONS

Gold: Elland – 1872 Porter

Silver: Purple Moose – Dark Side of the Moose

Bronze: Dancing Duck – Dark Drake

Winter beer styles, as taken from CAMRA's 'Dictionary of Beer'

Porter: A dark, slightly sweetish but hoppy ale made with roasted barley; the successor of 'entire' and predecessor of stout. Porter originated in London around 1730, and by the end of the 18th century was probably the most popular beer in England.

Stout: One of the classic types of ale, a successor in fashion to 'porter'. Usually a very dark, heavy, well-hopped bitter ale, with a dry palate, thick, creamy, and a good grainy taste.

Old Ale: Now virtually synonymous with 'winter ale'. Most 'old ales' are produced and sold for a limited time in the year, usually between November and the end of February. Usually a rich, dark, high-gravity draught ale of considerable body.

Barley Wine: A strong, rich and sweetish ale, usually over 1060 OG, dark in colour, with high condition and a high hop rate.

News from Ashley Down Brewery

Ashley Down beers made a good debut at CAMRA's annual National Winter Ales Festival. Seven beers went up to Derby and all seven received a very positive reception, with **Vanguard** being consumed during the trade session before the public had a chance to get at it. **Plum Porter** also went down well, lasting less than a day.

Brewer Vince Crocker (pictured) has produced two new beers for our own forthcoming Bristol Beer Festival. One is a honey beer called **BS7 Honey Beer**, a 4.2% golden beer brewed using half a kilo of Rob Sanders BS7 honey (from hives up by Horfield prison) in every firkin. The other is a strong stout, **Extra Stout**, weighing in at 7.6% and brewed with a little muscavado sugar, delivering loads of liquorish and molasses. A real beauty.

Vince wanted to check that the Extra Stout was developing nicely and included a pin at a mini beer festival, which was fundraising for a local scout hut, at the end of February. I had the chance to sample it and can say that it was full of deep roast flavours, but not heavy, and deceptively drinkable. As well as the pin of Extra Stout there were firkins of **York Street**, **Sideways**, **Vanguard**, **Remedy**, **Landlords Best**, **Pale Ale** and **Plum Porter**, the latter being the first to empty. The evening was well attended and a great success with hundreds of pounds raised towards a new scout hut.

As I mentioned in the last Pints West, due to continued expansion of both Ashley Down and Wiper & True, with whom they've been sharing premises, Vince is still on the lookout for a suitable new local premises



(the brewing kit should be temporarily back where it started in Vince's garage by the time you read this article). Good luck!

Tony Durbin

Moor Beer on Tap

It continues to be all action for Justin, Maryann and the team at Moor brewery, which recently relocated to Bristol. The last three months have seen three new beers launched, the first two of which are permanent additions to the beer stable: **Stout**, a 5% classic version of the style; **B-Moor**, a smooth and luscious 6% porter with a delicious blackberry flavour; and on February 13th **Return of the Empire** was launched – this special brew is a 5.7% IPA, deliciously bitter and with a dry finish, featuring Jester, one of the new generation of British hops being developed.

On 28th January there was a highly successful official launch of the Brewery Tap, based at the brewery in Days Road. Three hundred people packed in to sample four cask beers (including a rare example of **2013 Fusion**), eight keg beers and excellent oriental food from pop-up



restaurant Viet-Vite. The Tap has also featured as Pub of the Week in the Bristol Post.

The Tap's opening hours continue to evolve – see the Moor Beer website for updates. There is always one cask beer offered, plus a full range of bottled beers and a range of keg beers. As trade builds its hoped more cask beer can be offered. All Moor beers, whichever way they are served, are brewed the same – unfiltered and naturally hazy. Quality soft drinks and coffee are also served here.

Look out for three Moor cask beers on the 'LocAle' bar at the forthcoming CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival. It's worth remembering the Tap is only ten minutes' walk from the festival if you're looking for a drink before, after or between beer festival sessions!

Moor beers often feature at several locations across Bristol – the **Small Bar**, **Beer Emporium**, **Seven Stars**, **Famous Royal Navy Volunteer** and **Steam Crane**, for example, all take Moor draught beers. Bottles can be found at **Grape & Grind**, **Corks of Cotham**, the **Old Bookshop** in Bedminster and now also at **Flour & Ash**, an intriguing new pizza restaurant on Cheltenham Road which is winning rave reviews. If you wish to join the stable of stockists for Moor beers, you can contact the official brewery wholesalers, Big Beer.

One more event is up and coming: on Saturday 21st March 'Moor Arrogant 2' takes place at the brewery. Moor Beer is proving a big success in Italy and this one-day festival is the follow-up to a highly successful event which took place in Italy last year in conjunction with the Arrogant pub in Reggio Emilia. Expect music, food and of course plenty of beer! Look out for details on the Moor beer website, moorbeer.co.uk.

*Phil Cummings
(photos by Richard Brooks and Colin Postlethwaite)*



Moor owner Justin Hawke in the Brewery Tap



Bristol Beer Festival

With the start of the eighteenth annual CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival (which runs from Thursday 12th to Saturday 14th March 2015 at Brunel's Old Station, Temple Meads, Bristol) fast approaching, things have certainly been looking busy. The ticket sales events for CAMRA members were very successful at the **Commercial Rooms** and **Off The Rails** on Sunday 1st February. Tickets then went on sale online to everyone, with tickets for three sessions of the festival selling out very quickly. At the time of writing two or three weeks before the event, some tickets were left for the Thursday evening and Saturday evening sessions and, if you're still in time, these can be purchased online or from the **Seven Stars** pub, Thomas Lane, Bristol. For more up-to-date information about ticket availability and the festival in general (including the latest details of the beer order) please take a look at our website www.camrabristol.org.uk/festival.html.

As well as focusing on the excellent range of real ale, cider and perry, the festival also includes the announcement of the winner of the

prestigious branch **Pub of the Year** competition and of course the **Local of the Festival** award.

This year the festival glasses are sponsored by **Dawkins Ales**, the beer tokens by **Moor Beer Company** and the staff T-shirts by **St Austell Brewery**. Food is available at all sessions of the festival from Handmade Cornish Pasties, Native Breeds, Merry Berry (chocolates) and Piper's Crisps. There is strictly no smoking inside the building and this includes e-cigarettes, so no vaping in the venue please!



Richard Brooks



CHIPPENHAM

BEER FESTIVAL

Friday 24th & Saturday 25th April 2015
Sports Hall, Olympiad, Chippenham SP15 3PA
(5 minutes from rail and bus stations)

Friday evening 6pm to 11pm ~ £6
Saturday lunch 11am to 3.30pm ~ £5
Saturday evening 7pm to 11pm ~ £5

Prices include festival glass plus beer tokens for CAMRA members.

Organised by the North West Wiltshire Branch of CAMRA

Further details will be posted on the web site in due course

www.nwwiltscamra.org.uk
Facebook: ChippenhamBeerFestival2015

www.gloucesterbeerfestival.org.uk

3RD GLOUCESTER CAMRA BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

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11.30AM – 11PM
AT THE HISTORIC BLACKFRIARS PRIORY,
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AND OVER 25 CIDERS & PERRIES

PLUS MORE CHEESE THAN YOU CAN SHAKE A BAGUETTE AT!

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INCLUDES FESTIVAL GLASS & PROGRAMME
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www.gloucesterbeerfestival.org.uk

Otter Brewery – marking a milestone

2015 brings with it a double celebration for Devon's Otter Brewery

As head brewer Keith Bennett begins his 15th year making some of the South West's best-loved beers, the family-run brewery is also celebrating its 25th year in business.



David and Mary Ann McCaig

Established in 1990 by David and Mary Ann McCaig, Otter is set up high in the Blackdown Hills between Honiton and Taunton on a nineteen-acre site. Throughout this quarter century their aim has always been to produce commercially viable beers that are full of integrity, provenance and real character.

Beer is definitely in the McCaig blood with a history of brewing going back at least five generations on Mary Ann's side of the family. David began his career in 1965 at the age of 19 with Whitbread in Cheltenham and the couple met at a brewery dinner dance.

After much relocation, life in Devon happened almost by chance. A mixture of good fortune, hard work and a revival in craft brewing all came together at the right time. Family values and team spirit are still key to the business – three of the four sons work for the brewery and Mary Ann still cooks a communal lunch each day for the staff on site.

Green thoughts run through every aspect of production. This ranges from using a series of on-site willow beds to filter and aerate all the waste water from the brewing process, to building the UK's first underground eco cellar that has quietly been saving over 6½ tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions per annum since 2010 – the equivalent of removing eight chillers and compressors which would otherwise be running 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. Brewer's grains are recycled and used to feed local beef herds, brewer's yeast is used to feed local pigs, whilst 'spent' hops are distributed to keen gardeners in the form of fresh compost.

From day one, Otter has always sought to be an integral part of the community it serves. Together with preserving the region's pubs, supporting local grass roots sports is one of the closest things to their hearts. The brewery has worked with the Exeter Chiefs since 2008 and Derek the Otter has become a much loved part of the fabric of



their home games through his Benny Hill inspired 'Chase the Otter' and 'Over the Bar' fun and games at half time. Crowd participation is obligatory and an ice bath is sometimes required!

They also sponsor and support other local sports clubs including Devon County Cricket, Lyme Bay Gig Rowing, Exeter Racecourse and Exmouth and Honiton Rugby Clubs. There's charity work too in the form of the Devon Air Ambulance, Hospicecare, Help for Heroes and the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal for whom they raised £3,000 in December.

In pubs across the South West you might spot Otter Ale, Otter Bright, Otter Bitter, Otter Amber or Otter Head on the bar. The flavour of each beer is distinctive and comes from using the best local ingredients, pure water from the head springs of the River Otter and a lifetime's brewing experience.

So here's to another 25 years of family brewing and the continued health of the West Country's burgeoning cask ale scene.

Cheers!



Deep in the hop back

OTTER BREWERY

25 YEARS

25 YEARS OLD
and looking better than ever

BRISTOL PUBS GROUP

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

web: www.camrabristol.org.uk/pubsgroup
email: bristolpubsgroup@yahoo.co.uk

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



Pub news

The **Horse and Groom** in Bristol's West End (behind the Council House/City Hall) remains closed but we understand that there is a possible desire by a well-known local pub operator who is hoping to negotiate a satisfactory lease to re-open it soon.

It is with great sadness that we report the **Beaufort** in Montpelier is destined to be converted into three flats following Bristol City Council's decision to grant permission to convert. Back-street community pubs are becoming scarce in our city but there continues to be a great demand for them. In Old Market the **Punch Bowl**'s owner has applied for an extension to accommodate a kitchen and toilets in order to add to this pub's trading potential. At my last count St Philips had lost something like 13 pubs in the last two decades so the presentation of a new licenced premises in the industrial estate at Day's Road is moor than welcome. This has come about following Moor brewery's relocation to this site last year and their **Moor Beer Tap** represents a wonderful opportunity to drink moor beer, as their strapline announces. The **Bell** at Redcliffe has stood idle for the best part of eight years but it is back in the news. A proposal to include the Bell into the development of an education centre which would see the development of adjacent buildings has been commented on by Bristol Pubs Group to suggest the retention and refurbishment of the pub itself while sacrificing the skittle alley to the development. On Jacob's Wells Road the **Hope and Anchor** closed for a short while over Christmas but has re-opened in after a freshen up with an improved menu and an interesting range of six real ales. New landlord Peter Gibbs will be running it as well as his other first class pub the **Volunteer Tavern** in St Judes. Like the Volunteer it enjoys an unexpected garden, quite unusual in Bristol's city centre, and with it backing onto Brandon Hill a potential oasis for city wildlife.

The **World's End** at St George was going to auction and by the time you read this the auction would have happened so expect an update next issue. The **Bull** in Crews Hole has been re-opened by its owners who

own two other pubs in the city. Alan Hart previously of the Air Balloon at St George is landlord. In Fishponds Morrison's have declared an intention of offering the **Farriers Arms** for lease but some repairs to the building are required before it is put back in use. We would be overjoyed to see the Farriers re-open as a pub. Contact Savills if you are interested.

Slightly historic news now but the **White Hart** in Bedminster re-opened just before Christmas following a spruce up. The **King's Arms** in Brislington is having a considerable investment from owner Enterprise Inns. We understand this popular pub will be refurbished and re-opened under the stewardship of a new tenant.

The **Shakespeare** in Redland is another pub enjoying an investment. This architecturally interesting and attractive pub has been on an uncertain path for some time so we are hopeful that it can now move on to a stable future. The **Coach House** on Stapleton Road, Eastville has closed. It would appear that the pub may open after six months providing a new licensee can introduce and stick to stricter conditions. On Gloucester Road in Horfield **Grace** could be changed at the rear if a planning application is approved for more usable space. Nearby, the **Foresters**, also on Gloucester Road, has a planning application approved that I quote here: "... alterations to public house, to include the replacement of an existing single storey rear extension with a proposed two storey extension, and the alteration of a front window into a door." Wickwar Brewing Company are the applicants and this pub should open later in the year. JD Wetherspoon have withdrawn their planning application to convert an existing building into a pub towards Ashley Road.

Leaving the city and entering North Somerset JD Wetherspoon have plans in place and are acting on creating a brand new pub in Portishead. There is a campaign to save the **White Hart** in Weston in Gordano which closed in August 2013 and appeared to be in serious threat of permanent loss until owner Enterprise Inns announced that they are to spend £200,000 on it and get it re-opened in June. The pub formerly known as the **Dew Drop** in Flax Bourton reverted to the name **Jubilee** upon its re-opening in December. A new layout, menu and children's area line up along a choice of cask ales. In Chew Stoke the news is not good with the owner of the **Yew Tree** finally gaining permission to convert the pub to housing. There was a huge campaign here that was very well constructed and it is quite shocking that the change succeeded against the odds. In Weston-super-Mare the **Bristol House** is trading under the control of a manager but following last year's battle against change of use to a supermarket we remain vigilant to more possible threats.

In South Gloucestershire the **Anchor Made For Ever** in New Cheltenham near Kingswood has closed but its future is unknown to us at present. It is inconceivable that a pub bearing this fantastic name would not continue. The **White Horse** at Hambrook is a fine traditional country pub with lots going for it. It closed recently when the lease had run its course; it is now under a refurbishment and seeking a new lease holder to re-open it soon. To the pub-goer predatory supermarkets are to

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Saturday
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We hope the Anchor is Made For Ever



The White Horse at Hambrook undergoing refurbishment

be treated with suspicion. We have seen instances of supermarkets and pubs sharing the same footprint in recent time such as at the **Lamb** at Cadbury Heath with Co-op so it will be interesting to see



The Grapes in Chipping Sodbury is now open again

what happens at the Wadworth-owned **Badminton Arms** in Coalpit Heath. Work starts in March to build a Sainsbury's outlet on the car park of the pub. Will this help the pub and local community? How will reduced parking affect the pub business? Another Wadworth pub, the **Rose and Crown** in Pucklechurch, is being advertised as a 'business opportunity' for a new tenant. Apart from seating for 100 diners it presents a lovely village pub atmosphere around the bar area at the front of the pub where a small snug with serving hatch add to its traditional appeal. The **Grapes** in Chipping Sodbury is now open and is serving beer from local

brewer Cotswold Spring.

Well that's the update on the local scene. If you still have a local then use it; if you don't then use someone else's. Importantly, enjoy your pub experience!

Not trying to be too gloomy I have listed six *phoenixes rising from the ashes* alongside half a dozen permanent losses.

Six permanent losses:

- Rose and Crown, Iron Acton;
- Air Balloon, St. George;
- Beaufort, Montpelier;
- Cattle Market Tavern, St. Philips;
- Queen's Head, Willsbridge;
- Plume of Feathers, Hotwells.

And six rising from the ashes:

- Phoenix, St Judes;
- Volunteer Tavern, Old Market;
- Lazy Dog (was Ashley Arms), Ashley Down;
- Barley Mow, Dings;
- Hare and Steam Crane, both Bedminster.

I owe a belated thank you to Ali Bridle, Laurie Gibney and Steve Plumridge for significant contributions to recent *Pub News* articles.

*Mike Jackson
(for the Bristol Pubs Group)*

Forging a future for the Farriers Arms

The Farriers Arms on Fishponds Road in Fishponds has been closed for more than four years. It was purchased by Morrisons when it was still a going concern in 2010, with the intention of demolishing it for a proposed store extension.

After a local consultation it became apparent that there was considerable opposition to Morrisons' proposals so in the end they decided to withdraw their planning application. Since then the property – which is a two-storey Georgian building converted into a pub in the 1870's – has been boarded up and is starting to show signs of neglect and decay. This neglect has been a continual source of concern to the Greater Fishponds Neighbourhood Partnership, local residents and Bristol Pubs Group.

Morrisons have been made aware of the need to maintain the pub premises by Bristol Pubs Group and the neighbourhood partnership but so far they have not responded with any proposals to repair the building. After a recent Bristol Pubs Group meeting it was suggested that the Farriers Arms might be a possible candidate for a Asset of Community Value (ACV) application. The ACV application registers the building as a community facility which means that if the owner wants to sell the freehold or lease it for 25 years or more, the ACV nominating group must be told and given an opportunity to offer to buy it. It should be noted that an ACV registration may be a material consideration in any planning application for a change of use. To qualify, the pub would have to have still been in use within the last five years and requires the signatures of 21 people registered on the electoral roll with a Bristol address.

According to the ACV application process a local neighbourhood forum can submit an ACV nomination, so Bristol Pubs Group decided to enlist the support of the Greater Fishponds Neighbourhood Partnership by raising the issue at a partnership meeting on 18th December 2014.



After Bristol Pubs Group made a public statement about the ACV nomination, members of the partnership discussed the matter and whether they could support it or not. In the end the members felt unable to give their support because they were unclear as to whether they were legally constituted to register the application so they agreed instead to seek legal guidance on the issue before their next meeting in March 2015. Despite this disappointment, the partnership invited Pubs Group members to be involved in the ACV decision-making process and invited Morrisons to the next partnership meeting to outline what their intentions are so it will be interesting to see how they respond. In addition, Morrisons have now agreed to meet Bristol Pubs Group, which it is hoped will be a positive step forward in saving the pub.

Hopefully a deal can be hammered out which sees the Farriers Arms reopened as a community pub in the not too distant future.

Ian Beckey

BRISTOL PUBS GROUP

Hopefully not the end for the World's End

The World's End at 157 Clouds Hill Road in St George is a historic pub. It occupies a corner plot between Cloud's Hill Road and Whiteway Road. The clientele in recent years was mainly local, and no real ale was sold.

However the building is quite large, including a separate function room and annexe and outside drinking area as well as the main bar and flat above. There is also a garage and workshop. In short, it has had potential.

The landlord died some time ago and his family employed a manager to run the pub for quite a while. Then in July 2014 it closed.

There were rumours about various people being interested, not necessarily to run it as a pub, and then in January this year a sign appeared outside announcing that the World's End was to be auctioned in February.

The part of the A420 that runs through St George has lost a number of pubs in recent years. These include the Lord Rodney (now a Co-Op shop), the Bell on Bell Hill Road (now a Tesco), the Prince Albert (housing), and further towards Bristol the Don John's Cross and the



Wheatsheaf (both now housing). The Mechanics nearby is still trading, but apart from that there is now a gap of about half a mile in either direction to the next nearest watering hole.

Bristol Pubs Group hope that someone comes forward to run the World's End as a pub.

Norman Spalding

The Bull reopens



The Bull in Crews Hole Road, St George, Bristol reopened on January 5th, after a prolonged period of closure. New landlord Allan Hart was previously at the Air Balloon Tavern in St George until it closed a few days before to become housing.

The current Bull was built in the early 1900s on the site of an earlier pub which dated back at least a further hundred years. It now comprises one large drinking area which runs across the front of the building with the serving counter towards the back, plus a separate smaller room behind which has in the past been used as a polling station among other uses. The large room has a raised area to the right where karaoke and other music can be performed, a lounge bar through an arch to the left, and in the centre an uncarpeted area with a brickwork floor. Dogs are allowed in here.

Outside at the front is a fenced patio area with tables for outdoor drinking, and to the side a large car park. There are plans for a pool table upstairs, and food in due course.

One or two real ales have been on sale since the first week after the reopening. So far Butcombe Bitter and Doom Bar have been on offer, but Allan has plans for a variety of ales in rotation. Recommendations from his customers will play a part in the choice. Allan's track record has involved beer and cider festivals and a variety of other events, family, musical and otherwise. Opening hours are noon to 11 Monday to Saturday and noon 10.30 Sunday.

The Bull was registered as an Asset of Community Value in 2013, and Bristol Pubs Group is very pleased to see it in business again. It is close to Trooper's Hill nature reserve and a short walk away from Conham River Park and the Avon River Trail. We hope it has a bright future ahead.

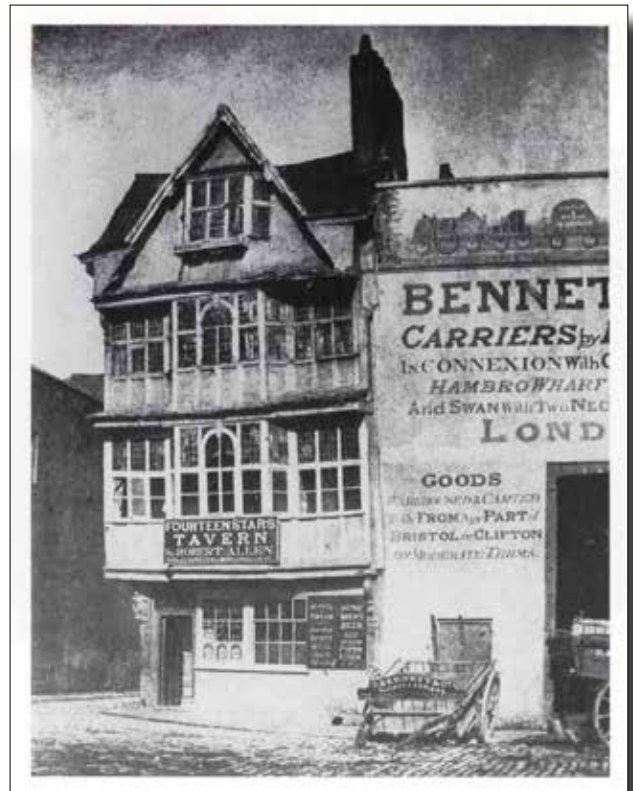
Norman Spalding

Bristol's Lost Pubs and Breweries

The Bristol Pubs Group will be presenting a three-hour walking tour on the evening of Thursday 23rd April, entitled "Bristol's Lost Pubs and Breweries (or at least some of 'em)", starting at the Palace Hotel (aka the Gin Palace) at 7pm and culminating at the Seven Stars.

The tour will encompass breweries such as J & T Usher's, Garton's, Rogers and Georges, along with pubs such as the Green Man, Glass House, White Hart, Fourteen Stars (pictured below) and Crabbes Well Inn ... discussing their successes and their demise.

Bristol Pubs Group member Mark Steeds will lead the tour which is open to all Bristol Pubs Group and Bristol & District CAMRA members.



Have Tesco checked out of the Chequers?

The prolonged closure of the Chequers public house in Lodge Road, Kingswood has continued to be a source of concern to Bristol Pubs Group for some time and to highlight the issue it has been featured in *Pints West* on a number of occasions, most recently in issue number 103 (Autumn 2014), but has also been mentioned in the *Bristol Post* and *Bristol Observer* as well.

In 2014 Tesco acquired a 25-year lease on the pub from Enterprise Inns with the intention of converting it into a Tesco Express store, despite the fact that it had been recently listed as an Asset of Community Value following a campaign by local residents and councillors supported by Bristol Pubs Group. Due to the ineffectiveness of current planning policies regarding the protection of community pubs from supermarket conversions, there was nothing that could be done to stop Tesco going ahead with the conversion. However, after months of inactivity apart from fencing being put up around the building, rumours began to circulate that Tesco were not going to proceed with the conversion for the whole of 2015. Shortly afterwards Tesco announced that they were closing 43 stores (mostly Express ones) and scrapping the opening of other new ones.

The question then arises that if Tesco are not going to open the



Chequers as a store, then Enterprise Inns could quite easily reopen the pub themselves and if they don't want to then they could sell it to someone who would. There are enough supermarkets in the surrounding area already so there is no good reason to sacrifice the only pub the local community has.

Bristol Pubs Group will be monitoring the situation closely and see if new Government planning rules for the protection of community pubs can be used to encourage Tesco and Enterprise Inns to change their minds about the store proposals and give local residents their pub back.

Jan Beckey

Will it be a new golden era for the Golden Lion?

The Golden Lion in Fishponds is located on the left-hand side of the main A432 Fishponds Road to Yate at its junction with Alexandra Park close to Lodge Causeway. The premises opened as a pub in 1866 and is a two-storey building of pennant sandstone construction, with dressed freestone facings including two stepped lintel (keyed voissiroed) windows on the upstairs frontage.

The pub is a corner property which is part of a terrace which was once known as Regent Place, possibly to commemorate a visit to the Fishponds area by the Prince Regent, later King George IV, in the early 19th century.

For some time the Golden Lion was a popular cider pub which hosted bands on Sunday nights as well as on other occasions and was often packed out because of this. Previously, it was a more traditional local pub consisting of a bar, lounge and off sales counter, the remains of which can be seen in the form of a blocked-up doorway on the right-hand frontage.

In 2014 a new landlord (Lee Randall) took over the pub and it was given a complete makeover consisting of an external repaint, new flooring, pool table, darts board and new television screens, and since reopening it appears to be trading well. On my visit the pub was serving



Bankers Draft, Coopers IPA, Doom Bar, Butcombe Bitter and ciders including Taunton Traditional.

To encourage customers to visit the pub there is live music every Friday and once or twice a month on Sundays; there are two darts teams on a Monday evening, a Ladies Super League darts team on Tuesday evenings and a pool team in on a Wednesday night. There is also a raffle with potentially big prizes.

It seems that there could be a new golden age for the Golden Lion with the enterprise being shown by the landlord and so residents and CAMRA members are urged to visit the pub and give it their support.

Jan Beckey

News from Twisted Oak



Hidden away on a working farm in Wrington is the Twisted Oak brewery. To set the scene, just up the road you can find the Plough Inn in Congresbury – Bristol and District CAMRA’s pub of the year for the last two years running and frequent stockist of their beer – and both Butcombe and RCH breweries are only a stone’s throw away.

The brewery is a five-and-a-half-barrel plant and is run by husband and wife team Keith and Deb Hayles. Keith and Deb have been quietly going about their business for nearly three years and have been building up a very loyal following.

Keith says: “All of our ale is brewed traditionally with the best ingredients we can source. We also use a fresh live brewer’s yeast which we believe gives our ale a much smoother flavour. This yeast also creates a wonderful protective head on the ale in the fermentation vessel which you generally do not get with dried yeast.”

Twisted Oak has three core ales (**Fallen Tree**, **Spun Gold** and **Old Barn**) that are available throughout the year. They also brew seasonal specials such as their black IPA **Unknown Pleasures**, an American amber **Sheriff Fatman**, a lovely traditional English porter **Slippery Slope**, and **Ultra** which is their American pale ale. In addition there is now **Wild Wood**, a 4% ABV session ale, which will be available all

year round.

“I concentrate on quality, consistency and sustainability with all of our ales,” says Keith. “It is particularly important for our core ales. They have to taste the same with each brew, and because the beers are available all year I need to be selective about what hops are used and establish contracts with suppliers to ensure that the hops are available.”

Both Keith and Deb have a background in corporate customer service and this is reflected in their day-to-day operations. They provide their regular outlets with quality point-of-sale merchandise such as branded glassware and coasters. “We really value and appreciate our customers,” says Keith. “I also like to think that the beer we supply is very saleable; I want whoever stocks our ale to be able to sell the whole cask. So repeat purchasability is key.”

You can find out more about Twisted Oak brewery by visiting their website at www.twistedoakbrewery.co.uk or following them on Twitter @twistedoakales.

Richard Harman



News from Wiper & True



The last three months have been very busy for local brewers Wiper & True, initially with the run up to the festive season, and subsequently with the ongoing expansion of the brewery at the premises in St Werburghs which they have been sharing with Ashley Down.

Winter Ale (Small Abbey Rye) at 3.9% and **Winter Ale (Large Abbey Rye)** at 7.4% were both available prior to Christmas in bottles, with the latter being released in large (appropriately) 750ml bottles.

The start of the New Year saw work commence on the expansion of the brewery, but brewing has continued on the Ashley Down five-barrel kit whilst the new W&T fifteen-barrel brewery is being installed in the unit next door (previously used for beer storage). However, this has resulted in a temporary reduction in the range of beers being produced, with some additional brewing being carried out by W&T at the Celt Experience brewery in Caerphilly and beer currently being stored off-site at Big Beer Distribution in St Phillips.

Notwithstanding the above complications, a varied range of pale ales, amber ales, porters, stouts and IPAs has continued to be produced. The latest batch of **Small Beer (No. 8)** at 3.3%, a low-strength but full-bodied brew featuring tropical fruit flavours, was released in 330ml, 500ml and 750ml bottles. **Milk Stout (Milk Shake)** at 5.1%, which features copious amounts of chocolate malts, laced with vanilla and thickened with lactose sugar; and **Porter (Rye Porter)** at 5.4%, which features intense dark fruit flavours with notes of black pepper and a satisfying, dry finish; have both just been released in cask.

As far as the new brewery is concerned, which is planned to be operational in the spring, the required drainage and services have been installed together with the hot liquor tank. At the time of writing, the new flooring is about to go down prior to delivery and installation of the remaining tanks/vessels.

Dave Graham



Solution to the crossword on page 22

Across: 1 Witch ball, 6 Width, 9 Example, 10 Tin foil, 11 Tutor, 12 Opening up, 14 Aid, 15 Worthington, 17 Belorussian, 19 Guy, 20 Rancously, 22 Aryan, 24 Legless, 26 Urethra, 27 Scrum, 28 Adherents.
Down: 1 Wheat, 2 Toasted, 3 Hop grower, 4 A bed of roses, 5 Let, 6 Wongi, 7 Drought, 8 Halfpenny, 13 Ethnic youth, 14 Arbor Ales, 16 Ninja beer, 18 Lounger, 19 Gryphon, 21 Oleum, 23 Nears, 25 Spa.

News from Zerodegrees



After an absence of a couple or so years Zerodegrees will be back at the Bristol Beer Festival this year. A cask of **South Pacific Lager** (on tap now at the brew-pub on the corner of Colston Street and Park Row, and closely located to the BRI hospital) will be an entry in the ‘LocAle’ competition at the festival.

This 5.6% ABV lager is quite hoppy with a clean bitterness, balanced by good body. The mix of Australian and New Zealand hops also gives the lager aromas and flavours of tropical fruits and grapefruit. This interesting CAMRA-approved real lager is worth a try if you are at the festival, or in the brew-pub itself at the end of a short climb up the historic Christmas Steps from the Centre.

The next Zerodegrees special on tap in the brew-pub will be a **California Steam Lager** similar to a style brewed in San Francisco. Anchor Steam is the most popular brewery for this style and you may have seen bottles in your local supermarket. The Zerodegrees version will be brewed with a moderate amount of hops, but fermented at high temperatures, and will have a strength of 5.2% ABV.

Roy Sanders



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An update on beer scoring and the Good Beer Guide

2016 is almost upon us. Well at least the selection process for pubs to be included in the 2016 CAMRA Good Beer Guide is now almost complete! As noted in the diary inside the back page, the selection meeting for the Bristol & District branch is to take place on Sunday 8th March. Whilst the 2016 Good Beer Guide is still over six months away from publication, the process whereby pubs are selected for inclusion is an ongoing process over a lengthy period of time. Pubs in the current guide need to be monitored for beer quality, as do pubs that narrowly missed out on selection last time. In addition recommendations are received from CAMRA members, and sometimes from non-members, for other pubs, new and old, to be included in the guide. As Michael Bertagne explained in Pints West 103, the method of assessment takes some time, often involving organised coach trips to pubs that cannot easily be reached by public transport.

One way of monitoring the quality of cask ale served is by reviewing beer scores submitted by members via the WhatPub website (whatpub.com). The system used in the National Beer Scoring System (NBSS), which is used in many CAMRA branches as a major factor in the selection process, but as I have explained in previous articles (Pints West 103 and 104) there is still a long way to go before we are able to use beer scores as a significant component in the Good Beer Guide selection process for the Bristol & District branch.

However I am pleased to note that beer scores are now being recorded for many more pubs in our branch. Over the three months November 2014 to January 2015 beer scores were recorded for 255 of the 692 pubs serving real ale in the Bristol & District branch (including the Severn Vale and Weston-super-Mare sub-branches). This compares with scores for only 175 pubs in the previous quarter. Whilst this is a significant increase there are still 63% of real ale pubs in the branch with no scores recorded in the last year. The question therefore to be asked is: are we missing some pubs that are serving consistently good quality real ale that could merit inclusion in the Good Beer Guide?

Whilst members appear to be recording beer scores for an increasing number of pubs, the total number of beer scores recorded is only increasing gradually, with 868 scores in the quarter to January 2015 compared with 853 in the previous quarter. There is a core of members in the local branch who score beers on a regular basis, and whilst this number has been increasing fairly impressively, now up to 34 “scorers” in the last quarter compared with 27 in the previous quarter, this is still a very low proportion of total members (just over 1%!).

As I have previously noted there is a relatively high percentage of members from other branches that score beers in the Bristol & District branch, with some 27% of beer scores in the last year being recorded by members from other branches. Of course, many other branches may have started on beer scoring much earlier than us and it has now become a habit for many people who, like me, will score beer wherever they are in the country. As well as personally assisting in the Good Beer Guide selection process for the branches, an added bonus is that the system will keep a record of your scores so you can look back to see what beers you have had and how you rated them.

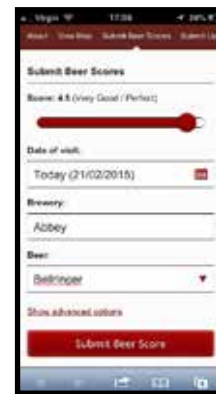
So remember, whenever possible record your beer scores when you visit a pub, either on your smart phone whilst you are there or on your computer when you get home. As a reminder the beer scoring system is as follows (with the option to use half points if your opinion of the beer falls between two categories):

0. No cask ale available

1. **Poor.** Beer is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment.
2. **Average.** Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.
3. **Good.** Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again.
4. **Very Good.** Excellent beer in excellent condition. You stay put!
5. **Perfect.** Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.

Carry on scoring!

Martin Gray



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BADRAG - Bristol And District Rare Ales Group

“ In search of ‘rare ales’ ”

BADRAG, the Bristol & District Rare Ales Group, is a campaigning group within the local branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Its aim is to promote the rarer styles of ale such as stouts, porters, old ales, barley wines and milds.
www.camrabristol.org.uk BADRAG@camrabristol.org.uk

Mild ... and the CAMRA Mild Month of May

At one time mild ale was the favourite ale of the majority of drinkers, with the middle classes favouring bitter beer and the upper classes barley wine. First there was a swing from mild ale to bitter and in the 1970's to lager; recently there has been a swing to very hoppy, very bitter beers, the opposite end of the spectrum to mild ales. If cask mild ales are to survive as a style, then ... **they need your support!**

A national survey of CAMRA branches took place last year to decide whether CAMRA Mild Month should remain in May or move to the cooler months of the year. Mild ale is predominantly a dark ale and some felt that it would sell better in the cooler months. The voting was close but favoured leaving Mild Month in May.

And so for May this year, BADRAG will once again be organising a mild trail and also encouraging local breweries and pubs to produce and stock mild ales.

Organised trail

The one organised trail is the **South Gloucestershire Mild Trail** which will take in the **Cross Hands**, Winterbourne Down; the **Globe**, Frampton Cotterell; the **New Inn**, Mayshill; the **Swan Inn**, Nibley; the **Horseshoe** and **George Hotel**, Chipping Sodbury; the **Beaufort Arms**, Hawkesbury Upton; the **Salutation Inn**, Ham (CAMRA national pub of the year for 2015); and the **Anchor** at Thornbury.

Further details of the trail are in the list of future BADRAG events below. If you cannot join that trail, please support the pubs listed during the few days after the trail to drink up the mild ale.

DIY trails

You are also encouraged to do your own mild trails taking in the pubs listed below (in postcode area order) which, at the time of going to press towards the end of February, had agreed to have mild ales available during May. (If you would like to invite CAMRA members to join you for a trail of your choice, please email the date, start time and place and your contact details to badrag@camrabristol.org.uk and we will circulate details.)

- **Commercial Rooms**, Corn Street, BS1 1HT
- **Bank Tavern**, John Street, BS1 2HR
- **Crofters Rights**, Stokes Croft, BS1 3RW
- **Famous Royal Navy Volunteer**, King Street, BS1 4EF
- **Gryphon**, Colston Street, BS1 5AP
- **Seven Stars**, Thomas Lane, BS1 6JG
- **Bridge Inn**, Passage Street, BS2 0JF
- **Miners Arms**, Mina Road, BS2 9YQ (early May)
- **Robert Fitzharding**, Cannon Street, BS3 1BN
- **The Hare**, North Street, BS3 1EN
- **Chelsea Inn**, Chelsea Road, BS5 6AU
- **Red Lion**, Whitehall Road, BS5 9BP
- **Quinton House**, Park Place, BS8 1JW (Thursdays to Sundays)
- **Kings Arms**, High Street, Kingswood, BS15 4AB (early May)
- **Kingswood Colliers**, High Street, Kingswood, BS15 8HP
- **Cabot Court Hotel**, Knightstone Road, WsM, BS23 2AH (Fridays to Sundays and maybe at other times)
- **Rising Sun**, Frampton Cotterell, BS36 2HN
- **New Inn**, Mayshill, BS36 2NT (occasionally during May)
- **Salutation Inn**, Ham, GL13 9QH

No doubt some other pubs that regularly offer rare ale styles, mainly in the central area of Bristol, will also support Mild Month. Other pubs will be added to the list on the branch web site www.camrabristol.org.uk when BADRAG hears of them.

Mild ale brewers and wholesalers

At the time of going to press we have been advised of mild ales (along with some tasting notes) that the following breweries will be producing – please ask your licensee to support them.

- **Ashley Down** – Expect a new 4.2% pale amber mild ale. (Tel: 07563 751200.)
- **Celt Experience: Dark Age** – A resinous mild ale (4% ABV) with elegant a smooth chocolate and caramel body and a spicy dry finish. Inspired by the tranquility of the myths of Avalon. (Tel: 02920 867 707.)
- **Cotleigh Brewery: Nutcracker Mild** – A 3.4% mild which Cotleigh has brewed for more than 10 years now. It has a delicious hint of liquorice that is easy to drink and leaves you wanting more. Cotleigh will probably bring in a few milds from other brewers to sell wholesale into the West Country. (Tel: 01984 624 086.)
- **Cotswold Spring: OSM (Old Sodbury Mild)** – A complex seven-grain mild at 3.9% ABV. Initially dry with a bitter sweetness. Chocolatey notes and a long finish. Old Sodbury Mild was the Supreme Champion at the SIBA 2011 National Beer Competition. (Tel: 01454 323088.)
- **Great Western Brewing: Meerkat Mild** – The colour is a dark red, brought upon by the chocolate and crystal malts used in the grist. Milds were traditionally low in ABV and the Meerkat is no exception at 3.9%. It has a light aroma of dark roasted malts with just a hint of chocolate. Its taste isn't far off the nose with the added zesty hop character at the forefront of the palette along with an essence of nuttiness. (Tel: 0117 957 2842.)



● **Moles: Double MM** – This is Moles' 3.6% mild, a light bodied, dark beer with fruit and toasted toffee flavours and with smooth bitterness from the careful blend of Fuggles and Goldings hops. (Tel: 01225 708842.)

● **Moor Beer Company** – Phone from March for "Moor" details! (Tel: 0117 9414460.)

● **Plain Ales: Mayday**, 3.6% ABV. (Tel: 01985 841481.)

● **RCH Brewery: Hewish Mild** – At 3.6% ABV, a dark traditional mild with a bitter sweet taste and a long sweet finish. RCH are also wholesaling mild ales for about twenty-five other breweries.

● **Severn Vale Brewing: Monumentale** – At 4.5% ABV it is a little stronger than most milds and has a smooth balanced maltiness set against a noticeable but not overpowering hop character. (Tel: 01453 547 550.)

● **Anita Sully** – Wholesaler (Tel: 07737 119910.)



WhatPub

Whatpub.com will soon have a filter to identify pubs that dispense rare ale styles other than the usual line-up of bitters. When that comes on line, if you feel a pub should be identified in this way, please supply feedback to Whatpub.com (see back page for further information) or email details to badrag@camrabristol.org.uk, including how frequently rare ales are available, and a member of the BADRAG team will update Whatpub.com.

BADRAG has negotiated the addition of this filter, so that supporters will be able to find bars in any area that support ale styles that we campaign for (in support of one of CAMRA's national key campaigns, specifically to encourage more people to try a range of real ales, cider and perries).

Recent BADRAG events

On Thursday 20th November a small number of BADRAG supporters met at the **Gryphon** to lay the foundations for future BADRAG events and decide how to make best use of those who plan, research, lead and support such events, including supporters in the trade.

The most significant change agreed was to reduce events during

CAMRA's national Mild Month in May and to put more effort into events during the autumn and winter months when more rare ale styles are available (and being mostly dark ales they sell better in the cooler months).

The Bristol & District CAMRA Christmas party took place at the **Gryphon** on the evening of Sunday 7th December. BADRAG does not hold its own event during December but urges supporters of the group to support the Christmas party where there are always rare ales to be savoured. Landlord John Ashby didn't let us down and there were always three rare ales on the six handpumps during the evening. These were Dark Heart American Brown Ale at 5% ABV and Celtic Cross, a 4.5% a dark collaboration ale between Brecon, Bru, Inveralmond, Purity and St Austell breweries. The third rare ale was Piddle Brewery's Jack Porter at 4.5% which ran out and was replaced by Rudgate Milk Stout at 4.2% (the latter two were your scribe's favourites).

The January BADRAG gathering was held at the **Highbury Vaults** in Kingsdown, where details of the events programme for the year were confirmed. Those present enjoyed Young's Winter Warmer (5% ABV) and Gloucester Brewery's Black Citra (4%). At the end of the evening licensee Bradd Francis kindly took us on a tour of his cellar, where we were interested to see not only 9-gallon firkins but also 18-gallon kilderkins in use.

The most difficult part of organising BADRAG events is researching bars that will have BADRAG style ales on the day of any event, months in advance, in order to get details into the quarterly Pints West magazine. So many thanks to those researchers who do a dry run for us!

Many thanks also to a few licensees who have recently told us that BADRAG has boosted their sales and generated interest in the variety of ales available!

Future BADRAG events

● **Thursday 12th March, 7pm - 11pm:** Your opportunity to meet other 'BADRAGGERS' at the Bristol Beer Festival at Temple Meads. Ask how to find us at the membership stand.

● **Saturday 25th April, 10.30am - 4pm:** Group visit to the Chippenham Beer Festival to sample their BADRAG style ales. Dave Kibble (07976 732934) will be leading the group. Meet by Temple Meads ticket office at 10:40 in time to purchase Groupsave tickets for the 11:00 train, arriving for the lunchtime session (11-3:30) just after the queue has died down – £5 on the door (bring your CAMRA membership card).

● **Saturday 16th May, 11:25am-7.30pm – the South Gloucestershire Mild Trail.**

Early booking is advised for a place on the coach for this popular event (email branch social secretary Andy Gray on social@camrabristol.org.uk or sign up at branch meetings).

The coach will depart from the Cornubia at 11.25 prompt. Pubs to be visited are the Cross Hands, Winterbourne Down; Globe, Frampton Cotterell; New Inn, Mayshill (lunch stop); Swan Inn, Nibley; Horseshoe and/or George Hotel, Chipping Sodbury; Beaufort Arms, Hawkesbury Upton; Salutation Inn, Ham; and Anchor at Thornbury. The trail leader will be Brian Abbott, contactable on 07455 080678.

Yet more dates for your diary

- **Sat 6 June:** Group visit to the Southampton Beer Festival by train.
- **Mon 15 June:** Evening BADRAG Beer Day Britain Trail.
- **Sat 11 July:** Group visit to Nailsea & Backwell Beer & Cider Festival.
- **Thu 13 August:** Enjoy BADRAG Ales at the Great British Beer Festival, London.
- **Sat 12 September:** Badminster & Harbourside Rare Ales Trail.
- **Sat 31 October:** Clifton Rare Ales Trail.
- **Sat 21 November:** Kingsdown and City Centre Rare Ales Trail.



Mike Lawrence R.I.P.

It is with deep regret that we report the death on Thursday 29th January 2015, following a brief cancer-related illness, of Mike Lawrence, an avid supporter of mild and one who organised the South Gloucestershire Mild Trail for a number of years. He will be much missed by his friends in BADRAG and the rest of CAMRA.

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**Associate
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National Pub of the Year

Gloucestershire pub judged best in Britain

The Salutation Inn, a rural freehouse in the small village of Ham, Gloucestershire, has walked away with the Campaign for Real Ale's National Pub of the Year Award – a feat made even more impressive given that this is the first pub the landlord has ever run.

Former business analyst Peter Tiley had never even pulled a pint when he decided to quit his job in London and follow his love of beer to take over the Salutation Inn with his wife Claire. Eleven months later the pub had won its local branch competition, then the whole region, then making it through to the final four and finally being named overall National Pub of the Year.

A "gobsmacked" Peter said: "For the Sally to have won National Pub of the Year is beyond our wildest dreams – we're totally shell-shocked. Pubs are so important to me that to have our own one recognised in this way is just amazing. We count ourselves so unbelievably lucky to have a brilliant team of staff who are so passionate and dedicated as well as a community of locals who have given so much to support and contribute towards the pub. It is these people that have made the pub what it is today and for that we are incredibly grateful."

Pubs are judged by CAMRA on a variety of criteria such as atmosphere, level of service, value for money and community focus, with extra weighting of course given to the quality of their real ale, cider and perry. The Salutation Inn, known by locals as 'The Sally', was popular with judges due to its fantastic beer selection and welcoming, homely feel – with one judge saying: "What struck me most was the welcome – as if I was being invited into a private house as a friend."

CAMRA director Abigail Newton says that being named the overall Pub of the Year is a massive achievement for any landlord: "What Peter and Claire have done in the short time they have been running the pub is nothing short of staggering and goes to show that passion, enthusiasm, and a real love of beer are hugely important when running a pub. They have hit the ground running and taken what was already a great pub and made it truly exceptional – beating off over 50,000 other landlords from across the UK."

For those thinking of visiting the pub, it is described in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2015 as a "rural gem in the Severn Valley, within walking distance of the Jenner Museum, Berkeley Castle and Deer Park. The enthusiastic landlord keeps an inspired selection of ales and eight real ciders and perries. The pub has two cosy bars with a log fire and



a skittles alley. Live folk music and piano singalongs regularly occur. Shove-ha'penny and table skittles are played."

The three other finalists were, in alphabetical order, the Freshfield in Formby (Merseyside), the Harewood Arms in Broadbottom (Greater Manchester) and the Windmill in Sevenoaks Weald (Kent).

Readers' Letters

Readers are welcome to send letters to the Pints West Editor

Steve.Plumridge.PintsWest@gmail.com

Steve Plumridge,
Garden Flat, 6 Royal York Villas,
Clifton, Bristol BS8 4JR

Peter Wilton Cushing OBE

With regard to Robin E Wild's excellent article "Hopping down In Kent" in Pints West no. 104 it should be noted that the celebrated actor Peter Wilton Cushing OBE was never elevated to Knighthood, but surely should have been!

Andy Stanton,
St. George, Bristol.

(Robin referred to the Wetherspoon pub "The Peter Cushing" as "Sir Peter Cushing". Ed.)

The John Gatty Letter

Our highly respected Editor once again gave me a 'named heading' over my last contribution to this esteemed magazine.

My readership seems to be growing wildly(?): whilst delivering the last issue of Pints West, a landlord told me he always read my letters. And later, whilst alighting from the bus, having taken Management (the wife) shopping, a neighbour also said she liked reading my letters. The mind boggles. Where will this all end? The Times Literary Supplement? How about the Beano? I studied the New Year's Honours list, but no joy there. As an aside, I do have two titles: a K.B.E. (Knowledge By Experience) and an O.B.E. (Ole Big 'Ed).

Since I last put finger to keyboard (doesn't sound as good as 'pen to paper' does it?) I have 'flown' past my 80th birthday ... literally! My family booked me on a flight with the Wessex Flying Club. There was I thinking Tiger Moth, but no, this was in a Piper Cherokee. It was a wonderful experience and I could recommend it to anyone given the offer.

The day was to finish with a meal for family and a few friends at the Ship, Alveston. Unfortunately, I thought the food was awful, but – deciding to go all religious – I was drinking The Rev. James, which was a cracking pint, so the evening was not a waste.

When Management was arranging the

meal, she was asked, "Would you want wine served with the meal?" Which got me thinking (must have been 'The Rev' going to my head): why do these restaurants keep pushing wine? Why not beer?

Funnily enough, there was a film on the telly recently about a chef who bought a rundown village pub and brought it up to a first rate 'eatery'. They did show pump clips on the bar, but I don't think they had a beer named on them. Part of the story revolved around a critic who sampled the food, followed by a glass of wine. It struck me that we seem to be hell bent on wine but not beer. WHY? One of the few food critics who will talk about beer with a meal is our own Susan.

In closing, let me tell you that I went for a pint of cask conditioned and the landlord, being a friendly type, said as he poured it, "Looks like rain". "Yes", I said, "and you are still charging me £3.40 a pint for it!" Boom, boom. The old 'uns are the best!

If you should have a good explanation as to why wine is pushed so much, buy me a pint and I will listen to your views.

Bye for now, see you through the bottom of an empty glass.

John Gatty, Thornbury.

News from the Bristol Beer Factory

The Bristol Beer Factory report that they are investing some more time and effort into their **Barley Mow** pub in St Philips, Bristol. Since rejuvenation into its current “beer haven” form nearly two years ago it has gone from strength to strength. However, the brewery feel that with a few little tweaks it could get even better. They have decided to focus more on local Bristol breweries’ beers and some will be given permanent slots on the bar. The Barley Mow has a perfect cellar (straight below the bar) so no pump-assisted methods are needed to get the beer to the hand-pulls, which enables the pub to serve the perfect pint. There will also be a focus on food service, although there is no intention to go down the “gastro-pub” route. They consider that the food is now better than ever with an excellent Sunday roast offering, about which they would like to spread the word. Their aim is to provide great value, real pub food with warm, friendly service.

The ‘Eco Hybrid’ truck purchased by the Bristol Beer Factory, and mentioned in a previous issue, is coming into its own with Bristol now being European Green Capital. Fuel bills are apparently virtually the same as they were for the previous trusty Transit, although they are now delivering at least 25% more beer in a shorter time.

Beer production at the brewery continues to increase and they are very pleased that **American Dry Stout** and **Oatmeal Porter** (two of their most recent releases) have gone down a storm. So much so, that Oatmeal Porter is now a strong candidate for being put into bottles later in the year.

Bristol Beer Factory have just joined up with Bristol charity *It's in the Bag* which they believe is very fitting for Bristol Beer Factory. *It's in the Bag* is a charity for testicular cancer that they hope to be supporting for at least the next 12 months, with the charity featuring at this year's ‘Factoberfest’ which will run from 11th to 13th September. There are also plans to release some new T-shirts just before the summer and hopefully *It's in the Bag* will be helping with a grand launch and possibly even a fashion show. If the plans for this do come together, it will apparently be an evening not to be missed!

Richard Brooks

News from Wickwar Brewery

Wickwar Open Day

Over 400 railway enthusiasts and members of the public journeyed to the past at Wickwar’s open day in January. The event took place at the Old Brewery, Station Road, in Wickwar, where a working scale model showing the Wickwar train station as it would have looked 50 years ago was on display for visitors to enjoy.

Crowds of people attended the open day, which was commemorating the 50th anniversary of the last passenger train leaving the now closed station. The working ‘N Gauge’ scale model of the station and historic 1860’s brewhouse were apparently a hit with all that saw it.

Barry Fortin from Wickwar Brewing Company, who was responsible for organising the event, said, “We had a fantastic turnout at the brewery to support the unveiling of Farham and District’s Model Railway, which includes our heritage brewery. It was great to welcome over 400 people of all ages into the brewery to enjoy the model and also learn how we brew our ales.”

Brewers were on hand throughout the day answering questions and educating the public about the brewing process and history of their site. Wickwar also produced a commemorative ale called ‘Last Train’ for visitors to sample or buy during the day. Mr Fortin added, “Due to its success, we are extremely keen to continue holding events such as this at the brewery in the near future and urge the local community to keep an eye out for future events.”

The Star Inn, Wotton-under-Edge

Wickwar have announced that they are the ‘proud new owners’ of the Star Inn, Wotton-under-Edge. As of Monday 26th January, Wickwar took ownership of this traditional free house in the town of Wotton, which is only a few miles away from their brewing site in Wickwar. Alongside Wickwar’s own ales, the pub will continue to provide Butcombe Bitter and guest ales.



The Bristol Beer Factory brews a wide and diverse range of Craft Beers.

Beers available from
www.bristolbeerfactory.co.uk
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 - The Brewery, Durnford St

or from our outlets at the
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 - Grain Barge
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Cider Space

An often underestimated factor in people's choice of what food to eat, or what drink to select, is memory or brain association. In fact, in a 2009 survey by the University of Cardiff, it was found that nearly half of all respondents (43%) admitted that they had not revisited the food or drink that gave them their first bad flavour memory.

While this absolutely applies to early memories of Brussels sprouts, shellfish or olives, there is little doubt that people's perception of alcoholic beverages can also be adversely affected by early unpleasant experiences associated with that drink.

Nowhere is that better illustrated than in drinkers' reactions when the subject of cider crops up. "Ooh, I don't drink cider since I had a bad night on it when I was 18" or "I tried some strong farmhouse stuff on holiday in Devon and it was disgusting." Those early drinking memories of teenagers in the park swigging from a bottle of the cheapest, strongest supermarket cider available, or of post-adolescent bravado guzzling from a flagon of *Crippleshisthatortheother*, undoubtedly affect today's adult drinker's likelihood of trying the wide variety of ciders available.

And yet cider consumption is on the rise, with more and more people casting off or ignoring preconceptions to discover a refreshing, crisp and varied alternative to beer, lager and alcopops. Indeed HMRC figures show that cider and perry now account for some 9% of alcohol sold in the UK, up from 5% a couple of years ago. (By the way, perry is the alcoholic drink made from the fermented juice of pears: *pear cider* is a contradiction in terms, but don't get me started on that.)

Purists, of course, will be screaming at the page that none of the above is an advert for 'real cider', just mass-produced industrial products, not the really good



Cider in the Orchard Inn (photo by Richard Brooks)

traditional cider that represents the best of British craftsmanship. And here I should declare an interest, for my taste in cider tends toward the 'artisan', the ciders lovingly and innovatively crafted by people for whom cider itself is a passion.

Fundamentally the more cider, of all varieties, that gets sold, the more apples need to be grown in the UK, which is great for the economy and the environment.

And once people discover that all cider is not the same, they are more likely to be happy to explore what's on offer, whether that is the locally produced cider on handpump in the pub, or the single varietal bottles that sit alongside the national brands on supermarket shelves, or the farmhouse cider advertised on handwritten boards beside rural lanes throughout the South West.

As important as the national brands are for the future of the cider industry, there can be no doubt that there are some truly great ciders to be found if you are prepared to look a little beyond the TV campaigns. In Somerset, **Orchard Pig** produce some innovative and exciting sparkling ciders in sweet, medium or dry varieties; and if you want truly traditional cider,



Bristol Cider Shop named Independent Cider Retailer of the Year

The team at Bristol Cider Shop was in celebratory mood earlier this year after being named the top cider shop in the country. The shop won the Independent Cider Retailer of the Year Award at the Drinks Retailing Awards in early February.

The awards are the drinks industry's most prestigious accolades and involve a rigorous judging process. The shop has been short-listed for the award for the last three years and it was third time lucky when they beat two previous winners to the top spot.

Owner Pete Snowman attended the awards ceremony, which was held at London's Dorchester Hotel, and received the award from wine expert 'Jolly' Olly Smith. Pete said, "It was a great night. The Dorchester is amazing and being a drinks industry event, there was no shortage of free drinks!"

The shop was one of the first dedicated cider shops in the country when it opened on Christmas Steps in central Bristol in December 2010. It stocks over 100 varieties of quality local cider and perry and has recently added a tasting room.

Cider & Sausage Festival 2nd - 3rd May 2015

Bristol Cider Shop has announced details of its fifth annual Cider & Sausage Festival. As usual it will take place on the May Day bank holiday weekend and feature local artisan cider and sausages.

This year will see the event move to the **Trinity Centre**, a community arts space in the Old Market area of Bristol. The festival has been held at the Southbank Club in Southville for the last two years but the popularity of the event has meant the need to find a larger venue.



Pete Snowman (centre) receiving the award

As ever, there will be over 40 varieties of the new season's very best cider and perry on offer, plus cider-fuelled music, a cider-themed barbecue, and lots of cider prizes to be won. The event is split into afternoon (12-6) and evening (7-12) sessions. The afternoons are more relaxed whereas the evenings are all about the music. Tickets cost £5 for the afternoons and £10 for the evenings and are available now from www.bristolcidershop.co.uk.

The organisers are looking for volunteers to work at the festival and to help organise the event. They would also like to hear from any bands that would be interested in playing over the weekend.



The Apple Cider Boat



The Coronation Tap

then seek out **Wilkins Cider Farm** in Mudgeley in Somerset, or **Heck's Farmhouse Ciders** in Street.

For an expert view on cider, as well as a cracking variety to choose from, it's worth visiting the **Bristol Cider Shop**, on the historic Christmas Steps just off the centre of Bristol.

A selection of cider pubs:

The Orchard Inn, 12 Hanover Place, Hotwells, BS1 6XT

Tucked away on Spike Island just by the SS Great Britain, the Orchard Inn is a brilliant one-bar cider and real ale pub. There are five or six real ales tapped straight from barrels at the back of the bar, but the ciders go to another level. The four handpumps on the bar offer Thatcher's Cheddar Valley and Traditional, as well as Moles Black Rat and Weston's Old Rosie, but a glance on the wall to the right of the bar and you see a column of little mini-blackboards listing about twenty more ciders that are available from people such as Wilkins, Heck's and the Tricky Cider Company. A good value food menu has also been added.

Apple Cider Boat, Welsh Back, BS1 4SB

Or you could try the Apple Cider Boat. Moored just off Welsh Back, this is a cider lovers' paradise. No real ale on offer, but as many as 40 different ciders and perries, and they'll always let you have a taste of their draught ciders before you decide. There's a conviction here that if you're sure you don't like cider, then they will have a variety that will convert you ... still or sparkling, sweet or dry, cloudy or clear.

Bridge Inn, Main Road, Shortwood, BS16 9NG

To the north-east of the city is the Bridge Inn. Two bars, a tiny snug that was used for off-sales and a function room. The left hand bar is a constant hubbub of conversation and some very odd jukebox selections. Thatcher's Cheddar Valley (Dry and Medium), Taunton Traditional and Thatcher's Traditional all turn over quickly so they are always fresh and at their best. The old-fashioned 'front stoop' is ideal for sitting outside, chewing on a piece of straw (not supplied) and saying things like, "Storm's-a-comin'!"



The Bridge Inn

Coronation Tap, 8 Sion Place, Clifton BS8 4AX

If you've never visited the Coronation Tap then you've missed a treat. Two passions here: great music and great cider. If you haven't visited, you may not know this little gem is within yards of the Suspension Bridge. There are always at least five or six traditional ciders on offer, including the specially made Coronation Tap Exhibition. This is not for the faint-hearted, and is so strong it's served in 'third-of-a-pint' measures, but it is as smooth as any drink of this strength can be.

Cider Press, 86-90 Gloucester Rd, Bishopston, BS7 8BN

Finally for now, the **Cider Press, 86-90 Gloucester Road, Bishopston BS7 8BN** is on the main drag up Gloucester Road and, as you'd expect from the name, there is a passion for cider here, with as many as ten different ciders on offer at any one time, as well as a wide range of craft ales and ciders.



The Cider Press

The great thing about the Bristol & District CAMRA area is that we have only just scratched the surface of cider pubs here. Within our area CAMRA's **whatpub.com** website lists as many as 150 pubs that offer traditional cider. To find a traditional cider outlet near you, just go to **whatpub.com**, search for pubs in your area (Bristol, Thornbury, Cheddar, etc), and then you can filter to only show pubs selling traditional cider.

Happy hunting!

Duncan Shine

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News from Arbor Ales



Breaking into the Italian and Spanish markets

On approaching the Arbor Ales brewery the eye cannot fail but light upon two rows of four tall, shining, stainless steel conical fermenters. A narrow walkway between the right-hand row and the container that is the refrigerated store for hops and yeast cultures, leads to the office. When I arrived, owner Jon Comer was busy opening hop pockets saying, "Be with you in five minutes."

I ventured into the adjacent unit and said hello to Ollie who was

operating the new Italian bottling machine. Capable of dealing with 1,000 bottles per hour, the machine fills seven bottles simultaneously then caps and labels them, sending them along a roller conveyer for the operator to pack into cases. I was also given a look into the large container, which acts as a cold store. On the forecourt, brewery assistant Alex Mansfield was engaged in cask washing while "drayman" Elliot Brooks was away delivering.

Once in the office, a cup of freshly ground filter coffee in my hand, Jon gave me the latest news. The Italian market accounts for a large part of the brewery's output, with several whole brews being commissioned each month for keg and bottle. The Italians requested a stout and Arbor has obliged. The beer, however, is nitrokeg (a bit like Guinness) so of no interest to the home market.

A new regular ale has joined the other nine cask ales in the core range. This is **Smokescreen** (5.5% ABV), a "robust smoked porter" with an enticing aroma of smoky roast and fruity spice. A silky-smooth taste of chocolate and smoked malt, blended with wild dark fruits, fades into a slightly sweet finish balanced by roast and English hops – traces of smoke lingering on.

The increase in fermenting capacity allows casks to be double dry-hopped over a longer period so that fresh aromas are retained when they are served. Demand can only be met by brewing at least four times a week. Jon is taking Italian lessons once a week and, in a fortnight's time at the time of writing, is off to the Barcelona Beer Festival to establish Arbor Ales in the Spanish beer market.

Henry Davies



Cryptic Crossword

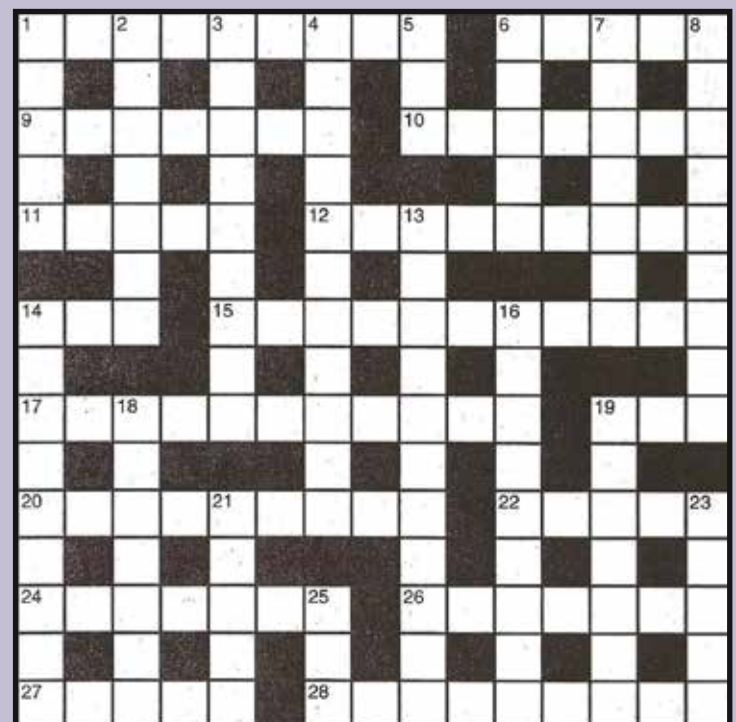
Compiled by Pete and Eddie Taberner

ACROSS

1. Heard which party has special beer from Cornish Chough (5, 4)
6. Broadly speaking, the first sip of wallop is detrimental to hip-size (5)
9. Former MP, into ale, is not a good one (7)
10. Lit up about little information on wrapping (7)
11. Master Trout gets pissed (5)
12. Time to get a drink and so becoming more communicative (7, 2)
14. Returning some ingredients of Aldi ale is a help (3)
15. National brewer's White Shield shaken up – not right now (11)
17. East European getting sozzled is real bonus (11)
19. Odd gaudy bloke (3)
20. Treat our saucy first landlady harshly (9)
22. In summary, a nice pure Blonde (5)
24. Seems walkers have gone to get very drunk (7)
26. Drunken Arthur, 'e literally takes the piss (7)
27. Pitch confrontation involving endless rough cider (5)
28. Hangers on stand unsteadily around here (8)

DOWN

1. White grain with fervour for the brewer (5)
2. Product from 1 dn can be drunk to (in the kitchen) (7)
3. Bitterness could come from this Kentish farmer (3, 6)
4. An easy life before sodas get spilt (1, 3, 2, 5)
5. Rent out little English taverns for starters (3)
6. Upset, owing to colloquial Aussie bar chat (5)
7. It's rough with the DT's and no refreshment in sight (7)
8. Put a small beer before a girl. It will make very little change (9)
13. Politically correct renaissance for the Blackboy Inn (6, 5)
14. Disrupt sale after grassy plot developed by Bristol brewery (5, 4)
16. Japanese fighting brew? (5, 4)



18. Idler frequenting a bar (7)
19. Angry – lost head with endless hops at this local pub (7)
21. Ancient Romans' oily product, possibly from 3 dn (5)
23. Northern pissed arse is getting closer (5)
25. Where Barnsey might get a bath (3)

Solution on page 14

News from Bath Ales

First off, Bath Ales was over the moon to have won Silver at the recent National CAMRA Winter Beer of Britain Awards with their seasonal porter **Festivity**. Coming second in class only to the overall 'Supreme Champion' winner was a fantastic result and the fourth time Bath Ales has taken home a medal. Mark Harding, sales director, said: "For Festivity to be recognised in this way by CAMRA is testament to the depth of flavour and character that has been so lovingly crafted by the Bath Ales team. It is further testament to the progress we're making, not just in terms of growth but of the quality of what we do."

Next, Bath Ales are taking **Golden Hare** in bottle to Sheffield in March, to compete against brews from across the country at the BeerX National Beer Competition 2015 organised by the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA). Golden Hare earned its place at the national finals by winning an award in a regional SIBA competition. It is one of just a handful of beers to represent the South West at BeerX.

Golden Hare, a light golden ale, is Bath Ales' seasonal for spring and is available in cask throughout the Bath Ales pub estate, as well as selected venues in the South West. Brewed at 4.4% ABV it's described as "a rewarding light ale that bursts with flavour and brims with condition, wonderfully fresh and delightfully zesty." Golden Hare will be available at the Bristol Beer Festival.

In time for Easter, Bath Ales will be brewing **Rare Hare**, that most elusive of ales. Rare Hare is produced from the finest floor malted barley and a specially selected old English variety of hops called Fuggles from Worcester. At 5.2% ABV, it's the strongest beer in the Bath Ales range. After the beer has been brewed it needs to rest to give the flavours time to integrate and mature. This premium ale is full in flavour and appreciably dry and clean on the palate. It will only be around for a limited time.



Suzanne Hurley of Bath Racecourse and Mark Harding of Bath Ales

Bath Ales is pleased to announce a three-year sponsorship deal with Bath Racecourse. Bath Ales has been a prominent feature at the Lansdown course over the last 12 years and is an integral part of the racecourse's annual beer festival, which has grown in popularity attracting



Photo courtesy of the Bristol Post

thousands of race goers and real ale lovers to the event.

Bath Ales' sponsorship of Bath Rugby has greatly benefitted from their superb form this season and fans have been able to enjoy a pint of Gem or Dark Side at the Rec, pre and post match.

When long-term employee, John Lansdall (pictured above), known to many as 'Big John', notified his employers of his retirement at the end of December, he expected to go quietly with a small send-off. However Bath Ales had a different idea. To commemorate John's commitment and dedication to the company, they decided a fitting farewell would be to brew a new beer in his name.

Reflecting John's much-loved character, the celebratory beer, itself called **Big John**, is traditional, robust and hearty at 3.9% and described by Bath Ales as "an ale packed with character, biscuit flavours with hints of dependable dried fruit and crafted with no-nonsense Pilgrim hops." It was served at John's send-off at the **Hare on the Hill**. "We all wish Big John a long and happy retirement."

The Hare Foundation, Bath Ales' charitable foundation, is now on *Just Giving* and anyone can donate a large or small amount – as a grant-making charity Bath Ales relies on the support and generosity of its staff, suppliers, customers and the local community to raise funds which charities will be able to apply for. The objective is to raise money by organising a variety of activities, ranging from payroll-giving to voluntary contributions through Bath Ales pubs, and from individual challenges organised by staff to collecting at events. The focus is on charities targeting cancer, children and the environment.

For news from the Bath Ales pubs, check out their blog at www.bathales.com/blog for the latest on menu changes, events, supper clubs and other 'harey happenings'.

News from the Beerd Brewery

Beerd brewery is going from strength to strength. The team is just back from 'Craft Beer Rising', where Colossus was launched and sold out in record time. It's an Indian pale ale, brewed with Mosaic and Calypso hops, which is said to evoke notes of mango and finishes with an impactful grapefruit and blood orange bitterness. Votes by some as the beer of the event, Shane O'Beirne, Beerd head brewer, is quite rightly proud of how well it was received. Other more recent Beerd beers that were on offer were: Vigilante, APA (4.5%), Crowbar, Barrel-aged Imperial Stout (8.5%), Cubic, Triple-hop Pale Ale (4.5%) and Baron Samedi, Coconut Porter (5.1%).

Monterey, the Californian style pale ale, and Silvertip, the pale ale brewed with New Zealand Sauvignon hops, are now brewed all year round. Both of these are available in cask, with the latter, along with Monocle the English style IPA, available in bottle, though not bottle-conditioned.

Beerd, in conjunction with Bristol pubs No. 1 Harbourside and the Canteen, are in the judging stages of the home brew competition to give home brewers the opportunity to make their own beer with Shane. The idea is to design and name a beer perfect for spring or summer, under 5.5% ABV, and the winner could be pouring their very own pint at those pubs. The winner will be announced shortly via social media.

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WHAT?UB crawling

Whilst many folk are more than happy to spend an evening out supping a few pints in a single favourite pub, I, along with a few like-minded friends, usually include at least three or four different pubs on each night out. With the bewildering array of great beer pubs around central Bristol these days, we would never get round them all any other way! On occasions, being ungrateful so and sos, we get a little restless and take a trip to another town or city to sample the pubs there.

Up until now we were totally reliant on the CAMRA Good Beer Guide (GBG) to choose our itinerary. The Guide is a fantastic resource, and the only way to discover which pubs most impress the local CAMRA folk, but it suffers from a couple of disadvantages. Firstly it comes out in September each year after a few months in production, so cannot hope to be quite as up to date as we would wish. Secondly, space is necessarily limited so many potentially worthy pubs get left out every year – particularly in real ale “hotspots” like Bristol.

The above is no longer as much of a problem thanks to our fantastic new on-line resource – whatpub.com. This is our national website that aims to feature every pub in Britain and is able to offer greater details than the GBG can. It is compiled entirely by CAMRA volunteers who will have visited each pub and tried to create as complete a picture (indeed including a picture) of what the pub offers. This will include beers sold, opening and food hours, facilities and a full description. Extremely usefully it also pinpoints the pub’s location on Google maps, and most crucially of all it can be updated constantly when anything changes. It does not offer any attempt to recommend or rate pubs so having access to the Good Beer Guide is still very useful.



Over the recent Christmas period, a few of us planned a weekday trip to Salisbury. As always, we perused the Good Beer Guide which recommended half a dozen good-sounding pubs. To our dismay we noted that almost all of them do not open on weekday lunchtimes leaving a void in our itinerary. I then took a look on Whatpub, picking a central pub at random and looking at all pubs near it and beyond. It quickly became apparent that there were plenty of pubs with interesting beer ranges, decent food offerings or historic features, most of which were open all day. I printed off a map of the centre, marked all pubs of interest on it and formed a plan. As a result, we had a very pleasant day out and got to see pubs that we would previously have missed. We were then able to include most of the GBG-listed pubs later on when they opened. One highlight was the **Haunch of Venison** in Minster Street, a fantastic 14th century pub on CAMRA’s national inventory of historic interiors, which is an amazing survivor and had two Hop Back beers in great order plus Courage Best. Others were **Cloisters** in Catherine Street where we had very good food and unusual guest beers, and the nearby **Wig and Quill** in New Street, a superb Wadworth pub with exceptional beer quality. We did several other pubs, and a trip to the cathedral (the cultural bit of the day) before doing the GBG pubs – all of which impressed and were well chosen. A great day out.

A few weeks later we decided that a day out to Oxford was in order – and once again Whatpub did us proud, in conjunction with the Good Beer Guide of course! No problems with lunchtime closing here, and it was a Saturday anyway. The GBG listed nine pubs of which we ruled out three on distance grounds and another as it is owned by Bath Ales (no disrespect to them but we can get that readily at home). Using Whatpub and Google maps we then added in three more that were not in the GBG, but sounded good. One of these was the **Turf Tavern** – a famous 18th century Inn (it feels even older) where Greene King have allowed nine guest beers to be served along with two beers of their own. The pub is tricky to find and has an amazing “Tardis” like character with many rooms, nooks and crannies plus extensive outdoor areas. We were surprised when we exited by a different route to discover that we were next to the famous Bridge of Sighs (which sufficed as that day’s cultural bit). Another non-GBG pub was the **White Horse** in nearby Broad Steet, which featured beers from local microbreweries including Shotover brewery whose beers impressed us. The third was the **Eagle & Child** in St Giles (directly opposite the excellent **Lamb & Flag** which is in the GBG and had a superb selection on). Once again all of the beer in both the GBG and non-GBG pubs was in very good order and another excellent day out was had.

Going slightly off topic, we were surprised, especially in student-dominated Oxford, to see absolutely no sign of any “craft keg” beers being promoted in any of the pubs in either city. This is in marked contrast to London and our own beloved city of Bristol. It appears that cask ale is still unchallenged elsewhere.

All of this gave me reason to think how a visitor to Bristol might use Whatpub to find pubs not listed in the Good Beer Guide. More or less off the top of my head, I have come up with two possible pub crawls shown here (I could do several more) that could be done whilst only including a single pub that is listed in the current Good Beer Guide and that one has changed its character significantly! This only goes to show just how fantastic the Bristol beer scene has become and how difficult it is for us to decide which pubs to leave out of the guide every year. The proposed national review of area allocations next year cannot come soon enough!

Vince Murray

Crawl One: Centre and Harbourside

Meet in the **Famous Royal Naval Volunteer** in King Street which serves at least half a dozen changing cask beers, alongside many 'craft keg' offerings. Food served too. CAMRA discount offered.

In the same street visit the **Small Bar**, which is a wonderful new place that offers an array of changing weird and wonderful brews in cask, bottled and keg forms. Unusually, beer is sold in halves, thirds and two thirds measures but not in pints. Quality food of the burger / hotdog / sandwich style is served all day. The in-house 'Left Hand Giant' brewery has commenced brewing and the beers will be on in early March or sooner.

Head to the bottom of Park Street and walk across College Green keeping the cathedral close on your left (cultural bit). Keep on past the Three Tuns (Good Beer Guide) and you will see the **Bag of Nails** by the roundabout. This tiny pub offers a changing range of about six beers from near and far, plus many bottles. Avoid if you are allergic to or do not like cats though!

Walk up Jacobs Wells Road about 200 metres to the **Hope & Anchor** on the right. Actually in the Good Beer Guide, it is now run by Peter Gibbs of the Volunteer Tavern (not the same 'Volunteer' as at the start of this crawl). Much changed, it is offering half a dozen well chosen changing guests and all-day food – the beauty of Whatpub is that these changes are already reflected.

Drop back down to the bottom of the hill and turn right; you will see the SS Great Britain (bonus cultural bit). About 200 meters further on is the **Grain Barge**, a moored boat owned by Bristol Beer Factory. Expect three of their beers plus three quality guests from well-chosen micro-brewers.

Another 200m further on you will find the **Merchants Arms**, a former Bath Ales pub now privately owned. It features at least two from Bath Ales on the four pumps with guests from the likes of RCH popping up too.

If six pubs is not enough, or you fancy different views, it is possible to return via the opposite bank of the harbour, taking in any of the **Nova Scotia** (nice pub with three or four beers), the **Cottage** (Butcombe pub with two or three beers and food) or the **Orchard Inn** (former national cider pub of the year with up to six beers and 24 ciders, and now doing food again).

Crawl Two: Centre and Stokes Croft

Meet on the centre at the **Drawbridge** next to the Hippodrome, which now offers half a dozen real ales, mainly from regional and larger micros. Food and CAMRA discount too.

Coming out walk 200 meters to your left crossing Colston Street to the **Christmas Steps** pub (at the bottom of Christmas Steps) which now serves four beers from micro-brewers, usually including a couple from Arbor Ales.

Walk up the steep steps (or go the long way around via Colston Street) and turn right at the top. You will see **Zerodegrees** brew pub and restaurant in front of you – this has had a makeover recently and also has a newish brewer. Expect four or five of their brews, which are served colder than normal real ales, plus great pizzas and other food.

Coming out of Zerodegrees on your right is the **Yard**, formerly Colston Yard. This is owned by Butcombe brewery and features two or three of their beers plus guests and a range of bottles and 'craft keg'. Sky Sports has also been added.

Turn right out of the pub and head to the major "Haymarket" roundabout about 400 meters away. Turn left onto Gloucester Road and walk another 400 meters or so; **Crofters Rights** will be found on your left. This is another quite new venture specialising in a mix of cask and keg beers that change all the time and can include foreign offerings. Toilets are down a dizzying spiral staircase.

On the opposite side about 200 meters up is the **Pipe & Slippers** which offers two or three beers often including local micros. For culture, admire the street art and many murals in this area.

Finally for this crawl, another 300 to 400 meters up is the **Prince of Wales** which is a very pleasant pub that has recently got more adventurous with its range of four or five beers. Good food and a large beer garden too.

So there you have it. All those pubs and many more can be found fully described on Whatpub, which is available on any computer, laptop or smartphone, complete with easy to follow directions. You can even submit suggestions to amend entries if anything has changed, or, if a CAMRA member, score your beers online. However don't forget to find time to visit the 15 pubs in central Bristol that are in the Good Beer Guide, plus many in nearby suburbs. Better book a week, as a weekend just won't cover it!

Vince Murray

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Pubs and Breweries (in brief)

Hope & Anchor

No sooner do we feature a story about it in the last issue of Pints West than it's all change at the Hope & Anchor (in Jacobs Wells Road, Clifton). Well, not all change ... it's still the same great place it's long been for beer, food and welcome. But the pub closed around Christmas and reopened a few weeks later, following some general redecorations, with a new man in charge. Long-serving landlord Martin Hughes and family have moved out of the upstairs accommodation and Peter Gibbs, who previously worked at the Hope & Anchor and now runs the Volunteer Tavern (part-owned by Martin) near Cabot Circus, has moved in.

Peter has been running the Volunteer for a few years now (and still does) and has transformed it from a sad-looking basic boozer into a popular thriving community pub offering a fantastic range of beers and quality food. And he is bringing his ideas up from there to the Hope & Anchor.

The Hope still serves food all day every day (until 9.30pm), though now with a different menu. And the beers promise to be more exciting, with ales that will cover a range of styles and strength, with a dark ale generally amongst them. Traditional ciders have also been introduced. Moreover, following the tradition built up at the Volunteer, there will be beer festivals – probably three a year and tying in with those at the Volunteer (such as one week at one pub, the following week at the other).

So it looks like exciting times ahead for the Hope & Anchor.

SP

Surrey Vaults






The splendid Surrey Vaults in Surrey Street, between Portland and Brunswick Squares, is offering good food and drink in its pleasant surroundings and a series of 'Meet the Brewer' evenings are coming up as follows: March 31st Gloucester Brewery, April 28th XT Brewing Company, May 26th New Bristol Brewery, and June 30th Waen of Powys, Wales. There was an evening with Towles Brewery just before Pints West went to press.

They are also planning their first beer festival (or "street takeover beer fair") which is scheduled for June 6th.

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| May 26th |  | New Bristol |
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Gryphon and Three Tuns

Two pubs in central Bristol are to be putting on beer festivals just as Pints West hits the streets (so this will be very short notice). They are the Gryphon in Colston Street, just up from the Colston Hall, and the Three Tuns in St George's Road, near College Green. The pubs, which are just a few minutes' walk from each other, are both are having their festivals over the same weekend, from Friday 6th to Sunday 8th March. Entry to both is free, and both will be well worth attending.

The Gryphon's festival is their ninth 'MetAle' festival. There will be up to 14 ales available at any one time – 6 on handpump and 8 on stillage – plus reserves. The beers will range from light to dark, weak to strong. They will also be running a sausage festival alongside the ale festival, with a wide variety of sausages available throughout the weekend.

At the Three Tuns (where some of the beers may be available on the Thursday if they are ready) they will be having only Bristol breweries on the main bar, with breweries from 'beyond' on the outside bar, with 14 cask beers representing Northumberland, Manchester, Yorkshire, Dorset, Macclesfield and Scotland confirmed at the time of writing. The pub is also planning to hold a 'double meet the brewer event' (time to be confirmed) with Jon Comer of Arbor and Justin Hawke of Moor to coincide with having the latest batch of Dark Alliance on the bar. 'MyMatesBarbeque' will be serving up the grub.

SP

Lansdown

The Lansdown in Clifton will be holding another beer festival, dubbed "The Lansdown 30 – a celebration of brewers within 30 miles of the Lansdown." It will take place over the 17th and 18th April starting from 6pm on the Friday night and all day Saturday from midday (or until all the beer is drunk!).

There will be 20 different ales, with six on the main bar and 14 on their stillage in the marquee. There will be live music both days from some local favourites. A full food menu will be available, as well as homemade pasties, etc, available in the marquee.

There will be the option to buy in third-pint measures to allow more beers to be sampled, and feedback forms for customers to rate their top three and help crown the next "Lansdown 30 Champion Ale".

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Cheddar Ales

Cheddar Ales is keeping busy and production for 2014 was up 14% on 2013. They will be brewing the second beer in their premium craft cask range in Spring, planning a Saison with a massive WOW factor!

Almost certainly **Summer Pale Ale** will return followed by an IPA with a real difference in the Autumn. Core brands are all readily available (**Potholer, Gorge Best, Totty Pot** and **Bitter Bully**).

Latest news is that they are taking on a sales person to help spread the word. The brewery still feels like a fairly well kept secret, especially in Bristol, and that their beers deserve to be available to a wider market. As always quality and consistency lie at the heart of what they do.

Jan Deverell



New Bristol Brewery

New Bristol Brewery, based in St Pauls, have recently appointed a sales and marketing manager and are now embarking on some promotional activities. They are also working on a **Collaboration Ale** with the **Crofters Rights** pub in Stokes Croft which will be available in cask and in bottles. There will be a special launch event soon to be announced. Keep an eye on their Twitter feed and on their website for details. Recent brews included **Japan** which is described as “a fabulously tasty unfiltered ale, complex with a hint of tea in the aftertaste” – complementary to their **Super Deluxe Stout** which includes coffee!



Michael Bortagne

Beaufort Arms

The Beaufort Arms in Hawkesbury Upton is celebrating twenty unbroken years in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide and will be marking this with a beer festival from Friday 1st to Sunday 3rd May.

The pub was previously in the Bristol & District branch area but, with boundary changes several years ago, is now in the Gloucestershire branch area. Both branches have considered it consistently worthy of entry into the Guide.

Incidentally, Marks Steeds, landlord of the Beaufort, is responsible for “Pints West”. It was he who suggested this magazine’s name change (it used to be called “The Avon Drinker”) following the demise of the county of Avon.

SP

The Beaufort Arms

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Chew Valley Brewery

Chew Valley Brewery commenced brewing around July 2014 with the first brews on sale around August. The brewery is located in the village of Pensford close to Bristol. Sales have been mainly to the Chew Valley and Pensford areas (such as to the **George & Dragon** in Pensford) but is extending to Weston-super-Mare as well.

The brewery is owned and operated by Matt Stalker and Dom Lowe. It is a one-barrel plant. One beer is in general production; this is called **Pagan** which is still evolving to be a 4.4% ABV ruby coloured best bitter. Two other beers have been produced as short one-off runs. One was called **Druid** and the other was an old ale called **Chew Brew Winter Warmer**.

Consideration is now being given to the production of bottled beers which, if successful, may lead to an expansion of the range of beers produced.

Phill the Pint



Incredible Brewing Company

As featured in the last edition of Pints West, the Brislington-based Incredible Brewing Company (IBC) continues to make a successful foray into the world having sold all of their bottled range before Christmas at various food and drink fairs across the area.

Since then Stephen Hall, the brewer and owner, has been busy expanding his bottled range based on spring and summer beers, including a Belgian-style patersbier, a raspberry wheat beer, cherry lambic, amber ale, harvest bitter, a lime and coriander beer, and IBC’s Saison, which should be available in cask at this year’s Bristol Beer Festival.

IBC are entering SIBA’s South West beer competition in April and are in talks with local pubs about stocking their ever-growing range of beer.

Stephen Edmunds



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BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

Pub and brewery news from the CAMRA Bath & Borders branch

Bath and surrounding villages

Colonna & Hunter, Milson Place, Bath

This latest addition to the Bath drinks scene is the city's first specialist 'craft beer' outlet. Colonna & Hunter, which opened in around late October, serves 'craft beer' alongside speciality coffee and is a joint venture between Maxwell Colonna-Dashwood and his wife Lesley, who founded Colonna & Small's speciality café in Queen's Square in 2009, and fellow enthusiast James Hunter. Situated in a busy shopping area, the new venue, which has a light and contemporary feel, is not so much a pub – real ale is not served here – but rather a space which fills the gap between home and office.

Griffin Inn, Monmouth Street, Bath

We understand that the Griffin Inn in Bath has changed hands and that the new owner has a connection with Timothy Taylor. Boltmaker was on handpump during a recent visit.

Old Green Tree, 12 Green Street, Bath

Long-serving landlord, Tim Bethune, has bought the lease of this well-loved historic freehouse in the centre of Bath. (See article opposite.)

East Somerset

Redan, Fry's Well, Chilcompton

Major refurbishment work is underway at the Redan, which is under new ownership, and it is hoped that the pub will soon be re-opened. Locals, who were anxious that the pub be saved, have already registered it as an Asset of Community Value.

Lamb Inn, Chapel Road, Clandown, near Radstock

The closure of this large pub back in January was seen as a major loss of amenity to a part of Radstock that sees itself as a distinct

community. We understand that the freehold of the Lamb has been sold and that new owner is currently digging out the cellars to establish how the building can be configured before putting in a planning application. The intention, we gather, is still to have a bar outlet of some description

White Hart, Lane End, Corsley, near Frome

Refurbishment work is going on at this roadside pub, which closed in 2013, and which traditionally drew much of its trade from the nearby Longleat estate. Whether the White Hart will re-open as a pub is not yet known.

Guss & Crook, South Street, Tisbury

A planning application to convert this pub into a workshop, shop and private residence was withdrawn. A local community group has been set up with the intent of saving the pub and, as a first step to this, is applying for the premises to be listed as an Asset of Community Value.

West Wiltshire

Riverside Inn, 49 St Margaret's Street, Bradford-on-Avon

A major structural renovation of this large town-centre pub, which closed in May of last year, is nearing completion. The pub should re-open during the coming months.

Bath Arms, 116 Clay Street, Crockerton, near Warminster

A big refurbishment of this picturesquely situated pub was carried out in January. The pub, which is only a few hundred yards from Shearwater and the Longleat estate's forests, closed for around three weeks to enable the refurbishment to take place.

Lion & Fiddle, Devizes Road, Hilperton, near Trowbridge

A planning application for two dwellings within the pub's extensive grounds and for more accommodation within pub itself has been turned down.

Longs Arms, Upper South Wraxall, near Bradford-on-Avon

Congratulations to the landlords and staff at this Wadsworth-owned pub to the north of Bradford-on-Avon on making into the 2015 *Budweiser Budvar Top 50 Gastropub Awards*. The pub, which came in at 32nd, is a large, ancient, stone-built pub, with a beautiful walled garden, and is situated in a picturesque out-of-the-way village.

Greyhound, 61 Mortimer Street, Trowbridge

A major refurbishment of this pub was completed shortly before Christmas and the pub has now re-opened. Keith Morris, who was previously landlord of the Twelve Bells on Seymour Road in Trowbridge, bought the pub back in April and has worked hard to comprehensively transform the building both inside and out. The Greyhound has been re-wired, refitted, redecorated, refurbished and re-floored. The kitchen has been refitted and the pub now offers extensive sports coverage on Sky and BT.

Bell & Crown, 66 Deverill Road, Warminster

The freehold of this former Admiral Taverns pub has been bought by local landlord Chris Pitcher. Chris owns and runs the nearby Fox & Hounds in Warminster, an excellent and very well used community pub, which was the branch's *Pub of the Year* in 2012. He also owns the Bell at Chalford on the outskirts of Westbury along with the Ludlow in Westbury town centre. The Bell & Crown is currently closed as it undergoes refurbishment but should re-open in the spring. This is splendid news for the locals of south Warminster. In Chris's capable hands the Bell & Crown stands a very good chance of gaining a new lease of life as a well-used community pub.

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Steve Hunt

A new chapter for the Old Green Tree



A new chapter in the long history of the Old Green Tree has begun as Tim Bethune has taken over the lease of this famous pub on Green Street, Bath.

The Old Green Tree is one of Bath's and the West Country's most famous pubs, and I'm sure many of our readers will have visited this legendary hostelry in the city centre on numerous occasions over the years.

It is one of only two Bath pubs that are included on CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors – the other being the Star on The Paragon (see www.heritagepubs.org.uk).

The interior and shop front date from the 1928 refurbishment by local architects WA Williams for the Lamb Brewery of Frome and consists of three beautifully conserved oak-panelled pub rooms, a lounge to the front and smoke room to the rear with a small public bar in the centre of the pub. The pub itself has older origins dating back to the early 1700's when the terrace was built.

Tim Bethune has been working at the Old Green tree for 14 years and took over the lease from Nick Luke to become the new landlord on 4th December 2014. The pub is a free house and Tim will continue to serve the three regular ales: Green Tree Ale, brewed by Blindman's Brewery especially for the pub; Butcombe Bitter and RCH Pitchfork, the pubs most popular ale. Additionally there are also usually two specials on offer with a stout or porter featuring in the winter months. I had an excellent pint of Exmoor Antler when I visited. Tim will continue running the pub as it is with only subtle improvements. He plans on making improvements to the cellar arrangement and has employed a new chef Hugh Dennis-Jones who previously worked at the very well respected award-winning food pub, the King William on Thomas Street. It is planned to further develop the lunchtime menu while maintaining the Old Green Tree's reputation for good quality traditional pub food.

The Old Green Tree will be again taking part this year in CAMRA's Mild Month in May – promoting the resurgence of this historic dark malt, lightly hopped ale type. The pub is planning to have some great milds on including the popular Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby. So get down to the Old Green Tree and congratulate Tim and you will receive, as ever, a very warm welcome.

Tom Chapman

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Advance tickets available from:

The Old Green Tree, Green Street, Bath.

Tickets can be ordered online from:

www.bathandborderscamra.org.uk

or by post from:

Martin Ansell, 38 Maple Gardens, Bath, BA2 3AG.

Please state session(s) required and, if ordering by post, send a cheque made payable to **Bath & Borders CAMRA** along with a stamped, addressed envelope.

BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

Pub and brewery news from the CAMRA Bath & Borders branch

Willy Good Ale at Bradford Roots

The Bradford Roots Music Festival took place over the weekend of January 17th and 18th at the Wiltshire Music Centre, Bradford-on-Avon and, as in previous years, a specially brewed real ale was supplied for the event by the Willy Good Ale brewery. This was a traditional amber session ale at 4% ABV called **Roots Brew** and I can say that it was definitely “moreish”. Others must have agreed with me as the eight casks provided proved to be a sell-out!

If this was not enough, head brewer Will Southward and his partner Madelaine Ryan also performed on stage with the band Wasuremono with Will on lead guitar and vocals and Madelaine on keyboards. What talent!

Graham Walker

Twisted Brewing

In early December our newest micro, Twisted Brewing, based in the West Wiltshire Trading Estate in Wiltshire, launched its second ever seasonal beer, **Piper**, a 4.5% winter ale brewed using hops grown at the nearby Horse & Groom in Westbury and designed to be a dark, warming and delicious chestnut premium beer.

More recently the brewery has produced **Apprentice**, a 4.3% light-coloured classic pale ale brewed using Maris Otter and Crystal malts and hopped with Challenger and First Gold. Dry-hopping, using Archer and Admiral hops, was carried out in the fermenters as a way of avoiding hop residue in the casks.

Steve Hunt

Abbey Ales

Abbey Ales, based in Camden Row in Bath, are now brewing **Bath Best**, a 4% best bitter, and **Somerset Ale**, a 3.8% malty full-bodied ale with a hoppy and floral finish, all year round.

Meanwhile, **Bellringer**, their flagship brew, got mentioned in despatches by renowned beer writer Sophie Atherton in a Telegraph article on 22nd January entitled “The patriotic pint: 10 best beers made with British hops.” The article describes Bellringer as a classic best bitter that bucks the fashion for imported hops and uses Challenger, Fuggles and Goldings grown in Worcestershire. You can read the full article on-line at www.telegraph.co.uk/foodanddrink/11360318/The-patriotic-pint-10-best-beers-made-with-British-hops.html (or simply google *Telegraph Patriotic Pint*).

Trevor Cronie

Three Daggers



Daggers Ale (4.1%) became Three Daggers’ first bottled beer in December. With the addition of the very experienced John Pilling (ex Twisted and North Cotswold Brewery among others) to the brewing team they were able to brew five times in three days to get enough beer together for the bottling run. The first 130 cases flew out over Christmas and the next run is planned soon. Cases of *Batch 001* are still available from the Edington Farm Shop (Westbury, Wiltshire, BA13 4PG) if you want to get your hands on one.

Daggers Session Ale at 2.8% was launched in January with some people thinking that it was over 4% in blind tastings. It is described as a pale and refreshing beer brewed with Cascade hops and with the addition of oats to give the beer a full mouth feel and a creamy head. Look out for it.

The very collectible oak pump clips from Three Daggers have reached the final of the SIBA business awards. The Judges obviously liked the handcrafted clips reflecting the handcrafted beer. The winner will be announced at SIBA’s BeerX in Sheffield in March.



Milk Street Brewery

Five and a half million pints later, having started brewing in 1999, Milk Street Brewery in Frome are getting a new copper. Due to ever increasing demand for their beers, they have needed to fit even more capacity into the now crowded space at the Griffin pub, home of the brewery. The new custom-built equipment will increase brewing capacity to 3,500 pints at a time, meaning twice as much Milk Street beer brewed per week. Owner Rik Lyall says: “The new copper is gas powered making for a much cleaner flavour in all our beers – our brewers are very excited and can’t wait to get started!”

Bear Flat Brewery

News is coming through of a new brewery in Bath. We understand that the Bear Flat Brewery will have around a 15-barrel brew-length. We know very little at the moment but hope to have more information in time for the next edition of Pints West.

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The George, Longbridge Deverill

The George at Longbridge Deverill is a pub which has changed ownership/landlord a number of times over the last few years but is now owned by **Upham Ales**, a brewery based in Hampshire which is now building up a chain of pubs across the south of England.

They are known for their sympathetic approach when they purchase a pub. They don't simply go in and renovate to a corporate standard they talk to the locals to find out what they would like and try as best they can to incorporate this into their plans. This enables the pubs to retain their local trade and encourage new visitors. It also ensures each pub has its own unique identity.

This works well at the George. The front of the pub has changed very little with just a little updating and redecorating. The bar leads through to the new areas which consist of a large function room, a separate bar, a conservatory with seating for about 30, and an outdoor terrace with seating. The new area can be partitioned off from the main bar enabling it to be completely self-contained meaning that the bar is not compromised by the function and can retain its pub atmosphere. At other times all of these areas are available for relaxed drinking and eating.

The George keeps one of Upham's three beers, **Tipster**, **Punter** and **Stakes**, on tap along with guest ales, which change regularly.

Well worth a visit.

Nicky and Pete Cornock



News from Dawkins Ales

After selling bottled beers for some time exclusively in Bells Diner in Montpellier and Riverstation in central Bristol, the Dawkins brewery intends to step up production of bottle-conditioned beers with a full range available by summer. The first new customer is the Better Food Company on Whiteladies Road, where sales have been strong.

First brewed last year as part of Bristol Beer Week, **Albion** barley wine will reappear this spring in both cask and bottle. A strong (at 9.7% ABV) incredibly complex beer for savouring, there will also be a very limited edition run of large bottles designed for keeping. Already matured for several months at the brewery, the beer should further improve for many years. The beer will be available on draught at the CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival in March.

With so many microbreweries vying for a finite amount of New World hops, the brewery has greatly upped the quantities it pre-orders every year under contract with hop merchants Charles Faram of Malvern. Drinkers can look forward to many more richly hoppy beers this year. Extremely popular brews such as the single-varietal **Citra!** and **Mosaic!** and the powerfully double-hopped **Ultra** will recur regularly throughout the year. By contrast, darker, unhoppy beer lovers will not be neglected with **Foresters Black** and **Chocadee** (5% double chocolate milk stout) also being more regularly brewed.

In Dawkins pub news, new landlord Phil at the **Green Man** is doing well in his first few months, ably assisted by his team of old and new faces. Sunday lunches have been a sell-out success with free-range meat from local butchers Ruby & White. Food on other nights is in development. A recent winter ales festival was very busy so look forward to more such events in the future. The pub has had a lick of paint and further improvements are in the pipeline at this Kingsdown pub.

Over in St Werburghs the first Dawkins pub, the **Miner's Arms**, is undergoing a refurbishment too with the original Victorian brickwork being revealed under the previously tired exterior facade. A true centre of the community, a summer fete and beer festival is planned.

The diminutive **Victoria** in Clifton will be getting a tidy up starting this spring too. Belgian beers continue to be a big hit there. Local customer and chutney-maker Hannah has produced chutney made with Dawkins ale, which is for sale at the pub under her 'Ham Jars' brand. April will see the eighth St George's Day beer festival with ales from across the country.

In Clifton Village, Joe at the **Portcullis** hosts his irreverent Wednesday night quiz and the monthly Oppo comedy night is a riot; full house on the last Sunday of the month. Similarly ridiculous, the annual Eurovision Beer Contest will take place in May.

Phill the Pint

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Beer and Buildings



An exciting new pub trail for Bath – ‘Beer and Buildings’ – is being put together jointly by Bath & Borders CAMRA and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). This is the first time local CAMRA and RIBA have run a joint venture and it has been organised primarily by Tom Chapman of Bath and Borders CAMRA, Lucy Inder of Donald Insall Architects of Bath, and Emma Metcalf, the events co-ordinator for RIBA South West. The trail is planned to run as an event during the Bath Fringe Festival from May 22nd to June 7th this year. The Bath Fringe Festival is a long established alternative arts and music festival that has been running since 1991, and having the pub trail during the festival should attract new customers to the pubs.

Beer and Buildings will feature a selection of 15 of the city’s most interesting pubs. It will celebrate our unique pub heritage, and Bath has many examples of traditional historic pubs, most having been in continual use as pubs since the 1700s and some have retained important protected historic interiors. The trail will also include new pubs and



An exciting new pub trail for Bath

newly finished interior renovations that have sprung up in the city over the last few years. Many of the new pubs have had significant amounts of investment and this shows in the quality and creativity of the interior design on offer. And we have made room for a few that are just simply our favourite pubs. The trail will provide a really varied and interesting selection for all tastes. All the pubs included will be of architectural and design interest as well as being well worth visiting, and there will be of course a healthy contingent of Good Beer Guide regulars.

The trail is self-guided and will consist of a leaflet map, designed by a team of our architect-volunteers, that will include information on the architecture, history and interior design of the pubs. The leaflet will also contain a stamp card, and completed cards can be sent in for some great prizes that will go down well with all beer lovers! A favourite pub of the trail will also be voted for by participants. The trail will feature a strong digital component too – so more information and ways to get involved and participate will be available. The individual pubs are being encouraged to put on special events as part of the trail so there should be plenty of offers and interesting stuff going on – keep up to date on the trail and events by visiting our website (below).

For pub and beer lovers from further afield it is a great time to come and visit the city; as well as its famous Georgian architecture and all the usual sites and attractions, there will also be plenty to do and see around the city as the Fringe Festival will be in full swing.

So please come and enjoy what we hope will be a memorable and informative experience. The full trail will be unveiled closer to the event and more information will be available on the *Beer and Buildings* website www.beerandbuildings.com and watch out for social media presence soon.

See also the Bath Fringe website www.bathfringe.co.uk for further information, and the Fringe Magazine, due out early May.

You can also contact us directly by emailing tomchapman608@gmail.com.

Tom Chapman

Photos are of interior and exterior detail of some of the selected trail pubs. Email the identities of the pubs to Tom (tomchapman608@gmail.com) and the first correct answer will get a slap on the back and invite to the launch event. (Note that two of the pictures are from the same pub.)



Watering Holes in the Desert

brought to you from Weston-super-Mare

On 14th November a group of Weston sub-branch members met up in Worle for a survey of the pubs in the area. The starting point was the **Lamb Inn**. It was only *Butcombe Bitter* here as usual, but some were happy to stay for two pints while waiting for any late arrivals, so it must have been OK. Then on to the **Golden Lion** next as we had heard it was changing hands. We found it still being run by interim management awaiting new arrivals and only *Sharp's Doom Bar* on offer. The **Woodspring** was next to be visited, with three beers on: *Butcombe Bitter*, *Doom Bar* and *Wychwood Hobgoblin It's Christmas* (I couldn't tell the difference from *Hobgoblin*). All were OK and no mention of the forthcoming closing (see below). The **Nut Tree** was next – best pub of the evening for me, and the busiest. Three beers here: *Courage Best*, *St Austell Tribute* and *Theakston XB*. I enjoyed the Tribute. I hadn't tasted XB for a long time; I used to drink it a lot in Cumbria in the 1980's but it was not like I remembered it. It could be my taste buds have changed over the years! The **Old Kings Head** was the final stop. Much quieter than on a previous pub crawl but still selling a *Newman's* beer; tonight it was *Castell Coch Celt Express* (4.7%), an unusual tasting beer but OK.

On 26th November another group of Weston sub-branch members took the W1 bus to Congresbury for a similar survey of pubs in that area, starting at the **Ship & Castle**. This is a Mezza chain pub that again has a dinking area by the bar and the usual *Greene King* beers on, all at £3.60 a pint (*Abbot*, *IPA* and *Old Speckled Hen*). All were tried by various members and they were of good quality. Next up was the **Old Inn** on Paul's Causeway, a *Young's* pub that had their *Bitter* and *Special* plus *St Austell Tribute* and *Butcombe Bitter*; once again all the beers were tried by the members collectively and all were of good quality (the *Special* was changed as we arrived). The last pub in Congresbury we visited is the Bristol & District CAMRA pub of the year for 2013 and 2014, the **Plough**, which had five ales on, in their peculiar dispense method. All the beers were of good quality but no more so than the previous pubs; they were *Cheddar Potholer*, *Twisted Oak Fallen Tree*, *Palmers Barley Mo* (so called to celebrate the Movember charity), *St Austell Tribute* and *Bath Ales Festivity*. I had a chat with the landlord here as he recognised me and he told me that a new beer from *Twisted Oak* was expected the following week. I recommended the new *Prescott* beer *Ruby Stout* to him as a good dark session beer at only 4.2% as he was interested in my opinion of *Prescott* beers.



The New Inn in 1959
(from WsM Borough engineers department)

The **Woodspring** pub in Worle closed unexpectedly in the last week of November. Previously known as the **New Inn**, it has been on the site since at least 1820. I have heard that the pub company have no plans to reopen it and it will go on the market soon, this despite the fact it has a big garden and a car park.

The sub-branch had their winter (festive) ales crawl on the December 12th despite the general feeling that it was too early. It was held on a Friday as that seems to be the most popular day for members; however there was a rather disappointing turn out with a maximum of 12 at the Brit Bar. Next year

Dr. John ... Capital Capers

After a Doric corner conflict in the Ionic dialect about a Corinthians passage on speaking in the tongues of men or angels, my passport only allows me to visit Wales *Cymru* for information in other languages for this column. There, Campaign of Two Halves was *Ymgyrch o Ddau Hanner*, real ale *cwrw go iawn* and pubs *tafarndai*. Cardiff *Caerdydd* has been the capital since 1955, something *Machynlleth*, *Mach* at 761.2 mph, and Carnarvon *Caernarfon*, famous for OS X chess app castling, never were.

The Windsor Place Central Bar's Welcome to Wetherspoons *Croeso i Wetherspoons* was £2.15 Wibblers Essex Polar Beer 4.2%. The nearby 1393 hospital became the Capitol, perhaps a Welsh spelling, Shopping Centre. The Westgate Street Gatekeeper stands opposite Millennium Stadium *Stadiwm y Mileniwm* and had: Brains SA copper-coloured best bitter 4.2%; Tomas Watkin red Old Style Welsh Bitter and mahogany Otter Ale 4.5%; full-bodied Inveralmond Lia Fail *Stone of Destiny* 4.7%; and pale Nottingham Supreme Bitter 5.2%. The *Gwynt y Ddraig* Cider/Perry included: medium Happy Daze 4.5%; blended mature Welsh Warrior and apple/pear Farmhouse Pyder 6.0%; and dry farmhouse Ancient Warrior and sharp-toothed Dog Dancer 6.5%. The theatrical St Mary Street Prince of Wales had: Brains SA; Sharp's Doom Bar 4.0%; Mantle's tautological Cardigan Mojo Marvelous Pale Ale 4.3%; and Adnams Broadside 4.7%. In the same street, The Great Western had, from £1.95: Brains SA brewed nearby; Doom Bar; Broadside; and Rhymney Export flavoursome bitter 5.0%.

Falling asleep on the train, I finished up in Paddington and, if you can Bear with me, continued my capital wander to the Edgware Road Tyburn, where 24 people used to hang out, including Perkin Warbeck of whom I rote in *Pinctae Occidens CIV*. There were Doom Bar and: a fresh Greene King IPA 3.6%; Wickwar Christmas Cracker 4.2%, an easy pull; Shepherd Neame Bishops Finger 5.0%, no hidden extracts; Mordue Headmasters Christmas Sermon 5.2%, a job shared being a job halved; and Thwaites Yule Love It Amber Christmas Ale 4.0%, cheque in the post the following morning.

Wetherspoons Victoria Station with its 'outside' no-smoking areas had, although not Baker Street, over a dozen on including two just seen and: the very veterinarian By the Horns Mick the Miller Amber Ale 4.0% and Hogs Back Mistletoe and Swine 5.2%;

Fuller's London Pride 4.1%, Oscar Wilde rather than the seasonal Noël Coward being on the wall tiles with the Orient Express, which card was refused for payment; a non-seasonally-bronze Dark Star Winter Meltdown 5%; Fuller's ESB 5.5%, even in London not costing the Earth; Moorhouse's Ice Witch 4.8%, not served over-cold; Windsor & Eton Mandarin Christmas Ale 4.5%, appropriate to another Victoria station; and Itchen Valley RИSSIAИ ШИИТЯ 5.3%, the answer to "capitalist lager and stout imposters."

Not where it claims but typically Whitehall round the bend, The Lord Moon of the Mall pub sign image restored real-world proprietorial sanity, as did ten on in the mortise-locked joint, with four just seen

it will be held closer to Christmas and not on a Friday. We visited (in order) **Sam's Bar and Grill, Criterion, Cabot Court, Regency, Brit Bar, Royal Hotel, Bristol Hotel, Dragon Inn and White Hart**. Normally it has been a requisite that that a pub must have a seasonal ale on for the participants to stay – this rule was broken this year by popular consent!

On the 9th January we had a three-pub survey/social in the St Georges/Worle area. Six stalwarts turned up for the first pub, the **Woolpack** at St Georges, which had two *Butcombe* beers which were pronounced good by all who drank them. The **Parish Pump** at North Worle had three real ales on – *Sharp's Doom Bar* and *Atlantic*, and *Wadworth 6X*. The *Doom Bar* was not tried but the others were and the *Atlantic* was preferred. Finally the **Summerhouse**, a *Marston's* pub near Worle Parkway rail station, is considered good when it has *Jennings* beers on. On that night two pumps had *Pedigree*, two *Hobgoblin* and one *Piledriver*, the last going before everyone could try it. Those who had some thought it would have been better not served, though not really bad. The *Pedigree* tasted just right and the *Hobgoblin* too, though a tad cold. The cost of bottled beers and cider was expensive here with a £1 mark up from pubs in the town centre!

The February pub survey was for a change held on Thursday (the 5th), and we had a reasonable turnout of eight members for a Weston-super-Mare town centre crawl. First pub visited was **Off The Rails**, the pub on Weston railway station, where *Cottage S&D* and tasty *Box Clever Old Number 8* were supplemented by one real cider. Then across the road to the **Bristol Hotel**, now owned by Mark Short of the Good Beer Guide-listed **Regency**, where the *Butcombe Bitter* is now joined by *Dartmoor Jail Ale* and the excellent *Timothy Taylor Landlord*. A few yards further on bought us to the **Red Admiral** which was having a karaoke night but the *Butcombe Bitter* there had *Wells Bombardier Burning Gold* as its companion beer, which was in tip-top condition. We squeezed in an extra pub then, the **Tavern Inn The Town**, which only had *Wells Bombardier* which was a tad on the warm side. The final visit was to the **Dragon** which had only four ales on out of ten beer engines, two of which were duplicated with the *Greene King Abbot* and *Ruddles*, and most of the rest had clips for cider on them, which were not in fact served by beer engine but from cardboard polypins on the back of the bar. However the *Moles St Elmo's Fire* was in good condition and provided a fitting end to the evening.

*Robin E Wild
and Bill Barnes (Worle trip)*

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and: Hawkshead Red 4.2%, to go with the un-American books on the walls; Rudgate Rudolph's Ruin 4.6%, perhaps caused by too much rein; Arundel Old Scrooge 5.0%, with a free humbug; and Abbot Reserve 6.5% for the twelfth man.

The Kingsway Shakespeares Head had not gone bust and had five seen before and: Deuchars IPA 3.8% hopping in from another capital; Hardy & Hanson Captain Christmas 4.2%, a Major success; Hook Norton Old Hooky 4.6% to play truant for; and Stonehenge Ales Rudolph 5.0% to sleigh you. The very civil but not hidden-away Holborn Penderel's Oak had four just seen with: Fuller's London Pride handed down to us in the cellar; Batemans XXXB 4.5% for fishermen; and Exmoor Exmas There's Noale Like It! 5.0% to hang your hat on. I left the crafty Full Sail Wassail Ale 7.2% but it inspired my next outing.

Before that Wassail, my Black-Friday-broken *sus scrofa domesticus* bank was not replaced in our *El Dia de Los Reyes* Kings' Day Gregorian Twelfth Night presents exchange, leaving no money for a fourth CAMRA Millwhites Wander. So, we arrived early at 1930, though Wassails started in the 1400s, at Kingston Seymour's muddy-puddled Yew Tree Lane, named after neither Cardiff's apples nor London's Oaks. Heavy rain beautifully bracketed the ceremony, giving meteorological conditions not, as previously, problematic for chionophobic Bristolians or forerunning flooding on the Somerset Levels, possibly named after spirits inhabiting cider orchards.

This Julian January 17 Old Twelfth Night had Crossman's Mayfield Farm, Hewish mulled Prime Farmhouse Cider 6%. Wassail wakes up the apple trees, drives away evil spirits and encourages good ones, possibly Wild robins, for a copious crop. As a celebration of seasonal transition this one was: non-Roman, with no candles; non-Mari Lwyd, with no Grey Mare; and non-Celtic, with the traditional bonfire in a white-goods

drum in the farmyard next to the straw-strewn barn much enjoyed by smaller people along with free squash, as was Wurzel Worldish live music by their seniors. All was very non-pagan C21: by the M5; no visible Wassail Queen; a remaining male Anglican vicar from All Saints uttering a Christian prayer through a loudhailer, cross in hand; and a great amen. We were not able to form the traditional circle to pour and share cider around the tree and be deafened by the shotgun blasts, with no key to the door or orchard gate for our equally keyless signing of the Carhampton Wassailing Song (*Anon, as French ladies say*) from the 1638 *Butcombe Bitter* or *Exmoor Ale Butchers Arms*, opening 1800:

*Old apple tree, we wassail thee,
And hoping thou wilt bear
For the Lord doth know where we shall be
Till apples come another year.
For to bear well, and to bear well
So merry let us be,
Let every man take off his hat,
And shout to the old apple tree!*

*Old apple tree, we wassail thee,
And hoping thou wilt bear
Hatfuls, capfuls and three bushel bagfuls
And a little heap under the stairs,*

Hip, Hip, Hooray!

Diolch yn fawr iawn ac yn Dduw bendithia chi.

A Round with Robin

Whilst drinking with fellow Bristol CAMRA member Andrew Hayward in the Gryphon one evening in October, talk turned to the subject of pubs in Oakengates. He mentioned that it had three Good Beer Guide (GBG) listed pubs within a minute's walk of each other. Then in November I saw an advert in *What's Brewing* for a festival to be held in two of these three pubs, in what is essentially a village surrounded by the new town of Telford, and decided to pay a visit. With advance train tickets secured, I set out early from Weston-super-Mare on Saturday 6th December and arrived, through hard frost in the Cotswolds and snow from Wolverhampton, at Oakengates. By 11 o'clock I was in the **Station Hotel**. The bar here shows that this was built in 1861, and they had 17 ales on handpump. I started with half pints of *Vibrant Forest Nova Forest* and *Celt Black Book*. For those interested in this sort of thing, they also had 14 draught Belgian beers (including *Gouldon Carolas Christmas* at 10.5%), 30 bottled Belgian beers and six other bottled beers from Europe.



The bar of the Station Hotel

After another two halves, I went the 80 feet up the hill to the **Old Fighting Cocks** (the local CAMRA pub of the year) where, alas, there were only ten handpumps, but large crowds the previous night meant that 14 beers came on while I was there. This pub is still the brewery tap for *Ironbridge Ales*, although the brewery is now at Wellington, one stop up the line; the hoppy *Ironbridge Wrekin Ale* was worth a try, as were their stouts.

Having spent two hours in each of the two pubs I thought I'd better pop into the **Crown Inn** on the other side of the road from the Station Hotel. This is the oldest of the pubs in Oakengates, but with only eight handpumps delighting in ale, while two more had real cider. The ales ranged from *Joules*, *Wentworth*, *Hobson's* and *Tring*. A couple of hours were spent here in the company of ex-landlords of local pubs and a great dane/bull mastiff cross! There is actually a fourth pub right next door to the Station Hotel which is not in the GBG – the Duke, a sports bar – but as this only had one real ale viz. M&B Mild, I returned to the Crown as the other two pubs were filling up for their beer festival.

(I was able to get my train to Birmingham New Street only a few minutes late, before the railway system appeared to fall apart completely, with cancellations and platform changes, but somehow I managed to get the last train from Bristol home with two minutes to spare.)

Back in Bristol at the **Seven Stars** in Thomas Lane, the beer festivals at the beginning of each month starring beers from one county or area – known as the 'Beeriodicals' – have been diverse and excellent. November saw beers from Hants and Dorset (my own choice for best ale being the *Flowerpot Perredge Pale*); December was from Greater London (with *Moncado Oatmeal Stout* from Notting Hill vying with *Portobello Apache IPA* for my favourite); January produced beers from Sussex, with no one beer better than any other, but all very varied in style and taste; and in February we had beers from Devon, when the *New Lion Pandit IPA* was not only my beer of the festival but it seemed for many others too as it went in less than one day.

Before Christmas I went to Devon for the day to buy my brother lunch at the excellent **Three Little Pigs** in Crediton. Although, not noted for its huge range of real ales, it usually has at least three on from Devon, and we both liked the *Hanlon's Yellow Hammer* from their new brewery in Half Moon, a mere five miles away. I also visited the **Crediton Inn**, a regular in the GBG, where I drank *Celtic Cross* (a collaboration ale involving six breweries). In Exeter I had time to pop into the **Great Western Hotel** near St David's railway station, and the *Country Life Pot Wallop* was the beer of choice from 11 other beers. At the Wetherspoons **Imperial Hotel** I had a pint of *Hunter's Crack Shot*, a New World style hoppy beer – so all beers tried that day were brewed in Devon.



I spent Christmas in Bristol this year and on Christmas Day had a fine pint of *Celt Native Storm* at the **Commercial Rooms**, before proceeding to **Horts** (where *Young's Arthurs Tipple Christmas Ale* was very drinkable) to meet friends and onwards for Christmas lunch. On the 27th December I had a pint of *Blue Anchor Spingo* at the **Seven Stars** and I would be interested to know if any other pub in Bristol has ever had this very Cornish ale. I know it has been seen at the Star Inn in Bath for their Cornish festivals, and it may have been at beer festivals here in Bristol.

I haven't been to any 'winter ales' festivals this year, but have contented myself with visiting pubs in Bristol, and readers of this column will not be surprised with my choice of hosteleries. The expert way in which beers are chosen and served makes it impossible to choose an overlord of beers at the **Bag of Nails**, **Bank**, **Cornubia**, **Gryphon**, **Three Tuns** and **Volunteer Tavern** and other Bristol pubs hereinbefore mentioned.

Robin E Wild

Seven Stars Ale House

Thomas Lane Redcliffe BS1 6JG



CAMRA Bristol & District
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2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014

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01/15

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CAMRA pub discounts



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An extra benefit of CAMRA membership is that a number of pubs offer discounts on the price of real ale or traditional cider (or occasionally other things) to card-carrying members. Some examples:

- **Air Balloon**, Gloucester Road North, Filton, Bristol
- **Anchor Inn**, Gloucester Road, Lower Morton, Thornbury
- **Annexe Inn**, Seymour Road, Bishopston, Bristol
- **Bank Tavern**, John Street, Bristol
- **Bay Horse**, Lewins Mead, Broadmead, Bristol
- **Bear Inn**, Walliscote Road, Weston-super-Mare
- **Bell**, Badminton Road, Old Sodbury
- **Be In Bristol**, Whiteladies Road, Clifton, Bristol
- **Beaufort Arms**, North Road, Stoke Gifford
- **Black Castle**, St Philips Causeway, Brislington, Bristol
- **Black Swan (Dirty Duck)**, Stoke Lane, Westbury-on-Trym
- **Bristol Cider Shop**, Christmas Steps, Bristol
- **Brit Bar**, High Street, Weston-super-Mare
- **Cider Press**, Gloucester Road, Bristol
- **Coach & Horses**, Highland Square, Clifton, Bristol
- **Cornubia**, Temple Street, Bristol
- **Cotham Porter Stores**, Cotham Road South, Kingsdown, Bristol
- **Drawbridge**, St Augustines Parade, Bristol (city centre)
- **Eastfield Inn**, Henleaze Road, Henleaze, Bristol
- **Famous Royal Navy Volunteer**, King Street, Bristol
- **George Hotel**, Broad Street, Chipping Sodbury
- **Globe Inn**, Church Road, Frampton Cotterell
- **Golden Guinea**, Guinea Street, Redcliffe, Bristol
- **Grapes**, Rounceval Street, Chipping Sodbury
- **Gryphon**, Colston Street, Bristol
- **Hare**, North Street, Bedminster, Bristol
- **Hope & Anchor**, Jacobs Wells Road, Bristol
- **Horseshoe**, Downend Road, Downend, Bristol
- **Horseshoe** (formerly Gilly's), High Street, Chipping Sodbury
- **Mill House**, Emerson Way, Emersons Green, Bristol
- **New Inn**, Badminton Road, Mayshill
- **Old Stillage**, Church Road, Redfield, Bristol
- **Orchard Inn**, Hanover Place, Bristol
- **Prince of Wales**, Gloucester Road (near the Arches), Bristol
- **Queens Arms**, Celtic Way, Bleadon
- **RAFA Club**, Eastfield, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol
- **Red Admiral**, Alexandra Parade, Weston-super-Mare
- **Robert Fitzharding**, Cannon Street, Bedminster, Bristol
- **Robin Hood**, St Michael's Hill, Kingsdown, Bristol
- **Royal Oak**, High Street, Nailsea, Bristol
- **Royal Oak**, Lower Bristol Road, Twerton, Bath
- **Roo Bar**, Whiteladies Gate, Clifton, Bristol
- **Rose & Crown**, High Street, Wick
- **Sandringham**, Quaker's Road, Bromley Heath
- **Seven Stars**, Thomas Lane, Redcliffe, Bristol
- **Shakespeare Tavern**, Prince Street, Bristol
- **Ship Inn**, Thornbury Road, Alveston
- **Squire Inn**, Broad Street, Chipping Sodbury
- **Star**, Bristol Road, Congresbury
- **Steam Crane**, North Street, Bedminster, Bristol
- **Strawberry Thief**, Broad Street, Bristol (Belgian beer bar)
- **Surrey Vaults**, Surrey Street, Bristol
- **Swan Inn**, Badminton Road, Nibley
- **Talbot Inn**, Bath Road, Keynsham
- **Three Brooks**, Bradley Stoke District Centre, Bradley Stoke
- **Three Tuns**, St George's Road, Hotwells, Bristol
- **Volunteer Tavern**, New Street, St Judes, Bristol
- **Westbury Park Tavern**, Northumbria Drive, Henleaze, Bristol
- **White Lion**, Quay Head, Colston Avenue, Bristol (city centre)
- **White Lion**, Passage Road, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol
- **Woolpack Inn**, Shepherds Way, St Georges, Weston-super-Mare
- **Yard**, Colston Street, Bristol

The details of the discounts vary from pub to pub and from time to time. The discount is at the discretion of the pub and can be as little or as large as the pub feels suits their business, or may be withdrawn at any time without notice.

Get involved in 2015

**Not been involved with your local branch?
Why not join us on a social event soon?**

As I write this on a dreary Sunday afternoon in February, like most people I am eagerly awaiting the soon to be longer daylight hours and warmer weather. It will be a good time to shake off those winter doldrums and look forward to visiting some of the many fine pubs in our area. One way of doing this is with your local CAMRA branch!

Your local branch of CAMRA, as well as doing all of that campaigning, also has a lively and varied social calendar. OK, when I say varied, it does mostly involve visiting pubs in our area – but at least the pubs are varied!

A quick scan of our branch web sites, the branch diaries here, or even the branch diary pages in CAMRA's national paper *What's Brewing*, will reveal a busy calendar with events throughout our area. These events are open to all CAMRA members.

One example of the Bristol & District branch's socials is the Bedminster pub walk on Saturday, 28th March. It starts at the Ropewalk on Nelson Parade (BS3 4JA) at 1.30pm. The social will take a few pubs in the BS3 area and is all very informal. Led by a local member who is so dedicated that he doing the pub walk before the day to check out best directions, etc, it should be an enjoyable Saturday afternoon social. Of course, people can do just a part of the walk if they wish, or complete the whole crawl.

What's involved? The onerous task of visiting pubs with like-minded people and having a few beers!

Our members are from all sorts of backgrounds with the whole gamut of ages enjoying these events. So, if you are free and able to get along, we would love to see you and you will be made most welcome. Of course, if you can't make this event, there are many other branch events coming up so keep checking the diary.

Perhaps I will see you in BS3. Make a diary note now!

Pete Bridle

Bristol diary and contact

Diary of the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA

- **Sun 8th March:** 2016 GBG selection meeting, Famous Royal Navy Volunteer, 12.30 start (please arrive 12-12.15pm).
- **Tues 10th March:** Committee meeting, Gryphon, 8pm.
- **Thurs 12th to Sat 14th March:** Bristol Beer Festival, Temple Meads.
- **Thurs 12th March:** BADRAG gathering at this session of the Bristol Beer Festival.
- **Wed 25th March:** Quarterly branch meeting, Brunswick Club, Brunswick Square, 8pm.
- **Sat 28th March:** Bristol Pubs Group (though open to all) Bedminster pub walk, starting Ropewalk 1.30pm and taking in seven other pubs. Contact on the day Keith Shapland, 07877 329947.
- **Wed 8th April:** Committee meeting, Gryphon, 8pm.
- **Tues 14th April:** Bristol Beer Festival wash-up meeting, Gryphon, 8pm.
- **Wed 22nd April:** Branch meeting, 8pm – venue tbc.
- **Thurs 23rd April:** Bristol Pubs Group – Lost Pubs and Brewery Walk. Start at Gin Palace, 7pm (see page 12).
- **Sat 25th April:** BADRAG visit to Chippenham Beer Festival by train (see page 17).
- **Sat 2nd May:** Joint social with Cheltenham branch in Cheltenham (by train).
- **Wed 13th May:** Committee meeting, Gryphon, 8pm.
- **Sat 16th May:** BADRAG South Glos Mild Trail (see page 17).
- **Wed 27th May:** Branch meeting, 8pm – venue tbc.

Please check our website (www.camrabristol.org.uk) or sign up to our yahoo group for the latest information and more details on any of the above events, as sometimes events can change after press date – or email Andy Gray at camrasocials@btinternet.com for the latest information. Please note that any coach and brewery trips must be booked in advance, either by email, or in person at a branch meeting.

If you would like to receive no-obligation details of forthcoming Bristol & District branch events, simply go to the branch website (www.camrabristol.org.uk) then click on 'Contact Us'. This takes you to the branch contacts page, then just click where it says 'Click here to join our email news list'. It's as easy as that.

Andy Gray (Social Secretary)

Bristol & District CAMRA

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Bath & Borders CAMRA

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Bath & Borders branch diary and contact

- **Tuesday 3rd March, 8:30pm:** A mini crawl of Westbury, starting at the Crown, on the market Place.
- **Thursday 12th March 7:30pm:** A special celebration party, at the George in Croscombe, of the 100,000th pint of 'George the Thirst'.
- **Tuesday 17th 8:30pm:** A crawl of the pubs of Farmborough and Timsbury, starting at the Butchers Arms, Farmborough.
- **Thursday 26th 8:30pm:** A social at the Garrick's Head, Bath.
- **Tuesday 31st 8:00pm:** The Branch Meeting, at the Fox and Hounds, Warminster.

See www.bathandborderscamra.org.uk/events for further diary dates.

Branch socials contact: Denis Rahilly on 01225 791399 or 07711 004501, email denis.rahilly@talktalk.net or socials@bathandborderscamra.org.uk

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

Weston diary and contact

- **Saturday 7th March:** Social two-pub visit to the beer festival at the Gryphon (Colston Street, Bristol) at 1pm followed by the Three Tuns at 4pm (a direct route can be obtained via Trenchard Street and past the back of the Council House).
- **Thursday 26th March:** A pub survey to the Windsor Castle in Upper Bristol Road at 8pm. The way to get there is a no. 7 bus to Baytree Road and walk up the hill (you are allowed rests on the way), followed by a walk down the same hill to the Borough Arms in Locking Road at 9.30pm. We haven't visited either of these pubs for a good while, so hopefully some of you will be curious enough to want to go.
- **Wednesday 15th April:** This will be the second popular Meet & Greet evening at the Regency in Lower Church Road, opposite the College, which last year was attended by more than 25 members. Pub games will be available to play (pool, darts and skittles), and curry and chips (as last year) should be an added draw. Come and give your reps your feedback.
- **Saturday 25th April:** Visiting pubs in Bath: make your own way there or join with friends to get 3-for-2 tickets on the railway. We will be leaving Lambretta's bar at 1pm and finishing by 7pm to get trains or buses back to Weston-super-Mare.
- **Saturday 2nd May:** Social at Weston Cricket Club's charity beer festival in Devonshire Road; hopefully it will be a nice day so we can sup beer and watch cricket. No beer list available yet but entrance is £3, to include a glass, programme and beer!
- **Friday 22nd May:** This year the Brit beer fest will be on the late May bank holiday weekend for three days, so we will have a social there on the Friday evening at 8pm.
- **Saturday 13th June:** A visit to Wells pubs with a possible loo/pub break on the way back at Winscombe or Banwell. We will be departing on the 126 bus at 11am from Alexandra Parade.

All tours and socials open to members and also any non-members who would like to find out more about the local pubs and local CAMRA sub-branch.

Socials and Pints West contact:

Robin E Wild – robinwild42@yahoo.co.uk 07857 602293

WsM contact for other matters:

Mark Hirst – ogrekhirst@hotmail.com

Severn Vale sub-branch diary and contact

Severn Vale CAMRA is a sub-branch of the Bristol & District branch. It covers roughly the area bounded by Thornbury in the north, Severn Beach in the south, the River Severn in the west and the M5 in the east.

- **Fri 6th March:** Survey trip, Thornbury north.
- **Fri 13th March:** Old Spot, Dursley, 12:30 (or Plan B).
- **Wed 18th March:** sub-branch meeting, Bowl Almondsbury, 8:30.
- **Fri 27th March:** Survey trip, Thornbury south.
- **Fri 10th April:** Old Spot, Dursley, 12:30 (or Plan B).
- **Wed 15th April:** sub-branch meeting, Black Horse, Thornbury, 8:30.
- **Fri 1st May:** Survey trip south-west of area (i.e. Hallen, Pilning, Northwick, Easter Compton).
- **Fri 8th May:** Old Spot, Dursley, 12:30 (or Plan B).
- **Wed 20th May:** sub-branch meeting, Wheatsheaf, Thornbury, 8:30.
- **Fri 5th June:** Survey trip, tbc.
- **Fri 2th June:** Old Spot, Dursley, 12:30 (or Plan B).
- **Wed 17th June:** sub-branch meeting, Anchor, Thornbury, 8:30.

All are welcome to attend any of the pub visits and meetings.

For up-to-the-minute details and any changes, please check our diary page at www.severnval.camrabristol.org.uk and/or email us at SevernValeCAMRA@gmail.com.

Due to the recent unreliability of buses between Thornbury and Dursley, we now have a Plan B for the Old Spot visits. If the 87 bus doesn't turn up in Thornbury, we'll catch a 78 in the opposite direction and head to a selected pub towards Bristol, close to the A38.

So if you're thinking of joining us, text or call me, Martin Farrimond, on 07813 604248 so I can let you know if Plan B is being put into effect.

One "Spotonian" tells his story...

Plan B

In 2007 the Old Spot in Dursley became the national CAMRA pub of the year. Son Roger suggested we pay a visit to sample their wares (alright, their beers). What we found was a country pub in a small village which sold a good selection of beers and not a drop of lager in sight. The then landlord, Steve, became a good friend over the years, with a good knowledge of the beers he had on offer and staff who could also talk beer. What more could one want?

After chatting to friends around Thornbury, we started making bi-monthly bus journeys to the Old Spot which – once again over the years – became increasingly popular with anything up to 12 people turning up. I should point out that the number 310 bus from First Bus stopped right outside the pub. Well alright, 35 paces from the bar, so not a difficult journey. The majority of us travellers were pensioners so we could use our bus passes. Roger was not one of them, but he felt the fare was more than made up for in the quality of the beer.

After a while, it was suggested we made our visits a monthly trip, with no objectors. Any rate this journey was now a regular event in our calendars, and we became known as "The Spotonians". We even had our own sign – made up for us by Steve – to reserve our table on the days we visited. Then last year Steve decided to move on and took a pub in Cheltenham. As the beer at the Spot was still good, we kept our monthly journeys going. We have paid a visit to Steve, now at the Beehive in Cheltenham, and it is on our agenda to pay him another visit before long.

THEN, in October last year, First Bus decided to change the bus number of the bus up to Dursley and to alter the route around Thornbury. Since then, the service has "gone to pot": either the bus followed the wrong route and missed the stop where half a dozen colleagues were waiting, or has not turned up at all, or has run out of fuel (according to their customer services).

So now we have decided on a 'Plan B' whenever there are problems with the bus, when we will travel instead towards Bristol – still using First Bus, though the services in that direction are supposedly less unreliable – visiting pubs fairly close to a bus route as some of us are not too good on our pins.

John Gatty



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The **whatpub.com** website is CAMRA's first ever on-line pub guide. It lets you search for pubs selling real ale (of course), pubs that do food, or show the football, or any of over thirty criteria you might need to know.

Pictures, directions, handy maps, opening hours, the real ales and traditional ciders sold, what bus route it's on. It's all covered. For those with mobile devices, you can even check what pubs are open and selling good beer near you wherever you may be! No more guess work! And you too can get involved by updating the details of the pubs you visit to make sure **whatpub.com** remains the most up-to-date and complete on-line pub guide out there!

AN APPEAL FOR HELP!

Because this website is written by CAMRA volunteers and pub-goers like you, it is only as up to date as the information we receive, and that's where you come in! Please do make use of **whatpub.com**, and let us know any details which need to be updated. The more drinkers tell us, the better and more useful resource **whatpub.com** becomes. If you use **whatpub.com** and visit a pub that is pretty much exactly as described, then that is because someone like you took a few minutes to share what they found with drinkers the world over. Now it's your turn to repay the favour! Any information about any pub or club that sells real ale will make a world of difference!

HOW TO HELP . . .

Go to the pub!

Use **whatpub.com**, and visit the pubs and clubs you find there. The more people visit the pub, and the more successful they will be, and the more these unique pieces of our heritage will be preserved for future generations.



Update the details!

- **LOG IN TO WHATPUB.COM** using your CAMRA membership number and password.

If you don't know your password, just pop to **www.camra.org.uk** and click the 'forgotten password' button at the top.

If you're not a CAMRA member, we'd love you to join (use the membership form in this issue or go to **www.camra.org.uk/join**), but in the meantime go straight to **FIND THE PUB** below.

- **FIND THE PUB** you want to update.

If you're using a mobile device, just hit the 'nearby pubs' button and the pub you're in should magically appear.

- **HIT 'SUBMIT UPDATES'**

On a mobile device you can just tell us what you want to correct in the box provided, while the desktop version adds some simple instructions to help you. Then confirm the updates and you're done. (For non-members, there's a link to 'Send an email to the branch' at the bottom of the page, so you can update pub details that way.)



This is a great resource for drinkers across Britain, and a really good way to promote all the good real ale pubs in our area, not just the absolute crème de le crème that make the Good Beer Guide. So please, visit **whatpub.com** and make sure we've got the details of your local spot on!