

Beer Tiz



CAMRA North Devon Branch



Campaign
for
Real Ale

Issue 27
Summer 2020

FREE



**A very grateful
THANK YOU**

**To all the people and their families
Helping to keep this great country going.
Without you, we would not be looking forward
To one of these!**



Committee Contact Information

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>e-mail address</u>
Chair	Stephen Lock	Chair@northdevon.camra.org.uk
Secretary and Branch Contact	Chris Wells	Secretary@northdevon.camra.org.uk Branch.Contact@northdevon.camra.org.uk
Treasurer	Andrew Austen	Treasurer@northdevon.camra.org.uk
Pubs Officer & Brewery Liaison Officer	Alan Edgecombe	Pubs.Group@northdevon.camra.org.uk
Press and Publicity (including Social Media)	Vacancy	
Website Manager	Sara Dyer	Web@northdevon.camra.org.uk
Public Transport	Mike Fletcher	Public.Transport@northdevon.camra.org.uk
Magazine Editor and Vice Chair	Peter Thompson	Beer.Tiz@northdevon.camra.org.uk
Membership Secretary	Peter Churcher	Membership@northdevon.camra.org.uk
Cider Representative	Richard Squire	Cider@northdevon.camra.org.uk
Social Secretary	Ian Jones	Social.Secretary@northdevon.camra.org.uk
Honorary President	Morris Elsworth	Fiona.ndcamra@icloud.com

Beer Tiz : the magazine of the **North Devon branch of CAMRA**, the Campaign for Real Ale, brought to you entirely by unpaid volunteers. Distributed free to hundreds of pubs in and around the North Devon area. Also available on-line at northdevon.camra.org.uk.

CAMRA Good Beer Guide suggestions for future entries (and comments on existing ones) can be made to our GBG co-ordinator Alan Edgecombe. If you have any pub updates please enter them via whatpub.com or e-mail to pubs.group@northdevon.camra.org.uk.

To **Advertise** in Beer Tiz - contact Neil Richards at Matelot Marketing (01536 358670).

Views expressed in Beer Tiz are those of the individual authors and not necessarily supported by CAMRA. Inclusion of an advertisement does not imply endorsement by CAMRA.

Chairman's Chatter . . .

Having been elected Chairman at the branch AGM in March (see BeerTiz 26), less than 48 hours later I found myself chairing the first meeting of the new Committee. I'm pleased to say this was a really productive meeting with the few remaining committee vacancies being filled and lots of positive ideas put forward for the year ahead. Then came coronavirus and the lockdown and our whole world changed overnight.



CAMRA was set up to secure the long term future of real ale, real cider and real perry by promoting their availability and popularity. Protecting pubs and clubs as social centres for their communities has always been part and parcel of our remit. Yet within hours of the lockdown it became crystal clear that all this was under threat with pubs and clubs closed and breweries robbed of much of their custom base.

Our first response as a branch Committee was to ask what could be done to help hard hit licensees and brewers get through this crisis? We already knew of individual pubs and breweries planning to offer take-away services for drinks and/or food, so we resolved to try and contact all outlets and create a single database on the branch website to help promote this trade. Thanks in particular are due here to Alan Edgecombe, our Pubs Officer Coordinator, and to Sara Dyer who manages our CAMRA branch website. As Chairman, I tried to do my bit by giving interviews on BBC Radio Devon and The Voice to further promote this initiative.

Since then much has happened. Nationally CAMRA has launched the Pulling Together campaign which aims to publicise innovative ways pubs, breweries and cider makers are using to stay afloat (visit www.camra.org.uk/pullingtogether). Very much in the spirit of our own local efforts, there is now the CAMRA **Brew2You app** which is a one-stop shop where customers can find and purchase fresh, local real ale, cider and perry. Other CAMRA initiatives have included a call to pub-owning companies to cancel licensees' rents for the duration of the crisis, while lobbying Government to provide a Business Rates holiday for all pubs. (Unfortunately a plea to the Chancellor to forgo the collection of Beer Duty in March appears to have fallen on deaf ears). But one final plug for CAMRA - if you have time then why not try and visit the **Red (On)Lion** - the Campaign's virtual pub where at the click of a button you too can get involved with discussion, games, socialising and much more!

As for North Devon branch, while face to face meetings are not possible at present, committee members are very much still active on your behalf exchanging ideas and making plans for the future beyond the lockdown - for which as Chairman I wish to publicly thank them. Also, I would like to thank those committee members who stood down this year - their knowledge and wisdom will be missed but I hope they do not become strangers as their company will always be welcome.

On a final note, have faith! Those halcyon days we have been so fortunate enough to experience in the past will return. The day when we will be once again sitting in the beer garden of a local pub, supping good English ale and cider with friends and family is not just a dream. It will turn into reality sooner or later, and when it does please, please support your local hostelry. Support the very people who have supported our English way of life for countless hundreds of years, the humble landlord and landlady of your local pub.

Until we meet again please stay safe and healthy.

Stephen Lock (aka Snuffy)
(Branch Chairman)



Pubs with Beer Gardens may be first to open after lockdown rules are lifted.

"Same Glass Sir?"

The following article was written BEFORE the current health emergency with all it has entailed by way hand washing, social distancing and generally staying alert! The issue of good glass hygiene has been a bugbear of mine for many years since – but I now suspect it's a view that will find many more adherents as we learn to operate in a post-Covid world?



I've lost count of the number of times that I've been asked this question when ordering a second or third pint of the same ale while at the same time performing the common courtesy of returning my empty glass to the bar. Now, I don't imagine for one moment that this is simply a cunning attempt to cut down on the glass washing at the end of the evening. Nor do I doubt that the member of bar staff asking such a question is doing so in the belief that giving the customer a choice in the matter must somehow be a good thing. So why then do I for one object to the practice?



To put it bluntly this is all about bodily fluids and my not wanting to share other people's - at least not unintentionally - when I'm enjoying my pint. So how does this come about, and is there a real risk or is it just another case of the Health and Safety brigade going over the top? As far as I can see the science isn't really in dispute. Where draught ales are dispensed and liquid sucked back into the dispensing equipment as it surely must, then cross-contamination can occur as harmful

(quite possibly infectious) bacteria or even viruses are transferred from the previous person's glass to that of the next customer. True, lager and other font poured beers ought not pose such a risk as the nozzle should never touch the glass or liquid within the glass during pouring – unlike serving real ale through a beer engine which to be done properly requires the tip of the sparkler to be at the bottom of the glass for the majority of the pour. Now, as I have no intention at my advanced age of suddenly becoming a lager drinker or taking to nitrokeg beer, how am I to avoid this potential risk to my own health when enjoying a pint?

First the bad news - apparently there is no specific law which prohibits the refilling of a customer's glass, assuming they have agreed to it. However, this matter is far from cut and dried, as while the legislation may be open to interpretation (the Food Safety Act 1990 applies equally to serving beer as to any other food product) any suspicion let alone evidence of contamination in pubs could well be investigated by local authority inspectors, with prosecution being one possible outcome. As a result, from my experience the overwhelming majority of good



landlords will have considered this risk as part of their Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) evaluation.

Complications can arise however, for example when regulars keep their own personalised glass behind the bar or someone insists on using the same glass because it has their preferred shape or the correct ale logo. Refusal could cause offence and even the loss of custom. Providing all bar staff with guidance and training on the matter so that they are better equipped to explain the reasons why a clean glass for every pint is necessary should certainly help. But failing that, the suggestion I like best is for whenever a customer says “fill it up, I don’t mind using the same glass”, staff simply pour a pint into a fresh glass then decant it into that of the customer! Surely a win-win situation?



Peter Thompson - Editor

Future of the printed version of Beer Tiz.

Our Beer Tiz magazine is printed by a family firm of printers at no cost to CAMRA. Their income is derived from the advertising revenue they can raise from Pubs, Breweries and others. The current Covid-19 pandemic has not bypassed this small family business either. Staff have been furloughed and obviously, income from advertisers has dried up, certainly as far as our magazine is concerned.

CAMRA is an organisation that relies on volunteers to carry out many functions for its members and the public at large to promote Real Ale, Cider and Perry throughout the country. One way this is achieved is through advertising in our Beer Tiz magazine and we, as your committee are concerned that the future of Beer Tiz in its current printed format is at risk.

We would ask that both current and future advertisers, consider the wider implications of reducing their advertising as laid out above and the knock on effect it may have. As CAMRA North Devon, we shall continue to promote and help all the Pubs and Breweries in our area as far as we can to ensure their continued existence. We would also ask that you help our printer in doing the same by continuing your advertising relationship with them and by osmosis, to all of the CAMRA North Devon members and public.

North Devon CAMRA Committee

Things you let yourself in for!

There I was, sitting in the back room at the Black Horse in Torrington, waiting with other CAMRA members for the start of the North Devon CAMRA AGM. I was already doing a job as a Pubs Officer for 16 pubs in the Holsworthy area and I was also the Brewery Liaison Officer for 2 of the breweries in our area. Having only been involved with the North Devon branch for about 12 months, what I was doing seemed to be sufficient.



During the course of the AGM the position of Pubs Group Coordinator became available and I found myself volunteering for that role due to there being no other persons willing to take it on. This is the trouble when you find yourself enjoying an ale or two at a convivial meeting, volunteering becomes easy!

This brings to mind the time I was at a car auction where I ended up buying a Daimler that used more oil than petrol and I said 'never again'! Oh how easy it is to forget.

Anyway, the upshot is that I now have a number of roles that are my responsibility. At least they all relate to the one area that has a consistent focus which is what many of us enjoy - the Pub!

So, being eager and willing to get started, I began gathering information from the previous incumbents, only to be stymied by the COVID-19 lockdown! The pandemic has, as we know, affected all of our lives and not necessarily for the better.

Pubs, Breweries and Tap Rooms rely on our presence to purchase their goods. Our only hope is that we are allowed to return to our favourite haunts and again enjoy an ale or two of our favourite tipples sooner rather than later.

This has given me time to reflect on the roles I have taken on and the most important one is the Pubs Officer Group coordination role. This is a vitally important role and with approximately 250 Pubs in our mostly rural area does require willing persons to help ensure that they get visited on a regular basis.

Our outgoing Pubs Officer, gave me the following explanation of this role:

'For those less familiar with our Group, I should perhaps explain that the role of pubs officers is a very important one in a geographically large branch such as North Devon, where contact with, and feed-back from our local pubs can otherwise easily become sporadic. Pub Officers act as two-way ambassadors, representing the interests of the pubs they look after while at the same time keeping them - and their customers - aware of the various CAMRA promotions and campaigns. Using their local knowledge and



expertise, they also play a central role in the various selection procedures for the Good Beer Guide, branch awards, etc. The role can, therefore, be very fulfilling and enjoyable.'

At the moment, our current Pubs Officers have too many pubs per head to look after. Consequently not all our pubs receive the attention we would like. I am, therefore, looking for approximately eight volunteers, across the North Devon area to take on this role. It is not onerous and would normally take about 2 or 3 hours a month. The pubs allocated to you would normally be in the area where you live. Only in exceptional circumstances would you be asked to look after a pub more distant from your home address.

Training in the role, such as it is, would be given by myself and should only take about 15 - 20 minutes over a beer or two! It also means that you will get to visit pubs you may never have been to and maybe enjoy an ale from a brewery new to you.

In this time of uncertainty, the more help we can give our pubs and local breweries once they return to an active role, the better we all shall be in the future. Never before have our pubs and local breweries required your help more than they do now. Being a Pubs Officer is an important and rewarding role.



Please respond to me at pubs.group@northdevon.camra.org.uk with a positive response or to ask for further information, and if you do become a Pubs Officer, I'll buy you a pint!

Alan Edgecombe
(Pubs Officer Group Co-ordinator)



Art Brew Brewery at Sutcombe and its lively Tap Room!

Never mind the beer, what glass is it?

To some people it does not matter if the beer comes in a bucket or a plastic cup, but to others the glass is almost as important as the contents itself. After all, you wouldn't drink brandy from a tumbler or whisky from a cup - would you???



For some years, my wife (Sara) and I lived in Holland and frequented a small brown bar in Amsterdam called Café Gollem. In there, as well as draught lager beers, they serve an innumerable number of bottled special brews such as Tripel, Westmalle, Trappist etc., etc. Each of these wonderful brews comes in its own unique bottle and labelling and, what's better is, it's served in its own dedicated glass or in some cases receptacle!

In the case of Pauwel Kwak Beer, it is served in a strange shaped Glass 33 cl requiring its own special Holder as per image here.

All this attention to detail, is it just for show? No, the glass enhances the qualities and flavour of the drink, and so adds to the enjoyment and satisfaction of a truly special moment.

But what of the history of our drinking vessels?

Until the end of the Victorian era, pubs served their ale mostly in pewter tankards, which hid the bits and bobs that used to float around in their ale. Then dingy pubs began to be better lit and modern filtration methods started to produce a clearer drink. As newly enlightened drinkers took more notice of the clarity of their pint, the modern beer glass was born.



The first mass-produced beer glass – the 10-sided (fluted) handled pint mug – arrived with the consolidation of the brewing industry in the 1920s, and became famous when the Brewers' Society used it in its "beer is best" adverts in the 1930s.



But after the war, it was replaced by the dimpled beer mug, made of thick glass patterned with indentations, resembling a hand grenade. This design change fitted in with changing drinking habits: dark mild had acquired an unfashionable



image as an old working-class man's drink, and its substitute, amber bitter, looks lovely in the refracted light of a dimpled glass.

Then, in the 1960s, the dimpled mug went into a long decline, with drinkers preferring a lighter, straighter glass. The invention of a new style of glass, with a bulge about an inch from the top, also solved the perennial problem of straight glasses – their propensity to chip near the rim when being washed together. This was the Nonik (no nick) glass.



Personally, I have always hated the sleeve beer glass (or sleever) which looks more suited to flowers than a drinking vessel!!!

I have always favoured a glass with a handle. These are called many names, depending on where you are in the country - mug, jug, pot, or simply handle!

So, what next - multi use disposable plastic cups!!!? Well not for me! When you order a beer ask for the glass you want it in. A pint in a handle please. Do not let conformity stop you trying a different beer and even a different glass until you find the one that suits you. If the pub doesn't have a mug or the glass you prefer - take your own so that you can decant the ale from the glass you're served into your own glass (or tankard) of choice. If you have an acquired taste, travel with it!

Cheers!

Mark Dyer



Congratulations . . .



The Farmers Arms at Woolsery

You may recall reading about how the village pub at Woolsery was brought back to life after being closed for a number of years (see BeerTiz 22 - Spring 2019). The Farmers Arms was reopened in January 2019 after an extensive rebuild, largely thanks to the patronage of multi-millionaire internet mogul Michael Birch in memory of his grandmother who was born in the village.

Now the Farmers Arms is one of the two pubs to win the Refurbishment Award in CAMRA's prestigious Pub Design Awards for 2020. Andrew Davison, chair of CAMRA's Pub Design Award judging panel praised the pub for retaining as much of the historic fabric as possible, maintaining the historic layout of the building, while completely reconstructing the roof using locally grown wheat straw thatch.

The result is a pub which is once again at the centre of village life – so congratulations to all concerned!

How will our Pubs survive Covid-19?

Well that rather depends on the British drinking public and what we choose to do post lockdown. A lot of us have realised the economic truth that we don't need as much of anything as we thought we did and can survive at home and in our local area.



CAMRA has been working hard to support both breweries and pubs through this difficult time. We have striven to connect the supply with the demand. We are getting accustomed to picking up our beer in the supermarket or ordering real ale either directly from a pub or brewery or online and getting a delivery or making a takeaway collection. This has allowed us to carry on enjoying real ale in our own homes. But whilst supporting some pubs and breweries we may also inadvertently be making it more difficult for others, especially those that weren't able to adapt quickly enough. A case of natural selection you might say? Or a case of more Government support needed?

The pub, although it still holds a special place in the hearts of the drinking public, now has many faces : the traditional boozer that still resists the lure of providing food (and increasing income?), to the family friendly restaurant providing cheap meals and an adventure playground for the kids. And all points in between. It remains to be seen whether rural pubs survive better than town pubs or whether the devastation to the trade is even-handed. One thing for sure is that the drinking public's attitudes to the pub have already changed greatly in recent generations and have naturally led to changes in the character and make-up of our pubs.

While we have been on lockdown, missing our friends and CAMRARaderie, technology has allowed us to "meet our friends" with our favourite brew in our own home. This has had some real advantages, and not just protecting ourselves from the possibility of infection. I have considered a few here.

Virtual pub using technology to connect		Real pub	
Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons
Stay at home – no travel cost, no risk of drink driving, no worries about unreliable public transport, fewer risks. Know where the toilets are and who's cleaned them and used them. The booze is generally cheaper and so is the food and certainly the soft drinks. You only	Missing the shared experience of the atmosphere and the shared experience of any entertainment that may be on in a real pub. Never being forced to try something new because they	Companionship and the chance to feel part of a community and that you have a place where you belong. Chance to meet new people and talk with strangers and encounter new ideas. Real fire for those that don't	Unpleasant toilets, sticky carpets and smokers in the garden. Noisy or abusive customers. Piped music. Waiting to be served. Noisy TV or games machines. Can't smoke indoors. Car parking or

<p>order what you want so should never be disappointed about choice. Can go and do other stuff (cooking, childminding, waiting for parcels) during the evening. No queueing at the bar. Only sharing with the people you want. Can connect with people who can't physically get to the pub or are abroad. Comfy seat where you want. No noisy louts from another table spoiling your evening. No threat of physical violence. Can join in the pub quiz. Can still smoke with your favourite tippie. Once you have left the pub you are "home" and it takes seconds to rejoin. No need to go shopping or go out to have a beer with friends. Convenient. Can share other content with group.</p>	<p>don't have your usual. Not getting the same opportunities to make a new friend. Not hearing stories from or sharing stories with strangers. Zoom bombing could mean you get exposed to upsetting images. No publican to regulate consumption. Someone has to organise the meeting and manage it. Cyber security or access to equipment may present difficulties.</p>	<p>have a real fire at home. Play area for the kids and a garden. Going to the pub can be part of a day out or a rest on a journey. Supervised environment for drinking. Games machines. Meeting up with friends, socialising, giving advice. Draught real ale, cider and perry. It should be a pleasant change from being at home. Provide opportunities for a change of scene and relaxation. The landlord can be an asset to a pub if they are a good host. Skittles, quiz, darts, fund raising, a base for meetings. Sharing live sport.</p>	<p>having to use public transport. Soft drinks are expensive if someone chooses not to have alcohol or is driving. Don't always have something you might want. May not have a pub nearby.</p>
---	---	--	---

The questions remain, "Will we ever go back to the pub?" and if so "What kind of pub will it be?"

But when all is said and done and analysed the survival and the character of pubs will depend on what the drinking public support. So, as soon as we can, if we want to keep our pubs, we need to use them often and responsibly to protect what we hold dear.



Sara Dyer



Brewery Liaison Officers Wanted !

In North Devon area we currently have a total of 14 breweries, each of whom have or have had a Brewery Liaison Officer (BLO) associated with them. However, the passage of time and natural turnover has unfortunately resulted in several breweries being left without a BLO.



Like the CAMRA Pubs Officer, a BLO acts as the conduit between the local branch and the brewery, ensuring that current and valid information regarding the brewery's activities are captured and relayed back to CAMRA . That information is then passed on to our members and the wider public via such vehicles as What Pub and the Good Beer Guide.

BLOs report to the Regional Brewery Liaison Co-ordinator (BLC) - in North Devon's case the South West Region. Although this role is a national appointment and not a branch one, in most cases the branch recommendation will normally be endorsed.

As a BLO is at times expected to produce tasting notes, it is imperative that the BLO is properly trained in the way CAMRA identifies various different beer types and this training will be provided for all successful appointees. The BLO is also required to produce short reports utilising the Brewery Information System, but these are few and not too onerous to complete.

At the time of writing there are at least 6 breweries in need of a BLO. Ideally a BLO would take on at least 2 breweries, but managing just one initially would be a great help. Like the Pubs Officer role we would try to allocate a brewery close to where you live although this may not always be possible.



There are a few more tasks involved in being a BLO but rather than me try to list them here I would ask that any CAMRA member who feels this may be for them to simply contact me at pubs.group@northdevon.camra.org.uk to receive a full account of BLO duties.

This is a fascinating opportunity to get more involved with local breweries and the brewing industry. Being involved with two breweries myself, I can guarantee that for the right person this can be a really rewarding position, helping us help not only our local CAMRA members but also the real ale aficionados on whom we all rely to produce such excellent real ale here in North Devon . . . So, why not give it a try?

Alan Edgecombe

(Branch Brewery Liaison Officer Co-ordinator)

Witterings of The Wizard.

The sad fact is that many pubs will not survive this pandemic! Every day on Facebook there is news of another pub closing, not able to renew their lease etc., etc. And this is affecting breweries too. But I don't want to dwell on the down-side of lockdown. I have something to celebrate as I'm sure many of you do too, because we value our pubs and breweries and we are endeavouring to do whatever we can to support them.



I have four pubs in close proximity to my home. Yes, I am extremely fortunate. All of them are very different from each other and attract a variety of clientele. Many people frequent all four. Under present conditions they are all struggling to keep going yet it is amazing to see what they are coming up with to keep their regulars happy.

We have had a beer festival. Yes, seriously, a beer festival – and this is without ever entering the pub or meeting up with other ale enthusiasts! We signed on for the 5 day/5 beer festival, received our box and drank a different beer each day, scoring it (mostly in line with CAMRA criteria as Fiona had been asked for her advice). The winning beer daily was acknowledged and then at the end of the week we found out which one was beer of the festival. All great fun. We also have a fortnightly quiz which has driven our lovely landlady from sipping water as she reads the questions to gulping gin this Sunday! And all of this whilst providing real ale on tap and in bottles for take home plus a full take-away food menu which has proven so popular we have to book the day before!

Our local pub has continued to support our community in every way possible; joining us on the Thursday evening clap for the NHS, decorating windows for displays, supporting VE day with bunting, getting shopping for people, checking up on the more vulnerable, entertaining us all on Facebook with family antics, decorating the outside of the building to enhance the look of the village for when visitors come rushing back to Dartmoor, and providing much requested flour for those who bake.

In conclusion I want to mention a neighbour with a bag who I saw walking down the road one Saturday evening a week or so ago who said that she had ordered a takeaway even though they didn't usually eat out but they simply wanted to support the village pub and help with every little bit of income.

So this is what we can do to celebrate instead of being miserable. Support your pub however you can. Let them know how much you care. How much they are valued. It's what we all want to hear at times of stress. Not grumbling!

Grumbledore *(aka Morris, Honorary President)*