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WELCOME

to the Spring 2026 edition
of South Devon CAMRA
branch magazine.



A warm welcome to the Spring 2026 issue of News and Brews. Well at least I hope it is getting warmer and dryer by the time you read this. We had a fairly active Winter with our customary Totnes post Christmas walkabout, social trips to Salcombe and Kingsbridge, Paignton, and two mini bus trips to survey pubs and clubs for our annual Pub, Club and Cider pub awards. Some of us also presented a cheque for £322 to Devon Air Ambulance in Totnes from money raised at our Totnes Beer Festival in 2025 and they are pictured on the cover.

In other news, it is good to see The Coach House in Paignton open again and managed by the landlords of The Torbay Inn. It is also good to learn that the Winter Beer Festival at The Albert Inn in Bridgetown, Totnes was a success. Unfortunately there is no news about the reopening of the Hole in the Wall in Torquay, or The Thatched Tavern in Maidencombe. More news on pubs, breweries and our branch events this quarter are inside.

Look forward to seeing you at some of our events and contributions to News and Brews are always welcome. This can be as simple as regular updates from pubs and breweries in our branch area although articles are also encouraged.

Hope you all enjoy your Spring,

Cheers for now,
Lawrence Stringer
Editor



IN THIS EDITION...

- **A Tribute to Richard Wilson** (page 5)
- **What's On - Festivals and Events** (page 8)
- **Pub, Club and Brewery News** (page 9-10)
- **A Tamworth Lad Returns Home** (page 14-15)
- **Reflective Times** (page 19-21)

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A TRIBUTE TO RICHARD WILSON

Sadly, I have to inform you of Richards death in Paignton in late February. Probably better known as SNOWY. He was well known in the real ale pubs of Paignton and especially Henrys Bar and the Constitutional Club.

He travelled much using buses and trains to visit other pubs in Devon and further afield and I can recall taking him to a classic British establishment which happened to be the Bathams brewery tap in the West Midlands.

In recent years he developed an interest in cruises and had just returned from the Far East and was planning a much longer venture through the Pacific but unfortunately never to be realised. In his time as a teenager he was into music and accumulated an incredible repertoire of knowledge especially on Pink Floyd and he was delighted when he managed to obtain a ticket for the Australian tribute band when they performed in Plymouth.

There was clearly more to Richard than beer. He could be quiet and reserved, that is until you mentioned beer when he became quite animated.

Many thanks Richard for the fond memories.

Bob Southwell



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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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Evening Session
5pm - 11pm £8

Friday 17th
All Day Session
11am - 11pm £12

Saturday 18th
All Day Session
11am - 10pm £8



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WHAT'S ON

Please check
our website for
updated details



Branch Events

We run a branch meeting and a social event every month.

If details are not shown below, please refer to www.southdevon.camra.org.uk/diary or contact our social secretary, Alan Cooke (details on the contacts page).

(All Tuesday branch evening meetings start at 7.30pm)

Wednesday 18 March - Midweek social in Dartmouth.

Meet at The Seven Stars, 8 Smith St, Dartmouth at Noon.

Tuesday 14 April - Branch social meeting

at The Upside Bar, 104 Queen St, Newton Abbot

Friday 17 April - Social meeting from noon.

at MaltingsFest, Osbourne Park, Newton Abbot

Wednesday 22 April - Midweek social to Ashburton and Buckfastleigh.

Meet at Ashburn Inn, Ashburton at noon. See our website for more details

Tuesday 12 May - Branch meeting

at Yates, Torwood St, Torquay and later other pubs in the harbourside area.

Wednesday 20 May - Midweek social to Teignmouth.

Meet at The Jolie Brise, Station Rd at 11.30 am or earlier for breakfast.

Tuesday 9 June - Branch AGM, 19.00

at TQ Beerworks taphouse, 1A Abbey Terrace, Torquay

Festivals

Please check times etc with the organisers and note that not all are CAMRA festivals so entry charges for members may apply.

Friday 27 – Sunday 29 March

Dartmouth Rotary beer festival at the Flavel Centre

Saturday 28 March

Dawlish Beer and Cider festival at The Strand Centre Dawlish

Thursday 16 – Sunday 19 April 2026

The Drewe Arms community pub beer festival

Thursday 16 – Saturday 18 April

Maltingsfest in Osbourne Park, Newton Abbot

Friday 22 – Monday 25 May

Rails and Ales at Staverton station (on The South Devon Railway)

Thursday 2 – Saturday 4 July

2nd South Devon CAMRA Totnes Beer festival at The Civic Hall

PUB & BREWERY NEWS

The Albert Inn, Bridgetown Totnes Following the success of the Albert Inn's Winter Beer Festival Landlord Giles Hawkins (amongst many other landlords no doubt) is looking skywards as spring approaches. "Thanks must go once again to everyone who supported the Winter Beer Festival. Hopefully as spring goes into early summer there will be some sunshine forthcoming to help the pub and club trade after what has been a dismal winter weather-wise," he commented. Hawkins also announced that the Annual Albert Inn Sausage & Cider Festival will take place from 24-26 April. "There will be around a dozen ciders, supported by the Bridgetown Brewery beer range plus a variety of sausages (including a vegetable option) available.," Hawkins added.

Palk Arms, Hennock Life goes on for the Palk Arms. "We are hoping that spring sees a turn in the weather and thus an increase in trade," said Palk landlord Mike Rowland.

To try and help the pub is shortly relaunching the popular BBQ's and outdoor music sessions. The pub is also launching music nights entitled "vinyl vibes" while continuing the popular live music nights. Meanwhile the kitchen and dining area renovations have been completed which will hopefully lead to an upsurge in meal bookings.

The Coach House, Paignton The Coach House reopened in February under the same ownership as The Torbay Inn. We wish them every success with their new venture.

Bays Brewery, Paignton Bays have announced their newest Charity beer. They have teamed up with Westcountry Rivers Trust (WRT) for their first charity beer of 2026, 'Up The Creek' – a session IPA that raises a glass to the waterways that keep the region flowing. Available in bottles, beer boxes and on cask from 22 February 2026, 'Up The Creek' bursts with bright citrus aromas, inspired by the freshwater habitats the Trust works tirelessly to protect.

Bridgetown Brewery Brewer George was delighted with all the positive feedback he received from all the specials he brewed for the recent Bridgetown Winter Beer Festival. "It's always good to receive compliments. All the specials went down well and were all finished by close of business Saturday evening", George said, also hinting that there may even be a special on offer at the upcoming Albert Inn Sausage and Cider festival in April (details elsewhere in this issue of N&B).

Copperhead Brewery, Totnes Copperhead bitter was awarded first prize in the "Best Bitter" category at the ARLO Beer Festival which was held at the Queens Arms Brixham in December. A new addition to the brewery's range is Fresh Cream, a blonde bitter. Brewer Jack Henderson describes Fresh Cream as "a Gold Top bitter that is light, seasonable, sweet and charming". It is available on handpump at the Copperhead Taphouse and may also be found at other pubs which offer Copperhead beers. These now include the Fortescue in Plymouth If you fancy a pre-pint run the Copperhead Trails Run Club meets every other Wednesday evening. There is the choice of a 5k or 10k run starting from the Taphouse and returning back there for refreshment.

PUB & BREWERY NEWS...CONTINUED

Riviera Brewing, Paignton. Riviera are pleased to confirm an increase in Cask ale production in 2025. Our thanks to the pubs and festivals for continuing to take RBC ales. The furthest festival was at the Spa Valley Railway in Tunbridge wells, taking two nine gallon casks for their Ales and Rails event.

Riviera has gone Vegan, there are no animal or fish products in our ales. The fining used to clear ale is traditionally fish based but RBC has moved to a mineral based fining.

2026 production will include all the favourites, available this Spring will see Drunken Porter 4.3%, Riviera Gold 4.2% and Torbay Express 4.8% available. These ales will be occasionally available at the Upside Ale Bar's in Paignton and Newton Abbot plus The Railway Brewhouse, Newton Abbot

Riviera Brewing also supplies direct to the public with free delivery in the Newton Abbot and Torbay areas please do get in touch. Ale is available using 9 and 21 pint cask systems and bottles. Contact Alan by email at waldronalan@yahoo.com

Teignworthy Brewery, Newton Abbot Teignmouth Breweries beers travel far and wide and their Westerly ale has been served in The Strangers Bar in The House of Commons.



The Durant Arms



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Opening times see website.

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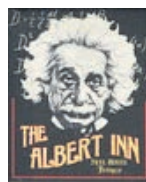


Bridgetown Brewery brews Albert Ale 3.8% abv; Bridgetown Bitter 4.2% abv; Shark Island Stout 4.5% abv and recently introduced Totnes Hemp Beer, Green Leaf 4% abv. There is also a selection of craft ales from around the world.

Yes, it is a pub with a darts team, a weekly quiz, people resolving their crosswords, people talking, joking, arguing and putting the world to rights. Our own ales brewed on the premises, traditional home made pies, curries, Sunday roasts etc.

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Real stories, real people, real ale



A TAMWORTH LAD RETURNS HOME

Storm Amy had hit the UK as I set to off up country to my best mate's stag weekend in my spiritual home of Tamworth, the former Anglo Saxon capital of Mercia.

Proceedings started on the Friday evening in the North Warwickshire town of Atherstone at the Angel. It had 6 fine ales on offer as I chose the ever reliable, golden session ale Oakham Citra 4.2%,



The next port of call across the Market Square was the Market Tavern Tap which had recently finished 3rd in this years CAMRA West

Midlands Pub of the Year. it certainly didn't disappoint with an interesting 7 ales. My first pint being from Black Iris Brewery (Nottingham) a light bodied American amber ale strangely called Monsters in your Parasol 4,2%. My next beverage was from the Shiny Brewery (Derby) called Affinity 4% unfinned, gluten free and fruity citra hops flavour. My final beer of the evening was from Silhill Brewery (Birmingham) named Super Star 5.1% west coast IPA.

Unfortunately, the next morning " the Stag" woke up suffering from man flu, however, the show had to carry on and Tamworth's 4 GBG pubs were on the agenda. First call of the day was the King's Ditch, an old cycle shop converted into a superb micropub. A former National Cider Pub or the Year finalist had 4 ales available. I plumped for the Shiny's Obscura 4,6% hazy, pale ale.



It was onto the Bolebridge (Wetherspoons) next which was hosting their Autumn beer festival with 5 beers on show. I chose the Automatic American Pale Ale 5% brewed in the UK by Adnams, This was followed by an amazing Elgood's Double Dog 6.5% a dark strong and malty mild.>>

A TAMWORTH LAD RETURNS HOME... CONTINUED

>> Our next stop was the Lamb, the home of my beloved Tamworth Football Club. Morecambe were the visitors and the game ended with an honorable 1-1 draw.

After the game it was off to the Old Bank House, a formerly home to Sir Robert Peel's Tamworth Savings Bank. A choice of 5 ales available, i decided on the Neptune from Green Duck (Stourbridge) followed by Velvet Goldmine 4.8% a NZ pale ale by Turning Point Brew Co. (Knaresborough).



The infamous Tamworth Tap was next. The 16th century/part Tudor building in the shadow of a Norman castle with a Saxon walled garden only opened as a pub in 2017, previously being a Tourist Information Centre. The pub has had a meteoric rise to fame by becoming the CAMRA National Pub of the Year in 2022 and 2023. Not to be outdone it is CAMRA National Pub of the Year this year as well.. In the packed pub there were 7 beers on tap, including Bathams. I plumped for Joy of Session IPA from the New Bristol Beer Factory which was much appreciated.

Last, and certainly not least, was the Sir Robert Peel. This pub has featured in every issue of the Guide since 2005. After a long day we all chose the NZ hopped South Island 3.4% from Saltaire Brewery (Shipley).

So, that ended my 2 day reacquaintance with the amazing Tamworth pubs and old friends. It was back to the beautiful South Devon and my new friends.

Dave Clarke

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Delivery times will vary but we estimate it will usually be 3 - 4 weeks from placing the order with the supplier.

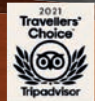


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1st DAWLISH BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

DAWLISH BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL



DATE: Saturday 28th March 12-10pm

LOCATION: The Strand Centre

TICKETS: £5

A Community Celebration



REFLECTIVE TIMES

To paraphrase Charles Dickens from 'A Tale of Two Cities': It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness.....

People often say "don't go back" but thinking about the Dickens phrase, when one becomes of a certain age there is much analogous in that phrase about ales, pubs, the brewery landscape and indeed CAMRA. During our formative years on the cask ale trail, the 'big six' were changing the face of brewing, breweries and pub estates. Drinks familiar to our forebears over many years, were being replaced by Brit Fiz and Mega Keg. CAMRA was becoming a leading force in the opposition to much that many of us held dear.

That period of celebration for much that is close to our hearts commenced, with the 50th anniversary since the formation of CAMRA a short time back. 2025 being of course, the 50th anniversary since the formation of the South Devon CAMRA branch, and closer to my formative years, October 2025 brought us the 40th Stoke Beer Festival. I can still recall the 1st held in the iconic Kings Hall, Stoke. Again, coincidentally, 2025 is also 100 years since the area encompassed by the towns, collectively, known as the 'Potteries' were granted city status by King George the Fifth. So, much to be celebrated and reflected on in these times.



Not untypically, whilst Elizabeth and I were partaking in our usual autumnal canal cruise, thoughts drifted to fine ales, strangely as they often seem to. And where better to indulge ourselves, than the aforementioned festival. A towpath walk into Stone, from our marina, a bus to the architecturally splendid Stoke Station and short stroll into town in search of breakfast. Prior to breakfast we called into the festival hall, chatting to the local CAMRA great and good. To take a few photographs and pick up programmes to scrutinise, over our repast, reviewing ales we wished to try. Base breakfast camp was The Wheatsheaf, the Stoke Wetherspoons. A modernish pub in the heart of the town, which always seems to have been there and formerly a visiting home to many bands playing amateurly and latterly becoming famous. Names such as Oasis and Radiohead, not to mention the Legionary Lonnie who kept the record shop virtually next door. Notwithstanding its austere exterior, the Wheatsheaf has won CAMRA branch awards in testament to the quality of its ales. >>

REFLECTIVE TIMES...CONTINUED

» From the 1st (glass in loft amongst many others!), Stoke Beer Festivals became incredibly popular, year upon year. Coaches of CAMRA members would descend from branches in the Midlands, Manchester and North West areas, Shropshire and further afield. Due to the halls safe 'head count' capacity, this popularity led to long queues outside, containing disheartened drinkers as at times, a one out, one in policy had to be adopted. Moves to the local university's student's union hall, the disused Spode Pottery works (I've never been so cold at a festival!) and then the huge Fenton Leisure Centre, eased capacity issues. These locations however, were totally bereft of the Kings Halls charm and character. Fortunately, the Stoke branch has a CAMRA, Campaigner of the Year award winner at hand, Lyn Sharpe. I suspect her influence as Lord Mayor during the Cities Centenary Year, resulted in the beer festivals return to its spiritual home. After all, as a former brewery guide at Titanic, Lyn as Mayor helped mash the Century Anniversary Ale, brewed specially and available at the festival itself.



From breakfast, retracing our steps, we were soon inside the splendid Kings Hall for commencement of one of the four-day festival, afternoon sessions. Walking inside the now active festival, for the first time in many years, it was somewhat *deja vous*. The general layout of the festival was

so similar to the many we/I had attended there over previous years. The main exception being the relocation of the foreign, bottled beer bar. Memories of fun times, there over the years came flooding back. I will not however expound further into Elizabeth's success; on the Kings Hall stage, of all places, winning the ladies half yard of ale drinking competition. Fortunately, not Thornbridge Jaipur on that occasion! I thought some memories faded with the passage of time but friends of ours, who were there over thirty years ago, still talk about it!

And now to those 140 ales and 40 ciders. Unlike the first Stoke Festival, where Bass, Banks's and Marstons, to name but a few were present; this time of course, there were none. No ales either from old established regional players from the north west. Pretty well all ales were from the smaller, local, more recent brewers although many recognisable names were present. Noticeably, more so from forty years ago, ciders and perry's were well represented, including, from Devon: Cockeyed Ciders Mad Jack; Farmer Jims Copper Top, Apple Red and Farmyard Perry; Hunts Cider Wobbler and Sandford Orchards Devon Red

»

REFLECTIVE TIMES...CONTINUED

» Far too many drinks for us to contemplate during our four-hour session, although we chatted to a relative of an old friend who was attending every session! Elizabeth prefers her IPA's and paler styles, whereas my tastes are quite eclectic, and whilst enjoying Elizabeth's preferences, I also drift to the 'dark side', of which there were choices a plenty, including one of my favourites, but more of that later. Beartowns, Crème Bearlee, a lovely milk stout appealed to me and their Lit, a pale ale for Elizabeth, who also enjoyed Black Sheeps Respire, a session IPA. Merlins Castle Black, another milk stout was enjoyed. Thornsetts He's behind you, being an IPA was again enjoyed by Elizabeth. All too soon, after soaking up the ales, atmosphere and recalling former festivals, departure time was approaching. All of the ales we tried, far in excess of those favourites listed were excellent. Individual palettes of course vary, so some were a touch more appealing than others. So, last ones before bidding farewell. Elizabeth retired to the Belgian Beer Bar, and me.....to the Titanic Bar in search of my aforementioned favourite, a glass of that prince of porters, Plum Porter Grand Reserve. Our last drinks certainly did not disappoint.



A stroll to the station, returning this time by train and looking at Titanic's Bod Bar on platform 1, albeit no time for a libation. Off the train at Stone for a cheeky half of Lymestone's Stone Cutter at The Borehole, their brewery tap on the site of the old Bents Brewery. Curry Club with a friend at The Poste of Stone then called, followed by a lift back to our boat on the marina.

A day of good ales, reflections, memories, familiar sights and places, and good company with people we conversed with, both at the festival and elsewhere. Chatting to one of the festival organisers however, the 40th Stoke Beer Festival, could be the last. In fact, during more recent year's festivals have been missed out. Why? He replied, a dearth of younger CAMRA members generally, and members willing to rise to the challenge. As those who organise our branch festivals know, it's one heck of a commitment but hopefully with the reward of happy faces and contented visitors. Let us hope that in the Potteries, someone will grasp the nettle.

Paul Hulme

THE BLUE ANCHOR

-TEIGNMOUTH-

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BEER & CIDER FESTIVALS



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We love to hold a variety of live entertainment, quiz and themed nights and an annual beer and music festival, throughout the year.

You can find us on the South West Coastal path and the bus route. We are very dog friendly.

We offer a 10% discount off real ales for CAMRA members (exclusions apply).

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CAMRA MEMBER PUB DISCOUNTS

The following pubs give discounts to card carrying CAMRA members

Pub	Location	Scheme
Golden Lion	Brixham	10% off cask beers
The Queens Arms	Brixham	Mondays 50p off a pint
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
Dartmouth Inn	Newton Abbot	30p off a pint
Maltings Taphouse	Newton Abbot	10% off cask & keg
The Railway	Newton Abbot	10% off bar bill
Torbay Inn	Paignton	10% off a pint
The Church House Inn	Stokeinteignhead	30p off a pint
The Castle Inn	Stoke Gabriel	40p off a pint
The Green Dragon	Stoke Fleming	10% off a pint
The Market House	Brixham	10% off for CAMRA Members
The Old Engine House	Torquay	10% off cask beers
TQ Beerworks	Torquay	10% off a pint
Totnes Brewing Co	Totnes	10% off TBC brews

THANKS TO ALL OUR CONTRIBUTORS:

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Last copy date for Summer 2026 magazine is 24th May 2026



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