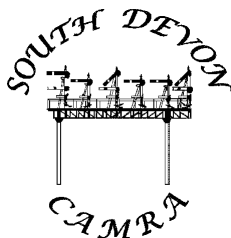


NEWS AND BREWS

**SPRING
2010**

FREE

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



**South Devon
CAMRA**

*Supporting Real Ale
in the South West*

Welcome to **NEWS AND BREWS**

29TH EDITION SPRING 2010

From the content of this magazine it is clear that South Devon CAMRA members enjoy being mobile, hunting for good beer. At the March Meeting, providing we have visited every pub, we get the opportunity to vote for our South Devon CAMRA Pub of the Year (or POTY for short). The pubs are compared for several criteria, which include beer quality; atmosphere; style and décor; service and welcome; value for money; clientele mix; and sympathy with CAMRA aims. The highest scoring becomes our POTY and receives our sought after certificate. They are then put forward for Regional Pub of the Year against all South West branch-winning pubs from Gloucester down, and if successful there, National Pub of the Year. Several of our short-listed pubs have appeared in previous POTY votes, which indicate consistency in the quality of the service provided.

The pubs in the running this year are:

The Queen's Arms, Slapton

The Rugglestone Inn, Widecombe

The Teign House Inn, Christow

The Wild Goose, Combeinteignhead

The next issue will give the results but all of them would be worthy winners, and all of them deserve a visit

Cheers, Tina Hemmings, Editor

Cover picture— The Pigs Nose, East Prawle



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

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BREWERY NEWS

Last Christmas was good for three local breweries as **Bays** at Paignton, **Red Rock** at Teignmouth and **Teignworthy** in Newton Abbot, all reported sales of beer increasing dramatically on last year's figures. Bays sold 40,000 pints of its one-off festive Jingle Ale, and Red Rock Brewery said beer sales had risen by between 25 and 30 per cent on December 2008. Teignworthy said that both its festive Reel Ale and Santa's Tale 4% abv had sold fantastically well this Christmas. All three breweries said they had plans to expand this year, which will mean more local jobs in 2010.

Bays Gold has been seen by thousands of viewers being guzzled by students in the much-hyped new ITV2 series Trinity. The eight-part drama was set in an Oxbridge-like university, and product placement on national television was organised by lead actress Antonia Bernath, who played student Charlotte Arc and who in real-life is the girlfriend of Bays Brewery director Pete Salmon. Antonia said: "Bays was everywhere on the set. It was almost a game we had to see how many bottles of Bays Gold we could spot."

Dartmoor Brewery has recently launched a new beer called Legend 4% abv. It has been described to me as 'a mid brown beer with a good balance of malt and hops, giving a complex taste with initial malty and bitter flavours and leading to a lasting dry and bitter finish. A good example of a best bitter.' The brewery has recently taken possession of two new 60 gallon fermenting vessels, and now has a brewing capacity of 300 barrels per week. They are also the first brewery in the country to be marketing their own brand of crisps.

In September 2009, Geoff and Clare, who for many years ran the Manor Inn at Lower Ashton, took over the old Scattor Rock brewery, and are now making two beers on the 4 barrel plant, which has been renamed **Gidley's Brewery**. The hoppy and golden Meadow 4.5% abv can be found at the Palk Arms, and Spinney 4.1% abv, a red ale with a malty flavour can often be found at the nearby Teign House Inn and at the Mare and Foal at Yeoford. They name their beers using a landscape theme and they hope to add a summer ale when the weather improves.

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Lunchtime and evening meals -

a la carte meals in the evening.

The Albert Inn in Totnes, home of **Bridgetown Brewery** has recently tweaked the recipes of both its main beers, Albert Ale and Realativity. The last visit by South Devon CAMRA members found both beers much improved and in March, the Albert will be serving its 100th brew since it started brewing in 2008. To mark the occasion a brewer friend from Cornwall has been invited to assist the brewing process.

South Hams Brewery in Stokenham continues to produce its three core brands of Devon Pride, XSB and Eddystone. Seasonal ales have also been popular; Devon Porter; Knickadroppa Glory and the Christmas beer - Sleigh'd. Towards the end of 2009, they brewed a new beer - Old Pedantic. A low AVB of 4.0% made this a popular session beer and they had to do two additional brews to meet the demand. This beer will make way soon for the spring beer, Wild Blonde, always available throughout the summer months. They bottle all their beers and these are available by mail order from Tuckers Maltings at Newton Abbot and other local outlets.

Quercus has been asked to produce a beer to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of The South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The beer is named Natural Beauty 4.4% ABV, and will also be available in bottles. The launch is to be held in March and a Government Minister will be attending. Congratulations to Pete Walker the brewer, as he has recently become a father for the 5th time.

Hunter's Brewery, a micro brewery trading from a farm near Ipplepen since September 2008, produces 7 beers based on a hunting theme, from Crack Shot 3.8% abv to Full Bore 8%abv. Pheasant Plucker 4.3%abv was drinking very well when we came across it at the Church House Inn, Harberton recently. They intend to start bottling beers soon, and will be represented at the Tuckers Maltings Beer festival at Newton Abbot in April.

Ringmore Brewery have just commissioned a new 2.5 Barrel plant.

Contact Us.

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Visit our award-winning Web Site at www.southdevoncamra.com

BRANCH ON TOUR.....

One Saturday in January, the branch chartered a minibus to explore the pubs of the South Hams- probably the least-covered part of our area. The minibus picked up most of the party in Newton Abbot - all except for the Secretary, who insisted on being picked up at home in Ipplepen, which was presumably his price for organising the day's itinerary.

With him on board we were able to press on to our first stop of the day, the Fortescue Arms at East Allington, which opened an hour early especially for us. Our resident South Hams member, who had dragged himself out of Slapton for the occasion, met us here. This welcoming village pub has two bar areas and a separate Restaurant, as well as a nice garden with a covered Marquee. We were offered three well-kept beers, which turned into four, as one barrel needed changing whilst we were there.

From here, we went to Frogmore, and the Globe Inn-a new entry in the 2010 Good Beer Guide. This roadside pub has been much altered, with the bar moved to the back and two separate areas created-each with a real fire and wooden floors. Along with Otter Ale and Betty Stoggs, there was the first 'Locale' of the day-Eddystone, from the South Hams Brewery.

After lunch at the Globe, it was off to the farthest point of our quest, the Pig's Nose at East Prawle. This remote and hospitable pub is a long-standing G.B.G. entry, and a cornucopia of esoteric artefacts. These include Toby Jugs, old radios, ships in bottles, and even a porcine Beefeater! On a more practical note, customers are encouraged to add a few lines to the various pieces of knitting that are dotted around the pub. Two of the three South Hams beers on offer are served by Gravity dispense, meaning the ale here is always top-notch. We sampled the quaffable Devon Pride, stronger Eddystone, and the new 'Old Pedantic', and were able to witness the replacing of a barrel on the top level of the stillage. This involved the use of a block-and-tackle arrangement to raise the new barrel to the required height, so that it could be manoeuvred into position on the stillage.

Back on the road, we were off in the now misty rain to the Millbrook Inn at South Pool, having to negotiate around the local Hunt, which was encamped at the side of the lane. On arrival, we had a choice of Otter Amber or two beers from the Red Rock stable, all already being enjoyed in this village pub that was remarkably busy for a wet Saturday afternoon. Not surprisingly, the rain had deterred anybody from sitting outside by the stream, in the company of the ducks that wander freely along its banks. *(continued on next page)*



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Continued.

For our final stop of the day, we first had the long haul back to Totnes. Here, our destination was the Albert Inn, home of the Bridgetown Brewery. The purpose of this visit was to monitor the two beers produced, and we were pleased to find that both the Albert Ale and the stronger Realaleativity had now overcome their initial teething problems, and were drinking well in what may well be the only Einstein-themed pub that there is.

Peter O'Nions

Vic Hall 1953-2009

Vic Hall, the landlord of the George Inn at Blackawton died suddenly on the 18 December, just a few days after his 56th birthday. He was a good friend to every person in Blackawton, and a welcoming and entertaining host, making everybody feel at ease when they visited The George. The beers that were available at the pub showed his appreciation for real ale, and he had recently converted a garage into a Beer Festival venue. He leaves a wife and two daughters.

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Roy and Heather Wheeler welcome all to the

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Pub News

During Cask Ale Week (29th March - 5th April) **The Ship Inn, Kingswear** will be launching a new Otter beer, **Otter Mild**. Many other beers will be available throughout the week, including **Adnams** cask conditioned **Irish Stout**.

The **Crown and Sceptre** in **St Marychurch** is taking part in the national CAMRA campaign 'Locale' where beer brewed within 30 miles is featured. **Gidley's Meadow** 4.5abv, was well received by his customers.

The **Royal Oak at South Brent** celebrated St David's day with **Sin Bin** from the Welsh microbrewery, **Breconshire**. **Keltek's Golden Lance** and **England's Glory** come soon.

The **Queens Arms Slapton** is running a mini Beer Festival from the 23rd to 25th April.

Reports are good about the quality of the beer at **The Wellington Inn Ipplepen**.

Pig's Nose at **East Prawle** was serving Old Pedantic 4.0%abv from **South Hams Brewery** this week. The beer was going down very well with the regulars.

The owners of the Meadfoot Inn recently bought the **Hesketh Arms** in Torquay. The Meadfoot Inn is to be converted into flats, and the Hesketh will remain as a pub.

The **Palk Arms** at Hennock was on the market, but is now thought to have been sold.

Bettesworths, the commercial property agents for the South West have a number of local pubs on the market, including more than 10 in Torquay, 2 in Shaldon and several in the South Hams

Shaldon Conservative Club will allow entry to card carrying CAMRA members. **Bay's Breaker** and **Teignworthy Reel** are the house ales with **Brain's Rev James** and **Stonehenge's First Signs of Spring** to appear as guests.

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The National 2010 Winter Ales Festival

Held at the Sheridan Suite, Oldham Road, Manchester on 20-23 January, this was the new home for the festival and was all on one floor. As I was experiencing this festival for the first time, I do not know how it had fitted into its previous home at the New Century Hall. On the 4 days I visited it with my friend John Williamson, we quickly found a seat to make our base. At each session the place was well packed, but despite that, I had no trouble making my way to the bar. The Champion Beer was Elland Brewery's 1872 Porter 6.5%. I am not keen on beer over 6% but this was worth tasting. Thornbridge's St Petersburg Russian Stout at 7.7% was well worth drinking too. Robinson's, the Manchester based brewery, had their own bar (where Old Tom 8.5% was going down well) as did Cain's Brewery. Harviestoun's Schiehallion at 4.8% (which has been a consistent hit at our South Devon Beer Festivals) went down a treat here. As in our Beer Festival, all the Breweries were in alphabetical order, so the beers on the programme were easy to find. One beer was too much for me to taste - Country Life's Devonshire 10der at 10.0%. German, Belgian, Dutch and other foreign beers were also for sale at the festival, and there was a large range of Real Ale in a Bottle.

The food at the Festival was superb. For £5, you could help yourself to hot food - a mixture of Asian and English. Thoroughly recommended!

Not all the beers were strong - Cain's Mild (3.2%), Fuller's Seafarer's Ale (3.6%) and Thwaites's Nutty Black at 3.3% were three that I tried, but I could go on and on. Only on the last day (Saturday), beer started to run out. This Festival will be a must in my diary for next year.

Colin Staines

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www.manorinngalmpton.co.uk

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.

What is a Free House?

Everybody has heard the term and nearly everyone until recently knew or thought they knew what it meant. Now, it sometimes seems unclear.

A Free House really came about from the Duke of Wellington's Beer Act, which was designed to break up the brewer's monopoly and bring inexpensive beer to everyone. Within six months of the Act, 25,000 new pubs were created, freeing up the pub trade for over a century and ushering in an era of cheap beer. Now that is my sort of politician.

My definition of a Free House is one that is owned, managed or tenanted by a licensee who can purchase their beer where they like, when they like, and charge what they like. This tends to result in lower beer prices, wider variety and beer the customer wants to drink, and is not governed by the brewery giving the biggest discount to the pub co (the current monopoly). As a possible secondary advantage, because they are not paying enormous rents Free Houses tend to be economically viable.

Here in Devon we have many free houses, supported by many small independent brewers and a huge variety of real ales. A good way of telling if a pub is free to choose is to watch the pump clips. If they remain monotonously unchanging, you may have a pubco owner. On price, the other week I went from the Union Inn Moretonhampstead a genuine Free House where a pint was £2.00, to one that belonged to a pub co (even though it said it was a Free House) and charged me £2.95 a pint. Therefore, you pays your money and takes your choice.

Anthony Woodwork

What's On

Branch Meetings and Social Events

Beer Festivals

Branch Meetings and Social Events

Date	Time	Purpose	Location
Tues 9 March 2010	20.00	Branch Meeting	Dartmoor Lodge, Ashburton.
Tues 13 April 2010	20.00	Branch Meeting	Manor Inn, Churston.
Sat 15th May 2010	Afternoon	Pub Crawl in Totnes	Branch Meeting and start at Bay Horse 12.00.
Tues 8 June 2010	20.00	Branch AGM	Court Park Farm, Abbotskerswell.
Sat 26 June 2010	11.00	Bus Tour round Torbay	Details to be advised.
Sat 10 July 2010	12.00	Branch Meeting & Social	Teign House Inn, Cristow.
Sat 14 Aug 2010	11.00	Social at Bays Brewery with Surrey, Hants & Cornwall Branch.	

Beer Festivals

2-4 April 2010	South Devon Diesel Society	Staverton Railway Station.
9-11 April 2010	Paignton Rugby Club Beer festival	Queens Park Road Paignton.
22-24th April 2010	SIBA Maltings Festival 2010	Tucker's Maltings, Newton Abbot.

3-4th September 2010 South Devon CAMRA Beer Festival

***** **Back at** St John Ambulance Hall, Newton Abbot *****

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An easy drinking light golden summer beer. The unique blend of English and Continental hops creates a juicy citrus overtones which lends the well balanced beer a bite. ABV 4.3%



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Dartmoor
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Ranging North ...

Having survived our excursion to the South Hams, 3 weeks later we were again in a minibus, this time headed for the North of our Branch Area. First stop this time was Moretonhampstead, and the Union Inn. This beamed G.B.G listed pub served London Pride; as well as 3 Red Rock beers that were sold by the pub under different names - a potentially dangerous practice, were it not for the fact that the staff willingly revealed their true identities when asked. A feature of the pub is several 'display cases' literally built into the wall on the way to the Conveniences. Contents include a selection of old cigarette-and-match-boxes, along with clay pipes and other ephemera. Whilst in town we decided to see what else was on offer. Over the road, the Bell served 2 perfectly acceptable ales. By contrast, those in the White Hart were both quite tired - evidence of a lack of throughput in this hotel bar perhaps.

Our next stop was Chagford, where we took lunch at the Globe: an across-the-board choice, accompanied by 3 beers (one of which was on Gravity dispense) which, whilst in good condition, at £2.95 a pint were somewhat dearer than the Union Inn's recession-busting £2 a pint. Elsewhere, the Ring of Bells had 3 well-kept beers; the Buller's 2 beers and a 'real' cider; and the 3 Crowns offered 3 beers including a Branch favourite, St Austell 'Proper Job'.

Then it was on to the Sandy Park Inn. Various black-and-white prints ranging from local scenes to sailing boats adorned the walls, and a fire blazed in the hearth in this cross-roads-located pub not far from Chagford. Very good Jail Ale, Otter bitter, and Yellowhammer were all flowing in this relatively - remote yet busy nonetheless Moorland Inn.

For our final stop of the day we headed into the Teign Valley. We arrived at the Teign House Inn just in time for the start of the England/Wales 6 Nations match. As well as very good Otter Amber and Jail Ale, we were offered 'Spinney' from the new Gidley's Brewery not far down the road - a 'local' end to an enjoyable day spent exploring the 'local' pubs of others in our Branch area.

Peter O'Nions

In Search of a Heritage Pub.... and a good pint

I love pubs, especially old historic pubs, and I am an avid reader of any books such as the National Inventory of interiors of pubs so I visit as many of these pubs as I can. Pubs are closing every day so I must get on with this!

Our children live in London and we visit quite regularly. My wife, Mary loves tennis and often goes to see live matches at Queen's, Wimbledon and the O2 arena. When Mary is off watching tennis, I am left alone to go on a pub-crawl. London has many National Inventory pubs and in December last year we had a few days in the big city and I did a lot of planning using the A-Z, tube maps, GBG and the NI book. You must always have a back up plan because it doesn't always go the way you imagine.

Pub One – The Salisbury, Haringey. GBG and a big write up in the London NI but closed and I have no idea why. Never mind - press on to Number 2 – The Beaconsfield is not far away and it was open. Very quiet but perhaps they don't drink too early in London and they only had London Pride and Greene King IPA on offer. A superb pub with a remarkable ornate ceiling, a large island bar, some good glass screens and an interesting round porch entrance. However, it was not too promising for food, so onwards.

Pub Number 3, Queens Hotel, Crouch End. Now this is a gem, designed by the same architect as the Salisbury, marvellous screens, ceilings and glass. I had an excellent pint of Bombardier and a very nice lunch. I spent quite a while soaking up the details of this great pub but others call - so onto Pub 4. The Great Northern Railway, Hornsey. Another fine pub but has had some refurbishment done. Unfortunately, their only real ale GK IPA was off, so I had to drink Guinness, but the décor made it still worth the visit.

Day 2. Another few pubs to visit, Clapham Junction here I come. Firstly the Windsor Castle, Battersea. There are many pubs called the Windsor Castle, this one was threatened with demolition but is still there and as great as ever. A drinker's pub with a lovely little front bar just right for drinking. Young's Bitter went down a treat as I ear wiggled the locals' conversation. Then just down the road to The Falcon – Wow - what a beauty. The outside is magnificent and inside is better. It is huge and has numerous original features, screens, glass panels and the longest bar in Britain apparently. Lots of beer – several that I had not heard of before: Cairngorm Autumn Fruits, Daleside Autumn Leaves. I sat by two old locals who had obviously been drinking there for years. They sit facing the windows so they can watch the busy street outside. They advised me on what to have for lunch and what to drink. They advised me on everything! I stayed in the Falcon for quite a long time but eventually had to go and meet the family at the O2 Arena. We ended up at another nice pub – not NI but GBG – King Edward VII at Stratford and another new beer – Nethergate Ladies Best.

Roll on my next visit to the Smoke.

Roger Adams

Hole in the Wall



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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.

Abbot Ale, Adnams, Bombardier and Guest Ales

Fine food, our chef having worked on the QE2

A miscellany of trains and beers around the Midlands.

A small number of CAMRA stalwarts recently (mid February) took on a tour of the Heart of England by train using the Good Beer Guide as their mentor, although in fairness, many of the pubs were already well known to us. However, should you contemplate any such venture in the future then there are a few things to be borne in mind.

Do not travel in the school's half term (as we did) as trains get very crowded and often with badly behaved children.

Have some form of rail pass or a Rail Rover that gives unlimited access to a wide geographical area on all train operating companies. These Rovers are available for all regions with a combination of availability (3 or 7 days etc) and subject to the usual discounts. In this case, we used the Heart of England Rover that covers a massive area; from Oxford in the South to Chester/Stoke-on-Trent in the north; and from the Welsh borders to Nottingham. Although these rover tickets are not well advertised they represent excellent value for money.

Go equipped with railway timetables which, since privatisation are company based, and very irritatingly do not include all services. This a confusing disgrace to the uninitiated.

Have a good working knowledge of local buses and especially in the Black Country where some of the best pubs are not on rail links (The Bull and Bladder, Batham's brewery tap, is a good example).

An up to date Good Beer Guide is essential, but beware of pub closures as we were let down twice (Leicester and Cradley Heath)

.Day 1. Oxford to Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Leicester, Derby, Stoke on Trent.

Wolverhampton.

The classic pub here is the **Great Western** next to the old lower level station and below the existing station. A superb range and quality of Holden's beers at £2.05 for the bitter plus Batham's bitter at £2.35. As the name might suggest, railway themes and pictures of the now abandoned lower level station in its heyday dominate. The food is excellent value and, all in all, an institution not to be missed. Not surprisingly, elsewhere in town is disappointing by comparison. We tried the **Wheatshaf** (Banks non GBG) with bitter at £2.23 a pint and mild 10p cheaper and the **Posada** (interesting name) with magnificent tiling, but a national range of beers. Deuchar's IPA was £2.70 a pint, very expensive for the area and not of great quality.

Leicester.

A relatively short walk from the railway station will take in a number of good free houses and pubs from independent brewers. As we were short of time, we just tried two.



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pub@tuckenhay.demon.co.uk

This newsletter is published by the
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Thanks to all our contributors - including Bob Southwell, Peter O'Nions, Ant Veale,
Anthony Woodward, Roger Adams, Ian Packham and Mike Fitzmaurice.

Last date for submission for the Summer magazine– 24 May 2010

CLIFFORD ARMS 34 FORE ST. SHALDON
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*A local pub recently completely
refurbished by landlords,
Mike & Linda Balster.*

Up to 5 Traditional Ales

*Featuring the new Oarsome Ale from
Ringmore Craft Brewery*

Fresh Daily Blackboard Menu



Ale and Rail (continued)

The **Ale Wagon** is the nearest and features Hoskin's beers all served up in what I would describe as a Spartan alehouse. We tried the HOB and porter priced £2.60/£2.70 before moving on to some of the free houses.

Unfortunately, **Vin IV** (formerly Out of the Vaults) was very much closed leaving nothing but good memories. **The Globe** in Silver Street is certainly open, serving Everard's beers and guests at £2.60+ a pint. Although much changed over the years it retains separate, and intimate drinking areas and is close to the town centre.

Derby.

An excellent beer drinking town, but being short of time we were confined to the magnificent **Brunswick** in the road opposite the station. Originally part of a railway village this is another not-to-be-missed institution serving both their own beer and guests with prices upwards from £2.20. Particularly recommended were the Brunswick Triple Hop and Whim's Weiss Bier (£2.80 and the most expensive). Many other pubs in Derby are more than worth visiting and especially the Flower Pots, but not on this occasion.

Stoke on Trent

I lived in the area briefly when Bass totally dominated. Still today, and without the Good Beer Guide, you are unlikely to 'bump into' good pubs/beer, but the **Titanic** brewery has made considerable inroads into beer desert territory. Recently reopened in Stoke itself, the **White Star** has 10 hand pumps serving a range of Titanic, Everards and rotating guests. The Titanic beers were all priced in the £2.20s and were all of excellent quality. Elsewhere (and on another visit), we travelled to Burslem where there are three GBG pubs within 2 minutes of each other. For some reason the **Bull's Head** (the Titanic brewery tap) was closed at lunchtime, but the **Leopard** (historical connections with Wedgwood, Brindley and the building of the Trent-Mersey canal) had a good range of independent beers and we tried the Blakemore Gold and the Quartz at £2.70. The **Post Office Stores** some 50 yards away was selling the excellent Jaipur IPA AT £2.70. However, the Potteries 'jewel in the crown' is the **Coach Maker's Arms** just below Hanley town centre/bus station. An oasis of tradition in area ravished by 1970s concrete and so called modernity, but unfortunately is under threat of further modernisation and demolition. Small, multi roomed, coal fires with incredibly friendly local locals, a wide range of clientele and an excellent range of beers (we tried beers from both Kelham Island and Woodlands at £2.80 although there were cheaper beers available) A visit is a must and hopefully it will survive and if not get there quickly.

Day 2. Wolverhampton to Crewe, Chester and Shrewsbury.

Chester.

An attractive city centre, but the three Good Beer pubs we tried were all on the Shropshire Union canal. Chester is obviously more affluent than afore-mentioned pubs, with prices pushing towards the £3 mark whilst the real ciders sell considerably at over that level. The first visit was the **Harker's Arms** just 5 minutes walk from the station and seemed to be a canal

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Beer and Buffers (continued)

warehouse conversion. Good range of interesting beer and Facer's Flintshire, Adnam's Old Ale and Weetham's Cheshire Cat were all in excellent condition for £2.90. There was also an extensive menu of ciders that were too good to miss, but at £3.50 a pint! A short walk along the canal will take you to the **Mill Hotel**. Basically, not a typical Good Beer Guide pub, being an hotel bar, but with 14 beers available and constantly rotating guests the reasons for its entry were obvious. In addition, we found the cheapest beer of the whole trip at £1.95, but prices were generally around the £2.80 mark (Enville Saaz and White).

Further along the canal is **Telford's Warehouse** and a relatively modern conversion with superb views over the canal and again with an interesting range of beer from Weetham, Hop Back, Thwaites and Inveralmond at about the £2.90 mark

Shrewsbury.

This wonderfully attractive town would have been best seen in daylight and has a large number of Good Beer Guide pubs with station signs. The **Loggerheads** is a national inventory pub Grade II listed building with separate rooms and is largely unspoilt and unchanged. There is nothing wrong with the beer from either Evan Evans or Bass at £2.60. The **Three Fishes** just around the corner had the excellent Thornbridge White Swan at £2.70 and the **Wheatsheaf** in the High Street saw Brakspear's Oxford Gold and Jennings Cumberland Ale at £2.70. I have made a note to return to Shrewsbury again as both a place to enjoy seeing as well as the pubs, but in the daylight hours.

Day 3.

Wolverhampton to Birmingham, Nottingham and Loughborough.

I can remember when Nottingham was a dominated by the three breweries of Home, Shipstone and Hardy Hanson, and had then the cheapest beer around. Unfortunately, all three have long gone, but the Castle Rock brewery has gone some way to replace them. Their brewery tap, the **Vat and Fiddle** is just outside the station. It is a good, straightforward and uncomplicated pub serving good value beer. The Harvest Pale Ale was just £2.10 a pint and the IPA £2.50. A short walk from the station in the opposite direction will take you to the **Canal House**. Again owned by Castle Rock, it is a more complicated affair with two narrow boats actually inside the pub and part of a redevelopment zone with a range of bars likely to appeal to the younger set in the evenings. As might be expected beer was a little more expensive at £2.70/2.80. Back along Canal Street is the **Newshouse** with Castle Rock (Harvest Pale at £2.30) plus guests (Bateman's Old Salem) and despite the busy road outside is well worth the effort.

Loughborough.

This was the last town to be visited and in heavy snowfall. The best pub has



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Points and Pints (conclusion)

always been the **Swan and Rushes** but is just about on the limit for a station sign. Again, Castle Rock was prominent, but there was a good range of guests including Devon's O'Hanlon's Port Stout.

Finally, and on the way back to the station, was the **Tap and Mallet** with even more variety for the region with Wolf beers and Oakham JHB (£2.60)

Conclusion.

Our travels covered many miles over several counties with an incredible range of beers. Prices varied considerably; from just under £2 to just short of £3. There were noticeable variations between regions, but the average was about £2.40. We also had to be selective as to where we visited and were forced to miss out some towns. We kept out of Birmingham City Centre, Coventry, Rugby, Hereford, Worcester, Gloucester, Northampton, Burton on Trent and much of the Black Country. The latter is well known for its independent breweries (especially Holden's and Bathams) but needs to be explored by bus with the exception of the Wolverhampton - Birmingham Snow Hill tram and the stopping train between New Street and Wolverhampton and Snow Hill - Stourbridge. Oh, and in case you are wondering how we could drink so much – mostly we drank by halves and there was a fourth day which involved repeat visits to some areas. Honest! Clearly, with what was missed out there is ample opportunity for a return visit.

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