

# *NEWS AND BREWS*

***SPRING  
2012***

***FREE***

*Free Magazine of  
The South Devon Branch of*  
**THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE**



*BRIXHAM - See Our Pub Crawl Report*



**South Devon  
CAMRA**

*Supporting Real Ale  
in the South West*



Welcome to

# NEWS AND BREWS

37th EDITION

SPRING 2012

The end of March sees a big CAMRA event occurring in our area, as the annual AGM and Member's Weekend is being held at Torquay's Riviera Centre on the 31<sup>st</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> April. Lots of CAMRA members (of which there are 135.8 thousand) will be out and about in local pubs and it will be a big boost for local brewers and landlords. Apart from debates on motions, and voting for the National Executive, delegates will be able to go on organised trips, and the local breweries of Teignworthy, Bays, Red Rock, Hunters and Dartmoor will be hosting tours. Other trips are scheduled for The Valiant Soldier (a pub closed and untouched since the '60's), Tuckers Maltings, Hunt's Cider Farm and the CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year, Ye Olde Cider Bar at Newton Abbot. South Devon members have lovingly researched pub crawls for visiting beer-quaffers, and this edition gives a flavour of their explorations. A further report can be found on South Devon CAMRA's website - [www.southdevoncamra.com](http://www.southdevoncamra.com)

A warm welcome to all visiting CAMRA delegates.

A lunchtime drink in an Exeter pub brought a whole new beer-related vocabulary. I called for a ½ pint of Greene King and was asked if I wanted smooth, or crispy. Smooth I know about; crispy was new to me, so I asked the barmaid what this was. 'Oh this one', she said hugging the hand-pump. 'Why is it called that?' I asked. 'I dunno, it's just what it says on the pump'. Well, I can report that the beer was neither crispy nor nice. Any more of this sort of hokum and I will be provoked into joining the Grumpy Club.

*Cheers Tina Hemmings*



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## *Pub News*

The Swan in Newton Abbot recently was serving Orkney Dark Island as its guest ale and will be providing a guest that will always be different to the stock titles. A good Meantime London Pale Ale at £2.10 a pint was on offer at The Vesty in Newton Abbot lately and their guest ale programme for guests includes Everard's Tiger and beers from Dark Star, Otley and Castle Rock. The Coach House at Chudleigh was still operating since its devastating fire. The Old Thatch at Bovey Tracey has been bought by Teignbridge Council to serve as an information centre.

The Parker's Arms at Collaton St Mary has re-opened.

The Vigilance at Brixham hosted a social evening for South Devon CAMRA on February 29th. We had a lovely selection of ales to sample, including Dorset Yogi Beer, Jennings Tizzie Wizzie, Marstons Single Hop Galaxy, Bays Up and Under, Sharps Winter Ale, Teignworthy Scrum Down and Cumberland Ale. The London Inn at Shaldon has changed hands but stays in the family – Gordon and Jean have retired, and their daughter has taken over. The Griffin in Torquay serves a good pint at £1.80 on a Saturday and £2.50 in the week.

The Lord Nelson in Kingskerswell is currently serving Tribute and Doombar and will be providing food soon.

The Wellington at Ipplepen has real ales on gravity. The Waterman's at Totnes has two real ales and serves lovely homemade pork pies.

We hear there is a new bottled beer shop scheduled to open in Newton Abbot in the near future, which will be specialising in foreign craft beers, country-wide UK beers and artisan spirits like small batch bourbons and gins. The Dartmouth Inn at Totnes gives a very good value daily carvery and decent real ale on gravity e.g. Bombardier at £2 a pint.

The Church House Inn, Stokeinteignhead is currently running a different guest ale weekly.

Churchill's in Babbacombe had re-opened. The landlord is a real ale drinker so the pub might be worth watching.

The restaurant at The Kents in Wellswood has recently had a refit. There are a number of pubs in the area serving beer on gravity such as The Griffin in Torquay. Last time we called the Young's Special was a very good pint.

At The Claycutters in Chudleigh Knighton, we found the food was good as was the ale. They offer Tribute, Otter Ale and a West Country guest ale. Previously this landlord had The Highwayman's Haunt.

The Lord Nelson in Kingskerswell is serving a pie and a pint on Fridays. The beer is good but is possibly slightly too cold.

The Wild Goose has its own shop which is a good initiative and a way forward for rural pubs. This is an opportunity for community pubs to obtain 50 % rent relief. Two other rural pubs to follow this route are The Kestor at Manaton and The Pelican at Dittisham which serves Palmers' beers.

The Anchor at Chudleigh Knighton is serving 2 Teignworthy beers and Jail ale. The pub will also have a shop shortly. Devonshire, the new Teignworthy brew had been one of the recent ales on offer.

The Victoria at Ashburton has a new landlord from March.

The last time we visited The Clifford Arms at Shaldon the ale was in fine form.

For the Dartmouth & Kingswear Jubilee Beer Festival 2 to 4 June 2012, The Dolphin will have Newcomen's Atmospheric Ale from the Bridgetown Brewery, Totnes, specially brewed for the 300th Anniversary of Thomas Newcomen.



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## *Brewery News*

Red Rock's new 7.5 barrel plant is up and running and the brewery is very busy fulfilling orders. Their bottled Lighthouse has won a gold award at The Food and Drink event for Devon.

Quercus under new ownership will brew two beers. The brewery has three new directors and is starting from scratch. They intend to build a new brewery on a prime location and will start slowly and produce only two regular beers: Shingle Ale ABV:4.2% and Prospect ABV: 4.% and a Seasonal Ale : Reindeer Fuel ABV 4.6%.

Hunter's expansion is going ahead.

Gidleys have started selling bottled ales.

Ringmore on the other hand has cut down the volume of its bottled beer (Oarsome).

South Hams Brewery is producing a beer called Start Bay for Tucker's Maltings.

Teignworthy has two new beers – Devon Shire 4.1% is a new dark ale with coffee/chocolate overtones, and Cor' Bugger at 6.5 is a red ale with port notes. They are also producing their RIP again this year (Russian Imperial Porter). Last year the bottled version was 13%.

Dartmoor Brewery has a new 60 barrel fermenter going in soon bringing capacity up to 360 barrels. Sales are up over 25 % over the last year.

Bays won ' Best E Business' at the national SIBA Awards in November and last month they won ' Best Marketing and Sales' at the South Devon Excellence Awards. They have new seasonal ales coming –Up N Under, 4.5% in Feb and March, Springtime, 4.5%, March – May, Jubilee Ale, 4.7%, May and June, Striker 4/1%, June and July and Winning Gold 4.5% in July and August.

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## *News from Summerskills*

Summerskills Brewery remains busy and the volume of sales for the year was reassuringly robust. Whistlebelly Vengeance, one of Adam Summerskill's original brews,

has been getting good reviews as it has been found in Wetherspoon pubs all over the country since Christmas as part of their quarterly guest ale programme. Locally, Indiana's Bones featured in their recent Devon Ales festival, still at 5.6% ABV. Recently Summerskills beer of the year for 2012 has been launched. "Bunker's Hill Bitter" at 5.1% is named after The Battle of Bunker Hill which took place on 17 June 1775 during the American War of Independence, where British Marines played a pivotal role. Work started on the Royal Marine Barracks in Stonehouse, Plymouth in 1781 and has been the home of the Royal Marines there ever since. The high ground to the North and overlooking the Barracks was named "Bunker Hill" by the marines in honour of their famous battle honour. We have been specially commissioned by the Royal Marines to produce this beer and proceeds from its sale will be donated to Royal Marine charities.



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*CAMRA Scene ; Plymouth view*

The number of pubs in the Plymouth CAMRA branch area, open at the end of 2011 was roughly the same as at the end of 2010. A number of sites owned by pub companies were sold freehold and reopened in 2011, balancing the closure of other pubs. Whilst some of the closed pubs are likely to reopen there is increasing pressure to redevelop sites for residential use, particularly for students, in Plymouth city centre. In the South Hams and Dartmoor the high price of petrol and diesel is continuing to make trading tough and wet sales are being hit particularly hard. In urban and rural areas alike, tenants of houses tied to pub companies report that they are struggling to make ends meet. It now seems the norm to run a pub and have a job to pay the bills as well! As the relentless increase in beer duty looks set to continue one wonders how long some of these rural and remote pubs will be able to survive.

This newsletter is published by the  
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**Last date for submission for the SUMMER magazine – 18 MAY 2012**

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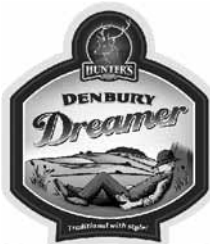


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## *Grumpy Old Man's Really Grumpy Night Out.*

In Graham Greene's *Our Man in Havana*, the central character invents assistant spies and claims money for them from the British government. He is then forced to kill them off when London becomes too interested, but they then keep reappearing mysteriously in newspaper reports. As you are probably aware, I have written many grumpy old man articles, but usually on separate themes. The thought has often occurred to me as to how many of these grumps could might come back to haunt me in just one evening out. On a recent visit to London I was about to find out.

I should start by explaining that the 'grump scale' was already well advanced before arriving at the first pub. Anybody who has ever stood behind Americans attempting to buy railway tickets will recognise the following. They always ask every conceivable question to slow down the service for those behind them. What platform do we go from and how many cars (coaches to us) does it have? How long does it take and when do we arrive? Does it have a dining car? What next – the name and address of the driver? Unfortunately, this is what often purports as customer service to them, but a damn nuisance to the rest of us. On arriving at Victoria I was forced to negotiate a sea of industrial wheelie bins (aka suitcases on wheels). Some of them were so large that they were capable of housing illegal immigrants or a family of children on a picnic and are generally steered by homicidal maniacs intent on imitating Roman chariots in the Coliseum. They are a curse and a danger, as I was to find out when a stupid woman succeeded in tripping me up!

On arriving at the first pub I already knew that my friend was to be late and he had asked for me *to get* in a pint for him. As he drinks considerably faster than me I decided I would take it easy and order just a half. Taking a look at the superb range of beers on offer I **also** noticed the DOOMBAR which seems to get everywhere.

"A pint and a half of Saltaire bitter please".

"Would the half be for a lady?"

"I have been called many things in my time, but never a lady. What difference does it make?"

He then showed me this object which was a hideous cross between a flower vase and a wine glass. I then pointed out to him that I knew many lady beer drinkers who would neither like to be patronised as a lady nor be seen dead with that monstrosity. He was not impressed.

I then sat down, but noticed that he was keeping a less than discreet eye on me. To pass time I picked up the menu and I think some of you will know what is coming. *Whole British red legged partridge roasted to perfection* served with a *mouth-watering* apple and celeriac mash *finished* with red wine, bacon and *baby* onion sauce. *Whole* to give the impression of a substantial portion, *British* as opposed to something horrible bought from foreigners and who cares what the colour of the legs are? It is obviously meant to be *cooked to perfection* and what is this nonsense about *mouth-watering* which is mere image and no substance. *Finished* is unnecessary as the word *with* would be more than adequate. A quick translation would be: partridge with mash and sauce. There were *succulents* all over the place and numerous words such as *delicious*, *tasty* and *hearty*. All total cobbler. I then caught a conversation from the group next to me who kept referring to their work and the absence of green light situations. More old cobbler and more proof that the world has really gone stark raving mad? By this time my friend had arrived and declared the beer delicious (which it was) and gulped it down. He then suggested a quick half for the road and I mischievously suggested that he asked for one of the special half pint glasses and prepared for a quick exit. It duly came.

... ..*Continued*...

The next pub has a reputation for serving a large range of real ales, but what I did not know was that they were also holding a beer festival. On entering, the first beer I saw was DOOMBAR. Now this does really get everywhere as witnessed in Chester and Stoke on Trent the week before and surely it cannot all be brewed at Rock. I chose an IPA from the Westerham Brewery in Kent which was excellent. Perhaps, not surprisingly, there was much evidence of 'ticking' and bottling' and I was immediately recognised by some of the people involved. All smashing people, but why do they insist on telling us how many beers they *need*. We then entered into a neo-philosophical discussion as to the distinction between *needs* and *wants*. You need food, shelter and general sustenance but you want Tinpots Old Donkey Droppings and would easily survive without. The paraphernalia of bottling was evident everywhere in the form of funnel, small 'panda' style bottles and substantial bag to take them away. What would a visiting Martian make of all of this?

To enter the next hostelry it was necessary to run the gauntlet through some seedy desultory desperadoes polluting their lungs and the local environment by that strange antiquated process called smoking. Not a good advert for the pub and hardly welcoming. To the bar, and you have guessed it, yet more DOOMBAR. Is this some form of national conspiracy? The woman behind the bar then achieved what I would have thought to be impossible by serving without uttering a single word. In fact, our presence was only registered by the faintest lifting of the eyes and suggesting the question of what do you want. Well, some sort of welcoming gesture would have been nice. I paid and my had change handed over in silence only for her to return to reading (if that is the word) some of the utter banalities of a celebrity magazine. Seating ourselves it was blatantly obvious that there was no conversation and the customers had seemed to have caught the landlady's disease. Everybody was either watching the TV screens or playing with their mobile phones. How about that for a dysfunctional view of the future and yet the beer was excellent.

Onwards to the next port of call with no smokers, a warm welcome and more decent beer, but what was that hand pump I see before my eyes. You guessed it - DOOMBAR, and by now we have clearly moved into the realms of an international conspiracy. There is a wonderful film called, I hope, The Invasion of the Body Snatchers whereby those who fell asleep were replaced by pale shadows of their original selves. Something akin to this is happening down in the cellars whereby an innocent beer is transmogrified by alien forces into DOOMBAR. At least, our Thornbridge was still intact, but better drink it quickly before the sun goes down.

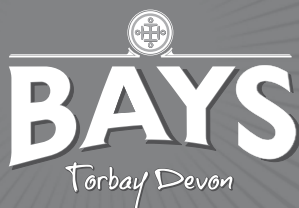
"Hello Bob"

Now, why is it that the people you most want to avoid always see you first thereby rendering avoiding tactics as useless? A short and innocent conversation began, but not for long.

"I want to be the next official hangman," and he then proceeded to give me a list of those who he would like to hang thereby, of course, automatically, disqualifying him for the post should it ever arise. In order to outdo his insanity I then provided my own list which, to say the least, did not best please him. He stared me in the eye and said "You are now on my list". Fortunately, he then left and, hopefully, will not be encountered again. Why is it that loonies cannot keep their psychopathic opinions to themselves?

Well that was quite enough for one evening however you care to read those words. Those of you who have read The Grumpy Old Man on previous occasions will recognise some of my themes. I have railed against pub customers, poor service, the decline of traditional pubs, ridiculously worded pub menus and beer tickers/ bottlers etc.

.....continued



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## *Torbay Trilogy - Brixham*

Despite having lived in Brixham all my life, I have never crawled around the town. This changed when 3 of us from S.Devon CAMRA set out on the second part of our odyssey around the Bay's towns to review pub crawls for CAMRA's forthcoming National A.G.M. in Torquay.

Not far from the Fish Market end of the harbour, our first stop was the Crown and Anchor. With its nautical feel, the pub offered its own badged House Beer (believed to be Courage) as well as a guest - on our visit, Red Rock Devon Coast. Also available was Old Rosie cider. On nice days, these can all be enjoyed at tables outside, overlooking the harbour. Walking back to the Golden Hind, we then went into the new St Austell pub conversion, the Old Market House with its ground-floor bar and upstairs restaurant. As well as the usual Tribute, we were lucky to find the excellent Tribute Extra (5.2%) on the bar; both very well kept. From here, we walked around the other side of the harbour to another St Austell pub, the Prince William. On one level, this is food-oriented, serving a variety of good-value dishes; but the Tribute, Proper Job, and Dartmoor Best all went down well. Back towards the town, the Hole in the Wall is entered down a couple of steps, and is partly below street level. Otter Ale, Bays Topsail and festive Jingle Ale were the offerings.

Just around the corner, the Blue Anchor, with its bar and adjacent eating area, serves up to 5 ales. Our visit being midweek, though, we had a choice of London Pride, Dartmoor Best, or Doom Bar; all of which were perfectly passable. Our final stop was The Vigilance in Bolton Street. Under its new manager, this Wetherspoons, named after an old sailing trawler, has quickly developed a reputation for the quality of its real ale, with 4 guest beers supplementing 4 regular ones. On this occasion, the proximity to Christmas was reflected in the Jennings Redbreast, Teignworthy Christmas Cracker, and Moorhouse's Lap Prancer in company with Dorset Piddle's Yogi Beer.

Peter O'Nions.

Footnote: Since this article was researched, Brixham has a new star on the ale front. The Queens Arms in Station Hill has changed hands, and the pub, near Furzeham Green, now has a range (usually 3, but sometimes more) of constantly changing ales from all over the country on offer. Well worth the climb up the hill!



Dartmoor Brewery  
Station Road  
Princetown  
Dartmoor  
PL20 6QX

Tel: 01822 890789

Fax: 01822 890798

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*GRUMPY continued...*

However, one theme was missing as the evening gave me zero opportunity to comment of the behaviour of children. I will let this GBG pub in Rye, West Sussex do it for me. " Whilst well behaved children are welcome.....children using outdoor play equipment must be supervised by a responsible adult and badly behaved children will be taken away at parental expense and sold into SLAVERY" . Echoes here of the so called child ' apprentices' sent to the water powered cotton districts of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire in the 1770s.

Talk about Victorian values, these are Georgian and even earlier! Now there's an idea.

Bob Southwell Aka The Grumpy Old Man

### Contact Us.

Branch Chairman – Bob Southwell [ecosochistoryman@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ecosochistoryman@hotmail.co.uk)

Vice Chairman – Anthony Woodwark 01803 813133. [tony@southdevoncamra.com](mailto:tony@southdevoncamra.com)

Secretary - Karen Morrison c/o Phillip Morrison

Treasurer – Ross McGinn [rosscmcginn@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:rosscmcginn@hotmail.co.uk) XXXXX

Pub Liaison Coordinator. - Mike Fitzmaurice 01626 873616

Membership Sec. - Phillip Morrison 07886 688121

Web Site Editor - Ant Veal . [ant@southdevoncamra.com](mailto:ant@southdevoncamra.com)

Newsletter Editor - Tina Hemmings 01803 854486

[tinahemmings@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:tinahemmings@hotmail.co.uk).

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### *Torbay Trilogy - Torquay*

With CAMRA's National A.G.M coming to Torquay in 2012, S. Devon CAMRA had the arduous task of visiting pubs in the three towns in the Bay to produce some suggested Crawls for the visiting delegates to follow. Six of us met up at the Buccaneer on Babbacombe Downs, with the intention of heading back down to the harbour. We started our quest in this St. Austell pub with halves of good Tribute and H.S.D. A short walk then brought us to the Babbacombe Inn, where 3 hand pumps curiously hidden below bar level dispensed Courage Best, Bays Gold, and, again, Tribute. Having crossed the road, it was down the steep hill to the Cary Arms, just above sea level and commanding magnificent views along the coast and out to sea. The Bays Topsail and Otter Ale weren't bad either, and fortified us for the climb back to the top, which we reached via the footpath behind the pub. Half of us then cut across the common land to re-join the road, and the others followed the coast path for a way to meet up with us at our next stop, The Kents, just off the main road at Wellswood. This afforded 3 well-kept ales: Otter Ale; Dartmoor Jail Ale; and the seemingly ubiquitous Tribute. After a short bus ride down the hill, alighting opposite the Museum, we crossed the road to find The Griffin, attached to the Yardley Manor Hotel; on the site of the old Winter Gardens. The landlord showed us some old plans of the latter as we supped his excellent Harviestoun Bitter and Twisted, Courage Directors, and Red Rock's eponymous beer - all drawn direct from barrels on the bar. After a protracted stay here - you can't beat beers on gravity dispense - it was over the road to The Hole In The Wall, just off the bottom of Torwood St, with its good selection of 6 ales. Some of the party first went into the next door Devon Arms, and were disappointed to find that the Marston's E.P.A. had 'gone'. Their spirits were soon lifted, however, by its replacement - a good Otter Ale.

Torquay thus completed, the next Port Of Call, a couple of weeks later, will be Brixham.

Peter O'Nions.

# Hole in the Wall



*6 Park Lane. Torquay, TQ1 2AU*

*01803 200755*

Tucked away in the centre of Torquay, only a few yards from the harbour is Torquay's oldest inn. For hundreds of years, smugglers, men of the sea, businessmen, locals and visitors alike have enjoyed drinking in this authentic establishment with its listed cobbled floors, beamed ceilings and warm atmosphere.

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**SOUTH  
DEVON  
PUB OF  
THE YEAR  
2010**

## *Some Beery Facts from Tony Woodward*

The ancient Sumerians in what is now Iraq were the first people to perfect the brewing process.

If buying an antique table or dresser aged up to the 18<sup>th</sup> century check its legs, if they show signs of rot it's genuine, because they used to throw beer on the floors to make them shine but this would make the furniture rot.

Iceland banned beer from 1915 to 1988.

Heather was used to flavour beer until hops were used.

Hops are very promiscuous and it only takes 4 males to fertilize an acre.

To make bitter beer the hops need to be fertilized. To make lager (as a rule) they don't. IPA or Indian Pale Ale was specially brewed for British soldiers in India. The Duke of Bavaria runs one of the largest brewery chains in Bavaria.

## *A Local Reborn...*



The Queen's Arms in Brixham changed hands at the beginning of December, and at the end of January held a re-launch party with live music from 3BF and 6 real ales. Around 250 people turned up to celebrate with the new landlord, Chris Simmonds. Attendees came from

Peterborough and Cornwall and the pub rocked! The Queen's keeps a good range of local and national ales, with one always at £2.

# A Campaign of Two Halves

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12/10

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- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
  - If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd asks you to.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

## London: A Search for Black Cab Stout

It's November and tennis at the O2 arena for some, and a pub crawl for others. I had been told that the stout from Fullers was worth looking for and even was told in which pub to find it. So the first night was a quick look at the Pilot in Greenwich; no stout on but ESB, and we arranged to meet the next day.

After collecting together the pub crawlers (the number is now three) we proceed to the city. We had a late start so the first stop had to be for lunch, The Argyll Arms in Soho. I had been here before but it is always worth a visit, large and with lots of etched glass and a very fine mahogany bar; and busy on Saturday lunchtime. The beer choice looked very good. Downton Dark Delight and Harveistoun Ptarmigan were both new beers to me so it had to be the Dark Delight first. I know it was 5.5% but it was a real delight while our lunch was cooked. The pub was full and the food took a while and we needed another pint so I called for the Ptarmigan. Unfortunately it was sold out, as was the Dark Delight, so I could only have White Horse Bitter from the brewery of the same name. It was probably a good one to balance the Dark Delight being light and very drinkable.

On to the next one, and we had to go down Oxford Street which was heaving with shoppers. Luckily we didn't have to go too far, just a little way down a side street to the George. Again mirrors and very fine woodwork, Victorian fittings and another new beer; Elgoods Black Dog mild which at, only 3.6% was very tasty and one to watch out for. I could have drunk more but we had to move on. At The Stags Head the outside was covered in scaffolding so I nearly missed it. Built in the 1930s it had lots of wood panelling, but more modern, lighter, plainer and cheaper. This stand up pub with tall stools was not so busy as the two previous pubs which was a bit of a relief. The choice of beers were London Pride and Tring Side Pocket 3.6% (light and very tasty).

Next we had a short tube trip and a walk (sober up) to the Duke of York. Through the door on the corner of the pub into the first bar we were met with dark plain wood and drinking booths. It really felt like a locals' pub; it may have been newer than the plush Soho pubs but still felt very cosy, and there were larger back rooms but they had the same atmosphere. The beers - Tribute and Doom Bar (hold on I have just come up from Devon) luckily these flanked Black Sheep Bitter so that is what I had.

Soon we were on the move again to the Seven Stars, Carey Street, as recommended by an acquaintance in the Cider Bar. Yes he was right, it is a cracking little boozier. ...continued

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full page	80	120	160	200	<i>We have a circulation of over 2,500. Contact- tinahemmings@hotmail.com</i>
back page				270	

## *A Torbay Trilogy - Paignton*

A week after three of us charted the Brixham ale scene, the intrepid trio's numbers were doubled for the repeat exercise around Paignton. Starting point was the 1930s-built Waterside, on the main road up the hill from Clennon Valley. The beer here is always good, and the Courage Best, along with guests Bass and Cottage Steaming Ale, all delivered quality. A short bus ride down the hill to the Big Tree preceded a walk along Fisher Street to the Torbay Inn. This friendly back-street local still has two separate bars, and had kindly opened some half-hour before the usual 1p.m. to accommodate our schedule. The well-kept beers were Tribute, Butcombe Bitter and Courage Best.

A short walk then took us to the Devonport Arms, at the bottom of Elmbank Rd. Again with two bars, there is also a 3rd room leading off the larger, left-hand bar. The beers were Courage Best, and Doombar. Back towards the town along Winner St, we turned right into Church Street, and the Coach House, which perhaps we didn't catch on a good day, as the Otter Bitter and Ale weren't as good as had been remembered from previous visits.

Cutting down through the park, Henry's Bar in Torbay Rd. offered a complete contrast. The Betty Stogs, Doombar, Bay's Gold and Teignworthy Santa's Tale were all in top condition; and it's good to see they have now added 3 or 4 'real' ciders. Heading back towards the bus station, we turned right to walk along to the Lime Tree, and were pleasantly surprised with the quality of the Bay's Jingle Ale and Devon Dumpling, along with Otter Ale. A short walk along Torquay Rd. then took us past the Post Office to our final stop, The Isaac Merritt - a near-guarantee of very good ale. The 'Flagship', ' Wessex Brue' and festive Adventageous and Santa's Tale proved a fine end to what had been an enjoyable and worthwhile day.

Peter O'Nions.

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### *The Black Cat Stout Tour... continued...*

A small long narrow bar straight in from the street, the bar is right in front of you with lots of handpumps on a plain Victorian bar counter. Numerous old enamelled advertising signs etc, and standing room only. There were three Adnams beers plus Dark Star Hophead bitter 3.8% and Sambrooks Wandle bitter 3.8% (gorgeous). The toilet trip is a mountaineering effort up winding and very narrow stairs; not easy in your fifth pub. This one certainly deserves another visit.

But time has passed very quickly it will soon be time to meet the girls so off to the tube again. Back at the Pilot there was still no Black Cab Stout so it could only be London Pride.

The next day we went to The Queens Arms, a very nice pub in Buckinghamshire for lunch. This too is a Fullers pub, but guess what? They were alternating Black Cab Stout with Bengal Lancer and it just was not my time - still Lancer is a very fine beer too. Will I ever get the chance to try Black Cab Stout?

Roger Adams

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