This is the bi-monthly newsletter of the Lichfield, Sutton and Tamworth branch of CAMRA.

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or see
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LAST Orders

Lichfield, Sutton & Tamworth Branch CAMRA

Free Free Free

NEWS OF THE ALE WORLD

Edition 41
Apr / May 2012

CAMRA membership in March: 136,645

This issue ...

Metro Meandering

Haarlem Trotting

In Praise of Lager

CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

The bi-monthly CAMRA newsletter for
Lichfield, Atherstone, Sutton & Tamworth,
including
Chasetown, Shenstone, Rugeley, Whittington, Curdworth, Coleshill, Kingsbury and Polesworth

Good Beer Guide 2013

Next year's *Good Beer Guide* – the 2013 edition – won't be out until September this year, so you'll have to wait until then to find out what is in. Well almost. At the February selection meeting for Nuneaton & Bedworth branch, the submissions for the branch area were made public, at the pub where voting took place.

This most unusual move, sanctioned by CAMRA Area Organiser for Warwickshire, Andy Burt, revealed the seven candidates. The catch is that there are only six allocations; one of the seven is a reserve (to be used in emergency purposes, such as a pub closing before printing). We don't know which of the following is a reserve; the following are simply listed in alphabetical order.

- **Crown**, Bond Street, Nuneaton
- **Felix Holt**, Stratford Street, Nuneaton
- **Horseshoes**, Heath End Road, Nuneaton
- **Lord Nelson**, Birmingham Road, Ansley
- **Malt Shovel**, Grange Road, Hartshill
- **Royal Oak**, The Square, Attleborough
- **Weavers Arms**, Long Street, Bulkington

Our branch also selected for the *GBG*, some 27 pubs in all covering bits of Warwickshire, Staffordshire and the West Midlands. But you'll have to buy a copy of the *GBG* in September to find out what they are!

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Good Beer Guide listed!

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Welcome from Jean & Mark www.thegateinn.com

Sunshine Surveying

It was not sunshine that I was surveying of course but pubs for possible inclusion in the 2013 *Good Beer Guide*. On a sunny Saturday in January after an overnight frost some cycling/surveying was in order, the **Griffin Inn** at Shustoke being the first port of call. A warm welcome was assured in its low beamed interior (pictured right), courtesy of the wood burning stoves within, and gaffer Mike Pugh. A fruity, hoppy offering, *One of My Favourites* from the onsite brewery was sampled. Forever onward to the **Green Man** at Coleshill. Here Yates *Golden Bitter* was enjoyed in one of the quieter side rooms at this halfway house. On the return route was the ever popular **Gate Inn** at Nether Whitacre where the guest beer was *Boondoggle*, a citrusy and hoppy brew. Any hopes of some warming winter ales were dashed as the nearby **Dog Inn** had the similarly flavoured Lees *Rising Sun* among its choice of ales.

In the setting sun I headed homewards calling in at the **Rose Inn** at Baxterley en route for a *Bombardier*. Back in the **New Dolphin Inn** in Atherstone were two offerings from the Blythe brewery. *Staffie* with its juicy maltiness and assertive bitter finish. This was followed by *Palmers Poison* with its grain and caramel flavours and gentler bitterness. On a different occasion the Dolphin offered Kinver *Pail Ale* and the contrasting Byatts *Urban Red*.

A few weeks later on a sunny Sunday in February after another frosty night I cycled to the **Green Man** where on this occasion the guest beer sampled was Batemans *Hooker*. It had a pear drop aroma and flavour and a tangy bitterness. The **Gate Inn** at Nether Whitacre had a star beer on, *Galaxy*, one of the Marstons single hop variety beers, this time with Australia-grown hops. This Wizard from Oz lends a blackcurrant aroma to the beer and has passion fruit and citrus flavours and a lingering dry hoppiness. The nearby **Dog Inn** had some *Top Totty* to tempt me in. I would have preferred the real thing but made do with the liquid version. This pale beer had peach and apricot flavours with a zesty hoppiness.

One of the benefits of beer and bicycling apart from the fresh air and exercise is the varied birdlife you can see. These days buzzards are a common sight along with herons, kestrels and black-headed terns. Even cormorants are making an inland appearance.

The **Bulls Head** in Polesworth (window motif pictured) was also visited on a couple of separate occasions. On the first Ludlow *Boiling Well* with its toffee and caramel flavours was on offer, and on the second *Easy Rider* from Kelham Island which was sweet with subtle hints of citrus fruits.

We also surveyed a number of other Warwickshire pubs for the *GBG*. Want to know what made it to *GBG 2013*? Buy a copy in September to find out!

Eric Randall

Beer Snippets

Pubs in town centres may be breathing a sigh of relief after JD Wetherspoon announced that it was scaling down its pub opening plans. With 834 venues at present, they are now looking at about 1,400 in total, rather than the previous target of 1,600. Chairman Tim Martin doesn't think the Bullingdon Club boys are doing a good job: "I thought this government would start to moderate the approach to taxing the industry but since they're increasing it, it puts a question mark over our expansion plans."

At the other end of the market, BrewDog's bar-opening plans are rolling out confidently with the news that they expect to open ten additional UK bars this year. Five are currently in operation (Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Camden and Nottingham). Leeds is the next confirmed opening, with Brum and Manchester also expected to follow. There is even talk of this year seeing one outside the UK, possibly Tokyo – a bit too far to go even for BrewDog?

If you're not quite sure what the phrase 'Corporate Bullshit' means, then look no further than the AB Inbev press statement regarding the cuts in ABV of their yoof-brews of Stella Tortoise, Budricer and Becks. They'll all drop from 5.0% to 4.8%, saving the global fizz producer 2.5p per pint sold. So don't laugh too loud when you hear their spokesman say that: "This latest advance is another example of our commitment to customer focus, quality and offering consumers the widest possible choice."

For a slightly different example of corporate bullshit, look no further than BrewDog's blurb regarding the opening of their latest bar in Nottingham. Opened at the end of February at 20 Broad Street, the website claims that the venture "rises from the ashes of an abandoned, 100 year-old factory building." Aaah, aren't they lovely fellas, saving an unloved building which was ready to drop? Trouble is, it was actually a bar-restaurant called Shaws in its former life.

And so on to Government bullshit, with news that the Department of Health plans to reform the way it classifies hospital admissions as alcohol-related. The current figure of more than a million admissions a year is based on all health conditions recorded for each patient, not just the main reason that the patient is actually admitted. You've had a heart attack and you drink? Alcohol-related! The proposal should significantly reduce the figures, which the Government have in the past used to clobber the alcohol industry. Call me cynical, but is this because looking to the next election, they'll want to report massive improvements in the numbers? 'Save' the NHS by juggling the stats!

Labour MP Kate Green has obtained the removal of Slater's *Top Totty* from a bar in Westminster. She was shocked that it showed "a picture of a nearly naked woman on the tap," not that anyone else had complained in the five years that it's featured in the Strangers Bar. But we say well done Ms Green for looking after this issue which so seriously affected her constituents. She now plans to spend the rest of her parliamentary time looking for a clip with a dog's knackers on it.

With the non-manifesto NHS reforms promising to blow up in the face of the Government, it's maybe timely to revisit a snippet from Last Orders Feb 2010. The then-shadow Health Secretary Andrew Lansley proposed getting rid of the 'confusing' units-of-alcohol system, and replacing it with centilitres of alcohol. Which is pretty bloody stupid

Beer Snippets

given that a unit is exactly the same as a centilitre. If boy-wonder didn't understand this simple issue, then you have to ask whether the reforms of the NHS are based on intelligent analysis or just political conviction.

Sounds like a contradiction in terms, but welcome news from Molson Coors! Their refurbished William Worthington microbrewery – the former Museum Brewery – is to quadruple production in 2012. This will include seasonal specials as well as the flagship *White Shield*.

In a time of near-zero growth, good news comes from a SIBA survey of member brewers. It reveals that small independent brewers have seen a rise of 9.7% in beer volumes over the past year. Real ale drinkers are not letting hard times affect their main pleasure – or is simply that real ale drinkers are more likely to hold onto a job? Fizz drinkers take note!

A recent report confirms that pubs and bars are not the cause of alcohol related violence, but part of the solution. A Plymouth study of 600 people arrested for disorder revealed that two-thirds had been drinking at home before moving into town, with the majority reporting that they were already drunk by the time they reached it. 83% had purchased supermarket alcohol, and 40% were later arrested for violence-related offences. Author Dr Adrian Barton suggests that Government policy needs to entice people back into the more controlled drinking environment of pubs. But is anything much likely to happen, given that the powerful supermarket lobby seems to have Government in its pocket? David Cameron has at least conceded – after far too much delay – that minimum alcohol pricing has a part to play.

Pie & Pint Corner

It's about time we covered pub food rather than just booze, so here is a starter for ten from Mark Cox.

My partner & I like to eat out occasionally and if I can combine this with a pint of real ale then so much the better. I thought other readers may also be interested in a few of the places we have tried, so here we go.

The **Kings Head** is situated on the Old Watling Street, just on the western edge of Atherstone (CV9 2PA). There is easy parking either in the car park or along the quiet road. There is easy access from the adjoining canal as well, so the pub attracts boaters during the season. The towpath also offers a pleasant walking route if coming from the town or further afield. In summer time you may wish to use the beer garden which reaches down to the cut.

The main entrance leads into the bar with its real fire. The dining area is on the other side of the fireplace, as well as the front area near the window. The interior is pictured below.

At the bar there is a selection of real ales from three hand pulls. On our visit there was *Bass*, Greene King *Abbot*, and *Town Crier* (4.5%) from Hobsons Brewery in Shropshire. The *Town Crier* was my choice and is described by the brewery as "a full flavoured golden ale with a big voice, the elegant straw coloured bitter has a hint of sweetness which is complemented by subtle hop flavours leading to a dry finish." Certainly a very nice brew.

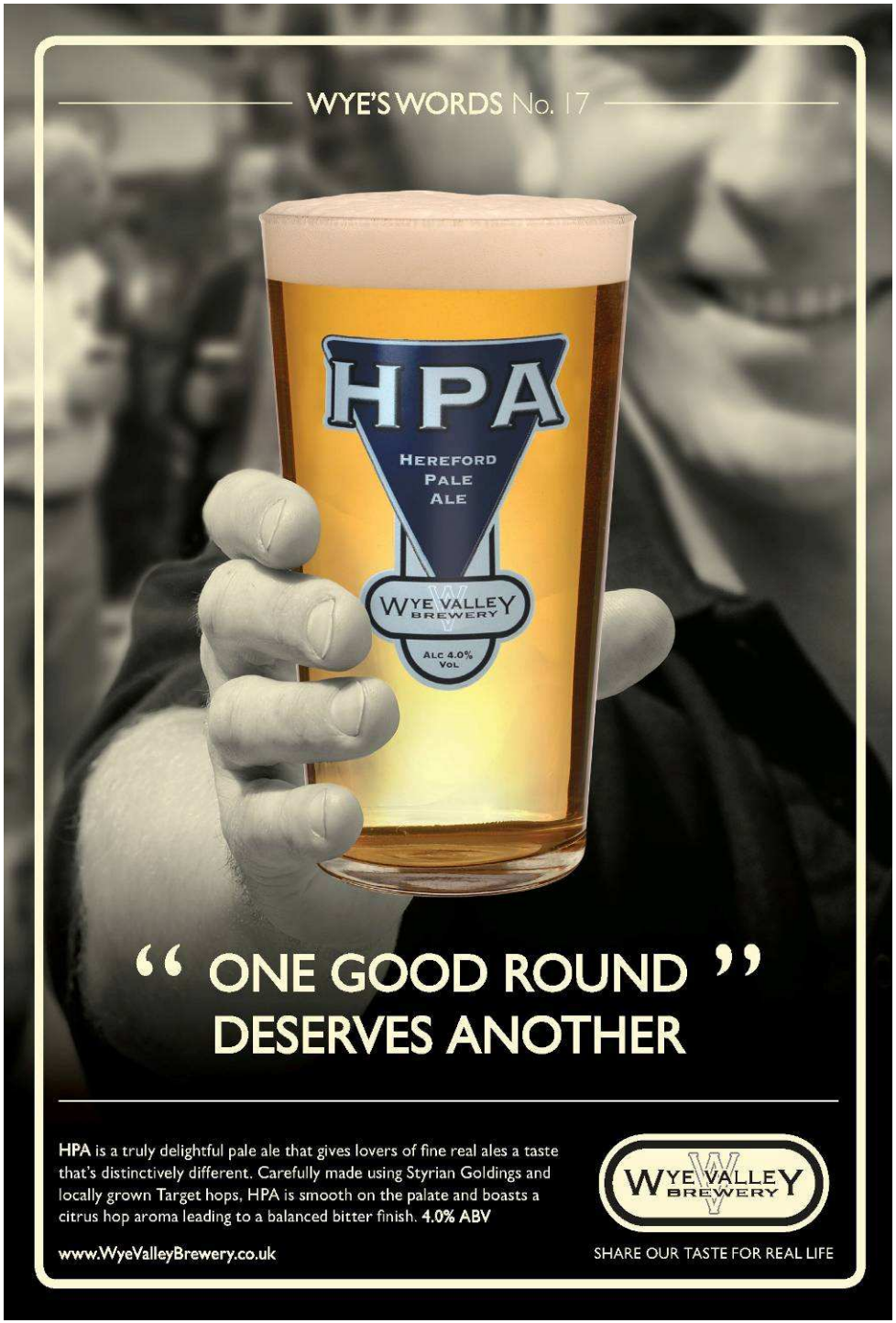
Mondays are usually quiet, so that's a good time to try the Curry & Pint special offer for £5. Most days there is a two meals for £8 deal; typical offerings include fish & chips, fish cake & chips, sausage & mash, cheese burger and chicken stir fry. A choice of four curries is also offered.

Specials aside, there is an extensive menu with many other choices. During our recent visit, the steak & eggs (£9.95) and liver & onions (£5.95) took our fancy.

The steak was properly cooked and tasty, as were the eggs and chips. The liver & onions, served with mash, disappeared quickly and obviously went down well. Service is quick and friendly, the food is nicely cooked and well presented. The small amount of salad that came with my steak was fresh and had a good dressing on it. These simple little things can make all the difference.

There's a range of home made sweets available if you have room. The lunchtime menu has two courses for £5.95, or three for £7.95. There is a Sunday lunch available too.

Good food, good prices. Well worth a visit.



Bottled Beer Review

We have a somewhat unusual bottled beer review this issue, courtesy of a donation from Sam Gallagher. Regulars of the New Dolphin in Atherstone will no doubt remember Sam, the barman who upped sticks to settle in Montreal in Canada. On a flying visit back home, he kindly bought us a brace of bottles from a favourite Montreal micro! The micro in question is **Dieu du Ciel**, which modestly translates as God of Heaven, a brewpub which opened in 1998.

First up was *Rescousse* (Rescue), a 5.3% brew in the style of a Düsseldorfer Alt. This was a very good example of the style, more assertive than a typical Alt – fruity nose, fruity-bitter palate, and a very long, very dry finish which lingered almost to the point of outstaying its welcome! Overall a classy act. 'Rescue' refers to a plan to reintroduce the wolverine, an animal which is presently extinct in Quebec, as pictured on the bottle below. Saving wildlife one bottle at a time!

This was followed by *Corne du diable* (Devil's Horn), a 6.5% Quebecois take on India Pale Ale. It's a full-monty IPA, rich'n'hoppy, but what really stands out are the strong pine notes on both the nose and the palate. There's a touch of sweetness, but it's well judged to balance the astringency of the hoppiness.

Quebec is nominally a bilingual province (i.e. French and English), and the bottle labels showed legal information in both languages. The bottle also suggested "to try the full range of beers on tap, visit one of our two pubs" – though strangely enough this was only in French!

These Quebecois need sorting out – how much are flights again?

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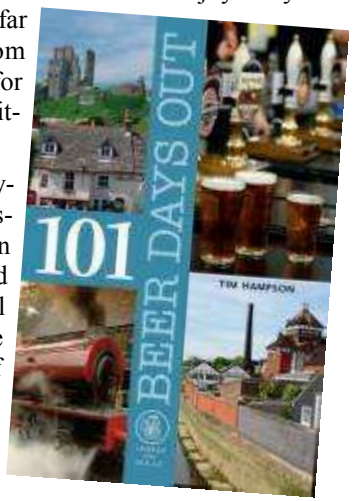
Beer Days Out

An interesting-looking new volume is issued by CAMRA Books on the 28th May. **101 Beer Days Out** has been painstakingly compiled by Chairman of the Guild of Beer Writers and What's Brewing journalist Tim Hampson.

The book brings together a variety of ale-themed days out that can be enjoyed by the whole family. Tim Hampson's recommendations range far and wide to highlighting venues, events and activities from England, Scotland & Wales. Coming out just in time for the summer the book is bound to be packed in many a suitcase for the holiday season.



The listings are arranged geographically and take in everything from the Museum of Kent Life to Edinburgh's historic pubs and Scottish Ale Festival to the Llangollen Railway's Ale trail in Wales. Every entry is illustrated with fabulous full-colour photography and include full details of attraction opening times, contact details, the best ways of getting there, what to see, what to do and, of course, what to drink.

The book is £12.99, or £10.99 to CAMRA members, and is available from www.camra.org.uk/shop

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Birmingham's Contemporary Classics

As well as promoting the virtues of real ale, CAMRA is also active in celebrating and preserving the nation's pubs, be they humble back street boozers or glorious Victorian gin palaces. Here we look at some of the notable pubs that our second city has to offer.

This issue:

The Brown Lion

In days gone by, you'd have gone to Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter for precisely that: jewellery, particularly golden trinkets. Nowadays, the quarter has exhibited another golden aspect, its much improved pubs.

Exemplifying this is the **Brown Lion** on Hall Street. In its former life, this was a bar called Nicole's, unremarkable except for its ghastly purple-painted exterior. Now the brewery tap for the city's Two Towers brewery, it has been returned to a more traditional white & black look.

Enter via the central door, with the main bar to the left, and you'll be greeted by the pleasing sight of seven hand pulls. The pulls are normally dedicated to the brewery's beers, but sometimes there are six plus a changing guest. The Two Towers beers carry 'Locale' stickers, eminently justifiable given that the brewery is only a few streets away! The local theme carries over into the beer names, such as the lovely *Jewellery Porter*, or *BSA* – Birmingham Special Ale. The *Chamberlain Pale Ale* will go down well with hopheads; it's a lovely fragrant hoppy brew, which seems to shout out 'New World Hops!', but in fact it's made with humble Fuggles and Goldings, showing what good results can be produced with the old staples.

Both brewery and pub are recent arrivals. The brewery rolled out its first beer in August 2010, and the pub opened its doors in September last year. Looking quite traditional on the outside, the pub unfortunately has little in the way of intact interior decoration, down no doubt to much casual refurbishment over the years. The one feature which remains is the rear leaded glass window (portion shown), showing a style common in the heyday of Birmingham pub building. I would guess this dates the pub (or at least the windows!) to around 1900.

Still, the pub is cosy enough, and the excellent beer selection is matched by a good range of real cider. There's also a short but comprehensive menu, from black pudding to rack of lamb. Try the place next time you're buying some golden bling!

Winter Wanderings

February provided a chance to shake off the winter blues with another beer trip; though you have to ask if going to a place where the daytime temperature was never above minus 10°C really counts in this regard! The destination was Stuttgart (a mere £101 for a direct flight from Birmingham) and the nearby city of Karlsruhe, both in the Baden-Wurtemburg state of Germany. Mind, with six breweries in Stuttgart, and a whopping eight in smaller Karlsruhe, the winter cold was never going to be a problem.

Stuttgart is surrounded by thickly forested hills, and this is probably best appreciated by the views from the first-floor **Sophie's Brauhaus** (sign pictured right). The gleaming brewery produces an assertively bitter *Helles*, a nicely complex *Schwarz* (which is brown rather than black!), and a fairly standard *Hefeweizen*. Another first floor outfit is **Calwer-Eck-Bräu**; it dates from 1987, but has a century-old feel due to the wood-and-leather furnishing, most of it looking rescued. Even the brewing vessels here are wood-clad, an unusual sight in Germany. Here the *Hefeweizen* was outstanding, of the spice-and-banana variety. The *Schwarz* was again brown – it must be a regional thing – and the naturally cloudy *Pils* was another good bitter brew.

Brauerei Dinkelacker is owned by global giant AB Inbev, but despite my instinctive dislike, I quite enjoyed the modern brewery tap next door to the big brewery. It's tastefully furnished with lots of pale wood and stained glass. The bar is wide and elevated above the main drinking area, with an automated sliding door to the kitchen. Food-bearing staff emerge from the kitchen as though they are appearing on the bridge of the Starship Enterprise. AB Inbev clearly haven't interfered with quality – the *Cluss Kellerpils* is a quality hop-driven brew, and other beers sampled were good. The glass doors to the brewery offices feature charming dray-horse handles, pictured left.

The suburban **Wichtel** brewpub is worth a visit. The beers are on the pedestrian side (a *Pils* and a brown *Hefeweizen*) but here you can try a weird novelty: surprisingly good pizzas featuring sauerkraut amongst the toppings!

Less than an hour's train ride away, Karlsruhe is a very pleasant city, and in hindsight I should have allowed more time here. The city has a fan-shaped layout (as pictured right), with roads radiating from the central palace and wooded Schlossgarten. And – of far more interest to the beer tourist – there's a first class tram system with a cheap day ticket.

Exploiting the tram, the first stop was the newest brewpub, in the suburb of Kneitlingen.

Winter Wanderings cont.

Lindenbräu is a good example of German forward-thinking, as the place is basically in the middle of a housing development, where many of the houses are still being built. The planners clearly thought: build the pub first, then sort the houses! New residents have a treat in store. As well as a lovely *Pils* (fragrant and bitter) and *Original* (in the style of *Export*), they also feature a changing special. During this visit it was a most unusual sight for Germany – *India Pale Ale*, very much in the US juicily-hoppy style.

Another surprise awaits at the **Hoepfner Burghof**, next to the absurdly gothic brewery (pictured right), which would look at home in Disneyland. Amongst the many beers on offer is a *Porter*, ruby brown with notes of treacle and burnt sugar. The *Jubelbier* and *Kräusen* were also interesting brews.

The multi-level **Badisch Brauhaus** is a pretty weird brewpub, attached to a pretty weird hotel (Hotel Kübler). The hotel offers wackily themed rooms (Igloo, Africa, Mountain Hut for example), and the brewpub is equally eccentric in its decor. Bits of it are how wandering around Disneyland on LSD must be like. The cellar bar – fish pond and weird brickwork aside – does at least serve a decent *Helles* and *Dunkles*.

The riverside **Kühler Krug** (Cool Tankard) is enough of a landmark that it even has a tram stop named after it. It's a spacious place, with two large brewing vessels occupying centre stage on a green-tiled podium. They do offer the occasional special brew, but during my visit it was the standards of *Pils*, *Dunkles* and *Weizen*.

The weather throughout the visit was crystal bright but face-hurtingly cold. This meant that the fifteen minute walk to the next tap was accomplished with a certain sense of relief! The **Moninger** is the tap of the brewery next door, and offered the full range of beers. The seasonal 6.7% *Bertold Bock* was just the thing as a defroster, nicely rich with hints of toffee and coffee; their spicy winter *Festbier* was also on.

The trip to Karlsruhe was concluded with a beer style rarely seen outside of Bavaria: the smoked *Rauchbier*, served up at the **Vogelbräu** in the city centre. This was a good example of the style, nice'n'smoky without being thickly overpowering. I was lucky as this is only served up in February, but there is a long list of other seasonal specials which also look interesting, such as *Weizenbock* and *Porter*. A good excuse to return! The *Rauchbier* was also served up at the sister **Vogel Hausbräu**; both establishments have their own brewery and they claim to make it at both.

All in all a very good trip; though when I visit again I'll spend more time in Karlsruhe – and I'll go in the summer!

Old Crown Let Down

When three tenants in four years fail to make a go of a pub in an affluent village right on the outskirts of a busy town, something must be wrong. Is it the pub? Is it the tenants? Is it the beer and/or food on offer?

Or is it yet another example of a pub company trying to bleed as much as possible out of a good business, to the extent that tenants find it impossible to make a living?

This is the sad tale of the Old Crown at Wigginton, just over the northern border of Tamworth. Having been closed for several months after the previous tenant left, this historic boozer, a drinking house since 1834, quickly developed a good reputation after Trevor and Barbara Astin took over in December 2010. It sold good food, it put on regular events and sold three well-kept real ales from the Marstons range.

From CAMRA's viewpoint, it was one of our bigger outlets for *Last Orders* and was about to join our list of pubs under consideration for *Good Beer Guide* entry. Then, just before Christmas 2011, a notice went up in the bar saying that the pub would close at the end of January because Trevor and Barbara were losing so much money.

Among the regulars at the pub was Birmingham Mail business editor Jon Griffin, who has lived in Wigginton and drunk in the Old Crown for many years. After Trevor and Barbara left, they told Jon they had spent around £25,000 of their own cash on the pub and had simply had enough. "We were fed up with seeing the pub opening and then closing," said Trevor of their decision to take on the tenancy. "We looked into it and we thought it should be okay to make a reasonable living and we thought we were looking at a profit of around £23,000, based on the figures provided by Marston's."

But the Astins claim Marston's had misrepresented figures during their discussions over the pub. "They said the staff wages being paid by (previous tenant) Sue McCarthy were £12,000 a year. In reality, they were £40,000. They said the fuel bills were £7,000 a year. In reality, the figure is nearer £20,000. We believed the figures," Trevor added.

A spokesman for Marston's, responding to their claims, said: "The Astins were well aware of the terms and conditions of the contract when they signed it with us. The individual contract was developed in order to help their business succeed." The pub closed at the end of January and at the time of writing in mid-March, had recently reopened with a temporary manager and agency staff being employed. The real ales are still there and still of reasonable quality, but over the front of the pub looms one of those pub company signs looking for someone to take over 'this exciting freehold opportunity.'

With Marston's developing a reputation for doing this kind of things in pubs right across Tamworth, will anyone grasp what should indeed be a great opportunity to run a successful pub – but which is increasingly looking like a very hot potato?

Martin Warrillow

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Tunnel Across The Channel

Twenty two hardy souls – or in the local vernacular, beer connoisseur pissheads – took part in this year's **Tunnel Brewery** Belgian tour. The coach-based week-long affair is always eagerly looked forward to, and this year's was up to the usual excellent standard – interesting breweries, bars, and overnight stops. And as we use a 50-seater coach for a deliberately limited number of people, there is plenty of space for purchases!

By tradition, the first stop after crossing the channel is the **Thiriez** brewery near Dunkirk. We are so familiar with the beers here that it's primarily a buying opportunity. This however doesn't stop us sampling the range, despite the fact that it's still only 8.30 in the morning UK time! Owner Daniel Thiriez used to be a corporate big cheese in a major supermarket, but chucked it all in to brew. The passion certainly shows in his beers; the generously hopped *Etoile du Nord* (North Star) is a personal favourite.

After a lunchtime quaffing stop at the picture-pretty market place of Veurne, it was on to our first two-night base at the pleasant city of Kortrijk. Exploiting an out-of-season bargain, we stopped at the posh Hotel Damier; a nice gaff, sullied only by the previous guest list including the likes of Thatcher and George Bush.

Down to business the following day, with our first proper brewery tour, at **Bavik** north of Kortrijk. Bavik is a largeish brewery, with around 400 pubs and making about 1% of Belgium's output. But it's family-owned and still very much at the quality end of the market, with a particular speciality of oak-aged ales. The most interesting part of the tour was the aging room, with its massive aging tuns (some pictured right), holding more than 20,000 litres each. The beer spends up to 2½ years in the wood, the idea being to allow the natural yeast in the wood to develop sour flavours. Sounds potentially daft, but this is then blended with young ale to produce the gorgeous sweet-sour style known as Flemish Old Brown. The Bavik example is *Petrus Oud Bruin*, containing 25% aged ale. However, diehards can drink the 100% version with *Petrus Aged Pale*, a very sharp, tart drink.

Bavik has an excellent sampling room overlooking the bottling plant, and here we were given unlimited freedom to sample the extensive range of Bavik brews. The tour overall was first class, and much to our surprise both tour and sampling were totally free.

Down to earth with a bump in the afternoon, with a sombre visit to the Tyne Cot cemetery, a vivid reminder of the bloody First World War battles of Passchendaele. The picture (right) shows just one quadrant of the burial ground. Over 12,000 fallen soldiers are buried here, in what is the largest Commonwealth cemetery in the world. Over two-thirds are unnamed, with the headstones bearing the poignant legend of "Known Unto God".

Tunnel Across The Channel cont.

Happier territory the following day, with a visit to the **Blaugies** brewery near the French border. This is a small family affair, making a static but highly regarded range of three beers. *Darbyste* is probably the most unusual, made to an old recipe which includes fig juice. *Moneuse* is a nicely hoppy brew, while most approval went to *l'Epeautre*, a complex Saison style. An excellent lunch cooked on the open grill in their restaurant prevented the sampling getting out of hand!

The afternoon saw us heading to our second base, the Hotel Marion in Ostende. The hotel is unremarkable except for its 'Little Bottle' bar, home to 400 well-chosen beers. Some of our party spent both nights here happily ensconced in the bar!

Contreras Brewery had the pleasure of our company the following day. Around 200 years old, this is another family affair. Part-modernised, the brewery still has a brick-insulated hot liquor tank which, very unusually, doubles up as a copper. Step into the fermenting room and you'll then see ultra-modern conical fermenters (right) and a sizeable bottling plant. Somehow however, it was the sampling room where we spent most time. Brewer Frederik kicked off the sampling, but then had to disappear to charge the hops, with the somewhat rhetorical question of whether we could fend for ourselves while he was gone. We assured him that the Pope was indeed Catholic, and made serious study of the seven beers on offer. Personal favourites were the 4.8% *Tonneke*, in the style of an English ale, and the 6.5% *Extra*, fragrantly dry-hopped with Amarillo. Between us we ended up ordering over €1,000 worth of beer – which led to further sampling while Frederik and volunteers got it all boxed up. And to prove that chivalry is indeed dead, it was the two female members of our group who volunteered to help with the packing.

Before returning to Ostende, we made a compulsory trip to the **Heeren van Liederkercke**, a five-star beer cafe featuring a great range of beers including a number of cellar-aged specialities. A 2007 Liefmans *Goudenband* here was heavenly – mellow and fruity.

The next day, alas, saw us heading to Calais, but with a stop at the **Dolle Brouwers**. The 'Mad Brewers' were at the vanguard of the revival of the Belgian brewing scene, and you can taste their beers in the excellent cafe adjoining the brewery. Another buying bout saw us nearly filling the hold of the coach – no room for suitcases in there, baggage goes on board! The Dolle bar displays a modified version of the classic poster to the right, featuring the healthy mother and happy baby at the nipple ("She bought the beer at the brewery"), and the wan mother and disgruntled baby ("She makes the drink herself"). Home brewers take note!

Sky Blue Brews

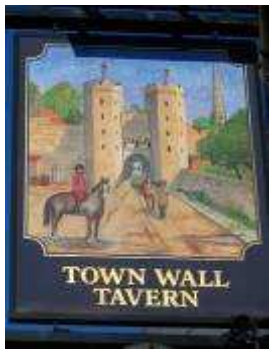
The sky was blue and clear on a Saturday in February and warm with it so a trip to Coventry seemed like a good idea. Arriving early before the pubs were open allowed for a visit to the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum. There are some interesting exhibits on display including this old advert for Hillman cars. Back in 1951 over a quarter of British cars were made in Coventry, a stark contrast to nowadays.

A short distance away is the medieval pub **Whitefriars**, pictured left, once part of the Whitefriars Monastery. It has an intriguing interior worth exploring. with rooms on different floors featuring much ancient timberwork. Note the interesting wall mural in the upstairs room. On the beer front, *Keystone Hops* from Weatheroak had an arresting hoppiness and smooth malty finish.

Amongst the choice of ales in the city centre JDW **Flying Standard** was an excellent beer from Wentworth, *Black Zak*. This beer had roast grain and liquorice flavours and a dry bitter finish.

The warm weather tempted me to the **Gatehouse Tavern** and its large beer garden to enjoy a Byatts *Urban Red* in the sunshine. This pleasing local ale has biscuit and grain notes and a firm bitter finish. The stained glass windows of the pub depict the six nations from the sport of Rugby, and add colourful hues to the pleasant interior on sunny days. Nearby is the **Town Wall Tavern** (sign pictured below). There are several rooms within including a tiny snug called the Donkey Box. A fragrant and hoppy *Deuchars IPA* was enjoyed before the last Coventry pub visited. This was the JDW **Earl of Mercia** where a second beer from local brewery Byatts was sampled. The *Regal Blonde* had a juicy maltiness, citrus flavours and a gentle hop finish.

The train connection home was via Nuneaton so a few more beers were in order in that town. In the **William White** (former local lad Larry Grayson's real name), a Freeminer beer *Speculation* was available. This had toffee and caramel flavours and a smooth warming finish of which Everard would have approved. *Bramble Stout* from Burton Bridge with its berry and chocolate flavours and dry finish was enjoyed in the **Felix Holt** before finishing off the days imbibing in the **Crown**. There was no sign of a *Gathering Storm* in the sky outside, rather in the pub in the form of a stout from the Leeds brewery. This smooth stout was rich and roasty and a complete contrast to the next beer. This pale beer at which style Oakham seem to excel was *Citra*. It was bursting with grapefruit and citrus flavours and palate tingingly hoppy to sustain me for the short train journey home.



Eric Randall

Ol' Big 'Ed

*Paul Raworth from the **Three Tuns** in Sutton Coldfield gives us his view from the other side of the counter ...*

I read the article "Full Pint – Or Not" in the Dec-Jan issue of Last Orders and feel it needs a reply from a publicans perspective.

CAMRA and more recently the GMB have been pushing for "full pint legislation" for a while now (just what our industry needs – more legislation). In my pub if we served every pint with no head at all, I would first, be lynched, and secondly, go out of business. It is everybody's right to ask for a pint without a head, but 99.9% of our customers want one with a head. Certainly with our cask ales, I have only been asked once in my time here to pour it without the sprinkler. Indeed, if I poured all my cask ale this way, then yes, you would be served quicker. I would also get a better yield, as contrary to opinion, you lose beer by serving with a sprinkler on, as it gives a lively pint (if kept correctly) and therefore you end up over pouring.

Bar staff do not try to "take ages" to fill your pint, as was suggested, but wait for the beer to settle before topping up to leave the 5% head (which the vast majority of drinkers north of the Watford Gap prefer – otherwise we would lose even more beer, and perish the thought, have to put the price up!).

We pride ourselves on our beer and have Cask Marque accreditation to support us, but as your article says, if you don't want a head on your beer, we are pleased to oblige.

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NORTH WARWICKSHIRE

At the **Market Tavern** in Atherstone, *Lady Godiva* has gone through a particularly fine spell, with the depth and richness of say *Landlord*, but also with a subtle smoky edge. The other beers also seem pretty good – let's hope it stays like this! The Tavern offers a 20p discount to card-carrying CAMRA members.

The JDW **Felix Holt** is definitely among the top tier of pubs in Nuneaton. Amongst the expected dross, it's rare for them not to have a number of interesting ales. A recent visit saw Burton Bridge *Bramble Stout* plus offerings from Byatts, Freeminer and West Country. The pub is still offering 50p/pint discounts to card-carrying CAMRA members.

The Marstons single-hop beers have been available at the **Gate Inn** in Nether Whitacre. The *Galaxy* version was particularly good, featuring the Aussie hop variety grown in Tasmania. This was one beer where the waffle – "outrageously fruity, flavours of peach and apricot" – was fully justified! A new hop-variety beer will be released each month of this year by Marstons. Sadly, we have to report that the Gate will not be holding a beer festival in May as we had previously reported.

The **Dog Inn** at Nether Whitacre has been doing quite well with some of their beer choices. Sadler's lovely low-gravity *JPA* featured again, joined by Cairngorm *Trade Winds* and Purity *UBU*. Following the recent improvement in beer temperatures, the pub now has Cask Marque accreditation. A nice feature of the Dog is that it is one of that vanishing band of pubs which still offer complimentary nibbles on Sunday lunchtimes.

STAFFORDSHIRE

The JDW **Plaza** in Rugeley will be supporting CAMRA's 'Mild May' campaign by having at least one mild on throughout the month of May, with a particular focus on examples brewed in the Midlands. Note that while the car park at the rear of the pub is now pay-and-display, your first hour is redeemable at the bar.

The **Yorkshireman** near Rugeley is just outside our branch area (it 'belongs' to Burton and South Derbyshire), but we felt that it wasn't getting adequate attention, so by agreement with Burton we used one of our *Good Beer Guide* allocations to put it into 2012's copy of the good book. The excellent news is that it is now back on the radar of Burton, and they have agreed to monitor it in future. Won't stop us going in though!

The **Old Peculiar** at Handsacre can be worth a look in for the changing guest ale. However, what can occasionally be annoying here is the mindless blather of talk-radio, totally spoiling the atmosphere. It's a message to all like-minded pubs: please take an axe to the radio, and if noise is even required, work on the CD collection!

The **Horse & Jockey** in Lichfield has recently had a new, larger kitchen installed, providing more scope for lunchtime meals plus themed food nights. On a recent visit the *Banned from Parliament but not from here!* poster from Slater's brewery was spotted. No sign of a *Top Totty* pump clip among the hand pulls at the front – the notorious bunny girl was on at the back bar, safely away from the sensitive eyes of any visiting MPs.

After a short closure, the **Earl of Lichfield** (on Conduit Street), aka the Drum, is back in business with a relief manager and his family at the helm. Mark, Leanne and Sian have

been working very hard to get this historic market place pub back in shape and judging by the visible increase in customers it must be working.

The **Duke of York** in Lichfield will be holding its third beer festival in April (see fest listings at rear).

Ye Olde Windmill at Gentleshaw (WS15 4NF) is also offering a June festival, but at the beginning of the month in celebration of the Queen's Jubilee (see fest listings). Music will include various bands, there will be a barbeque, and children can enjoy a bouncy castle and face painting. There will even be crown green bowling matches plus tuition if you're keen to give it a try!

WEST MIDLANDS

The beer range in the **Butlers Arms** remains somewhat unimaginative; you can only drink so much Greene King and Caledonian beer!

The guest beer at the **Three Tuns** in Sutton is now not always from the Thwaites range. Fullers beers have featured.

Near Mere Green the **Old Speckled Hen** remains busy on Friday and Saturday nights, with live music on alternate Saturday evenings. Four hand pulls are in use, featuring Greene King-owned beers – regular *Old Speckled Hen* and *Abbot*, plus for example, Belhaven *Grand Slam* during the rugby.

- *Thanks to contributors John W, Adam R, Dave B*

Sir Robert Peel

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Adrift Around The Barbican

My fiance and I decided to spend a long weekend in Plymouth and arrived at our hotel on the historic Barbican on a Saturday in February. Come the evening, it was time to decide which *Good Beer Guide* entry we could visit that offered both food and drink. We opted for the **Fisherman's Arms** (pictured right) and promptly phoned to reserve a table in the restaurant for 8pm. The outward trek only took around ten minutes as we were able to use the swing bridge over the seaward end of the Barbican. This highly recommended St Austell tied house is well concealed behind the waterfront buildings up a short but steep climb to Lambhay Street. On arrival the barmaid took our drinks order and invited us to take a seat in the bar ready to be shown to our table. I started the evening with a pint of *Trelawny* while perusing the food menu. It was gourmet cuisine with a price tag to match, but after washing it down with further pints of *Tribute* and *Proper Job*, I was far from disappointed. The service was perfect, the ales were all in top condition, and the food was excellent. Full to the brim and very contented we headed back to the hotel for the night!

Early on the Sunday evening we decided to visit three more local pubs as an aperitif before taking dinner at the hotel. Again we crossed over the swing bridge but this time went to the **Maritime Inn** (pictured left) at 19 Southside Street. There is no back to this pub! The long open plan interior continues beyond the bar behind which is a second frontage and entrance on Quayside.

While I indulged in a pint of the very competitively priced, house beer, Summerskills *Maritime Recession Buster*, the barman kindly offered me a sample of South Hams *Indiana Bones*. Both ales were again in good condition and it was a pity we did not have time to stop for another one!

Glasses empty, we took the short walk to the **Dolphin Hotel** at 14 The Barbican, pictured right. The hand pulls in this fine old hostelry are simply used to display the pump clips, as all nine ales are served by gravity. Although it was busy we managed to find a seat close to the real fire where I quaffed my pint of Skinners *Betty Stoggs*. Apart from an Otter Ale beer, the other ales were mainly national brands including Bass, St Austell, Hop Back, Greene King, Sharps, and Exmoor.

Adrift cont.

After dragging ourselves away from the fire we headed back close to our hotel and went into the **Thistle Park Tavern**, pictured below. This is the South Hams brewery tap. After checking out the four pump clips I decide to have a pint of *XSB*. The other ales being served were *Devon Pride*, *Eddystone* and *Knickerdropper*. Another cracking pint, but that was all I had time for as we were due to take the 3 minute walk back to the hotel for our pre-booked evening meal. The hotel did not serve real ale so I had to downgrade to red wine for the rest of the evening! I look forward to a return visit in the future so I can explore more of Plymouth's real ale outlets.

Dave Backhouse

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Closer to Heaven in Haarlem

Think of Dutch beer, and Heineken will probably come to mind, or worse, Amstel. But there is a real renaissance of craft brewing in the Netherlands, akin to the British micro scene some years ago.

To taste some stunning microbrews in a fabulous brewpub, try a visit to Haarlem, a short train ride from Amsterdam. Haarlem was once the major brewing city in Holland, with over a hundred breweries in the 1600s, but the historic breweries were all finally lost, due to takeover destruction by ever bigger brewing combines – a familiar story? Haarlem is worth a visit in its own right, a sedate version of Amsterdam – lovely buildings, but less in the way of canals, canine crap and sex shops.

One lovely building you need to visit is the old Jacobskerk, a former church now transformed into a truly beautiful brewpub. Opened in November 2010 as the **Jopenkerk**, it is now the home of Jopen, a new-wave micro with an impressive range of styles. Many of the beers draw inspiration from historical recipes once used in Haarlem brewing.

The Jopenkerk looks pretty modest from the outside (pictured right), and indeed there's no signage to help you identify the place. But step inside and you can see that it is a splendid conversion job. The brewery occupies one side of the church, with fermenting vessels sitting below the original stained glass windows. Pride of place goes to the highly polished copper brewing vessels, pictured below, with tall chimneys reaching into the heavens – or to the roof at least. The main bar, pictured next page, sits just in front of the coppers, so you can watch the brewer at work.

The brewer is clearly a very busy bloke – there are fifteen beers on the regular portfolio, with thirteen on tap during my visit. First on the gravity scale is the *Gerstebier*, a nicely bitter 4.5% resurrection of an old Haarlem style. It's a lager beer but uses the historical practice of top-fermenting, to avoid the need for cooling. Next is the *Adriaan Wit* at 5%, a lovely lemony example of the style, allegedly following a 1407 recipe, which makes sense as it would pre-date the use of hops.

The next beer was easily the star of a packed show; I don't think I've tried anything like the 5.3% *Jacobus*. And it's a new acronym to learn – RPA or Rye Pale Ale. Rye beers are nothing new, but this is brilliant, richly grainy and juicily hoppy, spicy, dry and sweet at the same time. There's history too, as the Jacobskerk was previously the starting point for pilgrimages, and the church lobbied for a tax-free beer for pilgrims. The town fathers granted this –

Closer to Heaven in Haarlem cont.

but with the condition that it had to be made from rye!

If the munchies start to kick in, then the Jopenkerk is an ideal place to try that curious Dutch snack of *uitsmijter*. It's the sort of thing you might make when the cupboard is nearly bare: fried eggs on untoasted bread, with whatever else you've got thrown in – cheese, ham, you name it. In the more organised environment of the Jopenkerk, you can choose your toppings, and my example with bacon and grilled cheese on dark bread was excellent – think world-class eggy Welsh rarebit!

Suitably ballasted, it's back on the beer. The *Extra Stout* at 5.5% was suitably extra – smoky, dry and roasty. Meanwhile the *Hoppenbier*, 6.8%, is not the hop-monster that you might expect; instead it's an accomplished spicy golden ale, very much in the style of a Belgian *Saison* beer.

It's quite a tribute to the place that I only had one beer which disappointed. The *Koyt* at 8.5% is a recreation of the ancient style of *gruit* ales. These were made before the widespread use of hops, when secretive pot-pourris of herbs and spices were instead used for flavouring. The *Koyt* – which cannot legally be described as beer in the Netherlands due to the absence of hops – is a revelation. But what it reveals is how important hops are! A nice enough experiment; I didn't expect to like it and indeed I didn't!

The day was saved – and completed – by *Ongelovige Thomas* (Doubting Thomas). It's 10% but has quality written all over it – a rich brown fruity beer but heavily dosed with fragrant US hops. Simply lovely!

The final touch which really lifts the Jopenkerk into first division is the staff – friendly, attentive and informative. They soon latched on to my interest, and were very forthcoming with details of the beers and the building, and the accompanying stories. They really did seem to be enjoying their job. It's a point which many British pubs could learn from!

● *Jopenkerk, corner of Gedempte Voldersgracht and Vestestraat*

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Derby Beer Fest - Sort Of

A pub-crawl in Derby is always a pleasure, so throw in the local beer festival and we were always on to a winner. As I left Derby rail station it was raining hard; I needed my spirits lifted as I was getting soaked. I quickly headed into the **Brunswick**, just five minutes from the station, to meet my friend. I first had a pint of Abbeydale *Dark Matter*, 3.6%, which was easy on the taste buds. I also had time for a half of a Brunswick ale called *Rambo*; at 8% it was as strong as the name suggests.

I didn't want to go too mad as we were out all day, so we went down the road to the **Alexandra Hotel**. This is a a Tynemill pub where they do an excellent promotion called 'One over the eight' – buy seven pints over time and you get an eighth free. I had a pint of Tillingbourne *Bitter Gem* at 4.6%, a pale ale which was well kept. We didn't stay for long as we were trying to fit in as many pubs as we could.

Next was the **Olde Dolphin**, which had Nottingham Brewery *Dolphin 1530AD* (4.4%). I had not had this one before so needless to say, I had a pint of that. Continuing away from the city centre, we went to the **Flowerpot**. Judging by the interesting menu choice on the bar (pictured left), this is a Derby County orientated pub. I had a pint of Nook Brewery's *Sky Blue Blond* (4.5%), which again was well kept. My friend wasn't so lucky, as he had a beer from the cellar range which had bits floating in it. I later braved the cellar-zone and tried the 4% Milltown *Platinum Blonde* which to my surprise tasted good.

We then proceeded round the corner to the **Silk Mill**. I had the 6% Sarah Hughes *Dark Ruby*. Aaah, nectar, I so love this beer. Let's have some of this nearer to home please! Our last port of call before the festival was the **Royal Standard**. I must admit to being a bit tipsy at this point, not having slept since six the night before, but I was still in the mood for more beer. I had a pint of Ossett *Treacle Stout* (5%), one of the better ales I had that day.

Onwards to the festival, pictured below, where we met more friends. Here I managed to get hold of one of the ales from Birmingham's Beer Geek Brewery; this was so new it was the first time anyone had seen them. The majority of ales had gone so I ended up trying the continental beers. Memory was getting hazy at this point, but I have a good recollection of fantastic Foo Fighters tribute band; also the fact that I dropped one of my take-home beers in the taxi back to Long Eaton, where we were staying! Despite this, it was a thoroughly enjoyable day out.

Ivan Dale

Geoff's Metro Crawl

Yes another Metro crawl! Do we get fed up with them? No, not with this unique feature of transportation linking two major cities and beer centres. Straight then to Wolverhampton; 35 minutes of seldom seen trackside views. New, old and abandoned; houses, factories and fields. Good weather for winter, sunshine but a little blustery so perfect weather for food and drink.

Arrived at the **Great Western** just before noon and it's match day. Wolves are playing at home and the pub is busy and filling fast. This means that the beer is turning over quickly and the food is fresh and hot. Two pints of Holden's *Black Country Bitter* (3.9%) sandwiched around a chicken curry. What a great pub with staff, beer, food and customers all top notch in a traditional setting oozing memorabilia and CAMRA awards.

Next stop on our way into Brum was the **Old White Rose** at Bilston. Great welcome from the amiable barmaid with a suggestion to try a few samples to select our want. First a Thornbridge *Wild Swan* (3.5%) which had the expected taste in a gentle guise. Second a *Snowdonia Ale* (3.6%) from Purple Moose: pure welsh wizardry. This was a pub known for strong beer but the landlord sadly confirmed that his clientele favoured the lighter brews on which he now concentrates.

On to West Bromwich, namely the **Wheatsheaf**. A traditional no-frills high street local with good Holden's *Bitter* (3.9%) and fabulous cheese and onion cobs for £1. Over the road we remembered there was a pub we had not visited for many years, the **Hop Pole**. What a surprise: a brighter look and Salopian *Oracle* (4%) perhaps just a half but fresh on and so mouth watering that another was a must. The wind was blowing in the wrong direction so we beat a hasty retreat just as West Brom scored so our exit was seamless.

Buffeted by the wind we trammed to the **Brown Lion** in Birmingham's Jewellery quarter which is a much renovated premises transformed into a modern two-room pub which is the tap for the nearby Two Towers brewery. We requested a Two Towers *Complete Muppetry* but it was running out so we were offered the *Baskerville Bitter* (3.8%) then finished with a *Jewellery Porter* (5%) The barmaid was also the brewer's daughter and had a great sense of humour, easily parrying quips with lightening retorts. We left reluctantly with promises to return on the following Thursday much to her disbelief. (Yes we did!)

Our final port of call was the **Wellington** on Bennett's Hill, an unpublike building but given great atmosphere by the many customers attracted to the plethora of real ales, real cider, bottled beers from home and abroad and lack of juke-box, music or suchlike. A damn fine place to finish especially because my favourite beer was sitting waiting for me to order and drink – Oakham *Citra* (4.3%) That's just about enough, great beer (double figures in halves), good food and company and entertainment all the way.

Geoff Cross

Tight-fisted Yorkshire bastards corner:

The new-year offering from our favourite loony brewery Samuel Smiths involved mental multi-millionaire owner Humphrey Smith personally shutting down a pub on New Year's eve. The reason? Licensees at the Royton's Junction Inn in Oldham were accused of selling "too full" pints. Humph wanted only 95% liquid in the pints and claimed that the licensees owed £11,000 for "lost beer" due to heads of less than 5%!

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Missing out?

Missing out on Last Orders? We distribute the magazine widely throughout the branch area, but if you would like to sign up for email delivery (PDF format, approx 2MB per issue) then please email the editor:

LST.Camra@yahoo.co.uk

Note that current and back issues are also available on the branch website:

www.LSTCamra.org.uk

We can arrange for paper copies to be mailed if you provide the stamps. And if you know of a branch pub which would like to stock the newsletter, then please let us know!

THE MARKET TAVERN ATHERSTONE
CV9 1ET
Now serving the full range of ales from

WARWICKSHIRE BEER COMPANY

Lagerboys

Best not read this if you are a lagerboy and afraid that you might taste something! In mid February the **Horseshoes** in Nuneaton, Tunnel brewery's tap, had three of the brewery's cask lagers on simultaneously through handpull, as well as one of them on keg. This gave us an opportunity for a lager lout night out.

The keg version of the *Munich Style Lager* at 5.2% was served cold and with a slight haze. It had a candy aroma and sweetness and a very gentle bitterness. It's a creditable beer for discerning lager drinkers, and converts from the mundane mainstream excuses for the real thing. However, the cask version of the same beer was markedly superior. It was rich gold in colour and served at a warmer temperature which let the flavours shine through – toffee/caramel notes and a light bitterness at the finish.

The *Vienna Style Lager* at 5% was an amber-hued brew, with no discernible aromas; fairly bitter throughout, it had a biscuity maltiness to back it up. We saved what we guessed would be the best of the trilogy of lagers till last and were not disappointed. The *Czech Black Lager* at 4.7% is available in bottles from the brewery on occasions, and is a cracking beer in this format. The cask version is even better, enhancing its enticing aromas and taste profile. It is not actually black in colour but a wonderful ruby-coloured beer. Appealing coffee and chocolate aromas and flavours, with a hint of molasses and roasted grains, are followed by a smooth finish which is both sweet and dry.

It just shows that lagers from wholesome ingredients have flavour to savour. I urge you to try these lagers with attitude if given the opportunity.

Eric Randall

"*Abstainer: a weak person who yields to the temptation of denying himself a pleasure*"
Ambrose Bierce

Local Festival Diary

Festivals with a **bold heading** are CAMRA festivals, where entrance is either free or discounted to CAMRA members. Why not join? See page 26.

12-14th April, 31st Walsall Beer Festival
Walsall Town Hall, Lichfield Street, WS1 1TE
Around 100 ales and 30 ciders. Thu 6-11, Fri & Sat 12-11

13-14th April, Coventry Beer Festival
Coventry Rugby Football Ground, Butts Road, Coventry, CV1 3GE
90+ ales, plus ciders and perries. Fri & Sat 12-4, 6-11.

20-23rd April, 4th St Georges Beer Festival
Rose Inn, Baxterley, CV9 2LE. Around 22 ales, a perry and two ciders.
Food throughout, various bands and Morris dancers. From noon each day.

23-29th April, Merchants Inn Spring Beer Festival
Merchants Inn, Little Church Street, Rugby, CV21 3AW
Over 100 ales, ciders and perries. See www.merchantsinn.co.uk for details.

26-28th April, Stourbridge Beer Festival
Town Hall, Market Street, DY8 1YE
Around 80 ales, 20 ciders and perries. Thu 7-11, Fri & Sat 12-11.

26-28th April, 3rd Duke of York Beer Festival
Duke of York, Greenhill, Lichfield, WS13 6DY
25 ales, 5 ciders, 1 perry.

28-29th April, Drill Inn Air Ambulance Beer Festival
Drill Inn, Springlestyche Lane, Burntwood, WS7 9HD
10 ales plus ciders/perries. Live music, BBQ, bouncy castle. Sat 12-12, Sun 12-10.30.

25-27th April, Stourport Beer Festival
Stourport Boat Club, Dunley Road, Stourport-on-Severn, DY13 0AA
30 ales, plus ciders. Food and soft drinks. Fri 5-11, Sat 11-11, Sun 11-3.

2-3rd June, Olde Windmill Jubilee Beer Festival
Ye Olde Windmill, Windmill Lane, Gentleshaw nr Rugeley, WS15 4NF
14 ales, 4 ciders. Music, BBQ, childrens activities.

2-4th June, Drill Inn Jubilee Beer Festival
Drill Inn, Springlestyche Lane, Burntwood, WS7 9HD. More details next issue.

Holding a beer festival? Let us know and we will advertise the event here free of charge.
Details to LST.Camra@yahoo.co.uk

Uniformly Substandard Beer

USB flash drives (memory sticks) can be remarkably robust things, at least if you buy at the higher end of the market. I was once distraught to find that mine had gone through a full cycle of the washing machine, but hey presto, plug it in and away you go, business as normal. I'm not recommending that you try it at home though!

However, a company in America – where else? – has decided that permanent immersion of your memory stick is a good thing. And what better fluid than beer? Or at least the urine-coloured, and usually urine-flavoured, stuff that passes for beer in the States. While some computers are water-cooled, a memory stick doesn't chuck out enough heat to need beer-cooling! Quite why this was thought to be a good idea or even a market winner is anyone's guess. And quite who would want to buy one is another matter.

Don't drink the contents. Disappointment would soon kick in, as closer inspection of the blurb reveals that it's filled with imitation beer and foam. Which probably explains why the biggest uptake has been by imitation beer manufacturer Budweiser!

Bar
Mon-Thu: 12-3, 6-11
Fri/Sat/Sun: 12-11

Tim and Sue welcome you to ...

Food
Mon-Thu: 12-2, 6-9.30
Fri/Sat/Sun: 12-9.30

The Rose Inn

Main Road, Baxterley
Warwickshire CV9 2LE
www.roseinnbaxterley.com
01827 713939

- Good Beer Guide listed with four Cask Marque accredited real ales
- Menu featuring local produce and homemade favourites, vegetarian specials, and Frank Parker's finest Scotch beef
- Sunday carvery 12 to 6pm
- Dogs welcome in the bar

St Georges Beer Fest
20-23rd April
Food throughout
Music & Morris dancing
Around 22 ales + ciders & perries

Thank you for reading Last Orders!
Next edition: 1st June 2012.
Previous editions available on the website.

Contact us at
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or see
www.LSTCamra.org.uk