

Beer Tiz



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Issue 16
Autumn 2017

FREE



CAMRA North Devon Branch



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Good Beer Guide



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EXMOOR BEAST • ABV 6.6%

Remarkably drinkable strong "Porter" style ale. Once a "Winter Warmer", now year round. Brewed making liberal use of chocolate and crystal malts. A smooth and complex beer with hints of fruitcake, rum, coffee and chocolate.

Witterings of The Wizard



I had an interesting conversation the other day with a lager drinker. I had asked him why he was drinking lager when there were three great real ales on offer. He told me that he didn't like to take the gamble that he would order a pint of something he didn't like, and that, although he preferred real ale to lager, at least if he asked for lager he knew that it would be drinkable wherever he was drinking it.

Of course I observed that that is because the temperature of his lager will always be icy, the colour will always be pale, it will always be fizzy, probably with an ample head, the aroma will be hard to distinguish, the taste will be contained in the froth not the liquid and there will be little discernible aftertaste. So I couldn't disagree that his choice of any lager would be predictable.

But that got me to thinking about why people drink real ale and how to encourage people to at least try. Of course many pubs will offer 'tasters' to tempt a drinker and certainly good CAMRA pubs will. There is also a growing practice to display a small sample of the ale in a glass container in front of the hand-pull so that you may be persuaded by the colour.

Despite having said last time to drink with your mouth not your eyes, the colour of an ale will often be the first thing to influence you. You might go with the strength (ABV percentage displayed on the pump clip), maybe the brewery will tempt you or perhaps even the name of the ale. All of these things can assist in your choice.

But finally it is down to individual tastebuds and individual preference.

So let's not condemn people for choosing a bland, chemical concoction that doesn't challenge but may still quench a thirst or just provide a desire for alcohol. Let's try to encourage them to take advantage of choice. This is being supported by so many breweries nowadays who seem hell bent on brewing an 'alternative' to mass produced lager by

producing a real ale version. Personally I'm fed up with being faced with a plethora of real ale lagers when what I prefer is a good, rich, dark, flavourful porter or stout, but I'm not a brewer and I don't have a business to run and a profit to make at the end of the day.

Here's to the wonderful range of real ales available. I'm a happy man!

Morris Elsworth
Aka Grumbledore



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Branch Calendar

SEPTEMBER

Sat 9th

Branch meeting: the Joiners Arms, Bideford, EX39 2DR

Fri 22nd/Sun 24th:

Rough Hill Beer, Cider and Gin Festival, the New Inn,
Roborough EX19 8SY

Fri 29th:

Brief History of Beer and Brewing, the Champ, Meeting St,
Appledore EX39 1RJ

Fri 29th Sep/Sun 1st Oct:

Festival of Real Ale, English Wine and Cider, RHS Rosemoor,
Great Torington, EX38 8HP

OCTOBER

Sat 7th:

CAMRA Southwest Regional meeting, Bideford
Conservative Club, EX39 2QA

Sat 14th:

Branch meeting, the Seven Stars, South Tawton, EX20 2LW

NOVEMBER

Sat 11th:

Branch meeting (venue tba)

Sat 25th:

Branch Festive Lunch, the Red Lion, Exbourne, EX20 3RY

DECEMBER

Sat 9th:

Branch meeting (venue tba)

COMMITTEE CONTACT INFORMATION

CHAIR

Morris Elsworth
morris.ndcamra@icloud.com

VICE CHAIR

Paul Wells
vena1100@hotmail.co.uk

SECRETARY

Chris Wells
vena1100@hotmail.co.uk

TREASURER

Matt Collins
mattcollins250@gmail.com

BRANCH CONTACT

Fiona Elsworth
fiona.ndcamra@icloud.com

PUBS OFFICER

Andy Grant
andrewgrant14@btinternet.com

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Bob Goddard
r.goddard911@btinternet.com

SOCIAL SECRETARY

Mark Partridge
aswell007@gmail.com

PRESS & PUBLICITY

vacancy

WEBSITE MANAGER

(see website)
www.northdevoncamra.org.uk

MAGAZINE EDITOR

Peter Thompson
peter_thompson@live.com

CIDER REP

Chris Wells (acting)
vena1100@hotmail.co.uk

PUBLIC TRANSPORT OFFICER

Bob Goddard
r.goddard911@btinternet.com

TASTING PANEL CHAIR

Fiona Elsworth
fiona.ndcamra@icloud.com

The Real Ale Girls



This local business was originally established in Combe Martin many years ago by Chris Franks who traded under the banner of 'The Real Ale Man'. Chris was well known in the area having previously run

the Castle Inn in the village, and was also a very active member of CAMRA. A few years ago, on Chris's retirement, the business was acquired by Natasha Vukic and her sister. Understandably it was then renamed 'The Real Ale Girls'.

Natasha now runs the business herself from a storage premises in Shirwell and an office in Swimbridge. Coming from a background in teaching and IT has meant a steep learning curve for Natasha. Fortunately she was ably assisted in this by Chris Franks during a transition period, but Natasha's knowledge of IT and the clever use of social media has greatly helped the business grow and expand into other areas of activity. The **Real Ale Girls** now service all of Devon north of Exeter but also cover parts of Cornwall and east Somerset.

As the name implies, sales of Real Ales form the backbone of the organisation. More recently Natasha has been expanding into the distribution of other alcoholic and non alcoholic drinks, together with numerous items related to the pub, catering, hospitality and tourism sectors.

While business in real ales has been good, competition from the larger breweries, both national and local, has made reliance solely on real ale in casks very difficult. To improve this situation Natasha has diversified into bottled beers, wine and soft drinks. However, the two biggest areas

of growth currently are Real Ciders and Gins (particularly artisan speciality gins). Both products have shown a huge increase in popularity, not least from the smaller producers in the south-west who need an established distribution network. The **Real Ale Girls** have exactly that and are now providing a cost effective service to the benefit of all concerned.

The company has also been very active in supplying beer and cider festivals in the region. Natasha is able to offer a wider variety of local beers and ciders than most of the bigger outfits, given their reliance on only supplying their own products - often in larger minimum quantities than most smaller festivals can cope with!



Not content with simply supplying real ale, Natasha is now organising tasting sessions for beer, wine, cider and gin, with plans to develop these further in years to come. She has also joined our local CAMRA branch and can frequently be seen at events and

meetings. Natasha tells me that in order to improve her overall knowledge of beer tasting she will be attending the next beer tasting training sessions organized by the branch.

Of course real ale is a central part of The **Real Ale Girls** business, but Natasha's interest is both genuine and passionate. As quality and passion about real ale are core to what CAMRA is all about, we can only commend and encourage Natasha and wish her every success for the future.

Chris Smyth

The Real Ale Girls

01271 831401

email: therealalegirls@hotmail.com

Forge Brewery on the move...



Back in 2008 when Dave Lang first decided to start brewing at Hartland in what was once the village forge, it wasn't that difficult to find a name for his brewery! Motivated by the simple belief that he could produce better tasting ales than those he was drinking elsewhere, Dave set about the task

despite having no previous experience in the brewing industry. Since then **Forge** ales have gained a well deserved reputation across North Devon and beyond, receiving numerous awards for their quality and taste. After developing an initial range of 10 ales the brewery has now settled on a core offer of 7 brews, covering the full palate of strengths and styles.

Nine years later and the **Forge** has been on the move. Limited space and problems with site drainage had forced the brewery to relocate - not far - but 400 yards across the county border means that **Forge** is now officially in Cornwall! But with new premises come new opportunities - and Dave certainly has big ambitions in this direction.

When in early June our CAMRA branch was invited to visit, Dave was more than happy to share his exciting vision of where the **Forge** brewery will be in 5 or 10 years time. For those of us old enough to remember Richard Briers and Felicity Kendall in BBC's 'The Good Life', this is tame when compared to what Dave has in mind for the Forge ... A purpose built brewery, strategically located close to the A39 and overlooking the Tamar lakes, offering an holistic experience of the brewing process from start to finish. With crops of barley, wheat and even hops growing in adjacent fields, Dave is seeking to create a major visitor attraction which will showcase the area's rich agricultural heritage. Originally a herb

farm, this will once more be created alongside orchards and bee hives to set the scene on an idyllic rural setting. Although some of these features may yet be a few years away, a good start has already been made with the acquisition of Massey and Fergusson - two rare breed pigs fattening nicely on the mash waste from the brewery.

At the time of our visit the new **Forge** brewery was still very much a work in progress. Although production has gone on uninterrupted since moving there in January 2017, building work is still very much in evidence. The new plant has a 5 barrel capacity so with 6 fermentors this means that Dave can now operate the brewing process 7 days a week. But the best is yet to come. Plans are in place to create an elevated visitors' lounge and tap room, with terraced viewing platform overlooking both the Perspex ceiling of the brew house below and the spectacular Tamar valley beyond.



Needless to say, our visit was an unqualified success. Despite being in the throes of a major move, members of the north Devon CAMRA branch were warmly welcomed by Dave and his staff, and treated to the delights of no less than three of Forge's best ales. **Discovery** at 3.8% ABV provided an excellent starter to the day, being a light bitter well suited to what lay ahead. **Forge IPA** at 4.5% ABV proved to be an equally great success with our group and demonstrated all that is best in a traditional Indian Pale Ale. Last but not least came **Litehouse** at 4.3%

ABV. This golden coloured beer with a fine balance of malt and hops more than justified its status as overall winner in the 2010 SIBA South-West awards held at the Tuckers Maltings beer festival and had just been awarded Gold in the Best Bitters and Pale Ales category in the 2017 awards.

So a big thank you to Dave and his staff for making North Devon CAMRA members so welcome (particularly at such short notice!) - we wish you every success in your exciting new venture ...

PS... if you would like to join us on a future CAMRA branch outing please contact me as follows:
aswell007@gmail.com

Mark Partridge
Branch Social Secretary

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South-West Regional Campaigning Day 2017

A bright sunny day in June, a bus loaded with 15 happy beer lovers, so what better way to start exploring new pubs in an area not known to many North Devon branch members? The brummy super highway (M5) soon had us on the Somerset levels and our first stop at the Sheppey Inn at Lower Godney. The food, music and selection of real ale were all excellent (if a tad pricey compared to North Devon!) before being rounded up by our social secretary Mark, keen as ever to move us on to our next destination.

At the Burcott Inn in Wookey we enjoyed 3 very good beers from the Teignworthy and Hop Back breweries, perfectly complemented by bacon sandwiches to help soak up some of the the alcohol. Heading towards Priddy, we stopped first at the Hunters Lodge to sample their delicious Butcombe Original and Cheddar Ales. Then, with the weather being so kind to us, on to the Queen Victoria where it was lovely to catch up with former branch treasurer Trish in such a pleasant garden setting.

With time marching on we made our way into Wells where we were delighted to discover the Just Ales micropub - and another excellent choice of brews. Although we were too late for the BBQ, freshly made cheese and onion rolls more than did the trick and we were back in business!

So, after a full day, and despite not having had time to visit several pubs on our original 'hit' list (including the Wookey Hole Inn), we reluctantly made our way home via the George Inn at Croscombe - with its own fine selection of ales - to North Devon.

Sincere thanks to the Bristol branch for suggesting such a great choice of pubs with a good range of ales. What better way to help highlight the paucity of public transport to pubs in the rural South-West?

Paul and Chris Wells

Congratulations to...

Congratulations to the **Railway Inn** Marking 20 consecutive in the Good Beer Guide

At our June branch meeting, held at the Railway Inn, North Tawton, landlord Bert Bolt was presented with a certificate to mark the pub's 20 consecutive appearances in the Good Beer Guide. It was not until we trooped into the bar together that Bert suspected anything out of the ordinary. "They can't all be wanting another drink yet!" he thought.

When our chairman, Morris Elsworth, congratulated Bert, Claire and their team on this milestone and handed him the certificate, Bert was, for once, genuinely taken by surprise. He usually knows what is going on rather better than most!

The GBG allocation for North Devon allows for less than 10% of our pubs to be included in any edition, so to have featured in every one over the past 20 years is a remarkable achievement. It is also a very well deserved one for this friendliest of pubs where the beer is excellent, the food superb, and the conversation invariably amusing.

The Railway has been in Claire's family for some 60 years, but it was back in 1988 that Claire persuaded Bert to join her in running the pub "for a short while". Almost 30 years later and they are both still very much at the helm. Their success is not just about serving good beer. It has been the creation of what Bert likes to call a 'sticky pub',

where you come in for a pint but then stick around much longer than anticipated. As he told Ron Lester for our Winter 2015 issue of Beer Tiz (his excellent article can still be found on the Beer Tiz section of our website): "In the pub trade if you don't enjoy it, get out. Do it because you like it. No point if not". Bert's infectious enthusiasm rubs off on everyone around him.

We are very proud to have the Railway in our branch area. If you have never been, then do make the effort - but be sure to allow for it being a much longer visit than expected!



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CAMRA National Pub of the Year

National Pub of the Year has this year been awarded to the **George and Dragon**, a small village community pub on the outskirts of the Yorkshire Dales national park. Its journey to national acclaim began when residents of Hudswell lost their previous village pub in 2008. The village then banded together to form a community action group, and within two years formed a co-operative to purchase the George and Dragon. After extensive renovations, the pub re-opened in 2010 and incorporated the village library, a volunteer-led shop as well as managing the community allotments.

The George and Dragon takes pride in serving Yorkshire ales, and up to five of them can be found on the bar alongside real cider. An annual beer festival takes place during the August bank holiday weekend. The pub's beer terrace offers

stunning views of the Swale valley. CAMRA judges were impressed by the pub's strong community ethos and its warm and welcoming atmosphere. CAMRA's National Pub of the Year co-ordinator Paul Ainsworth said "The story of the George and Dragon goes to show that in the right hands a closed pub can become viable and successful".

Sue Miller, the landlord of the George and Dragon said "we are truly thrilled to be recognized by CAMRA for this award. It shows that hard work, good beer and the support of the community can help you achieve goals that seemed impossible only a short time ago . . . I'm extremely proud of what our little pub has achieved".

Amen - and so say all of us, with best wishes for the future from North Devon CAMRA . . .

Clearwater Steam Delivery

Congratulations to **Clearwater** brewery for once again coming up with a novel way of transporting their produce to local outlets. Having pioneered a delivery of Clearwater ales by sailboat from Bideford to Lynmouth only last year (see Beer Tiz issue 12), it was yet another triumph of ingenuity when steam power was harnessed for the first time in more than half a century to deliver ales from the brewery to Instow and Appledore.



The Bideford based brewery has produced **Freshspring Steam Beer** in support of the project to restore the *SS Freshspring* - the 120 ft ex-Royal Navy auxiliary water tanker to be berthed in Bideford and converted into a steam cruise ship in order to help educate and inspire young people. Bideford's John Priddy's miniature steam locomotive was used to carry the ales along the Tarka Trail to the Quay Inn and John's of Instow, before transferring the precious cargo to steam boat for the final deliveries to John's other shop in Appledore and, of course, Clearwater's brewery tap - the **Champ**.

Pub News

from around the Branch



What an eventful summer all told!

The Sea Horses in Ilfracombe is now reopened, refurbished and renamed **Second Stage**, and no longer a tied house. Two recent offerings were Marsden's Lancaster Bomber and Banks' Dark Mild - a very welcome sight indeed! Nearby the **Wellington Arms** has secured Cask Marque accreditation. Stocking at least 3 real ales which are always well kept, their prices are cheaper than most locally.

The **Arscott Arms** at Chapmans Well has reopened after 18 months with experienced licensees keeping one locally sourced real ale but with plans to add another soon. The **Fox and Grapes** at Tinhay, resurrected last year, is now serving excellent food and boasting a very attractive beer garden ideal for summer functions. Latest news on the **Farmers Arms** at Woolsey is that it should reopen next Easter. At Hartland, Alison Mosely continues to run the **Hart** in conjunction with her own pub, the **Anchor** - with the freehold of the Hart now advertised for sale. Also in Hartland, the **Royal British Legion Club** under new steward Neil Hobbs is undergoing something of a revival, hosting village activities and most welcoming of CAMRA members. At Pusehill near Westward Ho!, the **Pig On The Hill** now has two AA rosettes for the quality of its restaurant, while adding a house beer from Country



Life - Old Pig - to their range. In Westward Ho! itself, there are promising signs from the **Village Inn**, now under new

licensees, where the beers (although only the usual suspects) were all reported to be in good form.

At Buckland Brewer, the **Coach and Horses** now stocks some very popular bottle conditioned Belgian styled wheat beer from nearby Buckland

Brewery - yet another new North Devon brewery. At Chittlehampton, the **Bell** was serving 8 Devon ales at my last visit (surely a future contender for the branch Pub of the Year?). Meanwhile the nearby **Exeter Inn** is now on the market (a village pub with great potential for the right person).



At Appledore, the **Champ** has undergone something of a renaissance with new manager Sophie, and is now open every day from 12 noon. In July, CAMRA members presented the Champ with their 2017

Pub of the Year finalist certificate, and this gem of a pub is now better than ever. Still in Appledore, work to restore the **Royal George** has at last begun with the new owner planning an Easter opening for this historic pub/restaurant, while the **Coach and Horses** seems set to become yet another Italian restaurant. In Bideford, work is finally underway to convert much of **Tantons Hotel** into dwellings, albeit with a brand new Bar promised for 2018 (watch this space!). Also in Bideford, the **First and Last** now has new landlords and with *Purple Moose* beer recently seen there what better reason to pop in and say hello? Sadly, Graham and Alana from the **Coach and Horses** at Horns Cross have announced their retirement - they will be missed by many I'm sure. Better news from the **Globe** at Beaford where new owners will no doubt be aiming to restore the pub to the Good Beer Guide where Rachel and Phil had taken it in 2017 and it surely belongs to be back there soon? In Okehampton, uncertainty shrouds the **Plymouth Inn** which closed in July for redecoration and has yet to reopen! Next door at the **London Inn**, a planning application has been made to convert half the pub into a retail outlet - for Art would you believe? A planning application has also been submitted for a new Ale and Wine bar in East Street, South Molton (more no doubt in a future edition!)

In Merton, the **Maltscoop** is now being run by Becky and Neil - their first venture into the pub trade - and I'm sure they'll quickly learn that all the best pubs sell good real ale. (When I went there last year to see Big Al and the Wild Strawberries I was reduced to drinking Guinness so everything to play for!). At Westleigh, the **Westleigh Inn** is now reopen after its recent make-over, and with good food and good ale is well worth a trip out. In the War Horse village of Iddesleigh, the **Duke of York** is advertising for a management team to run the pub. (So what of John and his trusted steed Trev - gone to greener pastures, or simply put out to pasture maybe?)



As usual during the summer months quite a few of our pubs hold their annual beer festivals. On a scorching weekend in June the **Old Cottage Inn** at Lynbridge held their **Fat Belly Beer and Music Festival**, serving the pub's own *Fat Belly* beers plus a good number from other local breweries. The **Wellie Fest** at the Big Sheep was also enjoyed by branch members. A marvellous showcase for Simon and Anna Lacey's *Country Life* ales, along with other Devon beers, all of which having recently won awards. The festival at the **Grove** in King's Nympton is always well attended and a pleasure to go to, with a thoughtful range of ales and excellent organisation. The Parkham beer festival, run by Mike and Rachel of the



Bell Inn was this year held in the village hall following the devastating fire at their pub earlier this year. The good news to end with is that rebuilding is well in hand and the **Bell** will be open again before next summer's festival.



Andy Grant
Pubs Officer Group Co-ordinator



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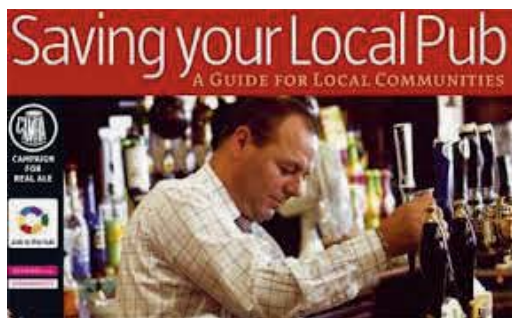
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CAMRA Campaign Success as Pubs get legal protection



For many years CAMRA has been campaigning to secure greater protection for pubs in planning law. CAMRA has led the way in demanding an end to 'permitted development rights', which allow developers to demolish pubs or convert them to

other uses such as flats or a supermarket without needing to apply for planning permission. This has denied local people a say in the future of what for many is a vital part of their community.

Some communities have been able to ward off such threats to their local by securing their status as Assets of Community Value (ACV) and there are now over 2000 pubs nationally with this designation. But the lengthy and bureaucratic ACV process has never been a guarantee of ultimate success and it should indeed be recognized that market forces will always determine the ultimate viability of any pub. However, the ending of permitted development rights across England has now given all pubs the same degree of protection,



as in future owners will always have to apply for planning permission in an open and transparent process before any pub conversion or demolition can take place. This has been a huge success for CAMRA and demonstrated the campaigning power of the national organization.

CAMRA Chief Executive Tim Page said: "This change delivers real and robust protection to valued community pubs, which previously have relied on communities going through the bureaucratic ACV process . . . CAMRA will continue to work with Government to ensure these measures are implemented as soon as possible to allow pubs across England to start benefiting from the protection of the planning system".

Peter Thompson



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The CAMRA Good Beer Guide (2018)

The latest GBG hits our bookshops on 14th September. North Devon branch is allocated just 27 entries, so with ten times that number of pubs in our area, being judged one of the best 27 is a great accolade. This year we will have 7 new entries, but will your pub be one of them? Buy a copy and find out!

Meanwhile, very soon the arduous process for judging entries to the 2019 GBG will begin, with deadline for nominations being 11th November this year! If you think your pub deserves to be nominated, just email the pub's name and location to whatpub@northdevoncamra.org.uk together with your CAMRA membership number (we need this in case the pub you nominate is successful so then you can be invited to give them the good news!) Alternatively, why not just come along to

a branch meeting and do it in person? All future meetings can be found on our website

www.northdevoncamra.org.uk

And finally, each year the branch selects its favourite **Pub of the Year**. The only criterion for nomination is that the pub is listed in the current GBG. So, if you're reading this and think your pub qualifies, don't just leave it to someone else - nominate your pub now, using the email address above.

Andy Grant

Pubs Officer Group Co-ordinator



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Beer Name	ABV
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DARTMOOR IPA	4.0%
LEGEND CASK ALE	4.4%
DARTMOOR BEST	3.7%

Dartmoor Brewery Ltd, Station Road, Princetown, Devon PL20 6QX
Telephone: 01822 890789 Fax: 01822 890798 www.dartmoorbrewery.co.uk

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