

76TH EDITION

SUMMER 2023



Sunshine Festival

Page 4



South Devon CAMRA

Supporting Real Ale in the South West



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BREWERY CO

WELCOME

76TH EDITION SUMMER 2023



Hello,

The South Devon CAMRA website has been judged best of CAMRA branches by CAMRA leadership. Congratulations to Alan Cooke for its construction and establishing southdevon.camra.org.uk as the go to place for what's happening in South Devon.

Also in this edition:

- **What's On in the South Devon area** (page 5)
- **Pub and Brewery news** (pages 8, 9, and 10)
- **Midweek to Salcombe and Kingsbridge** (pages 12 & 13)
- **Pub in Focus – The Bridford Inn** (pages 16 & 17)
- **News from CAMRA** (pages 20 & 21)
- **South Devon CAMRA awards** (page 23)
- **93 bus route** (pages 24 & 25)
- **Grumpy on Tradition** (pages 28 & 29)

Cheers,
Andrew Thomson
Editor

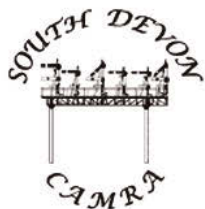


Ian Hemphill RIP

Ian Hemphill passed away at the end of May. He was a CAMRA branch member from Teignmouth for many years and also worked on the South Devon railway. Often to be found in the Blue Anchor or Devon Arms. Condolences to Dee and family on their loss. *Bold Southwell*

Please enter your monthly What Pub scores by the **6th** of the following month for them to be included on that month's database. For a 'how to' description of scoring see southdevon.camra.org.uk





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CIDERS**

**More details here:
southdevon.camra.org.uk**



Entry: £10 incl. Festival glass, Beer Tokens & Programme
CAMRA, NHS, NUS & Teignmouth RFC card carrying members £8
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EVENTS

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COLD
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& GIN
Bar**

WHAT'S ON

BRANCH MEETINGS AND SOCIAL EVENTS

Date/Time	Purpose	Location
13 June 2000h	AGM	Paignton Conservative Club
21 June 1200h	Midweek to Paignton	Henrys bar
11 July 2000h	Branch meeting	Crown & Sceptre, St Marychurch
19th July 1200h	Midweek to Topsham and Exmouth	The Bridge Inn Topsham
16th August 1200h	Midweek bus trip to Widecombe	See website for details
12 September 2000h	Branch meeting	Taphouse, Newton Abbot
20 September 1200h	Midweek to Brixham	Vigilance, Brixham
30 September 1200h	Joint Devon Branches social	Blue Anchor, Teignmouth

BEER FESTIVALS

Date	Event	Location
23 – 25 June	Summer beer festival	Albert Inn, Totnes
15 July	Ipple Tipple	Ipplepen Village Green
20 – 22 July	South Devon Sunshine CAMRA Beer Festival	Teignmouth Rugby Club, Bitten Park Road
1 – 5 August	Great British Beer Festival	London Olympia
11- 12 August	Ramsfest	Kingsteignton Athletic Football Club, Broadpark Road
25 – 28 August	Rails and Ales	Staverton Station
1 – 3 September	Beer festival	Durant Arms, Ashprington
14 – 17 September	Abbfest	Fermoys Garden Centre
18 – 21 January 2024	Exeter Festival of Beer	Corn Exchange, Exeter

Please check individual events prior to attending



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CAMRAS Summer of Pub campaign officially kicked off May bank holiday weekend urging everyone to head down to their local to celebrate!

Check out: camra.org.uk/pubs-and-clubs/current-campaigns/summer-of-pub





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PUB NEWS

After a successful Coronation weekend in **Hennock, the Palk Arms** is looking forward to the summer season with a re-vamped food menu - courtesy of chef Steve.

Over in **Kingswear** Leo and Hannah Canu are now in charge at **The Ship Inn**, well known to the area through family connections, and running The Watermans Arms at Bow Bridge.

The recently reopened **Steam Packet Inn** now boasts an upstairs restaurant and terrace in time for the summer season.

The new downstairs bar at **The Railway** in **Newton Abbot** is now open. Doubling the size of the pub, the Sports bar boasts a number of screens and all the latest electronics for music/bands. The ground floor is unchanged with 5 changing beers on the bar.

Now under the same ownership as Bar 7, The Jolly Abbot has relaunched as **The Abbot**, after an extensive refurb across the 2 bars and garden. Cask offer initially will be Otter Amber.

In **Totnes**, the **Albert Inn's** recent Sausage & Cider Festival was pronounced an unqualified success with over 8kg of sausages washed down by in excess of 150lts of cider, notwithstanding all the beer which was also drunk. The next festival at the Albert, which will be the Summer Beer Festival, will take place 23-25 June with around eight guest beers and four ciders in addition to Bridgetown Brewery beers. Entertainment will be in the form of Ben's Band on Saturday evening and Steve Louder on Sunday afternoon.

The Bay Horse Inn is once again hosting "Gigs in the Garden". The next event will be in June and feature a variety of artists and styles of music. There will be a pop-up BBQ caterer in the beer garden for the duration of the summer every Thursday - Sunday starting at 6pm.

BREWERY NEWS

Bays Brewery in Paignton has once again teamed up with its friends at Paignton Zoo to mark their 100th anniversary with the launch of a 'roarsome' charity brew called Wild 100. Available in bottles, cask and beer boxes, the crisp, copper-coloured pale ale made using Slovenian and American hops is roaring with character, with 5% of all proceeds going to wildlife conservation. The special edition ale is a fitting tribute to Paignton Zoo's centenary celebrations, with the zoo's founder Herbert Whitley the son of a successful brewer from the Greenall Whitley brewery.

Wild 100 is one of four new ales being served up by the big-hearted team at Bays Brewery who are supporting a number of top Devon charities throughout 2023 with its brand new 'charity brews'.

It's also the latest in a long line-up of limited-edition 'animal' ales brewed in partnership with Paignton Zoo, which combined have raised more than £25,000 for endangered species to date. »

BREWERY NEWS ... CONTINUED

» Last year saw Bays Brewery and Paignton Zoo team up for the launch of a limited edition 'Savanna' ale, with proceeds going towards a new giraffe house for its all-female Rothschild's herd.

Other firm favourites from the two Torbay businesses included Orangutan Ale, Crocus-ale and Trunk Ale, to name a few, with 10p of each pint and bottle sold donated to wildlife conservation.

Throughout 2023, the family-run brewery is also supporting a number of other top Devon charities with the launch of a further two charity beers aimed at giving something back to the community.

Beery Head will launch later this Summer, inspired by Torbay's most designated world heritage site, Berry Head, with 5% of proceeds going to the Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust.

Completing the charity line-up will be Bays' festive favourite, Jingle Ale, with 5% of proceeds from the Christmas-time tipple supporting the Torbay Holiday Helpers Network.

Bays Brewery is raising a toast to the news that it has been awarded a top accolade for one of its multiple award-winning ales after taking Gold at the Taste of the West Awards 2023. Its popular Devon Dumpling beer was given first place by judges of the coveted West Country awards in the first phase and will now go on to compete in a third and final judging phase.

Its best-selling Devon Rock craft lager also received praise, with Bays Brewery's modern beer taking Silver in this year's Taste of the West Awards 2023.

The Gold and Silver accolades follow on from a string of awards for the Paignton-based family-run brewery which celebrates 16 years of being on the beer scene in 2023.

Despite not winning any awards at Maltingsfest, **Bridgetown Brewery** brewer George was delighted with all the positive feedback he received from punters at the recent festival at which the brewery's Shark Island Stout, Albert Ale and Cheeky Blond all sold out. He is currently working on his Honey Beer which will hopefully be on sale at the upcoming Albert Ale summer beer festival and is also discussing making a possible collaboration beer with Totnes Bluebirds Ladies RFC

Dartmoor Brewery is bringing out a cold, carbonated IPA in keg. It's their cask version but filtered and carbonated. Only available in Torbay.

Looking forward to a great 2023 Summer brewing season is **Riviera Brewing**, with local festivals requesting ales for later in the year. RBC Ale will be found at the CAMRA Sunshine Beer and Cider Festival, Teignmouth and Ipple Tipple in Ipplepen in July, Rails and Ales Festivals at Staverton Station, South Devon Railway May 26-29, August 25th - 28th and Abbfest 14 - 17 September.

Seasonal Ales will be produced again including Beach Blonde 4% and Torbay Express 4.7% Riviera Gold 4.2%, RBC Best 4% and Devonian 4.1% will continue to be produced on a regular basis and are available throughout the year. Ale is always available direct from the Brewery in small cask/keg and bottle. »

BREWERY NEWS ... CONTINUED

» **Salcombe Brewery** has secured an agreement with John Lewis to sell an exclusive gift pack of their beer online and in John Lewis stores nationwide. The new gift pack contains a 500ml bottle of Devon Amber, a 500ml bottle of Shingle Bay and a branded Salcombe Brewery Co. pint glass. Shingle Bay (ABV 4.2%), is a very easy-drinking golden ale, with a crisp bite. It has a fruity aroma of blackberry and spiced fruit. Devon Amber (ABV 3.8%) is an amber best bitter. It is an easy drinking malt driven bitter with a dry yet sweet finish.

Devon Red Cider from **Sandford Orchards** has just been voted 'Best Drink Product' by the readers of Food Magazine. Devon Red is a naturally tasty and utterly delicious, fresh apple cider made from apples grown and pressed in Devon. It is available to purchase from www.sandfordorchards.co.uk as well as other select retailers across the country

Barry Butterfield, Chief Cidermaker at Sandford Orchards comments: "We are absolutely thrilled to win this award. We have always thought that our Devon Red was a pretty special drink but to win this accolade confirms that the food and drink-loving public thinks so too. We were up against some tough competition, as the South West is home to a host of fantastic independent drinks businesses, which makes the win even more prestigious."

Summerskills Brewery was sorry to say goodbye to Dan who has been with them for the best part of 10 years and we all wish him well as he expands his employment horizons. He joined as a brewery assistant when he finished his chemistry degree at Plymouth University

and had been Brewer there for several years. Norman will be wearing the "Head Brewer" overalls that Carl bought him rather more often for the foreseeable future!

Their Devon Dew was very well received in the JD Wetherspoon national guest ale listing between January and March and they brewed a Coronation Ale with Sovereign hops that was well received locally in May. They continue to brew the core range with monthly and seasonal specials when they can. GuzzAle has made a reappearance after a break of several years and First Light, the strong pale summer ale, should be available by the time this goes to print.

TQ Beerworks has been producing keg only, apart from cask specials for beer festivals. In their plan for later in the year they intend brewing more cask.

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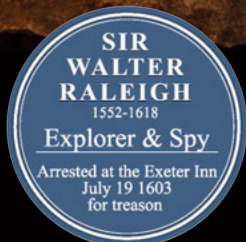
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MIDWEEK TO SALCOMBE AND KINGSBRIDGE.

Wednesday 22nd February 2023 dawned sunny and bright so a good day to visit Salcombe and Kingsbridge in The South Hams. So it was that a select band of South Devon and Exeter



Victoria Inn, Salcombe

First beer stop in Salcombe was the Victoria, which is now under new management and had four St Austell cask beers on handpump. This included two of St Austell's small batch beers brewed for the Rugby World Cup (Conversion and Anthem) as well as the more regular Proper Job and Tribute. All were in good condition.

On the way to The Victoria we spotted a few other Exeter and East Devon CAMRA members in The Fortescue who then proceeded to follow us and in some cases



The Fortescue Inn, Salcombe

CAMRA met at Totnes station and after some had fortified themselves with the excellent breakfast in The Signal Box café, the 164 bus to Salcombe was boarded and the day's adventures began.

At Kingsbridge where we were joined by several others who had travelled from other parts of The South Hams and the Tally Ho single decker bus, by now occupied in the majority by CAMRA members crawled its way towards Salcombe.



The Ferry Inn, Salcombe

join us as we proceeded. Next stop was The Ferry Inn, a Palmers pub which had Palmers 2000, Tally Ho and Copper on Handpump. On our visit last year, The Ferry had the most expensive beer in Salcombe and this appeared to still be the case although some prices do seem to have been reduced slightly. Unfortunately, rising beer prices is a sign of the times although it is always an emotive subject among CAMRA members. Again, beer quality was good and we took a group photo before moving on. »

MIDWEEK TO SALCOMBE AND KINGSBRIDGE... CONTINUED

» Next, on the way back down the hill was The Kings Arms which had a couple of Salcombe beers on and again in good condition. At this point it was realised that the aimed for 2.26 pm bus was not going to be achievable so a decision was made to take the 3.26pm bus to Kingsbridge which gave us the chance to sample the excellent beers in The Fortescue Inn which again came from the local Salcombe brewery.

The decision to take the later bus was a good one as we were in good time to catch the 164 from Shadycombe Lane and soon enough we were in Kingsbridge. A couple of our group had left early and visited one of the pubs in Marlborough before re-joining the bus to Kingsbridge. First stop in Kingsbridge was the Creek End Inn where we sampled Abbot Ale in great condition and spoke with the owner about the state of trade and customer numbers.

After this we made a visit to The Hermitage which had the cheapest beer of the day and two beers on hand pump, Dragon Pioneer from Summerskills Brewery and Thirsty Blonde from South Hams brewery. Both these were excellent and we were sorry to



Creek End Inn, Kingsbridge



The Hermitage, Kingsbridge



Seven Stars, Totnes

leave and catch the 164 bus back to Totnes. We did this without issues this year and several of the South Hams contingent left to return to their homes and a few more departed at Totnes. Three of us decided to finish the day at The Albert where we sampled a couple of the Bridgetown brewery beers before departing homewards.

All in all, a great day out with good company and excellent beers. Here's to the next one.

Lawrence Stringer

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PUB IN FOCUS – THE BRIDFORD INN

We're at the head of the Teign Valley on the edge of Dartmoor, catching up with the Staniforth family, Dean, Lyn and son Sam who've run The Bridford Inn for the past 10 years.

With hospitality formative years spent in Scotland, latterly running a CAMRA award winning pub, Dean and Lyn yearned for a free-of-tie business and, after an extensive search, they bought The Bridford Inn and it's been a great success since – from day one well supported by the village and surrounding area. It's also in the National Park so gets lots of visitors, particularly in the summer months.

"It's all about the community" says Lyn. They sponsor Bridford Village Cricket Club, host the Village Chat In, 2 darts teams, tag rugby team, poker, walking groups, cycling groups, running groups amongst others. Then they host Teign Valley Trappers, Clay Pigeon shoot run by Steve & Wilf Lygo, which visits regularly enjoying the beer, cider and food. They also run regular charity events.

It's not rocket science continues Dean "Run a pub that you want to drink in so people like you come in - good beer, the best food you can. Focus on your customers - we want them to come back as they like the place, and they like what we do. All our regulars are friends now – we drink & socialise together. We've worked hard to be part of the community"



Bridford Inn garden



MIne hosts Lyn, Sam and Dean

They've addressed the extra challenges since the pandemic and more recently from distribution with the sad loss of breweries and 'evolving' supply to enable them to focus on front-of-house that they all like most. Plus recent recruit and accomplished chef Mike gives the three of them freedom to be with their customers. »

THE BRIDFORD INN ... CONTINUED

» Four beers are on the bar all the time, three changing and the fourth always Dartmoor Jail. Lyn reckons there would be a riot if that went! On the day of our visit, Dartmoor Legend, Butcombe Original and Wainwright Golden Ale were the others, chosen from a list put together by the family over the years to reflect what the regulars like. Beer fans Dean and Sam are a good test market for new beers and quality control. Sourcing direct as well as wholesale, they aim to give customers a mix of locals and beers that are a bit less well known - Jail and Black Sheep Best Bitter are the best sellers. At the suggestion of one of their locals, a beer from Nuttycombe is going on next.

While there are no plans for beer festivals, they have sponsored the local South Devon CAMRA 'Sunshine' beer festival with a notable beer from the Black Country.



View across the valley from the pub



Clearly Dartmoor!

Dean's all-time favourite beer? Black Sheep Best Bitter with Theakston Best Bitter a close second. Favourite locally is South Hams Wild Blonde.

The pub building was a farm since 1600s but became a pub in the late 1960s and it's always been a free-house. They reckon in a village you have to have drink and food options. Their food is locally sourced, seasonal with traditional pub classics and Mike is introducing 'quirky' specials.

Dean and Lyn had decided to retire but then the pandemic hit and they rethought future plans. While Sam had been working elsewhere with designs on running a pub a bit later in life, he is now gradually taking over with Dean and Lyn helping out at weekends and busy times, set for a semi-retirement. So it's business as usual aided

by chef Mike and part-time staff. Plus, plans are afoot to relaunch the onsite shop that was a casualty of the pandemic.

I'm told more than once have customers visiting from afar said 'Can you sell up and open near us'. I can well believe it; after all The Bridford Inn has won South Devon CAMRA Pub of the Year twice and Cider Pub of the Year too under their stewardship.

A warm welcome from mine hosts Sue & Grahame

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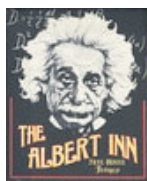


The Albert Inn *Home of Bridgetown Brewery*

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***Bridgetown Brewery brews Albert Ale 3.8% abv; Bridgetown Bitter 4.2% abv;
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NEWS FROM CAMRA AND REACTIONS TO THE SPRING 2023 BUDGET

CAMRA calls on Minister to save high street pubs

In 2017, the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) helped pubs in England gain landmark protection, giving communities the right to have their say through the planning process before a pub is converted or demolished. Now this protection is at risk from a new scheme being proposed as part of the Government's levelling up plans. The High Street Rental Auction scheme aims to bring empty buildings – including pubs – back into use, by letting Councils auction off the lease. These leases would allow pubs to be converted to other uses, divided up into multiple units, or gutted of their bars, cellars or other integral features. Concerningly, there would be no obligation to reinstate the pubs fittings at the end of the lease – in fact developers would be able to apply to make the conversion permanent.

This could be devastating for urban pubs, and CAMRA National Chairman, Nik Antona has written to the Minister for Levelling Up, to ask her to think again about these plans. Commenting, Nik Antona said: "The goal of bringing disused pubs back into use is one shared by CAMRA, but it is vital that High Street Rental Auctions are used to support and rejuvenate urban pubs, not to turn valued community venues over to the highest bidder. We know that pubs can increase and expand footfall on the high street, and give communities a place to come together, but we need Government to understand this too. I've asked the Minister to ensure that pubs keep their planning protections under this scheme, so that communities can still have their say."

Cut in help for energy bills could spell end for nation's locals. Commenting on the impending reduction in the Government's help for businesses with their energy bills from 1st April, CAMRA Chairman Nik Antona said:

"Sadly for publicans, this isn't a bad April Fool's joke from the Government. With our pubs and breweries continuing to face rocketing costs and customers tightening their belts, the last thing licensees need is vital support with sky-high energy bills to be pulled out from under them. This change puts the future of many of the nation's beloved pubs, social clubs and breweries under threat of having to close their doors for good – with communities losing vital parts of their social fabric as a result.

"CAMRA is urging the Government to think again, reinstate more help for the licensed trade with their energy bills – as well as making business rates fairer and cutting VAT so that pubs can survive and thrive in the months and years ahead."

Tax reforms are brilliant news for small brewers and cider makers, but changes needed to avoid a stealth ban on takeaway pints. Beer and pub consumer group responds to details on alcohol tax reforms.

Nik Antona, CAMRA National Chairman, has responded to the publication of details on reforms to the Alcohol Duty System, coming into force on 1 August 2023.

On the new draught duty rate for beer and cider. "CAMRA has campaigned for many years to secure a draught duty rate, and we are pleased that this has come to fruition. We particularly welcome the confirmation that traditional gravity dispense will be captured within the new, lower, duty rate. »

NEWS FROM CAMRA AND REACTIONS TO THE SPRING 2023 BUDGET... CONTINUED

» With the Chancellor extending the differential between the general and draught duty rates to 9.2% in the Budget, we look forward to campaigning to further increase that differential to the benefit of pubs, social clubs, and consumers.”

On the new Small Producer Relief Scheme: “Small brewers and cider makers will be pleased to see the details of the new Small Producer Relief Scheme, so that they can start planning for the future.

“With stubbornly high inflation and the impending cliff-edge drop-off in energy bill support, small producers need more help than ever to compete with the purchasing power and economies of scale enjoyed by the global producers that dominate the UK beer and cider market. Small cider makers will also benefit from a progressive duty system for the first time ever, supporting them to grow and increase choice of artisanal ciders for consumers.”

On the announcement that decanting from draught-duty paid containers for consumption off the premises will be prohibited: “Despite our formal representations and extensive engagement with the Treasury, a workable solution to allow pubs and social clubs to make incidental takeaway draught sales has not been found. It’s good that specialist bottle shops will be able to buy casks and kegs with the general duty rate paid on them to make takeaway sales, but most publicans – who the draught duty rate is designed to benefit – won’t be able to afford or accommodate extra draught containers just to make takeaway sales. This, if implemented, will equate to a stealth ban on takeaway pints and is extremely disappointing for licensees and consumers, and especially designated drivers that like to take away a pint or two to enjoy responsibly at home. We will continue to campaign for a workable solution.”

11p draught duty cut welcome but lack of energy bill help will see communities lose local pubs and social clubs.

Responding to the Budget, CAMRA Chairman Nik Antona said: “The Chancellor has made a welcome move to increase the draught duty rate discount to 11p, which will help pubs compete with the likes of supermarket alcohol. However, the lower tax rate is not coming until August, and we must hope that as many pubs as possible will be able to keep their doors open until then.

“With many parts of the licensed trade struggling to make ends meet, and consumers tightening their belts, hikes in general duty rates are the last thing breweries need, so it’s right that general duty rates have been frozen until the new system is introduced.

“With support for energy bills being extended for households, licensees will be devastated to hear that help for them will end on 1 April. This was a make-or-break Budget for pubs and social clubs, and the future of many businesses is now at risk, with an imminent cliff edge in support and rocketing energy costs on top of the other pressures facing the licensed trade. Communities will lose their local pubs because energy support is ending.

“It is also bitterly disappointing not to see the extension of help for pubs and breweries with the burden of business rates. With current support schemes due to end in 2024, these rates bills can be the difference between continuing to trade or having to close for good. The Government urgently needs to reform the whole business rates system to fix the issues with this unfair system and help to protect our pubs.”

THE GREEN DRAGON

STOKE FLEMING

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Chris Simmonds receives Pub of the Year and Cider Pub of the Year 2023 awards from Bob Southwell and Ian Packham

THE DURANT ARMS, Ashprington

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93 BUS – WEST FROM DARTMOUTH

There was a cool easterly blowing off the river when about 12 of us gathered at the Dartmouth Pontoon bus stop to catch our first Stagecoach 93 of the day.

Off on time to our first stop in Stoke Fleming and a short walk to the Green Dragon. Here we were joined by more members, including Martin "the Bag" who had arrived from the opposite direction having travelled the 3 and 93 from Plymouth! This took our party to a total of eighteen.

There were three beers for us to try in the Green Dragon, Tribute, Ferryman and Otter Bitter. All were approved of and, hopefully, beer scores duly entered.



Green Dragon, Stoke Fleming



View from The King's Arms garden

Soon it was back to the bus stop for the next 93, this time to the village of Strete and The King's Arms. The choice here was Jail Ale, Otter Bitter or Bays Devon Dumpling. Again all were sampled and approved of. We had about an hour here, so plenty of opportunity to sample the beers and admire the splendid view across the bay from the rear windows.

Time was soon pressing and it was back to the bus stop and on to Torcross and the Start Bay Inn. This is renowned for its fish and chips and, on our arrival, there were plenty of customers sampling them. At least one of our group could not resist the temptation! Here the offerings were two from Otter – Ale and Bitter, Proper Job and Tribute.

»



South Hams Brewery

93 BUS – WEST FROM DARTMOUTH – CONTINUED

» From here there were two further venues to visit before the last bus homeward. Each was about a twenty minute walk, firstly to Stockleigh Barton and the South Hams Brewery Taphouse. This enabled members of the group to choose how long they wished to stay at



Start Bay Inn

each venue. Taphouse is a modern building containing both the brewery and the Taphouse under one roof.

A full range of South Hams beers, both cask and keg, are available at the bar. Many of the group chose to have the paddle offer of 4 x 1/3rds to enable them to try more options.

Next another walk to our last pub of the day, The Church House Inn at Stokenham. In this same village was the Tradesman's Arms until a serious fire destroyed both the pub and several cottages in September

2021. The good news is that rebuilding has been going on since and the word is that it may reopen around July - let's hope so! Beers available at the Church House Inn were Jail, Tribute and Otter Bitter.

All that now remained was to catch the bus back to Dartmouth. I have on occasions had good reason to be critical of the service offered by Stagecoach. However today I must say that not only were all our buses on time, but they had also been cleaned inside and out after weeks of dirty buses you could not see out of. Long may this continue!!

All that remains is to thank the licensees and bar staff who accommodated us and seemed genuinely pleased to see us.....

Alan Cooke



Church House Inn

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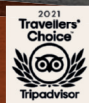


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GRUMPY OLD MAN EXAMINES TRADITION

Do you like breathing air? Well, of course you do. Do you like tradition? Instinctively the answer would be a resounding yes, but is it that simple? On reflection not everybody supports the monarchy or fox hunting but they are certainly ultra-traditional. By what criteria and from what period do we assess the word? Is it from when I first knew pubs, from the era of my grandfather, or from the period of the early Crusades or Robin Hood? Of course this is to assume that traditional merely means historical. However, not all that was traditional or historical was always good. Typhus was endemic in much of the 19th century urban environment, including the pubs, but we would hardly look back at that with nostalgia. The principal problem is that the word traditional has become meaningless in the hands of those butchers of the English language – the marketing folk. The word ‘traditional’ is used freely all over the pub trade. Pubs themselves are described as ‘traditional’ often with a ‘traditional’ welcome or a ‘traditional’ family atmosphere and even ‘traditional’ food including ‘traditional’ Sunday roasts etc. It is of course all rubbish and the word has become a nonsense merely conveying consumer warmth and security and possibly nostalgia for times past. It has a favourable connotation, but its actual meaning is more for times past. It has a favourable connotation, but its actual meaning is more illusory. Last month I passed a pub which described itself as ‘traditional’ and then went on to list its ‘traditional’ credentials. One such claim was for ‘traditional barista coffee’. How and by what criteria could that be described as ‘traditional’? I felt like rushing in to confront the barista (if there actually was one) and enquire about their coffee policy and ask what point in the evolution of the pub had this marketing nonsense appeared. I recently spoke to the mother of a friend and asked her what she thought a traditional pub actually was. Her reply was ‘a nice pub’ which is to replace one meaningless word with another.

What on earth does a ‘traditional welcome’ mean? I would hardly expect an avuncular Falstaff to greet me senatorially with the words ‘sooth, well met, gentle sir’. We have all moved on from the days of Shakespeare but neither do I like welcomes from a modern day script. ‘Good morning sir and how are you today?’ Do they really care how I am and would they listen sympathetically if I replied ‘not too good actually, just had the dog put down and still in pain from my broken knee and my wife has just left me’. I am also more than irritated by phrases like ‘hello buddy and what can I do for you today?’ Actually the best thing you can do is stop calling me ‘buddy’!

Why is this ridiculous and very un-traditional colloquialism so common in Devon, but not elsewhere? Let’s continue with an oxymoronic statement – a pub calling itself ‘traditional’ with one large bar. What happened to the multi-roomed establishments of the past with saloons, snugs, vaults etc. which were certainly traditional and had been for many a year? What is traditional about pine flooring, bookcases, televisions, loud music and fruit machines? And if it was really traditional then the only food was likely to be the humble packet of crisps, with the blue twist of salt inside, or possibly a pork pie. Nowadays, in these so-called traditional pubs, you seem to be able to have virtually anything and I have encountered snake, ostrich and alligator on the menu and all with (or rather accompanied by) chips of course. »

GRUMPY OLD MAN EXAMINES TRADITION .. CONTINUED

» I have written many times about some of the stupid marketing used to conjure up an image of the food. Succulent and sizzling Lincolnshire sausages served up on a bed of finely mashed New Jersey potatoes and drizzled with specially prepared caramelised red onion juices. It is, of course, sausage, mash and gravy dressed up in the modern meaningless, vernacular. In my youth anybody who talked about food in such a manner would have been regarded as a real weirdo. If it was really a traditional pub we would probably not be able to see the bar for cigarette smoke and the walls and ceilings would all be light brown. I used to think that there was a specially made wallpaper of that colour for pubs until a less naïve colleague told me it was nicotine staining! Finally, what happened to the traditional range of beers which invariably was mild, bitter, and possibly a best bitter? There are now so many different types of beer which go way beyond this range including gold beers and a plethora of other drinks as well as speciality bottled beers and ciders.

What is left of the so-called traditional pub once the marketing people have finished with it? Very little, actually, apart from the beer hand pumps, walls, ceilings and doors. Now there are a few pubs that are truly traditional and largely unspoilt and the Bridge at Topsham immediately comes to mind with its separate bars, gravity beer and limited food provision. Elsewhere the marketing people will attempt to conjure up a nostalgic image using the word traditional, but it is just that, merely hollow words and no substance.

Bolt Southwell Aka the Grumpy Old Man

CAMRA MEMBER PUB DISCOUNTS

The following pubs give discounts to card carrying CAMRA members

Pub	Location	Scheme
The Cherub Inn	Dartmouth	10% off a pint
The Palk Arms	Hennock	15% off a pint Monday-Friday
The Sloop	Kingskerswell	10% off cask beers
The Railway	Newton Abbot	10% off bar bill
Torbay Inn	Paignton	10% off a pint
Waterside Inn	Paignton	10% off a pint
The Green Dragon	Stoke Fleming	10% off a pint
The Castle Inn	Stoke Gabriel	40p off a pint
The Kents	Torquay	50p off a pint Monday-Friday
The Old Engine House	Torquay	10% off cask beers
Yates	Torquay	10% off a pint
Totnes Brewing Co	Totnes	10% off TBC brews

Thanks to all our contributors:
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