

Beer Tiz



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Issue 8

Autumn 2015

FREE



CAMRA North Devon Branch



Congratulations to our 2015 Award Winners

- Cider Pub of the Year - New Inn Roborough (top left)
- Club of the Year - Conservative Club, Bideford (top right)
- Pub of the Year - Red Lion, Exbourne (bottom left)
- Brewery of the Year - Holsworthy (bottom right)

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Witterings of The Wizard



Here I am again, wittering on! We are more than half way through 2015 already and I can't help it, I'm going to be Grumbledore, I am so concerned about the drop in attendance at branch meetings! Over the past couple of years we have tried various ways of making meetings more accessible. Some have been remarkably unsuccessful which is why we have settled into regularly meeting on a Saturday afternoon once a month. We move the venue around the branch area to enable members from different parts of the branch to attend. Now, Fiona tells me that it can't be the lovely venues that our pubs provide, so it must be the meeting itself which is not attractive. I am really interested to know why. When you join CAMRA you 'pay your money and you make your choice'; you have demonstrated your support for the Campaign For Real Ale but CamRA likes to know what it's members want for their money and what they feel about the way it is run. At Regional meetings Chairmen are asked to find out our member's views and opinions – but if I don't get to talk to you I find myself unable to feed-back on Regional and thereby National issues. So when you come to a branch meeting, what happens? Firstly I can assure you that you won't be pressed into taking on any responsibilities; you will meet people who have at least one interest in common with you – real ale. We have men and women members who regularly come to meetings leading to a comfortable, friendly and supportive network of people who often give each other lifts so that you are not always the 'designated driver' (as Fiona is!). We talk about beer! We learn from each other and enjoy finding out about pubs, beers, breweries and campaigning issues that affect us all. You may sit quietly in a corner and just listen or you may have strong views you want to express, all are welcome. You may be new to drinking real ale and want to find out more about your choices or you may have been a supporter for many years and have so much to offer others. I know that you receive Fiona's emails every month and that many of you read them, so you know what is going on. Please help your committee to represent you by coming to a meeting.

And if you're not already a member but you've picked up this copy of Beer Tiz and you're reading it....you've just taken the first step towards

becoming a member of the largest and most influential consumer group in the UK. You can come to a meeting too, and maybe join. What you say and do can and does have impact on the future of real ale and pubs.

So go on....do it.....stop me grumbling.....come to a meeting..... I dare you!

Morris aka Grumbledore

Committee Contact Information

Chairman

Morris Elsworth

morris.ndcamra@icloud.com

Secretary

Chris Wells

vena1100@hotmail.co.uk

Treasurer

Matt Collins

mattcollins250@gmail.com

Membership

Fiona Elsworth

fiona.ndcamra@icloud.com

Pubs Officer Group Coord.

Bob Goddard

r.goddard911@btinternet.com

LocAle Officer

Paul Wells

vena1100@hotmail.co.uk

Website Manager

Ron Lester

web@northdevoncamra.org.uk

Social Secretary

Mark Partridge

aswell007@gmail.com

Press & Publicity Officer

Ben McQuillan

benm.mcquillan@gmail.com

Beer Tiz Editor

Ron Lester

newsletter@northdevoncamra.org.uk

From The Editor's Armchair

One of the pleasures of CAMRA Branch membership is the opportunity for familiarisation with local brewers and licensed premises owners... and their products! We appoint members to liaise with each pub and brewery in our area, but also inspect and 'experience' their products. This all reaches a pinnacle in our annual awards, made at our AGM:

- Pub Of The Year – The Red Lion at Exbourne
- Cider Pub Of The Year – New Inn, Roborough
- Club Of The Year – Conservative Club, Bideford
- Brewery of the Year - Holsworthy Ales, Clawton

We covered the Red Lion in our last Issue, this Issue has articles on the other awards.

Looking more widely, pubs are then reviewed for regional and national Pub of the Year and beers submitted to the Great British Beer Festival for entry into the 'Champion Beer of Britain' Competition. Alas none of our pubs have seen success in the regional Competition, but, happily,

beers from four local breweries will be at Olympia this year – see our articles on the beers selected and GBBF experiences.

Now, before you dig into the delicious delights of these articles, why not meddle with medieval matters by attempting the quiz below?

Booze Quiz

This issue's quiz question has again kindly provided by Barry Raynes, MD Clearwater Brewery.

This time, there is a Medieval focus:

1. What relevance does clause 35 of the 800 year old Magna Carta have to CAMRA?
2. Why should we be pleased that Richard II took an interest in pubs?
3. What did trousers have to do with the way the quality of beer was measured in medieval times?

The answers are later in this Issue.

Is your Pub an Asset of Community Value?

In April 2015 the Government announced exciting



new plans to extend planning protection to pubs listed as Assets of Community Value (ACV). Any pub registered as an ACV will now be

subject to a full planning application should the owner wish to sell or demolish it. This gives CAMRA Branches in England a real opportunity to protect pubs by nominating them to be listed as Assets of Community Value.

There are already 800 pubs registered as ACVs across the country, and we want to see this number increase to 1500 by the end of 2015 and 3000 by the end of 2016 to ensure our local pubs are safeguarded in every community.

To make the process as simple as possible for all branches, CAMRA has now launched a new in-house support service to assist branches, including:

- An online nomination form for branches to fill out and submit to their local authority
- Providing branches with free copies of Land Registry site plans and title registers.

CAMRA's Campaigns Officer Faye Grima said: "CAMRA English Branches have a real opportunity to protect pubs in their area by nominating them to be listed as Assets of Community Value. Without ACV status developers can convert local pubs to a wide range of retail uses or even demolish them without applying for planning permission....."

Guide for CAMRA members nominating pubs to be listed as ACVs using CAMRA's online form:

1. Identify pubs you want to nominate
2. Before nominating on behalf of your local CAMRA Branch, ensure you have permission from the chairman (Page 4)
3. Use the online nomination form to fill out information on the pubs you wish to nominate. This should be done one pub at a time. The link is available on CAMRA's Members website.
4. We will use the information you provide to complete your local Council's nomination form, and return this to you along with the land registry documents you need.
5. Finally, submit the returned forms to the relevant local authority.

Please contact our Pubs Officer (Page 4) or visit: <http://members.camra.org.uk/group/guest/key-campaign-2>

Brewery News

Great British Beer Festival - We are delighted that four North Devon Breweries were at GBBF:



- **Barum** - Breakfast
- **Clearwater** – Honey Beer
- **Country Life** – Shore Break
- **Holsworth Ales** - Hop on the Run

Looking at more general news.....

Barum - Barurn Mild won Bronze in the Standard Mild Ales & Brown Ales category at the recent SIBA festival at Tuckers Maltings. Tim also organised the North Devon Beer Festival in Barnstaple in May. Two new North Devon breweries were there as well as cider, food and live music. CAMRA members again helped behind the bar.

Braunton - Now successfully selling #2 Bitter to a number of local pubs. Featured in the Lantern Beer Festival in Ilfracombe in early May & at the Barnstaple Pannier Market Beer & Food festival 23rd/24th May. #1 Pale ale is now commercially launched & is shortly to appear in bottle as well as barrel. Brewery has purchased its' own branded firkins and is slowly starting to expand. I have tasted both the #2 Bitter & the #1 Pale ale from the bottle. Also on at Ship & Pilot Beer/Cider Festival 22nd/25th May.

Clearwater - Following a fantastic Christmas and their recent feat of getting their beers on the P&O ferries, Clearwater have purchased a pub in the North Devon village of Appledore, The Champ, which opened 1 April selling a range of Clearwater ales and other local ales and Belgian beers.

Country Life - had a busy Spring, brewing flat-out for customers and Shows/Beer Festivals. Particularly Simon was thrilled to be asked again to brew the Show Beer for the Devon County Show - 'Blue Sky'. A second special range of beers 'Lundy Landmark' has been brewed for the Landmark Trust to celebrate their 50th anniversary. Otherwise the new 'surf range' and traditional ranges are doing well.

Grampus - Still brewing the standard & best bitters on a regular basis. Consumption is mainly through their own Pub outlet, but one or two barrels have been sold to a few local pubs. Takeaway sales in 5 pint poly/cardboard containers. They have featured in the Lantern Beer festival in Ilfracombe. They will be brewing the two seasonal beers, 'Hoppy Dog' Autumn ale, & 'Kraken' winter ale again this year.

GT Ales - See article elsewhere.

Madrigal - report good sales, in fact he can currently sell everything he makes. Because of this he is seriously considering expansion & moving to larger premises. Latest new product is a 'Smoked beer' called 'Burning House'

(named after a historic incident in Lynton). This is made using 'Raush Malt', a malt that is smoked with 'Beech chips', and 'Saaz Hops'. This beer & Wheatear featured at the recent 'Grove Inn' Beer Festival.

Yelland Manor - Production continues at a fairly modest level to local pubs. During the summer months, visitors are welcome on Saturday afternoons from 1.00 pm. onwards. There is now a very pleasant beer garden where the beers can be enjoyed. Hot snacks are also available.

Branch Calendar

Sep 2015
5th

Branch Brewery Trip - Otter Brewery

12th - 13th

Beer, cider & music - Hunters Inn Heddon Valley

18th - 20th

Second Weir Fest - Bottom Ship Porlock

19th

Branch Business Meeting - Conservative Club
Bideford

24th - 27th

Pub beer festival - Nowhere Inn, Plymouth

25th - 27th

Beer and Cider Festival - R. H. S. Garden Rosemoor
Torrington

25th - 27th

Beer Festival - New Inn Roborough

Oct 2015

3rd

Yeo!Cider - The Village Hall Yeoford

8th - 11th

Pub beer festival - Minerva Inn, Plymouth

10th

Pub Cider Festival - Bell Inn, Parkham EX39 5PL

Nov 2015

28th

Branch Festive Lunch - The Red Lion Exbourne
EX20 3RY

Brewery Visit - Country Life



What can persuade CAMRA members to leave their gardens and beaches on one of the sunniest days of the year? Rhetorical question really!

So, on August 8th a dozen of us met at the Appledore Inn, Bideford (Sharps x 3, Jollyboat x 1) before travelling to 'The Big Sheep' - which houses The Country Life Brewery, a finalist for ND CAMRA 'Brewery of the Year'. There, Anna ushered us through the holiday-makers and handed pints of Old Appledore before Simon (left in picture) sketched out the history of the Brewery.

It all started in 1998 a few years after Simon left the Royal Engineers, using the brew plant from Lundy Island Brewery. Initially based at Anna's folk's nearby pub, the 'Pig on the Hill', it moved to The Big Sheep in 2002 to allow expansion and to provide Brewery Tours and a Brewery Shop. In 2005 a new state-of-the-art brewery was installed which can produce over 9,000 (up to 15,000) pints a week, brewing three times a week - making it North Devon's largest brewer. It also has a bottling plant which has, at peak, bottled 4000 bottles in one run. Simon then took us through the brewing process and we quickly saw a brewer talking about a product he loves - the liquor, the malts, hops and their own live yeast. En-route you also see Simon the Engineer - he has taken great care to build a high quality brew-plant, using sophisticated control equipment to ensure consistency in his beer. He is also mindful of the environment - some 50%+ of the heat used in one brew is recovered for future brews whilst spent grains go to local pig farmers.

So, who is this all for? They supply about 100 pubs, as well as off-sales and wholesalers, mostly in the South West, although pallets of bottles are sent up country. They even recently discovered that their beers are being sold on via Amazon!



We then moved with Anna into the shop for a discussion on the beer range. Boy does her her passion for beer show; she is a powerful advocate for real ale! So, as well as **Old Appledore** (3.7% - a great amber session beer) and **Black Boar** (4.5% - a delicious dark ruby red porter), she introduced

us to **Golden Pig** (4.7% - gold full bodied smooth premium ale, silver medal GBBF 2011) and **Shore Break** (4.4% - a light straw beer). They also produce **Country Bumpkin** (6.0% - strong malty tasting old ale), **Reef Break** (4.0% - sweet malty amber with Challenger Hops) and **Devon 10'der** (10.0% - voluptuous, smooth barley wine style). Simon resists the trend for ferociously hoppy ales!

We finished our visit with a long lazy chat in the sun with more beer and a quiz to see who paid the most attention inside (our newly appointed press officer Ben Mcquillan won). Then we reluctantly left for Bideford to the Conservative Club (our 'Club of the Year') for refreshments and - oh yes - more beer!

I would end with warm hearted thanks from all the CAMRA members present to both Simon and Anna for their hospitality and the way they looked after us with short notice at such busy time of the year. For..... 'Didn't we have a lovely time the day we went to Country Life!'

Mark Partridge
Social Secretary

The Bell Inn

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CAMRA LocAle

The CAMRA LocAle initiative promotes pubs that endeavour always to stock at least one locally brewed real ale kept in consistently good condition. Our definition of "local" is a beer that is either brewed within our branch area, or within 30 road miles of the pub. Only one of the pub's ales needs to be local to qualify. If your local isn't part of the scheme ask the landlord or landlady "why not?" If they are interested in joining the scheme, then please get in touch with us and we'll take it from there (contact Locale Officer, details on Page 4).

Although the beer policy of pubs can change, to the best of our knowledge you should usually find a locally brewed beer available in the 81 pubs listed below (pubs in bold are changes for this Edition).

Abbotsham - *Thatched Inn*
Appledore - *Champ*
Ashwater - *Village Inn*
Barnstaple - *Reform Inn, Panniers, Bull & Bear, Green Man*
Beaford - *Globe Inn*
Bideford - *King's Arms, Lacey's Ale and Cider House, Rose Salterne, Crealock Arms*
Bradford - *Windsor Arms*
Brandis Corner - *Bickford Arms*
Bratton Clovelly - *Clovelly Inn*
Bridestowe - *White Hart Inn*
Buckland Brewer - *Coach & Horses*
Burrington - *Barnstaple Inn*
Chittlehampton - *Bell Inn*
Clovelly - *New Inn, Red Lion Hotel*
Dolton - *Royal Oak Inn*
East Down - *Pyne Arms*
Exbourne - *Red Lion*
George Nympton - **Castle Inn**
Halwill Junction - *Junction Inn*
Hartland - *Anchor Inn, Kings Arms*
Hatherleigh - *Tally Ho!*
Heddon Valley - *Hunters Inn*
High Bickington - *Golden Lion*
Holsworthy - *Old Market Inn, Rydon Inn*
Horns Cross - *Coach and Horses*
Ilfracombe - *George & Dragon, Ship & Pilot, Pier Brewery Tap & Grill*
Kings Nympton - *Grove Inn*
Lake - *Bearslake Inn*
Lee - *Grampus Inn*
Lynmouth - *Rock House Hotel, Blue Ball Inn, Village Inn, Rising Sun*

Lynton - *Sandrock Hotel, Staghunters Inn, Beggars Roost Inn*
Molland - *London Inn, Blackcock Inn*
Muddiford - **Muddiford Inn**
North Molton - *Poltimore Inn*
North Tawton - *Railway Inn*
Northlew - *Green Dragon*
Okehampton - *Plymouth Inn, Fountain Hotel, London Inn*
Parkham - *Bell Inn*
Parracombe - *Fox & Goose Inn*
Pusehill - *Pig on the Hill*
Roborough - *New Inn*
Rockford - *Rockford Inn*
Sandyway - *Sportsman's Inn*
South Molton - *George Hotel, Town Arms Hotel, Coaching Inn, Kings Arms*
South Tawton - **Seven Stars**
South Zeal - *Oxenham Arms, Kings Arms*
Sticklepath - *Devonshire Inn, Taw River Inn*
Swimbridge - *Jack Russell*
Throwleigh - *Northmore Arms*
Torrington - *Royal Exchange, Torrington Arms*
Welcombe - *The Old Smithy Inn*
West Down - **Crown Inn**
Westleigh - *Westleigh Inn*
Woolacombe - *Old Mill*
Yarde Down - *Poltimore Arms*

Brewery Focus - GT Ales, Chivenor



GT Ales have recently moved from Barnstaple to a new 2000sq ft unit on Chivenor Business Park. They have been producing bottled beers since September 2013, and following a constant increase in orders, scaled up to a brand new 5 barrel plant, built and installed by John Trew from Oban Ales. GT is owned and run by Gary Jarvis and Toby Marsh (hence the GT). They are lifelong friends, who are passionate about creating exciting new beers and rapidly driving the business forward. Gary is a Graphic Designer and is responsible for creating some of the biggest brand names in the brewing industry, and as a business, they are able to offer a bespoke naming, branding and design service to suit their clients' needs. Toby is a well-travelled, qualified engineer who has experience in the construction industry. Both are accomplished brewers, with their different skills being complimentary in regard to running a successful Brewery.

The installation of the new 5 barrel plant has enabled them to quickly increase production and move the Brewery to the next stage of development. Currently they are brewing three main beers:

Thirst of Many. ABV 4.2%. This is the flagship beer, an American style Amber Ale/Best Bitter.

Blonde Ambition. ABV 4.5%. A light, refreshing

'Summer IPA' type ale, but available all year.

Crimson Rye'd. ABV 4.8%. A Speciality beer with a distinct red colour, and a fruity and malty taste.

The first two are available in barrel or bottle, Crimson Rye'd is currently only in bottles. I have sampled all three, and found them to drink very well. Thirst of Many is a very good session beer with a lovely hop finish. Blonde Ambition uses a new hop combination to good effect. It has a zesty, fruity



light hop finish and is very refreshing. Crimson Rye'd exhibits a complex mix of fruity bitterness and is an unusual but very drinkable beer. Thirst of Many is now found in a large number of local pubs. It is quickly becoming a favourite in many. I expect 'Blonde Ambition' will soon achieve a similar popularity.

GT have featured their beers in a number of local Beer Festivals with great success. Their most notable to date, was at the recent 'Uffculme Beer & Music Festival'. Against some of the 21 best beers in the region, 'Thirst of Many' was voted Champion Beer. Chris Smyth.

CONTACT: GT ALES LTD. Unit 5, The Old Aerodrome. Chivenor Business Park, EX31 4AY.
Tel. 01271 267420. e-mail; info@gtales.co.uk

North Devon CAMRA Branch Awards 2015

Brewery – Holsworthy Ales

Holsworthy Ales has demonstrated a commitment to customers, often delivering to pubs on the day



*Another successful Holsworthy Ales
Night – booze and craic flowing*

of order. Dave also provides a service to the local community with monthly open evenings (Apr-Oct), popular with locals despite a complete lack of public transport - cars parking alongside tractors. His brewery shop opens every Saturday afternoon and he willingly delivers to people en-route to pubs.

Last year Dave had his beer for sale at The Great British Beer Festival in London's Olympia. This year he has again been invited, but is not alone on the Devon Bar - Country Life, Barum and Clearwater will also be present; congratulations to them all. Dave's is a family business, supported by his wife Sarah. He is committed to producing the finest quality real ales, brewed traditionally. He welcomes visitors and will happily talk for hours about his processes, techniques and philosophy; his passion ale extends to helping other brewers in every way he can. He is also a keen cider maker.

It was a great pleasure to have our Regional Brewery Liaison Coordinator, Ian Dickinson, to present Dave and Sarah with the certificate and the Mick Gullick Trophy for the second year running. Dave is so proud of winning that the certificates are proudly

displayed on the wall of the brewery, the Trophy has pride of place on the bar area and a photo of the presentation is on his website. I am proud to be his BLO.

Morris Elsworth

Club – Bideford Conservative Club

Bideford Conservative Club, North Devon CAMRA first Club of the Year has nine dart boards, two skittle alleys, three full-size snooker tables – with all the teams it can get quite busy in the Winter. The Stewards have done a very good job with four real ales: Tribute, Old Appledore and two guests: Otter, Courage Directors, other St Austell Beers or Timothy Taylor's Landlord as examples.



In a recent Cask Marque survey the Club scored top marks getting 80 out of 80. Originally, two of the lines came to the bar in the python

(insulated multi-beverage dispensing tube) so those two beers were very cold. However the Club got St Austell Brewery to change these so that all the ales are now served at 11 degrees. The Club has a small meeting room (for up to 30) and a large function room which is ideal for Weddings and seats over a hundred people.

Food is served lunch and evenings and light-bites such as sandwiches are also available. The Club is one of the plushest places to drink in Bideford; non-members are welcome. Go and see the friendly service and welcome offered at the 'Con'.

Cider Pub – New Inn Roborough

The New Inn Roborough was presented with North Devon Branch Cider Pub of the Year on 27th June 2015. This



Award is made to the pub in the North Devon Branch showing the greatest commitment to real cider - made from 100% natural apple

juice with no additives/chemicals, served naturally still.

The New Inn Roborough is a very worthy winner of this award. Magda and James who run the pub offer a great range of real ciders which is continually changing. This is appreciated by their locals and by cider lovers who come from all over to sample cider as it should be made. As well as that, the pub is a beautiful place to enjoy a drink, with all the country charm you could hope for.

The winner of the branch award goes through to the Regional and, potentially, the National Competition. The announcement of the national winner marks the start of CAMRA's October Cider Month campaign.

So, if you know a pub serving high quality real cider, please nominate them for next year's award by contacting me or any committee member.

Dave Slocombe

Cider rep North Devon CAMRA.

Pub – Red Lion, Exbourne

This Award was covered in Summer's BeerTiz.

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Pub News

from around the Branch



One of most encouraging things we have witnessed recently has been the growth in the availability of real cider in our pubs. In contrast to just a few years ago, when it was comparatively rare to find a pub stocking even a single cider year-round, there are now many regularly offering a choice of two, three or sometimes more. Our Cider Pub of the Year, **The New Inn at Roborough**, won against some very stiff competition this time. Around eight interesting and predominantly local ciders are usually available there; a good number of local CAMRA members thoroughly enjoyed our visit on 27th June when the certificate was awarded to landlady Magda Berry. Meanwhile last year's winner, **The Ship & Pilot, Ilfracombe**, have now installed a new temperature controlled area for Ciders. A minimum of 20, and sometimes up to 40 ciders, are now available in addition to the four regularly drawn from the barrel.

The Wellington Arms, also in Ilfracombe, has introduced a CAMRA discount scheme (10p off a pint, 5p half-pint). The pub is carrying six beers, all at quite competitive prices anyway and quality is reported to be consistently good. Premier Inns have submitted a planning application to turn **D J's Bar** in Ilfracombe into a hotel. **The Hunters Inn, Heddon's Mouth**, has undergone an impressive recent refit. There are now two bars and up to nine real ales currently being kept during the summer months. A small refit has taken place at **The Hartland Quay Hotel** and **The Hart Inn**, Hartland has reopened with new licensees. **The Royal George** in Appledore seems to have closed, as also has **The White Horse** in Barnstaple. There are plans to set up a new brewery in Petrockstowe, next door to **The Laurels**. The old brewery at **The Tally Ho!** in Hatherleigh, where the original Clearwater Brewery started, has been put back into service. Bert and Sylvia of **The Rams Head** in Dolton have retired after more than a quarter of a century. The pub reopened under new ownership at the beginning of August. The viability of **The Stag** in Rackenford is threatened by plans to convert the former skittle alley/function

room to housing. In a surprising move Martin Squire has recently left his post as steward of **The Conservative Club in Bideford**, our current Club of the Year.

Pub Beer Festivals

There have been many pub beer festivals held in recent weeks and Brenda and I have managed to get to several. At **The Crossways Inn**, Folly Gate, another festival held by former licensees Wendy and John - undertaking a short term management of their former pub - was a real bonus.

The Golden Lion at High Bickington (right) held a charity beer festival at the end of May. Casks were donated by local businesses and individuals, with



proceeds from the sale of beer going to two local charities. **The Bell Inn at Parkham** had some interesting local ales and were as hospitable as ever. Robert and Deborah at **The Grove** in Kings Nympton held their usual excellent festival in July, with a good selection of both beers and ciders. Several other CAMRA members turned up during our visit there on the Saturday - we could have held a branch meeting!



In early August, as part of The Dartmoor Folk Festival, **The Kings Arms** and **Oxenham Arms** in South Zeal (left) both held splendid beer festivals, with

the emphasis very much on local ale.

Bob Goddard
POG Coordinator

Cider

Nightmare or Business Opportunity?



We've all seen a forlorn tub of cider balanced on the end of the bar – as the licensee again tries his hand at selling real cider – probably in the height of summer. It's fine for a few days, with customers trying

the odd pint or two, but then it starts to turn a little sharp and then quickly becomes unpalatable.

To satisfy demand for cider, the Licensee is then enticed into the world of kegged and gassed apple-flavoured fizz that is 90% of the cider market. This solution ticks the 'cider' box for many publicans.

For many licensees, therefore, the selling of real cider poses several problems – not the least of which is the concern that they won't sell enough, it will go off and they will have to throw it away. Clearly not what they are in business to do!

However, with an understanding of a few basic points the selling of cider becomes, not a risky side-line, but an easy way to engage with a rapidly growing emerging customer base, who may not otherwise even enter pubs.

Firstly, real cider is produced once a year – around September. Many cider makers keep cider back from previous year's production to blend with 'new' cider in order to keep consistency and to help give depth and roundness to their product. I know of one cider maker who has got cider he made 15 years ago; it is in exceptional condition. Cider therefore does not need to go off, it simply needs to be kept properly – and that is not at the end of the bar counter.

Please also note that cider does not need to be 'fizzed' or pumped full of preservatives in order to be kept in good condition. If looked after properly it will quite happily keep for months, if not years.

Secondly, real cider is susceptible to the same elements that will make beer 'go off', namely air,

heat and humidity. You wouldn't (I hope!) leave a tub of beer balanced on the end of the bar and expect it to remain drinkable for weeks; the same is true with cider.

So, with these two points in mind, we need to transfer theory into practice.

In my pub, we don't use pumps – all ciders and ales are gravity fed from the Tap Room – which is air-conditioned (as are most pub cellars, thereby dealing with the heat and humidity problems).

This works well for us, but I realise it might pose a problem for others.

So, there are methods out there to connect 'bag-in-a-box' to a pump – thereby providing an easy method to dispense real cider in good condition on a consistent basis. If you do go down this route, make sure you use micro-bore pipes and clean them regularly and frequently to avoid yeast build-up problems in the pipes.

We also use a lot of 'bag-in-a-box' ciders. Real cider kept in a 'bag-in-a-box' in an air-conditioned cellar at around 8-10°C will keep for between 6 and 13 weeks, which should be ample time to sell it. Alternatively, there are systems out there to keep tubs and 'bag-in-a-box' drinks at chilled temperatures, often seen at beer festivals.

Finally, real cider and perry in a 'bag-in-a-box' should be readily available from almost any wholesale beer supplier – with one or two 'brands' being available nationwide. Moreover, a quick web search will find a local real cider producer - many will be delighted to supply the local pub trade.

Ian Pinches, The Railway Arms, Downham Market – CAMRA National Cider Pub of the Year 2013 and finalist in 2014.

North Devon Home Brewers Club

About a year ago a neighbour of mine dragged me (kicking and screaming of course) to a pub. Nothing unusual about that, until I realised that the people we were meeting all brought their own beer to the pub. It turned out that I was gate-crashing the monthly meet up North Devon Home Brewers Club. After an evening of drinking a little of each others' beer, interspersed with the odd pint from the bar, I had learnt a lot about the home brewing process just through listening in and asking the most basic of questions. For the next few months I kept going back and enjoyed some lovely evenings this way. That was until the others all told me I had to start brewing and stop drinking their beer for free!

To cut rather a long and boring story short, I bought some kit and started brewing. It's much, much easier than you think. With some basic equipment and one simple book I produced my first full mash home brew beer. It wasn't bad, but not great. I have since followed this with 6 more brews, some of which were amongst the best beers I've ever tasted. This is obvious as I can brew the beer to my taste. Apart from just meeting every month to try each other's beers, on these nights there is much discussion about brewing equipment, processes, hop types, flavours and much more. In January we had a food matching evening focusing on various German beers each of which went with a different food. Following this we have all agreed to brew a lager (technically this would count as a real-ale because it will follow the same process – but uses lager yeast and is stored for 3 months before drinking).



In June the group carried out a yearly trip to a local brewery. This year the visit was to Clearwater Brewery in East-the-Water. We had an excellent talk from Head Brewer Paul about Clearwater's beers and marketing, something that, as Home Brewers, we don't do. Paul also

answered a lot of technical questions about the brewery equipment and how Clearwater brews; all washed down by a cask of Clearwater's Artist's Rifles. Following this we all departed for a beer or five in the Clearwater brewery tap – The Champ in Appledore where we all tucked into more Clearwater beers, as well making a good dent in their bottled Belgian beers.

At the end of each of the monthly gatherings we all vote for our favourite beer tried that night as the Beer of the Month – if we can remember them all! In an unsurprising unanimous decision Clearwater won this month.

North Devon Home Brew group meets every 4th Tuesday of the month in the Rolle Quay in Barnstaple at 7.30pm for 8pm start.

For further information contact Matt Collins: mattcollins250@gmail.com

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Judging at the Great British Beer Festival

This year I was honoured to be asked to judge the Champion Beer of Britain final round at the Great British Beer Festival in London Olympia.



The Champion Beer Of Britain was from a Welsh brewery – Tiny Rebel and was called 'Cwtch'.

So how did this one beer get to be Champion Beer Of Britain? It all starts with CAMRA members drinking local beers. Every year every member is asked to 'vote' for their favourite beers in all categories – Milds, Best Bitters, Specialty Beers (Devon's Hanlons brewery won bronze for their Port Stout!), Bitter, Golden Ales, Strong Bitters and Bottle Conditioned Ales. In addition to this CAMRA trained and accredited tasting panel members are required to complete tasting cards throughout the year. For Devon this means sending them to me as Devon Branches Tasting Panels Chair.

The high scoring ales are also judged at beer festivals within CAMRA regions. For example, I judged bitters at Plymouth beer festival and Morris judged stouts at Exeter Winter Ales festival. The winning ales are put forward for judging at GBBF.

Different panels judged the different categories. The judging panel consisted of 8 people. An experienced CAMRA judge chair, 4 CAMRA trained tasting panel members, plus others who have experience of real ale. On our panel we had a brewer and a politician whose family were all publicans. This ensures that there is a balance between the criteria provided by CAMRA and the 'public' that are buying the beer.

We were judging the Best Bitters category. We had the CAMRA beer style description to guide us, ensuring that the beer was eligible for that category. The tasting is done 'blind' so at no time did we have any hint as to the name of the beer or the brewery and we were discouraged from guessing if we thought we knew. We were provided with a taster of the beer and worked through appearance, aroma, taste and aftertaste. Open discussion of the qualities was encouraged allowing all members of the panel to offer opinions. We were then required to score for each area out of 10. We had 8 beers to work through in total and recorded our individual scores. The score sheets are then taken away and

a weighting is allocated. The highest scoring beers from this round are then passed to the semi-final judging panel and thus to a final judging panel who choose the Champion Beer Of Britain. Gold, Silver and Bronze are awarded to each style category and an overall Gold, Silver and Bronze are then chosen. Imagine our joy on hearing later that day that the beer we had chosen in the Best Bitters category had been chosen as Champion Beer Of Britain!

It was a wonderful experience to be involved at every stage; from voting for my favourite local beers, completing as many tasting cards as I can for our Devon beers, to judging at Regional level and then the pinnacle of judging at the Great British Beer Festival...and there were side benefits (see 'Volunteers' Bar, above)



Fiona Elsworth

Devon Tasting Panels Chair

Answers to Quiz

Celebrating the medieval ancestry of beer was this Issue's three quiz questions:

What relevance does clause 35 of the 800 year old Magna Carta have to CAMRA? Answer: The Magna Carta (clause 35) stipulated that beer had to be sold in constant measures throughout the land. CAMRA these days still fights for a Full Pint measure to be served in pubs.

Why should we be pleased that Richard II took an interest in pubs? Answer: Richard II decreed that long handles across the road to signify an ale house be replaced with pub signs.

What did trousers have to do with the way the quality of beer was measured in medieval times? Answer: An ale conner (inspector of beer) purposely spilt some beer on a bench and promptly sat in it. If his trousers stuck then it was a sign that the beer hadn't fermented enough.

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