

# NEWS AND BREWS

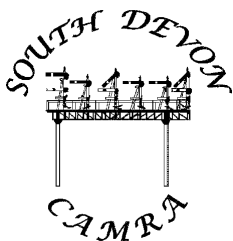
**WINTER  
2010/11**

**FREE**

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



*The Exeter Inn at Ashburton - A long-standing Good Beer Guide Pub*



**South Devon  
CAMRA**

*Supporting Real Ale  
in the South West*

# *Welcome to* **NEWS AND BREWS**

**32ND EDITION**

**WINTER 2010/11**

## *Seasons Greetings to All*

I note that during National Pub Week in early November the Prime Minister, David Cameron, had a lunchtime pint (and a photo opportunity) at the Bernard Arms in Buckinghamshire, which is close to his country retreat Chequers. It is reported that he raised a glass to toast the great British pub.

At Prime Minister's Questions in the House of Commons earlier the same week, Mr Cameron had said: "I am a big supporter of British pubs, and I want us to be a pub-friendly Government."

In that case perhaps the coalition government might slacken off the unremitting tax increases on beer and cider that occur budget after budget, especially as CAMRA research shows that around 39 pubs are closing every week. A CAMRA survey recently found that 84% of people believe a pub is essential to village life.

On a lighter note, I hope you all get the opportunity to visit some lovely pubs over the festive season and enjoy some delicious ales.

*Cheers, Tina Hemmings, Editor*



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## ***PUB NEWS***

Summerskills Brewery, Plymouth, is currently brewing to capacity most weeks. Its 2010 beer of the year "Guzzale" won the Local Beer of the Festival at the Plymouth CAMRA beer festival in July and they have revived Ninja Beer for the JDW autumn guest ale programme. Ninja had not been brewed for almost 10 years and has been very well received. It uses hops grown outside the UK but beer of the year for 2011, due to be launched in January will contain some English hop varieties unused by the brewery up to now. Their pale ale and lager malt comes from Tuckers in Newton Abbot, and their barley is grown in the South Hams.

The Fox in Newton Abbot, which had been closed, has undergone a total refurbishment and recently reopened under the name of The Vestry.

The Union Inn in Denbury has recently changed hands.

The Palk Arms in Hennock is reported as going well.

The Abbey Inn at Buckfastleigh has recently been taken over by Andy, who used to be an army chef, and his partner Hayley. Their beer range has changed in that St Austell HSD has been dropped, but they now serve Proper Job and Dartmoor Best.

Dartmoor Brewery is planning a winter beer which will be a darker brew of 4.4% abv. As yet its name has not been announced.

CAMRA members have reported good beer quality in Henry's Bar, Torbay Road, Paignton.

The Lifeboat Inn at Teignmouth has been sold.

Gidley's Brewery in Christow has changed hands. The new brewer is Paul Arrowsmith who took over in October, and when we met was enthusiastic about his new role.

Hunters Brewery had a good success with its Slaughtered Lamb, a red cherry beer brewed for Halloween. At the Abfest Festival it sold out on the first day.

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#### **Good Beer Guide Listed.**

*Discount for card-carrying CAMRA members*

Good beers (Otter, Abbot, Sharp's Doom Bar, St. Austell's Dartmoor). 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.

The Shipwrights Arms in Shaldon reopened on the 20<sup>th</sup> November. A totally free house, the new owners – David Cook & Carly Hales - have refurbished the Pub which had been closed for 18 months. The beers currently available are Otter Bitter, Teignworthy Reel Ale and Ringmore Oarsome. The choice of Ales will change regularly with the emphasis being on South Devon breweries. An extensive menu is offered, with much of the food home-made. Senior citizens' lunches will be on offer, as well as breakfast on Friday and Saturday mornings, when the Pub is opened at 8.30am. Other mornings the doors are opened at 11.30am.

Ringmore Craft Brewery in Shaldon is now brewing with a 2.5 barrel plant. Following this increase in production, its Oarsome Ale is now available permanently in the Rydon Inn, Kingsteignton, as well as the Clifford in Shaldon. A new bottle conditioned Christmas Ale is available – Smokey Santa 5% - the Brewer, Geoff Phillips, says "you will either love it or hate it". The beer is brewed using the same peated malt that is used in the production of Laphroaig Malt Whisky.

The Royal Oak in South Brent is hosting a pyjama party on New Year's Eve. With the alacrity with which Andy Dore got into a frock (ok, a tabard!) for their Oak Apple Day, I look forward to seeing him model his choice of negligee! Don't forget your teddy if you're going along!

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## ***Kingswear and Dartmouth Crawl***

On a warm mid-November afternoon, arriving just after opening time a select group started in Kingswear at The Steam Packet Inn to begin the Two-Towns tour. The Bays Spooky had just come to the end, so Sharp's Doom Bar was the kick-off ale. A short trip down-and-slightly-up hill brought us to The Ship Inn, where the protagonists took their pick of seven real ales, all of which were in first-rate condition. My favourite was Exeter Avocet, with Skinner's stout, Pennycomequick, a close second. Companions tried Young's Bitter, Bishop's Tipple and some of the Otter range and half of us had lunch, before we headed off down to the car ferry. This floating bridge steered by a tugboat holds 8-10 cars with room for standing foot passengers, and is a delightful way to cross the river, giving unencumbered views up and down stream. Once over on the Dartmouth side we made our way to The Royal Castle Hotel, (with a slight detour for antique browsing and Christmas shopping by the ladies). The Castle's three regular ales, Dartmoor Jail Ale, Bays Gold and Sharp's Doom Bar, were tasted by us all and found to be very good. Bay's Gold seemed to be the favourite here, although the Doom Bar may have had the edge. Next up, the Dolphin in Market Square with its own ale Whaler, (made for it at its sister pub -The Albert in Totnes - at the Bridgetown Brewery) and Doom Bar. Both were enjoyable, and after a while, a breakaway group headed to the Windjammer to try Dartmoor Legend and to the Cherub for Cherub Bitter and St Austell Proper Job, this last ale being pronounced the best beer of the day.

By this time, some of the intrepid expeditionaries had to catch their bus back to Torquay and beyond, and others returned over the river to find their own transport home.

The pubs in Dartmouth and Kingswear had showed themselves well, and we certainly had a better selection and quality than some previous crawls in larger and more pub-populated towns.



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## ***The Grumpy Old Man examines the unusual world of 'ticking' and 'bottling'***

Father, forgive me for I have sinned.

What is the nature of your sin my son?

Father, during the recent Wetherspoons Beer Festival I became a 'beer tucker' chasing after the different beers and ticking them off in my shiny new book.

My son, you should know better than worshipping false gods and indulging in unnatural acts.

Father, I know and have now seen the error of my ways and repent.

My son, you succumbed to temptation, but at least you did not resort to the ultimate depravity of 'bottling'."

I am now much better and would like to take the opportunity of thanking all of you who sent me 'get well soon' cards.

Well there we have it, in purgatory and heading back towards redemption. Russians tell jokes about the Poles, the English about the Irish and beer drinkers about 'tickers' and 'bottlers'. Basically, the nature of society does not welcome anybody who is 'different' and we tend to look down on such elements with both humour and pity. We all need some deviants and people who are prepared to 'push the frontiers' and stand out as true eccentrics. What is wrong with ticking? No grannies get mugged or cuddly animals abused. A little more tolerance is required please.

Apparently, the 'chief tucker' has accumulated over 40,000 beers to his name. Assuming these were half pints (they could be thirds) and this took place over a 10-year period then this averages out at nearly 5.5 pints a day! Furthermore, assuming that the average price of beer was £2.50 then this equates to £50,000 of beer expenditure or in the region of £70,000 pre tax income. Blimey! Don't tell the Mail and give them even more information to whittle and twitter about excessive drinking. Clearly, you need time to accumulate such figures, but how can you do that if you are working, and where does the income come from if you are not working? The Mail would love all of this and attempt to find some 'tucker' misusing benefits with kids abandoned back at home to become the next generation of delinquents. Overall, this is a potential public relations disaster for CAMRA.

I first came across 'ticking' at a beer festival when I espied someone with a laptop, earnestly entering information. My first thoughts were that some people can never leave work alone, but on entering into conversation found that he was storing his beer 'ticks'. He was probably one of the most boring people I have ever met and I would think that the word wearisome was especially invented for him, having been regaled by the intricacies of his 'tick' storage system. Now we come to the crux of the matter - it is not what a person collects or the hobby they indulge in, but how they handle themselves and there is always a 'thin line' between collecting, enthusiasm and obsession. Beer is no different from any other hobby if the fanatics take over. Do I want to hear about a rare first edition postage stamp with a wobbly watermark from some obscure French dependency? No, I do not. Am I interested in a 'fascinating' collection of Bulgarian bus tickets from the 1960s? No, I am not, anymore than I want to hear some bore droning on about this or that 'tick' and where the next sortie into 'tick land' will be.



Compared with 20 years ago there has been an enormous expansion of breweries and beers and we now have more choice than could have ever been imagined. No doubt, 'tickers' have helped to accelerate this trend with advantages for us all. However, it could also be potentially harmful. Archer's brewery produced eventually hundreds of different beers, but how different were they really? There is no way that they could have been individually brewed, and must have been blends, tweaks and flavour additives and therefore they were 'ticking' different names rather than different beers. More to the point the brewery eventually folded, having so diversified from its original small number of core beers to chase the 'ticker' market that its original identity was lost. Inevitably, with 'ticking' you get your 'tick' and move on and there is rarely any loyalty with long-established brewers of quality beers often totally ignored, with the chase for the next new beer paramount. Sometimes, this can reach ridiculous limits. As Chairman of a beer festival I was once faced by two 'tickers' demanding that they be served two particular beers. I refused, as the beers were not ready and had not 'dropped'. I will never forget their reply – "We don't care what it tastes like, we have to leave in 20 minutes" (to another festival with the 'ticks' all 'pencilled in'.) So heated did the issue become that they were on the verge of being thrown out, an absurdity as we were all beer lovers. I came across another absurdity recently. Apparently, this beer had always been 4.3% ABV, but the pump clip showed 4.2%, which meant another tick!

Now for the 'bottlers' (those who bottle beers from pubs/beer festivals and take them home to drink thereby accruing more 'ticks' than the festival time would allow). Here is a handy guide on how to recognise them.

- 1) They arrive with large holdalls, or even industrial wheelie bin sized shopping trolleys, which I originally thought contained a very generous lunch or two.
- 2) Eventually, the 'bottling' paraphernalia will surreptitiously, and guiltily appear, and generally consists of a funnel, small drink containers and labels.
- 3) Much pondering over lists takes place before a determined trajectory to the bar follows.
- 4) They return with a half pint measure which is then decanted (again surreptitiously) into the container, the top is sealed and Scroggins Old Daftness etc written on the label, with date.
- 5) Leaving the beer festival can often be difficult compounded by both the alcohol consumed and the weight of the wheelie bin. (Lifting the previously mentioned article up high kerbs is also not without its difficulty on the way back to Newton Abbot Railway station!)

These bottles can now be consumed at leisure and at home although I might question what the quality of the beer might be like after a few days in the fridge. There are even tales concerning bizarre arrangements for exchanging bottles. It may well be an urban myth, but I have heard rumours that bottles from the south are exchanged for those of the north on Birmingham New Street station on Sunday mornings! Clearly, new 'ticks' are now available for beer festivals which they did not even attend.

What is wrong with all of this? Absolutely nothing, and we should be wary about ridiculing people because they do things in a way which we might not and, after all, is this not the attitude of the bully in the playground picking on someone who is different?

### ***...tickers cont***

Again, no cuddly animals were harmed and so who has lost?

Temporarily, I became the ticker and quite enjoyed myself, but recognise my actions were not without some amusement to others. I will not be doing it again or, at least, not until the next Wetherspoons beer festival. In the meantime, carry on 'ticking', 'bottling', ignore the knockers, and celebrate good old English eccentricity.

Bob Southwell

Aka the Grumpy Old Man



## ***The Wash-Up Tour***

In early October, as a reward to ourselves for the work put in the month before for the South Devon Beer festival in East Street, we took ourselves off on a jaunt.

After an uneventful journey, during which we were soaked by a 15 min cloudburst and had to vacate the no 12 bus due to smoke pouring from the engine, we joined two other members on the next bus, arriving in Newton Abbot for our coach. Eighteen people set off for Moretonhampstead and before long the sweets were circulating at a rapid pace. Is this good drinking fodder?

On arrival, a leisurely stroll was enforced while we waited for opening time. At last – the first of the day, in the Union Inn, a real gem of a pub and the first of several. They had three of their own branded beers on, Union BB, Nods and Pale Ale, actually brewed by Red Rock, all at £2 a pint! There was also London Pride and Grays Medium Cider.

Soon we had to leave and onward to the Ring of Bells, Chagford. Here they were serving Teignworthy Reel, Dartmoor Jail Ale, Butcombe Bitter and Hunter's Pheasant Plucker. Conversation claimed me, so I stayed there, but several of our party also visited The Globe where they sampled Courage BB, Dartmoor IPA Red Rock Bitter and Otter Ale.

An hour later and we were on our way to Sticklepath and two excellent pubs. The Taw River Inn served Tribute, Doom Bar, Sharp's Own and Otter Amber all at £2 per pint, plus Green King Abbot at £2.20. After a couple of quick halves, it was a brisk walk to the Devonshire Inn to sample St Austell Tinner's, £2 a pint and HSD at £2.20, straight from the casks. This is a traditional pub, stone floors, low beamed ceiling, open fires and good conversation. Could it get any better?

Yes it did! Back onto the coach, and soon we were receiving a warm welcome from the landlord at the Tom Copley at Spreyton. An excellent buffet was provided and a very pleasant three hours spent partaking in some of the twenty-one beers available, all at £2.50 per pint. These included beers from Bay's, Cotleigh, St Austell, Harviestoun's, Cottage, Bath, Queran and Dartmoor. Some of us also sampled Sandford Orchard Cyder – delicious.

All too soon, it was homeward bound – a good day had by all. Vicky Atkinson

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## ***South Devon CAMRA visit Hunter's Brewery***

Recently, on a brewery trip to Hunter's Brewery, Paul Walker, the brewer and owner, greeted us when we arrived and gave us all a pint of Hunters Gold, which had been set up on hand pump on the bar. He then gave us a guided tour around his well laid out brewery, explaining everything in detail and showing us his current brew, which was Slaughtered Lamb, a special cherry beer for Halloween. His first year of brewing had not been easy, as he had to overcome deficiencies in the brewing plant that he had purchased new. Inadequate water heaters were part of the problem but with some re-welding and refurbishment he finally got everything working properly, as proved by the beer we were drinking whilst he talked, which was going down a treat.

Amongst his many customers is a celebrity chef in Weymouth, who has Mussel Ale and Oyster Stout specially brewed and bottled by Hunter's, as a perfect accompaniment to shellfish. Paul explained that he is a firm believer in bottle conditioned beer, where the beer has a secondary fermentation in the bottle to produce its sparkle and therefore has a small yeast residue left in the bottom from this very natural process. When we had finished our tour, we were treated to a barbecue of hot dogs washed down with plenty of beer. Everybody agreed that we had enjoyed this pleasant and interesting afternoon.

Tony Woodwork

<b>Ad Size</b>	<b>1 issue</b>	<b>2 issues</b>	<b>3 issues</b>	<b>Year</b>
1/4 page	40	55	70	80
1/2 page	50	75	100	120
Full page	70	110	150	190
Back page				250

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## ***Dartmoor Rover***

Sunday Sept.11th heralded the annual invasion of Dartmoor by bus-bound S. Devon Camra members. Nine of us met at Newton Abbot to board a bus for Tavistock. We left Ashburton, with most of us standing on the already-full bus, and once on the narrow moorland lanes, the bus's progress was somewhat impeded by having to follow a wayward pony for some distance, until it could get off the roadway. Pony passed, it was on to Tavistock and a short wait for a bus to Gunnislake where, on arrival, it was finally time to visit a pub. The Queen's Head at Albaston offered Butcombe Bitter, Doom Bar, and Courage Best - all in good condition. Back down the hill in Gunnislake, we then visited the Rising Sun, serving Dartmoor Legend, Otter Bitter and Betty Stoggs. The Tavistock Arms, where we took lunch, had 6X and also Doom Bar direct from the barrel.

Once replete, and a subsequent 10 minute bus ride later, we were back in Tavistock in time for our next connection - to Okehampton, and a perennial favourite on our moorland jaunts, the Plymouth Inn. On this occasion, it had Penpont Roughtor and Betty Stoggs - both out of the barrel, and both in excellent condition. An hour's stay later, it was off to Exeter, and our final stop of the day, the Old Firehouse. Here we chose between Castle Rock Black Gold; Triple fff Alton's Pride; and Hobgoblin - again all on gravity dispense, and all eminently drinkable. At this late stage of the day, though, we all deemed it sensible to forego this pub's outstanding choice of five 'real' ciders.

With thanks to Phil Stevens for once again organising an enjoyable day out.

Peter O'Nions

## Website News.....

It has been a while since I checked our web statistics and was pleasantly surprised to see that at present our website is averaging 75000 web page views a month. Close to the September Beer Festival this rises to around 100000 monthly page views and during the winter months traffic drops considerably with February having the lowest monthly figure of around 40000. The beer festival and brewery pages are generally the most popular.

The monthly statistics do not include the back issues of News and Brews, as they are stored online as PDF files. These are becoming increasingly popular and since we started uploading them in mid-2008 between them all, they have generated 100000 views. The Summer 2009 edition has been the most popular so far with 25000 views!

The site traffic continues to rise and has grown four-fold in the six years since I took over the role as webmaster. The biggest leap in interest in was in 2008, when back issues of News and Brews first went online. Many of our visitors (474000 since Jan 2005) have found our site using search engines with unsurprisingly Google being the most popular. The most popular keywords used to find our site are:

283263 Devon	39565 Abbot
154064 beer	37708 pubs
110326 festival	32552 ale
108834 south	31622 festivals
99144 Camra	28963 inn
64413 brewery	23974 breweries
52303 in	22625 the
44464 cider	22364 pub
44215 Newton	21419 real.

It is perhaps interesting to see that the words real and ale are only the 18th and 12th most popular. CAMRA HQ has sent us 88000 visitors and is our most popular referring site after Google.

We have had visitors from all over the world with the USA, Russia, Germany, Australia and Ireland being the most common so far in November 2010, though this varies considerably from month to month. Interestingly, for the past couple of months we have had a visitor who accessed our pages from the Seychelles!

The site is at it is busiest on a Tuesday at lunchtime and then again at 4pm and quietest at 6am on a Saturday!

Ant Veal

*(Ed -To all our overseas readers –welcome. If you are our Seychellois reader – a special ‘Hi’. Wherever you are, drop us a line about the ale in your part of the world.)*

## ***Camra Christmas Quiz—brews and breweries***

- 1) Exeter St.Davids to Exmouth
- 2) Ancient Dickens book without the retail unit
- 3) River of North East Italy flowing from the Apennines to the Adriatic Sea, but you are warned not to cross it
- 4) Large jar containing all the evils of the world
- 5) Defunct express from Paddington to Shrewsbury and Aberystwyth
- 6) 16th January to 23rd February 1991
- 7) 87 miles through the North Wessex Downs and Chilterns
- 8) 5071
- 9) Bitter for the capital = Providence
- 10) Diminutive, which needs to be expanded, that includes Hounslow, Heathrow, Brentford, Richmond and Staines
- 11) Sounds similar to a statistical theorem whereby two conditional probabilities are the reverse of each other
- 12) What came out of Medusa after Perseus had beheaded her?
- 13) Model of Mazda, a local wind in Southern California, an alcoholic cocktail and a type of apple
- 14) Poet who gave was named after a reservoir in Staffordshire, which is then followed by a curry
- 15) Wharf, Norwich FC or detector of carbon dioxide in mining
- 16) Victor over Cycloped, Novelty, Perseverance and Sans Pareil
- 17) Genius gives an order for a German beer or more correctly one stone
- 18) Boys conscripted to work in the mines 1943-48
- 19) Born 1804 near Midhurst in Hampshire, became Liberal MP for Stockport in 1841 and a free trader
- 20) Oxford College founded 1899 and named after art critic and social thinker (1819-1900)
- 21) Alloy of tin, antimony and copper followed by cream
- 22) Blonde for 19th century Prime Minister's nickname
- 23) Don Pacifico was certainly one of these for Henry John Temple
- 24) Adventures of Ulysses returning from Ithaca and the siege of Troy
- 25) Seaweed stout!
- 26) Newt like amphibian found in Mexican lakes
- 27) One who stops up seams in ships with oakum or other waterproof material?
- 28) John Wilkinson + Abraham Darby 111 + Pritchard as architect produced what?
- 29) Canonised + gold + canonised again + 45 inches!
- 30) Alexander George Thynne
- 31) John Boorman directed in 1972 and based on a novel by James Dickey?
- 32) Falkirk iron works founded in 1759 producing a lethal naval weapon improved by John Wilkinson
- 33) Scottish ale for English Premier League ground
- 34) Written by Richard Rogers and Lorenz Hart in 1934
- 35) Whose statue by William Hamo Thornycroft stands at Barras Bridge Newcastle?
- 36) What links Hyde Park in 1851 with the Champs de Mars in Paris 1867 and 1889?
- 37) A pint for all the brave men of Talavera, Rolica, Vimerio and Orthez
- 38) Sympetrum Sanguineum
- 39) Died 3 days after his evangelical quest finally became law in 1833
- 40) Russian for eye + 100 + town in Greater Manchester

***answers on back fly-leaf***

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W [www.baysbrewery.co.uk](http://www.baysbrewery.co.uk) E [info@baysbrewery.co.uk](mailto:info@baysbrewery.co.uk)





# What's On

## Branch Meetings and Social Events

Date	Time	Purpose	Location
Sat 11 Dec		Christmas Meal and Social	Union Inn, Moretonhampstead
Sat 8 Jan 11	11.00	South Hams Tour	Newton Abbott—outside train station
Tues 11 Jan 11	20.00	Branch Meeting	Blue Anchor, Teignmouth
Tues 8 Feb 11	20.00	Branch Meeting	Royal Oak, South Brent

## Beer Festivals

14-15 Jan 2011      22nd Exeter Festival of Winter Ales.      Exeter Football Club.  
60+ Winter only brews and specials, plus festive cider and perry.

### ***Bridford Inn diversifies nicely!***



The Bridford Inn at Bridford has had new owners since April, and when we visited had two ales from Exmoor (Stag and Fox) plus Jail Ale, Tribute and Doom Bar. Their website boasts that they have a weekly changing choice of cask ales from different brewers across Devon. We certainly got a good welcome, and were impressed by the new décor.

The village shop is inside the pub, and there are jazz and folk nights in the offing. I also noticed that they have poker and Mah Jong on Tuesdays and Sundays respectively.



Dartmoor Brewery  
Station Road  
Princetown  
Dartmoor  
PL20 6QX  
Tel: 01822 890789  
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### **Contact Us.**

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# Hole in the Wall



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## ***Pubs in pain, but real ale makers' cup runneth over***

So read the *Guardian* headline in late September. Real ale is apparently enjoying a revival as younger drinkers and women embrace the drink, which is shredding its traditional "flat cap" image. "Food appears to be the key to this renaissance with sales booming in pubs where sophisticated consumers are choosing ale in preference to wine with their meal. Cask drinkers typically have a high disposable income, visit pubs more often and spend more time in them." According to the *Cask Report*, the real ale market grew by 5% in 2009 and gained 100,000 new drinkers against a 2% decline in the overall UK beer market. Real ale now accounts for 15% of total beer volumes in pubs and is consumed by 8.6m people with the number of drinkers aged 18-24 growing by 17%. Ale's image as a northern drink is long out of date as 42% of all cask volume is sold in London and the South East and the latter's 24% share far exceeds its share of the UK population. In fact cask is under-represented in the north, largely because "northern brands" such as John Smiths and Boddingtons are in decline....but Scotland saw a growth of 31% - a testament to the country's burgeoning craft brewing industry. Pete Brown, the report's author said....."We have become more thoughtful about our purchases and we're looking for tradition, provenance and wholesomeness – all values that real ale can provide in spades" (sic).

At first, as one of the 8.6m, I was delighted by the message that my personal preferences were becoming more popular, but a sense of uneasiness then set in. What could be wrong with this piece of economic journalism? Perhaps that is the point in that it was not very economic consisting of a barrage of statements and statistics without any real or proper analysis. A lot has been written about women's participation in the leisure industries, but their reasons for choosing real ale, or going into pubs, were not discussed. Disposable income was thrust forward as an explanation that would also explain the importance of the South East and younger people's involvement, but exactly how or why? The relationship between income, consumption and recession is a complicated one and it would be perfectly feasible to argue that consumption of a non-necessity such as beer would be heavily curtailed during a recession. The closest we get to an answer is in the phrase "tradition, provenance and wholesomeness" with real ale seen as a non-industrial product using only natural ingredients. Who exactly are the authors of the *Cask Report* and what were their motives? Were they a pressure group masquerading as a business intelligence unit? How accurate are their figures and where did they come from? Basically, we read what we want to believe. If the *Guardian* could have done better, how did the rest of the Press fare? The *Telegraph* is often confused between business and economics and so it proved to be with similar statistics and again offering little analysis, but being more concerned with profits and dividends within the industry. It also managed to merge it with information from the not unbiased Tax Payer's Alliance pressure group. The Mail whilst offering "Cheers for drinkers" was unable to resist mentioning possible health and public order implications (real ale mayhem in the High Street!)

Economic journalism is not what it used to be.

Bob Southwell

## ***South Hams Pub Wins Accolade***

The Millbrook Inn at South Pool in South Devon recently scooped the top prize in October at the Restaurant Show held at Earls Court, London where chef Jean-Philippe Bidart and his team won the prestigious Gastropub Challenge.

The competition tests the skills of both the kitchen and front of house with four hours given to prepare a three-course meal for eight served with the appropriate wine. Five top Gastro Pubs were invited from around the country to compete in this prestigious event. Two panels of judges – back and front of house – ranked the food and service of each team and the overall winner was the one with the highest combination of points.

Ian Dent, who runs the pub with his wife Diana Hunt, said: "It was an incredible experience. We have developed the Millbrook to be a community pub with exceptional food and it has been judged as the very best you can get. We are very proud of all our team as this is about the whole team working together to produce food of an exceptional quality".

Ian and Diana took over the pub four years ago and since then have established it as one of the top eating destinations in the South Hams while ensuring it has become the hub of the local community. Most recently they have added The Veg Shed to the premises, a shop no bigger than a small wardrobe that is constantly open and relies on an honesty box for those who purchase locally produced fruit, veg, eggs, sausages and bacon.

"It's our way of bringing a local shop back for the community. It's totally non-profit making but it enables locals to sell their surplus fruit and veg. "Our nearest shop is almost three miles away", said Ian

In addition to top food, The Millbrook Inn also takes care of its beer and is currently serves a selection of well-kept real ales.

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## ***Brewery Tap - an everyday story of drinking men.***

I was on another visit to London but I was not to be allowed out on my own! I had previously mentioned that I would not mind visiting the nearby William IV in Leytonstone. This was the home of the Sweet William Brewery but the last time I visited it the brewery had stopped brewing and I was offered Deuchars IPA and Doom Bar. I had, many years ago, had the pleasure of drinking Doom Bar in Polzeath, Cornwall so it did seem a bit like giving ice cream to the Eskimos.

However, on Sunday afternoon, the clouds came over and we were stuck indoors. My son, Ads, also likes a pint but the last time he had been to the William IV, it had been full of football fans and a bit riotous. Still, we thought Sunday afternoon should be different.

Suddenly the heavens opened and it poured with rain but unbelievably we were offered a lift to the pub; perhaps the ladies just wanted to get rid of us.

The William IV is a great pub, large, two bars, loads of good wooden panelling and a lovely horseshoe-shaped bar with lots of hand pumps all selling Brodies beers, the new name of the brewery out the back.

We sat in the back bar where 20 or so locals were watching cricket on TV. England were playing and doing well.

Beer, where to start?

I had a pint of Mild 3.6%, dark traditional and easy to drink.

Ads had the Pecan Ale 4%, he said it was ok but to be honest I did not like it at all. Next Californian 5.3%, very hoppy and very drinkable - I recommend it.

Ads had the Amarilla 4.2% -light fresh and hoppy  
But wait a moment, check the hand pumps and time: we cannot pint them all before dinner so down to halves from now on.  
I had a little wander outside and on the other side of a courtyard was another building immediately recognisable as the brewery. Being Sunday, it was closed up so I could not see much more than the piles of casks stacked up beside it.

Back to the beer and we then tried

English best 3.9%, all English ingredients beautiful and hoppy.

Georges Pride 4%, even better.

Then Red 4.3%, an Irish style beer fruity and light.

Finally, and deliberately left to last, the Superior London Porter 7.2%; really brilliant, but dinner called.

The rain had stopped, England had won the cricket and I was happy, but as we walked home I had a moment of despair  
- we hadn't tried the IPA!  
Roger Adams





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### ***Festival at Merchants Inn, Rugby***

Whilst enjoying the canals of the Midlands in October, I arranged to meet an old beer drinking acquaintance who suggested we go to the Merchants Inn in Rugby as it was the week of their beer festival. I had visited this superb GBG listed pub before, and could not wait to see what their beer festival was like.

The pub, in Little Church Street, normally served up to ten real ales and typically six to eight ciders or perrys. The beer festival, which lasts for a week, featured ninety-one beers, eleven ciders and four perrys. A wide range of strengths and styles from around the UK was available with up to fifty at each session. Devon was represented by Gargoyles of Dawlish with Chocolate Stout and Dawlish Pale Ale, plus Hunters of Ipplepen with Half Bore, Full Bore and the cherry flavoured Slaughtered Lamb. The atmosphere in this large pub, which has a magnificent breweriana collection, was superb, as was the beer. I met a number of CAMRA members from the local branch including a couple who had visited the August South Devon Railway Beer Festival. They promised to return there again, and I will certainly be back at the Merchants.

Their next festival runs from Monday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2011 to Sunday 24 and I think it just the place to follow up a long session at the Maltings Festival in Newton Abbot. Details to be had at [www.merchantsinn.co.uk](http://www.merchantsinn.co.uk) Ian Hemphill

## ***Wetherspoons Beer Festival , Autumn 2010***

Wetherspoons hold beer festivals in April and again in the autumn. The beers are often 'one-offs' from British breweries plus a small selection of overseas beers, although in some cases these beers are brewed in this country. This time around there was a total of 50 beers which were obviously commissioned to represent a range of tastes and flavours and to include the highly unusual. Prices per pint varied from £1.69 (Swindon) to £1.90 (Bristol) and the vast majority of those sampled were in Southern England south of a line from Cardiff to London and mainly accessed by Great Western trains. Some had only 2/3 available whilst others had 20 plus on offer. Most of the beers were in reasonable or good condition, but there were a few exceptions, but perhaps that was how the beers were meant to taste! My first beers were at the Imperial, Exeter, on opening day on gravity in the Orangery and were excellent. Unfortunately, by Friday they were no longer in the best of condition, which probably reflects the problem of keeping gravity beer cool in a very crowded pub. All beers sampled were half pints and despite the advertising concerning the availability of 1/3 pint tasters these rarely seemed to be being used or even available.

Some of the beers could best be described as speciality offerings in that they contained strong and distinctive ingredients. **Lees Chocoholic** (3.6%) did not spare on the chocolate, but was a little too sweet with a low alcoholic content unable to 'punch through' and as a result was the sort of beer which was great for a half, but a pint would have been too much. By contrast, **Tom Wood's Vanilla Orchid**, **Traditional Scottish Ales Double Espresso** and **Mordue's Coriander 1879** were better balanced with strengths of 4.8/4.9% and able to easily cut through their very strong flavours. **Banks's UCB** (ultimate curry beer) claimed to be able to be complex enough to accompany any curry, but was excellent by itself. **Cotleigh's Ettaler Lager Ale** claimed to be Bavarian in Style, but was not like any lager or Bavarian beer I had ever tried before and was in fact far too malty. The foreign beers were a mixed bunch with the American offering from **Samuel Adams (Blonde Ambition** at 5.5%) brilliant, as you would expect from the dominant cascade hops. The Italian beer was a pleasant surprise (**Birra del Borgo Castagnale** at 4.4%) with a gentle chestnut flavour. However, the other international beers were a disappointment. The Sri Lankan **Lion Stout** was too thin despite its 5% strength, the **Palm Blond** from Belgium and The **Flying Dutchman Juniper** were both too sweet and sadly out of condition. Elsewhere, **Brewdog** actually produced a very low gravity beer by their standards (Edge 3.2%) and was one of the two milds, being much smoother than the **Banks and Taylors Black Squirrel** which was a little too rich for my taste. I generally associate RCH with dry hoppy beers, but their **Strawberry Line** was gentle on the palate and very drinkable.

My top five beers were in first place **Samuel Adams Blonde Ambition** (Newton Abbot) followed by **Bank's UCB** (Woking), **Thornbridge Lumford** (Salisbury), **Harvieston Wild Hop** (Bristol) and **Hilden's Scullions Single X Plain Porter** (Bath) and it follows that all of these beers were in tip top condition. The best range in good condition was difficult to choose between Woking and the Knights Templar in Bristol. We will all have to wait until next April for the next festival.  
P.S I tried all 50 of the beers over the 20 day period, but they were halves!  
Bob Southwell

## ***Good for Competition? Maybe not?***

The Office of Fair Trading has decided in its wisdom that the way that PubCos work does not hurt pub customers, and so has decided to stand by its original decision and take no action in breaking the beer tie.

They have further gone on to say that it is good for competition. I often wonder how they come to these fat-headed decisions. It would appear that they can be extremely selective in the evidence that they take into account. The OFT seems to ignore the evidence of tied pub landlords and their treatment by some of the larger pub companies. If an organisation such as CAMRA, with its 100,000 plus members (not to mention the British Beer and Pub Association) can show concern, and has asked the OFT to review their decisions on two occasions, it would seem obvious to me that the experience of some landlords is not unfounded. Perhaps members of the OFT should come and talk to me. I can tell them of a landlord who spends £30 above the price he could buy beer straight from the brewery, or another landlord who has worked out that so far this year he has paid £12,000 over the odds for the beers that he ordered through his PubCo. Bear in mind that these Pubcos do nothing for the extra money. The landlord orders the beer through his Pubco, who then pass the order on to the brewer or wholesaler (or maybe the landlord orders direct). The brewer or wholesaler then delivers the beer to the pub and the landlord pays the Pubco for that beer. They pocket anything from £30-£50 per 9 gallon barrel plus any discount they negotiated with the brewer/wholesaler, and send the remainder onto the supplier. PubCo mandarins sit spiderlike in an office and calmly watch the publican and supplier make and present the ale that you find in your local pub. There is only one group of people that pay this extra levy, and that is us, the consumers. But we are not being disadvantaged according to the OFT. So when a tied house in the same area as a free house is paying as much as one third more for its beer, where do you think the advantage lies? Particularly as the free house can access a wider selection of ales.

The bigger PubCos do not even brew beer, but they still tie their landlords, and sometimes to ales that are brewed 100s of miles away from point of sale. Pubs may be within a stone's throw of a local brewery, but they can't have that beer. Where do carbon footprints and food miles figure in that?

SOUTH DEVON CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR 2001

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## Quiz Answers

*Don't cheat!*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 21) Britannia   | 1) Avocet and the name of the railway line                              |
| 22) Dizzy Blonde after Benjamin Disraeli                | 2) Old Curiosity Shop   |
| 23) Palmerston's Folly                                  | 3) Rubicon  |
| 24) Odyssey   | 4) Pandora's Box  |
| 25) Bladderwrack  | 5) Cambrian Coast Express   |
| 26) Axolotl   | 6) Desert Storm   |
| 27) Caulker   | 7) Ridgeway   |
| 28) First Iron bridge                                   | 8) GWR Castle class locomotive  |
| 29) St. Austell   | 9) Rhode Island Red   |
| 30) Marquess of Bath                                    | 10) Twickenham from TV postcode   |
| 31) Deliverance   | 11) Bays from Bayes theorem and hence sounds like                       |
| 32) Carronade   | 12) Pegasus   |
| 33) St. Andrews and home of Birmingham City             | 13) Sundowner   |
| 34) Blue Moon   | 14) Rudyard Ruby from Kipling and rhyming slang                         |
| 35) Armstrong   | 15) Canary  |
| 36) Exhibition – Great Exhibition and Paris Exhibitions | 16) Rocket beating the other locomotives in the Rainhill Trials of 1829 |
| 37) Peninsular Pint as Peninsular War                   | 17) Ein Stein   |
| 38) Ruddy Darter  | 18) Bevin Boys  |
| 39) Wilberforce and the abolition of the slave trade    | 19) Richard Cobden  |
| 40) Glastonbury = Glas + ton + Bury the town            | 20) Ruskin  |

Richard Knibbs, licensee of Ye Olde Cider Bar, Newton Abbot last month won CAMRA's national Pomona Award for his dedication to real cider and perry.

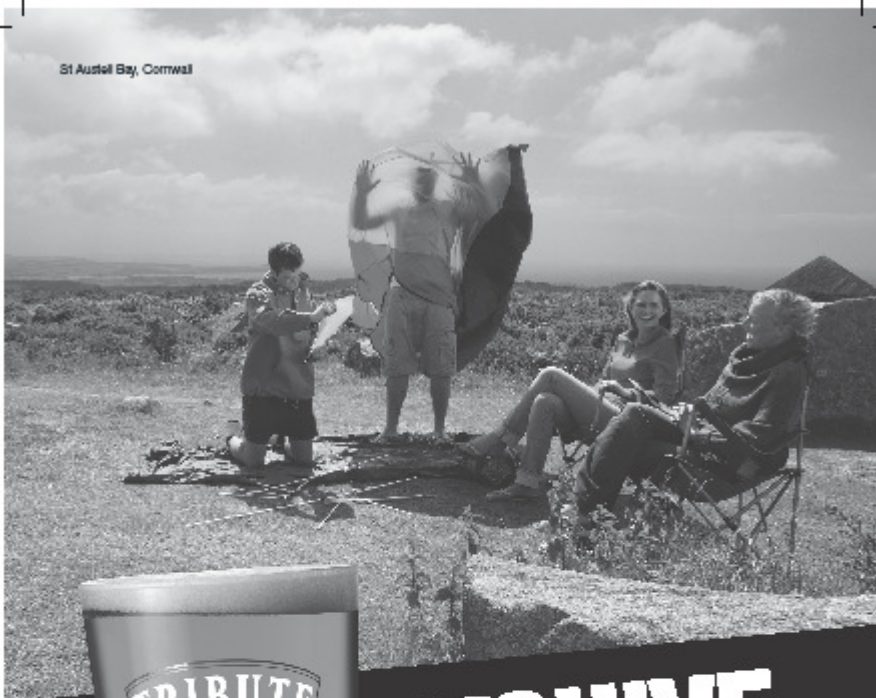
CAMRA's annual Pomona Award is named after the Roman Goddess of apples and is presented to the person, place or thing that has done the most to promote real cider or perry in the last 12 months or for their ongoing outstanding work in this field. CAMRA judged that Richard had provided the community of Newton Abbot with an outstanding range of quality real cider and perry for the last 40 years in a bar that has changed very little in the last 100 years.

This newsletter is published by the  
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and Vicky Atkinson

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St Austell Bay, Cornwall



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