

Beer Tiz



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Issue 18
Spring 2018

FREE



CAMRA North Devon Branch



FATBELLY ALE AND MUSIC FESTIVAL

Fri 15th, Sat 16th and Sun 17th June

Cottage Inn, Lynton





Make friends with an Otter



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Witterings of The Wizard



There are no bad dogs only bad owners.

So the saying goes.

A little while ago I spent a very happy hour or so in my local with about a dozen dogs and their owners. The occasion was a report for BBC Spotlight (I hope you saw it!) highlighting the fact that Devon has more dog friendly pubs than any other county in England (Kent came second and Yorkshire came third). This information had come from the launch of the update of the Good Beer Guide App. As you may know I am a bit of a technophobe, but Fiona has the App and was delighted to show everyone how it works and how you can find dog friendly pubs by looking at the little pictures! This information is reliant on our wonderful CAMRA volunteers who visit all the Good Beer Guide pubs and ensure the accuracy of the content in both Good Beer Guide and subsequently the app. When Fiona was asked by CAMRA HQ to recommend a dog friendly pub we were spoilt for choice so went for the easy option – our local. Hence we found ourselves on a Friday lunchtime, in the bar, with the dogs and their people. The dogs were extremely well behaved, not a grumble amongst them. In fact Baldrick the border collie went to sleep by the bar; Harry the Great Dane stood up the other end of the bar looking down on his subjects; Moss flirted with all the dogs and looked for pizza crumbs. The owners too were well behaved and we all enjoyed a few pints while the TV film crew worked hard.

I can't help but compare this experience with another.

There are no bad children only bad parents?

Living up to my nickname I find children in a bar an aggravating part of modern society. I am intolerant of children at the bar and if they should dare to move quickly (running!) or make any noise that I can hear then I start to grumble. I do avoid those pubs that proclaim themselves to be 'child friendly' and would never enter a

'family room'. But I have to admit that the other night a family came into my local and sat on the table next to me. I took a deep breath and prepared to be disturbed; but what a pleasant surprise. The children sat still, engaged in conversation at an appropriate volume and then remained glued to their tablet computers. Back in my day we would have had dominoes to play with or comics to read or maybe even Lego a few years ago, but a tablet computer is just another toy and the family on the next table enjoyed themselves and so did I!

So, having no cause to grumble I grumbled about that!

Morris

Aka Grumbledore



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Branch Calendar

MARCH

Sat 10th:

Branch AGM - The Ebrington Arms, Knowle, EX33 2LW

APRIL

Sat 7th:

Teignworthy Brewery tour (by rail) - Newton Abbott, TQ12 4AA

Sat 14th:

Branch Meeting - venue TBA (Pub of the Year?)

Thu 19th – Sat 21st:

Tuckers Maltings Beer Festival - Teign Rd, Newton Abbot, TQ12 4AA

Fri 20th - Sun 22nd:

CAMRA Members' Weekend, AGM and Conference - University of Coventry, CV4 7AL

MAY

Sat 5th:

Topsham Ale Trail - EX3 0HR

Sat 12th:

Branch Meeting - venue TBA

Sun 27th/Mon 28th May:

North Devon Beer Festival - Pannier Market, Barnstaple, EX31 1SY

JUNE

Sat 9th:

Branch Meeting - venue TBA

Sat 9th:

South West Regional CAMRA meeting - Exeter & East Devon Branch (venue TBC)

Fri 15th, Sat 16th, Sun 17th:

FatBelly Ale and Music Festival - Cottage Inn, Lynbridge (nr.Lynton), EX35 6NR

JULY

7th:

Uffculme Music and Real Ale Festival - Bobbie Watts Farm, Uffculme, EX15 2AW

Sat 14th:

Branch Meeting - venue TBA

(For further information on branch socials email Mark Partridge or call 07904858643)

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North Devon Beer Festival

Sun 27th and Mon 28th May

This year sees the 12th annual North Devon beer festival in Barnstaple's historic Pannier Market. The two day event has become a showcase for all that's best in North Devon hospitality

- featuring in excess of 30 real ales, not to mention real ciders and a host of celebrated food outlets - all of them produced in our area. Organised by Tim Webster from Barum

Brewery, the festival aims to include at least one real ale from each of the different breweries in North Devon, no easy feat considering that the number of local breweries increases year on year! From small beginnings in the Barnstaple Leisure Centre, the festival soon moved to the Pannier Market where its town centre venue and live music now attracts hundreds of visitors each year and provides an ideal family friendly environment over the late Spring bank holiday weekend.

Naturally Tim will be featuring a number of his own Barum Ales in the festival, with best selling **Original** (4.4%), **Breakfast** (5.0%), and **EPA** (4.6%) all likely contenders. As one of North Devon's longest established breweries, Barum Ales has always enjoyed a productive partnership with the **Reform Inn at Pilton** where the brewery has been based since 1996 and where Barum ales can always be found on tap throughout the year. Landlady Esther Davies

estimates that her customers drink in excess of 60,000 pints of Barum ale each year, quite apart from regular guest ales from other breweries. And for English patriots and history buffs alike, you'll be pleased to hear that each year on St Crispin's Day (25th October) they still celebrate the great victory at Agincourt with a rendition of Henry V's stirring speech to the assembled 'band of brothers'! So, if you're passing that way, why not call in and share a pint or two as you're sure to receive a warm welcome? In the meanwhile - we'll hope to see you at this year's North Devon Beer Festival?

(Ps Free admission to the Pannier Market - beer and cider tokens on sale inside)

The Editor

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Spotlight on Real Ale in Braunton



Some claim Braunton is the largest village in England. Indeed it often feels more like a small town, particularly with the influx of summer visitors attracted to the beautiful beaches along the nearby North Devon coast. But surfing aside,

Braunton also has a growing reputation for the number of decent quality pubs selling real ale. So when branch member Malc

Hale volunteered to show us some of the highlights of his home village he didn't need to ask twice!

Calling first at the historic **Mariners Arms** in South street for a swift half of *Submariner*, where better to start our evening with a nautical theme? This pleasantly golden style ale from Clearwater brewery was on offer alongside both St Austell's *HSD* and Sharpe's *Doombar*. Reluctantly leaving the warming glow of the pub's two log fires, and taking care to avoid the sandbags strategically placed outside the door - a reminder that the village has long suffered from episodes of flooding - we made our way to the **White Lion** in North street to join the rest of our merry band. Here we met Lee, the very knowledgeable landlord, and had no difficulty downing a couple of really excellent pints, both the Exeter Brewery's *Ferryman* and Ringwood's *Boondoggle* being on top form. Sadly, there wasn't time to sample the equally tempting *Otter Amber*.

Moving just across the road to the **London Inn** we found yet more evidence of the impact of flooding, though thankfully this community pub at the heart of the village has now been fully

refurbished since the devastation of 2014. With a choice of Sharpe's *Atlantic* and *Doombar*, there are no prizes for guessing what we chose to drink there!



A short walk through the village graveyard(!) and we were at the **Black Horse** in Church street. New landlord Ryan made us very welcome with Wells' *Bombardier Gold* on tap plus a quite decent *Doombar* served on stillage behind the bar. Certainly one to watch for the future, though sadly there was no evidence on the night of the annual tug o'war contest between the Black Horse and our next destination, the Aggi (or **Agricultural Inn** to give it its full title). Here the choice was between St Austell's *Proper Job* or *Exmoor Ale*. Both were well served, although there was some temptation to go 'off piste' (no pun intended!) and sample the soup of the day - which was advertised to be Whisky!

Returning to the centre of the village, our next point of call was the **George Inn**, not long reopened after a period of closure and undergoing a full makeover. With a wide range



of good beers always on tap, we were delighted to find no less than 3 GT Ales on offer - *Blonde Ambition*, *Crimson Rye'd* and *North Coast IPA* - along with *Cotleigh Tawney* and *Butcombe Bitter*. The bad news however was that within minutes of our arriving a fault was discovered in the bar delivery system, leaving staff with no choice but to stop serving ale for the evening! **(how does that old song go - there's nothing so lonesome, morbid or drear than to stand in the bar of a pub with no beer??).**

But fortunately all was not lost, as just across the road there was time for one final stop. **SQ's** may not be everyone's idea of a pub - indeed it sells itself more as a bistro restaurant - but with live music and a lively atmosphere, it's young clientele were clearly enjoying themselves, so it was that we ended the evening with a very decent pint of *Proper Job* - which is how I would describe our experience on that wet winter's night in Braunton. But remember, it never rains in the pub and with so many local inns now

serving a variety of real ales I can thoroughly recommend the village to discerning drinkers in search of an interesting night out. (Once again, special thanks to Malc for showing us around).

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

Mark Partridge
Social Secretary



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Congratulations to...

The Co-op!

The Co-op retail giant is set to begin a UK wide roll-out of its successful pilot scheme of selling local ale brewed in hundreds of smaller breweries across the land. Up to 200 smaller producers of real ale are set to benefit from accessing their regional market, in line with the Co-op's policy of supporting British products. Fierce Brewery of Dyce, Aberdeen, which won Breakthrough Brewery of the Year at this year's Scottish Beer Awards, will supply Co-op stores with three of its ales – Easy Shift, Day Shift and Moose Mousse (a chocolate stout with a local chocolatier providing the key ingredient!). In Derby, the Dancing Duck brewery will also be supplying the Co-op with three ales – Ay Up, 22,

and Dark Drake (a previous champion Stout of Britain award winner). In Wales you can expect to find local ale in a can (see the previous edition of Beer Tiz!), supplied by Boss Brewing. Simon Dryall, head of local sourcing at the Co-op, said: "The innovation, passion and quality going into these products is what makes them special. Our customers tell us that food provenance really does matter to them. Quality, trust, convenience and value are all key to our customers". So, we watch this space, and hope the scheme proves to be of benefit to some of the ever increasing number of small micro-brewers of North Devon.

A Wassailing We Will Go...

Three cheers for the age old custom of wassailing! Each year in January, orchards across North Devon bear witness to the strange ceremony of waking up the dormant apple trees in the hope of securing a bumper harvest in the coming autumn. This year at Ostlers Cider Mill near Goodleigh over 100 people joined in the celebrations, which involved lots of banging and crashing to ward off any evil spirits, while wetting the trees with cider to invoke fertility.

Traditional songs and poems were recited with the wassail queen placing a garland of flowers on some of the branches as folk dances were performed. As well as their award winning cider vinegar, the family run Ostlers orchards also produce apples for their celebrated scrumpy, using their own secret family recipe. How fitting then that the word Wassail comes from the old English 'waes hael' meaning 'good health'!

Branch Brewery of the Year 2017 - GT Ales

Congratulations to Gary Jarvis and Toby Marsh of GT Ales on receiving the branch 2017 Brewery of the Year award at our meeting held in December at the Crown Inn, West Down. The much coveted award was presented by brewery liaison officer Chris Smyth in front of a packed house of appreciative drinkers!



Big Job from St Austell Brewery

Big Job has been crowned **Champion Bottled Beer of Britain 2017**, in CAMRA's prestigious annual award which recognises the best bottled conditioned real ale in the country. Judging took place at the BBC Good Food Show at Birmingham NEC, following a series of local member voting rounds and regional judging competitions through the previous year.



Branch members enjoy a day out at the Exeter Festival of Winter Ales

Big Job really is a big beer. At 7.2% ABV it is powerfully hoppy with both citra and centennial hops, and is jammed full of Cornish barley. With a smooth, citrus fruit taste and a hoppy, lemon smell, it is anything but subtle! Christine Cryne, master beer trainer and judge described Big Job as "a moreish, golden beer with honey caramelized citrus notes, refreshingly smooth with a warming finish with increasing spicy dry bitter notes and a soft fruity nose".

Runners up in this year's competition were **Vintage Ale** (8.5% ABV) from Fullers' which was awarded silver, and **Green Devil IPA** (6.0% ABV) from Oakham brewery which won bronze.

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Pub News

from around the Branch



January is often a tough time for landlords trying to cope with slack post Xmas trade, but this year has been more difficult than usual for two pubs badly affected by recent adverse weather conditions. Having survived the impact

of a 13 week road closure requiring a 20 mile official diversion out from Barnstaple, the hardworking licensees at the **Muddiford Inn** very narrowly

escaped serious flooding when torrential rain caused the nearby stream to bust its banks. Only prompt action in diverting the torrent by



removing a car park wall averted real disaster. Not so lucky was The **Jack Russell Inn** at Swimbridge, where despite the best efforts



of staff, villagers and emergency services the pub's ground floor was inundated, with floodwater leaving a trail of destruction.

In February, two village pubs (both owned by Enterprise Inns) came under the hammer and have both now been sold at auction, although the ultimate fate of the **Hart Inn** at Hartland and the **Kings Arms** in Winkleigh is not known at time of going to press. (Watch this space for further news!). Meanwhile we understand that another Enterprise pub, the **Wellington Arms** (the **Welly**) in Ilfracombe, has become one of their 'Craft Union' pubs - although quite what this means we await to see.

On a positive note, work is well underway at the **Plume of Feathers** in Okehampton which will soon be open again after being closed for more than ten



years. Also rising from the ashes, quite literally, is the **Bell** at Parkham where Mike and Rachel are hopeful still of a summer reopening date - but more news as we have it. Rebuilding also appears to be making good progress at the **Royal George** in Appledore. At Instow, the **Boathouse** is still undergoing renovation

but hopes to be open again around Easter. Also at Instow, the **Wayfarer** is still closed. In Bideford, the **Appledore Inn** is having a major



kitchen refit so by the time you read this it will be fully open for your favourite Thai meal and a great pint.

Good news too that real ale is now available in the public bars of several North Devon venues, including the **Durrant House Hotel** in Northam (usually Butcombe), the **Royal Hotel** in Bideford (Doombar), and the **Riverside Restaurant** (BIB).

Andy Grant

Pubs Officer Group Co-ordinator

Now for a personal view from our Branch Pubs Officer Group Co-ordinator



By the time you come to read this the members of our Pubs Officer Group will have been busy surveying and assessing the record number of 51 branch pubs nominated for inclusion in the 2019 Good Beer Guide. The 27 pubs listed in this year's guide are automatically reassessed, plus any new nominations put forward by branch members. With competition for the 27 places allocated to North Devon likely to be fiercer than ever, there's no time

for a pub to rest on its laurels and inevitably some very good pubs will miss out.

Times are changing and our pubs are getting better and better. Long gone are the days of deep fried scampi in a basket and tanker beer. Customers are rightly demanding more choice and better quality, and if they don't get it they will quickly look elsewhere. Yes they want a wide choice of whiskies, rums and gins but they also want a choice of tonics and mixers, and let's not forget the garnish! But where am I going with this? BEER of course. CAMRA stands for the CAMpaign for Real Ale first and foremost.

Keeping the traditional values of the British pub alive is what we're talking about here, but I for one as a dedicated real ale drinker want real choice too. In January I had the very enjoyable experience of visiting the Manchester Beer Festival (my old stomping ground incidentally) with a few good friends. With over 800 ales, mostly from up north but also from across Europe, the festival was very well attended as you might imagine. But of these 800 ales, over 200 of them were what the brewers themselves refer to as Craft Beers, although why someone decided to call it 'craft beer' heaven only knows as hasn't brewing always been a craft?

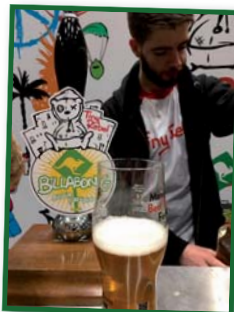
The point being that there is now a new breed of brewer out there who dare to brew something just that little bit different. They use a greater variety of ingredients so of course their beers cost a little more. I tried a new ale in my local a few weeks back - marketed as a 'session beer' - but surely, just because it was below 4%, did this really prevent the brewer adding some ingredients to give it a taste worth drinking? Yes it may have made it slightly more expensive, but not everyone buys the value range in the supermarket do they? So beware, mid brown bland beers at 4% are on their way OUT! They have had their day! Make way for the new breed of craft brewers.

With over 190,000 members, CAMRA is rightly proud of its status as the largest campaigning organization in the country. But I feel CAMRA is now at a crossroads. In ten years time, membership could either have fallen to no more than 90,000 (as an older generation falls by the wayside) or it could potentially grow to 290,000 - if it can manage to embrace that younger generation of drinkers who demand flavour as the new norm. They want the likes of Tiny Rebel's Clwb Tropicana, Moonchild's Infinite Dreams, Buxton's Rocky Road Ice Cream, or Beavertown's Shut Up and Play the Hits. Yes they are adventurous names, but the names are nothing compared to the beers themselves. Most of the craft brewers out there don't use finings or head retaining malts. In short, they don't need the help. They deserve your attention on taste, and deserve to be paid a fair price for brewing these fine works of art. Remember how you felt when you found the best bar on the very last day of your holiday? Well it's the same thing. Try some now or you'll only say "I wish I had found this ages ago". Find it, try it, love it. NOW !

Andy Grant

(POG Co-ordinator/

Branch Beer Scoring Co-ordinator)



Randall's Tavern

Most Private of Public Houses!



It goes without saying that all CAMRA members like their real ale, and that many spend at

least part of their week experiencing the unique pleasures of the traditional English pub. But branch members

Simon and

Donna Randall have

gone just that one step further, after spending more than 20 years converting much of their home and garden in Barnstaple into a replica pub - the aptly named **Randall's Tavern!**

While most of us have a drinks cabinet for the occasional tippie or for entertaining friends at home, Simon from the outset has had a much grander vision - to create his very own pub, complete with fully equipped bar and games room. Since moving into the near derelict property in 1992, what started out as a modest project to convert a loft into a boy's games room has steadily grown more ambitious, coming to encompass all things connected with the traditional pub experience. While all the time collecting more exhibits, it soon became clear that if Simon was to fully realise his vision then the house would need to be extended, moving the collection downstairs, until it has come to occupy almost half their home! Even now, after 25 years, it's a work in progress, with friends and contacts in the trade still sending interesting items to add to Simon and Donna's impressive array of games, glassware, furniture and other pub memorabilia (known in the trade as 'breweriana'). Randall's Tavern even has an outdoor beer garden - complete with picnic tables and branded beer parasols.

Yet the crowning glory of Randall's Tavern has to be the authentic period bar, salvaged from the Tiverton Inn at South Molton and coming complete with optics and real ale pumps. Always with one real ale on tap and often more, Simon has opted for Country Life as his supplier of choice - hardly surprising when considering all the help and advice he's had over the years from Simon Lacey from Country Life brewery, and not forgetting Chris Smith from Lilicos in Barnstaple, amongst others. Officially opened in 2014, Randall's Tavern can now boast a wider range of bottled local ales, ciders and spirits (95 gins and still counting!) than can most 'real' pubs. Drinks are even served in glasses with matching logo!



Simon has been passionate about real ale from a young age and has long since been a firm CAMRA supporter, although only more recently taking an active role in the North Devon branch. A regular attendee at the GBBF and travelling extensively throughout the country, like many CAMRA members Simon takes pleasure in searching out the very best local brews and places with that traditional English pub feel about them.

Entirely a labour of love, Simon and Donna have invested thousands of pounds over the years in pursuing their dream. Yet although Randall's

Tavern remains entirely a private enterprise (no need for a public licence as alcohol is never for sale there!), the couple have designed it with friends and family in mind and are frequently entertaining guests.

But more than this, they regularly host a range of charity events through their involvement with local groups such as Round Table, Rotary and Club 41 which over the years have helped raise tens of thousands of pounds for good causes.

Since the arrival of the Tiverton Inn bar

and the Tavern's official opening in 2014, fundraising activities have reached new heights with events such as pub challenges, summer garden parties and even their very own real ale festival! This Christmas saw them host a Family Day for 60 or so invited guests, raising over £200 in just a few hours. No stranger to the glare of publicity, Randall's Tavern has often featured in the national press, radio and on TV, and has been a three times finalist in the Games Room of the Year competition.

So, hearty congratulations to Simon and Donna, not just for all their hard work in supporting local charities, but for pursuing their passion, and for bringing that extra touch of colour to North Devon!

(You can find Randall's Tavern on Facebook or check out their website)

Peter Thompson



A.I. is too important to be left in the hands of machines.

The A.I. we're referring to isn't Artificial Intelligence, it's Ale Intelligence, of course. We're not technophobes, we just don't trust anything incapable of smelling, feeling or tasting to create something as delicately balanced as Landlord. That's why we have five hands-on, Heriot-Watt trained brewers involved in every step of the process, from barley delivery to filling the casks. This way, we can make sure that every sip of Taylor's is as delicious as humanly possible. Machines may one day take over the world, just be thankful you won't be around to drink their terrible beer.

All for that taste of Taylor's



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I/we wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association these are available at camra.org.uk/memorandum ☐

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title Surname
 Forename(s)
 Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)
 Joint member's Email
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Signed
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EXMOOR ALES

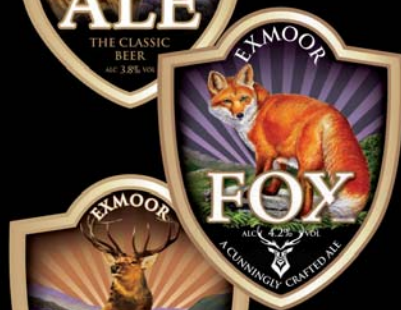
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EXMOOR FOX • ABV 4.2%

Cunningly crafted from a blend of several hops and malts to produce a mid-brown beer of unusual subtlety and taste. Slight maltiness on the tongue is followed by a burst of hops and a lingering bitter-sweet aftertaste.



EXMOOR GOLD • ABV 4.5%

The original and first single malt "Golden Ale". Golden in colour with a malty aroma and flavour, a slight sweetness is complemented by its long hoppiness resulting in a remarkable, well rounded beer.



EXMOOR STAG • ABV 5.2%

Strong copper-coloured premium bitter, with a good malty taste, full hopped aroma and long dry finish. Originally brewed for Somerset County Cricket Clubs Centenary celebrations...so popular the brew became permanent.



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.



8 St James Place, Ilfracombe. EX34 9BH

FOOD & BAR

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