

50TH EDITION

SUMMER 2015



The Bridford Inn, Bridford

South Devon CAMRA Pub of the Year 2015



South Devon CAMRA

Supporting Real Ale in the South West





OTTER BREWERY

25
YEARS

25 YEARS OLD
and looking better than ever



WELCOME

50TH EDITION SUMMER 2015



Over the last couple of issues we have been updating our look and on this, our 50th edition, have branched into colour for the outside pages. We hope you like the new appearance. The magazine was started in 2002 by Dean Roberts and has been going well ever since. At the start we ran at a loss for several years, and now although we do make a small profit, the aim of this publication is to campaign on CAMRA issues, and promote the pubs and breweries making the effort to supply excellent real ale throughout our region. In this issue we are also having a special feature regarding Beer Festivals, with even Grumpy getting involved. If you are not familiar with these, do go along; they are great fun.

The biggest of all, the Great British Beer Festival, which this year is on 11-15th August at Olympia London, will feature over 900 real ales, ciders, perries and international beers; more than 350 British breweries across 27 different bars as well as fantastic entertainment, food and traditional pub games all under one roof in the heart of London. All this is made possible thanks to the contributions of over 1,000 volunteer staff, all members of CAMRA. These folk work as bar staff, stewards, public relations officers, front of house staff, volunteer coordinators and as members of the festival's organising team. You can get your tickets by visiting www.gbbf.org.uk/tickets.

Cheers, Tina Hemmings



The Ship Inn Kingswear

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Colin and Heather welcome you to the Ship Inn. Our traditional Village Pub & Restaurant offers a selection of real ales, good food, together with a wide choice of popular drinks and first-class wines.

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The SHIP INN is a traditional village pub, with a restaurant having a great name for seafood and fish meals, using varied, seasonal, local and very fresh produce.

We are proud to have been in the Good Beer Guide for 10 consecutive years.

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PUB & BREWERY NEWS

Recently at **The Oak** in South Brent we had a lovely pint of Hanlon's New Moon, which also enjoys the seemingly unfitting suffix of IPA, but was excellent nevertheless.

The new Marston's road house, **The Wighton** at the Willows was serving superb Banks's Mild at £3.05 a pint and three other Marston beers were on. A plus after having been shopping at the Willows.

Work is proceeding fast on the **Jolie Brise**, the new Wetherspoons in Teignmouth which is due to open on 21st July.

The **Rugglestone Inn** at Widecombe is rearing their own happy, free-range pigs for meat for its restaurant. They have between 6 to 12 pigs on a small-holding on the other side of Widecombe and use all the meat for the pub table.

The **Artichoke** at Cristow has reopened. It is serving Jail Ale plus 2 rotating guests of good quality.

Landlords, Tim and Liz from The **Victoria Inn** at Salcombe have reached the final of the British Institute of Innkeeping Licensee of the Year competition. They have completed all their interviews and inspections in the final round of this national competition having outperformed several hundred other participants to reach the final six. The results will be announced after this magazine goes to press.

The **Palk Arms** in Hennock is currently under refurbishment, and is adding some letting rooms. Improvements also include work in the kitchens where the landlady, Jane, will be continuing her career as a chef.

The **Queensberry Arms** in Teignmouth closed in February.

The **Castle** in Totnes has also closed after a dispute with the council over excessive rates, and along with it, the Totnes Brewing Company which was housed in a small outbuilding of the pub. The team are in the process of rebuilding the brewery in the cafe below The Barrell House, and Totnes Brewing Company will be open there by May Bank Holiday.

Black Tor brewery has re-opened, but under different ownership with one of its beers having been at the Blue Anchor in Teignmouth.

Stumble Bee abv 4.2% has replaced XSB of the same abv in **South Hams Brewery's** portfolio.

Teignworthy Brewery has stopped brewing Martha's Mild abv 5.3% but has brought out a new ale, Black Dog Mild 3.7% abv, a low gravity, traditional dark mild which is proving popular.

Bays Brewery is launching a new bottled lager called Devon Rock 4.8 abv, and this will be available on keg later in the year.

New Lion Brewery celebrated the recent Totnes Local Entrepreneurs' Forum with a specially brewed 'Black Oat Mild' 3.5%, brewed to support the crowdfunding appeal of ▶

UNDER NEW OWNERSHIP

THE MANOR INN

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Discount for card-carrying CAMRA members

Good beers (Otter Ale & Bitter; Butcombe Bitter; Skinner's Betty Stogs, Exmoor Ale).

Good food, function rooms, patio, large car park, accommodation, good company.

Quiz nights Thursday (general knowledge) and Sunday (music).

Children and dogs welcomed in a real village pub.

..... CONTINUED

► Grown in Totnes. Grown in Totnes wants to be able to process oats in Totnes for local consumption, whereas currently any oats and barley and other staples grown around Totnes go straight for animal feed. The mild is of a traditional low abv, but despite this had a lot of nut and roast malt flavours. Prior to that the New Lion Brewery had a visit from 22 representatives from the Korean Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs who were fact-finding on issues of localism and local economics, and were interested to learn about current and previous collaborations, e.g. with South Hams Chilli Farm, local mushroom growers and the current Grow in Totnes scheme.

In April, **Dartmoor Brewery** celebrated its 21st anniversary with the launch of a limited edition commemorative beer at an enjoyable event for guests at a Dartmoor hotel. Jail Commemorative Ale (9% ABV), a bottle-conditioned craft ale, is a special limited edition beer, and uses the same traditional brewing techniques and quality local ingredients as the original Jail Ale (4.8% ABV), but with less of the core ingredient, water.

Dartmoor brewery is now the 2nd largest brewery in Devon and it began brewing its popular Jail Ale from the back of a Dartmoor village pub 21 years ago, but has since moved to a large purpose-made brewery with a capacity of 360 barrels per week. Both the original and new premises are within a stone's throw of Dartmoor Prison, which inspired the beer's name.



ROGER MATTHEWS 1947 - 2014

We are very sad to report the fairly sudden passing of Roger Matthews who acted as Pub Liaison Coordinator for the South Devon CAMRA region. He had been unwell for some time but always seemed to bounce back, but then unfortunately took a turn for the worse and passed away in November. He was very much dedicated to the task of Pub Liaison Coordinator and his love of numbers, (former quantity surveyor) and beer were key factors. Added to this, he was a mine of information as he had an encyclopaedic knowledge of breweries and beers which will be missed. His main task as PLC was to monitor and present the beer scores put in by members into What Pub and I felt the task of beer scoring gave him solace through the last year of his life. He also was instrumental in setting up a majority of the information on the What Pub website for our branch.



A real local character with his long hair and long beard, he held strong views on everything but particularly beer. He was particularly supportive of younger members as he saw them as the next generation of torch bearers for CAMRA and its values. We all appreciated him for what he was.

Born in Newton Abbot in 1947, he was a true local and met Donna, the love of his life, in 1973. They were happily married for almost 30 years. He and Donna had a special understanding and a love of ferrets, going to shows together regularly. There are many funny stories involving ferrets and Roger being nipped not just on the fingers but other surprising places!

A good man and loyal friend to many. Wherever you are we salute you!

RIP

Ray Elmore

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BEER DAY BRITAIN

June 15th sees the UK's first national beer day and we are all needed to demonstrate why Britain's beer and pubs should be recognized as national treasures.

Beer Day Britain is also the 800th anniversary of the date that Magna Carta was sealed in 1215, and unsurprisingly beer was so important in those times that it is mentioned in that august document. In Article 35 of the great charter it states *'Let there be throughout our kingdom a single measure for wine and **a single measure for ale** and a single measure for corn, namely "the London quarter"'*

In 2015 beer is still vital - not just to the British economy but to the social health of the nation, so Beer Day Britain wants to encourage people to drink beer wherever that is; raise the profile of beer as Britain's national drink; encourage pride in Britain's beer and pubs today and of Britain's brewing heritage, and have a fantastic time drinking and enthusing about our favourite drink.

Nationwide at 12.15pm on June 15th a communal cheers to beer is planned, and we are all encouraged to go to the pub to raise a pint of real ale as part of the national 'cheers'. Join in and encourage your friends to do the same - throw a party, or get your local pub or brewery involved. The aim is to trend on Twitter @BeerDayBritain using the hashtag #CheersBDB and #beerdaybritain.

Here's to Beer Day Britain 2015!



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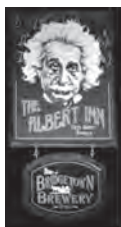
The Albert Inn

Home of Bridgetown Brewery

32 Bridgetown Totnes TQ9 5AD
01803 863214



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.

SOUTH DEVON PUB OF THE YEAR

Over 150 people squeezed into the Bridford Inn at Bridford to help celebrate the Pub of the Year Award 2015, presented by the South Devon CAMRA branch in early April. Publicans Dean and Lyn Staniforth, along with their son Sam, have only been in charge for 18 months but in that time have made a big difference, which has not gone unnoticed by the beer drinkers in the area. The 17th century Devon Longhouse was converted into a pub in 1968 and serves 4 real ales, a large range of real ciders and perries, and is also popular for its quality home-cooked food.



***Lyn & Dean Staniforth with South Devon Chairman
Bob Southwell***

The Pub of the Year is awarded to the pub that is judged best overall, taking into account several categories, and the pub scored well in all categories, the principal of which is beer quality. Other factors are taken into account, such as value for money and sympathy with CAMRA aims. Another is community focus, and the pub has a small village shop on the premises and runs events for its community: I spotted Italian food nights and a gin tutorial amongst others.

South Devon CAMRA has around 350 pubs within its catchment area, running between Kingsbridge to Teignmouth, Torbay and Chagford, from which only 29 make the grade and become entries in the Good Beer Guide. From these The Bridford Inn has been selected the best.

Dean, Lyn and Sam have a good pedigree in the pub trade. In 2012 they won Pub of the Year in their previous premises, The Woolpack in Tillicoultry in Clackmannanshire, a pub which went on to win Regional Pub of the Year for Scotland and N. Ireland.

The South Devon region is lucky the Staniforths came this way. Dean was hoping to go back to his native Yorkshire and was researching pubs for sale online. By chance, he saw the Bridford Inn and fell in love with the place: the rest is history.

We wish the family team all the best for the next stage of the judging, where they will be considered for Regional Pub of the Year against the other South West branch winners.

THREAT TO CIDER PRODUCERS

The tax exemption for small producers is under threat from the EU which wants Britain to remove this. A particular group to be affected by this will be the small cider producers who may find themselves facing an additional tax bill of up to £2,700, driving many small cider producers out of business, costing jobs, harming the countryside and dramatically reducing consumer choice. Imposition of this tax will cause irreparable damage to one of the nation's most historic industries as 80% of Britain's 500+ cider makers are currently small producers.

On 10th June, a petition will be handed in at 10 Downing Street to support the small cider makers and urge the Government to reject the EU's demand for the imposition of this new tax. An exemption from this duty is essential to support the growth of a vibrant but still small cider and perry market. Very small cider makers, such as hobbyists or farm-gate producers, whose small scale production is an integral part of rural culture, will generally be making less than £10,000 a year in sales. If a duty were to be levied on these producers it would make their operations uneconomic and lead to wide-spread closure.

Abbfest 2015

| | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| Friday 18th September | 17.00 - 23.00 | (Beer festival) |
| Saturday 19th September | 11.00 - 23.00 | (Beer festival) |
| | 11.00 - 18.00 | (Food festival) |
| Sunday 20th September | 10.00 - 16.00 | (Beer (from 11.00) & Food festival) |

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www.abbfest.org



Entry Prices to Festival (Glass and ale extra)

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| Friday | £5 |
| Saturday | £5 |
| Sunday | £5 |
| Weekend Pass | £10 |

Children under 16 free.

No under 18s will be admitted without a parent or guardian.

Proof of ID will be required.

MARCH MISFITS. BRIXHAM AND ENVIRONS

The Manor Inn at Galmpton was the meeting place for 4 of the 'Usual Suspects' as the Brixham 3 met the Grumpy 1 (variously out of London, Woking, or in this case Teignmouth). This imposing stone pub stands at the entrance to the village, and we started our day with halves of Jail Ale, and Sharp's Cornish Coaster and ubiquitous Doom Bar, accompanied by gentle background music. Thanks to John's having driven us, we were then spared the 15-20 minutes' walk to the Churston Court Hotel, in Churston village. This historic 13th century building was once the home of Lord Churston, and a roaring log fire greeted us in the large fireplace in the bar. Artefacts ranging from paintings to old mirrors and two antique clocks adorn the walls. To all this add Dartmoor Legend, Jail Ale, and - I said it was ubiquitous - Doom Bar.

John having brought the car now paid further dividends, as we drove back to Brixham and the recently re-opened Burton Hotel in Burton Street. John took his car home, to return on foot a short while later to the revamped pub - all new carpet on the stone floor and the wooden panelling painted pale blue. From the ales on offer we chose Jail Ale and Proper Job - both on fine form. From here it was a short walk to The Vigilance, the town's Wetherspoons, where we sampled good Cocker Hoop from Jennings of Cumbria.

The Long Bar having no real ale on, we walked down to the harbour and the St. Austell owned Old Market Inn, a conversion of what it says on the tin, for Proper Job and Tribute from that brewery's range, and a fine view of the replica Golden Hinde moored opposite. Then up the hill towards Furzeham for the last stop of the day - the much-lauded and ever-reliable Queens, where we rounded off our jaunt with very good South Hams' Eddystone and Exeter's County Best.

Peter O'Nions

APRIL'S ALE OUTING

Mindful of what happened the last time we went to Ashburton, when 3 of us caught 3 different buses and the other one headed off to Ivybridge and Points West before catching up with us in South Brent, in April we tested the Lightning Can't Strike Twice theory to its limit. On this occasion we tipped the odds in our favour by arranging to meet in a pub in Newton Abbot as opposed to at the bus station. So it was that 7 of us converged on Teign Cellars in East St., where a good range of ales featured Hanlon's Firefly; Spitting Feathers' Thirst Quencher; along with the dark and delicious Milk Stout from Bristol Beer Factory. True to form, we lost one of our number before we'd even left the pub - albeit because David had other things to do, and couldn't join us for the rest of the day. Splendid fellow that he is, though, he insisted on buying a round before he left. ►

APRIL CONTINUED

► Arriving at the bus station en masse well-nigh ensuring we all got on the same 88 bus, we were soon on our way to Ashburton, and one short journey later saw us in the Exeter Inn, a Good Beer Guide regular, where Dartmoor Legend and I.P.A. were on offer, but with the latter unfortunately not up to the pub's usually high standard.

Our next bus running very late, we opted instead for the 20 minute walk to the Dartmoor Lodge Motel at Peartree Cross, where we were met by John, who had bussed out to meet us. Very welcome sandwiches were ordered, to accompany the good Butcombe Bitter, Exeter Ferryman, and Hunter's Devon Dreamer as we sat outside on this lovely day. From here, the party split up, a couple going back to Newton and the rest of us going to Totnes for onward transit to Paignton for Torquay and Brixham.

Peter O'Nions

SALCOMBE MID-WEEK SOCIAL MAY 2015

This was a most unusual day. Nothing went wrong!

The pedants amongst you may regard our leader nominating the bus service from Totnes to Kingsbridge as the 166 rather than the 164 worthy of censure but given the calamitous history of our mid week adventurers we all agreed that an error of less than ten per cent was within acceptable tolerances. Enough of all that, let's just talk about the day.

We now have a long established tradition (for 2 years) of visiting Salcombe in early summer to take advantage of the glorious late Spring weather, and Salcombe as usual delivered. The sun always shines on the righteous.

We caught the 164 bus from Totnes to Kingsbridge (Bob please note the route number) and the journey was notable for a driver with a death wish pulling out in front of our bus just outside Totnes causing us all to examine the seats for signs of anxiety. As we had a little time on our hands before the bus departed for Salcombe the six of us elected to partake of our first half at The King of Prussia, where we had the choice of Bass and Bombardier and we all agreed that the Bass, despite being a little cold, was a very acceptable beer to start the day.

Our next bus journey from Kingsbridge to Salcombe provided us with a welcome addition to our merry band as Malborough resident Robin joined us at the said village bringing our numbers up to seven. Magnificent! Our first port of call was The Victoria a delightful pub right in the centre of town serving Proper Job, Tribute and Salcombe Best (originally Dartmoor Best).

All of the St Austell beers were drinking well with Tribute particularly good. The Victoria was also our feeding station and most of us enjoyed the fresh crab sandwiches. ►

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MAY IN SOUTH HAMS.... CONTINUED

► We then walked down to The Ferry where we sampled the Palmers beers including Best and Copper and had a lively discussion regarding the merits/de-merits of CAMRA policy of not allowing pubs using cask breathers to be included in the Good Beer Guide. This argument will rumble on until the membership passes a motion at a CAMRA AGM to overturn the current policy. Please note that this is the writer's personal opinion only.

Our next stopping point was The Kings Arms where we were all surprised by the quality of the Courage Best on offer. It was like an old friend making a welcome come back. Our last pub was The Fortescue, which is undergoing extensive refurbishment but was still open and the refurbished area we occupied looked very smart. The Jail and Doom Bar were both in good order and our Chairman surprisingly preferred Jail Ale much to everyone's amusement.

We then wended our weary way home via bus and train and on reflection we spent more time on public transport than in the pubs!

Edgar Walton

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SOUTH DEVON CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR 2015

This year there were 5 pubs in the running for South Devon CAMRA's Pub of the Year award. The winner was the Bridford Inn at Bridford. The other contenders were The Bay Horse, Totnes; The Exeter Inn at Ashburton; The Tally Ho at Littlehempston and Teign Cellars at Newton Abbot. The worthy runner-up was The Tally Ho at Littlehempston.



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ROGER'S BEER FESTIVAL SEASON

I love beer festivals and last year I went to several which I detail below and will endeavour to visit again in 2015. The start of my season was Tuckers Maltings in April run by SIBA (The Society of Independent Brewers). The venue is unsurpassable, using the actual maltings floor, and because the brewers run it, the beer is always first class. I love working there, talking to people about beer and sampling a few of the more than 250 different West Country beers on offer.

Next was at the Devon County Show and the Contented Cow real ale bar in mid-May. There's always lots of choice with over 50 Devon beers plus ciders. The showground is such a packed venue with so much to see; the bar is a welcome light relief but with never enough time to do it justice.

The next one was the Devon Diesel Society's at Staverton railway station, another interesting venue. This is over 4 days on the bank holiday weekend at the end of May in part of the old railway building. It has brilliant beers coming from all over the country; maybe 40 in total plus ciders.

Then the Summer Moon Festival at Kingskerswell in mid-June which is run for the church and local community funds and held in a marquee. The beers come from far and wide; about 60 ales and ciders, and with the advantage of being quite close to a bus route.

Mid-July for visiting Ipple Tipple, being a one day event in a marquee at Ipplepen's village show. But there were 44 different beers and at least 12 ciders and lots of fun and interesting things happening.

There is a bit of a gap after this for me, but the GBBF in London was in early August with loads of beers new and old, plus ciders, foreign, and bottled beers, not to be missed.

I went to several pub beer festivals, the Tally Ho in Littlehempston one was much smaller but very pleasant with 8 or 10 local ales and several ciders, sitting outside with a decent pint, a burger and music takes some beating. The Crown and Sceptre in St Marychurch held a Cider festival so on top of its usual 6 beers there were 11 ciders - some from Wales and Cornwall as well as the more usual ones from Devon, plus bread and good cheeses, a barbeque, Morris Dancers and folk music.

Next was a new one at Seale Hayne in the middle of August. An exciting new venue, lots of music, and again over 50 local beers and ciders. It is amazing that there are always a few new beers to sample.

The second Staverton railway station festival was on the August bank holiday weekend with 60 unusual beers, ciders and steam engines of course. Just standing on the platform in the sunshine talking to friends, drinking beer and watching trains, what could be nicer?

Now September and it is Abbfest at Fermoys on the road between Newton Abbot and Totnes. Featuring free buses, lots of Devon beers (160), and 30 ciders, good food and music. It's held in a marquee, so not so good when it rains, but still worth the visit and a free bus home.

ROGER'S BEER FESTIVAL SEASON CONTINUED

► The winter is upon us so it is winter ale festivals; at Exeter and the National CAMRA one (last year at Derby), Christmas beers and looking forward to next season.

Don't forget there are also CAMRA festivals at Plymouth, St Ives, Falmouth, and Weston Super Mare, not to mention the numerous pub mini festivals. Keep drinking.

Roger Adams

The Ipplepen Village Show Ipple Tipple - BEER FESTIVAL Saturday 18 July 2015 2.00pm to 11.30pm



Marquee on the Playing Field, Ipplepen
Admission to the Village Show: £1.50 (until 5.00pm)
Ipple Tipple entry: £3.00

Live music in the evening: "THE FLOWER POWER BAND"
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WHAT'S ON

Branch Meetings and Social Events

| Date | Time | Purpose | Location |
|-----------|-------|--|----------------------------------|
| 22nd May | 20:00 | Branch Meeting | Staverton Railway Station |
| 9th June | 20:00 | Branch AGM | Crown & Sceptre St Marychurch |
| 13th June | | Mini Bus Trip to Quercus Brewery Details to follow | |
| 17th June | | Mid-week Social to South Hams 120 bus 10:30 at Paignton | |
| 14th July | 20:00 | Branch Meeting | The Pigs Nose East Prawle |
| 25th July | | (Provisional) Mini bus trip to Hanlon's Brewery | |

Beer Festivals

| Date | Event | Location |
|---------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| 22nd - 25th May | Devon Diesel Society Beer Festival | Staverton Station |
| 22nd - 25th May | Hope Cove Folk & Ale Festival | The Cove, Hope Cove |
| 22nd - 25th May | Highweek Inn Beer Festival | Newton Abbot |
| 30th -31st May | Kernow CAMRA Beer Festival | St Ives |
| 5th - 6th June | Occombe Farm Beer & Cider Festival | Paignton |
| 19th - 21st June | Summer Moon Festival www.summermoonfestival.co.uk | Parish Centre, Kingskerswell |
| 10th - 11th July | Plymouth CAMRA Beer Festival | Plymouth Pavilions |
| 17th - 19th July | Dartmouth Steam Railway Beer Festival | Kingswear |
| 31st July - 2nd August | Seale Hayne 2nd Beer and Music Festival | |
| 11th - 15th August | Great British Beer Festival | Olympia, London |
| 28th - 31st August | Bay Horse Beer Festival. 25 ales, 15 ciders & BBQ | |
| 28th - 31st August | Devon Diesel Society Bank Holiday Beer Festival | Staverton Station |
| 18th - 20th Sept | Abbfest Beer Festival | Fermoys Newton Abbot |
| 25th - 27th Sept | Dartmouth Beer Festival proposed | |

Correction from last issue Summer Moon Festival - website www.summermoonfestival.co.uk

QUERCUS



Devon Amber 3.8%



Prospect 4.0%



Shingle Bay 4.2%



Harry's 4.6%

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RAILS AND ALES

I am a prime example of the affinity between steam railways and real ale. Many heritage railways sell real ale in station bars and pubs, and on the train, but the increasing phenomenon is the Railway based beer festival.

My first encounter, not surprisingly, was at Staverton on the South Devon Railway where I am a volunteer. The festivals have grown over the years they have been run and now operate out of a converted station building with its own bar and stillage. They are in fact run by the Devon Diesel Society to raise money for restoring and maintaining the small fleet of heritage diesel engines and railcars.

Nowadays they run 3 festivals each year. The one in February is the smallest affair, the main ones being the 'Rail and Ales' festivals held over the late May and August Bank Holiday weekends. They are very busy during the day with visitors taking the train rather than drive. The evenings are a bit quieter and there is something quite magical sitting out on the platform on a summer's evening, pint of ale in hand and a steam train simmering away waiting to take drinkers back to Totnes or Buckfastleigh. Up to 50 different ales are on offer, and cider drinkers are not forgotten. There is also usually a Pimms tent in the station yard and food is available.

The next festival is that being held from 22nd to 25th May, and by the time you read this I hope many of you will have been able to have benefited from a visit there.

The other local steam railway - from Paignton to Kingswear - held its first festival last year to commemorate an anniversary and the success has led them to hold a 2nd one between 17th and 19th July.

The beer festivals held on the Minehead platforms of the West Somerset Railway are different in that they are not run by the railway. They are the annual Somerset Campaign for Real Ale's Real Ale & Cider Festival and the one this September (12/13th) is their 16th.

Further afield in North Wales is the beautiful Welsh Highland Railway which runs for 25 miles through Snowdonia from Caernarvon to Porthmadog, where it joins the equally impressive Ffestiniog Railway. The railways have the advantage of small breweries by the line, including Purple Moose at Porthmadog and Snowdonia Parc Brewpub at Waunfawr. There is also Spooner's bar on the Porthmadog platform which is a regular entry in the Good Beer Guide. And it is the Welsh Highland which holds an annual beer festival, around mid-May, in the old goods shed at Dinas near the northern end of the line. I am a member at the Welsh Highland and one year I will make it to the festival.

A quick trawl around the good old internet shows festivals at railways all over the country - I recommend them to you.

Chris Mackenzie-Thorpe

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THE SOCIETY OF INDEPENDENT BREWERS TUCKERS MALTING BEER FESTIVAL

In April, South West SIBA held its prestigious and famous beer festival at Tuckers Maltings in Newton Abbot. Proceedings opened at 10:00 on Thursday with a gathering of approximately 150 invited guests to judge the beers: publicans, brewers from outside the SW, beer ingredient (e.g. barley) growers, CAMRA representatives, beer sommeliers and beer drinking friends. The judges sniffed, peered at, swilled, and gulped the ales presented, cask and bottled, narrowing down the 600+ beers to decide the winners in their categories, and finally the Overall Champion of the Competition. In the meantime, judges were able to meet old friends, renew acquaintanceships and make new contacts, making the wait for the results a highly enjoyable social occasion.



The overall gold winner for 2015 was Inncognito, a delicious port stout from Plain Ales on Salisbury Plain, with silver going to St Austell's Big Job, and Merry Maidens Mild from Coastal Brewery at Redruth winning the bronze.

Devon breweries put up a good show with awards going to Exe Valley, Exeter, Summerskills, and Otter. Especially notable for me were the 2 winners from our South Devon CAMRA region, with Teignworthy Brewery winning bronze in its class for Porters Stouts, Old Ales, Strong Milds & Strong Brown Ales with Martha's Mild 5.3% abv. South Hams Brewery triumphed with a gold award in the Best Bitters & Pale Ale class for Wild Blonde 4.4% abv. A full list of competition results can be found at www.siba.co.uk/events/regional-competitions/south-west/2015-2

At 6:00pm the doors were opened and ale fans from all over piled in to try the delights on offer. Needless to say, the winning ales were not slow in selling out, but with so many to choose from, there was something there for everyone. My particular favourites were Pandit from New Lion Brewery in Totnes, Nor'Hop from Moor Beer Company in Bristol and Quantock Brewery's Wills Neck. However, as I was helping behind the bar and was very busy serving, you might be able to see that I didn't get out much (from my L-Q range of beers).



*Brewer Sam Brooking
receiving the gold
award from Will of
Charles Faram & Co*

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Last date for submission for the Summer magazine - 17.8.15

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| Ad Size | 1 issue | 2 issues | 3 issues | Year |
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THE GRUMPY OLD MAN AT BEER FESTIVALS

To start with, here are two conversations I recently overheard at a festival in Surrey. "That was probably the best beer that I have ever had." "That's good to hear, would you like another one?" "No, I can't because I'm a ticker."

How daft can you get? Most of us spend ages waiting for the perfect pint and would certainly over-indulge given such access to paradise. I find it difficult to believe that any sane person would give up the chance of the superb for the next unknown that might well smell and taste like the output from the local sewage works. Why do this? It seems to be the case of seeking quantity over quality with the single minded purpose of achieving that extra tick! However, and I have said it before, they are harmless, if a little weird, but they add some diversity to the beer world. "A pint of Guinness please." "We have 12 porters and stouts available. Would you like to taste one?" "No, why would I taste something that I have never heard of?" Congratulations on being so adventurous and keeping well inside your comfort zone whilst closeted within your tunnelled mind-set. This just goes to show the power of big brands and image-making in the process of determining consumer. Anybody who says that they are not influenced by advertising is clearly a moron. Why do giant corporations spend billions of pounds in pursuit of not influencing anyone? The chances are that Mr Unadventurous could actually have enjoyed one of these alternatives and would have paid something like a third less.

Serving at beer festivals can also raise some 'grumps'. "Oi baldy, what about some service" and all of this accompanied by the banging of his glass on the bar. He is clearly a great loss to the Diplomatic Service, has confirmed himself as being an idiot, and also of failing to be being served under the present communication arrangements. In any case, it was a little rich coming from him as he was probably even less endowed in the hirsute department than me.

Then there are the problems of lined glasses and measurements. "What about filling up this glass." "It has a line and it is easily up to that point." "What is the point of having a line if it is not the top of the glass?" "It prevents spillage." "That's stupid, just fill it up".

To get rid of him I did just that, but it came back to 'bite me'. Sometime later his friends were being served elsewhere and were also complaining about their measures. To my enormous embarrassment, they pointed at me and told the server that I knew what I was doing whilst he did not. The moral of the story may well be that appeasement is at best only a temporary expedient as Mr Chamberlain came to know only too well.

At some festivals the glasses are also marked with lines at the dreaded third. I say dreaded as it is virtually impossible to serve an accurate third via a hand pump and over-serving becomes endemic. It is becoming increasingly common for customers to ask for a small taster and often more than one.

There is nothing more annoying having given two, or even three tasters, for the final request to be for a third of a pint. As it is such a short measure why not buy a third in the first place and take a chance as there is so little to lose? ►



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GRUMPY CONTINUED

► The ultimate example of this occurred at the GBBF at Earls Court a couple of years ago. I served this person who was not happy with any of the beers that he had asked to taste and decided to try elsewhere. A little later I changed bars and guess who turned up asking for tasters and rejecting them all? His next move was with security who promptly removed him to the outside world. He was obviously intent on spending an afternoon getting as much free beer as possible and presumably would have got away with it if I had not changed bars.

Then there is the problem of strong beer. At a recent festival I was working in the area where there were two beers over 9%. Inevitably, there was this macho thing with young men ordering it up as their first beer and gulping it back. The next time I saw one of them he was fertilising the football pitch and contributing to future grass growth! On another occasion I suggested to a group that these beers were one for the road meaning the end rather than the start. Fortunately, having had a taste they chose something more sensible as a starter. The result was that they were there for most of the evening, which is more than can be said for the grass fertiliser! Inevitably, you will get asked for the strongest as if there is any sensible distinction between 9.2 and 9.4%. This is particularly true of cider where the request for the strongest includes some sort of idiotic statement that they can drink 10 pints of Strongbox and can easily handle it. I have news for them in that they can't and they are moronic to try. In any case, cider strengths are somewhat variable with the strengths hardly a precise science.

Talking of cider, I am not certain whether it attracts the cerebrally challenged or creates them as I have had many a conversation that was not really of this planet.

"Can I have a Blood Orange Cider please?" "No, cider is made from apples not from oranges."
"OK, I will have a strawberry one then please." "Since when was a strawberry an apple?"

To get rid of her I suggested that she has a black cider called a porter made with cherries and off she trekked to seek it. A little later a colleague approached and thanked me for sending her in his direction. At least, that is what I thought he said!

Let me be very clear that the overwhelming majority of customers at beer festivals are sensible, friendly and appreciative and long may it be so. I have to add that in order to avoid any bricks that might happen to come flying through my front window!

Bob Southwell

Aka Grumpy Old Man

Last minute notification of local festivals

18th - 19th July: Totnes, Beer, Cheese & Cider Weekend to celebrate
5 years of the Totnes Good Food Sunday Market.

Totnes Civil Hall, 11am to 4pm. www.totnesgoodfood.co.uk

15th August: Devonport Arms, Paignton, with food and live music.

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