

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

53RD EDITION

SPRING 2016

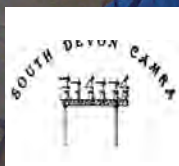
FREE

News & Brews



Mid-Week Trip to Totnes

Report on page 6



South Devon CAMRA

Supporting Real Ale in the South West



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WELCOME

53RD EDITION SPRING 2016



By the time this magazine is in your pubs and clubs, the selection of the South Devon CAMRA Pub of the Year 2016 will have been made. Branch members have been visiting the short-listed establishments, tasting the beers, appraising the *dé cor*, and generally getting a feel of the four contending pubs. Voting will take place at the next branch meeting where this magazine will be distributed to the volunteer who supplies your copy. A full report will follow next quarter giving details of the winner, but until then I can reveal that the contenders, in alphabetical order are:

Henry's Bar, Paignton; The Queen's Arms, Brixham; The Ship Inn, Kingswear and Teign Cellars, Newton Abbot.

My Christmas cake this year was a triumph. I used a recipe from Susan Novak's 'The Beer Cook Book' having met the lady and discussed cakes at St Austell's Celtic Festival. It involved soaking the fruit for 48 hours in strong sweet ale. I used Teignworthy Christmas Cracker and it was so good that I made a Tryanuary cake using Branscombe Vale's Harbinger. They were different and there were preferences in the home, but I cannot reveal those here. Suffice to say I have had requests for Valentine's Cake, ½ Term cake, and Mother's Day cake, something that Grumpy would take me to task for.

Cheers, Tina Hemmings



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PUB AND BREWERY NEWS

We wish Peter and Lesley, landlords at **The Pigs Nose**, East Prawle a happy retirement. Their son Joss will soon be taking over the running of the pub.

The Durant Arms at Ashprington now has Church Ledge from Noss Beer Works, a zesty IPA with a 4% abv, as its regular house beer.

The Hunters Lodge at Cornworthy has recently reopened. The inside has been substantially remodelled with the bar now in the centre and a large open fireplace at the front of the pub, all decorated quite plainly in cream and oak. When we called the two hand pumps were serving Otter Ale and Teignworthy Reel Ale and the latter was drinking well.

The Market House, Newton Abbot is temporarily closed as the landlord has given up the lease.

Garry Perkins, the landlord of **The White Hart** will be retiring. Now that Richard Knibbs is no longer at the Cider Bar, Garry is the longest standing landlord in Newton Abbot.

The Blue Anchor at Teignmouth was providing an old favourite, Red Rock Darkness, when our reporter was last in there.

There have been big changes in the management of Torbay Weatherspoon pubs. Billy the last manager at the **Brixham Vigilance** has been replaced by Tracey from Torquay's **London Inn**. Billy has move to the Plymouth Barbican pub, the **Gog and Magog**. Richard, an Isaac team leader, has taken over in **The Isaac Merritt** since Colin left the company after completing over 10 years at this Paignton pub. Vicky in the **Talk of the Town** (Paignton) and Emma (**The Green Ginger**, Torquay) are two of the ongoing managers in this big shake-up.

Colin Bianco, manager of Wetherspoon's **Isaac Merritt** in Paignton for the last 13 years, has left to manage the seafront **Inn on The Green** for Marstons. He intends to introduce real ales from local breweries and microbreweries to complement the Marstons range. Also, his plans include the introduction of a bespoke Cider Bar, to highlight 'real' ciders. We at South Devon CAMRA wish him every success in his endeavours.

Since taking over a year ago, the new licensees at **The Hermitage** in Kingsbridge have planned a changing supply of ales from seven local breweries. At time of writing Anna and Austen are selling Grubber from Exeter Brewery and Devon Amber from Quercus. Snacks and weekend meals are also offered.

The Ring of Bells at North Bovey had a disastrous fire in January caused, it is thought, by a spark from the chimney flue igniting the thatch and destroying the roof and first floor. There was water and heat damage to the ground floor, but fire-fighters were able to stop the fire spreading to adjoining thatched properties. Sadly, the pub has advised us that it is closed until further notice.

The 'To Let' sign on the **Lord Nelson** at Kingskerswell has disappeared and we are told the new landlord will be taking over in late February. >>

PUB NEWS.... CONTINUED

>> For the third year running **The Victoria Inn**, Salcombe has been judged and received the highly prestigious GOLD award from Taste of the West, South West England.

Mike Cox, self-professed non-athlete and bar-manager at **The Highweek Village Inn** has a daunting trip planned for the Easter weekend. Together with 3 (younger) members of his family, he is cycling from John O'Groats to Land's End to fulfil a family aspiration and in the process they are raising money for Alzheimer's Society and the Multiple Sclerosis Trust.

After 12 years of neglect, Heavitree Brewery's wishes have come true with their application to change the use of **The Toby Jug Inn** at Bickington into four dwellings. After all this time the pub will be too derelict to restore its status as a pub. So despite a hard fight by Bickington residents and other campaigners in the past, Heavitree's demolition by abandonment has been achieved. **The Halfway House** on the Ashburton Road (also owed by Heavitree) is displaying a sign saying that major refurbishment is to be undertaken, but the sign went up over 18 months ago with no indication of any work taking place.

In a recent article, The Times gave a list of their choice of the 25 best pubs in the country. These included 3 South West inns, **The Mason's Arms** in Branscombe, **The Two Bridges Hotel** at Princetown and **The Cornish Arms** at Padstow.

New Lion Brewery is continuing to make a series of limited edition ales for sale in the brewery, or forming part of the reward system for becoming a member. We recently tried 2 of these: Brett IPA, based on Pandit IPA using Brettanomyces yeast. This had tropical aromas and a creamy taste with a nice hop finish. Smoke Stack Lightening Porter would be excellent with cheese after dinner. It has plum aromas and flavours of plum, fig and liquorice with a palate cleansing hop finish.

Bays Brewery is launching 'Rhino Ale' in May, hoping to raise even more money for the endangered species. To date, working closely with Paignton Zoo, it has raised nearly £10,000 for endangered animals. The keg craft lager, Devon Rock, will be available this summer.

Black Tor Brewery has increased production of vegan friendly bottle conditioned beers. From March it will be launching a special edition 4.4% porter brewed with 7 speciality malts and Wakatu hops from New Zealand.

PLEASE enter your monthly What Pub scores by the 6th of the following month for them to be included on the month's data base, and so be counted.

MIDWEEK TRIP TO TOTNES

Well, a Stagecoach Gold bus actually. Or in the case of those not travelling from Paignton, a different bus. Except for the Grumpy One, who had the exclusivity of a train (ah, the trappings of rank). Any which way, we all met up at The Albert Inn in Bridgetown. No Prince Consorts here - it must be the only pub of that name to have Mr. Einstein on its pub sign. As home of the Bridgetown Brewery, 3 of its beers were on offer: the standard Albert Ale; rugby-themed Tap'N'Go; and the dark Shark Island Stout, all enjoyed along with cashew nuts from a large jar behind the bar, and which the pub dog declined when offered (apparently he doesn't like beer either - sounds like a pooch with a problem). Those who had not seen it before were then treated to a brewery tour.

Over the river, and abutting The Plains, we came to The Dartmouth, doing a good trade from lunchtime diners. We stuck to the Jail Ale and Otter Bitter and Amber. It was then out the back of The Dartmouth, and over the road to The Watermans, and a rendezvous with Robin, who had travelled up from Malborough, in the S. Hams. We tried Jail Ale on hand pump, and Wadsworth Horizon tapped from the barrel, both of which were drinking very well. The rest of the enlarged party then headed off up the main street to the King William IV, while I went to get my 'fix' from the specialist cheese shop. I met the advance party coming back down the hill, in time to join them in the Royal Seven Stars and its up-market bar (see front page picture). Along with Jail Ale and Bay's Devon Dumpling, they had Grumpy's favourite (sic) Doom Bar, which was actually quite a pleasant drink.



The re-opening of The King's Arms, Strete.

brewing plant visible behind the bar. The pub featured their dark 'Ink' on hand pump along with the now-kegged 'Spanner Hand' which we had previously tried as a cask beer when the brewery first started. Apart from being cold, it was still very good, and, along with the general ambience of the new venture, rounded off our day nicely.

Right the way back up the hill now, and still a wait for the Bay Horse to open, so we piled into the basic Bull Inn for some cold Hobgoblin and intrusively loud music until the former opened at 4, at which time the Exeter Avocet and New Lion Totnes Stout were as manna from above. We stayed here until nearly 5, the opening time of the new Totnes Brewing Co. whose premises were not far down the road, all beams and alcoves with the small

Peter O'Niours

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The Albert Inn

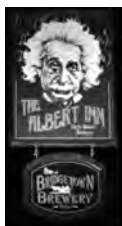
Home of Bridgetown Brewery

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Bridgetown Brewery brews Albert Ale 3.8% abv; Bridgetown Bitter 4.2% abv; 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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ROGER IN LONDON 2015

It was the usual London pub-crawl with the boys meeting the ladies and children for dinner at 6. This called for an early start and I gave my nephew, Pete, who lives in London, a long list of pubs I would like to visit in the same area for less travel and more drinking. Pete produced a schedule and 4 of us met on time at Homerton tube station at 10.45.

A short stroll took us to The Plough on Homerton High Street. We were a few minutes early, but very soon the barman was pushing up the shutters on the front, revealing an interesting corridor open to the street and the pub doors. Apparently this was only the second time he remembers having had a queue. Previously an Indian restaurant for a while, it was built as a pub and it still retained a few old pub bits and a very fine mahogany bar back with mirrors. The only beer was Hackney Brewery Kentucky 4.5%, but soon the nice barman had another - Five Points Pale an American IPA 4.5%. I was on halves, there were a lot on my list, but I had to have another Kentucky, and this was my only duplication of the day. Beer was costing £9.50 for four halves - well it is London!

The second stop, also on the High Street, was at The Adam and Eve which opened at 12:00. It had a Cornish themed menu and some beer from Tintagel Brewery plus Scottish Caledonian Deuchars, but I went for Trumans, Bold as Brass 4.2% and Hackney Best 4.4% with my fish lunch. This is a pretty, large pub restored a few years ago and has lots of lovely features especially the blue tiled façade. At the back there is a brewery school.

The Chesham Arms next, a community-owned pub bought to save it from the developers who had stripped it out. The new tenants have fitted out the interior with fittings saved from a pub in Derby. The decor was good; it looked like a pub again although a bit new. The very chatty landlord, (originally from Exmouth so knew a lot of our S Devon pubs) and a chatty local made this visit very enjoyable. We tried Southwark Bermondsey Best 4.4%, Dark Star Rockhead 6.8% (gorgeous) plus Salopian Velocity and Oracle.

Onto the busy Dove Freehouse & Kitchen by Broadway market. We squeezed into the pub, which was heaving with lots of diners and we couldn't find anywhere to sit. Even all the four rooms in the lower back area were full so we stood up in the corridor. I drank Stodfold Dark from Halifax, a robust Porter 4.4%. There were two other beers from that brewery as well, so the pub is worth another visit.

Our fifth stop was at London Fields Brewery Tap, not a proper pub just a retail outlet at the brewery. I am not sure if they were brewing there at the time as we saw several people in the brewery through the glass partition walls, but they seemed to have pencils and paper rather than brewing stuff in their hands. We found a table even though it was quite busy. London Fields Love not War, a red ale 4.2% was notable and there were 4 other on from that stable as well.

On to No 6, The Pembury Tavern, the Milton Brewery tap. The large interior was more modern with bar billiards and pub games. We were running out of time so took up our usual stance, propping up the bar and drinking.

I was pleased to see a mild on the pumps - Milton Minatour was only 3.3% but very tasty and other Milton beers were for sale. We stood and chatted, it was not very busy and the barman joined the exchange. »

HOP TO IT!



An increase of hectares dedicated to hop growing has occurred this year for the first time in decades. This is because of the extra demand as the market for aromatic hops has grown in the States, Europe and even Brazil. The British climate is ideal and British growers are able to take advantage of the demand. Hop merchants Charles Faram in Malvern are developing new aromatic varieties, one of which they are very excited about, with floral fruity characteristics and very intense aromas. Look out for Jester in the future. The heyday of hop growing was in 1878 when 29000 hectares were given over to this crop, but last year's area was only 927 hectares.

However a local brewery is doing its bit to increase the hop-growing area in the south-west. New Lion Brewery in Totnes has launched a Hop Club, where brewery members can buy a hop rhizome from the brewery, and grow a dwarf variety called Prima Donna. Harvesting in September will be coordinated, and all members' hops will be used to make a green-hopped special ale which, once brewed, will be the star attraction at a party to celebrate the beer produced. It is hoped that the 'patchwork' hop garden will extend all over the South Hams.

This initiative follows on from several around the country. Greg Pilley, MD of the Stroud Brewery has been growing 40 hop plants in his garden for several years, and encouraged neighbours and friends to do the same. On one day in September, the hops are harvested, brought to the brewery, and a pale ale called Brewer's Garden is created and everyone involved then gets 9 pints of it when it is ready.

British varieties of hops are prized for their aromatic qualities. Here are a selection of some of the popular ones. .

Fuggles - mild wood and fruit. Introduced in 1875.

Goldings - gentle orange and grapefruit with floral lavender and thyme.

Endeavour - complex blackcurrant and spice. Grapefruit and lime flavour.

Challenger - mild and spicy with sweet floral notes.

First Gold - slightly spicy with orange and tangerine flavours.

Jester - intense punchy aroma and tropical and grapefruit notes on the flavour.

Prima Donna - an offspring of Whitbread Goldings Variety and a dwarf male.

Proven success in stronger flavoured summer beers. Rich citrus character, well balanced bitterness and a fruity spicy note.

ROGER IN LONDON 2015.... CONTINUED

>> By then we had to meet the ladies, so on the tube to West India Quay and Browns restaurant, which unfortunately was all keg and I had to finish the day with a half of Korev Lager from St Austell. Not a bad pub crawl though - five great pubs, a brewery, a restaurant and ten different beers.

Roger Adams

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THE GREAT NORTH RUN

November 2015. It was approaching my birthday and this called for an expedition to meet friends and family to help me celebrate officially becoming an OAP.

First stop was the Anchor at Oldbury on Severn - this wonderful pub was my local for 15 years before we moved to South Devon nearly 25 years ago. It had changed little since those days and Bass was still available on gravity dispense along with Butcombe Bitter and, believe it or not, St Austell's Trelawny. After a leisurely fireside lunch, it was time to brave the elements and make my way to the car park from where my daughter chauffeured me back to her home. Many birthday gifts were exchanged (it also being her husband's birthday - an expensive time for her!).

The following day we set off for Chester to stay with my brother-in-law ready to take advantage of the CAMRA Cheshire Beer Festival. What should have been no more than a three hour drive ended up taking six hours by the time I had cut across country, in and out of Wales, in an attempt to avoid the miles of Friday tailbacks on the M5. It was very scenic.

Over 120 ales, many from Cheshire breweries that I had not tried before, were arrayed at the Racecourse at Chester. The festival was a ticket only event, which indicated it was likely to be very busy and, sure enough, this was the case. At times we had to resort to moving outside to the grandstand, watching the rain lashing down, in order to obtain a seat. Breweries sampled included Anarchy, Beer Nouveau, Happy Valley, Northern Monk and Offbeat, plus some old favourites like Oakham and Dark Star. The following day, at an evening visit to the Glynne Arms at Hawarden, we were rewarded with more beers from the Offbeat and Facers breweries.

The next destination was Derby to visit my Dad. We were booked in at the John Thompson Inn on the banks of the River Trent, one of the first pubs to start a new brewery back in 1977. Its JTS XXX is still going strong and is now the longest continuously brewed beer in Derbyshire. The 2016 Good Beer Guide lists no fewer than 56 breweries in Derbyshire so there was plenty of scope to try out some new brews. We first visited the Five Lamps Inn near the city centre which was a former Derby CAMRA 'Pub of the Year'. Although owned by Leicester brewers Everards, the pub served many Derbyshire brews from a number of its 14 hand pumps including Thornbridge, Jaipur IPA; Littleover, Gold; Whim, Hartington Pale and Peak Ales, Chatsworth Gold. >>



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THE GREAT NORTH RUN.... CONTINUED

» There were also some more familiar South West beers on tap, with Exmoor Beast and St Austell Proper Job both in good form. We met up with friends for an evening meal at Harpurs in Melbourne. The hotel is owned by a company which also owns the Boot at Repton and the Dragon at Willington and now brews their own beers at the Boot Brewery. Both the Repton Cross and the Clod Hopper were very good.

Although there were many more pubs and beers I'd have liked to try in Derby, they'd have to wait for another day, it was time to head north up the M1 and visit our daughter in Shipley, home of the Saltaire Brewery. Fairly close to her house, a new beer shop had recently opened and we thought this deserved an inspection. We were not disappointed and came away with a few bottles from Cloudwater, Arbor, Buxton and the Kernel breweries. Since our last visit to Shipley about a year ago, a new micro-pub had opened, and as I had yet to try out one of these drinking establishments, we headed off to the Cap and Collar in Saltaire. The single-room bar had seating for about 30 people, a bar with four hand pumps and a couple of keg taps. Behind the bar, racking with the casks was on view behind a glass screen. Boxed cider and a small selection of wine and spirits were also available. While it lacked the ambience of a comfortable pub with a log fire etc., I was impressed by the quality of the beers - Mallinson's Cascade; Bingley Jamestown APA; Saltaire Challenger Special and Elland Cardinal were all excellent.



*Old Peculier from the wood.
The Craven Arms, Appletreewick*

Overnight, the first snow of the winter had fallen and the Yorkshire Dales beckoned. We decided on Wharfedale and arrived at the Fountaine Inn in Linton-in-Craven. Set in front of the village green with a stream beyond, this old pub is a gem. I opted for the Wharfedale Blonde, brewed in Ilkley, and not the cask versions of Tetley and John Smith's. Following our meal, it would have been easy to linger by the warm fireside, but there was one more inn I had spotted in the Good Beer Guide which I decided I would like to try. So after a short walk along a stretch of the Wharfe, we headed for the Craven Arms in Appletreewick. This pub proved to be extremely popular, and deservedly so, but we managed to find a table in the Tap Room, again with a warm log fire. We enjoyed a couple of beers from the Dark Horse Brewery (Craven Bitter and Night Jar) rounded off with Theakston's Old Peculier from the wood. We left wishing this pub could be our local and returned to Shipley via the snow covered Ilkley Moor, hoping it would not be another year before we would be able to visit Yorkshire again.

David Lockley

BRANCH TRIP AROUND THE SOUTH HAMS

January. So it must be our annual excursion to this little-covered part of our branch area.

In the absence of Peter, our usual driver, Dave Buckler kindly agreed to step in as 'Wheelman' for the day. On arrival in Salcombe, we were thwarted by a 'Road Closed' sign across the narrow street leading to the Victoria Inn (and car park opposite). This necessitated walking along to the pub - most inconvenient. Whilst Dave sought alternative parking, we were left to sample the Tribute and Proper Job in this multi-award winning St Austell pub, both of which went down very well next to the roaring fire in the beamed bar.

From here it was back through Kingsbridge and along to Frogmore, and the roadside Globe Inn, our lunch stop. The cod and chips proved popular- or was it the allure of the mushy peas option? Accompanying ales on offer were Betty Stogs, Eddystone, and Otter Ale.

Fed and watered (well, beer is well over 90% water) we were off down the lanes to remote East Prawle, and the Pig's Nose, where changes are afoot. Son Joss is taking over the running of the pub, and is already making his mark- the hall adjacent to the pub which is used for live music is now home to a large ship's prow which he has built, and is much more impressive than his mother's assessment of 'really Heath Robinson'. Back in the ephemera-laden bar (things porcine to the fore) another welcoming fire blazed in the hearth, and 2 of the 3 ales on offer (Eddystone and Devon Pride) were served straight from the barrel, with Otter Bitter on hand pump.

The Old Inn at Halwell, on the main road towards Dartmouth, didn't have any model ships onsite, but did have Otter Amber and 2 Red Rock beers. Cutting back inland, we came to the Pig and Whistle on the Totnes - Newton Abbot road, a dining-based pub with well-received Jail Ale. From here it was a short hop to our final stop of the day, the community-owned Tally Ho down in the village, which counts various S. Devon CAMRA members among its shareholders. We finished the day with good Dartmoor Legend, Bay's Devon Dumpling, and Hunters George and the Dragon in very convivial surroundings.

Peter O'Nions

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CAMRA CAMPAIGN - CALLING FOR BEER DUTY CUT

Brewing trade associations and CAMRA have joined to call for a cut of one penny in beer tax in this year's budget on the 16th March, and are lobbying MPs to sign an Early Day Motion (EDM) to pressure George Osbourne in this matter. In the past three years there has been a penny decrease in the budget every year and research has shown this has resulted in rescuing over 1000 pubs from closure. In addition the yearly decrease is responsible for a boost in employment figures of around 19000. We can help by contacting our MP to pressure them to sign the EDM.

CAMRA have produced a beer mat to highlight the fact that the UK pays the highest rate of

duty on beer in Europe. An additional 52.2p is added to the cost of a pint here in the UK, whereas the next highest taxed pint in the Netherlands attracts 15.3p. Ideally a reduction of much more than one penny would be acceptable, but in reality this would be an unlikely outcome as the government would be reluctant to reduce the income from this cash cow. Please petition your MP to support this cause.



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JANUARY JOUSTABOUTS

A wet Wednesday in January - not the ideal day to head to the edge of Dartmoor. But head the six of us did - taking the 173 bus from Exeter on the hour-long trip to Chagford. On arrival at The Globe Inn, we were met by a warming fire in the impressive fireplace, and a choice of Otter Bitter and Dartmoor IPA on the bar, along with Exeter Ferryman served direct from the barrel. The bar features a stained glass window depicting a globe being held up by a hand, and was formerly a coaching house and cooperage.

A few doors along and we were in the panelled bar of the Ring of Bells, sampling Reel Ale, Jail Ale, and Otter Amber in the company of a black Labrador intent on snaffling the snacks that were doing the rounds. This pub used to house the Stannary Courts, where Dartmoor tin and silver was assayed.

Back on the bus to Moretonhampstead, and thus The Union Inn, where baguettes were mostly the order of the day for lunch. These were accompanied by a choice of London Pride and three Red Rock beers renamed by the pub. Notable here are the display cases built into the wall leading down to the toilets, showing items relating to the pub's history, one of which details the current owner's 3 times great grandfather being the landlord in the 1820's.

Across the road and round the corner the White Hart Hotel was our final stop of the day. A Grade II listed hotel dating back to 1639 with its hotel bar dispensed Jail Ale and Otter Bitter concluded our history filled beer tour.

Peter O'Niours

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ACV NEWS

The new landlord of The Cider Bar is currently collecting signatures of 21 customers, which is part of the process in applying for ACV status (Asset of Community Value). This will give up to a 6 month delay on any proceedings to sell or change the use of this historic bar. The new licensee, Jonathan McCool, is very aware of the history of the place and told the Herald Express that people now using The Cider Bar are sometimes the third generation of their family to do so. Some of the photographs on the walls in there depict parents and grandparents of the people you might meet at the bar. Once the petition is finalised, it will be sent with an ACV application to Teignbridge Council for consideration.

A NEW COMMUNITY PUB

The Monk's Retreat in Broadhempston has been bought recently by a consortium of local residents. This Grade II listed building had changed hands in 2014, and at that time the buyers' motive was to save the pub for the community and re-establish its trade. Now an offer from the consortium has been accepted allowing the new team the opportunity to take this inn, which dates back to 1456, further forward.



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WILKINS CIDER

The journey back from London is always a bit boring so I try to find something to brighten up the drive. This time I ventured off the beaten track into Somerset to try and find a cider farm recommended by CAMRA. Luckily I had the post code and a sat nav because it was a bit difficult to find. Lots of country lanes, left, right, straight on until at a junction was a farm gate with a large hand painted sign “Wilkins Farm Cider”. Then down the narrow lane for what seemed like miles; it was getting a bit dark and it was a miserable grey day anyway. But we drove into a farm yard with a sign saying “Cider Works”. We parked up and looking around, up the hill to the left was an orchard, and beside each apple tree was a large white bag full of what I presumed was apples - it looked like a field of trees and sheep. On the other side of the barn was a sea of large black containers apparently waiting to be filled with cider.

We crossed the open space towards the cider shed, a large stonewalled, corrugated iron roofed farm barn. We had a little trouble finding the way in, needing to step over a small wall and down some steps into the dark building. Although not pitch black there was not a lot of light and we soon got used to it. There were several men there, some drinking cider, one filling containers in a small annexe, two unloading bags of apples, one operating the mill and two stacking the cheeses in the press, quite a hive of activity.

The press had been made by H Beare & Sons Newton Abbot. We were offered cider, my sample of dry was too dry for me; the gentleman added some sweet and this mix was much more to my taste. I said I would like to buy some, I was asked how much and was reeled off a long list of the different sizes I could have. I opted for two gallons or was it 10 litres? I then stood around, the man was still filling containers, so I waited and watched the milling and stacking, apples coming in, pomace (the remaining solids) being loaded on to a trailer for the cattle. There was another annexe full of 40 gallon wooden casks full of last year's cider, a large table of local produce pickles, fruit concentrates and other interesting jars. It was all fairly dark but everywhere there was something going on steady and sure. Then in came the boss, Roger Wilkins, it all carried on the same just a few confirmatory “alrights?”. I collared him for my order which he did in no time. We chatted a little, I introduced myself as »

WILKINS CIDER.... CONTINUED

>> Roger from Newton Abbot who drinks in the Cider Bar. He had heard of it of course, but had never been there and I invited him to visit. I enquired as to my debt as there was no obvious price list, paid up, finished my sample cider and departed into the dark. Quite an experience.

Roger Adams

DRINKING FOR CHARITY

In late February, The Queen's Arms in Brixham made a presentation of a cheque for £2003 to HALO (Help Animals Live On) as a result of its charity beer festival in December. Winning certificates were awarded to Branscombe Vale Brewery for its Harbinger and Hunt's Cider for Mary Maud's, through winning a blind-tasting competition, judged by customers of the pub from the 26 ales and 6 ciders presented. This festival was the best yet, showing about a 30% increase in the money donated to the designated charity, which changes every year.



Queen's presentation to H.A.L.O.

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MEET THE BREWER JOHN PARKES, RED ROCK BREWERY LTD.

Founded in 2006 by John Parkes and his son Lewis (who formulates the recipes), Red Rock Brewery is situated at the top of the hill just outside Bishopsteignton overlooking Haytor and the Teign valley. Housed in farm buildings belonging to his farmer friend Geoff Lang, the brewery has since grown into the established business it is today.

At the time of our visit, John and the team were tearing out equipment in preparation for a wholesale change around. The current brew house is being enhanced by the addition of a mezzanine floor to give extra storage. There is going to be a new fermenting room, some new brewing vessels, and parlourboard cladding throughout to prepare for SALSA Association



*Lewis, Hollie and head brewer Ollie
with John Parkes in foreground*

Accreditation (operated by The Institute of Food Science and Technology and granted to suppliers who are able to demonstrate to an auditor that they are able to produce safe and legal food). This will assist in sales to supply shops and supermarkets. The area of the brewery is also spreading into an adjoining barn which will be used exclusively for bottling and the brewing of the keg and lager beers (a new bottling plant is being commissioned). The Red Rock logo is to be modernised and new beer labels have been ordered. The brand name is named after a rock in the Teign Valley topped by an old tree where the family played when John's children were young.

Using water from its own three springs, Red Rock's portfolio includes seven real ales plus occasional seasonal beers. Its best seller is Red Rock followed by Lighthouse. Although moving more into the keg market, it will always continue to view the cask ales as its core business. Most of the lager sales go through Tolchards and Red Rock also supply 3 real ales which are marketed under the Tolchards banner. John does see the brewery's future mainly in bottles and craft bottled beers, and to promote this has taken on 2 new employees for telesales and e-marketing.

The brewery is now linked to the Slow Food movement under another new initiative thus accessing a new market. An Original and an Elderflower IPA Slow Beer has been made, and plans for beers from honey and from blackberry are in development.

This 10th anniversary make-over has been achieved through a loan of £68K raised through peer-to-peer lending, a validation and mark of the faith that people have in the brewery's future. There is certainly a lot to see at Higher Humber Farm, and it is clear that the Parkes and Lang families are working together to make opportunities to maximise the brewery's »

MEET THE BREWER.... CONTINUED

>> potential. Barley is being grown on the farm this year which is destined for a trip to Tuckers Maltings and back, once malted. There is a brewery tap bar, a cosy space with 2 ales on pumps, which provides occasional themed meals e.g. curry and quiz. This has extended out to an anteroom used as a function room and later that day was to be used by a folk club.

In summer, there are 2 marquees in the pasture which because of the lovely views are popular for events; the diary for next summer is almost full. In the past these have seen the celebrations of the wedding of Hollie (John's daughter and head brewer at that time) and Joe (Geoff's son) and the two families and their extended range of friends and acquaintances have made several interdependent businesses on this site and provided a happy collaboration. I was impressed how everything meshed together and gave John and his family an enjoyable lifestyle, social life and an occupation that they obviously relish.



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WHAT'S ON

Branch Meetings and Social Events

Date	Time	Purpose	Location
8th March	20:00	Branch Meeting	Crown and Sceptre, St Marychurch
16th March	11:45	Social Tour of Ashburton starting from Newton Abbot bus station	
29th March	20:00	Social Cider and Cheese Tasting	Cider Bar, Newton Abbot
14th April	20:00	Branch AGM	Dartmoor Lodge, Ashburton
21st May		Rail outing to Bristol - Details to follow	
27th May	20:00	Proposed Branch Meeting	Staverton Station, TBC
12 July 20:00		Branch Meeting	Crown and Sceptre, St Marychurch

Beer Festivals

Date	Event	Location
10th - 13th March	Minerva Inn Beer Festival. 25 beers from wide area.	Plymouth
10th - 12th March	Bristol CAMRA Beer Festival - ticket required.	Bristol Temple Meads
11th - 27th March	Wetherspoon Beer Festival Up to 50 ales around the branches	
24th - 28th March	Blue Anchor Beer Festival. Ales from Powderkeg, Bristol Beer Factory and Dark Star in addition to usual West Country fare	Teignmouth
1st - 3rd April	CAMRA Members Weekend and AGM	Liverpool
14th - 16th April	SIBA Festival at Tuckers Maltings	Newton Abbot
27th - 30th May	Devon Diesel Beer Festival	Staverton Station
17th - 19th June	Summer Moon Festival	The Parish Centre, Kingskerswell
24th - 26th June	Albert Inn Beer Festival. Olympic Theme	Totnes
15th - 17th July 4th	Highweek Village Inn Beer Cider and Music Festival	Highweek, Newton Abbot
15th - 17th July	Kingsbeer Festival Arrive by train for free entry	Kingswear Railway Station
9th - 13th Aug	Great British Beer Festival	Olympia, London
26th - 29th Aug	Devon Diesel Beer Festival	Staverton Station

This newsletter is published by the
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Ad Size	1 issue	2 issues	3 issues	Year
1/4 page	55	65	90	110
1/2 page	75	100	125	150
full page	100	160	200	240/ 260*
back page	-	-	-	330 350*
* colour outside pages				

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12/10

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WETHERSPOON'S CARPETS

Have you ever looked at the carpets in Wetherspoons? Well why should you when most of us merely traipse across the floor to get to the bar?

The national press had a lot of fun in January pointing out that all the carpets in their 950 pubs are individual to that pub. The Guardian and the Telegraph newspapers explored the dichotomy of the alleged homogenising of British pub life against a unique highly ornate bespoke creation made from scratch and evoking the spirit of William Morris and art nouveau architecture. The tabloid press were more concerned with alliterations and puns along the lines of 'basic, basement bargain price pubs go posh' (Metro). However, being unique does not come cheap and they cost between £20,000 and £30,000 each. They are all handmade by the renowned firm Axminster with more than 6 colours in the mix meaning that they have to be produced on old fashioned looms thereby doubling the price. They rely on 5 or 6 'in house' architects who take ideas from the pub name as well as from both the building and the town. Apparently, the Britannia in Plymouth is designed to resemble a cruise ship and the carpets come in three sections, the final one of which has a wave pattern to represent looking out to sea from the top of a boat.

Armed with this information I set out to investigate some of the Wetherspoon pubs in South Devon. First up was the Jolly Brise in Teignmouth in which is named after a ship, but the carpet design gave neither a hint of ships nor the sea, although the pattern could loosely be described as fish like. The Richard Hopkins in Newton Abbot again did not appear to resemble anything to do with Newton Abbot, or anything else, when you thought there could be hints of the Great Western Railway. The Isaac Merritt in Paignton surely should have something directed towards cotton threads and sewing machines, but the link with the carpet totally escaped me. It is of course possible, in all three cases, that I was too stupid or unimaginative to pick up any subtle links.

One thing is sure in that they are all highly ornate and generally pretty impressive. Next time you go in to a Wetherspoon's pub give the individualised carpet a little more respect as a creative work of art whilst you struggle in making the link between the pattern, pub and building.

Bolt Southwell

STAVERTON BEER FESTIVAL – DEVON DIESEL SOCIETY

This was the third February festival and the best so far. Despite being a smaller festival than the May and August bank holiday ones, there were still a total of 22 ales, coming from Bristol and all points south. Included were several exciting unfamiliar brews such as Russian Stout from Wessex Brewery and 80 Shilling from Rebel in Penryn. The first to sell out was Twisted Oak's Slippery Slope and the organisers were pleased with all the good comments they received.



A typical set-up for the bank holiday festival

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GRUMPY OLD MAN EXAMINES VALENTINE'S DAY

So who was this Valentine geezer who plagues our pubs once a year? Apparently, he got the 'chop' for helping persecuted Christians get married in Ancient Rome, whereas I always believed he had been canonised for *services to commercialism* and had some connection with chocolate, flowers and candlelit dinners. Oh, foolish me. I would have loved to have been the official Devil's Advocate at his canonisation process to warn of much of the nonsense to come. It is not his fault of course, that grubby huckstering in the name of love and romance has been hijacked in his name. They were all at it: from coffee shops (love coffee?), perfume stockists, gift shops and of course pubs. I actually came across heart shaped cheese tied up in a bow being sold for the big day. Imagine the look of pure delight on your beloved's face when being presented with a whiffy gorgonzola however it was presented! St. Valentine is not to be confused with Cupid, the Greek God of Desire, although the marketing people can often be relied upon to conjoin them as a helpful selling twosome with history being thrown out of the window. Cupid is the diminutive one with the bow and arrow and looks like a three year old. Now there does appear to be a parenting issue here let alone one of child protection in allowing a child to have a bow and arrow. We must not allow this to catch on as children will be in the pub playing cowboys and Indians with potentially disastrous consequences. At least it would make a change from pushchairs, prams, bicycles and scooters.

The pub trade is in overdrive to take advantage of February 14th, and although I would heartily support pubs at difficult times I do find the whole scene one of almost seedy opportunism. The Morning Advertiser (the pub trade newspaper) was full of advice as to how to arrange a successful Valentine's night. 'A package, including bubbly, chocs (sic) and including a red rose - blokes will love it *because they don't have to think*'. What, stereotyping and sexism of the highest order, but this time directed towards men! It was followed up by the idea of 'an aphrodisiac menu to get the romantic juices flowing'. Not quite sure exactly what a romantic juice might actually be, but let's not put that in the way of some good old fashioned and meaningless marketing. Somebody had to sit down and write this old tosh and I always wonder whether they seriously believe it all or just turn it out to make a living, but there again the more you do the latter, then the more the former takes over. May I never get in to a conversation with such a person as the will to live would very quickly evaporate. If you look on the internet you will see numerous adverts for Valentine beers mainly revolving around chocolate beers of high gravity. Innis and Gunn are producing a beer entitled *50 Shades of Green* with 50 different hops infused with ginseng, ginkgo and some other difficult to spell and pronounce ingredients, which are apparently good for the libido. I won't be trying it. There will, of course, be a plethora of 'new' beers with names related to love, romance and marriage with the appropriate hand pumps and their clips covered in roses, hearts and cupids etc. Whether the beers are any good or not who knows, but the tickers won't care as it is another one for their little books. My favourite, in terms of name, is the subtly named Nuptial beer at a reasonable gravity and price. >>



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GRUMPY.... CONTINUED

>> The food part is being pushed very heavily with one pub chain advertising its steak meals in a romantic setting. Since when did a slab of meat, reconstituted potatoes masquerading as chips with frozen peas and a manicured tomato become romantic? There is probably more romance in fishing on the canal bank or doing the washing up. The in word appears to be '*sharing*', to increase the romantic bond between the participants where you both tuck in to the same grub. You can tell that I am untarnished by the marketing disease in referring to the distinctly unsexy *participants* and the derogatory use of *grub* instead of intimate cuisine, or whatever. I know one pub that will continue to hold its quiz night on Valentine's evening. Imagine that, there you are attempting to make sweet talk with your loved one when it is interrupted by a microphone asking in which county is Peterborough? (Actually Cambridgeshire.) Another pub chain produced the following rubbish as a suggestion to its pubs in that they should 'spread the love across the entire weekend to give you even more time to enjoy those special moments with your special someone'. Yuk. Notice the reference to the whole weekend to max out the business opportunities with some pubs including the Thursday. It gets worse with one piece of advice to have valentine themed activities for the *whole* of February which will inevitably merge in to that dreadful tradition of Mother's day. Why not stretch it even further in to include a *lover's spring*, a *lascivious summer* and a *carnal winter*? If it reaches this point we would have to seriously consider putting Viagra in the public water supply.

It does not stop there. Another suggestion is that the Valentine weekend experience should include the whole family, but how on earth is that meant to operate. What a splendid idea to bring mum along as a 'warm up' for her special Mothering Sunday or the kids for indoctrination into a way of life that they will naturally migrate into, thereby perpetuating the nonsense. What is happening is the stretching and distortion of the meaning of the word *love* away from the romantic sense involving couples, into the more generalised familial love as in *loving* your mother or father etc. This naturally takes us in to the realm of the Valentine present and even more commercialisation. The pub companies also implore their landlords not to forget the singles in the Valentine 'experience'. Here the emphasis is again on *sharing* with *sparkle* both of the food and its presentation and the drink to include lots of Prosecco and fizzy rosé. Notice the beer aspect has been ignored, but surely it is not impossible to produce a pink beer using food colourants; it would look, and probably taste, revolting. At least it would be another one for the tickers.

It is a truly dreadful time of the year for old grumps like me. No sooner has Valentine's day departed, we are in for the horrors of children's half term to be finished off in style by that nonsense that is Mothering Sunday. No wonder that I am escaping to Germany for a week or so and I encourage you all do likewise.

Bola Southwell
Aka The Grumpy Old Man

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BAYS GOLD
Alc 4.3% Vol

Our Head Brewer's favourite. An easy drinking, light golden ale with a unique blend of hops that create refreshing lemon citrus overtones.



DEVON DUMPLING
Alc 5.1% Vol

A strong premium beer with a fresh hop character. This ale has a smooth taste with a balanced sweetness. Devonshire through and through!



TOPSAIL
Alc 4.0% Vol

This exceptional ale is the brewery's flagship product. It is well balanced, deep amber in colour with a subtle sweetness throughout.

DEVON'S BEER OF CHOICE



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