

Minutes

South Devon CAMRA Branch meeting

At Preston Conservative Club, 299 Torquay Rd, Preston TQ3 2EY

Tuesday 10th January 2023.

1. **Members present:** Ian Packham (Treasurer and Vice Chairman) Lawrence Stringer (branch Secretary and social secretary) Roger Adams, Alan Cooke (Whatpub, website and social media coordinator), Richard Wilson, Eddie Pyle, Les Flower, Peter Lister, Philip German, John Bishop, Edgar Halton (membership secretary) Kate Halton, Phil (Billy) Kidd. (Pub Liaison, Beerscoring and Locale coordinator).
2. **Apologies**

Received from: Bob Southwell (Chairman) Andrew Thomson (Magazine Editor), Phil Stevens, Dave and Amanda Buckler, Paul (Grizzly) Adams (Beer tasting panel chair).
3. **Minutes of previous meeting** These have been made available on the branch website for all members to peruse.
4. **Officers reports:**
 - a. **Chairman-** Bob was not present as he had pulled a ligament and was laid up at home. The meeting wished him well and Ian Packham took his place as Vice Chairman.

Bob had not provided a lot of news, but had asked for information for his quarterly report to the SW regional director and Ian asked those present if they had anything suitable to supply.
 - b. **Secretary-** Lawrence also had a short report but advised that the new comms tool is working better than the old version and that he was now a signatory on the branch bank account.
 - c. **Treasurer-** Ian reported that the branch currently had £ 2,671.66 in the current account and this was helped by money in from News and Brews Advertisers. Ian also conformed Lawrence as a signatory to the account, replacing Bob Southwell.
 - d. **Social Secretary** – Lawrence gave a short review of some of the events of the past six months, including the Christmas event at the Queens Arms, much helped by Chris Simmons, and the trip to Widdecombe. More events are planned for 2023, including a trip to Chagford and Moretonhampstead on the 25 January and Salcombe and Kingsbridge in February. Lawrence also said that future trips would try and cover as much of the branch area as possible with the vagaries of public transport etc.
 - e. **Membership** – The order of the meeting was changed as Billy had not yet arrived, and Edgar reported as membership secretary. For the period 31st October 2022 to 10th January 2023 there were five new members, seven lapsed members and four transferred in from other branches. This gives a net increase of two members and brings the total branch membership to 549. This is better than CAMRA nationally which shows a decline of 276 members in the same timeframe. Edgar also advised that in general, Inner City branches are having more success in recruiting new members than elsewhere.



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At this point Billy arrived so it was decided to hold Alan's raffle and have a short beer break. The raffle prize was three bottles of beer from Titanic, Rudgate and Tollgate breweries and the raffle was won by Kate Halton

f. Pub of the year, Club of the year and Cider pub of the year 2023.

Billy advised he was a bit late in sending out the usual email regarding the annual awards so the deadline for nominations has been extended to 17th January, with the shortlist being announced a few days later. Each member can vote for two town pubs, two rural pubs two cider pubs and two clubs. The current overall pub of the year (The Tally Ho Littlehempston) cannot be nominated this year in accordance with branch rules. Billy also reminded everyone that the annual awards have a wider criteria than the GBG selection which is purely based on beer quality and that care must be taken in nominating pubs etc. as the winner goes on to the National competition and is then judged by members from outside South Devon.

The next stage of POTY/COTY/CPOTY after the shortlist is produced is for members to survey the selected establishments and score according to guidelines which are on our website. The selection meeting will be in March when the winners will be announced.

- g. Magazine (News and Brews) report** – Andrew had sent apologies and a reminder that the copy date for the Spring 2023 edition is 15th February and submissions are requested by this date. Lawrence made the point that the current issue has a few articles from people outside our branch and it would be good to get some SD members in the magazine. Ian advised that there had been 14 new advertisers of which eight had paid, and the magazine is still self-financing.

- h. Beer Festival** - Edgar Halton and beer festival committee member reported that the branch had been looking at The Maltings to hold the beer festival, and had had discussions with the current owners. There is a lot of work to do on the premises and other issues so probably better to look at this carefully and fairly for future years. There is another potential problem that CAMRA require longer notice to approve business plans that involve change of venue and this means we will not have time to submit a proposal for The Maltings this year.

Edgar, Dave and Lawrence will be meeting with Mark at TRFC on Friday 13th January to discuss this year's festival in Teignmouth.

- i. Website, Whatpub and Social Media - Alan** reported as follows.

Website

News page – 17 items added in November and December including details of the new leisurewear range and various pubs either closing or opening.

Diary page – includes known items up to & including April

Recent Events – Reports of 3 social events were added

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Please be aware that I am unable to attend the mid-week Tour to Chagford & Moretonhampstead, so unless anyone is prepared to write a few words, just the pubs visited and beers enjoyed would suffice, and take a few photos there will be not be a report of the event as there wasn't for the Social on the 28th December.....

Please email them to me at my Whatpub address: (whatpub@southdevon.camra.org.uk).

Whatpub Received 9 pub updates since my last report

Please notify me of any long term changes in opening times and changes of regular beers offered. Whatpub is of no use if it's not up-to-date. Remember we get many visitors from elsewhere in the country, many of whom use Whatpub to select pubs to visit, let's not let them down.

176 Beer scores submitted during Nov & Dec by visitors, 358 by SDE members giving a total of 534. Champion scorer was Philip German with 72.

- j. **Cider News** - Ian had nothing specific but reminded the meeting to ensure the cider they reported on was real cider as some, such as Lilley's, Westons and Thatchers were not real cider by definition. There is a link on our website to the CAMRA National Cider list if there is any uncertainty.
- k. **Brewery News** – Billy reported that **Riviera Brewing** had a mega Christmas brewing and now have a new mini keg system as well as the beers on gravity. **New Lion Brewery** are seeing exceptional demand for their Pundit and are struggling to produce enough to meet demand. They are doing well but need more assistance in the brewery. They are also producing craft beers in small quantities. **Devon Earth** are still basically hobby brewers with occasional output. Ian had no real news from Dartmoor brewery and the meeting heard that Skinners had been bought but the buyer's identity is as yet unknown.
- l. **Pub News** – Lawrence has visited the **Hole in the Wall** and **The Kent's**, both in Torquay with favourable reports on beer quality. There have been some higher level business changes at The Kents but this does not seem to have affected the pub itself. John Bishop had visited the **Steam Packet** in Kingswear that is undergoing refurbishments and was told these should be finished by March. There are plans for a guest ale and the pub is owned by Breakwater. **The Ship** in Kingswear may be changing hands and there are several interested parties but nothing definite. There are also several pubs in Dartmouth shutting for refurbishments in January which isn't unusual in itself but as Edgar pointed out, we must expect random early closing in pubs with little winter trade. Philip German advised that the **Bullers Arms** in Brixham is currently closed and awaiting a new tenant. Alan related that the **Green Dragon** in Stoke Fleming were annoyed that owners Heavitree weren't being supplied with Dragons Breath by Dartmoor Brewery at Christmas. Also the **Kings Arms** at Strete has had a second share issue which has proved popular. Eddie Pyle has also been to the Hole in the Wall in Torquay as well as the Green Ginger and found the latter very quiet and the former busy on a Friday evening. Les Flower reported that **the Bell** in Kingsteignton only had one or two real ales on. Ian gave a report on the pubs in Ashburton. The **Old Exeter** is still closed but due to reopen, **The Silent Whistle** now has a permanent landlady, The **Victoria** will



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reopen in spring but possibly under a new name. The **Royal Oak** is still for sale with the current purchaser having issues with the bar location. There is no news on The **Bay Horse**.

m. Any other business - There was a discussion over craft keg versus real cask ale and apparently the issue is being looked at by CAMRA. The point was made that is better that people drink in pubs than at home regardless of whether they drink cask or keg beer. Peter Lister made a point about the optional fields on What pub which could lead to rogue scoring but Billy is aware of this and can filter these out. The meeting was closed at 9.38 pm

5. Date and venue of future meetings - Maltings Taphouse and Bottleshop, Teign Road, Newton Abbot TQ12 4AA on 14th February 2023 at 8.00 pm.

