

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

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or see

[www.LSTCamra.org.uk](http://www.LSTCamra.org.uk)

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# LAST ORDERS

## NO 77 APR/MAY 2018



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The free bi-monthly CAMRA newsletter  
for Lichfield, Atherstone,  
Sutton Coldfield & Tamworth

now also serving the  
Nuneaton & Bedworth  
CAMRA region



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Easter Weekend – Easter Bonnet competition, Easter Egg Hunt and facepainting for the kids!

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# LAST Orders

The magazine of the Lichfield, Sutton and Tamworth branch of CAMRA, also serving the Nuneaton & Bedworth branch.

6 issues per year, issued at the beginning of the months of Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec. The magazine is free and circulated widely through the branch areas and beyond.

Contributions are welcomed, pub news particularly. Contact the editor.

**4,500 circulation**

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You can provide your own artwork (around 300 dpi for the best results) or we provide a free design service. Contact the editor.

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The opinions expressed in Last Orders are not necessarily those of the editor, CAMRA Ltd or its branches



Lichfield, Sutton & Tamworth CAMRA:  
[www.LSTCamra.org.uk](http://www.LSTCamra.org.uk)

Check out the website for pubs, maps, news & more!

Pub feedback? Contact our Pubs Officer:  
John Rowling [pubsofficer@LSTCamra.org.uk](mailto:pubsofficer@LSTCamra.org.uk)

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And if you know of a branch pub which would like to stock the magazine, then please let us know!



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With the deepest of sadness we need to record the untimely death of **Sally Lavender** in early February. Hailing from Stoke but active in the Birmingham CAMRA branch, Sally was widely known within the LST branch as well as across the rest of the West Midlands. Sally was a prominent campaigner for and enjoyer of real ale, and though it wasn't her natural choice of drink, she brought enthusiasm and effectiveness to the promotion of the real cider cause. Known for her flamboyant choices in hats and dresses, Sally would be seen at beer festivals across the region, often acting on tasting panels or getting out into the crowd and helping first time visitors or the unsure – to find something to suit their palate, or better still, broaden their tastes.

Sally was active on a local level, but also had an indefatigable enthusiasm for the bigger picture, from active involvement in Member's Weekends, promoting ale at the *BBC Good Food Show*, or contributing to our national newspaper, *What's Brewing*. We have lost a champion.

Farewell Sally – you will be sadly missed by us all.

### NH Trophy

In late January this year's NH Trophy night took place. This is an annual sports event between Nuneaton & Bedworth and Hinckley & Bosworth CAMRA branches. This year's titanic clash took place at Earl Shilton's **Constitutional Club** and featured darts, dominoes, crib and pool, with Nuneaton & Bedworth chipping out 11-5 winners. As usual it was a fun-filled night with the emphasis to enjoy friendly competitiveness. My only moan is that H&B always field a good mixed male/female team, whereas N&B have yet to have a female team member, so the gauntlet is down for next year, ladies.



I would like to thank all players from both branches who took part and also Mark from the club for some cracking food. Both branches are like-minded in their aims, with one of the main ones being keeping pubs open so we can keep having events like this. We do visit each others pubs regularly and socialise, which to me is what CAMRA is all about. Having said that I'm sure our good neighbours will need no gelling up to cross the A5 next January, hell bent on revenge.

Ray Buckler

Pictured left is H&B team captain, Norman Hall, relinquishing the trophy – made of solid, erm, metal – to N&B guvnor Ray Buckler.

# The HORSE & JOCKEY

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## Windmills and Weed

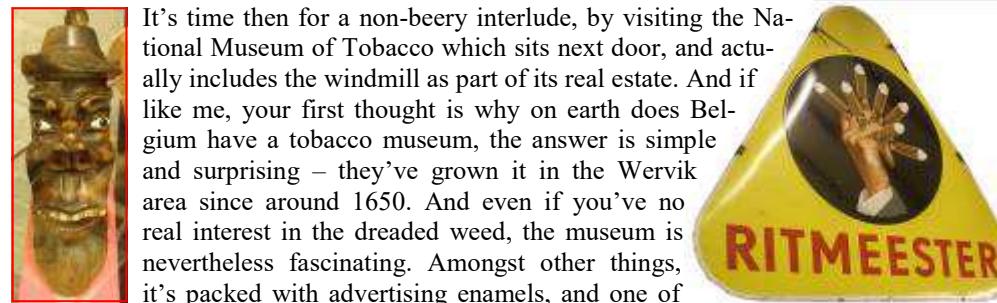
For such a comparatively tiny place, Belgium punches well above its weight. It obviously has a superbly diverse beer culture, which easily rivals that of the UK, but is also awash with superb places to visit. There are the obvious places – if you haven't been to Brugge then you simply haven't lived – but also a wealth of smaller places which are well off the tourist radar. Add in an enviably brilliant public transport system – and your copy of *Good Beer Guide Belgium* – and you're ready to roll.



The highlight of a recent visit was a trip down to Wervik, sitting close to the French border and on the edge of the Flanders battlefields zone. The *Guide* had highlighted the **Groeten Moriaen**, pictured above. And who can resist a pub with its own windmill? I reckon this is my third such pub-with-windmill visit – there can't be that many left surely?



Even without the windmill, the place is well worth a visit. I kick off with the Leroy Stout, a superbly light, sweetish stout, an excellent way to start a gentle day's drinking. The place is quiet, providing an opportunity to admire the elegantly old-fashioned bar, left. I peruse the menu, making the obvious choice of spaghetti bolognese which the Belgians do so well. If you eat much in Belgian pubs you'll soon come to the conclusion that the Belgians must eat more bloody pasta than the Italians! Lunch is partnered with something of a rarity, a bottle of Zundert, from a Trappist brewery founded in only 2013. *Zundert* and *La Trappe* are the only two Trappist beers brewed in the Netherlands.



It's time then for a non-beery interlude, by visiting the National Museum of Tobacco which sits next door, and actually includes the windmill as part of its real estate. And if like me, your first thought is why on earth does Belgium have a tobacco museum, the answer is simple and surprising – they've grown it in the Wervik area since around 1650. And even if you've no real interest in the dreaded weed, the museum is nevertheless fascinating. Amongst other things, it's packed with advertising enamels, and one of the biggest collections of smoking paraphernalia I've ever seen. Though where they've found a pipe bowl modelled on Nigel Farage, above left, is beyond me. You also get a sense of how much attitudes to tobacco have changed – there's an interesting selection of items from World War I, including urgent appeals to support the troops, basically suggesting that the Allies were going to lose the will to battle on unless they were sent boatloads of cigarettes.

Letting the train take the strain, I next drop in at the smallish city of Roeslare. It's home to the Rodenbach brewery, but my mission here is to visit the two *Guide* pubs. The **Walhalla** is a pleasantly simple café, with low lighting, a reassuringly mature customer base, and a beer



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## Windmills and Weed cont.



list which merits a few minutes of contemplation. I go for a recently discovered favourite, Verzet's *Rebel Local*. Verzet is a newish brewery run by a couple of cool young dudes, reminiscent of Tiny Rebel, and *Rebel Local* is their take on an IPA, but using restrained English hops rather than US zingers, so there's a pleasing subtlety to it.



On the way back to the rail station is **De Koornbloem**, left. On home territory, it feels compulsory to go for a Rodenbach *Grand Cru*, a souped-up version of the standard brew with plenty of tangy, oaky acidity. It's far more comfortable in here, but again with a quite mature audience; it's Friday evening so it's maybe too early for the young crowd. Feeling quite relaxed by now I next select the Urthel *Samaranth*, an 11.5% stonker, which is sweet, rich and warming, very much in the style of Rochefort 10. After this I need a bit of a sorbet to reset the palate. Boon *Kriek* on draught does the trick, and at 4% is the friendliest thing my liver's seen all day. But I have to reflect that the draught product is not a patch on the bottled version.

After that, a complete change of scene, to a one-horse town called Zedelgem where there's not even a proper platform at the rail station. On the train, I make the mistake of sitting in first class – tired and emotional by this point I guess. The guard is fine when she points this out to me, and it's an easy mistake to make – the seating, right, is different, but hardly enough to justify the extra 50% it costs. It's not even as if you get your own compartment – it's at one end of a carriage, so you even have to breath the same air as all the proles in second class.



From the station it's a desolate kilometre walk to the **Rembrandt**, left. Maybe one of the reasons it does so well is that there's little else in town apart from a petrol station. But it's well worth the walk, as it's a splendid place, where every available surface is dripping with beeriana – mirrors, enamels, posters, and a collection of gnomes from La Chouffe. Don't drop your guard, they're watching you. I have to finish on something special, *Mariage Parfait*, a gueuze from Boon. It's a five-star beer in the *Guide*, and presented like champagne in a wired-cork bottle. It's a class act, and offered up at €6 for a 375ml bottle, a good-value nightcap.

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## Tipple Tattle



### NORTH WARWICKSHIRE

We lead with excellent news from Dordon, which has seen the opening of a new micropub on Browns Lane, conveniently on the route of the Arriva 65 bus service. For more on the **Mini Miner**, see the report on page 18.

David Bellamy, long-serving steward of Nuneaton's **Griff & Coton Club** departed for greener pastures in March. He has moved to a venue in Kettering, home territory for him. We wish him all the best, and wonder whether this means the end of the popular October beer festival that he used to organise at the club. We'll find out soon enough ...

The **Stag & Pheasant** on Hartshill Green will be starting a new venture on Thursday 5th April with an Indian restaurant – *Tiffin's Eatery* will use the pub's kitchen to supply either eat in or takeaway meals.

Welcome news from Atherstone's **New Swan**. Their success in introducing real ales from Church End has led them to increase the number of hand pulls. From the start of April they're planning to offer up to five real ales, plus some craft ales. They'll be offering three-thirds paddles, and a significant CAMRA member discount is also promised. Note that while the larger right-hand bar is often a bit noisy of an evening, the smaller bar at the front should offer a quieter retreat.

On a far less positive note, Nuneaton's **Crown** closed suddenly and unexpectedly on February 12th. Julian and family had been running the place for eight years. This has led to much speculation into the future of the pub, none of which can be corroborated. The Crown has a long connection with real ale, appearing in the *Good Beer Guide* a total of 21 times, including the first two issues in 1972 and 1974. It is hoped that whoever takes it on maintains its commitment to real ale. It was also the home to several community groups which have struggled to find new homes.

Uncertainty surrounds the town's **Granby** too. This was feted for a major refurbishment by owners Star Pubs and Bars, but is now up for sale freehold as a pub. Unhappy news too from the **White Horse** in Bedworth which had its licence revoked by the police due to problems with some customers. And to round off the dismal news, the **Boot Inn** at Ansley re-opened after a fire, only to close again after a short time, for unknown reasons.

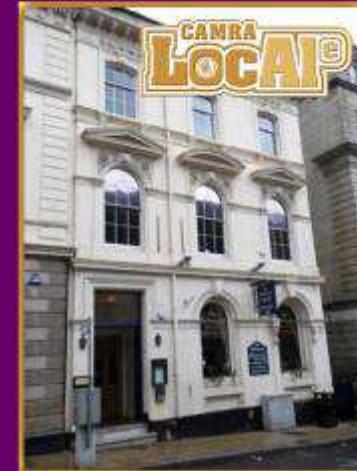
The area is also seeing a couple of planned departures. Graham and Karen from the **Anker** in Weddington have signalled their intention to move to pastures, new leaving the Ei (Enterprise) owned venue looking for a new manager. Meanwhile, Tony and Rebecca Jackson will also be vacating the **Whitestone** at the end of May, after six years during which they turned the former Hayrick into a respected dining venue.

We can thankfully finish on a positive note by noting that the **Lord Hop** has been awarded Nuneaton & Bedworth's Pub of the Year and Cider Pub of the Year for the second year running. We offer them our congratulations, and all the best for the next round, the county competitions.

### STAFFORDSHIRE

The number of LST branch pubs offering a discount to CAMRA members continues to grow. The latest addition is the **George IV** in Lichfield, where 20p/pint or 10p/half is up for grabs.

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## Tipple Tattle cont.

This brings the number of discount pubs up to 33 – see page 30 for details.

Lichfield's **Duke of York** has had a good run of interesting guests, with three on at any one time. A recent visit, for instance, saw beers from Thornbridge, Marble, and one from Kirkstall called *Ignore the Ignorant*. Though when we asked for a pint of the latter, it was almost as though the barmaid couldn't hear us ...

Lichfield's other Duke, the former Duke of Wellington, has morphed into the **Wellington Ale House**. After a much-needed and tasteful refurbishment, the pub re-opened in early February. A guest ale is served alongside *London Pride*, *Pedigree* and *Wye Valley HPA*. A small menu of hot and cold food is available all sessions.

Lichfield may be set to gain yet another pub or bar. There's a planning application for a change to a drinking establishment for a property on Swan Road, not far from the **Queen's Head**. Little detail in the application, so it could be anything from a wine bar to a micropub. We'll keep you posted.

We're pleased to note that the closure of the **Three Tuns** at Fazeley, as reported in the last issue, lasted only three weeks. Popular former gaffer Martin Young is once again at the helm. The regular ale is *Wye Valley HPA*, and up to two guests are offered – recent examples have included *Doom Bar* and *Castle Rock Harvest Pale*. How long Martin will stay in place is unsure, as he's supposedly only there until a new tenant is found, although many locals would undoubtedly like to see him there for the long term.

Also offering *Doom Bar* is the nearby **Plough** aka Plough & Harrow, occasionally supplemented by Adnams *Ghost Ship*.

Meanwhile, we're pleased to note that **Three Horseshoes** in Fazeley has given *Doom Bar* the shove and replaced it with *St Austell Tribute*. This joins the regular offerings of *Bass* and *Pedigree*.

Also offering Fazeley a bit of relief from *Doom Bar* is the **Fazeley Inn**, where gaffer Lisa offers a good pint of *Wainwright*.

Something of a landmark for the **King's Ditch** in Tamworth, which served its 1,000th beer in early March. The beer in question was *Poynton Black Pearl*.



The **Moat House** in Tamworth was featured in a two-part TV programme about haunted buildings in March. Were any spirits found apart from those in the optics? Find out in the next issue of *Last Orders*.

### WEST MIDLANDS

The **Bishop Vesey** at Boldmere is now closed for a significant 10-week refurbishment, which amongst other things will see the addition of a rooftop garden area and a remodelled bar. They will also be upping the number of beer lines, so that sixteen ales can be offered. The Vesey is already a showcase for real ales, and is clearly set to match this with an outstanding pub environment. The planned grand opening date is 4th May – check it out for yourself then!

An exciting and somewhat unexpected development comes to us from Streetly, which may



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well be gaining a micropub. The planned **Brew House** is on Boundary Road, and according to the planning application it will seek to offer ‘at least four varied ales’ from ‘smaller independent specialist brewers, aimed at the beer connoisseur’. There’ll also be craft ales, wines, gins and cocktails, as well as simple snacks. It’s expected to open every day of the week except Monday. Very welcome news, particularly given the relative dearth of interesting drinking spots in the area!

Another very welcome development is the opening of the **Craft Inn** in Sutton Coldfield (on the Birmingham Road, between the Brewhouse & Kitchen and cinema). It opened in mid March and is aiming at the high end of the craft beer market, with nine ever-changing taps featuring breweries such as Cloudwater, Twisted Barrel and Burning Soul, and quite likely many you’ve never heard of! Some of the beers are on the KeyKeg system and will count as real ale (i.e. the dispensing gas doesn’t come into contact with the beer). They’ve also got a fancy growler filling system for takeaways, which uses a carbon dioxide flush to eliminate oxygen and so retain the freshness. Good range of exotic bottles and cans too.

- Thanks to contributors Denise H, Ray C, Mike G, Adam R, Dave B, Bill H, Eric R, Richard S, Barry E

### Nuneaton & Bedworth AGM Summary

The hasty relocation from the Crown to The Lord Hop proved a popular choice with an increase in attendees. There has been no overall change for the branch with all committee members being re-elected for another year.

Our Pubs Officers reported that over the last 12 months the branch has lost four pubs (Boot Inn at Ansley, White Horse in Bedworth, Granby and Crown in Nuneaton), we hope only temporarily. The branch still has 60 pubs selling real ales and 14 that do not.

### Nuneaton & Bedworth Diary

10 Apr	Branch meeting, <b>Anker</b> , Weddington. 8:00pm
26 Apr	Summer Social / Survey <b>Bear &amp; Ragged Staff</b> , Bedworth – 8:00pm <b>Travellers Rest</b> , Bedworth – 8:45 <b>Prince of Wales</b> , Bedworth – 9:30 <b>Weavers Arms</b> , Bulkington – 10:15
8 May	Branch meeting, <b>Horseshoes</b> , Nuneaton. 8:00pm
31 May	Summer Social / Survey <b>Acorn</b> , Nuneaton – 8:00pm <b>Chase Hotel</b> , Nuneaton – 8:45pm <b>Anker</b> , Weddington – 9:30pm
12 June	Branch meeting, <b>Miners Arms</b> , Stockingford. 8:00pm

Up-to-date details of forthcoming surveys can be found on the website:  
[www.nuneaton.camra.org.uk](http://www.nuneaton.camra.org.uk)

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## Bottled Review

With the late February weather apocalypse upon us, and the country falling to pieces because it got down to -10°C in one place and there was three inches of snow somewhere else, it was timely to avoid the chaos and instead consult the bottled beer store. A bit of rooting around came up with a splendid matching pair, two brews from De La Senne in Brussels. When a brewery gets five stars in Tim Webb's *Good Beer Guide Belgium*, you know you're on to a good thing. Among the more well-established De La Senne beers are *Taras Boulba*, *Stouterik* and *Jambe-de-Bois*, but confident in their abilities, I've gone for a couple of their more unusual brews.

First up is *Bruxellensis*, 6.5% and badged as a 'local brett beer'. Brett refers to the wild yeasts so prevalent in the Brussels area, more properly known as brettanomyces – literally 'British fungus'. In this case they've done the primary fermentation with conventional yeast, following it with a four-month refermentation with brett. It pours cleanly, with a thick collar of foam and a full golden colour. There's a mild sediment at the bottom, and unusually, the label recommends keeping the sediment out of the glass, drinking it separately if desired.

The aroma is peppery and fruitily musty, quite hard to describe really, which is probably why many beer writers cop out and refer to 'horse blanket', safe in the knowledge that few people have ever sniffed a nag's comforter. The palate is full of bitter fruitiness, orangey and peppery. There's also a long and impressive bitterness, not florally aromatic but sharp and uncompromising. I quite like the style of this beer; assertive and bitter but achieving this without dosing it to the eyeballs with perfumy New World hops. Not that there's anything wrong with beers which go down that road of course ...

With typical Belgian confidence, the *Bruxellensis* had a stated three-year bottle life, so I'm surprised to find that the slightly stronger *Schieven IPA*, 6.8%, has a seemingly arbitrary seven months. And it's already four months out of date – one of the hazards of a large bottle hoard. But I press ahead and find a pleasantly conventional IPA. There are tropical fruit flavours in the aroma but not too much, a nicely rounded malty and hoppy body, and loads of dry lingering bitterness in the finish. And like the *Bruxellensis*, they've done it without going too far down the heavy aromatics route favoured by many other brewers. Mind, as I drink the beer, I notice an admonishment on the label: "Enjoy its freshness - do not age this beer!" It could be that the very mellowness I'm enjoying is a result of my inadvertent aging. Still, it's my bottle and I'll age it if I want to.

**Next LST Branch Meetings; come along and say hello! 8pm start**

**Mon 9th April, Duke of York, Lichfield, WS13 6DY**

**Tue 8th May 8pm, Mare Pool, Mere Green, B74 2UG**

**Mon 4th Jun 8pm, Crown, Elford, B79 9DB**



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Yes, a mini-bar selling real ale! The **Mini Miner** bar & coffee house owned by Steve and Mandy Rondel opened its doors mid-March and has already been a big hit with the locals of Dordon.

With the loss of the Gate, Cuckoo's Rest (formerly the Merrie Miner) and most recently Dordon Club, Steve spotted a much-needed gap in the market for local drinkers when the former Indian restaurant became vacant in November 2017. This splendid addition to the businesses on Browns Lane is fitted out with the original bar from the Cuckoo's Rest and can accommodate up to 60 drinkers.

On my visit there was a good selection of ales on offer, all on hand pull: *Bass*, *Merry Miner Miner's Bitter* and *Church End Goats Milk*; up next was *Church End Gravediggers Ale*. The bar also sells coffee and cakes. Steve hopes to add a draught cider in the near future.

The Mini Miner opens daily from noon to 10:30pm (11pm Fridays and Saturdays).

John Rowling



## Watch This Space

Tamworth Borough Council are to install a memorial statue in Tamworth Castle Grounds, which will be the first statue of the Staffordshire Regiment's mascot. Watchman – or Colour Sergeant Watchman V to give him his full title – is a familiar face to many people in Tamworth and a much loved mascot. He has recently been crowned Westminster Dog of the Year, and both he and his handler have been awarded the Freedom of the Borough.

Tamworth Brewing Co, the town centre's microbrewery, is joining in by brewing an ale in honour of Watchman V. The brewery is also holding a competition to name the ale, and is asking ale lovers to log onto the brewery's Facebook page and put suggestions forward. The best entries will go forward to a public poll. The final ale will be unveiled to coincide with the dedication of the Staffordshire Regiment statue later this year.

Greg Hedges, handler of Watchman V, said "It's a great honour to have an ale brewed for Watchman. Thank you to Tamworth Brewing Co for this distinction." Meanwhile George Greenway of the brewery said "It's a great privilege to brew this very special ale. I hear that Watchman V has a discerning palate and look forward to creating an ale for Watchman, the Regiment and the county to enjoy!"



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## Mack Brewery, Tromsø



**S**o, in January I was in Tromsø, Norway, sixty-nine degrees north, the land of the mid-day dark. Yeah, I know ... I'm an astronomer, we had a great view of the Northern Lights.

Tromsø is a great city, well worth a visit in either winter or summer. It's a bit like New York, on a small island sandwiched between the mainland and a larger island (Kvaloya). Unlike New York, it's surrounded by mountains, and you can take the Fjellheisen cable car up one of them for a panoramic view over town. There's history, too – the Tirpitz was hunted down and sunk by British ships on 12th November 1944, as part of the battle of the North Atlantic – I'm told you can still see small circular craters in the neighbourhood. Tromsø is a calm-water harbour in a hostile northern ocean – I joined the Hurtigruten boat *MS Trollfjord* on its post-boat cruise around the tiny ports of the Norwegian coast.

OK. Nice location – what about the beer? Tromsø is the location of the **Mack Brewery**, which bills itself as the world's most northerly brewery (though there are other contenders). I joined a tour of the microbrewery which stands on the site which Mack have brewed on for over a hundred years, just to the south of the city centre. Ludwig Mack founded the brewery in 1877 and it has remained in family hands ever since, for five generations. After resistance by the city council, Mack opened a very popular beer hall, **Ølhallen**, in 1928. A fire in 1939 and the privations of the second world war held up development, but in the second half of the twentieth century Mack thrived and expanded, first into large premises in Tromsø and then to a major commercial operation seventy miles south. In 2000 the original brewery was converted to a microbrewery for the development of new brews, and it was this that we toured.

The brewers, Rune, Eivin and Esben have an entertaining approach to brewing. They brew to a rock music soundtrack, and each brew has its own playlist, which can be accessed on Spotify from the Mack website. The brewing vessels are named for an eclectic selection of artists: Ringo Starr, Elvis, Patti Smith, Iggy Pop and a Norwegian by the name of Jokke. One of their favourite brews was named Lemmy's Lager until Motorhead objected – so it's now Lenny's Lager. Iggy Pop, on the other hand, visited the brewery to sample the beer brewed in honour of him.



The tour concludes with a visit to the Ølhallen, which is still very much part of the Tromsø scene. There are 67 beers on tap, as pictured below, guarded over by a stuffed polar bear. The tour includes samplers from the Mack range. I tried the *Nordlys* (Northern Lights), a 4.5% pilsner, and *Ijsbjorn* (Polar Beer), a 4.5% pale lager. Mack claim that the *Ijsbjorn* was the first beer ever to be drunk at the North Pole (1981) – and at the South Pole (1990). Both beers were OK, but much better was the *Haakon*, named for the former King of Norway, Haakon VII, and introduced for the Lillehammer Olympics of 1994. This is an imperial pilsener, also brewed at 4.5%, but preferable is the *Haakon Senior* at 6.5%.



- The Ludwig Mack Brygghus is at Ølhallen, Storgata 4, 9008 Tromsø.

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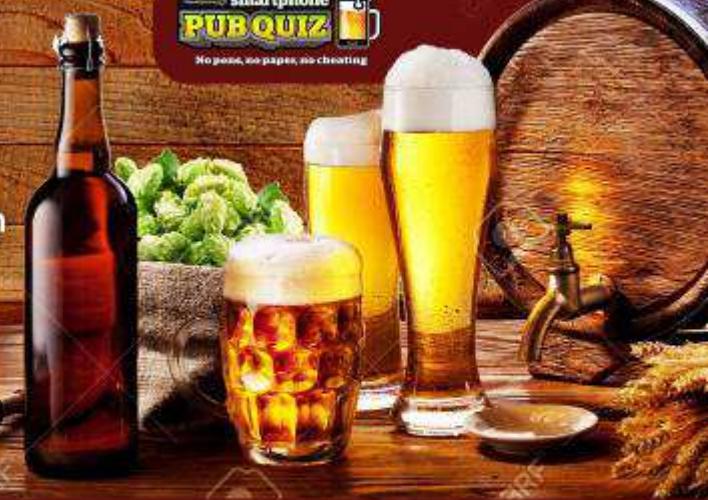
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## Doing Some Lines

Caerphilly – known for its castle and its cheese, until it moved to Somerset and Wiltshire. Production of the crumbly cheese that is, not the castle, which still stands proudly if a little drunkenly in the centre of town. We didn't trek down to Caerphilly for cheese or castle though, but rather for something far more interesting, a visit to the **Lines Brewery**. The purpose of our visit was to present Tamworth's Bronze Beer of the Festival award for the impressive *Session IPA*, a beautifully light 3.2% brew which nevertheless packed in the flavour. Tucked away in a top secret location on an industrial estate – or at least that's what it felt like given our faltering attempts to find it – the brewery is quite an impressive setup. It's a 40 barrel plant, with a number of 40 and 80 barrel fermenters filling the large building. Even the pilot plant for trial brews is 5 barrel, which is at least as large as many of our local micros!



We were met by Duncan Illsley, who runs the outfit with business partner Tom Newman. As part of a tour of the brewery, our interest was well and truly spiked by a raised platform containing a number of old wooden casks. It was here (as pictured left) that festival organiser Ian Eason (right) presented the award to Duncan, albeit in the rather steamy atmosphere close to the roof!

But what of the casks? They're used for conditioning some of the intriguing speciality beers that the brewery makes, particularly Saisons and Grisettes. Don't know your Saison from your Grisette? They're both rustic ales of European heritage, with the story being that Saisons were for thirsty farmers, while miners would slake their thirst with Grisettes. The wooden cask conditioning allows natural wild yeasts – aka brettanomyces – to add their flavour edges. We had a sniff of *Strawberry Grisette* gently working away.

They also try their hand at lambic beers, the idea being that wild yeasts from the atmosphere spark a spontaneous fermentation. Duncan caught us off-guard with talk of 'yeast traps', which had us thinking of butterfly nets or mouse traps, but of course it's simpler than that. Just leave some sweet fermentable liquid in places of your choice and see if what develops holds promise or conversely is disgusting. While the brewery itself is not a favourable spot (no Caerphilly Cantillon then!), they've apparently had some success with samples from Tintern Abbey, which makes sense in that it brewed in ancient times, and could only have done that spontaneously in those less scientific times.

Lurking in another corner was another interesting item, a 'foudre' vessel as pictured right. A foudre is essentially a giant wooden cask, popular amongst French winemakers for maturing wine, but also finding a place in breweries interested in aging beers. This beastie – acquired brand new for a five-figure sum – had its first fill in September last year. They're making a Flanders Red – think *Rodenbach* or *Duchesse de Bourgogne* – and it'll spend a year in the foudre, picking up lots of oaky flavour along the way. So it'll be



## Doing Some Lines cont.

ready in September this year, and could you credit it, that's when Tamworth Beer Festival is on again. Rest assured that we'll be talking to Duncan closer to the event, with the intention of securing our first ever Flemish Red for Tamworth. Not that we can think of any other UK beer festival that's had one anyway ...

While the Lines guys are very much into their soured beers, they do of course make more conventional beers, such as the *Session IPA*. The only disappointing thing about their conventional beers – from our point of view at any rate – is that they like experimenting so much that they rarely produce the same beer twice. So while there's a nice little tap room on site (open Wed-Fri from 6pm), we had to rely on our memories of *Session IPA* from Tamworth! However, Duncan did kindly produce some special bottles for us to try. *Strawberry Oak* and *Blackcurrant Oak* both had a notable oakiness and a quenching sourness, though it was really the *Blackcurrant* where the fruit properly expressed itself. *Primary Brett Imperial Stout* – 9.5% – was a different beast altogether, full of rich-but-tangy flavours and drinking more like a six percenter.

Nearby Cardiff is getting increasingly interesting for beer, and with plans afoot for a Lines bar there, it can only become more of a beer destination. There are also tentative thoughts of something similar in Bath; interesting times, and we wish the Lines guys all the best.



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# Top 10 beers

LST Branch Treasurer Eric Randall selects some desert island beers ...

Over fifty years of imbibing, both at home and abroad, I've inevitably sampled an astonishing variety of ales and lagers. Initially, beers from Ansell's, Bass, Banks's, Davenports and Marstons were the mainstays from the limited options available in my home town and others close by. The main choices from these breweries were usually a *Mild* and a *Bitter*, with some pubs having an occasional guest beer. How different it is today, with a multitude of breweries producing an overwhelming variety of offerings. These are widely available both locally and in most parts of our sceptred isle, or at least to pubs that have the freedom to acquire them. I am fortunate in not having any real preference for a particular style, and so have enjoyed a kaleidoscope of beers which have been testament to the brewers' skills and innovations.

- 1 Salopian *Oracle*, with its citrus aromas leading into a blackcurrant hoppiness, is an ideal thirst quencher and session beer.
- 2 A Scottish offering, Brew Dog *5am Saint*, is a red ale with a fruity, grainy background balanced by a piney, resinous hoppiness at the finish.
- 3 Not to be outdone is a Welsh wonder, Tiny Rebel *Breakfast IPA*, a beer that at 3% is low on alcohol but high on flavour. It has tropical aromas and fruit flavours with a pleasing hop finish. It would qualify as an all-day breakfast beer given its strength and quaffability.
- 4 Aecht Schlenkerla *Urbock* is a stronger version of Bamberg's premier smoked malt beer. This German gem has the intense smokiness of its sibling but with richer, fuller flavours to balance out that bacon bite. Sadly this beer is only available around November time.
- 5 Beowulf *Dragon Smoke Stout* is the benchmark to judge other stouts by as Beowulf excel with their dark brews. Strong chocolate, liquorice and burnt fruit notes with a dry, smoky, and grainy bitterness at the end.
- 6 Batham's *Bitter* is a traditional straw-coloured bitter from the Black Country. Fruity with a malty sweetness and a nice hoppiness to round it off. Best drunk in the Vine aka Bull & Bladder, their Brierley Hill brewery tap.
- 7 Hook Norton *Twelve Days* is a Christmas cracker with rich, spicy flavours and a warming finish – a perfect antidote to the frivolities of the festive season.
- 8 The same applies to Bath *Festivity*, a dark and delicious porter laced with rum; chocolate and roast grain flavours are also in the mix.
- 9 Oakham *Bishops Farewell* is not all about the hops, as in Oakham *Citra*. A fruity, malty background precedes a zesty, bittersweet hoppiness.
- 10 Last on my luscious list is Maui *Coconut Porter*, a Hawaiian highlight from a brewery on the island of Maui. This beer featured at Wetherspoon beer festivals in days gone by. Included in its recipe were toasted coconut flakes which really intensified the flavour.

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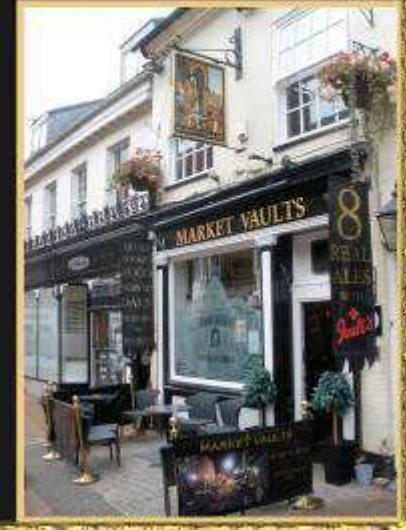


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## Brewing in the Kitchen

On a Saturday early in March my wife and I attended a brewery experience day at our local **Brewhouse & Kitchen** in Lichfield. On arrival at 10am we were greeted by head brewer Gabriele who organised some coffees and introduced us to another husband and wife team attending the day. Once we read and signed our health and safety forms we then tasted the different types of malt to be used in our beer. We were going to create a seasonal toffee porter which was due to be available at the bar in around two weeks time. With no time to lose, Gabriele ran some hot water from the kettle into the mash tun. He then gradually added the mix of malted grain while us helpers took it in turns to fully stir it in until the mixture looked like the early stages of porridge! It then had to be left for an hour to let the natural enzymes kick in and do their work.



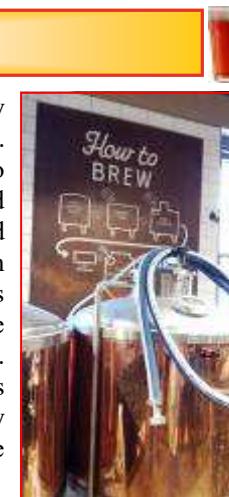
To pass the time we were all served bacon baps while Gabriele, left, talked us through the planned brewing process. We were then shown around the brewing equipment from the hot liquor tank, mash tun, copper, and finally our allocated fermenting tank (the other three were already occupied by beers at different stages of fermentation). Next stop was the bar where we had a tasting session of all six available beers. These were *Gatehouse* session bitter, *Lunartick* red rye ale, *Handy Man* traditional IPA, *Spellman Sam* single hopped pale ale, *Red IPA* and a keg *IPA*.

The hour soon passed by and then we set about drawing the wort into a small holding tank where a jug was used to take large samples and allow us to visually check for spent grain. This was then poured back (recycled) into the mash tun over the back of a paddle to avoid disturbing the mash. The idea was for the spent grain in the mash tun to compress into a natural filter. Once the wort sample was clear of spent grain an anti-foaming agent was added and it was all transferred to the copper. This took a while as the wort had to be fed into the small holding tank and then pumped onwards to the copper in stages, a move which prevents the grain bed filter collapsing too quickly.

Once the copper was full, a measured quantity of dried hops plus some preliminary kettle finings were added to the copper, and the wort was then left to boil for an hour. That signalled the time for lunch at which point our pre-ordered meals promptly appeared at our table along with our choice of beer – classic burger washed down with a pint of *Handy Man* in my case!



During our lunch break Gabriele started to transfer the wort through the heat exchanger and onwards to the allocated fermentation



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vessel. During this process he asked us to keep an eye on the temperature display and advised that he was aiming for 22 degrees for the start of the fermentation.

Once all the wort was in the fermentation vessel I was entrusted with the task of pouring in the yeast to start the actual brewing process. The yeast converts the dissolved sugar into alcohol along with significant amounts of carbon dioxide. Gabriele showed us an escape pipe running out of the top of the vessel and down the side to provide an essential pressure release for the excess gas.

Now that the *Toffee Porter* was on the home straight it was time to help clean out the copper and remove all traces of spent hops. Once all was spotless it was time for our debriefing and for Gabriele to give us our wage for the day, a 5-litre mini-keg each of our chosen B&K beer.

It was a very enjoyable day and a great opportunity to gain 'hands on' brewing experience. Considering that all our food, drink, and a 5-litre mini-keg of B&K beer were included, I felt that the £85/person cost was reasonable value. It will also help B&K gain a collection of potential head brewers waiting in the wings!

Dave Backhouse



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When your hotel accommodation asks for quiet after 10pm, and between 1pm and 4pm, you know you're somewhere searingly hot where siesta is the way to cope. But I've chosen to come to Cyprus in early March, when the weather is still warm enough for most visitors to grill their pasty skin to a lobster shade of overdone, but cool enough for me to get some serious cycling done.

Now, Cyprus is not known for its real ale. At least, not if you've failed to read the many recent-ish CAMRA magazine articles about western Cyprus. So a stay in Paphos was required to investigate further, with the bike providing an ideal way of getting around. Not that I realised quite how challenging it would all be ...

Various northern mags have featured an article about the **Old Fishing Shack** in lower Paphos, and as it's a short walk from my digs, I make this my first port of call after settling in. The Shack, pictured right, along with owner Athos, is something of a Paphos legend. Athos acquired a taste for real ale and interesting beers when studying in England, leading to him opening the Shack in 1993. And he was able to bring real ale to the place in 1995, when a local outfit started brewing *Pendle Witches Brew* under licence.



While the place might indeed look like a shack, that's just the sun protection for outdoor drinkers – inside is pleasantly pubby, with a conventional bar, two active hand pulls, and fridges groaning with a cornucopia of bottles, mostly imported but with some interesting Greek and Cypriot micros. Athos refuses to sell the local industrial fizz – *Keo*, *Carlsberg* and *Leon* – describing them in terms which would have libel lawyers rubbing their hands with glee if we dared to print them here. Instead, his key draught beers are two hand pulled offerings from local micro Aphrodite's Rock, *London Porter* and *ESB* during my visits. He also shifts shedloads of imported Weston's *Old Rosie*, with his fresh-fruit-addition variants proving particularly popular. The lemon and ginger version was so special that even an acid-avoider like me was impressed. The Shack comes highly recommended – I ended up in there every night of the trip, as an enjoyable prelude to dinner.



Equipped with a hire bike – €12 a day for a reasonable mountain bike, pretty good – it was time to begin exploring in earnest. And the **Aphrodite's Rock Brewery & Bar** was the obvious first target. But as it's only around 12 km away, a more circuitous route through the villages of Akourtos and Kathikas looked more interesting. And the thing you need to understand about cycling in a hot climate is that it gives you a raging thirst. Or at least that's my excuse. But what I hadn't appreciated is that the route involved heights of well above 2000ft. So after 35 km of this, there's no more welcome sight than the brewery hoarding, left – and the thirst has raged itself to a point where it's clamouring for satisfaction.

I walk in just before 2pm, and am brightly met with "ah, you're just in time for the brewery tour!" I don't say "sod the brewery

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## Cy Beer Security cont.



tour" but instead politely decline and plonk myself down with the beer list. Four ales on hand pull, two on keg, where to begin? A tasting paddle is an option, but subliminal Captain Thirst takes over and demands a pint of the lightest cask, *Yorkshire Rose* at 3.8%. It's a lovely quaffer – biscuity, malty body with a good traditional hoppiness. I can now sit on the tranquil beer terrace, right, and enjoy rather than loath the sight of the surrounding hills. The chocolatey *Lian Shee*, 4.5%, sinks down pleasantly, topped off with a 6% *West Coast IPA* (keg) – this is no hop stonker but it's certainly got a good aromatic hop edge.

A return on another day (different route, more bloody hills) allows for the free brewery tour, which is well worth doing. One notable aspect is the ingredients. While I've got blasé about seeing bananas, oranges and even aubergines growing by the roadside, it's evident that the climate is far too southern for malt and hops. So Aphrodite's have to import everything, which makes the pricing at the tap (€2.95 to €4.20 a pint) pretty remarkable.



On my travels, the real ale radar has spotted the **Wooden Pub** on the Tomb of the Kings road. Not surprisingly the promised cask ale is *Yorkshire Rose*, but it's as good as at the brewery. A full range of Aphrodite's bottles are available, as well as a number of keg beers. One is *Humor IPA* from the Hop Thirsty Friends of Nicosia in central Cyprus; it's 6.5%, richly hoppy but with plenty of balancing toffee-edge malt. I also try their imported BrewDog Punk, but the *Humor IPA* is hands-down winner.

From the Wooden Pub I get a top tip about another bar selling Aphrodite's, **DT's Sunset**. It's further along the same road, and devilishly difficult to find as the name is hidden away under the sun awning. It looks like any other tourist café-bar, but offers a virtually unadvertised *Yorkshire Rose*, again in exemplary nick. An upstairs terrace offers beautiful views of the Med. It's clearly something of an expat place, as the menu features full English breakfasts and Curryoke (thankfully no singing involved). Somewhat depressingly, *Keo* and *Leon* factory fizz seem to be the drinks of choice for the expats present. I'm sure there are expats whose idea of living the dream is *not* tinned John Smiths and fish & chips in a perpetually sunny climate, but they were pretty thin on the ground as far as I could see.

Another discovery is that there's an additional **Wooden Pub** in the centre of lower Paphos, near to the seafront. Pretty much the same beer menu as the other one, and again *Yorkshire Rose* is the cask beer of choice. It felt mildly rebellious to be drinking a cool real ale with the sun beating down and palm trees in the distance, right, but it felt like a campaigning feather-in-the-cap. Both of the Wooden Pubs have whimsical games placed on the tables, but I soon tired of fishing out little plastic Pisceans from the one on this table. Maybe time for another real ale instead?



More info? See the Paphos map on our website: [www.LSTCamra.org.uk/tripmaps.htm](http://www.LSTCamra.org.uk/tripmaps.htm)



Want to burn some calories while you're having your pint? May we suggest the following unusual seating, spotted in an LST branch pub? We didn't road test them, but would guess they are a lot easier than riding a unicycle ...

Top marks – though sadly no prize – if you can identify the pub.



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## Weston-Super-Mare

In February my wife and I took our tourer down to Locking, a small village about three miles from Weston, for a week; a good opportunity to visit some pubs. The first pub was close to our site, a four-year-old Marston's pub called the **Landing Light**, next to an old air field where the Helicopter Museum is sited. Among the usual Marstons ales on offer, I had a *61 Deep* which was not bad.

The following day we went to the *Good Beer Guide*-listed **Cider Barn** in Draycott, on the main A371. As the *Guide* says, this is a quirky place, right, but well worth a visit. Cheddar *Bitter Bully* went down well. On the way back to Weston we called into Axbridge to visit the **Lamb**, another *Guide* entry. This is a Butcombe-owned Grade II-listed pub, with the National Trust's medieval King John's hunting lodge opposite. Here I tried a new beer to me, the very nice Butcombe *Original*.



The following day saw us in Weston in the **Imperial**, one of the oldest pubs in town. The three changing beers are often sourced locally. Here I had a pleasant Dorking *DB One*, a hoppy best bitter with underlying orange notes. Next it was on to the **Regency** opposite the university. Here they have four regulars and one changing beer, in this case Fullers *Front Row*, another new beer to me.

The next day was Weston for the last two *Guide* pubs. The **Bear** is a large pub just a few minutes' walk from the seafront. Among the four regionally sourced beers on offer here, another new brewery and beer to me was Beat Ales *Metal Head*, a very nice stout. Then on to the **Brit Bar** for its three changing beers. I kept it dark with another good brew, New Bristol's *Shergill Farkley* porter.

Our last day saw us taking a walk to the village of Locking to visit the local boozer, the **Coach House**, pictured below. This Butcombe-owned pub is surprisingly large for a small village, but for a Wednesday lunch time was very busy. Lunch here of BLT and chips was very filling. I had a Butcombe *Original* which was very poor as I think it was the last from the barrel; however the *London Pride* was very good.



Nice trip; the only thing I regretted about the pub visits involving the car was that as the driver I could only try a half in each pub!

## Closer to home ...

On a recent visit to Bulkington I called into the **Weavers Arms**. Peter the landlord was his usual pleasant self, moaning about his bar staff and giving grief to his customers and the dog, but it is well worth it for a pint of his *Draught Bass*. He boasts that it is the best kept Bass in Warwickshire and judging by the pint I had he is right. Try a visit there and judge for yourself!

Richard Simpson

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May

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6th Bank Holiday Disco – with DJ Benno

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## 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 36.

### 25-28th April, Stourbridge Beer Festival

Town Hall, Crown Centre, Stourbridge, DY8 1YE

80+ ales, plus cider & perry. Wed 7-10 (members only), Thu 7-11, Fri 12-11, Sat 12-9.

### 4-6th May, Angel Spring Festival

Angel Ale House, 24 Church Street, Atherstone, CV9 1HA

10 ales & 10 ciders from the south east of England. Fri & Sat 12-12, Sun 12-11.

### 10-12th May, 18th Banbury Beer & Cider Festival

Army Reserve Centre, Oxford Road, OX16 9AN

100+ ales/ciders. Thu 5-11, Fri 12-11, Sat 11-11

### 17-19th May, 6th Kidderminster Beer & Cider Festival

Town Hall, Vicar Street, DY10 1DB.

48 ales, 15 ciders & perries. Thu 4-11, Fri 11-11, Sat 11-7.

### 31st May-3rd June, 9th Hopwas Beer Festival

Coton & Hopwas Social Club, School Lane, Hopwas, B78 3AD

25+ ales plus ciders/perries. Thu 5-12, Fri 4-12, Sat 12-11, Sun 12-6. Food, live music.

### 31st May-3rd June, Old Moseley Arms Summer Beer Festival

Old Moseley Arms, 53 Tindal Street, Balsall Heath, Birmingham, B12 9QU

16 ales, 3 ciders. From noon each day. Food and live music every evening.

### 7-9th June, 43rd Wolverhampton Beer & Cider Festival

Newhampton Arts Centre, Dunkley Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 4AN

70 ales plus ciders/perries/foreign bottled beers. Thu 5-11, Fri & Sat 12-11.

### 28-30th June, Bromsgrove Beer & Cider Festival

Bromsgrove Rugby Football Club, Finstall Park, B60 3DH

144 ales, 50+ ciders & perries. Thu 6-11 (CAMRA only), Fri 12-11, Sat 11-9.30.

### 6-8th Sept, 25th Tamworth Beer Festival

Tamworth Masonic Rooms, 29 Lichfield Street, B79 7QE

75+ ales plus ciders, perries and a range of bottled beers. Thu to Sat 11-11.

Holding a beer festival? Let us know and we will advertise the event here free of charge. Details to [LST.Camra@gmail.com](mailto:LST.Camra@gmail.com)

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