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for  
Real Ale

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# the tippler

**Winter 2023**

**Inside:**

**The bitter truth  
about Sour Beers**

**The Tegestologist:  
33,500 beer mats  
and counting**

*Biggest  
ever issue!*



The Magazine of the Gloucestershire Branches of the Campaign for Real Ale





# STROUD BREWERY

## EASY PEASY

### 2.6% ORGANIC SESSION ALE

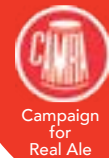
WHEN LIFE GIVES US ORGANIC LEMONS  
WE MAKE A LIGHT PALE ALE MAAAN.  
OUR REFRESHING ALE INVITES YOU TO:  
CHILL OUT WHEN THE SUN SHINES.  
BECAUSE LIFE IS GOOD,  
TAKE ON AN ABUNDANCE MINDSET.  
WHEN LIFE GETS SOUR,  
PRACTICE THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE.  
ENJOY THE LITTLE THINGS,  
LIKE BALLOONS.  
THEY COST MORE NOW,  
BUT THAT'S INFLATION FOR YOU.  
CHEERS



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# the tippler



The Magazine of the Gloucestershire Branches  
of the Campaign for Real Ale.

The opinions expressed need not represent those of CAMRA Ltd., or its officials.  
(E & O B) Errors and omission excepted.

**FRONT COVER:** The magnificent Three Kings, just outside  
the county (it's not their fault) in Worcestershire, in the  
throes of their 29th Annual Beer Festival, always worth a  
visit!

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Got something to say?



Then please get in touch! We value feedback and news from around the  
county, so, if want to make a contribution, compliment or criticise, contact:

The Editor, The Tippler, 23 Theocs Close, Tewkesbury. GL20 5TX  
[chris@thetippler.co.uk](mailto:chris@thetippler.co.uk) 07977 157050

## CONTRIBUTION DEADLINES

For the next two issues, the deadlines will be  
the second Friday in November 2023 and February 2024

[www.thetippler.co.uk](http://www.thetippler.co.uk)





Some of us old codgers are still happy to use the services of the Royal Mail, and we actively encourage all forms of (preferably printable!) communication. So get writing letters, sending emails and get your news, views and comments published!



**Well, here it is, my mission to relaunch and revitalise the Tippler after the disaster of the Covid lockdowns.**

This is issue # 8 since we took it on as a completely self-funded venture. With a new (and brilliant!) design partner Pete Adams, we have got this thing up to a (possibly) country leading 80 pages of news, views, articles and competitions. Speaking of competitions, there are, once again, three regulars to choose from all with great prizes, so get the entries sent in and see if you're a lucky winner.

All our regular features are here, along with some new contributors, letter writers and some that are a bit of a divergence from just beer and cider, but are still part of the fabric of this great county of ours. Although a native of Kent, I have now lived here longer than I lived there, so I reckon I've earned that adopted membership.

Gloucestershire's pub, brewing and real ale and cider community needs you and your support, so get out there and get drinking, taking part and saving real ales, ciders, pubs, breweries and other venues that are vulnerable to the bulldozer of 'progress'. Cheers!

**Chris Leibbrandt**

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COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON TO ALL

## TEWKESBURY CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR 2023 & CYDER PUB OF THE YEAR 2023



WE'RE IN IT!



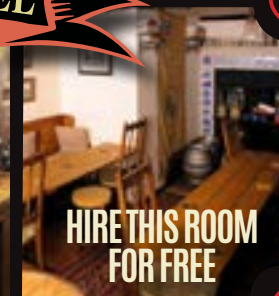
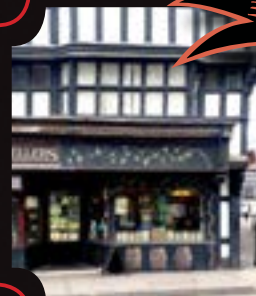
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**2ND**  
IN SOUTH WEST  
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YEAR COMPETITION

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pouring today  
on Facebook

# Letters to the Editor...

Hi Chris

I thought I would mention a recent trip to Munich (not the Oktoberfest, I hasten to add).

In search of some good beer, my dear wife found us a wonderful establishment called HopDog. <https://hopdog.eu/> (worth a look).

Primarily a craft beer bar, it served 'build-your-own hot dogs' as the only available food; a very good solid accompaniment

to the liquids on offer. There was a strong heavy metal (HM) vibe (décor, music, tattoos etc.) and the barman/manager, Greg, was a fine exemplar of the HM genre, and the most friendly and accommodating barman one could wish to meet. He personally tours the area collecting craft beers from independent breweries and had on draught IPAs of various strengths, a magnificent porter, unfiltered fruit beer etc. No handpulls, but that was no surprise.

Interestingly, when I asked Greg to name his favourite beer style, he replied, unhesitatingly: "English Best Bitter."

So, if a Slovenian working in Bavaria prefers BB above all else, why are they not more prominent in our home country? The answer is probably based on supply and demand - and possibly the issues around longevity, but having been quaffing BB for half a century I know I'm not alone in fearing its disappearance, other than from the national brands.

Kind regards  
**David Jackman**

**Chris replies:**

**Hello David and many thanks for the email. An interesting email regarding the ability of people to all get on with our continental friends, something that large swathes of the population seem to have forgotten in the last decade. Slovenia is worth a look, a**

**fabulous country with plenty of good people, countryside and beer.**

**I couldn't agree with you more about best bitter, I have no idea why it is falling from grace, a good one is exceptional, great colour, malty, hoppy and, as its name suggests, bitter. It is my favourite tipple by a long way, maybe we should join a campaign to save best bitter?**

**I was put off by over hopped light beers when I was working in Florida, luckily they served the 'beer' so cold you couldn't taste it anyway, a bit of a godsend if you ask me.**

Dear Chris,

Another brilliant edition (Autumn '23) of your county CAMRA magazine, most enjoyable and an informative read.

As a result I visited the re-opened Olde Black Bear and how impressive that pub now is. I hope it gets the custom it deserves. And the Uley beers aren't too bad either! Which of course resulted in a first visit to the nearby Inferno Taphouse; again a treat.

Visits to Kingsholm might now need to be extended, so that Tewkesbury can be added to my usual circuit of pubs and taverns to sample.

Peter Searle's tales of 'collecting' are also of personal interest, as we each have our methods of recording and recalling visits, drinks etc. iPhones have made life easier for sure!

Keep up the good work; greatly appreciated.

**Jeffery Davies (Sherborne, Dorset)**

**Chris replies:**

**Many thanks for the email Jeffery, always appreciate some positive comments and compliments, we're working hard to make sure the magazine has a bit more of a**

# Letters to the Editor...

**diverse list of contributions than most I've seen. I have similar magazines from around the country so we can ensure that you get the best read that we can make available.**

**I am also really pleased that the magazine has steered you into some of the local pubs in Tewkesbury, which does mean that it is working as a magazine. I see you come along to the south west's best rugby venue so you'd do well to visit the Pelican and the Turk's Head in Gloucester, both popular venues on match day.**

**You never know you might spot me in the 'Shed' at the next game.**



Hi Chris

I thought I'd reply to Geoff Sandles, who mentioned my articles in the Autumn Tippler:

I really enjoyed reading Geoff Sandles' article about searching out real ale in the 1970s. This is a bit before my time - I was still in short trousers in the 70s and didn't get into real ale until I was at university in the mid 80s, so some of the breweries Geoff mentioned are unknown to me. However, Geoff's words brought home to me how lucky I have been to be able to collect so easily for most of my drinking life. In fact, all beer drinkers of today owe a debt of gratitude to Geoff and all those like him who fought for the survival of real ale breweries in the 1970s.

Thanks Geoff!

**Pete Searle**

**FLAGONS  
DOWN, YOU TIPPLER  
SCOUNDRELS, AND OUT  
WITH THE QUILLS**



Dear Chris,

I am studying for a qualification in the most interesting of subjects, anthropology and sociology and wondered if you could help.

I was trying to find out the average age of CAMRA members in the county, would you be able to help with this. As far as I can ascertain, it is pretty old, with a membership that doesn't engage with (as they would say, no doubt) the virtual world of social media. I have tried that route and not been very successful.

I was wondering if CAMRA would be interested in a scheme that I have thought up, where there are junior members who benefit from a special membership deal. The junior section would be identified using one simple criterion: Anyone who doesn't get a winter fuel allowance from the Government. That should do the trick and you'd get a lot more members, wouldn't you?

Anyway, if you could look out for that information I'd be grateful.

Kind regards,

Catherine Young

**Chris replies:**

**Many thanks for the email Catherine, what an interesting field of study.**

**Well, what an issue to talk about. I don't think anyone can argue that most of us in CAMRA are in what I presume you would term 'Adult members' with plenty over that group. Why is that? Who knows, but it may be that there is an issue with the mission of CAMRA, it is, after all, the biggest 'pressure' group in the country, but I am sure most people would just think of it as beer swilling old blokes with beards and sandals.**

**I am as interested as you in the breakdown of the membership and suspect that women, ethnic minorities and anyone under 65 is probably not well represented.**

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# Letters to the Editor...

**Every now and then, as the Editor of the Tippler, I have to behave like a grown up and do responsible stuff, on this occasion, writing to Tewkesbury Borough Council's Licensing Committee. At the time of going to press we do not know the outcome of Tewkesbury Borough Council's Licensing Committee's deliberations on the licence review.**

**Here is what I sent:**

Dear Sirs,

As the editor of The Tippler, the magazine for the branches of Gloucestershire Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), I find I have to write in support of the Black Bear in Tewkesbury whose licence is up for review.

The first thing I would like to comment on is the lack of response time and broadcasting of the review; many, many residents and interested parties would not have seen nor had the ability to respond. I am sure it is only by accident that many people will have heard of this news, particularly if social media is the driver of the dissemination of information, this is a far from an adequate method.

I am worried that, after the landlord and his family painstakingly resurrected this building at enormous cost, in line with every item of legislation deemed necessary by the council, it is only just over a year since opening before its very future (and the future pleasure of its supporters and patrons) is being put in jeopardy by a small number of complainants.

The building is a model in sympathetic restoration that has in its short new life brought in many outsiders who are visiting the town purely to experience Tewkesbury's newest (and oldest) tourist attraction. The pub highlights many historical features, being a beacon in how to restore and enhance a building of not only historical significance but economic significance too. It is already acting as a draw for other pubs, restaurants, shops and hotels in the town, nearly all of whom

have noticed an upturn in business because it is not only bringing people into the pub, but also keeping them in the town to enjoy its other facilities.

As the editor of a magazine all about pubs and real ale, I am only too aware of the plight of many pubs being closed down to make way for housing in what become dormitory towns and villages. Social cohesion, something every community should worry about is being eroded, it would be a (self-inflicted) economic and community disaster for the licensing committee to reduce the entertainment licence to a point where the economic viability of the venue's future is in doubt.

It is worth bearing in mind that this corner of Tewkesbury has, in the past, had a lot of music entertainment in the form of Montells Nightclub, The Boathouse and the White Bear. The Black Bear's owners inherited its current music licence and have invested and worked to create a pub complies with all of its current restrictions, to the point of using decibel metering and sound proofing curtains to ensure it does so.

Whilst the licence should be reviewed due to its success that affects close neighbours, I would caution fairness (taking into account the owner's views, the views of local residents, the benefit to the town's economy, its supporters as well as the minority of complainants) parity and common sense be applied in this review. Any harsh restrictions would quite simply not be in anyone's interest.

The Black Bear has been feature of Tewkesbury for over 700 years, long before any of the nearby residential buildings came into being, it would be a tragedy if over zealous restrictions create an atmosphere where its continued success is in doubt and take away a valuable economic and social asset and tourist attraction to Tewkesbury.

Yours faithfully,

**Chris Leibbrandt**  
Editor - The Tippler Magazine

**'The Black Bear has been feature of Tewkesbury for over 700 years, long before any of the nearby residential buildings came into being..'**

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# THE HUNTER'S COLUMN



**Our intrepid hero investigates Vlad the Impaler and gets stuck in some bloodthirsty research into some blood curdling brews. He wonders, as we all must: Do Vampires Know It's Christmas?**

**Always difficult to buy for. Worse than teenagers. They don't need socks or handkerchiefs. Handkerchiefs are out of the question anyway, too difficult to get the blood stains out. Worse than getting blood out of a stone. But if anybody could get blood out of a stone it would surely be a vampire.**

Still a persecuted minority who don't even get a mention amongst the LGBTIQA+ community. If you've not kept up to date, it stands for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual and many other terms (such as non-binary and pansexual)". If anyone has been left out, I do apologise, and rest assured that we will be thinking of you this Christmas, as we continue trying to work out what they all mean.

According to the University of Virginia's publication UVA Today, October '21, (Virgins were always a popular item on the Vamp menu) "The first known reference to vampires appeared in written form in Old Russian in A.D. 1047, soon after Orthodox Christianity moved into Eastern Europe."

Coy Hall, an Associate Professor of History in Kentucky, a neighbouring state to Virginia writes, "The concept of the vampire as an undead creature inflicting harm originated in Eastern Europe... a thousand years ago. Make no mistake, this was a legend isolated among the Slavic people. It was not widespread or well-known. As a word, vampire translates roughly as "ghost monster". Some Americans watch a lot of vampire programmes on the

telly. They believe the strangest of things and follow, cult like, the orangest of men. It's probably the same ones who swear to have been abducted by aliens, "up to 3.7 million Americans" according to the 1992 Unusual Personal Experiences: An Analysis of the Data from Three National Surveys Conducted by the Roper Organisation of Las Vegas, California.

What did make 'The concept of the vampire as an undead creature inflicting harm' widespread and well known was the book Dracula, written by Irishman Bram (Abraham) Stoker in 1897, inspired by Transylvanian

folklore and historical figures such as the Romanian Prince, Vlad III, a.k.a. Vlad the Impaler.

Vlad was not to be messed with, as his name implies. Dracula was actually his nickname, nicked by Bram. Prior to that during Victorian times, penny dreadfuls, cheap popular weekly magazines that serialised ghoulish and gruesome stories, were keeping the Vamps alive (and dead) with titles such as Varney The Vampire published in 1845.

When it came to Christmas, I would imagine that any abnormal, outward looking, fun seeking Vamp wouldn't want to be left out in the cold (coffin) and might appreciate the offer of a Christmas Experience Gift such as, a visit to the cinema (they like the dark), maybe to see The Addams Family, a film that they can relate to and have relations in, or get down with the Goths and Steampunks at The Elsinore pub, Whitby, 'Home of the Goths' and

**'Some Americans watch a lot of vampire programmes on the telly. They believe the strangest of things and follow, cult like, the orangest of men.'**



the town where Dracula arrived in England by ship from the Carpathian Mountains, leaping ashore in the form of a large, black dog.

The ultimate Christmas present would no doubt be a day out at the blood bank, but we don't like to encourage bad habits, do we? Instead, we might encourage them into drinking a drop of Black Death from Whitby Brewery, if any thirsts needed quenching. And trust me, they will.

Had I met up with Vlad in the mid to late 1800's we could have popped into The Vampire Tavern in Great Hampton Row, Birmingham, a street once known as Hangman's Lane. St George's churchyard is just around the corner, he could have put up there for the night.

The pub became a Holt's Brewery house, but earlier had been a home brew outlet. I would have sauntered up to the bar, being careful not to step in the spittoon and said: "Me, bitter, 'im pale". I think Vlad would have liked that. With a butcher's shop next door and plenty of hanging carcasses around he'd have felt quite at home. The pork scratchings must have been 'out of this world' and I would have ordered Vlad a bag straight away - something to get his teeth into. These days there are plenty of ales to satisfy the most blood lusting of Vamps.

Keswick Brewery will serve up a Thirst Blood 6% ABV. Hop Union promote Bloody Nora, a 4.7% Blood Orange IPA, named after "the maid for the wealthy Duke



Wodingtonshire in the 17th century. She earned the name Bloody Nora after she killed a servant of the duke with a stick of celery". 10 out of 10 then for originality and creativity - 'Stick 'em up?'

Vlad might go for a Blood Red 5.5% from Leviathan Brewery but surely couldn't resist a St Austell's Bucket of Blood at 4.5%. This beer is named after a public house in Phillack, Hayle, Cornwall, owned by St Austell Brewery. Wikipedia tells us that the pub "is thought to be named after an incident where the landlord brought up a bucket of blood from the building's well. The resulting investigation revealed the corpse of a murdered Customs Officer which had been dropped there".

Do they know it's Christmas? I'm sure they do because like us they, down at the boneyard, would have been inundated with adverts for said event since the end of the previous summer holidays, being encouraged to book their Christmas Dinners at the local, well in advance. Given their peculiar tastes and allergies - rarer than rare, dripping with blood and definitely no garlic - mediterranean dishes are a definite No No. Wherever you good people are this Christmas, remember to keep one eye over your shoulder, stock up on cloves of garlic, have a bottle of Holy Water handy and put a wooden stake in the boot, just in case.

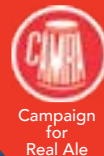
Wassail!

*The Hunter*





## News from NORTH COTSWOLDS



### Monthly Pub Walks

**Held outside the Summer festival months. We have now completed 113 walks around our pubs in the North Cotswold area.**

Generally 4 or 5 miles easy walking these are held monthly on the first Saturday of the month starting at 10:30 am from the pub car park returning at 12:30 pm for lunch.

We have around 80 pubs in the area and each one will eventually figure in the process. Reports on all walks are available on our website [www.northcotswoldcamra.org.uk](http://www.northcotswoldcamra.org.uk) together with the route and photographs.

The next walks are as follows:

- No 114: Sat 7th November**  
**Plough Inn, Stretton**
- No 115: Sat 2nd December**  
**Carpenters Arms, Miserden**
- No 116: Sat 6th January 2024**  
**Hobnails Inn, Alderton**

Call Roger Price on 01451 810305 or just turn up. Dogs welcome on leads. Non CAMRA members welcome. Walks are subject to weather and walker numbers.

### Day Away

Was held on Friday 29th Sep to Tewkesbury. A good turnout visited all GBG pubs in the town. See website for details.

### FaceBook

A link to this site is on our web page <https://www.facebook.com/North-Cotswolds-CAMRA-the-Campaign-for-Real-Ale-in-the-North-Cotswolds-1022351584505679/?fref=nf>

### Cycling Events

The programme includes 3 events in 2024. Spring Summer and Autumn. Dates to be announced. 20 mile events around GBG Pubs in N Cots area. Usually visit 5 pubs on route at a steady pace.

**The Summer run was held on the 18th August from Broadway to Evesham and return. The Autumn run on 13th Oct from Bourton on the Water to Stow and Oddington area was deferred.**

The spring event to Cirencester from Chedworth was held on 12th May and included a visit to Corinium Brewery and 5 GBG pubs. A good turnout enjoyed a great day.

### Motorcycling Events

We are also planning 3 motorcycle runs (approx. 80 miles on fine days) visiting scenic locations. Started in Spring 2024.

# Record Attendance at the 2023 Moreton Beer and Cider Festival



**The North Cotswold branch of CAMRA staged the 16th festival at Moreton Cricket Club on the weekend of 8th/9th September.**

Despite the previous week being wet, outstanding, continuous sunshine enabled both set up and the Festival to feel like we were in the southern Spain. An attendance of 1650 exceeded the last year's 1450 by 200. Keeping the beer cool was our biggest challenge requiring some 170 icepacks to supplement our normal fans and wet towels.

A range of 50 beers were available with 35 sourced from three counties of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire with 15 local beers. Thanks go to the beer selection team and the Good Beer Company. The beer styles included pale ales, bitters, porters, stouts and milds. A broad range of 25 ciders and perries came from Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Kent, chosen by our cider coordinator, James Fry. In total, 75 choices for drinkers to enjoy.

Friday opened at 11am and the crowds built up, Improvements to fencing and signage assisted the entrance arrangements and access arrangements.

CAMRA members from near and far turned out in force, many of whom had attended all of the previous fifteen festivals, tasting the range of quality ales, ciders and perries.

Afternoon entertainment was provided by *Eden Bay*, our own *James Long* with his brother-in-law, Joe, playing a long set followed by *The Dropouts* who rocked the evening from 8pm to 11pm rounding off a very busy day.

Throughout the weekend local Butcher, R & D Walker, provided extensive catering,

including pulled pork, burgers, faggots, and chilli, in the main marquee. This proved very popular as usual.

More campers and caravans arrived for the Saturday 11am opening. On the entertainment front, the *B Flats* from Cheltenham played the first set then *Barrons and Hall*, a duo from Shipston followed, both appreciated by a record Saturday afternoon crowd. Regular band *Good Intent* played the evening session playing from 8pm to 11pm. As usual, locals turned out in numbers swelling the audience, with more dancers enjoying the set than seen for some years.

The first beer to run out on Friday night was RBA's *Midnight Orange* (5.8%) an American Porter from RBA Brewery in Derby, so winning Beer of the Festival. The first cider to run out on Friday was Prior's *Tippie Elderflower Infusion* (7%) a medium cider from Stanton, Gloucestershire. The Local Beer of the Festival was *Drovers Return* (5.0%) from Cotswold Lion Brewery.

Thanks to all our helpers, sponsors and to Moreton Cricket Club for the venue, and in particular, Branch Chairman, Roger Price, who actively recruited 14 new CAMRA members who signed up through the weekend. Thanks to our usual stalwarts who worked tirelessly on Sunday morning packing up the empty barrels and racking for collection, and clearing the site.

Many thanks to all for a great festival, come back next year for the 17th Festival on 13th and 14th September 2023.

**Martin Jones**  
**Moreton Festival Director**

## BEER FESTIVALS 2024

**16th Moreton Beer Festival 8th - 9th September**

**Further information on our website:**  
**[www.northcotswoldcamra.org.uk](http://www.northcotswoldcamra.org.uk)**

## Cotswold Beer Festival Thanks Its Founders



Photograph: Veronica Emary.

Martin, Patrick, and John are seen receiving engraved glassware from the current organising chair, Rob Coldwell. The presentation took place at the CBF-23 Helpers thank you buffet on Wednesday 25th October, at the Sandford Park Alehouse.

**After many years of sterling work in organising the Cotswold Beer Festival, Martin Parker, Patrick Phair and John Barrett have stepped down from their roles and earned a well-deserved break.**

Rob Coldwell, festival organiser said: "The Cotswold Beer Festival is believed to be the oldest CAMRA festival running continuously in the same location throughout its life. The fact that it has continued for so long (from the CAMRA side) is mainly down to the hard work and commitment of four people: John Barrett, Martin Parker, Patrick Phair and Geoff Rosam. Geoff managed to step down from his treasurer role a few years ago.

John Barrett was involved from the start. Shortly after CAMRA Gloucestershire came into being in 1975, they started looking for a suitable site to hold a beer festival. Various venues were considered, including both the Town Hall and the racecourse in Cheltenham, but everything seemed either impracticable or too expensive. He then heard about the Postlip Community through a work colleague

who was a member of the community. After some initial discussions, they agreed to go ahead with a festival in Postlip Tithe Barn in July 1977. If you were starting the festival today you probably wouldn't choose a barn in the middle of the Cotswolds to hold it, but the Tithe Barn at Postlip is perfect for a beer festival, with the thick stone walls keeping the beer at a perfect temperature even on the hottest summer days. John has been involved in the organisation of the festival ever since, chairing both the Gloucestershire branch and the festival for many years. He is the only active member who was involved in the first festival 42 years ago. John was responsible for brewery signs, keg labels, beer taps and buckets and electrics-lighting and more, plus offering storage in his garage. His tenacity and attention to detail kept the show on the road, every year.

Martin Parker was first involved with this festival over 40 years ago, initially as an ordinary helper behind the bar. He was persuaded to join the organising committee

three years later. He has been involved ever since and was chairman for nearly twenty years. Martin has been responsible for stillage, staffing, and the festival programme including its advertising.

Patrick Phair attended his first couple of Postlip festivals as a punter, after seeing a poster on the notice board at work. This was in the early 80s and Patrick has helped for almost 40 years. He was responsible for beer ordering and beer layout and pricing, all of which present interesting challenges.

Over the years they have had to deal with various adversities, including foot and mouth

disease cancelling one festival and the floods of 2007, when the festival still went ahead with any undrunk beer being donated to the Army as a thank you.

For many years, Martin and John also used to do the cooking for the after-festival thank you barbeque held at the Jolly Brewmaster in Cheltenham. This is one thing that the new organisers have subcontracted to the professionals!

On behalf of all at Gloucestershire and Cheltenham CAMRA branches we thank them for all the hard work. The festival would not exist without them."

## Gloucestershire Beer of the Year Presentations

**Following judging the Gloucestershire Beer of the Year Competition, at the Cotswold Beer Festival (Postlip), the Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards were presented to three breweries by competition organiser Tony Lucas.**



**GOLD:** Presented at the Tank, Gloucester Docks, the Gloucester brewery team receive the Gold award for their Gloucester Cascade.



**SILVER:** The Silver Award was presented to Battledown's owner, Roland Elliott-Berry, for his Belgian Dubbel. As

Roland has since retired it was fitting that Cheltenham's longest serving brewer should receive this award.

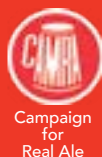
**BRONZE:** Andy Forbes, owner of Cotswold Lion receives the Bronze Award for his Drover's Return premium bitter.







## News from CHELTENHAM



### Cotswold Beer Festival 'Popular Vote' Beer of the Festival Presentation

The first beer to run out at this year's Cotswold Beer Festival was Uley Pale, from Uley Brewery. As is the tradition for the festival, it was therefore declared the most 'popular' beer of the festival.

The presentation of the award took place on Friday 20th October, in the brewery tap room.

Here we see the chair of the Festival Committee, Rob Coldwell, (right) presenting the award to Uley's Head Brewer Ken Lush.



### Sue Ryder Charity Presentation

On Wed 6th September, members of the Cheltenham Committee presented a cheque for £350.25 to 'Sue Ryder Leckhampton Court'.

The money was raised through 'Token Aid' at this year's Cotswold Beer Festival. A similar amount went to the Postlip Communities nominated charity 'Heart Heroes'.

We'd like to thank all those who donated their spare tokens to these worthy causes.



Members of the Cheltenham Committee are seen presenting the cheque to Tamsin (far left) from the Sue Ryder charity.

### Cheltenham CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2024 Launch

On Thursday 28th September, members of the Cheltenham Branch joined with staff at The Beehive in Montpellier to launch the 2024 edition of the Good Beer Guide. The evening celebrated the Beehive being a worthy new entry in this year's guide.



### Cheltenham Motor Club is South West Champion

The Cheltenham Motor Club has once again won the South West Club of the Year competition. The CMC now goes forward to the Super Regional stage of the competition.

The presentation of the award took place on Thursday 24th August.



Neil Way (left) receives his award from John Vanderwolfe, CAMRA's Regional Clubs Officer.



**CHELTENHAM MOTOR CLUB**  
CAMRA NATIONAL CLUB OF THE YEAR 2013, 2017 & 2020

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W: www.cheltmc.com

### Jolly Brewmaster is Cheltenham Cider Pub of the Year

Chair of Cheltenham CAMRA (Rob Coldwell) and Branch Cider Officer (Guy Vowles) present the Cider Pub of the Year award to the 'Jolly Brew' staff.




**WE NEED YOUR HELP**

[chris@thetippler.co.uk](mailto:chris@thetippler.co.uk)

### WE NEED NEWS!

If you have any pub news at all to share (starting up, being refurbished / taken over etc), then please let the editor know.

Similarly, breweries are coming and going, starting up, being bought out, merging with others, and we want to know all about them. It only takes a few lines to the editor and he'll do the rest!





**The Forest of Dean sub-branch of Gloucestershire CAMRA remain surprisingly active, with more members now joining us for our weekly pub visits.**

**We had excellent press coverage in local newspapers when we met at the Littledean House Hotel (right) on 28th September to launch the 2024 Good Beer Guide.**

Despite the rather inclement weather there were at least a dozen CAMRA members present. It was also a double celebration for landlords Rajpreet and Sandeep (second left and centre below) who had just brought home their newborn baby boy Albie from the maternity ward. Sandeep has built up an impressive collection of breweriana and other advertising paraphernalia, his latest acquisition being a large plastic Fullers Brewery sign which hangs from the ceiling.

On the 9th November, Forest of Dean CAMRA held their weekly meeting at the Rising Sun Community Pub in Woodcroft – a far flung Gloucestershire pub not far from Chepstow. The purpose of the visit was to present landlords Lee and Sian (right) with a special CAMRA certificate for Forest of Dean CAMRA Community Pub of the Year in recognition of the successful first year of trading since re-opening as a truly inspirational community owned pub in October 2022. Ten years ago, the future of the Rising Sun looked bleak after the owning property developer sought to change the use to residential. The locals were outraged and fought a determined campaign under the banner of 'Save our Sun' and eventually raised the capital to purchase the pub themselves. It was a well-managed campaign, helped by the planning officers at Forest of Dean District Council who wisely saw through the claims of non-viability of the applicant and refused permission which ultimately gave the Rising Sun chance to shine in Woodcroft again. The beers sampled on our visit were all excellent – Wye Valley Butty Bach, The Hopfather and Kingstone Brewery Llandogor Trow.



## Doggy Day Out in the Forest

**On Saturday 30th September, the Dog House Micropub in Coleford – the current Forest of Dean CAMRA Pub of the Year – held a charity 'doggy day out' in aid of Forest of Dean Dog Rescue.**

Twenty-four humans and fifteen dogs of all shapes and sizes walked from the St John Street pub over to the Ostrich Inn in Newland following the course of the old burial path. Part of the ancient track is no more than a rutted and often muddy sunken lane which can be tricky to negotiate but the walkers were rewarded with stunning views across to the Black Mountains with the Sugar Loaf prominent. Perhaps the star of the canine ramblers was George the miniature Dachshund who took the rough terrain in his stride. Refreshment was taken at the Ostrich Inn, now offering a good and often varied selection of ales. The interior of this ancient pub has hardly changed in generations and is well worth a visit.

The next section of the walk was a little easier, taking the unclassified road towards Clearwell and onto the next hostelry – the Lamb Inn at Clearwell. This wonderful pub is probably unique in the Forest as the beer is drawn straight from the barrel. There are handpulls in the bar but Fred the long-serving licensee goes into an adjacent private room to draw the beer direct from pins. The quality of the beer is excellent. Fred essentially runs the Lamb as a 'hobby pub' and it is limited to weekend opening with cash sales only.



Suitably refreshed and the canine contingent happy with their doggie water and a few treats, the walkers – on both two and four legs – slowly made their way back to Coleford via Pingry Lane, a quiet picturesque country track. Back in Coleford the assembled walkers were rewarded with a delicious home-cooked beef stew courtesy of Scoff's Coffee House.

A big thank you to Greg and Vicky of the Dog House and Scoff's Coffee House for organising the Doggy Day Out. An incredible £100 was raised for the Forest of Dean Dog Rescue that helps dogs far less fortunate than our own.

**Geoff Sandles**





## 'The Lord John' hosts Stroud CAMRA's Good Beer Guide Launch

**Stroud CAMRA launched the 2024 Good Beer Guide on an unseasonably warm and sunny Sunday 1st October at The Lord John in Stroud, which is back in the guide for the first time in 18 years.**

The pub was busy and CAMRA members turned out in force to celebrate the launch of the 51st edition of the UK's best-selling beer and pub guide. Many Stroud CAMRA members were involved in visiting and shortlisting pubs for inclusion in the guide, so this was also a celebration of their efforts, culminating in the publication of the end result.

Copies of the Good Beer Guide were available at the launch at the special members' price of £12 - a saving of £4.99.

The 2024 guide has a striking cover using the distinctive imagery, font and typography of heavy-metal band Iron Maiden, whose lead singer, Bruce Dickinson, contributes a foreword. Bruce is an avid drinker of real ale, so much so that his collaboration with Robinsons Brewery has produced one of the most well-known beers in the UK, Robinsons' Trooper.

The Guide was published by CAMRA on Thursday 28th September. This is the entry for the Lord John:

'Behind a handsome red brick and Cotswold-stone façade, Wetherspoon's sympathetic conversion of the town's former post office has produced an L-shaped bar with a south-facing walled courtyard. The pub is dominated by the large greenhouse-style glazed skylight which used to light the sorting office. The bar counter runs down the right-hand side with booths and individual high tables opposite. The rear has been designed

to resemble an old-fashioned railway carriage, complete with overhead luggage racks and a curved, boarded ceiling.'

Stroud CAMRA chose these eight pubs to be included in the guide this year:

Black Horse\* (2011) Amberley  
Crown Frampton Mansell  
Woolpack\* (2020) Slad  
Ale House Stroud  
Crown & Sceptre Stroud  
Lord John\* (2006) Stroud  
Prince Albert Stroud  
Stroud Brewery Thrupp

\*Asterisk indicates a pub back in the Guide with (in brackets) the date when it was last featured.

The self-styled 'beer-lovers' bible' is fully revised and updated each year, and this year lists 4500 pubs, bars, and clubs across the United Kingdom that serve the very best

real ale. Each entry contains a short description as well as details of regular and guest beers both local and national.

The guide is completely independent, with listings based entirely on evaluation by members of CAMRA's 200-plus local branches. The unique breweries section lists every brewery—micro, regional and national—that produces real ale in the UK, and their beers. Tasting notes for the beers, compiled by CAMRA-trained tasting teams, are also included.

Stroud CAMRA (which covers postcodes GL5, GL6 and GL10) has more than 200 members who file reports on the pubs they visit, rating them for the range and quality of their beers, as well as the welcome, service and atmosphere. At our monthly meetings, these reports are used to draw up a shortlist of pubs to be visited and evaluated for inclusion in the Good Beer Guide.

As part of this evaluation process, each shortlisted pub is visited unannounced at least three times a year, in spring, summer and winter, to see how the pub fares at

**'All Wetherspoon pubs clean the lines  
thoroughly between every beer —  
unlike so many pubs...'**



Photograph by Bill Hicks

different seasons, whether the number of beers available varies, and if the temperature and quality are consistent on a hot summer's day as well as on a cold winter's night. So every pub is assessed by three separate teams of assessors - a minimum of six different individuals. As far as possible they try to judge the quality and condition of the beer on offer - the part that is down to the licensee and the cellarman - rather than whether or not a particular beer is to their taste.

"The Lord John opened on Tuesday 14 July 1998," reports Stroud CAMRA Pubs Officer Tim Mars. "I was there on the first day. At a stroke it transformed the pub scene in Stroud, joining the Pelican (later renamed the Market Tavern), the Queen Vic and the Duke of York as standard-bearers for real ale in the town centre. Of those three, only the Queen Vic is still open. The Lord John soon earned a place in the Good Beer Guide and was featured in 2003, 2005 and 2006 before an 18-year hiatus until this year's triumphant return."

The red-brick and carved Cotswold Stone façade on Russell Street gives little indication of the Tardis-like space inside, featuring a unique purpose-designed and woven Axminster carpet (a Wetherspoon signature) and culminating in a series of booths designed to recall the compartments of an old-fashioned railway carriage, complete with overhead luggage racks and a curved, boarded ceiling. These are inspired by the pub's proximity to Stroud Railway Station

- in fact the back of the pub overlooks the station, though it is not visible from the pub itself, which terminates in a suntrap walled courtyard.

"The range and quality of real ales at the Lord John have over the years sometimes been a disappointment," according to Tim Mars, "but, since she came from the Moon Under Water in Cheltenham to take over as manager, Leah Farrel has transformed the selection of beers on offer (usually including a dark ale) and the quality has never been better. Beer temperature in the glass is spot-on at c12.5°C.

"All Wetherspoon pubs clean the lines thoroughly between every beer - unlike so many pubs and even several Stroud CAMRA Good Beer Guide entries. How do I know? Because I've been in the cellar. Like all 'spoons, they have an automated line-cleaning machine. You just plug it in, pull the handpump forward and let the gas-assisted flojet pumps do the rest.

"But that's not the really clever bit. The line-cleaning machine records every pass. And it's audited. So if a member of staff wants to cut corners and skip a line clean between beers, it will show up on the audit. "You sold 95 firkins of real ale, but the machine only records 80 line cleans." Managers who preside over this sort of malfeasance are transferred to one of the many Wetherspoon airport Gulags. As janitors."

**Tim Mars, Stroud CAMRA Pubs Officer**



## OFF WE GO AGAIN!

The 27th Tewkesbury Winter Ales Festival is on the horizon

Following the resounding success of TWAF 23 back in January, CAMRA have recently given us the go-ahead to do it all over again next year from Thurs 1st to Sat 3rd February 2024 at The Watson Hall

As you may be aware, TWAF is unusual in that our master buyer of beer, Mr Ian Mence, insists on including only those beers that can truly be called Winter Ales (brewed solely in the winter and not all year round), which is widely appreciated and is one of the reasons TWAF has always been such a success.

This year we begin with entertainment on the Friday evening in the shape of the district Rock Choir, whilst Saturday sees the return of live rugby during the afternoon after the always popular Town Band at lunchtime.

A big thank you goes to our main sponsor for this year, The Cross House Tavern (our Pub of the Year 2023). As ever though, TWAF depends massively on our ever willing band of volunteers, so please consider lending a hand. Whether you're behind the bar or behind the scenes, the camaraderie's great, it's fun to do and you get paid in beer, so what's not to like?

If you would like to get involved, please return the form on page 2 to let us know what you can do.



2024



### GOOD BEER GUIDE 2024 LISTINGS

Congratulations to the seven pubs included in next year's Good Beer Guide from the Tewkesbury region, which are:

#### Tewkesbury:

The Berkeley Arms,  
The Cross House Tavern,  
The Lower Lode  
The Nottingham Arms,  
The Royal Hop Pole,

#### Newent

The Cobblers  
The Kings Arms



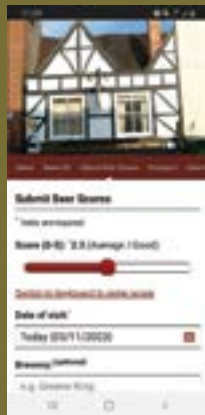
### GET SCORING

You may not realise it, but the choice of which local pubs we submit to CAMRA for inclusion in the Good Beer Guide is all down to beer scores cast online for the quality of beer in those pubs.

Which means that scoring the beer in your favourite pub is **essential** if you would like to see them in The Good Beer Guide.

The easiest way to do this is through CAMRA's 'WhatPub' App, which makes it simple to select a pub and give the beer a rating up to 5.0. You'll need your CAMRA membership number and password the first time you submit a score but only the first time. So get scoring at:  
<https://whatpub.com>

It helps the pub and it helps us!



### 2023/4 LINEUP

Unchanged apart from Chairman, Secretary & Social Secretary, this year's lineup is as follows

**Chair: Pete Adams**  
[chair@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk](mailto:chair@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk)  
**Secretary: Ian Mence**  
[secretary@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk](mailto:secretary@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk)  
**Webmaster: Ian Mence**  
[webman@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk](mailto:webman@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk)  
**Treasurer: Chris Comens**  
[treasurer@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk)  
**Membership: Bill Hunt**  
[membership@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk](mailto:membership@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk)  
**Pubs Officer: Pete Goodger**  
[pubsofficer@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk](mailto:pubsofficer@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk)  
**Social Secretary: Justin Gowthorpe**  
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**Beer Rep: Ian Mence**  
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**Cider Rep: Martin Raven**  
[cider@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk](mailto:cider@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk)  
**NBSS Co-ordinator: Mike Bristow**  
[mike@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk](mailto:mike@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk)

Keep in touch via our website  
[www.tewkesbury.camra.org.uk](http://www.tewkesbury.camra.org.uk)  
or our facebook page.

### WHAT'S ON

#### 3 Kings Beer Festival

Still a few places on the minibus this Saturday Nov 11th to the 3 Kings Beer Festival. Leave Tewkesbury 11.30, back 5pm. £10 a head. **BOOK NOW!**

#### Xmas Mystery Trip

Fancy a trip into the unknown? Sign up for our outing on Friday evening 1st December by emailing Justin at [socialsecretary@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk](mailto:socialsecretary@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk). Bus & food £20

#### Diary Dates

**Friday 1st December**

Xmas Mystery Trip

**Wednesday 13th December**  
TWAF Committee meeting

**Friday 22nd December**  
Xmas Bash - New Plough

**Thursday 4th January**  
Branch Business Meeting

**Thurs 1st - Sat 3rd Feb**  
Winter Ales Festival



**Friday  
22nd December  
New Plough**

7.30pm

**Festive Fun, Food & Ale**

Tickets

**£10** members

**£15** non-members

To book, contact Justin on  
[socialsecretary@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk](mailto:socialsecretary@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk).

**£5 deposit on booking please**

Payable to Justin, Pete or Ian

### TEWKESBURY WINTER ALES FESTIVAL 2024 - OFFER TO HELP

Please tick the sessions at which you can help

	HELPER 1			HELPER 2		
Name						
Address						
Telephone number(s)						
Email address						
			TICK HERE			TICK HERE
Set-Up	Sun 28 January: 10am - 12noon			Sun 28 January: 10am - 12noon		
Day 1	Thurs 1 February: 7pm - 11pm			Thurs 1 February: 7pm - 11pm		
Day 2	Fri 2 February: 11am - 3pm			Fri 2 February: 11am - 3pm		
	Fri 2 February: 3pm - 7pm			Fri 2 February: 3pm - 7pm		
	Fri 2 February: 7pm - 11pm			Fri 2 February: 7pm - 11pm		
Day 3	Sat 3 February: 11am - 2pm			Sat 3 February: 11am - 2pm		
	Sat 3 February: 2pm - 5pm			Sat 3 February: 2pm - 5pm		
	Sat 3 February: 5pm - 8pm			Sat 3 February: 5pm - 8pm		
Take Down	Sun 4 February: 10am - 12noon			Sun 4 February: 10am - 12noon		
Preferred work area (Please number in order of preference)	Beer	Food	Door/Steward	Beer	Food	Door/Steward

Please send completed form to Tewkesbury Winter Ales Festival, 17 Barton Mews, Barton Rd, Tewkesbury, GL20 5RP  
or email your response to: [TWAFVolunteers@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk](mailto:TWAFVolunteers@tewkesbury.camra.org.uk)





# Sponsor a Barrel



at the **27th Tewkesbury Winter Ales Festival**

Sponsor a barrel of beer of your choice for  
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Your name/logo displayed prominently on your chosen  
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Your name/logo featured on our Sponsors page in the  
Festival Programme tasting notes; and



Two free tickets to attend the preview night on Thursday  
1st (normally reserved for CAMRA members only).

## Interested?

Contact Ian Mence on [secretary@tewkkesbury.camra.org.uk](mailto:secretary@tewkkesbury.camra.org.uk)



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**TEWKESBURY WINTER ALES FESTIVAL**  
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for  
Real Ale



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(CAMRA members with membership card only)  
Fri 2nd: 11:00am - 11:00pm  
Sat 3rd: 11:00am - 8:00pm

£15 per Day  
£20 All Sessions Festival Pass  
Includes souvenir glass + £7 in beer tokens  
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# The Tegestologist

Welcome to a series all about Tegestology, the little known term for the collection of beer mats. Our man has a lot, over 40,000 to choose from, so we reckon he knows what he's talking about . . .

Welcome back to another instalment of **Beermatters**. I covered all the new breweries last issue, so this time I will show a few examples of closed breweries and their mats which I have in my collection, but before I do that, you might be interested in the collection, and how and where I keep them.

I have quite a lot - 33,500 British beer ones to be precise, plus one each from overseas breweries and a few thousand British non-beer ones pre 1965, just because I like the old simple designs. That's quite a few and I have a hierarchy of what goes where. Foreign and non-beer are in my loft in big cardboard boxes. It's dry up there and no woodworm\*

Precious mats i.e. 1930's or others known to be rare, are in CD holders or smaller boxes in the old nursery. The boys have left home now so I should be safe keeping them there, alongside oversized or odd shaped mats and regular 4" mats from breweries A to Q. Some are in resealable plastic bags with the rest standing on end rather than in piles in old shirt drawers from the officers' Mess at Brize Norton and some security drawers from the Nationwide building society when they had a revamp many years ago. Yes, I file them alphabetically. R to Z are in metal filing cabinets in the garage, previously used to store magnetic data tapes in the days before floppy disks! Even USB sticks seem dated now. At least the cabinets are recycled even if the contents have changed somewhat. I must locate that Wombles mat!



Duplicate mats go in random, easy-access places so I can swap them out to fellow collectors when possible. My problem is that all the available drawers are full, and as I have little space for more files, I may just have to start specialising (again). I had disposed of my cider mats and Irish ones a few years back, but I started over and now have over 1,000 cider and 3,000 Guinness mats. Or, maybe I can scan them all to the cloud?

I do have an understanding wife - well she tolerates them, as I was a tegestologist before we met, but then there is all the brewery enamel signs, pump clips, mirrors, playing cards...you name it. If it advertises beer I'll collect it.

I'm often asked which is my favourite or the most valuable, to which I reply: "The next new one I find". Unfortunately, like many antiques, values are falling, as there are fewer collectors and the young 'uns don't want clutter these days. I should have collected *Star Wars* advertising back in the 1970's instead.

Having said all that, my favourite is probably the 1934 Russells & Wrangham mat (left) from Malton (of All Creatures Great and Small fame). It is very old and I believe there are only four or five copies in captivity.

That one is obviously an obsolete brewery, having been taken over and closed by Cameron's in 1961. These next few mats are also from obsolete breweries, but perhaps not so long ago, so I'm sure you'll recognise them.

I'll start with the biggest brewery around in their day, and what I believe is one of the most attractive 1950's mats to be found. This beautiful mat is Cheltenham & Hereford #2,



from 1952 (the green one above). You'll recognise this as their logo and the subject of many plaques which adorn pubs in the area, as either Cheltenham Original, Cheltenham & Hereford or West Country breweries all prior to their merger with Stroud brewery in 1959. Above and right are examples from all the iterations from (in order) 1934, 1960, 1964 & 1996.

It later became Whitbread Flowers and closed in 1998. All that remains is the brewery tower and a bunch of restaurants including Brewhouse and Kitchen of course, maintaining some currency to the Brewery Quarter name.

My final two mats are of Brewpubs (below). The first is Old Swan brewery at the eponymous pub still operating on Cheltenham High St. It was a very tasty malty beer from memory, and led to many an evening session, which I could manage in my younger days, even when interest rates were 14%. It was a Whitbread home-brewhouse, all the rage in 1983, but had closed by 1987. Pictured below left is their one and only mat.

The final Mayhems mat is also a solitary example from a local brewpub which started in 1992 in Apperley. The Farmers Arms still operates as a Wadworth's house, but I can't remember if Mayhems was a Waddy's operation or if they took over after brewing ceased. Anyway, the brewhouse which stands in the middle of the carpark alongside the main road is now a B&B room.

That's it for now. More next spring all being well.

**Russell Murfitt**



\*woodworm... the scourge of many, especially ephemera collectors. They don't eat one at a time, but bore through a whole pile from top to bottom. Religious beermats (holey) are not desirable. Regular inspection is the answer, plus the occasional plastic bag as a barrier to downwards munching.



# THROTTLE CLUB

Turks Head Regulars Out Trying The Local Establishments - Casually Lapping Up Beer

The 'Throttle Club' is a social drinking boys and girls club with only one rule: Behave!

The Throttle Club members decided that it being a wet and windy October day, what better place to travel to than Weston super Mare! An excellent day for a paddle.

We met at The Turks on the Sunday morning at 10am. A quick pint of 'Giggle and Titter' by Parkway then off to the train station. There were eight of us in total, so off we went. There was a quick change at Bristol Temple Meads and in no time at all, we were in Weston. Being from Gloucester we headed for the seafront where everybody knows most pubs are located. Ten minutes later we had lost Batman who had gone to buy an ice cream (in October!) then into The Brunel.

Now we had to behave in there, because it being a 'Lounge' they consider themselves posh and actually serve single women... it's good to get away occasionally and see how civilized folk behave in polite company. The Loungers are funny old places, lots of huge lamp shades



and paintings of dodgy looking people from the 1940s. Alas NO REAL ALE! So we tried Brixton Reliance pale ale. It's what I once knew as keg rubbish, but has now been remarketed as 'Craft Beer'. More like 'Crafty Buggers' at £5.95 a pint and only 4.2% ABV. Some of our fellow travellers back home drink our very own Cider, aptly named 'Dockers Dribble' at 8.2% ABV and at £4 a pint you can even get change from a fifty pound note after a night out (and a hospital visit).

Next we headed for the back streets to Grove Village. Village? It was a bunch of Victorian back to backs, very nice, but not exactly villagey. So The Brit Bar. Quite famous locally, music on Sundays outside (under cover) and plenty of ale. i.e. Homegrown

Golden 5%, Oakham 30 Citra, Idaho Smash 4.8% - by Good Chemistry Brewing. No me neither. The Fresh Standard Horse Brass 4% and Gloucester Brewery Docks Dark 5.2%.

Now I know we were out of the county and supposedly trying new tastes but we ordered one of each including Docks Dark which is brewed 4 minutes walk from where we normally sup. And they were all lovely and at £4.50 a pint, more than us poor Glaston folk are used to, but never mind.

Next stop, the Fat Head Brewery across the road. You can call me fussy but I thought the place a bit wet, you know, water on the floor,

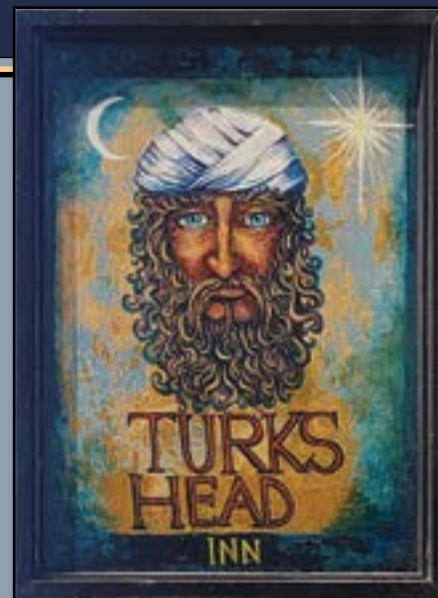
stepping over pipes to get to the loo etc. It just didn't seem very tidy for a pub, when Hairy Simon pointed out the name 'Fat Head BREWERY'... Ah ha! The clue's in the name. It was a brewery, of course, with men making beer and slopping things around, so all was forgiven. It's worth a visit just to see the workings of a small brewery. They

do the crafty stuff and ales. The ales were lovely and at £4.50. Unfortunately by now I had lost my pen and didn't write their names down so you will have to go and see for yourself. Their collectors card at eight stamps and get a free pint is an incentive to get bladdered.

It seems we then with no whistle needed ambled along the road to The Black Cat micropub (see photo of Christine (blonde bob) the whistle blower and some other lady one of our crew had acquired!)

It seems we managed to catch the right trains back and someone helpfully woke me up as they were calling "Glaston, the next stop is Glaston."

Peter Sheehy



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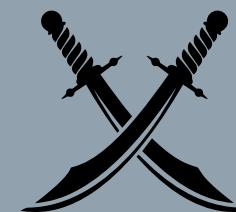
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# Tall Tales from the Cider Shed...

**Back in the early 80s there was a rather famous person who lived in the area, a couple of villages away in Ashleworth.**

With its village green, Manor House and Tithe Barn, Ashleworth could be described as a quintessentially English village. But every village should have a good pub and Ashleworth certainly had a good pub.

Situated on the banks of the river Severn, *The Boat* was an iconic pub, probably one of the best pubs in the country. You only had to look at the awards on the walls to realise it.

At the time of this story Auntie Rene and Auntie Sybil would have been pouring pints while the locals munched on their bread and cheese. Those were the days my friends!

So who was this famous celebrity you might ask? Well it was none other than Charlie Watts, the drummer of probably the most famous band in the world, The Rolling Stones!

I had been told that Charlie had come to Flat Farm to get some cider before, but I had never actually met him. On that particular Sunday I was doing some work for a change when these two people came through the gate. I thought it was Charlie but wasn't too sure.

It must have been around September time as father had some Plum Jerkin on the go and the two of them were interested in buying some, but father kept that for his friends to drink so there was none for sale. (*Not even to a Rolling Stone? Top man! Ed.*)

So they tried the cider and I started filling their bottles up. As I filled the second bottle I noticed that one of them had some funny shoes on. This must be Charlie Watts, I thought.

So, nervously and in my squeaky voice I asked 'Are you in a band?' to which he replied, 'Yes I play drums in The Rolling Stones. You must have heard of us?'

And without thinking as normal, and in an even squeakier voice, I blurted out 'Yes but you were before my time!' Not the brightest thing I've ever said.

Well what happened next, a couple of years later, I buy a stones LP called 'Undercover'

and the rest, as they say, is history.

However, Mr Watts can't have been too impressed by Mr Squeaky's knowledge of The Rolling Stones, as he never came back to Flat Farm to buy any more cider!

**Dereck Hartland**



*Currently closed since severe flooding in 2020, the Boat Inn Ashleworth was first licenced in the 18th Century. Amazingly, the Jelf family ran this Severnside pub for over 350 years until Irene (Auntie Rene) sadly passed away in 2001.*



*Compliments of the season to all our customers and Tippler readers!*

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**Old Spot**

**Ormond**

**Plough**

**Ram Inn**

**Retreat**

**Ship Inn**

**Snooty Fox**

**Star**

**Strand**

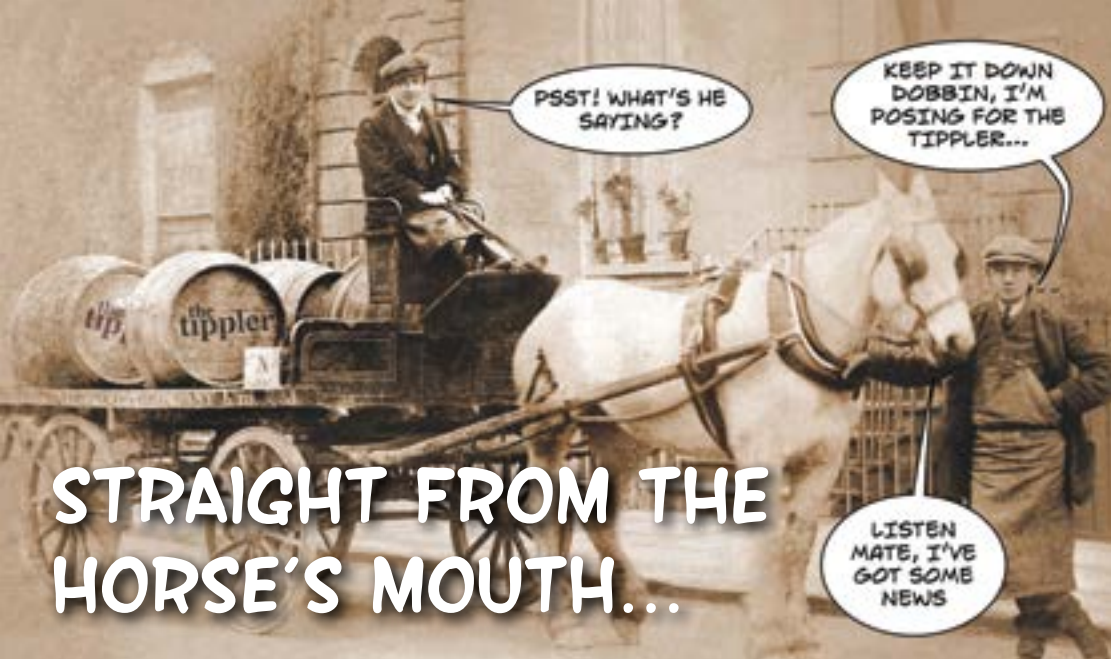
**Swan**

**Tivoli**

**York**

- 1 Find the listed Gloucestershire hosteleries in the grid (open before the COVID lockdown).
- 2 They can be horizontal, vertical or diagonal, forward or back.
- 3 The unused letters spell out a significant beer-related technology event from 1688

Send your answer in ASAP to [chris@thetippler.co.uk](mailto:chris@thetippler.co.uk) and win ONE of FOUR BREWERY TOUR tickets available to lucky winners.



STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH...

## BREWERY NEWS

*We're suffering a bit this edition for brewery news, if you have any, help us out and send it in!*

**Clavell & Hind** has moved to Elmstone Hardwick just west of Cheltenham. This puts

the brewery on the same site as its new owners, Cellar Supplies. A brewery taproom is now open with views into the brewery and across open countryside. The new brewery has outdoor seating and garden. The opening hours are Friday 3pm to 11pm and Saturday

Noon to 11pm. Events and food are planned for the near future. Eventually the facility will be available for private events, and pre-booked group brewery tours are also in the pipeline. See feature on page 54.



**Fresh Standard Brew Co.** is keeping its taproom open all the way up to Christmas Eve. After a short hibernation, they then reopen/reawaken with a bang on

the 1st March 2024. We got drunk dry at our reawakening this March, so we hope to be more prepared this year. This March and April, we were ripping out and installing a new brewery, so look out for new beers in the spring.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP**

[chris@thetippler.co.uk](mailto:chris@thetippler.co.uk)

## WE NEED NEWS!

If you have any brewery news at all to share then please let the editor know.

Breweries are starting up, being refurbished, taken over, coming and going, being bought out, merging with others, and we want to know all about them. It only takes a few lines to the editor and he'll do the rest!

# Tewkesbury Brewery

## The new kid on the block

Tewkesbury's newest brewery, the eponymous **Tewkesbury Brewery** has been quietly making a name for itself in several CAMRA beer festivals, its latest accolade being the 'Dark Beer of the Festival' at the Tamworth event in September.

"I'm delighted," said Darryl Tanner, owner of the brewery. "We started this up a while back but COVID got in the way, but rather than shelving things, we used the time for essential research, flavour profiles, suppliers, distribution, just all the things that you have to work on to get things to tick along properly, it turned out to be a blessing in disguise. It gave us that time to really concentrate and work towards a proper start date.

"The fact that our beers have started to appear at beer festivals is another great

benefit to us. It means that drinkers and CAMRA members from further afield are getting to see the brand and try it. I have to say I am really pleased with the progress. The Tamworth award was especially pleasing and the CAMRA guys from up there came down especially to award the plaque. I must thank Laurence at the Cross House Tavern in Tewkesbury for hosting that little event, it was much appreciated by all who attended.

"Speaking of appreciating things, I am delighted to say that one of our beers will be on the list at the brilliant Tewkesbury Winter Ales Festival and I am looking forward to featuring there as it's one of the biggest of its kind in the country. I hope we'll get plenty of positive feedback, which always helps to us to brew the best beer we can."



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## STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH...

### PUB NEWS



The Nottingham Arms

**The Nottingham Arms**, in Tewkesbury continues its ascent on the list of the best local pubs in the county. Rachel the hard working real ale loving landlady is delighted to see the pub appear in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2024. It has also been awarded the coveted Cask Marque certificate.

**The Haw Bridge** has re-opened on a part-time basis albeit limited hours, they open from Thursday through to Sunday. It's been closed for around five years so great to see them back on the map.

**The Montpellier Wine Bar** reopened on 8th September following extensive renovation.

**The Restoration**, Cheltenham's oldest pub on the High Street, now appears to be closed.

**The Sudeley Arms** (Prestbury Road) also appears to be closed.

**The Royal Oak** in Prestbury is under new management.

**Jolly Brewmaster** is Cheltenham Cider Pub of the Year

**The Cheltenham and Gloucester Beer Week** took place from the 11th to 18th September. The Tippler is given to understand that it ran successfully with a number of Cheltenham pubs hosting events. **The Cheltenham Motor Club** Has continued its astonishing record of Club of the Year awards and after winning the Cheltenham CAMRA award went on to the South West regional heats. Once again it won the South West Club of the Year competition. The CMC then went forward to the Super Regional stage of the competition.

It has now been selected as one of the best four clubs in the UK along with the other contenders for the crown the full list is:

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**Dobcross Band Social Club, Greater**

**Manchester.**

**Marden Village Club, Kent.**

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# Time for a Change

By Greg Pilley, founder & MD of Stroud Brewery

## Tough times? How about a new approach that's win-win all round?

How's life as a publican these days? Fun, hectic or a constant challenge to increase income and reduce expenditure (or all three)? Whilst price discounts, special offers or buying cheaper options are often used to balance the books, there's an approach which can attract more customers, reduce overheads and even embrace your personal values. Sound too good to be true? Read on...

When the pandemic faded, we all breathed a sigh of relief and concentrated on getting 'back to normal' (wouldn't that have been nice?). But ever since, the challenges have been non-stop: energy prices, cost-of-living crisis, food supply, bank interest rates....you can name the rest.

On top of that, news bulletins regale us about the effects of extreme weather on communities, plastic pollution and other examples of environmental breakdown. You can either get depressed or take the bull by the horns and start to do something.

This was our decision in the early days of Stroud Brewery. I'd spent time working in wildlife conservation in Africa, followed by five years studying the contribution alcoholic drinks make to that continent's community life (dream job, huh?). When I settled in Stroud and resurrected the town's brewing heritage, that experience made me determined to make the brewery a hub for community activity



Greg Pilley

**'...making your pub more energy efficient will reduce bills, re-using resources will save money.'**

and honour the age-old role that pubs play in community life.

Stroud is well known for doing things differently. Business models incorporating sustainability were virtually unheard of back then. However, my background plus Stroud's community spurred me on to look at reducing our environmental impact. We became the first UK brewery to be certified as both organic and a B Corporation – the latter is a global mark for businesses meeting tough sustainable and ethical standards.

Our sustainability achievements have been recently recognised and rewarded at both regional and national levels. The SoGlos Gloucestershire Business Awards 2023 named us as Green Business of the Year, and we won the Sustainable Pub Award in the Great British Pub Awards run by The Morning Advertiser.

We were over the moon to receive these from our peers, and it's exciting to see hospitality enthusiastically embracing its environmental responsibility to the point when awards include a dedicated category.

But what about my promise at the start of this article to help you improve business and increase trade? It might not surprise you that my suggestion – based on Stroud Brewery's experience – is to make your pub greener. You probably think sustainability is about saving the Amazonian rainforests and polar bears on melting ice-caps. But it's far more focused upon you and your community: making your

pub more energy efficient will reduce energy bills, re-using resources at will save money and, best of all, promoting your sustainability credentials will attract customers.

It's true that people are going out less at the moment but when they do, they're more discerning about where and on what they spend their money. Numerous market research reports demonstrate how consumers prefer to buy from businesses they can see are reducing their environmental impact, and on food and drink that is not only contributing towards tackling climate change but also supporting their local producers and farmers.

Thinking sustainably also allows a pub to utilise that old saying 'What goes round, comes round'. We employ local people, 70% of our suppliers are local, and at least 70% of the beer we sell is consumed within 50 miles of the brewery. As a result, our money flows into the local economy and we see much of it returning as trade – both from customers and local businesses.

Our steadfastness in mixing business with our values rescued us during the pandemic. Like most hospitality businesses, we had to close and the devastating drop in income meant we stared closure in the face. Local people were our knights in shining armour and raised over £114,000 in a crowdfunding appeal that helped to keep us afloat. This is how much they value us as part of their community, stemming from our sustainability commitments and the effort we put into supporting what's important to them.

So – have I convinced you? If these benefits sound appealing, have a look at our new 'Sustainability in Pubs: Getting Started' guide. We understand how the whole sustainability thing can seem daunting when you don't know anything about it and are too busy running your pub to research it. We've focused the guide on 10 straightforward actions that anyone can take, such as introducing LED lightbulbs and asking your staff for ideas. Download your copy from our website [www.stroudbrewery.co.uk/people-and-planet](http://www.stroudbrewery.co.uk/people-and-planet).

Sustainability really is a win-win all round: enabling you to reduce costs, minimise environmental impact and future-proof your business.





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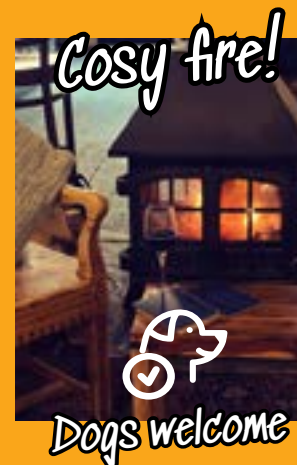
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# The Pub Whisperer

In a new occasional series about local pub life, entitled 'The Pub Whisperer', we're looking for readers to make regular contributions even if they're new to writing. Bob Jeffrey, pub enthusiast, historian and social commentator, begins the idea with some of his tales.

## Youngsters' Induction into pub culture

It's a relatively quiet late night Sunday afternoon in the Rotunda. As usual there is some music in the background, football on the three TVs, and a very slim greyhound wandering around and only five people in the back bar and a dozen around the bar. In the step between the two bars two eight or nine year old boys sit on stools with a shelf holding their drinks, their crisps and a mobile leaning against the wall with an adventure cartoon playing emitting a third set of quiet narrative. They could be seen as sitting at the bar, but are too young to do it. Their dad appears from the main bar and asks if they want a 'wee' and a drink, then escorts one lad down to the toilets in the basement. It looks so natural, as if this happens very regularly. They are the young regulars of today and imbibing pub culture at an early age. It looks so natural. Instead of taking a cigarette break outside they leave to kick a ball up against a wall and, like other regulars, leave their drinks for their return. After a while their father joins them for a cigarette. Let's hope they skip that part of the cultural assimilation. However, it disintegrates as the boys start a playing with their football in the centre of the pub and none of the

**'They are the young regulars of today and imbibing pub culture at an early age. It looks so natural.'**

family members, including their mother who has just arrived, stops them. Are we in a new culture where the pub has become not only the drinkers' playground, but also the kids playground and a customer helps them carry out neck passes?

## Family Time in the pub

A lone child's scooter stands waiting for its two-year-old owner to use it. She has been scooting up and down in a corridor to the loos and back again, urged on by her family. She leaves it and returns to the table and a few minutes later says she is hungry, and her mother says: "Yes it's time to go." Earlier, before the small child and her mother arrived, a male member of the family was lecturing two boys from the family

aged about none or ten. "If you are grounded, you will have to accept it and take your punishment. Is that understood?" It appears very probable that he is an absent father meeting in the pub with his 'family' for a drink in the early evening. Is the pub becoming the neutral ground for split families to meet and work through their separated relationship? Why not? It is now a third place (alongside work and home) for people to meet and solve problems in a neutral space.

## The Doctors Group and the 6-year-old boy

At least eight medics take control of a large table and a curved settle in a local backstreet pub. They discuss recent operations and then laugh as some of them describe medical esoteric issues and events. They laugh loudly at times over work experiences.

They are joined by more members and some leave after an hour or so. About an hour and a half into the social, another member arrives with his six-year-old son, buys him a juice and a bottle of beer for himself, which they both drink from the neck of the bottle whereas his colleagues drink pints of ale.

One wonders what on earth is going on. For a start, why is a six-year-old in a busy pub at 7pm? How do his colleagues understand this action and how much do they feel they must constrain their behaviour? The father, who is over 40, sips his bottle slowly and chats to his child as well caressing him from time to time. The discourses break up with one person nearest the father talking to him and two other pairs chat to each other. The joyful camaraderie is dissipated and then a woman joins the group and diverts the father's conversation with the person next to the child and he is left talking to his son. Is this a punishment for the father's intrusive entry?



The guy he was talking to leaves and the woman is left to talk to him and his child as the father carries on stroking his child's hair. He then tries to explain to his child something about their subject matter and the child joins in. She uses this intervention to get back to talking to the group and the father is back to sipping his bottle and talking to his child alone. However, a colleague sat to his right acts socially and engages him. But within a minute the colleague is enthusiastically engaged with all his other colleagues and the father is left chatting to his child again and checking his posts on his mobile phone. He tries to gain attention by pulling out a drawer in the old table, but it doesn't work as his colleagues continue with their adult conversation. He leaves with his son after half an hour.

Are there occasions when children are not so 'welcome'?

**Bob Jeffrey**

**WE NEED  
YOUR HELP**

**chris@thetippler.co.uk**

## WE NEED NEWS!

If you have any pub news at all to share (starting up, being refurbished / taken over etc), then please let the editor know.

Similarly, breweries are coming and going, starting up, being bought out, merging with others, and we want to know all about them. It only takes a few lines to the editor and he'll do the rest!







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## CAPTION COMPETITION

Sharpen your pencil, as well as your wits, and come up with a suitable caption for this rather unusual pub's window display.



This bare-bellied chap, is another silent pub resident overhearing many a yarn, must have been witness to plenty of pint and leg pulling in his time.

What's he got to say about the goings on in this Gloucestershire pub and real ale scene?

Thanks go to Laurence and the staff at the Cross House Tavern for the use of image of this fine fat friend.



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NOTE: Judges decisions are final and winners will be chosen due to acerbic wit and hilarity.



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[www.thetippler.co.uk](http://www.thetippler.co.uk)





## Lookout He's a Bathamophiliac!

**There must be a specialised name for my passion. I'm already a confirmed labeorphilist (collector of beer bottles) and tegestologist, but is there a word to describe my obsessive devotion to one particular brewery? Might I suggest Bathamitis or Bathamophilia?**

The symptoms are, thankfully, untreatable and I suffer long periods of withdrawal with a strong urge to visit the Black Country to seek the reassurance and sustenance of the expertise of the products of (the somewhat alliterative) Daniel Batham at the Bull and Bladder in Brierley Hill. Living in the Forest of Dean I have learnt that long periods of abstinence from drinking Bathams Best Bitter and Mild only makes the affection and devotion stronger. It is indeed a strange and, to some, bewildering condition but the eventual reward of supping a pint or two of 'Bathums' accompanied by the culinary delights of a pork pie, cheese black pudding and onion 'cobs' or a bag of proper pig hair encrusted pork scratchings make the wait worthwhile. The simplest pleasures in life can often be the most rewarding.

For those unfamiliar with this legendary Black Country institution, Bathams Brewery was established in 1877 and is now in the capable family hands of the sixth generation of the Batham family. There are currently a dozen Batham tied houses, scattered around the Black Country with two country pubs near Kidderminster at Shenstone (Plough Inn) and Chaddesley Corbett (Swan Inn). The brewery



**Another Bathamophiliac, the late, great John Bonham, (in long coat) drummer in the mighty Led Zeppelin (probably) swilling a pint of best.**

also supply a limited number of free houses. Sadly, none of these extend to Gloucestershire, the nearest outlet probably being the Huntsman Inn at Kempley Green Street to the north of Upton on Severn. My holy grail of ales have reached into Gloucestershire in the past, my last sightings were at the Jolly Brewmaster in Cheltenham and, for a while, it was 'guest beer' at the now closed Parrot Inn in the town's North Place. But it remains as 'rare as hen's teeth' in the county.

But that surely is the attraction. Absence or abstinence makes the heart go fonder as the saying goes. Perhaps it would be a retrograde step if 'Bathums' were to become a regular guest beer in the pubs of Gloucestershire, competing with other ales, the quality could not be guaranteed. Besides, the brewery, attached to the Vine Inn or Bull and Bladder, in Delph Road, is operating to full



capacity and such is the demand for Bathams Bitter some pubs can turn over 54-gallon Hogsheads.

The task to visit every Batham pub is challenging as their portfolio of tied houses tends to change over the years. There have been recent acquisitions in Oldswinford (the Bird in Hand) and Hagley (the King Arthur). Of interest is that Batham's historically owned the Bird in Hand, but was subsequently sold to Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries way back in 1940. In October 2002, the family brewers bought the Giler Arms at Pentrefoelas near Bettwys-y-Coed in Wales. I once made

a lengthy deviation from where we were staying in Chester simply to sup a pint of truly 'Bostin' Bathums' at the Giler Arms only to find it didn't open at dinner time. A long journey with absolutely no reward... and an unhappy and perplexed wife in the passenger seat. Batham's have since disposed of the Giler Arms. Fortunately, my wife has not yet disposed of me.

In 1991, Bathams won the CAMRA Champion Beer of Britain in the Bitter class at the Great British Beer Festival. The current Good Beer Guide describes the beer as a "4.3% pale yellow, fruity, sweetish beer, with a dry, hoppy finish. A good, light refreshing beer." The sweetness is apparently achieved by adding glucose sugars into the copper. A brewing process that may be disconcerting to devotees of the full mash. The excellent Mild Ale at 3.5% is described as a "fruity, dark brown mild with a malty sweetness and a roast malt finish." Then there's the seasonal XXX Delph Strong Ale, a cracking 6.5% winter ale, which should be available now.

**Geoff Sandles**

## THE INN AT FOSSEBRIDGE



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# DEAF BOY WANDERIN' JOHN

Sitting in the pub one night, we said to our favourite deaf wanderer 'Beer's good tonight, go on, 'ave a drop'. So he went off and walked to Adelstrop. Anyway here's the story of the misheard instruction.

**Do you remember Adelstrop? If you were educated in the 1960s, of course you do. Edward Thomas' famous poem was part of the O-Level English Literature curriculum at the time.**

This memorable five-mile walk starts at The Fox Inn, Lower Oddington, near Stow-on-the-Wold. I once knew it as a small village pub, but it has now been massively expanded into a hotel/restaurant with amazing food and an exceptional range of craft beers, the highlight for me being Timothy Taylor's Landlord.

Reluctantly leaving the luxurious comforts of the pub behind, I headed for the nearby A438, Stow to Chipping Norton Road and walked carefully alongside it, downhill to a railway bridge. Looking over the parapet I gazed down at what once was the location of Adelstrop Station on the Worcester to Oxford line.

Of course, Dr Beeching (if a rail enthusiast, BOO now) obviously axed such an important literary spot in 1964, but the station master's house remains a private dwelling. I suggest that you, like Edward Thomas, 'pause unwontedly', and transport yourself back to

a summer's day in 1914, six weeks before the outbreak of the war that swept this time and way of life away forever. Tragically, Thomas was killed at the Battle of Arras in April 1917.

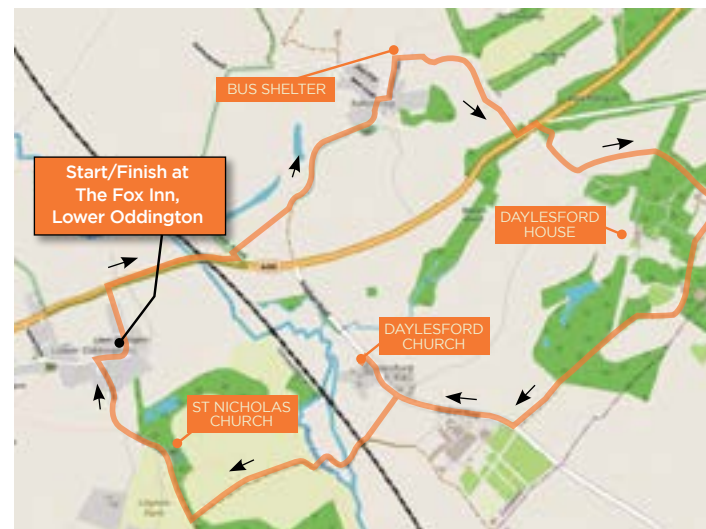
Wiping away the tears (for who could not feel lachrymose?) I headed for the bucolic delight that is Adelstrop Park. A quintessentially English landscape laid out in 1787 by Humphry Repton, one of Capability Brown's more able apprentices. Needless to say, if Thomas had got off that train and wandered into the park, he would have been compelled by its sheer beauty to have written another poem in praise of this area.

As I strolled between the lake and the cricket pitch, I came across a chap fishing, pursuing his own version of a rural idyll, watching a fishing float with intense concentration. It turned out to be Courtney Moore Lately, writer and wordsmith, not to mention raconteur and wit. We passed the time of day, in some confusion it has to be said, and praised the beauty and peace of the park. Finally, fed up with that nonsense I strolled on uphill, passing St Mary's Church to a unique bus shelter. Here I rested on an original G.W.R. station bench, positioned under

the Adelstrop Station sign and, whilst I paused there, read the poem engraved on a brass plaque attached to the middle of the bench.

After posing for the mandatory photograph, I headed uphill out of the hamlet turning right into a wood and eventually re-crossing the A436 and walking along the verge, picking up a footpath that leads into the Daylesford Estate. The path winds through various stables, outbuildings etc., of Daylesford House, home to Mr and Mrs J.C.B. (*Lord and Lady Bamford to us lesser mortals* - Ed). The route is very-well marked as 'blots' on the landscape, such as walkers, are not encouraged to wander from the very straight and narrow.

The next notable stop is Daylesford Church. On entering the churchyard I saw an urn and memorial to Warren Hastings, who restyled the church in 1816. One of my past wanderings took me to the town of Hastings, New Zealand, named after the same person - the phrase 'a small world' doesn't even touch it. Hastings was a real-life rags-to-riches character, and the exterior of his church is well worth a perusal,



with features that remind you of Tolkien's Lord of the Rings buildings.

The walk now went into reverse for a short distance, re-passing a telephone box, leading to a track that bends towards the nearby River Evenlode, a tributary of the River Thames.

I paused on the metal-framed bridge and experienced the sheer joy of being alive, idly watching the dragonflies

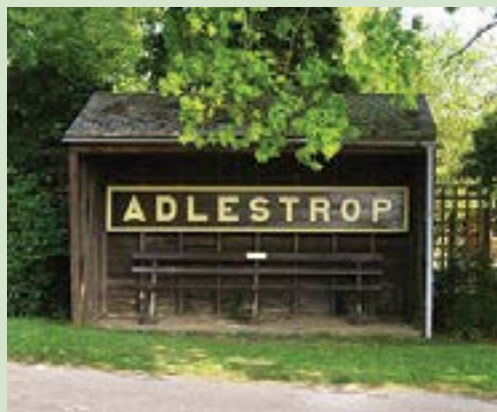
and butterflies gad in and out amongst the bullrushes. I progressed up the slope towards St Nicholas Church, Oddington, proudly surmounting the gentle hilly ridge. The church is usually open and should not be missed. On the north wall of the nave is a fantastic medieval wall painting, purported to be the largest surviving 'Doom' painting in the UK. It has nothing to do with that famous beery sandbar in Cornwall, but everything to do with the Last Judgement and the Seven Deadly Sins. Look for a scale replica of the complete painting, feel awed and, if over-indulgent, be afraid: be very afraid.

After that brush with medieval beliefs, it is comforting to know that at the end of the church lane is Lower Oddington and the Fox where you enjoy some of the current Deadly Sins and remember an outstanding walk through some of England's most

'...feel awed, and, if over-indulgent, be afraid; be very afraid.'



The Fox Inn, Lower Oddington



The Station Bench, Adelstrop



The Doom painting, St Nicholas Church



## The Plough in Prestbury

Prestbury village is about two miles out of Cheltenham town centre and is much older than Cheltenham, dating back to Norman times. It was on the route from Winchcombe to Gloucester which crossed Cleve Hill and was used by Royalists and Roundheads during the Civil War. Prestbury is supposedly the most haunted village in England, but I have yet to see a ghost although I have walked through the churchyard in the dark to get to the Plough on numerous occasions and particularly on Halloween. The most famous ghost is the Black Abbot whose wanderings particularly occur on three special occasions, Christmas, Easter and All Saints days.

The Plough is a small 17th Century thatched pub behind St Mary's Church. The pub sells cask ale out of barrels and has various ciders and a selection of keg beers. It has two small rooms, including a tap room with an enormous fireplace which is a joy to sit by in the cold weather. There is also a garden room that can be used for special functions and another cosy room for the use of small groups. It has an extensive garden which was once an orchard (there are still apple trees in situ) and a boules pitch. Also, children have been catered for with a play area. The food is classic pub fare – fish and chips, burgers, homemade pies etc.

Paul Gibbons, the licensee, was in the motor trade prior to taking over the Plough. Eight years ago, Paul and Emma used this pub as their local, already having taken over the Hewlett in 2014. When the previous publicans at the Plough decided to leave, they looked to Emma and Paul as the next custodians of this pub. Since taking the helm, they have both worked extremely hard to enhance this pub's

good reputation further, broadening the offer whilst maintaining the pub's much loved tradition. Paul is in charge of the kitchen and is a good cook. In addition to running two pubs, Emma and Paul sit on the Cheltenham and Gloucester Beer Week Committee.

The Plough is very much a community pub and using the facilities are the Choir and Bell Ringers from St Mary's Church, the Chamber of Commerce, a folk group and Prestbury Page Turners (a book club) to name but a few; dogs are also welcome. Emma and Paul hold two festivals a year (one beer and one cider).

A month or so ago, they won an award given by Punch Pubs & Co. Ltd., (formerly Punch Taverns) in the competition to be 'Publicans of the Year'. To be selected out of about 1300 pubs in the country is a massive achievement. They were judged on the character of the pub, the history and the amount of community support they provided. Clive Chesser, the CEO of Punch, made the final decision. I congratulate them on their success.

These are difficult times for publicans and Paul and Emma have put their hearts and souls into running a pub that their community loves and feels at home in. Long may it continue!

**Veronica Emary**



## 45 Years of Fundraising – and a lot of beer!

The 11th March 1979 was the day that the 'Young Friends of Cheltenham Samaritans' held their first meeting and decided to organise events to raise money for, and publicise, the work of Cheltenham Samaritans.

Amazingly, nearly 45 years later they are still going and still have a couple of the founding members as part of their group. Since 2006, their primary method of fundraising has been to organise beer festivals. They organised 15 summer beer festivals at the Old Patesians in Leckhampton, but in the last few years have moved to running smaller, bi-annual, niche craft beer festivals in a church – the amazingly updated St Philips & St James (Pip & Jims) in Leckhampton.

To celebrate their 45th anniversary, The Friends of Cheltenham Samaritans (they dropped the 'Young' many years ago) are delighted to present their fifth Craft Beer Festival to be held in this stunning location in February 2024. There will be two sessions:

**Friday 16th: 16:30 – 22:00 (last orders 21:30)**  
**Saturday 17th: 13:00 – 18:30 (last orders 18:00)**

Each session will be limited to 225 people and at each session there will be at least ten keg beers available, including many CAMRA approved key kegs, covering a whole range of different styles (appropriate for the season) from a plethora of top-class breweries. There will also be a small range of ciders, wines, and soft drinks. It is planned that the beer list for the two sessions will be different.

A small range of cold food, including vegetarian options, will also be served, but we cannot allow food brought in from outside to be consumed on the premises.

Tickets are £8.00 and include a branded festival half pint glass and beer list. A limited range of 'early bird' tickets are available at just £6.00. 'Weekender' tickets are also available – when you book either Friday or Saturday sessions, you will receive a code giving you the option of adding the other session for just £4.00. All prices are also subject to Eventbrite booking fees.

All monies raised from this festival go to support the running of Cheltenham Samaritans.

**February 16th & 17th 2024**

**Tickets £8.00**  
 (Earlybird £6.00)  
 (Weekender deals available)

**Pip & Jims**

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# The ART of Beer

After last quarter's lesson in gin and beer, we asked our incognito Man of the Arts for 'More history please, but it's got to include beer'. So cast your mind back 150 years or so. . .

On a chilly New Year's Eve in 1875, so the story goes, a Bass employee was instructed to forget the New Year celebrations and instead be the first in what was to become an overnight queue outside the Trade Mark Registry in London.

A new Trade Mark Registration Act was to come into effect the next day, 1st January 1876, and Bass were keen to get the first of the new Trade Mark Registrations. In fact Bass got not only the first Trade Mark for their red triangle, but also the second for their red diamond (for their stronger ales).

Bass was a pioneer in the use of marketing to grow their brand not only at home but abroad, and it worked brilliantly. They spread across Europe and the red triangle became immortalised by none other than the French Impressionist Edouard Manet, in 'Bar au Folies-Bergère' in 1882 (shown below).

Appearing bottom right is none other than a bottle of Bass. These days, this would be seen as an early example of product placement. Aston Martin and James Bond? Way before that it was Bass and the Folies-Bergère.

## Why Bass?

Apparently members of the Jockey Club and English bookmakers used to congregate at the Folies-Bergère bars and Bass was brought in especially for them.

So it was a sign of the sophistication of the clientele and proof if needed that the Bass marketing department was working wonders (I seem to remember Double Diamond also did that about a hundred years later).

Bass continued to be prominent in the bars of Paris, as evidenced thirty years later by another rather well known artist, one Pablo

Picasso, towards the end of his Cubist period in 1913/14. He produced a number of paintings with 'Bass' in the title, such as 'Bottle of Bass' and 'Pipe, Bottle of Bass, Dice'.

I imagine the uncharitable among you will be looking at these paintings and wondering what he was on to see a bottle of beer quite like that. So did much of the art establishment of the time. Contemporary art critics saw his art as 'degenerate', 'odd', and a product of 'diseased nerves'. But he defied them all by going on to become one of the most influential artists of the 20th century. Critics, what do they know?

## Picasso's last words

Picasso was indeed well known for his love of the strong stuff - absinthe in particular (*The Green Fairy*, so called because of its reputation for inciting madness), and his last words were reputedly 'Drink to me, drink to my health, you know I can't drink anymore', before going to bed and dying in his sleep.

Which reminds me of the 1973 Wings song 'Picasso's last words (Drink to me)' on the *Band on the Run* album - written by McCartney in response to a question from Dustin Hoffman at a party in Jamaica (Hoffman was there filming *Papillon*). 'Can you really write a song about anything?', asked Hoffman, before showing him Picasso's last words and challenging him to write a song about them there and then. Which, being Paul McCartney, he did.

So fish out a bottle of Bass, ask Alexa to play *Band on the Run* and get creative. Now there's a good idea.

**Pintsy**



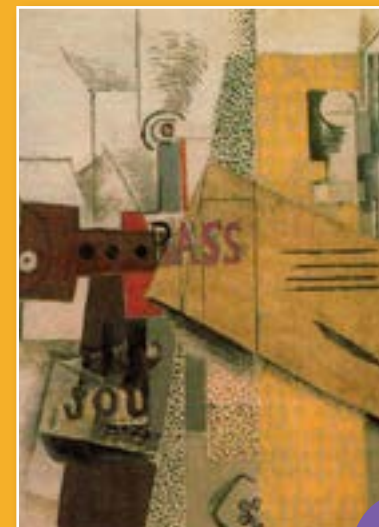
Above: Bottle of Bass (1914)  
Below: Pipe, Bottle of Bass, Dice (1913)  
Both by Pablo Picasso.



Bar au Folies-Bergere by Edouard Manet (1882)



The first two Trade Marks registered in England, the Bass red triangle and diamond. The eagle-eyed will spot that this Bass No 1 Barley Wine was bottled locally in Stroud at the Stroud Brewery.





# Gloucestershire Brewery Begins Exciting New Chapter

**On Friday 10 November 2023, much-loved brewery, Clavell and Hind, opened the doors to its brand new a taproom at its new Elmstone Hardwick home.**

Named after notorious local highwaymen, John Clavell and James Hind, the brewery has been a firm favourite with Gloucestershire beer drinkers since it was established in 2017. However, two years ago the firm was on the brink of collapse and the future of its beers – including Outlaw, Coachman and Blunderbuss – looked bleak.

Not wanting to see the loss of such a well-loved Gloucestershire brand, local businessman Peter Cassidy bought the firm in April 2022. He has subsequently shored up its future by investing in top brewing facilities and the taproom at the new Elmstone Business Park site.

The taproom will open its doors to the public at on Fridays from 4pm & Saturday from 12pm (Please check social media for other opening hours & food) and visitors will be able to sample all the brewery's top tipples, as well as its very latest creation and a selection of guest products. Going forward, the facility will also be available for hire for private events, and brewery tours will be on offer for large groups (pre-booking required).

Mr Cassidy said: 'We are hugely excited to be welcoming the public to the new home of Clavell and Hind. A lot of work has been going on behind the scenes to get everything ready and I think that people will be delighted with what we have done to secure the future of this much-loved Gloucestershire Beer.

'We have invested in new equipment to ensure we can meet production demands and our team are working on exciting new products. We are also developing a programme of events and an exciting food offer to ensure the taproom becomes a destination of choice.

'For those wanting to try our products outside of the taproom, it is available in pubs across the county via our distribution partner,

Cellar Supplies Cheltenham. We also offer boxed and bottle versions for takeout.'

To find out more, book events and/or pre-order beers, visit [clavellandhind.co.uk](http://clavellandhind.co.uk) or visit our facebook & Instagram pages.

For orders & book events visit [Clavellandhind.co.uk](http://Clavellandhind.co.uk), call 01242 677118 or email [alex@clavellandhind.co.uk](mailto:alex@clavellandhind.co.uk)



Alex Jordan, Head Brewer, with Peter Cassidy, Owner



# Clavell & Hind

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# A Step Back in Time...

**Our resident angling correspondent takes a trip back in time to visit a lake from another era...**

For those of us of a certain age, our fishing experience was shaped by a chap called Bernard Venables who created an iconic cartoon pairing of Mr. Crabtree, and Peter, his acolyte in his angling adventures.

Adlestrop, now a typical Cotswolds' dormitory village with a church and a shop, but no longer a pub to visit, although there are several Donnington's pubs within a few of miles or so. Arriving at Adlestrop lake was one of those 'step back in time' moments. The estate was clearly an example of the 'English Landscape School' and later research proved me right, as it was modelled over 200 years ago by the successor to Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, namely Humphry Repton. Repton was prolific in his garden design career undertaking some 400 projects, mostly on a smaller scale, but more densely planted than Brown's commissions.

A typical shallow estate lake, the depth of the water wasn't as important as the visual effect that was desired. The main objective was to create a horizontal vista amongst the vertical tree plantings, and it worked a treat.

The specimen trees surrounding the lake



are magnificent: alder, ash, beech, hazel, lime, oak, and sycamore. Also notable are the large hornbeams in the adjacent field some of which are truly huge, climbing well over 60 feet into the Cotswold skyline. To top off the scene in style and complete this bucolic English slice of heaven, you can see the sightscreens of the local cricket club peeking through the trees.

It's always a bit of a voyage of discovery when you visit a new water, and not knowing any other members of the club, I had to rely on 55 years of fishing experience to tackle up to catch a fish or two. One thing you good take for granted is that estate lakes are shallow, normally created by damming the local stream, this lake is no exception. The other thing to bear in mind is that they are very rarely maintained in terms of silt levels. Over the years, the incoming stream deposits silt from the surrounding fields and of course,

vegetation and leaves are also deposited, so it all builds up and reduces the depth of the water.

Choosing a spot where there were plenty of small fish, rudd in this case, dimpling the surface, I watched dragonflies compete with their smaller cousins, damselflies, in a colourful aerial display. A clump of waterlilies was a nice feature that will always hold fish on sunny days. It was too good a scene not to use a simple set up, a beautiful traditional centrepin reel and a float set up with sweetcorn as bait; invariably when fishing, simplest is best. In the old days, the float would have been made from simple crow or porcupine quill, but these days, a straight clear plastic (below) or peacock quill 'waggler' is equally as good. A lot of younger anglers spend an awful lot of



**The 'Triton' True-Pin reel, British craftsmanship, and made in Gloucestershire too!**

their energy casting as far out as they can, but the biggest feature on any lake is the marginal shelf, so it is rarely necessary to fish more than 30 feet from the bank.

Throwing in some handfulls of sweetcorn near the lily pads would get the fish interested, so a couple of cans went in and I decided

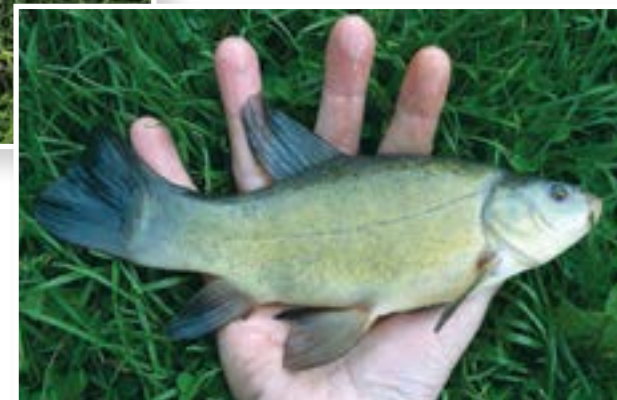
# A Step Back in Time...

to walk around the lake while the fish got interested. It gave me time to take a look at the bank side wild flowers and maybe spot some bigger fish like carp, bream or tench. There were plenty of smaller fish, rudd and roach cruising along the surface, but I didn't spot anything bigger. I did, however, disturb a big fish lurking in some bank side vegetation, the surface of the lake bulging as it took off, leaving a silty vortex of swirling water, probably a carp, but, who knows, maybe a pike?

The wild flowers were worth a look, with gypsywort, woundwort, greater willowherb in abundance with an odd specimen of meadow sweet amongst the hazels and osiers. Even if you caught nothing it was worth a stroll and thereafter an afternoon of drinking in the scenery. Very often, the fish are a bonus and there's an old saying that you get to understand on a deeper level as you get older:

'It's why its called fishing, and not catching.'

Speaking of such things, I returned to my chair and to find a few nice bubbles appearing over the baited area, so a few tench, the fish of the green scales and orange eye were surely mooching about on the sweetcorn. I flicked out a baited grain of corn and, what a delight, was rewarded with a small, feisty, but perfect little tench, brilliant fun!





After a few more of those perfect little fish I decided to give the rudd a go, there was a reasonable shoal of maybe 50 fish cruising about, dimpling the surface of the lake taking, I suspected, small flies just hatching, caught in the scummy surface film. Changing tactic was also a way of staving off the sleepy effects of the soporific weather, buzzing insects and my ability to surrender to an afternoon of laziness.

I guessed that I could catch a few of these lovely golden fish with their vermilion fins, by using a small piece of bread, allowing it to sink slowly towards the lily pads, it was just a matter of waiting for the shoal to come by



on one of their regular feeding patrols. This kind of fishing can be a frustrating way of going about things, you need to put the float and bait in front of the fish and hope the fish intercept your offering. The fourth attempt proved successful and a fish, bigger than I had expected, was duly held up for the camera, the pictures never do the fish justice, they are a magnificent sight in the late afternoon sun.

During the lazy afternoon, of catching now and again, I thought I recognised the tuneless whistling of our resident rambler, Deaf Boy Wanderin' John. The shambling gait was a give away, he must have been wandering around looking for a pub. He gave me a cheery wave and walked over to talk to me, a bit of a surprise as I had never met him, but knew him by his burgeoning reputation as a rambler of some note.

"I'm out walking," he told me helpfully, confirming my deep suspicion of anyone in red socks. Why do they wear them?

"I've been out fishing," I replied thinking how helpful I was being, continuing to watch my float in case of any fishy action.

## A Step Back in Time...

"Caught any lately?" he inquired.

"Yes, you're right there."

"What do you mean?" He pressed on, regardless.

"Courtney Lately, that's me, how did you know?"

"That's you what? I'm asking whether you have or you haven't" He asked a little bit testily I thought.

"Have or haven't I what?" I was beginning to wonder about this chap.

"Caught any lately? You know: fish?"

"Oh right! Well yes, I have, it's been a lot of fun."

"More than this conversation," he mumbled.

"Sorry, yes, it's a bit confusing don't you think? Eponymous names, I guess you're called John Walker or Rambler or something similar? That'd make sense."

"No, people call me 'deaf boy'," he said.

"Right, on account of your ears I guess. Not John then?"

"Yes, not John and no, not my ears, but to be fair only one works, so it could be worse," he said cheerily. "OK, good to meet you, I'm off to find the nearest pub, the Fox at Lower Oddington, that's where I started, it's a bit posh, but they still let me in. Then I might go to the Horse & Groom Village Inn in Upper Oddington, if can remember where I'm off to."

With that he wandered off whistling tunelessly as he melted into the Cotswold countryside.

Leaving the water and thinking about a well earned pint, I had plenty of pubs on my route home, so it was a case of picking a good one with decent beer and some food. I settled on the Golden Ball in Lower Swell, a great Donnington's pub that is what the Cotswolds is all about, it turned out to be just the ticket, good beer, good food and good company.

I'm going back later in the year and see what else is lurking in cold winter water of that perfect part of England. Maybe some ancient pike or maybe a perch or two, that's one of the great things about fishing: who really knows?

**Courtney Moore Lately**



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# Another Step Back in Time...



**The City of Bristol enjoys an enviable reputation for the diversity and quality of its craft beers and traditional real ales. The current Good Beer Guide lists an impressive 21 city breweries, all of which have been established since the demise of the once dominant Courage Bristol Brewery in 1999.**

Back then, the sign of the Courage cockerel could be seen on most pubs in Bristol. The proliferation of Courage pubs was due to the historic takeovers and amalgamations of breweries such as Bristol United by the then dominant Bristol brewers, Georges & Co. Ltd. In turn, Courage, Barclay and Simonds bought the old Georges' Bristol Brewery and their tied houses in 1961.

In 1999 when the old George's/Courage Brewery in Bristol closed, apparently



there was little respect for the heritage of the brewery that was founded in 1788. Hundreds of old pub photographs were unceremoniously dumped in a skip. Fortunately, those valuable archives were rescued by Martin Gibson, a local publican, then running Cosies Wine Bar in Portland Square, Bristol.

Derek Hore, a CAMRA member living in Thornbury with an affiliation to the Dursley sub-branch, contacted me through my Gloucestershire Pubs website to enquire if I knew anything about this intriguing archive. Derek had heard that the photographs, mounted on a dozen or so large display boards, were deposited into the care of CAMRA for safekeeping fifteen years ago. The Bristol area CAMRA magazine 'Pints West'



had a feature on the collection at that time. Derek had seen a reference to the collection of photos which was assembled by the local writer Lewis Wilshire, who it seems was Publicity Officer for the Brewery, and was keen to track them down.

I was intrigued with the 'lost' archives, but unable to help. Derek got in contact with the CAMRA Bristol Pubs Group and, with the help of Bristol's Pints West editor, Steve Plumridge, it was discovered that the pub photos were in safe keeping with Mark Steeds at the Beaufort Arms in Hawkesbury Upton. For those familiar with this classic and long-standing Good Beer Guide listed pub you will appreciate that Mark is the ideal caretaker for these documents, who is passionate with pub history with a good knowledge of Bristol. However, the display boards had been put in storage, unseen for many years so it was a revelation to be able to view them again. Mark kindly

## Another Step Back in Time...

arranged for a private viewing with the images on display in the pub's skittle alley. Derek and I took the opportunity to take copies of the old pub photos. It took several hours to complete.

Most of the old photographs of Bristol pubs, including many in the area now known as South Gloucestershire, have now been added to the Gloucestershire Pubs website. Perhaps the simplest way to view them is to type 'Courage archives' or specifically, 'Lewis Wilshire' or 'Mark Steeds' into the search engine. Mark has expressed his intention that the collection should be offered to Bristol Archives, who we hope will provide their long-term home.

Within the collection there are a few photographs of ex-Courage pubs in 'our' region of Gloucestershire, some of which will be very familiar.

**Geoff Sandles**

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# SCRAPING THE BARREL

with Ernest and Verity Dregg

Seven years ago, Ernest and Verity Dregg, retired snipers and fleet street hacks swapped their life as anti-woke, unreconstructed bigots and gossip columnists opened their dream pub. We find them hard at it on Monday 27th November...

Verity was hard at it, sorting through her box of Christmas tree decorations. They'd found themselves a tree at the far end of the local park, nobody really goes there, so liberating it and using it to cheer up the residents of Mugsborough seemed like a good idea.

Last night the Temperance Society were in again, it doesn't make any difference to them, she thought, they'd celebrate anything. Verity was busy rummaging through the baubles, reminding her that her favourite tee-totaller had brought along a strapping new friend, she could get used to a regular double in the snug she thought, a couple of gins afterwards helped. She was dragged from her reverie by Ernest, going on about politics again.

"Right then, let's just summarise here. So we have net migration up to 745,000, and I thought that Preti Patel was doing a great job getting the numbers up. Suella Braverman was even better! Now we've got a bloke called Cleverly in charge how could it get be better than that?" He exclaimed.

"I thought they were supposed to be bringing the numbers down, isn't that what they said?" Verity asked, confused about his enthusiasm.

"Forget about that, the great thing is, if we do legally employ a foreigner we can pay them 20% less than a home grown worker, it's brilliant. Of course, we don't need to mess about like that, we've still got plenty of them

on the barges, earning their keep delivering our beer to the local pubs."

Verity groaned to herself, will it ever end? She wondered. More madcap schemes to make money. They were doing OK, brewery doing well, they'd even added another canal

side pub 'The Pirate' to their list, another great outlet, full of raucous clientele that Verity was pleased didn't

visit her pub too regularly.

"Another thing," called out Ernest, "we had to forget the mortgage rate betting scam and now we've got other ideas."

"Yes, I am sure you have," mumbled Verity, making herself busy rearranging the clothing on the fairy for the top of the tree.

"We've started a new betting club, every time to Government says it is going to drive down prices or spending, we'll bet against it, we'll make a packet. Just think, in the last two years, food prices have gone up 25%, rent and mortgages up 30% and fuel bills up 80%, Rishi reckons he's halved inflation. What he means is mean prices aren't going down, they're just not going up as fast!"

"I thought it was all going brilliantly, that's what our great leader seems to think," Verity replied. "He reckons that he's halved inflation, but then he says it's the Bank of England policies that have done that. So not only blaming other people, but also taking their credit too, you can't go wrong."

"Well, I have got a great new plan, that'll be right up the Government's street, we'll be

**'We've started a new betting club, every time to Government says it is going to drive down prices or spending, we'll bet against it, we'll make a packet.'**

Humphrey Bogart as Captain Queeg, fiddling with his marbles



"I dread to think," moaned Verity, but she knew she'd have to put up with another tirade. So back into the decorations box, she needed plenty of baubles, tinsel and lights to cover this massive tree that the council 'donated'.

"Right then," said Ernest settling into a bar stool ready to hold forth. "I've been looking at the news and the thing is: taxes. They're just going to keep going up and up with this lot."

"I thought there was a tax cut last week," interrupted Verity. "National Insurance, not that we pay any to our lot, but somebody does, don't they?"

"Of course, but the £1 cut is only offset by

## SCRAPING THE BARREL

the £4 it's all gone up, so HMRC still get an extra £3, it's brilliant!. So, what I'm going to do is set up a privatised tax collection service, tell the Government it'll save them money, and then just pocket loads of it, put people out of work and blame the opposition for not stopping it. It's worked with loads of stuff, hasn't it?"

"Well I don't know about that," said Verity, already bored with this latest scheme.

"Of course it has, look at what we've got these days, private steel industry, private water industry, private trains, the list goes on, what we do get is worse services, bosses and shareholders making a packet and watchdogs that are all asleep. It's such a good system if you've got loads of money in the first place, keeps the rich richer and the workers poor, great! It makes you proud to be British! I'll tell you what the best bit is."

"What would that be then?" Asked Verity, not really taking any notice.



"The great British electorate keep voting for this stuff."

"Well, from what I've read today, it looks like Rishi is losing his marbles, just like Bogie in that film. I mean, not meeting the Greek Prime Minister in case he has to answer some questions about the Elgin Marbles, what are they giant ones? What a guy!"

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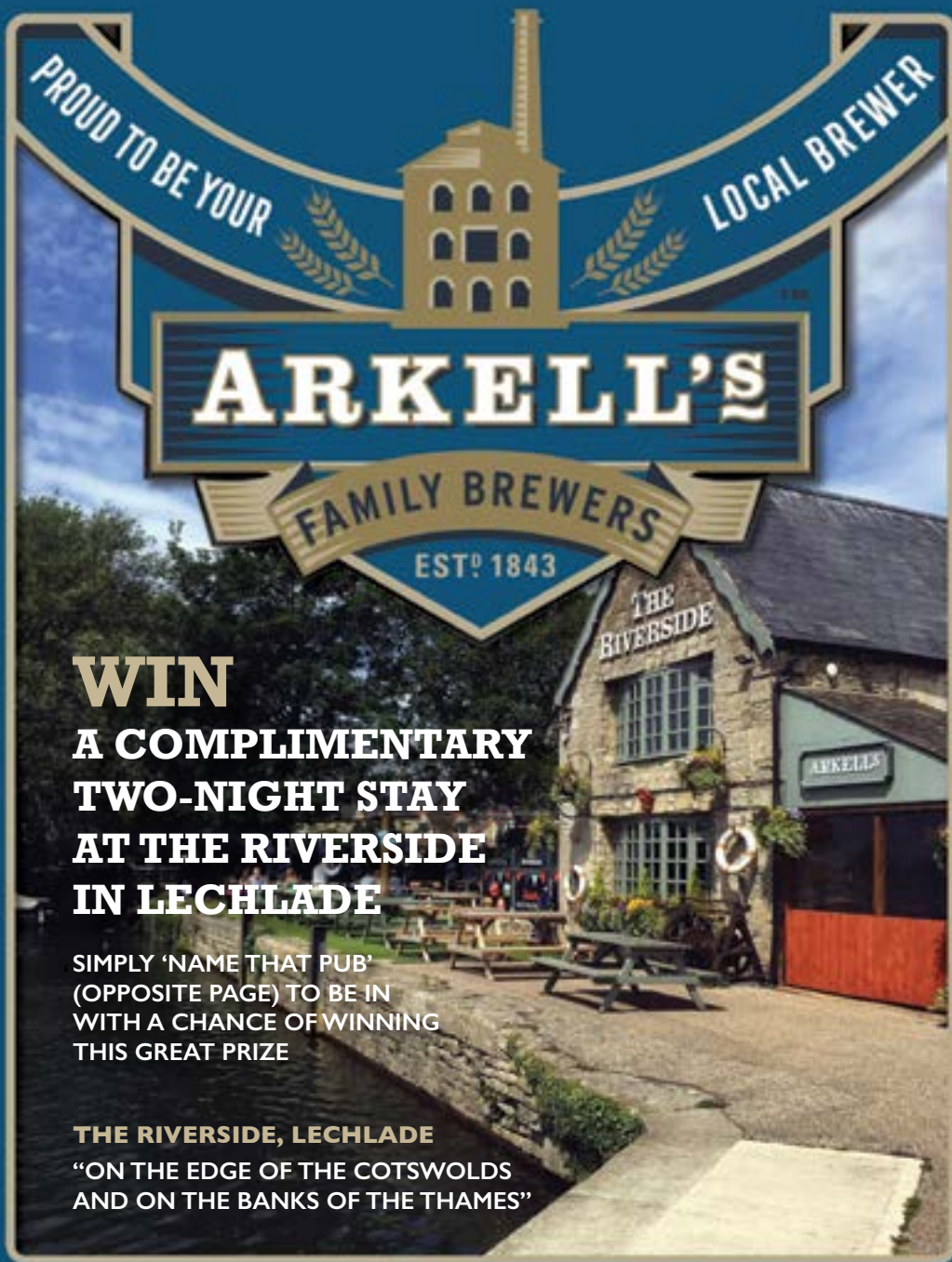
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# NAME THAT PUB COMPETITION



It's another big 'hello' to sheep and dogs from this pub which is a whole lot friendlier than the list of house rules would suggest.

Another great small pub (although it's the tallest in Gloucester) that's 'Full of Eastern Promise' has plenty real ales and ciders on offer in the heart of the county's capital city.  
Cheers!

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# CIDER & PERRY MAN



In this series, the cider representative for Cheltenham CAMRA keeps us up to speed in the world of cider and perry in Gloucestershire...

## Playing Away From Home!

Since my last article, I have found myself sampling 'the golden juice' well outside my home town, which is hardly surprising, given the few outlets in Cheltenham offering proper cider.

However, one of my favourite pubs in town is The Railway, just at the rear of Waitrose, which apart from their excellent Thai food, also offers Hogan's cider on draught, which I have always enjoyed. The home of Hogan's is up in Warwickshire, which has very few other producers. By coincidence, I found myself doing a walk around The Heart of England Forest and less than 10 miles from their base, so I rang up to make an appointment. Allen Hogan was fortuitously on site, and had the time to show us around and to tell us all about his business, which was certainly illuminating.

Firstly, this is no small craft enterprise, but a million pound business with a predominance of sales reaching the 'wet trade' i.e. pubs and clubs. They do, however, have a really interesting and different range with about 15 different labels ranging from *High Sobriety Low alcohol*, through to *Wild Elder Cider*, and *Libertine* (named after your scribe?) as well as a perry. These are all available in bottle but seven are also available in bag in box (BiB). They also offer a keeved (vatted) example called *French Revelation*, which is rare, as is also the name of the apple brandy they produce. I asked Allen about the provenance and variety of fruit he used, and was amazed

to hear that it is mostly from Herefordshire, and the pressing is actually done just outside Malvern. But then, he is not alone, in that Dunkertons also mostly use Herefordshire apples. It was a really great visit and my mixed case I came away with didn't last for very long at all!

Our local branch of CAMRA organize some really interesting 'Ale Trails' to nearby towns and cities. These mostly use the railway (strikes permitting!) and I was interested to hear of a recent trip to Weston Super Mare, where I thought I might find some interesting ciders. So I signed up for the trip, expecting some decent results. The first two pubs were offering mass market brands and whilst the main party went off to get some fish and chips by the seafront, I found myself in the local 'Spoons'. I wasn't expecting anything different but lo and behold! They had two BiB ciders in a chiller cabinet, which were certainly worth drinking, and especially at £2.50 a pint. I then ended up at the amazing little *Black Cat* micropub. Well, I don't know about the beers, but the cider range was awesome, with several dispensed from the bar, then there was a kind of cupboard at the rear, with at least 10 more in BiB. As it happens, and as a happy coincidence, my youngest son lives in Brighton and I was wanting to visit a farm close to him, that makes the interestingly named *Silly Moo* cider, but there on the counter, in sleepy Somerset, it was to be found, and enjoyed.

In November, there is another Ale Trail to Bath, where I am already in touch with their local cider representative, who has quite a few good outlets for me to visit. There is often an interesting comparison between our two Regency towns, but without being a heretic, I think that Bath is going to prove the winner for outlets of proper ciders. (*Not to mention architecture, and possibly spa baths - Ed.*)

Having greatly enjoyed my visit to Weston, I took up the offer for a little trip over to Gloucester, where I had heard there were at the very least a couple of good cider pubs. We first visited The Pelican which is conveniently placed between the cathedral and the Gloucester Rugby club ground. The Pelican had the most interestingly named *Gurt Lush Cider* in BiB. This is a slang expression from south Gloucestershire which possibly means A Great Drop, and I'll second

that! I have now also found a Somerset (Brie type) cheese by the same name. I have yet to ascertain where the cider is actually made, but it should be somewhere in Gloucestershire! We then moved on to The Turks Head, which



is very small bar situated right in the middle of town and not dissimilar to The Black Cat in Weston. They also had a good range of BiB and were preparing for their autumn cider festival so had extra boxes waiting to be tapped. Amongst others, I also managed to taste a local example from Hartlands, which is situated to the west of Cheltenham, on the road to Ledbury. Several customers were enjoying this at the recent Postlip festival and it typifies the taste of a true farmhouse cider with lots of 'bite'.

The next Tippler will be out in the spring (March) 2024 when I shall look forward to reporting on my cidery trip to Bath.

**Guy Vowles**

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# DODGY TICKER?

THE CONTINUING TALES OF A BEER COLLECTOR

**Our tick box hero gets all technical, chemical and biological keeping a straight face whilst quaffing the 'marmite' of beers...**

**There was a time when sour beers were hardly ever seen in the UK, but in the past decade or so they have come out of obscurity and nowadays I regularly see sour beers on offer in many of the pubs and bars I frequent.**

There is little doubt that many of the earliest beers brewed around the World would have tasted sour since they relied on wild yeast strains for their fermentation, but the story of brewing in Britain, in general at least, moved away from the tartness of sour beer a long time ago and the word 'sour' became synonymous with beer that had become spoiled and was therefore bad.

We are lucky to live in an age when we have relatively easy access to a great many beer styles from around the World. Most beer drinkers have their favourites, of course. You may be particularly fond of fruity IPAs, whereas the drinker next to you at the bar would prefer to order an imperial milk stout. But in my experience there seems to be one word which will immediately bring out a marmite-like reaction from drinkers – either love it or loathe it, there's rarely anything in-between – and that word is sour. Many of my beer drinking friends need considerable encouragement to try sours when they are on offer, but as a collector if I were to shun all sour beers, the collection would suffer. I have, therefore, learnt to love them and I hope that this article may encourage you to give a sour a go the next time you get the chance.

Sour is used to describe a wide variety of beer styles, but there are some who consider it a misnomer – perhaps the word 'tart' would be a better description. Put simply, a sour beer is any beer where acidity is at the forefront of the flavour profile. So, how does a beer become acidic? Any beer will become acidic



or sour if certain micro-organisms gain access to it. That is why real ale has a short shelf-life: once it has been tapped and is open to the air, unwanted microbes will quite quickly turn it sour. It is also the reason why those serving real ale have to be scrupulously clean with all their equipment. I'm sure many readers will have experienced a 'bad' pint – that unpleasant vinegary taste that tells you either the beer has been hanging around too long or there are cleanliness issues.

However, brewers can also deliberately introduce acid-producing micro-organisms to the brewing process to create acidity. This is usually either in the form of a particular yeast strain (often referred to as a wild yeast,

since many of the yeasts that float freely in the air all around us will be acid-producers) or an acid-producing bacterial strain, such as lactobacillus (similar to the bacteria that turn milk into yoghurt). These microbes can be introduced at different phases of the brewing process.

A kettle sour beer is made sour by the brewer adding a bacterium such as lactobacillus to the wort while it is still in the mash tun. This is how many modern sours are brewed. It is quick and allows a significant degree of control, since the infection of lactobacillus can be killed off in the boil when the beer has reached the desired level of sourness.

Many traditional sour beers use a very different method, which is much slower and very difficult to control. This type of brewing makes use of the wild yeasts (for example, Brettanomyces strains) in the immediate environment of the brewhouse, allowing them to spontaneously ferment the wort. You may have seen pictures of shallow open fermenting vessels surrounded by open slatted windows to allow easy access for the local yeasts. The Belgians have been brewing this way for many hundreds of years in a style known as lambic. Many modern brewers would be too nervous of brewing like this, since they have no control over what micro-organisms may infect their precious beer. Indeed, each lambic is quite unique, so reproducing exactly the same taste is very difficult. Only a handful of brewers (Cantillon and Boon, for example) still produce true lambics and famously preserve the dust and cobwebs in the brewhouse lest they disturb the colonies of microbes that give the beer its distinct character and local flavour. The Belgians developed a way to maintain consistency from year to year by combining vintages of lambic into a batch – known as gueuze. This requires very skilled blenders, who are able to judge which lambics will combine to produce the required taste profile. Fruit can also be added to a lambic in the form of juice, pulp or whole fruit. This can help balance the beer's tart acidity. Kriek, made with cherries, and framboise,

**'love it or loathe it, there's rarely anything in-between...'**

# DODGY TICKER?

THE CONTINUING TALES OF A BEER COLLECTOR

made with raspberries, are the most common fruit lambics.

Other styles of traditionally brewed sours are Flanders Red, Oud Bruin, Gose and Berliner Weisse. The last two in that list originate from Germany and are traditionally wheat beers, made sour by the addition of lactobacillus. Even Saisons and Farmhouse Ales can have a pleasant tartness in the

background when certain yeast strains have been used.

Kettle souring has enabled modern brewers to add tartness to pretty much any beer style, even dark beers, but the sours I encounter most often these days are pale beers with added fruit, sometimes a whole host of different fruits. If you haven't yet tried one of Vault City's seemingly crazy creations, I urge you to search one out and give it a go. Beer names such as Red Fruit Coconut Dreamcake or Winter Berry Smoothie may not sound like beer at all, but in my experience their fruit combinations are well thought out and rarely fail to hit the mark.



They can look bizarre – a red berry sour, for example, will usually be a deep red colour – but the additional fruit is often used very cleverly to add some balance to the acidity of the sour beer. Indeed, these beers often have a sweetness that complements the tartness very well, not unlike the combination of sweet and sour in some Chinese cooking.

It is difficult to put a number on the total sour beers in my collection. A quick search of the spreadsheet will discover 60 beers with the word 'sour' in the name, but this is clearly nowhere near all of them. Out of the last two hundred beers added to the list, 16 were sours. This would suggest that less than 10% of the beers I choose at the moment can be described as sour. This proportion is limited by availability, since many pub visits will not offer a sour to try. All the sours I have drunk have been keg dispensed. This may be due to the nature of fruited sours, which are often described as 'refreshing in hot weather', so require a colder serve. However, I suspect it is more to do with the fact that sour beers are less popular with most drinkers, therefore a

## PODGY TICKER?

THE CONTINUING TALES OF A BEER COLLECTOR

cask sour would sit on the bar for longer and probably spoil before being finished. This leads me to ask – 'How do you tell if a sour beer has gone sour?' – answers on a postcard please! The lack of cask sours also means that few CAMRA beer festivals will have any on offer. Then there are those (you may be one of them) who simply will not touch anything that isn't real ale or are not prepared to pay the higher price that any beer dispensed from a keg will inevitably carry. I certainly understand the pricing issue. Some of the best fruited sours I have tried have been high ABV and high price. It has to be noted, though, that these beers have opened beer drinking up to a new audience. My sister has never been a beer drinker, the bitter taste of most 'brown' beer has never appealed to her. However, for the past year or so I have been regularly receiving WhatsApp messages from her with details of the latest sour she has tried. We have even set up a group with my brother called 'Sour

Tasting Siblings' specifically to share our sour finds.

You shouldn't have to travel far if you are keen to try a sour beer for the first time. Many of our local breweries produce sours fairly regularly. Up until recently, the Hop Kettle in Cirencester (an outlet for Hop Kettle Brewery) had a rotating experimental sour as a permanent fixture behind the bar – I still remember their Strawberry Sherry Trifle Sour! Both Gloucester and Deya have produced sours in the past too, though sadly not on any regular basis. New Bristol Brewery brew great sours – Lime and Raspberry Crumble Sour and Cherry Pie and Vanilla Ice Cream Sour being two examples. I particularly like their 'Cheesecake' and 'Donut' series of sours. Tiny Rebel are keen sour brewers too – their Rhubarb and Custard Sour is lovely. My favourite two sour breweries, however, have to be Vault City (Edinburgh) and Yonder (Somerset). I appreciate that the names can be a little off-putting; Fruits of the Forest Triple Stacked Breakfast Waffle sounds like a hideous mash-up of tastes that will never

## PODGY TICKER?

THE CONTINUING TALES OF A BEER COLLECTOR

work! However, Vault City in particular, seem to have the wonderful knack of creating combinations of flavours that really do work together. They only started brewing in 2018, but very quickly developed a reputation for innovation. They are a specialist sour brewer and are now a sought-after collaborator for other brewers who are keen to learn from their expertise.

So, if you are someone who has never given a sour a go, I urge you to take the plunge. The level of tartness can vary greatly, so perhaps start with a more balanced fruited sour – these are often labelled as pastry sours or smoothie sours – before heading off into the mouth-puckering world of the Belgian lambics.

Cheers  
Pete Searle



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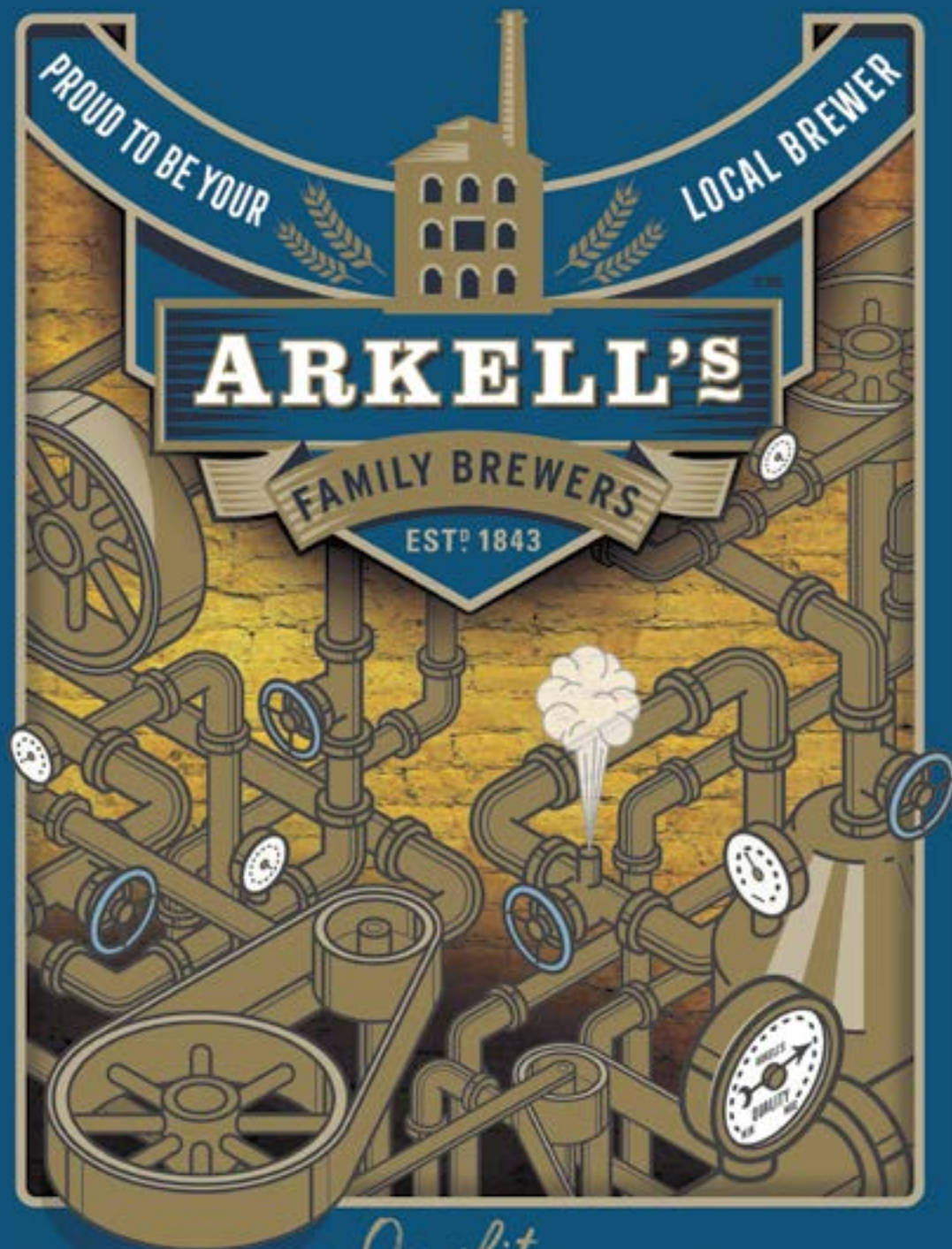
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