

Beer Tiz



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FOR
REAL ALE

Issue 11

Summer 2016

FREE

CAMRA North Devon Branch



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Witterings of The Wizard



CAMRA AGM, Liverpool – what a wonderful city Liverpool is, the people are so friendly and helpful. I spent the week in a wheelchair (because arthritis prevents me from walking far) and I couldn't fault the place at all! Not the usual Grumbledore then!! The AGM was interesting at times with some people getting quite irate but as always Colin Valentine kept it in order. The Members Weekend is so worth attending especially as it is so nice to see so many old friends. Next year is a little closer to home as it will be held in Bournemouth. (Please note the change of venue).

The next national event on my calendar is the **Great British Beer Festival at Olympia in London 9th -13th August**. Fiona and I expect to be on the judging team for the CAMRA Champion Beer Of Britain again. If you can get to the festival I can guarantee you a great time with over 400 beers available! It can be done in a day from our branch as I have done it several times and would really recommend it to you.

Our visit to **Derby Winter Ales Festival** earlier in the year was great. I so enjoyed the venue – a former railway roundhouse with lots of original features. Steam trains and real ale – bliss!

Our Branch AGM at **The Blue Lion in Lewdown** was especially good this year with lots of new members attending. We were treated to some great ales too! In March we made a trip over the border into deepest, darkest Cornwall to The Cornish Arms in St Merryn for their beer and mussel festival. We have managed to get there for every one of the five years it has been running and have always thoroughly enjoyed it. The company was excellent too as Trish and Terry always journey back from Bracknell and this time brought friends Karen and Barry. Also Fiona's niece and her family came to celebrate her nephew-in-law's birthday. What a treat.

Judging for the SIBA competition at Tuckers' Maltings was fun but the categories I judged were a little disappointing as nothing stood out to my taste.

The **CAMRA South West Region Campaigning Day** planning is coming together as I write. By the time you get to read this we will probably have enjoyed the event and Fiona and her team will be relaxing after all the stresses and strains of organization.

I hope you will join me in congratulating **The Admiral Collingwood in Ilfracombe**, which has won CAMRA New Build Award at the National Pub Design Awards.

A small team of members are currently travelling round the south of our Region judging pubs for the Regional Pub Of The Year and Fiona and I are visiting other branches judging the Regional Club Of The Year.

I will end with congratulations to our Branch winners: -

Pub Of The Year – The Grove at Kings Nympton,

finalists – The Railway, North Tawton;

The Red Lion, Exbourne;

The Ship & Pilot, Ilfracombe

Cider Pub Of The Year – The New Inn at Roborough,

finalists – The Ship & Pilot, Ilfracombe

Club Of The Year – The Conservative Club in Barnstable

finalist – The Conservative Club, Bideford

Brewery Of The Year – Madrigal Brewery.

Cheers

Grumbledore

Branch Calendar

JUNE 11TH

Club of the Year Presentation
Barnstaple Conservative Club

JULY 2ND

Brewery Visit
Hunter's Brewery, Newton Abbot

9TH

Brewery of the Year Presentation
Madrigal Brewery

16TH

Pub Beer Festival - Bell Inn, Parkham

22ND

Beer and Bluegrass Festival
St Aldhelms Hall and Gardens
Branksome, Poole BH12 1AD

23RD

Pub Beer Festival - The Grove Inn, Kings Nympton

AUGUST 20TH

North Devon CAMRA Branch Meeting
TBA

26TH

Sunwest Beer and Music Festival - Ilfracombe

SEPTEMBER 23RD

Beer Festival
R.H.S. Rosemoor, Torrington

OCTOBER 8TH

CAMRA Regional Meeting - South Devon Branch

NOVEMBER 26TH

CAMRA Branch Festive Lunch
The Grove Inn, Kings Nympton

Calendar subscription at
<http://northdevoncamra.org.uk/calendar/>

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Brewery Visit



What does the name Dartmoor conjure up for you - desolate moorland, terrifying hounds, forbidding prison? No such fears for the dozen or so North Devon branch members who set off from Barnstaple on a sunny April morning, heading south to explore yet another of the county's celebrated breweries. Stopping briefly at Hallwell Junction to pick up a couple of stragglers, in no time at all we were arriving at our destination. Unfortunately, we were a little early so where better to spend an hour than at Princetown's oldest building - the Plume of Feathers. Sited just around the corner from the brewery, we were not disappointed by the quality of Dartmoor Ales on offer, not to mention their fabulous Jail Ale pasties.

Situated in the heart of the national park, Dartmoor brewery at 1465 feet above sea level claims to be the highest brewery in the country. Starting life in 1994 as the Princetown brewery, their very first brew was Jail Ale (aptly named after the nearby prison!) at 4.8% abv, followed soon after by Dartmoor IPA, a light session beer at 4.0% abv. By 2006 the brewery had outgrown its original location (a shed behind the Prince of Wales pub) and so relocated to purpose built premises designed by Prince Charles own architect no less, on the site of the old Princetown railway station where it was renamed the Dartmoor Brewery.

In 2010 Legend Ale (4.4% abv) was launched to fill the gap between the Jail and Dartmoor brews, now complimented in winter by Dragon's Breath (4.4% abv), a unique heart warming beer flavoured with black treacle. Dartmoor best at 3.7% abv

was added to complete the core range in 2015. With a permanent staff of 13 including 2 brewers, Dartmoor has always prided itself on using only locally sourced ingredients. Committed to using English hops from nearby Drewsteigton and malt produced using Dartmoor barley at the fabulous Tuckers Maltings, master brewer Mike Lunney is rightly proud that even the soft water used to make Dartmoor ale is run directly off the moors for a truly authentic taste.



Despite it being a Saturday, staff at the brewery spared no effort to enlighten and entertain their guests from the north. It's fair to say that for the next three hours generous quantities of Jail Ale, Legend and IPA were thoroughly tried and tested by all concerned, not to mention the delicious Three Hares - a most delightful honey beer at 4.4% abv - and a seemingly endless supply of pasties! Not forgetting, of course, the prime purpose of our visit which was a guided tour of the brewery premises and an insight into one of the region's commercial success stories. Reluctantly, however, we had to take our leave and head back north, but not without stopping off at one or two notable watering holes along the way!

If the sound of this interests you in any way, then why not come along and join us on our next outing? To find out more, simply contact me using contact details at the front of this publication

Mark Partridge
Social Secretary – North Devon CAMRA



Exmoor Ales founded in 1979, based in the historic brewing town of Watchcomb on the fringes of Exmoor National Park, is now the largest brewery in Somerset.

EXMOOR ALE • ABV 3.8%

The brewery's first beer and winner at GBIF 1986, Best Bitter. Pale brown beer with a *robust* aroma, a full dry taste and nutty bitter finish. A classic session drink.

EXMOOR FOX • ABV 4.2%

Consistently created from a blend of several beers and malts to produce a mid-brown beer of unusual subtlety and taste. Slight sweetness on the tongue is followed by a *burst* of hops and a lingering bitterness afterwards.

EXMOOR GOLD • ABV 4.5%

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EXMOOR STAG • ABV 5.2%

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EXMOOR BEAST • ABV 6.6%

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What's in a Name?

Like them or loath them, it's difficult these days to go down any high street in any sizeable town or city and not come across a Wetherspoon's pub. With almost a thousand outlets in the UK, the chain has been accused by some of driving established pubs out of business. Yet with policies of promoting real ale and supporting local breweries, not to mention very competitive pricing, J D Wetherspoon has become for many a firm favourite, if possibly the 'marmite' brand of the modern pubs industry. Yet surely there is one aspect of the Wetherspoons phenomena that all can agree is a force for good - their policy of rescuing redundant buildings of local architectural merit and converting them so as to retain as much as possible of their original character. From my travels in recent years I've come across the following examples of successful conversions where it's not too hard to guess the pub's original function:

The Playhouse, Colchester (Theatre)
The Ritz, Lincoln (Cinema)
The Penny Black, Bicester (Post Office)
The Courthouse, Mansfield (Courtrooms)
The Fire Station, Whitley Bay (Fire Brigade HQ)
Chapel an Gansblydhen, Bodmin (Methodist chapel)
The Mechanical Elephant, Margate (Amusement arcade)
The Standing Order, Derby (Nat West Bank)
The Opera House, Tunbridge Wells (Opera House)
The Old Gaol House, Winchester (Prison)

Closer to home at Barnstaple in North Devon, we have **The Panniers** and **The Water Gate**, both sited in older buildings but with names inspired by nearby historic features of the town. Bideford's **Rose Salterne** has more of a literary pedigree, being named after the heroine of local author Charles Kingsley's famous novel *Westward Ho!* (even if the premises have a slightly less exotic origin as the former Bideford Carpet and Furniture centre!) On the other hand, the **Admiral Collingwood** at Ilfracombe, although newly built, is named in honour of local hero Cuthbert Collingwood, Nelson's

second in command at the battle of Trafalgar.

Name apart, wherever I go I always find a Wetherspoons pub to be a virtual treasure trove of local history. With its collection of old photographs, maps and information boards I hardly need leave the bar to get a sense of the town's character and heritage. So, on balance, I find myself more with the 'pro' camp than the 'anti' brigade when it comes to Wetherspoons, but each to their own I guess?

(These are the personal views of the Editor)

Peter Thompson

Revitalisation

So what's CAMRA all about these days?

The answer in 1971 when CAMRA was first set up would have been obvious: to rescue real ale in Britain from the slow death that the 6 big brewers of the day were determined to bring about with their highly processed and carbonated (dead!) keg beer. Forty years later and some might say 'job done!' With the vast majority of pubs now offering at least one real ale and the number of breweries increasing each year, you could ask what is the purpose of CAMRA in the 21st century? Should it just be about promoting real ale (what about ciders and perry?). Or these days should CAMRA be more concerned with 'real' pubs and drinkers at large? And should it continue to be a campaigning body, concerned with issues such as beer tax, pub closures and alcohol driving limits? All are important questions, so this year the membership has just been asked to give its views on the future direction of their organisation. It is now for CAMRA's national executive to consider carefully what members' think, and report back with proposals to the Members' Weekend at Bournemouth in April 2017. So, if you're one of the millions who continue to enjoy a good pint, and appreciate their local pub, then watch this space for further news about the future role of CAMRA...

Liquid Bread or Bread of Heaven?

Being Welsh I used to think that the rugby hymn 'Bread of Heaven' was all about spiritual salvation. Now I'm not so sure . . .

If you're reading this, then you are likely to be someone who has an interest in beer so may be interested to know a few things about its origins and development. We'll start with the ancient Sumerians 5,000 years ago. Back then, beer was described as nutritious, thirst-quenching, liquid bread – a description I find particularly warming. It was used not only to feed the sick but also to honour the gods. Indeed, it was considered so important that during the Babylonian Empire one of the punishments for brewers of beer thought unfit to drink was to be drowned in their own brew!



Historically, beer brewing was always the preserve of women and this makes sense when you remember that generally, the menfolk went out hunting while the women stayed at home to prepare various foodstuffs and provide nutrition for the family, not least of which was beer. Again, in ancient Babylon, beer houses evolved as the first bars (and brothels!) and these were run by women. Not only did they brew and serve beer, they also offered sexual services to their customers.(CAMRA take note!)

Even today, in many traditional societies women continue to brew fermented beverages – using maize in Mexico and South America, cassava in Amazonia, green bananas (!) in Africa – but sooner or later so-called advanced civilisations have

deprived them of this role and the brewing process has since been largely entrusted to men.

In essentials, the brewing of beer has not changed much since the time of the Sumerians. The trick is still to transform cereals into thirst-quenching, flavoursome and more or less alcoholic drinks by harnessing the process of fermentation.

In more recent times it is undoubtedly Europe that has produced the greatest diversity of beers – and the greatest beer drinkers! However, while much of Europe has favoured the light coloured larger style of beer, Britain has for the most part remained faithful to the traditional darker beers or 'real ale'. These demand great skill on the landlord's part as they have to use their experience to judge just the right moment and temperature to serve the beer – which as a 'live' product will be changing by the day. Even then, an experienced real ale drinker can discern differences in the taste of the same beer from one pub to the next. Taste aside, it is the 'condition' of the beer which distinguishes the ordinary from the truly great pint.

It seems that 40 years ago real ales were too much trouble for the major British brewers and so they tried to replace them with the more stable but 'dead' keg beers. This manoeuvre provoked a general outcry and led to the birth of the Campaign for Real Ale. The success of CAMRA is evident today, not only in the range of real beers available in pubs but also of the growing number of successful micro-breweries springing up and, thank heavens, the re-emergence of women brewers (brewsters!) to help restore the gender balance in our national treasure which is the real ale industry. . .

Mal Thompson

Do you like Real Ale?



Have you ever thought why?

Do you know what makes a winning ale?

Would you like to be a member of the Devon Branches Tasting Panel?

If you answered yes to these questions then you could be at the start of a very interesting journey.



To become a Tasting Panel member you have to be trained, but the training is quite informal and lots of fun. You will find out what your

palate is like. You will understand how and what the basic tastes are. You will learn about flavours

from raw materials and the brewing process and you will be able to recognize fermentation-derived flavours in beer. You will experience some of the off-flavours in beer and where they come from and you will have an understanding of the different styles of beers. Finally you will learn how to complete a 'tasting card'. The information you provide will lead to beers being chosen for the CAMRA Champion Beer Of Britain competition. You will play a vital part in that process.



Fiona Elsworth

Chair Devon Branches Tasting Panel

Fiona.ndcamra@icloud.com

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Pub News

from around the Branch



At the recently held National Pub Design Awards, The Admiral Collingwood in Ilfracombe won the prestigious New Build Award. This was particularly gratifying for us as it was none other than our local Pubs Officer, Chris Smyth, who had originally nominated it for the award. In a press release it was stated that *"Harrison Ince Architects have devised an uncompromisingly modern building where the glass dome offers urban presence, while the rest of the main elevation is understated yet sophisticated. New artworks commissioned for the interior and a steel sculpture of a wave breaking reminds customers that they are, after all, on the towns seafront"*. Aside from that, The Admiral Collingwood has been consistently busy since opening almost two years ago, and this Wetherspoons pub does seem to have complemented the good pubs in Ilfracombe, rather than detracted from them.

It will be interesting to see whether there is a similarly positive effect in Okehampton where, after major refurbishments, The White Hart is scheduled to re-open as a Wetherspoons in July. Not far from Okehampton at South Tawton, The Seven Stars, which has appeared in both the last two Good Beer Guides, closed a few weeks ago. This was particularly sad, not just because we will miss this quirky Art-Deco themed pub and it's engaging landlord Tony, but also as it leaves the village without a pub at present. Some good news from the south west of our branch area is that The Fox & Grapes at Lifton reopened in February after a prolonged period of closure.

The Cranford Inn near St Giles in the Wood, which had been closed since last summer, reopened at Easter with new tenants. This attractive and once very busy pub deserves some stability after having experienced a succession of short term licensees in recent years. A recent visit found the beer well kept and more promising signs for the future. Meanwhile a planning decision concerning The Stag Inn at Rackenford has disallowed plans to turn the former function room there into houses. The future of this popular village local, reckoned by some

to be the oldest pub in Devon, would have been severely affected if those plans had gone through. The Barnstaple Inn at Burrington is currently closed following the sad death in March of landlord, Mick Harding.



Picture showing Globe landlady Rachel Dawson with CAMRA members Andy and Lynn Grant

There has been quite a lot of activity in the Barnstaple area in recent weeks. The Wrey Arms at the top of Sticklepath Hill reopened at the end of April following a few weeks of closure and some major refurbishments. In the town, both The Ebberley Arms and Marshalls have had similar refurbishments of late. The Cork & Bottle, which had been closed for a while, has reopened with new licensees and is once again serving real ale. The Borough Arms at Forches, which closed several years ago, has now been demolished to make way for houses. The George at Braunton, which was mentioned in the previous Beer Tiz, duly reopened in April and is reported to be offering 3 real ales now.

Works are underway to re-roof The Farmers Arms in Woolery. We understand that this long closed pub is now scheduled to reopen in early 2018. Another new licensee has taken over at The Hart in Hartland. The Anchor, also in Hartland, has been used as the film location for the successful BBC series The Night Manager.

To end this piece I would like to mention an excellent article found in a March edition of The Morning Advertiser. Written by Peter Tiley, landlord of the Salutation Inn at Ham in Gloucestershire, last years National CAMRA Pub of the Year, it draws attention to the positive health benefits of pub going. In it he responds to some of the alarmist advice issued by Chief Medical Officer earlier this year and cites research carried out by CAMRA which showed *".... that people who live close to a pub are significantly happier, have more friends, better life satisfaction and are less likely to drink to excess. Friendship and community are probably the two most important factors influencing health and well being"*.

Pub Beer Festivals

We always like to support pubs when they promote real ale and cider by holding festivals. It is of course difficult for any of us to get to them all. Among those recently held, we paid our usual visit to The Clinton Arms at Frithlestock and thoroughly enjoyed their regular Easter weekend festival. On Sunday 1st May The Globe at Beaford held a particularly impressive and well attended event, which featured 12 imaginatively chosen beers from Devon and Somerset, 3 local ciders, a hog roast and live music.

21 Pubs on the 21 Bus Route



The number 21 bus route provides arguably the best bus service in north Devon. Stretching all the way from Westward Ho! by way of Bideford, Barnstaple and Braunton to Ilfracombe, the route takes in some of the finest coastal and estuary scenery in the region. By providing a frequent, reliable and reasonably priced service, what better way for the adventurous drinker to explore the delights of some unfamiliar pubs? Being such an extensive route (30 miles?) there are, of course, countless pubs to choose from along the way, so the idea of selecting just 21 to recommend to readers may seem ambitious. However, that's exactly what north Devon CAMRA in partnership with number 21 operator Stagecoach have attempted to do in a new publication due out later this summer. Whether you dip into the list as a one-off guide or use it as the basis for an extended pub crawl - we're sure there'll be some good ale to greet you on your way. Watch out for the information leaflet for further details.



Members Weekend, Conference and AGM 2016

As I am sure you are aware this is one of the main events of the CAMRA year, and in terms of policy making it is the most important weekend too.



"Come together...right now" the Members' Weekend started as usual with a social get together and welcome on Friday evening. This was a chance to meet up with friends only seen once a year and to make new ones. On Saturday the Conference began with AGM business; reports from officers and adoption of standing orders and special resolutions. What is generally an easy piece of business was, this year, very contentious! There was much debate, obvious concerns and some raised emotions! It will be interesting to read how this was recorded in the Minutes of the meeting.

Michael Hardman was the guest speaker. Michael is one of the four founder members of CAMRA. He has been deeply involved in the Revitalisation Project, which has been launched to take stock of CAMRA's role, activities, strategy and campaigns at a time of unprecedented changes in the brewing industry and licensed trade.

The Keynote Speaker was Tim Martin, Chairman of JD Wetherspoon PLC. He was instantly recognizable and I expect most of you will have an opinion on his pub company. Tim was an entertaining speaker with strong views covering all manner of areas from how much salt we should eat to our place within the European Community.

"We Can Work It Out" workshops – these covered a wide range of topics all very relevant to members today. So much on offer, but so little time to share ideas and good practice.

On Sunday the meeting settled to the Motions for debate. This was much smoother than the Saturday meeting.

"Day Tripper" organized trips – The members weekend is enhanced by the availability of trips to breweries, guided walks and pub crawl. Morris, Trish, Terry and I did the Shiverpool Guided walk!

"There's A Place"...to really get to the beating heart of Liverpool you have to visit its pubs. There you will find what defines its identity, its history and most of its people....

This was so true. We did our best to visit as many pubs as possible in the time we were there and the thing that stood out the most was not the quality of the beer, nor the quality of the venue but the quality of the people.

Our car was parked for 6 days and the wheels were still there when I picked it up to come home!

Hope to see you at next year's Members Weekend, AGM and Conference which will be in Bournemouth so not so far to travel!

Fiona Elsworth

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Make more friends at your Local Pub

Local pubs are good for you! New research commissioned by CAMRA and led by Professor Robin Dunbar of Oxford University confirms the role of pubs as community venues. Researchers undertook a series of studies to determine how social cohesion was affected by the type of venue and amount of alcohol consumed.



The Friends on Top report found:

- people who identify as having a local have more close friends and are more content with their lives.
- people tend to drink less in a community pub than when they are in other drinking venues.
- face-to-face interaction has proven to be more satisfying than interactions via any other digital media platform.
- most social skills improved initially after a drink, such as approachability and trustworthiness.
- people are more engaged in conversations in small community pubs than in larger venues.
- Pubs provide us with a venue in which we can serendipitously meet new, in many cases, like-minded people.

Local pubs also "offer an opportunity to broaden our network of acquaintances – something that has advantages both in terms of the potential to translate them into new friendships and widening our contact with a greater diversity of cultural groups by bringing us into contact with people from other walks of life and cultures" say researchers.

Pubs allow us to engage in conversations with, and get to know better, a wider range of community members than would be the case if we confined our world to work and home.

The report confirms the importance of community pubs, concluding that "providing a welcoming venue that will get people out of their homes and into the world of face-to-face interaction can only be good for both the individual and their wider community".

Tim Hampson

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01/15

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- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay by Direct Debits.
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
 - If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd asks you to.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

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