

MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTH DEVON BRANCH OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

FREE

57TH EDITION

SPRING 2017



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WELCOME

**57TH EDITION
SPRING 2017**



CAMRA is currently lobbying the Treasury ahead of the March budget for a cut in beer duty. Scrapping the beer duty escalator in 2013 and 2014 resulted in huge gains for the pub and brewery industries, and it has been calculated that more than 1,000 pubs were saved from closure. Beer prices would have risen by 16p a pint more than they did over the period, and because of the duty cut 750 million more pints have been sold and 26,000 jobs created. The Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) and the British Beer & Pub Association are supporting this initiative and have done some research, which shows that production and sale of beer currently results in almost 900,000 UK jobs, not only in pubs and breweries, but in agriculture and in the supply chains. Nearly half of these jobs are taken by 16-24 year olds. Any further cut in beer duty would expand the effect and cause more growth for the UK. We must hope that Phillip Hammond can be persuaded to see the merit in cutting this undesirable source of duty.

Before this magazine is printed, The House of Lords will have voted on a clause to ensure planning permission is sought prior to the demolition or conversion of a local pub in England. CAMRA members have been lobbying members of the higher house to elicit their support and it is to be hoped the clause is accepted in law.

Details of other campaigning issues can be found on the CAMRA website, www.camra.org.uk.

Cheers,

Tina Hemmings
Editor

**Please enter your monthly What Pub scores
by the **6th** of the following month
for them to be included on that month's database.**

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PUB AND BREWERY NEWS

The Charity Beer Festival at the **Queens Arms**, Brixham, went well in December - although the weather was not kind, (the cellar temperature was warmer than the outside, making the courtyard less attractive than previous years). Despite that, attendance was good, the bands were great, the pizzas flowed and the 25 beers were enjoyed by all. Teignworthy's Cor' Bugga won the blind tasting competition and Gun Dog came third. Lost in the Woods, a dark sweet porter from Devon Earth was voted into second place. A total of £1778.89 was raised for the local charity, The Brixham Battery Heritage Centre which runs a volunteer-staffed museum, and works to preserve Brixham's costal defence battery built in 1940. The presentation night in February also went with a swing, and the champion ales were featured, the cheque was handed over and winning certificates awarded to the brewers.



Queen's Arms presentation night

London Inn in Ashburton is to be reopened and the new owners have a free of tie lease. They intend to showcase a Hound of the Baskervilles theme, having obtained a licence to do so. Memorabilia and 'Hound' artefacts will be included in the interior décor. The original opening date may been put back due to planning issues.

London Inn on Torquay's Strand has recently been taken over by Stonegate Pub Company, a business which holds 650 pubs. It has now been reopened as a Yates's establishment. All the current staff members have been retained and plans are afoot to revitalise the site. In the meantime the menu has been revised. Yates is Britain's oldest pub chain and is thought to having opened its first pub in Oldham in 1884.

The **Rugglestone Inn** at Widecombe in the Moor are rearing some wild boar that will be on the menu over Easter, in line with the home-reared free-range meat they already produce. On May 14th the 2nd Widecombe Sailing Club, Ruggle Regatta will take place. The regatta was started by a local resident who wanted to host music events throughout the village. She approached Steve Knightly of 'Show of Hands' asking him to come and play at a village event. He declined saying he didn't perform at village events but also mentioned he had performed at some sailing club events. Hence the Widecombe Sailing Club was born. Subsequently he did come and play and is now Honorary Rear Admiral of the Widecombe Sailing Club. The group has grown into a great success hosting events throughout the year and raising money for charities including Teignmouth life boat.

The **Ring of Bells** at North Bovey is still being rebuilt with no known date yet for reopening. In the course of renovations a new fireplace has been uncovered.

The **Old Workshop** at Red Rock Brewery has reopened after some renovation including the bar being moved back slightly to create more room. »

PUB AND BREWERY NEWS.... CONTINUED

>> The **Dartmoor Halfway Inn** at Bickington is still under renovation; from passing by on the A383 things seem to be progressing well.

The **Ferryboat** at Shaldon is under new management.

The **Isaac Merritt** at Paignton will be closing soon for a short time for renovations.

BREWERY NEWS

Five casks of **Black Tor's** best-selling amber ale, Pride of Dartmoor, were sent up to The Strangers Bar, Houses of Parliament as its February guest ale. The ales are gaining in popularity and The Tors Inn, Belstone, recently had their own Black Tor hand-pull installed to allow them to stock it permanently. The brewery's next Limited Edition brew will be New Zealand IPA 5.2%abv, available in casks in a few selected pubs. The ale has big hop additions of Motueka, Dr Rudi, Kohatu & Waimea hops for tropical fruit flavours of pineapple, limes, mango, and passion-fruit.

It's all go at **Salcombe Brewery Co.** Since the official launch in September 2016 things have moved apace. The new brewery site at Estuary View, just off the A381 and overlooking the Salcombe and Kingsbridge estuaries, has just taken charge of its new brewing kit and plans are being made to increase the brewery's portfolio of beers. In the meantime the brewers, Chris & Tom, have been working hard and produced the first single hop beer, Equinox 4.8%, which has been well received in pubs across the region. There are plans for further single hop ales, a red ale and possibly a stout.

Teignworthy Brewery's Martha's Mild (abv 5.3%) won the strong mild and old ales category at the Exeter Winter Ales Festival in January. The beer was first brewed in March 2002 and was named after brewery owner John Lawton's second daughter Martha, who's now 14 years old! Martha's Mild will be available through the 'CAMRA Mild Month of May 2017' and at Tuckers Beer Festival 20-22 April. John told us that he wanted a sweet dark ruby red mild with a 'biscuit' background reminiscent of Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild. In order to do this he blended Amber, Chocolate and Pale Ale malts with roasted barley all produced in the adjacent Tuckers Maltings. Also a mixture of English aromatic hops were required for the light and complex bitterness needed in a stronger mild.

Devon Earth's Lost In The Woods came second in the Queen's Arms Charity Beer Festival competition which showcased over 25 ales in December last year. Brewing for Tuckers Maltings Beer Festival has started and its ales; Devon Earth, Lost In The Woods and a new recipe Grounded IPA at 5%abv will appear. Grounded IPA is a single malt ale using two hop varieties in the boil and a further two for dry hopping in the fermenter.

Bridgetown Brewery will soon be producing a limited edition brew, 'Tap And Go' 4.2%abv, a bitter based mainly on Cascade hops to celebrate the 6 Nations. The brewery held a successful Winter Ales festival in the Albert Inn (home of the brewery), and its next festival is provisionally planned for the end of June. Currently the seasonal favourite, 'Shark Island Stout', is for sale at The Albert Inn. >>

PUB AND BREWERY NEWS.... CONTINUED

>> **Totnes Brewing Company** are continuing to come up with some great tasting beers. Recent brews have included 2 new ales that have been adopted into the brewery's portfolio. Duck Medicine, 4.2%, is a white grapey Pale Ale made with New Zealand hops. And Tropango, 5%, has fruity hops and a lovely mango flavour. Both of these are unfiltered, unfinned and vegan and both are delicious. Spent grains are being used by a local pork farmer to feed his animals, and a new beer to celebrate this is called Davey Brown's Smoked Porter 5.4%, named after the enormous prize boar. At the beer's launch sausages from Davey's progeny were served. A lovely synergy.

Following the success of their Christmas ale, **Platform 5 Brewing** has decided to add it to the range. Blitzen is a 5% ABV best bitter, brewed from a mixture of 3 hops and 3 malts.

Bays Rhino Ale raised £4600 for Rhino Conservation. Paignton Zoo will use the money to support Save The Rhino International charity. The next collaboration will be called Crocod'Ale. Bays Gold won gold medals at the recent Food & Drink Devon Awards and Topsail and Devon Dumping took silver.

Riviera Brewing Company's Ale is now available on a semi regular basis at the Tally Ho, Littlehempston, Tuckers Maltings Taphouse & Bottle Shop and Devonport Arms, Paignton. The Devonian Pale Ale 4.1% is going to be brewed more frequently in 2017.

EXPANSION OF THE NEW LION HOP CLUB

The success of **New Lion Brewery's** hop farmer's initiative last year was impressive. 45 people planted hop plants in their gardens, allotments and patios, and the first year's yield of 1.3 Kg was used to create a beer named for the growers, "Local Hero". The Hop Club is gearing up for the 2017 harvest and is calling on more growers and/or beer lovers to support the initiative by planting the chosen variety, Primadonna, and joining in the harvest on a chosen date in September. Last year it was on September 11th. Rhizomes can be ordered from the brewery by 8th March for £10 and will be available for collection the following week. You will be given an instruction sheet and a length of hop twine. The co-owner of the brewery, Rob Hopkins said that the brewery has great hoppy ambitions for 2017, and commented that Stroud Brewery's hop growers contributed 50Kg of hops to the cause of brewing their Hop Club ale.

Mat Henney, head brewer, praised the growers and said that the freshness and flavour of these hops was amazing, and that meeting all the growers and welcoming them to the brewery on harvest day was one of the most special days they had had since they opened the Brewery.

Get in touch at www.newlionbrewery.co.uk or 01803 226277 as the hop plant sale is open to all.



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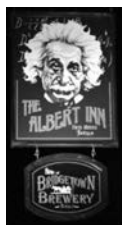
The Albert Inn

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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.

However, it also provides a sheltered beer garden overlooking the Dart. Free WiFi. Regular live music, an open mic night for the adventurous or enthusiasts.

Would you expect culinary theme nights, an elaborate lunch menu; a wine list that will surprise you by variety and price? A large range of malt whisky; calvados and brandy to please the connoisseur? Give us a try you will be surprised.

A TORQUAY TREK IN FEBRUARY

Initial destination: The Crown & Sceptre, St. Marychurch.

Current location: Philip and I are on the Strand waiting for bus 22 to take us up there.

He inquires how we know which of the 5 or 6 stands we should wait at, as they all say 22, and I am obliged to point out that he is looking at the middle 2 digits of the 6 digit Travel Line timetable information number. I am left hoping that I haven't got another Bob on my hands. (I subsequently discover that meanwhile, in Teignmouth the real Bob is trying to convince Sue and Clive that they need to catch an unspecified bus at 11.22., until Sue points out that they need bus 22 at 11.32). Anyway, the two of us finally get to the pub, our bus being nearly 15 minutes late. The rest of the party is there by now, choosing from the no less than 8 ales on offer. I opt for Butcombe Gold, and Philip for what turns out to be the only dark beer we encounter all day - Exeter Darkness. We all admire the pub's enduring feature - the collection of chamber pots attached to the ceiling. Back down through the precinct we arrive at Molloy's, home to Platform 5 beers from the Railway brewpub in Newton Abbot. The 2 available today are Western Gold and Coaster, along with Courage Best.

The 'trek' part of the day now comes into play, as we all head for Babbacombe Downs or, more specifically, the Buccaneer towards the far end. This St. Austell pub has the brewery's Tribute, Proper Job, and H.S.D. on the bar. The original plan was to then catch the bus down the main road to The Kents at Wellswood, but this is changed en-route and we go down to The Strand, a short walk from The Hole In The Wall off the bottom of Torwood Street. Torquay's oldest pub offers good Tribute; Butcombe Bitter and Gold; Otter Bitter; and Doom Bar. We are kindly given two dishes of Mini Cheddars to soak up the beer.



*Part of the Group outside
The Hole in the Wall*

In due course we double back around the corner to The Clock Tower, where piped rock music accompanies Hunter's Devon Dreamer and Fuller's London Pride. As time is getting on, Philip and I at this point decide to get a bus back to Brixham, as the rest of the troop decamp over the road to the former Wetherspoon's, The London Inn, now owned by Lloyd's.

Peter O'Nions

The South Devon branch of CAMRA is holding a New Members Evening on Friday 24th March from 5.45pm at The Taphouse & Bottle Shop, Tuckers Maltings in Newton Abbot.

If you have become a new member in the last 12 months, come along for a pint, a chat and some tasty food. Existing members are also welcome for a nominal charge of £7.50, but new members come for FREE. Contact Ray Ellmore on 07886002482 or ray.ellmore@btinternet.com

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WHAT IS THE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF CAMRA?

To be honest I don't think that it is a very flattering one.

Yes, everybody applauds CAMRA's historical role in fighting to promote choice of real ales but beyond that most people don't have a clue about the other campaigns and work carried on by the organisation.

There is little general awareness of the fight to save pubs, the constant lobbying which has helped to eliminate the beer escalator, and the reductions in duty on beer, all brought about by the professional lobbying of Parliament.

In fact the consumption of real ale is now marketed in such a way, particularly the new keg beers and imported ales from North America that beer is now becoming fashionable, which encourages our MP's to support real ale issues.

But, I hear you say does keg beer and imported beer meet CAMRA's quite narrow definition of the product? No is the answer and herein lies the rub. We need to accept that the drinking public, including CAMRA members, drink and enjoy a whole range of beers including many that don't meet the CAMRA criteria for real ale.

To many people CAMRA and its members represent a reactionary old-fashioned organisation that enjoys sitting in pubs of questionable style criticising any beer presented to them and making 'professional' judgements on the ales.

My experience has shown that many of these 'professional' drinkers exhibit an arrogance towards beers and pubs that is truly amazing and their opinions are so biased they do not serve the industry at all well. In fairness, there are also many knowledgeable and fair-minded CAMRA members who have earned the respect and friendship of landlords and brewers alike. Unfortunately it is not always their voice that is heard.

That brings us back to CAMRA's public image. My research has indicated that we are seen as generally old, judgemental and stuck in a time warp that doesn't allow any change of thinking regarding the industry that we claim to represent, despite the natural evolution that is taking place in the beer sector.

There has recently been a CAMRA initiative to revitalise the organisation, building on the successes of the past forty years and trying to formulate a policy of "Where do we go from here." Members have been actively consulted and the process will not be finalised for until the CAMRA AGM of 2018.

Hallelujah there is a chink of light! The latest feedback from the Revitalisation Group indicates that their recommendations will embrace changes in thinking and ideas that would have been deemed as sacrilege only a few months ago. A change in policy on the use of cask breathers has been recommended together with taking a new look at keg beers.

For readers who are unfamiliar with the cask breather position a little explanation is required. When a cask has been tapped, the beer starts to come into contact with oxygen - and a beer in contact with oxygen has a limited life. >>

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PUBLIC PERCEPTION.... CONTINUED

>> Stronger beers last longer, but for most ales with an ABV in the low 4% region, three days is typical. If the pub doesn't have a high turnover, or if a beer is not popular, three days will not be enough to sell all the beer in the cask.

A cask breather allows a small amount of CO₂ to replace the oxygen in the cask. Not enough CO₂ to push it up to the bar - that's "top pressure" - but enough "blanket pressure" to keep the beer fresh tasting for longer by replacing some or most of the oxygen that has made it into the cask with CO₂, an inert gas. The use of cask breathers is considered "extraneous carbon dioxide", so CAMRA does not endorse this method and any pub using cask breathers cannot be included in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide irrespective of the taste of the beer! We are shooting ourselves in the foot as CAMRA is damaging the sale of real ales and for what, some outdated policy. I'm sure that some landlords use cask breathers and tell no one. That's what I would do!

A word of caution for all of you who are getting really excited. The Revitalisation Group's recommendations have to be passed at a CAMRA AGM in order to be adopted and so the result may be as much of a cliff-hanger as Brexit. We shall see.

I believe that the conservative dyed in the wool thinking of the past few years is unlikely to change until the average age of members reduces from upper middle age down to early middle age and lower, helping us to be recognised as a vibrant young persons' organisation embracing modern ideas and drinking habits.

As was stated at a recent 'Revitalisation Meeting' we have lost sight of the fact that we are the: **CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE and not THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST EVERYTHING ELSE.**

Let's all wake up before we are consigned to history as yesterday's organisation. Remember, nothing is forever!

If you have any views on this subject please email the editor or contact the writer.

Please note that these are the writer's opinions and do not necessarily represent the views of the branch or the CAMRA organisation.

Edgar Halton : ehalton@mac.com

BUSINESS RATES THREATEN PUBS

Another blow to the British pub is looming with the pending double hit of the revised business rates and the increase in minimum wage. Due to other factors, including supermarket pricing, alcohol duty and social factors that include wage stagnation, pubs have decreased catastrophically in the past few years. The figures are frightening: pub closures from 58,200 to 48,000 in the 6 years to 2013. The Torquay pub, the Babbacombe Inn, was on television recently and has had a 650% hike in rates over the last three years with a 3 fold increase expected over the next five. The government have stated that many businesses are likely to expect a reduction, but it seems that if this is the case, some businesses are subsidising others.

HEINEKEN'S PUNCH BUY-OUT

CAMRA has raised concerns with the MD of Heineken's Star Pubs and Bars business seeking reassurance that the kind of choice currently existing in Punch Tavern pubs will remain. This follows the news that Heineken plan to acquire 1900 of Punch Tavern pubs, with Patron Capital bidding for the remaining 1373. Heineken have confirmed that Punch tenants will not be forced to stock only their brands and that they will remain free to source beers from the Society of Independent Brewers. Colin Valentine, CAMRA's Chairman has also asked that tenants will continue to be able to opt for a "market-rent only" agreement, enabling them to break the beer tie and buy on the open market.

Meanwhile some campaigners have called for the deal to be referred to the Competition and Markets Authority, as the deal would increase Heineken's holding from 1100 pubs to 3000.

Sourced from The Times Feb 2017

Ed – I understand that currently 85% of beer sales in Heineken pubs are Heineken products.

REGIONAL WINNERS OF THE CBOB JUDGING

At the Exeter and East Devon CAMRA Festival of Winter Ales on the 13th to 14th January 2017, the following beers were the regional winners in the two Champion Beer of Britain (CBOB) categories that the festival was asked to judge.

Category : Old Ales and Strong Milds

1st - Teignworthy, Martha's Mild

2nd - Tintagel, Gwaf Tan

Category : Strong Old Ales and Barley Wines

1st - RCH, Santa Fe

2nd - Exmoor, Beast



All beers put forward for judging were nominated by SW CAMRA members and the winners in the categories were selected in a blind tasting by a panel consisting of:

A brewer who's beer was not in the category being judged.

Three CAMRA members who are licensees of Good Beer Guide pubs.

Two experienced CAMRA trained tasters who were not members of Exeter and East Devon Branch (and thus were not involved in the ordering of the beers or setting up of the bars).

Steve Murray



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JANUARY JAUNT

About 10 days before our scheduled first outing of the year, an email arrived from organiser Chairman Bob, informing all and sundry that we were to visit Highweek, and to meet in Newton Abbot to catch bus 77 up to the Highweek Village Inn. Being aware of his track record in these matters, I thought it prudent to verify this, and sure enough found that bus 77 didn't go to Highweek. Having established that we needed bus 70, and informed him of this, he sent a return email blandly stating 'bus 70 confirmed'-not a whiff of an apology, of course. I duly informed him that a dodgy memory (he had recalled that the 77 used to go to Highweek) is no substitute for a current time table (and the ability to use it).

Anyway, on the day, the 3 of us from Brixham arrived at Newton Abbot in plenty of time for the 11.30 bus 70, to find the self-same Grumpy already there. He said he had to wait for a guest from Somerset CAMRA who was joining us for the day, so the 3 of us caught the bus as planned.

Arriving at the Highweek Village Inn, we were met by a blazing fire, and Exmoor Gold, Tribute, and Teignworthy Seadog on the bar. John's round and Philip says 'pint of Seadog please' and our standard practice of drinking halves goes straight out the window. A short while later Clive arrived, having got a lift up from the town. In due course Bob and guest appeared, having got the next bus up. Numbers were then boosted with the arrival of Philip Stevens, who doesn't usually join us due to a prior engagement on Wednesday evenings. A notice on the wall announced that pasties were the only food available that lunchtime, so pasties it was - and very good they were too.

Back in town, a short walk took us along to the Wolborough, notable for its front window etched with 'Starkey, Knight and Ford' after the long-defunct brewery. The Draught Bass probably shaded the Tribute and Doom Bar (other opinions are available). Back around the corner we came to the Union Inn, and its offering of Bay's Devon Dumpling, Doom Bar, and the somewhat more esoteric Hog's Back 'Farnham White' and Greene King's 'London Glory': both 'ticks' for the Annoy Grumpy element amongst us.

Along East Street we arrived at the Teign Cellars- no chance of any Doom here. Instead, we were treated to Black Tor 'Ale'; Arbor; 'Motueka'; Mallinson's 'Bramling Cross'; and Anarchy 'Strait Jacket'. In due course, the rest of the party decided to decamp to the Cider Bar, but Philip and I, mindful of the effects cider can have after drinking beer, decided to stay put and try a couple of the 'Craft Beers' that were on offer.

Peter O'Niours

NOTABLE QUOTE

From the towns all Inns have been driven: from the villages most.... Change your hearts or you will lose your Inns and you will deserve to have lost them. But when you have lost your Inns drown your empty selves, for you will have lost the last of England.

Hilaire Belloc : Anglo-French writer and historian 1870-1953



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

CAMRA 2017 AGM

MEMBERS' WEEKEND

Bournemouth International Centre
7th - 9th April 2017



Please register online at: www.camraagm.org.uk
or return form to 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 4LW

Membership # _____ Joint Membership # (if applicable) _____
First Name _____ First Name _____
Surname _____ Surname _____
Email _____ (Closing date for postal & online registration is Friday 17th March 2017)

If you would like to volunteer, please circle below to indicate when you would like to work. Your details will be passed on to the staffing officer and you will be contacted closer to the event.

Tue AM / PM Wed AM / PM Thur AM / PM Fri AM / PM Sat AM / PM Sun AM / PM

Please circle if you have any specialist skills: first aider / cellarman / local knowledge / logistics / customer service / other

ROGER'S 2016 LONDON BEER TOUR

My annual pub crawl came around earlier this year, in September rather than November and so the weather was dry and much warmer. The ladies and children were meeting for tea but the men all wanted to come with me! The plan was to meet at 11, and a brisk pace between pubs. Our first, The Pride of Spitalfields (Good Beer Guide) is a proper old fashioned type of pub, two bars, carpets and comfortable seats and I had Crouch Vale Brewers Gold 4% to start the day. Pete arrived to try Truman's Zephyr 4.4% and we received messages - the others were coming. On to no. 2, Williams Ale & Cider House (GBG and Craft Pub Guide) with a modern retro look, but clean and a bit dark in the back room. It had a good list of beers but they were not too easy to identify properly, Spitalfields a 3.8% amber ale brewed by Green King? And Winter's Revenge 4.7% from Kent or possibly from Norfolk. Then the last three arrived so we were now a full complement. After lunch we went onwards to no. 3, Brewdog Shoreditch a brewery pub (Brewdog) and (CPG), having only keg craft beers but a highly drinkable Dead Pony Ale. This was a modern pub, a converted shop with recycled furniture and decor and lots of neon signs. Then no. 4, The White Hart Brewpub (GBG) (One Mile End Brewery), a much more traditional pub with a proper bar counter and stools, the beer was Dockers Delight 4.2%. Now we had a long walk and came across an unscheduled pub that looked worth a try, you can only walk so far without refreshment. No. 5, The Horn of Plenty, had lots of room but more of a foody pub but still fine for drinkers. I had Fullers Oliver Island 3.8% and Gales HSB 4.8%. But onwards to two pubs close together which had looked good on What Pub. No. 6 was The Florist, and the beer was East London Brewing Co Foundation 4.2%. What a lovely pub, small, with seats out in the front and specializing in pizzas. Next, no. 7 was The Camel, billed as a small, traditional London Pub, long and narrow, with tables out on the pavement. I tried Sambrook's Wandle 3.8% and Adnam's Ghost Ship 4.5%, there was also a beer from Five Points Brewery. Doesn't time fly when you are having fun? I was told we had to fly ourselves to meet the girls and so on to the tube Westfield for a meal and to finish off the day with a bottle of Wolfrock.

Well 7 pubs, a restaurant, two brewpubs, nine different beers including a craft keg and a bottled one, not a bad day out.

Roger Adams

Clifford Arms 34 Fore St, Shaldon TQ14 0DE

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WHY I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO BOURNEMOUTH 2017

This April, I will be joining CAMRA members from across the UK in the seaside resort of Bournemouth for CAMRA's Members' Weekend, which includes our National AGM and Conference.

I have been attending the CAMRA Members' Weekend for almost 30 years, well before I was active nationally, never mind National Chairman. Those of you who were in Norwich in 2013 may remember that I still have my glass from my first AGM weekend, as they were then called, from Norwich in 1990. Even prior to becoming Chairman, I always made an effort to travel to whichever corner of the country the weekend was held and have only missed one since then - and I was even the organiser in Edinburgh in 1998. It has always been, and still is, an opportunity to meet with old friends, make new acquaintances and socialise with other CAMRA members from across the country.

Most importantly, the Members' Weekend is a fantastic opportunity for any member across the organisation - whether you have just joined, been a member for 20+ years, active or inactive - to shape the future direction and purpose of CAMRA.

As Chairman, I now have the great responsibility of making sure that the AGM and Conference part of the Members' Weekend is run successfully and open to every single one of our 185,000 members. This year, that responsibility is even greater than ever before.

Following 50 consultation meetings across the UK and three national surveys, we have now seen the proposals that were put forward by the Revitalisation Project Steering Committee on CAMRA's future. Whether you agree or disagree with the proposals, took part in the consultation events or stayed at home, the Members' Weekend will be the opportunity to discuss them inside and out, ahead of a decision next year.

Over the weekend, members will be able to consider the Revitalisation Project and proposals on the future of CAMRA in a series of discussion groups. It will be your chance to have a say on the Revitalisation Project's findings and represent your views in the debate. A final decision on the proposals will then be taken at the Members' Weekend in 2018.

I am proud to chair an organisation that is a true democracy - where every member has the opportunity to feed into our policies, direction and future. I never forget that without our huge membership base and dedicated volunteers; there simply would not be a CAMRA.

I hope you will consider joining us this year in Bournemouth on the 7th to 9th April. The closing date for registration is Friday 17th March 2017.

For more information simply visit camraagm.org.uk.

Colin Valentine
CAMRA National Chairman

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THE BRANCH CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

On a cold and wet Saturday in December, some 33 intrepid regulars, partners and even 2 prospective junior members made their way to the Shipwrights Arms at Shaldon for an afternoon of ales, excellent food and winter beer talk.

First through the doors on the stroke of noon was our well-travelled Chairman, Bob Southwell, literally just back by train from a jaunt around Belgium, a commendable effort!

Brains Rev James, Hanlons Port Stout, Timothy Taylor Landlord, Courage Directors and Powderkeg Speak Easy were all on tap. At 2 o'clock we tucked into an ample buffet spread, much of which was home-made and was very well received, including a very hot chilli number which meant all the above ales had to be sampled again!

Thank you to all who attended, including our guests from Exeter, one of whom I believe was even moved to consider transferring to South Devon branch. I would like to extend a special big thank you to our hosts Ray & Julie and all the staff who worked hard to make this a very enjoyable event, all the very best to you for 2017.

Clive Mackriell

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WHAT'S ON

Branch Meetings and Social Events

Date	Time	Purpose	Location
7 March	20:00	Branch Meeting	Jolie Brise top bar Teignmouth
24 March	17:45	New Member's Evening	Tuckers Maltings Newton Abbot
11 April	20:00	Social Meeting	TBA
26 May	20:00	Branch Meeting	Staverton Station
20 June	20:00	Branch AGM	TBA

Beer Festivals

Date	Event	Location
22 March - 2 April	Wetherspoon Spring Festival up to 30 ales at all pubs	
23 - 27 March	Bristol Beer Festival	Old Station Temple Meads, Bristol
7 - 9 April	CAMRA Member's Weekend	Bournemouth International Centre
13 - 17 April	Blue Anchor Beer Festival	Teignmouth
14 - 16 April	Highweek Village Inn Festival	Highweek, Newton Abbot
27 - 29th April	SIBA festival. 280+ local SIBA ales	Tucker's Maltings Newton Abbot
29 April - 1 May	Worm Charming Beer Festival. Harry Potter Theme	George Inn Blackawton
26 - 29 May	Devon Diesel Beer Festival. 40+ beers and 60's music festival at Buckfastleigh	Staverton Station
23 - 24 June	Summer Moon Festival	Kingskerswell
23 - 25 June	Albert Inn Festival	Totnes
14 - 7 July	Kingsbeer Festival. Arrive by train for free entry.	Kingwear Station
8 - 12 August	Great British Beer Festival	Olympia, London
25 - 28 August	Devon Diesel Beer Festival. Rails and Ales festival with 60+ beers	Staverton Station
25 - 28 August	Annual Bank Holiday Beer Festival	George Inn, Blackawton

FORTY YEARS OF RAIL ALE RAMBLES

In April 1978, while living in London, I spent £4.50 (£25 in today's money) and enjoyed a day out with a difference. I joined 419 other people on a specially chartered train heading for Macclesfield, Stockport and Manchester, where at each stop we took our pub maps and descended on all kinds of boozers to drink real ale.

Why did we do this? Real ale was in danger of extinction in the 1970s, which is why CAMRA was formed in 1971. London in particular was a real ale desert unless you lived in the south-west suburbs around the Fuller's and Young's breweries, but there was more to be enjoyed in provincial towns and cities.

The day was a great success. I discovered a back street pub in Ancoats, Manchester - Hyde's Jolly Angler - which is still going strong today - as is Hyde's Brewery. I wrote up the trip for my then employer, Travel Trade Gazette, noting that there were lots of empty seats on the train home. The ale was so good that many passengers were never seen again!

I didn't know it then, but my trip to Manchester was number three in a series of Rail Ale Rambles (RARs) devised by a CAMRA member called Gerald Daniels. Gerald was a British Rail manager at the time, who knew there were plenty of spare trains to charter at weekends at a very attractive price. The idea proved an instant hit, although the logistics were sometimes very challenging, but Gerald is a great organiser. Transporting no fewer than 579 people from Banbury railway station to Hook Norton, and getting them all round the historic brewery safely, is a case in point - with a fleet of coaches called into action. Hook Norton is in fact the brewery that RARs have visited most often, with 10 visits taking nearly 3,500 participants to rural north Oxfordshire over the last 36 years.

So it was appropriate that for a commemorative tour for the 40th anniversary celebrations, Hook Norton was one of the five breweries visited. Its managing director James Clarke and his mother Paula welcomed a party of 79 one Sunday in October, James recalling how, as a boy, he had gone down to Banbury station to greet the special train from London. Fortunately, 79 was a rather more manageable visitor number than 579.

The 40th anniversary tour

Five breweries were visited on the "Looking Forward to Forty" tour in October, three of these being very much "old friends" as they had been visited on RARs many times before. All the breweries presented commemorative bottles of beer to everyone on the tour, with snacks, meals and plenty of draught ale included in the tour price.

First stop was at Elgood's in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire. Brewing started on this riverside site in 1795, with the Elgood family taking over in 1878. My choices were the best bitter Russet Gold at 3.9% and Black Dog mild at 3.6%, which I enjoyed rather more than the bottle of sour fruit beer we were given to take home.

We now drove around The Wash and into Lincolnshire to visit Bateman's brewery in Wainfleet, near Skegness, and Stuart Bateman from the fourth generation of the family is now in charge and welcomed us in the old windmill where the visitor centre is located. >>

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RAIL ALE RAMBLES.... CONTINUED

>> His great grandfather started brewing in 1874 mainly to supply local farmers who often paid their workers partly in ale - hence the expression "harvest beers".

We then crossed into Leicestershire for our final brewery visit of the day, to Belvoir at Old Dalby. We didn't tour this modern brewery but could view it from the visitor centre and dining room where we enjoyed a much appreciated steak pie dinner.

Belvoir brewery started in 1995 in other premises, but moved to the present site nine years ago and the beers are now available in nearly 300 pubs and retail outlets. The beers we tried were a rather puny tasting Whipping at 3.6%, the much more palatable Beaver Bitter at 4.3% and Old Dalby ruby ale at 5.1%.

The following morning, the first brewery stop was the highlight for many visitors, Hook Norton. We were treated to a sandwich and pork pie lunch before touring the "tower" brewery, claimed to be the finest example of this Victorian design still extant. Brewing started on a farm here in 1856, the tower brewery being built in 1872, and the original chimney was restored in 2014 with a Heritage Lottery Fund grant. Originally it was powered by steam, and the 1899-built steam engine still works on special occasions, such as our visit. An integral part of the tour is a visit to the stables where the giant shire horses can be admired - they still deliver beer to pubs in the village once a week.

Our final stop was a few miles away just over the border in Warwickshire, in Lower Brailes village. Clouded Minds brewery moved here from London to premises previously occupied by Whale Ale, and makes Hazelnutter (5%) and Luppul (4.2%), the former flavoured with Italian hazelnuts.

Finally, Gerald's whistle sounded, announcing it was time to head to the station for the trip home, leaving us all to reflect on a very enjoyable and indeed historic weekend.

Tours are still being organised by Gerald Daniels and the 2017 programme has not been finalised but will include several RARs, which usually start in London but can often be joined at other places. Longer Explorer holidays will operate to Slovakia, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and weekends to South West Wales and Nurnberg in Germany, for the Christmas market. CAMRA members will be made most welcome and full details are at www.crookhamtravel.co.uk (01252 665652).

Dave Richardson

NOTABLE QUOTES

"For a quart of ale is a dish for a king" - William Shakespeare; *A Winter's Tale*

"He was a wise man who invented beer" - Plato

"Wherever beer is brewed, all is well - wherever beer is drunk, life is good"

- Czech proverb

MESSAGE FROM BOB SOUTHWELL BRANCH CHAIRMAN



Dear Fellow CAMRA Members,

I'm delighted to announce we have created a family of garments carrying the South Devon CAMRA logo. You can buy these from us by using the order form that you will find on our website at <http://www.southdevoncamra.com>.

Cheers!

Bob Southwell

South Devon CAMRA Chairman

BEER GLORIOUS BEER

I have had some unusual and delightful beers recently. The first was on a trip to Truro where our first pub of the day, the Rising Sun (a GBG one of course) offered us amongst several others, Doom Bar. 'No thanks' I said 'there are more unusual beers', but a little later I read the pump clip and it was Doom Bar Reserve at 6%. I had not sampled this before because it was a brand new beer but the locals said it was worth a go so it had to be tried. An amber bitter ale, very tasty and not like normal D B, certainly worth a taste.

The next was when I was on a visit to Baldock a small town near Letchworth in Hertfordshire. I was meeting relatives but was able to choose the venue so a quick check in the GBG and found a pub of the year with a range of beers. The Orange Tree had several local beers and also Worthington's White Shield 5.6% on draft. I had never seen this before and didn't know it was available on draft but apparently it is occasionally. I could not pass up the occasion and it certainly was a beer not to be missed, India Pale Ale at its best in my opinion.

Finally, I sat at home in front of the fire the other night and opened a bottle of one of my favourite beers, Thornbridge St Petersburg Imperial Russian Stout 7.4%, dark, deliciously smooth, sweet, chocolatey but also hoppy. A beer to just sip slowly in comfort and enjoy all the flavours.

In the past two weeks I have drunk three gorgeous beers a new one, an old one and a black one, all a bit on the strong side, maybe too sweet for some and none very easy to find, but I enjoyed them all.

Roger Allen

IS THE BREWERY INDUSTRY OVER A BREXIT-SHAPED BARREL?

I was reading an article in the Derby Drinker in January and I quote 'One lame excuse that hasn't been used for raising ale prices yet...is the Brexit effect'. Well, brewers are now using that excuse, but is it really that lame? Any sensible person knew that the pound would fall in value given a vote to leave with the only question being by how much. In fact, it was clear that even the strongest leavers recognised this fact, and were championing the benefits of a lower pound for exporters. Well the pound has fallen by about 15% against the Euro and more against the dollar. As a result, anything that is imported should cost more, but there is uncertainty in determining how much this will affect costs and prices in the UK.

Brewers import barley, hops and various pieces of equipment that have all gone up in price. According to Andrew Patterson, head brewer at Dark Star brewery in West Sussex - "Everybody has noticed it (rising costs) and it is to be expected if you're importing hops from places like the US and Europe. It also the case with steel tanks, kegs, and yeast from Holland". Fabio Israel of Bedlam brewery is planning to build a new brewery, but estimates that the investment cost has risen from £500,000 to £600,000. Larger, and established brewers, are in much stronger position with strong brands and marketing and better able to pass on cost increases to customers.

According to Gavin Hogg of Salcombe brewery the price of barley has risen by about £50 a ton, but in this case it is British barley, due to an increase in demand to replace imports, forcing up the domestic price.

What can brewers do?

- 1) Shift to using British products including hops and barley. However, overseas hop quality and variety is what many brewers require, especially for the newer style so-called craft brews. According to Hogg, UK soil is simply not right for growing some types of hops, such as Citra and Mount Rainier.
- 2) Reduce the amount of hops or move to cheaper varieties, but that would diminish some of the highly distinctive and popular, tastes and flavours.
- 3) Buying more hops in advance, but not without initial costs
- 4) Buying Euros/dollars in advance in the case of further reductions.
- 5) Take advantage of a falling pound and the potential reduction in export prices. However, there are additional costs of transport etc. in breaking in to new markets and in the case of bottling it is very unlikely that small brewers would be able to afford the initial investment.

How does all of this affect the consumer? The answer is somewhat of a Hobson's choice: pay more for beer or risk seeing their favourite brewers go out of business. Already, some craft brewers are over the £5 a pint mark so would you be prepared to pay more? Alternatively, you could switch to the larger brewers who are likely to be less affected, but possibly experience a blander pint in the process.

What would be your choice?

Adapted from an article in the Guardian 31st of January 2017.

Bob Southwell

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Steve Murray and Dave Richardson

Last date for submission for the Summer magazine - 15.05.17

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1/4 page	55	65	90	110
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GRUMPY OLD MAN AND TALES FROM THE TOILET

It is official and I have definitive and incontrovertible evidence that men can also multi-task. Whilst visiting a urinal recently there was a young man doing what came naturally whilst at the same time texting and thereby performing an incredible and amazing act of both physical and mental agility. However, what could possibly be so important that this message could not wait a couple of minutes? Had he discovered a secret plot to destroy mankind and was he warning the security services or, more likely, asking a mate which kebab shop they were to meet in later? I saw him again later, still texting with the eerie blue light from the phone reflecting from his glasses and making him look like some sort of alien. At the time I was struggling for a theme to grump about and there it was handed to me on a urinal and Tales from the Toilet was born!

Let's start at the beginning and ask how we should identify toilets. They could of course be called the traditional Ladies and Gentleman, but somehow that seems to be a little old fashioned and very formal with men and women being marginally preferable. What about Lords and Ladies, Stags and Hinds, Dukes and Duchesses etc. and all accompanied by pictures of bonnets, top hats or antlers? What is this nonsense? It is little more than a ridiculous attempt to a sex up of the bodily functions department, with the appearance of the dreaded marketing and the sprucing up of the image of the pub? You could, of course, use images of men and women to identify the right door for you. The women's toilets appear to have a strange figure with a rigid triangular skirt, but I have never seen anyone who dresses like that and how on earth would you maintain that rigidity? The men's toilets seem to be the same figure, but without the skirt and no wonder I get confused, especially where the skirt is depicted as minimal. I have also noted that the phrase water closet is making a return and perhaps the privy will follow with the marketing people creating a 'real' 19th century experience of the outside loo. There are still a few outside toilets of course, but most of them are encompassed in purpose build extensions. Largely gone are the free standing toilet blocks where the elements were often used as the flushing mechanism. I even know of one such building which has a preservation order, but not for the pub itself!

There are a few of the traditional urinals that survive and the Philharmonic in Liverpool is legendary, but ironically you might have to wait for the large number of female observers who want to view this Victorian classic with its ornate porcelain. The Princess Louise in Holborn, London, is a subterranean masterpiece with massive cubicles and a similar design almost enclosing the user, and I could not help but being reminded of the Iron Maiden but fortunately without the back and spikes. Modern urinals are often the stainless steel trough, but it has to be high grade stainless to resist the uric acid (there's a useful conversation piece when you are next down the pub), but is too often treated as a litter bin for chewing gum, miscellaneous bits of paper and even the illegal cigarette butt. (Some trains have alarms in the toilet to detect smoking and perhaps pubs should adopt them and have flashing lights and klaxons to identify the smoking sinners who can't be bothered to go outside.) Some ingenuity has been used at times with the use of converted beer casks and even one establishment that used large bed pans but, again, I detect a marketing edge in all of this. »



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GRUMPY... CONTINUED

>> Finally, in this section some pubs have baby changing facilities - yes, baby changing which obviously suggests that babies are permitted in the pub and I can feel myself beginning to twitch with the thought of all those pushchairs cluttering up the adult environment. Any more twitching and I will have to stop and take some of those special tablets to recover!

Hand washing used to be a relatively straightforward affair in that you turned a good old fashioned tap and the water came out. Now there are a variety of means of newer types of dispense, rather than the humble tap, which can be quite complicated, especially for simpletons like me. Some have buttons, others require a handle to be depressed or elevated or moved to the left or right whilst others are automatic. I must confess that I have had to give up on a few despite my 'O' level in domestic science! Similarly, the soaps have moved on and are generally liquid, or foam these days, but why are they different colours and does it make any difference or is this the excess marketing of a very simple process? Now for the hand drying. Fortunately, those unhygienic wet towels that left your hands damper than when you started, are mostly in the past. The modern versions are a shiny variety of hot air machines but, annoyingly, not all seem to work and you are left with little choice, but to wipe your hands on your trousers or wave them in the air which renders you likely to appear to be some sort of loony. Others are just useless and you might as well use your breath whilst at the other extreme there are those that almost blow you over and singe your eyelids. Alternatively, there are the disposable paper towels but, inevitably the bin overflows and the toilet looks both dirty and untidy. I remember one occasion where the hot air drier apparently failed to work and I kept trying to activate it by pushing various knobs. Fortunately, help was at hand and I was reminded that it was probably better to use the hand drier rather than the condom machine for that particular purpose. The British are getting better at washing their hands after using the toilet, but there are plenty who do not. A pub in North London experimented with CCTV covering the wash basins and if you failed to wash your hands then a bright light lit up outside and the whole of the pub knew what had happened. On that basis, if you were trying to 'chat up' the women and kept failing you would never know why.

Some toilets have chalk boards for institutionalising graffiti. That is all very well if you are in Oxford where the graffiti has a touch of class about it with references to Tolstoy or Shakespeare, but elsewhere it too often resorts to sexual issues with lurid drawings and contact phone numbers. One publican assumed that such numbers were just that, but then realised that it was the number of the local drug dealer! That proved to be one of the easiest 'nicks' that the police ever had by phoning him up with an order and arranging a meet.

Some of you will be aware of a particular perversion called 'beer ticking'. As these 'ticks' become more and more difficult to obtain then 'toilet ticking' might supplement it and on that basis a new brand of toilet paper would represent a change and therefore a new tick along the lines of a beer changing its strength becomes two different beers. This may well be my last Grumpy article as I am starting to run out of ideas, but you never know and I might find some new territory which would continue to give me the chance to bash the 'tickers'.

Bold Southwell AKA The Grumpy Old Man

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