

NEWS AND BREWS

*Summer
2013*

FREE

Free Magazine of

The South Devon Branch of

THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE



*The Pig's Nose at East Prawle awarded
South Devon Pub of the Year 2013*



**South Devon
CAMRA**

*Supporting Real Ale
in the South West*



Welcome to

NEWS AND BREWS

42nd EDITION

Summer 2013

There has been excellent news since the last issue, where concerted effort from CAMRA members (amongst other pressure groups) supporting the CAMRA Executive Committee campaigns for the ePetition, and the London rally has resulted in the beer duty escalator being scrapped. This means the automatic increase in duty on ale is no longer set at an annual rise of 2% over inflation—something that has contributed to a 42% increase in beer duty in the last 5 years.

This is fantastic, and to be celebrated, but there is more to be done. The Government is currently working through a plan to introduce a code of practice for PubCos to ensure fair pricing, fair rents and the lifting of restrictions on supplies of guest ales. I know of at least 2 different PubCos in this area that dictate the ales a publican can buy and then charge him 70% - 100% more than the market rate. CAMRA's current campaign supports members lobbying their MP, and completing the Government's survey for pub reform. Find out more at <http://www.fairdealforyourlocal.com>

Another website that is likely to become popular is whatpub.com. CAMRA branches around the country are busily surveying every pub in the country, to provide information for its own online pub guide. Once this information is uploaded, it will be available for all to use with the added advantage of a Mobile App for CAMRA members which lists the Good Beer Guide pubs.

Cheers, Tina Hemmings



The Ship Inn Kingswear

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Pub News

The George Inn in Blackawton had a great day as part of the village's Worm Charming day in May. Along with the International Worm Charming competition there was a dog show, stalls, fancy dress and Morris Dancers. The pub held a beer festival accompanied by live music and there was an auction in the evening. As usual the ale and food was top notch.

The Queens Arms in Brixham has recently been awarded the Cask Marque after having achieved full marks on each of four categories on both visits by the cask marque assessor. In May the pub hosted a charity event for the Golden Vanity Trust, an organisation that preserves historic fishing vessels and provides sail training for young people. The day included an art auction, open mike music, BBQ and raffle and £930 was raised.

The Blagdon Inn, Totnes Road, Paignton has a new manager as from April. Chris comes from the Wetherspoons Group and is looking to support some of our local brewers; including Bays and Hunters.

The Cork and Bottle, Torquay Road, Paignton has a new manager – Steve who hails from the southeast. He is a strong supporter of Real Ale and is attempting to encourage this side of his business. Although Spitfire is his regular ale at present he hopes to be able to introduce other ales as he settles in.

The 8th March saw the grand opening of the Fortesque Arms at East Allington under the new management of Steve & Michelle. Steve has spent 22 years in the British Army. They have brought with them an experienced French chef and currently serve Dartmoor Ales plus a selection of lagers and cider on tap.

George's Carvery, Esplanade Road, Paignton has this month reverted to its old name of The Mermaid. Up to 4 Bays' beers will be available throughout the summer. There have been some adjustments made to accommodate the changes but the carvery will still be the main food focus.

The Tally Ho Inn, Littlehempston has launched a share offer to raise the funds to buy and re-open the Tally Ho! The Littlehempston community did well in opposing the planning applications for the pub which were eventually withdrawn, and they now need to buy the pub and re-open it. If you are interested in this investment opportunity visit www.tallyhoinn.co.uk.

The Open Arms in Chillington is now up for sale having been long closed.

The Polsham Arms, Lower Polsham Road, Paignton has re-opened under new management. At present Tribute is the main ale but Devon Earth, a new Paignton Brewery will be providing some ales shortly.

Long term work is scheduled at the Anchor in Chudleigh Knighton. The buildings to the rear are to be demolished (including the skittle alley) to make way for car parking. These buildings were originally the coaching stables for the Exeter to Plymouth turnpike road. Food will now be offered with an enhanced kitchen, but it would be disappointing if the original public bar gets removed which might be a possibility. The beer range is changing slightly with Doom Bar being dropped to be replaced by a local beer. The quality of the beer remains excellent.

Recent visits to the Palk Arms at Hennock have evinced reports of well-kept ale. Our reporter comments that this is a good pub and worth a visit.

The Grand Central Bar Café, Torbay Road, Paignton has introduced Otter Ale as its regular ale. Since it opened it has been a keg beer and lager bar/Café doing a range of food. The recent move towards real ale is proving very positive for them.



The Tradesman's Arms
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(www.beerintheevening.com)

Good Beer Guide Listed

4 Real Ales. Local ciders.

Thursday Quiz night

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Under new ownership

The Manor Inn

2 Stoke Gabriel Road Galmpton, Brixham

TQ5 0NL Tel: 01803 661101

www.manorinngalmpton.co.uk

Discount for card-carrying CAMRA members
 Good beers (Otter Ale & Bitter, Butcombe Bitter, Skinner's Betty Stoggs, Exmoor Ale).

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

Quiz nights Thursday (general knowledge) and Sunday (music). Children and dogs welcomed in a real village pub.

www.manorinngalmpton.co.uk



Brewery News

St Austell Brewery has recently taken over the beer wholesaler, The Real Beer Company. One of the advantages of this will be that tenanted St Austell houses will be able to order a large variety of guest ales from the extensive wholesale list.

—Hunters Brewery won the prestigious Overall Champion of the Competition at the South West SIBA festival at Tuckers Maltings in April, having gained a place in the final through winning the Strong Bitters category.
 Congratulations to the brewing team at Hunter's.

Award	Brewery	Beer	ABV
Gold	Hunters Brewery	Royal Hunt	5.5
Silver	Tavy Ales	Tavy Porter	5.2
Bronzer	St Austell Brewery	Proper Job	4.5

A new brewery is on the horizon. Teign Valley Brewery is thought to be opening soon on Chudleigh Business Park and we think that the 5-barrel plant will be run by a brewster, Michele Jones.

Dartmoor Brewery triumphs

A special beer developed to showcase the taste of Dartmoor has been awarded a top UK award at the National Beer Competition 2013.

Dartmoor Brewery scooped the UK's Champion Speciality Beer award for their unique Dartmoor heather honey enriched beer Three Hares.

Famous for its Jail Ale, Legend and Dartmoor IPA beers, the Princetown brewery collected the prestigious award from actor and micro-brewer, Neil Morrissey, at the national awards evening organised by the Society of Independent Brewers Association (SIBA). The Three Hares brew staved off competition from around 150 other national entrants to take the prestigious gold award.

Dartmoor Brewery developed Three Hares real ale by using the Brewery's popular Legend ale with a special blend of heather and wild flower honey sourced only from Dartmoor. Three Hares also uses Dartmoor malted barley, grown specifically for the Brewery at Drewsteignton, which combine to give the beer its rich taste of Dartmoor honey and a hint of apricots.

"It is tremendous recognition for our Three Hares to be crowned the UK's Champion Speciality Beer" comments Mike Lunney, Head Brewer at Dartmoor Brewery. "We believe the secret of its success is the wonderfully intense and balanced honey produced on the moor that gives it that distinctive Dartmoor flavour." Mike first tasted the honey now used by the Brewery in the production of Three Hares at the Tavistock Farmers Market, "I was completely struck by the intensity of the flavour of the honey produced by Peter Hunt. He keeps his hives near North Bovey and I felt confident straight away that we could marry his Dartmoor honey with our Dartmoor beer to achieve a special result." Mike adds.



However despite a strong demand for Three Hares there is such limited availability of the special Dartmoor heather and flower honey, the Brewery only produces Three Hares as a special beer for festivals.

Three Hares won the national competition, following its success at the regional SIBA competition hosted at the Tucker's Maltings Beer Festival in 2012.

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Website: www.kentsstorquay.co.uk



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Not the way to do it!

Punch Taverns is trying to cover a £4.2 billion debt by restructuring its business, but talks do not seem to be succeeding and the company's chances of defaulting on its debt and going into administration appears to be high. Punch, who own about 4,000 pubs - one in ten of Britain's pubs - has been in talks for months to restructure the 2 divisions it owns, Punch A and Punch B. The talks between the company and its debt holders are nearing stalemate. The debt is said to have arisen through the company's spending spree in the last 2 decades.

If administration happens, the value of shareholders holdings would become wiped out and it could lead to a break-up of the company. Hundreds of staff who own shares through an employee share plan would also lose everything.

Punch only started the process to restructure its debts 8 months ago, despite there being calls for urgent action on this since March 2011. Its share value has collapsed and is now less than £90m; the company owes 26 times this on its loans.

Punch's parent company is currently paying about £2 million each month by dipping into fast-depleting cash reserves to keep the outstanding loans going, but this is only servicing the loans and the capital debt remains.

At present there are nearly 100 Punch pubs for sale around the country, according to Christie + Co catalogue.

Pub Trail around the Dart.

Saturday 6th April and the Lowe flying club feel it is time to set out on a little foray into territory we have not visited for many years. Our little group set off south of the river Dart.

The evening began in Dittisham and we walked from the car park across the foreshore to The FERRYBOAT INN, a pretty little pub at the bottom of a steep hill. Lovely views all around, up and down the river Dart and inside we find it crammed with the remnants of the Easter holiday families enjoying a last meal before returning home to the city. Attached to the door counter-balance on the bar there was a cuddly otter, which seemed to move up and down unbidden and was being enjoyed by all ages. The beers on offer were Jurassic-Dorset Brewery OG 1040, FBI (Otter Bitter) OG 1036, Doom Bar OG1038. We supped the Jurassic and the Otter Bitter which were acceptable and one of us tried the Addlestons cider which was very good. Prices averaged £ 3.90 per pint. You are really paying for the amazing views and position on the river. We set off up the hill to the RED LION INN, a lovely village local and B & B with a post office, café and shop all within its walls. We enjoyed a good pint of Palmers Copper Ale OG1036 at £ 3 a pint. Dartmoor Legend was also available. The beer was not on hand-pump but drawn straight from the barrel in the cellar. We noted many local foods in the shop, notably Sharpham's cheese and Aune Valley meats.

Next we were off to the HUNTERS LODGE INN at Cornworthy. We arrived to find a local quiz was getting underway. We appreciated some Cottage MGA and Doom Bar. Teignworthy Reel Ale was also on tap. This is a well-supported local with a car park at the back.

On to the MALTSTERS ARMS at Tuckenhay and very much a food pub. They had four real ales on offer. Bays Topsail ABV4%, Quercus Spring Oak, Dartmoor Jail Ale OG1047.5, Dartmoor IPA OG1039.5. We tried the Spring Oak and found it unusual but not unpleasant; we also tried the Jail Ale.

Just down the road is the WATERMANS ARMS HOTEL, a Palmer's owned pub in an idyllic spot. Beers on offer were Copper Ale OG1036, Best Bitter OG1040, and Dorset Gold OG1046. We sampled the Best and the Gold, it tasted a bit tired.

As we approached our next pub the DURANT ARMS in Ashprington, it looked like everyone was already in bed and the pub was in darkness. What to do now, shall we go to the New Inn at Moreleigh, or the Church House Inn at Harberton?

We decide on the CHURCH HOUSE INN at Harberton. We arrived and found the pub car park area congested with cars but a sign says more parking up the lane to the right of the pub. Some locals assure us we can get our van up the lane and we make it with an inch to spare.

Inside, the pub was very lively with people enjoying a local band. We enjoy Skinner's Betty Stoggs, Hunter's Honey Bunny and Quercus Shingle Bay. Also on tap was Otter Bitter. A dance and a sing along made a fitting end to our evening adventures. On this showing this seems a likely Pub of the Year candidate.

We can't wait for the next trip out.....

Ross McGinn

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MIDWEEK MARAUDERS - FEBRUARY

Way back at the end of February, and in hindsight even before the really cold spell, Ashburton was the destination for the bus-borne brigade who constitute S. Devon CAMRA's midweek raiding party. Disembarking from the bus in the main street, we were approached by three chaps who had also been on the bus, and who asked us if we were from CAMRA - I ask you, do we stick out that much - and introduced themselves as S. Devon Branch members who were to link up with us for the day. The more the merrier, then. Just across the road from the bus stop was our first stop of the day - Ashburton's oldest pub, the Exeter Inn, built in 1131. This friendly pub comprises a main bar at the front, and a smaller one at the rear served through a hatch and counter. Ensnconced at the bar were two of our members who live in the town and whose local this is. Having greeted them, we sat down with our very good Dartmoor I.P.A. and Legend, and were soon met by three more of the travelling party, who had driven out by car. From here it was a short bus ride/drive to the Dartmoor Lodge Motel at Pear Tree Cross, slightly outside town and off the A 38.

Whilst not necessarily the sort of place you would expect to find good beer, we all thoroughly enoyed the offerings from Hunters, Dartmoor, Butcombe, and the much farther afield, Arkwright.

Next up was the Abbey Inn, overlooking the river at Buckfast, where we stopped for a light lunch, washed down with a good Proper Job but an off-form Tribute. From here we moved on to Totnes, and the Albert Inn, home of the Bridgetown Brewery, where we rounded off our day with their A.A. and TapNGo, along with Noss Beer Works Ebb Rock.

Peter O'Nions

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Contact them if you are dissatisfied with service
or quantities and are unable to resolve this with the service
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MIDWEEK MARAUDERS – MARCH

After the dizzy heights of the previous months 10-plus Aleforce- isn't that a storm? - March saw a return to more usual numbers for our day out and about our Branch area. Mindful of A: Paignton Bus Station being closed, and B: our leaders incapacity (Grumpy was walking with the aid of a crutch due to an injured leg) I decided to intercept him at Paignton Railway Station to guide him to the nearest Bus Stop for our destination. The easy option of emailing him with directions in advance was negated by his computer being down at the time-as it often is - it really is time he replaced it. Anyway, on getting onto our No.12 bus to Waterside, we were greeted by what transpired to be the other half of the party, and the four of us duly turned up at the Good Beer Guide listed Waterside Inn, having alighted at the stop opposite the pub. Here we sampled Greene King Yardbird and the pub's staple, Courage Best - both perfectly acceptable.

Next, a decision had to be reached- make a quickish exit to catch the hourly 120 service to Kingswear, or stay a bit longer and then advance up the main road to Churston Bridge, and walk down to the Manor Inn in Galmpton. A choice was made by one of us saying he had never been to The Manor, and so would like to try it. On arrival we were confronted with Otter Bitter and Doom Bar- our chairmans favourite (sic). Halves later, we walked/hobbled back to the main road to intercept the next 120 bound for Kingswear. On disembarking at Kingswear, we were reminded of what a bitterly cold day it was - the local adage goes that its always colder down by the river. A short walk away was The Ship Inn, a long-standing Good Beer Guide entry and former branch Pub Of The Year. It was here that we ate - various tasty baguettes from the lunchtime menu. These were accompanied by an assortment of very good Adnams Bitter, Otter Seville and Head, and Wadsworths Henry's I.P.A.- two halves each here, to accompany the food.

In due course, fed, watered, and regaled by Colin, the ebullient landlord, it was back to catch a bus into Brixham, and The Vigilance, the towns Wetherspoons. We were greeted by Billy, the manager, who provided us with beer lists for the companys forthcoming Beer Festival, and we tried Quercus Shingle Bay and D.B.C.s Durdle Door. This left the ever-worthwhile climb up the steep hill to The Queens Arms, in time for its winter opening of 4 p.m., and we ended our day with first-rate O'Hanlon's Stormstay, Wadsworth 6X, and Hunter's Devon Dreamer.

Peter O'Nions



The Ipplepen Village Show

Ipple Tipple—BEER FESTIVAL

Saturday 20 July 2013

2.00pm to 11.30pm

Marquee on the Playing Field, Ipplepen

Admission to Show: **£1.50** (until 5.00pm). Ipple Tipple entry: **£2**

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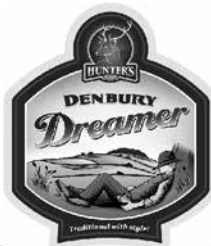


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The Pigs Nose wins Third Award



Peter & Lesley Webber were delighted to receive the award of South Devon Pub of the Year from chairman, Bob Southwell last month. They have been publicans for only 13 years and in that time have won the Pub of the Year accolade 3 times, in 2005 and 2011 and now in 2013.

The pub is a delightful mix of pub memorabilia, quirky signs, knick-knacks and lovely old features, and has a great mix of customers of all types and ages, including locals, coast-walkers and

holiday-makers. Peter used to be involved as a road manager for the '60s band Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick and Titch, and he still holds gigs with some very famous artists and bands in the hall at the side of the pub.

This charming inn is tucked away off the beaten track, but is well worth making the effort to get to as there is always a friendly welcome and a pleasing atmosphere.

To welcome the CAMRA contingent, Peter supplied South Hams Eddystone and South Hams Devon Pride on hand-pump along with a perry and two real ciders including Heritage cider. Otter Brewery generously donated a cask of their Otter Mild to celebrate this event, so all partakers benefited with free beer.

And see cover photograph.

Henry's Bar

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month.



THANK YOU!

From South Devon CAMRA, we'd like to say a HUGE thank you to Jacky & Dave Montgomery at the Gresham House Inn, Dawlish (formerly the Laffin Pig) for hosting a charity quiz, mini auction, raffle and donations from beer sales of ISCA and St Austell beers to top up the £256.90 raised at Newton Abbot Beer Festival 2012 for the RNLI. Dave and Jacky's efforts added a **further** £361.33 on the night to the RNLI fund. The Gresham House Inn is a great little pub that always stocks a LocAle plus ever changing range of beers from the South West and beyond (a recent delivery of Midlands beers from the likes of Sadlers and Burton Bridge sold like hot cakes).

Sarah Cooke

The Little Pub with the Big Garden

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CALL US NOW TO PLACE YOUR ORDER - 01803 555004 - www.baysbrewery.co.uk

A NEW CRAFT BEER BAR

Let me tell you the exciting news that a craft beer bar has opened less than 10 miles from my house. Woo hoo! (As they say).

Teign Cellars was formerly a small speciality beer shop in a side street close to Newton Abbot town centre, owners Chris and Stuart had been looking to branch out for some time and now they have. Taking over a building that was previously an average boozer (I use the term generically because I never went to the pub in question) called The Greene Man, they have moved their shop to the new premises and opened a bar too. I attended their launch party last week and did a dance of glee at the beers on offer.

Cornwall's Harbour Brewing had a big presence on the bar with three of their brews available in keg and among others there was also Flying Dog's 'Doggie Style' pale ale (5.5%) – which I tried for the first time – a bronzed golden glass of delightfully thirst quenching tropical fruit bitterness mixed with barley-sugared maltiness.

I followed it up with one of the Harbour beers. An 8.7% Imperial Chocolate Stout (No. 1) apparently aged in Jack Daniels whisky barrels. A slight red hue when I held it to the light and a buff-coloured head were the two subtle shades that broke up the blackness of the brew which although it had some pleasing rich roastiness to it did feel a little like drinking a beer-flavoured version of JD and coke.

Cask beer is also on offer via two pumps on the bar and two insulated casks on a stillage. On the night of the launch these included one from another Cornish name, The Rebel Brewing Co and from my old friends Art Brew from Dorset. Expect also, a regular local cask ale which Chris and Stuart hope to be able to offer at only £ 1.85 per pint.

That the launch party featured a superior buffet including obligatory sandwiches but also lovely smoked salmon and cream cheese wraps, chicken kebab skewers with mushroom and cherry tomatoes and generous hunks of tiger bread with crudité's type veg tucked inside, bodes well for plans to not only serve food at Teign Cellars, but also to develop a beer and food matched menu.

You can also expect beer tastings and meet the brewer events bringing the best of the craft beer movement – until now largely restricted to metropolitan areas – to this Devon market town.

Reproduced with the kind permission of Sophie Atherton from her blog at

Dartmoor Brewery

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What's On

Branch Meetings and Social Events

Date	Time	Purpose	Location
11 June 2013	20:00	Branch AGM	The Cromwell Arms, Bovey Tracey
19 June 2013	10:30	Mid-week Social.	120 bus from Paignton for trip to Kingswear, Dartmouth, then on to Slapton, Frogmore and Kingsbridge.
9 July 2013	20:00	Branch Meeting	Maltings Bottle Shop, Newton Abbot
26 July 2013	19:00	Social Trip to Hunters Brewery.	Meet there.
13 Sept 2013	20:00	Branch Meeting	Dartmoor Lodge, Ashburton TBC

Beer Festivals

20-23 June – Summermoon Festival, Kingskerswell Parish Meadow, Kingskerswell.

12-13 July – Plymouth CAMRA Beer Festival, Plymouth Pavilions.

20 July – Ipple Tipple Beer Festival, Playing Field, Ipplepen

13-17 August - Great British Beer Festival, Olympia, London

25-27th July - The Ship inn, Teignmouth. Devon V Cornwall Beer Festival. 10 plus Devon and Cornish ales.

23-26 August – S. Devon Diesel Society Real Ale Festival, Staverton Station, Staverton.

23-26 August - 8th Annual Beer Festival, The Bay Horse, Totnes. 20 ales 10 ciders, live music, BBQ. This is in support of Totnes Festival (23/8-1/9)

23-26 August - 4th Annual Beer Festival, The Cannon Inn, Newton Poppleford. 12 ales and ciders, live music and BBQ.

24-25 August - Sandygate Inn, Kingsteignton. Live-Gate Music & Beer Festival.

7-8 September – Somerset CAMRA Beer Festival, Minehead Station, Minehead

20-22 September – Abbfest 10th Anniversary Festival, Fermoy's Garden Centre, Ipplepen

6-8 December - Brixham, Queens Arms 2nd Birthday weekend and 1st Queens Arms Winter Festival. 20 plus ales and live entertainment.



Teign Cellars



67 East Street ~ Newton Abbot ~ TQ12 2JR ~ 01626 332991

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ALL PURCHASES UNTIL 1st JUNE 2013

GRUMPY REPLIES

Following one of my latest Grumpy Old Man articles I received an accusation of sexism. This hurt a little as I really hate sexism in all its guises and would do anything to avoid this type of criticism. It was pointed out that I had made a certain amount of fun out of a woman not looking after a child and returning with 'fag breath'. The critic has a point in that I did identify the gender rather than just referring to a parent/grandparent and leaving the gender as unspecific. However, the critic was guilty of 'selective confirmation' in that you seek evidence for your opinions whilst ignoring evidence to the contrary. (I do the same with menus seeking out the nonsense and meaningless phrases and ignoring the self-explanatory 'fish and chips' or 'eggs and bacon' which would fail to make my point.) In the article in question there were two references to men with children but this had been totally ignored. However, sexism is very much alive within the bar environment. What gives any man the right to ask a woman for a pint of X please followed by 'love' or 'darling'? You would not dream of saying that to a man so why is a woman so different? Stop it now! Even worse are those men who will not let women go to the bar and insist on being the 'one in charge' and doing the ordering and paying. These men are stupid institutional sexists still occupying the world of Gladstone and outside toilets. Why do men assume that we know what women like, and want, thereby creating classic sexist stereotyping assuming that they always require light fruity and sweet products. I know many women who like strong dark beers or dry cider and would chew my head off if I told them otherwise. There is definitely a trend in the cider market for women to be more discriminating and ask for drier products leaving the Neanderthal men to ask for the saccharine saturated sweeter varieties. Why do some publicans compound the issue by offering special 'ladies glasses' for the half pint? There are still plenty of men who believe that it is not ladylike to drink from a pint glass, but hopefully they will all be dying out relatively shortly. I feel much better now after that anti-sexist rant.

Grumpy Old Man AKA Bob Southwell

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CAN GRUMPY OLD MAN GET TOO GRUMPY?

Those of you who have seen me around recently will have noticed that I have been on crutches as the result of a broken knee together with cartilage and ligament damage. I have also been taking pain killers which are quite capable of affecting both my behaviour, and decisions, in some wacky ways. I mention all of this to explain it as a good starting point, and even rationale, behind the grumpiness, but was I capable of being more grumpy than usual under these new circumstances? I will leave that decision to you readers.

I boarded the bus to go in to Newton Abbot and having sorted out the arrangements the bus driver said "thank you buddy". Was he really talking to me or was there a real person somewhere who happened to be actually called Buddy? I ended up in the supermarket where I spotted the Checkout Captain (yes seriously) whose task was somehow to manage the queues at the tills. Incredulous at this ridiculous American import I approached a manager lurking and apparently doing very little. "Can you direct me to the Bread Brigadier or Grocery General, please?" Clearly they are well trained at handling lunatics and responded by laughing it off only to disappear rapidly. At least, I made my point and certainly felt better for it. Now for the pub and on approaching the bar I was greeted with the words "Hello Bud and what can I get you today?" Just what is the mechanism by which this over-personal American nonsense arrived in South Devon? I suppose it could have worse been and I'd been referred to as boss, chief or governor or some other dreadful colloquialism. What is wrong with something along the lines of "good morning and what would you like today" with, or without, the respectful "sir"? I then took my pint and sat down only to realise that it was very mediocre and verging on poor. I was waiting for a friend and idled away some time reading the menu. As you can imagine from some of my previous utterances it was littered with nonsense and meaningless words and phrases such as – cooked to perfection, fresh, delicious, mouth-watering and so forth, but then I saw reference to a scintillating steak. If you look up scintillate in the dictionary, and I quote, it says 'to sparkle, twinkle or to emit sparks'. Thank goodness, I have never seen a steak do any of this and the thought of it emerging emitting sparks is somewhat worrying. What was it served with – luminescent and exploding potatoes? They probably meant sizzling, but I have not actually seen, or heard, a steak sizzle either. The English language is a wonderful creation until morons get hold of it and reduce perfectly acceptable words into pith and pap for mere marketing purposes. My friend now arrived and it transpired that she wanted a small coke.

"A small coke please"

"Would a regular coke be ok?"

"She only wants a small one"

"We only do regular or large"

"What happens if I had asked for a medium?"

"That would be a regular."

"What sort of nonsense is it when regular means either small or medium?"

He was very cheery about all of this with nothing seeming to faze him as if he found the whole episode somewhat amusing. I rather got the impression that he would have been similarly unfazed if a tsunami had swept through the bar or perhaps it was his way of handling visiting idiots?

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....GRUMPY....CONTINUED

... *continued.* I returned with the coke only to get an 'ear bashing'. "If you are going to behave like that again I am going to leave". I was only pointing out the idiocy of some stupid Americanisms.

"Well don't". The conversation now followed along more convivial lines, but the beer was getting worse.

"This beer is not very good"

"Don't you dare complain" I didn't and suffered in silence. As we were about to leave I spotted the opportunity to say something about the beer.

"Sorry, but I don't think that this beer was quite right".

"You should have told me and I would have willingly changed it". It was pointless to explain, and was obvious that I was damned if I complained or damned if I did not, albeit by different people. That should teach me not to grump.

Bob Southwell AKA The Grumpy Old Man

APRIL ACOLYTES

Whilst acolytes are, strictly speaking, officers attending priests, it could be argued that there is a certain religious devotion to the pursuit of fine ale by the various incarnations of the Midweek Mob (even if we haven't as yet come across The Bishops Tipple, or any beers from Church End Brewery on our many travels). Indeed, cynics might argue that we are more likely to fit in with the Fallen Angel Brewery. But enough speculation, and off to Bovey Tracey, where this month's vintage found ourselves in the St Austell-owned Cromwell Arms, at the top of the town, sampling Dartmoor Best Bitter, Tribute, and the stronger H.S.D., whilst ensconced in the comfy sofas in the middle of this pub's 3 distinct sections. All very well, until you try to get up again, as the unfortunate whose round it was soon found out. There was time enough before our bus, so we decided to try the nearby Bell, where halves of Otter Amber and Jail Ale were quickly consumed before our connection.

On arrival in Chudleigh we headed straight for The Bishop Lacy, where we were greeted by the resident Ale wife, (with Ale husband sat at the bar). On offer were Otter Bitter, and Hunters Crackshot and Royal Hunt. Some chips were kindly supplied to accompany our beers, earning maximum Brownie Points. Luckily, all five of us liked both salt and vinegar on them. Bus timings then allowed a visit to The Globe at Chudleigh, where the Bass on offer accompanied a few legs of darts between four of us - Grumpy decries sport of any description. For our final stop we headed to Chudleigh Knighton, and The Anchor Inn, where we rounded off the day with Devon Dreamer by the fire.

Peter O'Nions

letters...

Dear Editor

Just a short note to say that our wonderful Chancellor gave the poor hard-done-by drinker a penny off a pint! Well actually he didn't. He made a reduction of 1p off the duty which works out at approximately 60p to 80p per 9 gallon keg depending on its original strength. What wasn't mentioned was that almost all breweries increased their prices by approximately £ 3 per 9 gallon keg during February/March.

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