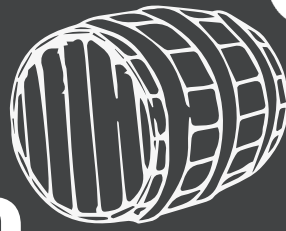


Barrel Organ



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

*The magazine of the Salisbury & South Wiltshire and
Heart of Wessex branches of the Campaign for Real Ale*

Voted CAMRA's most improved

magazine of 2018

March - May 2022

FREE
Please
take one



IN THIS ISSUE

NORMALITY SLOWLY
RETURNS

MEET THE
GOVERNORS:
THE SHIP, BURCOMBE

A HISTORY OF PUBCOS

Plus much more...



It's Festival Season

CAMRA beer festivals are ready
to welcome you back!



Find your local
CAMRA beer festival
camra.org.uk/festivals



FROM THE EDITORS

Two years ago it was enjoyable but unremarkable to meet up for the local CAMRA New Year Social at the Rai d'Or in Salisbury. This year the same gathering involving many of the same people at the same venue had a totally different feel. The joy of returning to normality was truly extraordinary, something that none of us could possibly have anticipated at the beginning of 2020 when Covid-19 was a far-off event in China. Lateral flow tests having been taken in the morning, we indulged in the simple pleasures of drinking real ale, eating good food, talking and laughing. That is what the cover picture of this issue of *Barrel Organ* shows – people drinking at a social event. How we had missed something that we had taken for granted all our lives.

This gradual return to normality came too late to save Winterfest, Salisbury's winter beer festival organised by CAMRA and scheduled to take place in late January. Beer festivals need organising well in advance and the rapid spread of the Omicron variant in December made CAMRA's volunteers understandably wary and the Government's reaction to a fast moving situation uncertain. But Winterfest will be back next year.

The onset of Omicron triggered a flood of cancellations of pre-Christmas bookings for pubs and restaurants already reeling from two years of restrictions. But now that we seem to be learning to live with this variant, we urge all *Barrel Organ* readers to support local pubs and restaurants. If they do not, then some may not survive. And once again we will discover that we miss something that we had taken for granted.

Kathy, Will & Neil
Editors, Barrel Organ magazine

SALISBURY & SOUTH WILTSHIRE CONTACTS

Chairman: Ian Turner
Tel: 07795 952374
Email: chairman@salisburycamra.org.uk
Secretary: Alan Purchase
Email: secretary@salisburycamra.org.uk
Social Secretary: Bruce Springett
Email: social.secretary@salisburycamra.org.uk
Membership Secretary: Roger Braddick
Email: membership@salisburycamra.org.uk

www.salisburycamra.org.uk



HEART OF WESSEX CONTACTS

Chairman: Paul Smith
Tel: 01747 823574
Email: g1sni@btinternet.com
Pubs Officer: Vacant
Email:
Membership Secretary: Vacant
Email:
Branch Email: howessex@aol.com

www.heartofwessex.camra.org.uk



EDITORS

Kathy Pascoe, Will Bennett and Neil Beagrie
Email: barrel.organ@salisburycamra.org.uk

The Editor reserves the right to amend or shorten contributions for publication. All editorial copyright © Salisbury & Heart of Wessex CAMRA 2022. Views expressed in this publication are those of their individual authors and are not necessarily endorsed by the Editor, branch committee or the Campaign for Real Ale nationally. Salisbury & Heart of Wessex CAMRA accepts no liability in relation to the accuracy of advertisements; readers must rely on their own enquiries. It should also be noted that acceptance of an advertisement in this publication should not be deemed an endorsement of quality by Salisbury & Heart of Wessex CAMRA.

Trading Standards (Wiltshire)

Wiltshire Council, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge,
Wiltshire, BA14 8JN Tel: 03454 040506
Email: tradingstandards@wiltshire.gov.uk, www.wiltshire.gov.uk

Campaign for Real Ale Ltd.

230 Hatfield Road, St. Albans, Herts, AL1 4JW
Tel: 01727 867 201 Email: camra@camra.org.uk
www.camra.org.uk

Advertising, Published & Designed by:
PAPER RED MEDIA

Neil Richards MBE
Tel: 01536 358670
Email/s: n.richards@btinternet.com
paperredmedia@outlook.com

LOW ALCOHOL BEERS

If you are the duty driver, or if for some other reason you are not drinking alcohol, what is there for you to drink? Perhaps fruit juice or squash or sugar-crammed fizzy pop. But what if you, not unreasonably, like beer. The answer to that question until recently has been “little or nothing”.

Thirty years ago, there appeared on the market quite a number of non-alcoholic and low alcohol content beers. Some were not bad but many were, let us not be coy about this, awful and the memory of the bad taste left in the mouth lingers. Not surprisingly they were not a success and within two years they disappeared but so too did the ones that were palatable. Recently however there has been a resurgence in low and zero alcohol beers and in general they are much more palatable than their predecessors.

The annual British craft beer report published by the small brewers’ trade body, the Society of Independent Brewers (Siba), tipped these “nolo” drinks to be the UK’s biggest trend. Siba believes that no or low alcohol beers are set to become one of the fastest growing parts of the beer market (albeit from a low base) with consumers increasingly expecting to see a wider range in pubs and bars.

Some of the best examples of “nolo” beers are made by small independent breweries. Unfortunately, you will not yet find a wide range of these in pubs or on supermarket shelves but they are available via mail order.

Ever dedicated to promoting sensible drinking and choices for duty drivers, the Salisbury and South Wiltshire CAMRA Tasting Panel decided to investigate this new range of beers. Luckily, we have on our doorstep Booze Free UK, a mail order company which is based in

the Old Sarum Business Park and has over 40 different low and no alcohol beers (plus a selection of low or no alcohol ciders and spirits). Terry Greenwood, the founder of the company, kindly came to our meeting and supplied us with a selection of some of the many examples of this genre that he stocks.

The first thing that Terry did was to explain that in the UK for a beer to be sold as alcohol-free it must contain less than 0.05% alcohol. Products with 0.5% or less alcohol content should be called “ultra-low alcohol”. From 0.5% up to 1.2% a beer can be classed as low alcohol content but even at that strength it is subject to all the laws and restrictions that relate to the sale of alcohol. “Reduced alcohol” means more than 1.2%. In Europe and in the USA a drink of 0.5% ABV can be described as alcohol-free or non-alcoholic. As a consequence, many of the beers imported from the continent or USA may describe themselves as alcohol free but cannot be sold as that.



And so to the six drinks we tried:

Brewer: Big Drop

Beer: Paradiso Citra IPA. 0.5%

A pale ale with an aroma of lemon and grapefruit and flowers with, as the name would imply, a sharp citra taste which led to a drying aftertaste.

An International Brewing and Cider award winning nolo beer.

Brewery: **Mickeller**

Beer: **Drink-in the Snow 0.3%.**

An aromatic complex beer with floral, malt and caramel tastes reminiscent of dandelion and burdock and dried fruit. Pleasantly sweet but not overly so. Another favourite.

Brewer: **Infinite Session**

Beer: **Pale 0.5%**

A hazy, aromatic American pale ale style with a sharp taste, and a lingering bite. Scored well overall with the panel.

Brewery: **Lowlander**

Beer: **WIT alcohol free 0.0%.**

A sharp tasting Wit-style beer with cutting sour lemon taste bringing out hints of lemon sherbet and orange peel. Something very different. A lemonade with a sharper edge. Some liked it on its own, others thought it would make a very good mixer with spirits!

Brewer: **Preta**

Beer: **Super Bock 0.5%**

A dark brown, German Bock-style beer. The beer presented as having a slight trace of malt and hops in the aroma and quite a sweet taste but little body. It had a pleasant lingering slight astringency and although not a favourite was overall considered inoffensive.

Brewery: **Brutal Brewing**

Beer: **A Ship Full of IPA alcohol free 0.0%.**

A tawny copper coloured beer tasting of a dry bitter with none of the taste characteristics that one would expect from an IPA.

A wide range of low and alcohol-free beers and other drinks are available from Booze Free UK. You can mail order on their website at:

<https://www.booze.free.uk>

They also have a local collection option from their premises in Old Sarum by prior arrangement.

Derek Blackshaw and Neil Beagrie

Editorial note: Due to COVID-19 and suspension of the magazine, this article has been held over from publication in 2020 until this issue. Details and availability of some beers may have changed over this time.

HOOK & GLOVE

at Farley



01722 712247

Dog friendly Country Pub
3/4 Real Ales
Food 12 - 9 every day
except Sun 12-3
Bookings recommended

The Street Farley, Salisbury SP5 1AB

BREWERY NEWS

Sixpenny Brewery

At the time of writing in January the beers available from Sixpenny were Gold, Best, IPA, plus the winter seasonal beer, Sixpenny Black, which was selling very well and brewing a second batch was being considered. The Black is brewed from a blend of roast barley, chocolate and roast malts producing a rich, smooth flavour. The spring seasonal beer is usually Cranborne Chaser but the brewery is 15 years old this year and they are considering a retro brew from 2007. (But where was the brewery then and what was its name? The answer is at the end of the Brewery News column)

The Christmas Eve Open Day at the Brewery Tap was very successful featuring a brass band, carol singing and magician Jon Gadd providing entertainment. Jon regularly performs magic tricks when he visits the Tap – he certainly tricked me when I met him on a recent visit! The Tap was also open on Christmas Day with free beer and mulled wine available!!

Some developments are happening around the brewery. A new stage has been constructed in the courtyard to provide more entertainment opportunities and consequently more income for the brewery. Similarly, more entertainment events are planned for inside the Tap (dancing, bands, etc). Part of the courtyard wall has been demolished and is being replaced by a new building which will rehouse the Orchard Bay Bakery which is currently to the side of the Tap but not directly accessible.

New pub outlets for Sixpenny beers are the Sheaf of Arrows in Cranborne and the Happy Man in Englefield, Surrey. The brewery supplied a batch of beers to the Kings Head in Salisbury before Christmas, the first time for a while.

Stonehenge

Everything is ticking over nicely at the brewery, home deliveries are continuing with Friday now the delivery day for all areas. Seasonal beer Old Smokey porter had a successful roll-out and perennial favourite Sign of Spring was available in time for the last week of February. Plans for seasonal beers for the remainder of the year are currently being put in place. Discussions are continuing with interested parties regarding new people taking over, it is hoped that by springtime something will be concluded.

Hop Back

Hop Back Brewery and its tied pubs are now all open again for business. The brewery portfolio consists of nine pubs, most of which are in the south of England and which includes the Wyndham Arms in Salisbury and the Duck at Laverstock. Following the end of lockdown the brewery is reintroducing its monthly programme of seasonal beers and hopes to introduce additional seasonal beers created by Jamie Fergusson the new brewer.

The following seasonals will be in the pubs soon:

March – Thunderstorm ABV 4.7% - An English wheat beer first brewed in 1994. A 50% wheat malt, barley malt recipe flavoured with English hops and coriander. It has a soft malty palate with a hoppy orangey finish.

April – Spring Zing ABV 4.2% - An array of European hops feature in this fantastic beer crafted from maize, wheat and barley malts. It all adds up to one of Hop Back's most popular session beers; really pale with a huge aromatic punch.

May – Glasshopper ABV 3.8% - A subtle blend of New World hops will make this light fruity ale dangerously drinkable. Pale in colour, big in flavour with a spectrum of tropical fruitiness.

Brew Shack

Due to the impact of Covid on demand, new production has been largely on hold and the brewery has been using up stocks over recent months. However, both new fermenters are fully operational (total of four now) bringing the 10 barrel plant up to potential full capacity in due course. Current beers are limited to the three core beers (Pale Ale, Bill's Bitter, and 8 Grain Porter) but Adam is hoping to introduce the new Golden Ale as a seasonal in the spring and the Vienna Oat Stout as a seasonal in the autumn.

Downton

Currently brewing 25% of sales as bottled beers as opposed to 5% pre-pandemic. No sales to wholesale suppliers or SIBA (Small Independent Brewers Association) at present but some beers have been supplied to Italy. Small pack canned beers and local deliveries are catered for. A new

member of staff has been employed as a sales representative. Sales of draught Stonefish 3% ABV are good. Introduction of a low alcohol beer, 0.5%, in either bottle or can, is under consideration.

The brewery bar is open Fridays 4-8pm until the end of March and will then be extended to 4-9pm for the summer period with pizzas on sale. Ten outside summer events have been booked.

....and the answer is

In 2007 what is now Sixpenny Brewery was called Waylands and was based in Addlestone, Surrey.

Contributors: *Derek Ellis, Gerald Gibson, Andrew Hesketh, Neil Beagrie and John Lambert.*

THE DUKE OF YORK

- A TRADITIONAL PUB -

A traditional locals' pub offering 7 ever changing, reasonably priced cask ales and traditional cider. 15p discount to CAMRA members with CAMRA membership card



Open Every Evening:
Monday - Friday
from 4pm,
Saturday & Sunday
from midday

The Duke of York | 34 York Road | Salisbury | SP2 7AS

PUB COMPANIES WHO THEY ARE AND WHAT THEY DO

CAMRA's Pub and Club Campaigns Committee feels that many members would find it helpful to have more information about the companies that control many of our pubs. This is the first in a series of articles that will provide the facts on pub company practices and operations, explaining in particular how their business models work and what this means for both licensees and, ultimately, us as customers. The aim is to let the facts speak for themselves so that members can make up their own minds about the positive or negative effects of these practices on our pubs and the folk who run them.

Part 1:

A Potted History of the Pubco

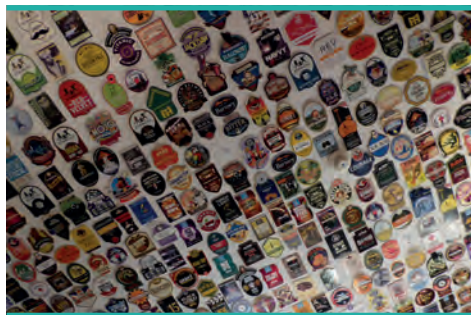
Fifty years ago, when CAMRA was formed, the pub landscape looked very different. For a start, there were many more of them – some 75,000 against around 47,500 now. The majority of pubs (52,000 or so) were owned by breweries. The 89 small and regional breweries had 13,800 of them and the rest were in the hands of the 'Big Six' – Bass Charrington, Allied, Whitbread, Scottish & Newcastle, Watney/Grand Metropolitan and Courage/Imperial.

Most of the other 23,000 pubs were free houses (in name anyway – many tied their beer supplies to a big brewer in return for loans and discounts). Companies that just owned pubs were few and far between – the likes of Sir John Fitzgerald in the north-east and Heavitree in the south-west (although they tied themselves to Bass).

Just about every pub-owning brewery rigorously imposed a supply tie on its own products. As late as the mid-1980s, I remember a Greene King director recoiling in horror at my suggestion that they allow a few guest beers in their pubs.

As a result, new breweries found outlets hard to come by and we customers were hardly spoilt for choice, as a glance at a Good Beer Guide of that era will reveal.

Then, in 1989, along came the Beer Orders. The story of this epochal legislation (for better or worse) is superbly told in Laura Hadland's recent *Fifty Years of CAMRA* book but, in essence, the Government acknowledged the stranglehold on the industry exercised by the Big Six and, among other things, capped their pub ownership at 2,000.



This wide choice of beers did not exist in the days of the 'Big Six'.

By now, because of closures and sell-offs, the Big Six owned fewer pubs between them but the Orders still meant around 11,000 pubs coming onto the market. We, of course, dreamed of a new golden age of multi-handpumped free houses galore, but the reality was sadly different. Companies were quickly established, usually with close links to the Big Six, to Hoover up these pubs in big batches then negotiate supply deals, invariably with the company who previously owned the place. Enterprise Inns, for instance, started off with the purchase of 368 pubs from Bass, and that is where they bought the beer from.

In the years that followed, wheeling and dealing saw companies variously grow, collapse, merge, acquire, dispose – it was very difficult to keep up with who owned what. Some companies concentrated on managed pubs, some on tenancies, a few on a mixed model. Behemoths emerged – by 2004, Punch Taverns and Enterprise each owned more than 8,000 pubs, although both had accumulated so much debt that they ran into trouble come the financial crash and subsequently retrenched. We will have a closer look at the current pub company scene in the next article.

A brief history of Punch Taverns illustrates the volatility surrounding pubcos from the 1990s onwards. Punch formed in 1997, purchasing a tranche of pubs from Bass. Two years later, they bought Inn Business (mostly former Whitbread pubs) and then the rump of the Allied estate. The managed pubs were spun off into a separate division called Spirit. In 2003, they acquired their 3,100-strong rival Pubmaster plus a couple of smaller companies. Next, Scottish & Newcastle's managed pubs were snapped up and added to Spirit. By 2011 the impact of the crash was being felt, calling for a 'strategic review'. Spirit was demerged and, in 2015, sold to Greene King. Come 2016, a takeover bid totalling £403 million (plus the taking on of a billion pounds of debt) was accepted; 1,900 pubs went to Heineken with the remaining 1,300 residing with Patron Capital, although the Punch brand has been retained.

In the meantime, the treatment of their tenants by many of the pubcos had become a major issue and, after years of campaigning, the Government was persuaded, in 2014, to announce a statutory Pubs Code aimed at regulating their practices and ensuring fair treatment for tenants. We will return to the Code in a future article. In this context, though, it needs mentioning that the currently accepted definition of a pub company embraces breweries that own pubs – and nowadays most such companies have

separate management structures for their pub and brewing operations.

Final comments: Pub companies are here to stay. There is nothing wrong with the basic model and, indeed, there are some excellent companies (mostly smaller ones) who treat their licensees well and clearly see their pubs as more than just property assets. It would, though, be difficult to argue that the ways in which some companies operate raise many issues around their custodianship of what are not just piles of bricks and mortar but, in most cases, precious and valued community assets. We will examine those issues in due course.

Paul Ainsworth



MEET THE GOVERNORS THE SHIP INN, BURCOMBE

The scene that greeted Andy and Egija Caston when they bought The Ship Inn in Burcombe in May last year was not one for the faint-hearted. The pub in the little village just outside Wilton had been closed for two and a half years. It was damp, dreary, all the furniture and equipment had been taken out and the garden, crucial to the success of any country pub, was in a chaotic state.

Andy and his Latvian-born wife rolled up their sleeves and worked 18 hours a day for three and a half months. While they decorated the inside of The Ship and sorted the garden out, a team of builders and handymen tackled the more specialist tasks. The result is extremely attractive with a cosy bar and a spacious restaurant area with an elegant traditional feel. There is seating on decking outside and a garden which runs down to the River Nadder.

Astonishingly they opened for business on 7 September to the great joy of Burcombe villagers who had been without a local for so long. But The Ship is much more than a community hub, important though that is. Andy and Egija have hired a chef who produces gastropub standard food with a difference. For example Sunday



Andy and Egija

roasts are served as a sharing lunch – a big piece of meat in the centre of the table from which people can cut their own portions. Andy also takes real ale seriously of which more later.

Andy, who once worked in the TV chef Keith Floyd's pub, and Egija met in Jersey and then, having had enough of being employed by other people, moved to France. There they bought a rundown hotel in the Dordogne which over the next 13 years they turned into one of the



best-rated restaurants in the region. But Andy's thoughts began to turn to home and, once they had sold their French business, they started hunting on this side of the English Channel.

Wiltshire was not 'home' for Andy, who was born in Surrey, went to school in Yorkshire and lived for much of his life in Devon. But The Ship ticked a lot of boxes for the couple. "I had never been to Wiltshire in my life," said Andy. "We were looking for the right pub in a nice village but close to a larger town or city. It had to be a freehouse as we were not going to go near a brewery-owned pub. We saw the potential here and we like the village and its people. We feel at home".

The food at The Ship is sourced as locally as possible. The meat comes from a butcher in Devizes, the fish from a supplier in Downton, just south of Salisbury and the vegetables from local growers. "It seems to be going down well, people like the food" said Andy.

As far as real ale is concerned, Andy soon discovered that south Wiltshire and north Dorset is very well off for small, independent local breweries. So he has been working his way through them all, finding out which ones are most popular with his regulars. He has already tried ales from Hop Back, Plain Ales and Gritchie. On the day that Barrel Organ visited The Ship, he was serving Wriggle Valley's Dorset Pilgrim at 4.2% ABV and Sixpenny's Dorset 6d Gold at 4.0% ABV.

When he has completed this tour of local breweries he will ask his regular customers to vote for their favourite. The winner will then be on tap all the time and there will be one guest real ale alongside it in the winter and two in the summer. It sensibly combines democracy with marketing, giving the loyal core of his customers what they like best.

Giving the regulars what they want has always been an essential part of running a pub, but some things have changed in the 13 years that Andy and Egija were away in France. One is the huge rise in the popularity of gin. In the past just a few major gin brands were on offer to pubs but now hundreds of different labels are available, some of them distilled locally. "I also don't seem to see as many 25 to 30 year-olds in village pubs as I used to previously," he said.

The biggest change of all has been the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic. Although The Ship reopened after restrictions were lifted in England last summer, the onset of the Omicron variant in December inevitably led to cancellations. Like everyone else running pubs and restaurants in the UK, Andy and Egija lost vital pre-Christmas business. One can only wish this couple, who have worked so hard to bring this wonderful south Wiltshire pub back from the dead, the best of luck in what are difficult times for everyone. If anybody deserves to succeed, Andy and Egija do.

Will Bennett



The Rai d'Or

Historic city centre pub (since 1292.)

GBG-listed since 2004 and CAMRA-listed in
'Heritage pubs of the South West.'

CAMRA discount for ale drinkers. Bar drinkers
always very welcome but call ahead on
01722 327137 if you prefer a table, either just
for drinking, or with our affordable Thai food.

For mid evening tables, booking is advised
but not normally necessary early evening
(the most popular time for ale drinkers)

Dog-friendly

Open Tuesday to Saturday from 5pm

69 Brown St, Salisbury. SP1 2AS

THE BLACK HORSE



17th Century, originally three cottages
one of which was a forge.
'Village' pub serving good ales and extensive
good value pub food (no food Sun evenings).
Nice conservatory extension used as restaurant.
With a Real Fire.

2 regular ales, Sharp's Doom Bar
& Shepherd Neame Spitfire
with a changing ale available

Garden & Parking available
Dog Friendly
Traditional Pub Games

01980 619089

www.blackhorsehurdcott.co.uk
Black Horse Lane, Hurdcott. SP4 6HW



CELLARMANSHIP HOW TO KEEP, SERVE AND SELL REAL ALE

Seventh edition of this classic CAMRA publication.

Essential advice for anyone training to work in a pub cellar,
planning a beer festival or serving real ale at a celebration.

Clear and concise technical advice, complete with more than
30 informative illustrations and diagrams.

Useful and comprehensive glossary of terms.

The last word on storing, keeping and serving real ale.

Get your copy of
Cellarmanship today
shop.camra.org.uk

*member price RRP £12.99



PUB NEWS

Here is a round-up of what has been happening in our pubs since the last issue of *Barrel Organ*.

The **Carriers Arms** at Stockton has just been re-opened by the team at The Bell, Wyllye and we wish them all the best. At the moment they are open every day except Mondays and Tuesdays.

The **Horse and Groom** on Wilton Road, Salisbury has re-launched with a new-look menu and The **Old Railway Hotel** at Porton is re-opening on Monday evenings, meaning it is now open for drinks and food every day.

The **Black Horse** at Hurdcott changed hands again just before Christmas and we wish the new landlords, Dave and Rachel, the very best of luck in their first pub. In fact, Rachel tells us she gave up nursing to pull her first pint just a few weeks ago!!

Sadly we have to report that the **Royal Oak** at Great Wishford and the **New Inn** at Amesbury have closed.

Belated congratulations to Lorraine and Paul Cooper for celebrating their 30th year at The **Parish Lantern**, Whiteparish last September. An incredible achievement and long may they continue.



And finally we bring you this photograph of The **Five Bells** in Salisbury which, as we reported last time, has been bought and re-opened by television chef and sandwich guru Max Halley. It looks attractive and welcoming – and yes he has carried out his promise to put a speedboat in the garden!

Sue Turner
Pubs Officer

DIARY DATES *Salisbury & South Wiltshire*



MARCH 2022

16th **City Saunter**
8pm Bishop's Mill, Bridge Tap, King's Head and Old Ale and Coffee House.

APRIL 2022

6th **Open Branch Meeting**
7.30pm Deacons, Salisbury.

8th **Minibus Trip**

6.30pm Yew Tree Inn, Odstock; Royal Oak, Fritham; Lamb Inn, Nomansland and Cuckoo, Hamptworth.

20th **City Saunter**

8pm Deacons, Royal Oak, Halfway House and Horse & Groom.

MAY 2022

4th **Open Branch Meeting**
7.30pm Wyndham Arms, Salisbury

13th **Minibus Trip**

6.30pm Carriers, Stockton; Bell Inn, Wyllye; Rainbow on the Lake, Steeple Langford and Swan, Stoford.

18th **City Saunter**

8pm Cosy Club, New Inn, Wig & Quill and Bell & Crown.

SHORT STORY COMPETITION RUNNER-UP



Back in that seemingly far-off era when none of us knew what a lateral flow test was, Barrel Organ launched a short story competition. As it is a CAMRA publication, the stories had to involve pubs and beer and to the editorial team's great pleasure it produced some wonderful entries. Then the pandemic closed everything down, including Barrel Organ, and we were unable to publish them.

Now that our magazine is up and running again, we want to share them with our readers despite the delay. In November we published the winning entry by Carole Cole, and in this issue the runner-up by Mike Rogers takes pride of place. Mike received a case of mixed ales donated by the Downton-based Hop Back Brewery as his prize for LIVE, a dryly amusing account

of a meeting between a growly northern landlord and a couple of corporate types. You will enjoy it.

We are most grateful to Hop Back for generously supplying the prize and to local author Michael Hambling, a pub and real ale enthusiast, for judging the competition.

LIVE By Mike Rogers

The gurgling sounds made her wonder whether she had come into the right place – whether, indeed, she should be there at all. A spraying noise. The rushing of liquid into an open bowl. A grunt of male satisfaction. A head appeared above the bar.

“Ow do,” it said, and disappeared again.

“Are you all right?” she asked. Southern. Concerned.

“Aye,” the voice answered, “and so’re me pipes now.” The head re-appeared and continued speaking.

“Y’see, what most people forget is that beer’s *alive*. Good beer, anyroad. And live stuff has bits in that need to be got rid of sometimes. If you don’t, you have problems. Mostly, they sink to t’ bottom. But when there’s a big shake-up, or someone who doesn’t know what they’re doing starts scraping the bottom of the barrel, as it were, then stuff as doesn’t belong there can come to the top. But I reckon I’ve sorted it now. And thank you for your kind concern.”

She watched his surprisingly delicate hand embrace the pump-handle and pull it gently, but firmly towards him. He held the glass of clear brown liquid with a thin collar of froth up to the light with satisfaction.

“Is this *The White Swan*?” she asked. “Only I was expecting to meet a friend here, and –”

“That’s the sign, but most folk round here call it *The Mucky Duck*. Northern humour, y’see.” He smiled. She found it no effort at all to smile back. “There was another pub wi’t same name, but it went upmarket and didn’t want to be confused. They changed its name to *The Lobengrin**, so they wouldn’t have to pay for a new sign.”

“And what do ‘most folk’ call *that* one?” she asked.

“They don’t bother. And what can I get you?”

“I think I’d better wait for my friend – ah – here he is now!”

Crombie overcoat, trousers you could cut your finger on, shoes you could see your face in, hair that must have been styled once a week, head set back at an angle which made looking down his nose at people the most natural thing in the world for him.

"I went to the other one," he said, "otherwise –"

"I came just where you told me," she said.

"Yes, well –" He looked down at his feet – but the bare boards, where he might have sought an excuse, were well-swept and perfectly clean.

"What can I get you? Sir? Madam?" There are times when the prevention of embarrassment is so accurately targeted that you think it must be intended to provoke it.

"Lager, I think..."

But she interrupted him.

"The gentleman has some wonderfully fresh, clear, living beer. Surely you ought to try it? Be like the natives?"

"Live is always best – beer – music – don't you think, madam?"

He smiled at her. She smiled back, crinkling her eyes, controlling the laugh she wanted to let out, so that two little dimples of mischief appeared in her cheeks.

"Always," she said.

"You know," said the Crombie overcoat, "I think I'd prefer some wine – before we go on to the – the –"

"Lohengrin," she said. "Our firm's thinking of taking it over," she added to the man behind the bar, who opened his mouth to draw in an expressive but silent breath.

"What will you have, sir?"

"Oh, give me what most people drink." He was sat at a table, getting out his phone.

"And you, madam?"

"I'll be guided by you," she said, in a voice that didn't reach the table. "Give me what you think I'll like." And she walked over to join her companion.

Superficially, the two looked identical. The glasses of wine, that is. But the man, intent on his device, took a swig, as if he were rinsing his mouth in the dentist's and made a corresponding face, while the woman relished the wine's nose, once, twice, then sipped delicately and let it roll over and round her tongue before swallowing.

"Shall we go?" said the man, his glass emptied.

"No, said the woman. "I'm enjoying myself too much." She cradled the glass to warm it some more, inhaled, drank, inhaled.

"Very poor signal in here. I'll just go outside."

She was not to be hurried. The man at the bar could see, by the turn-of-the-century long-case clock on the wall, that she had taken ten full minutes over her glass of wine. He watched, as she took her handbag off the seat beside her and tucked it out of sight under the table. The Crombie overcoat re-appeared, with every gesture of impatience, and they left together. The man behind the bar collected the glasses.

Two minutes later, she burst in through the door.

"Clever idea with the bag," he said.

"I had to make sure he wouldn't interrupt," she smiled, eyes dancing. "But what was that *wine*!?"

He produced the bottle.

"*First growth*?!" she said.

"Of course. Just because I like beer, doesn't mean I don't have any other pleasures that I take seriously. So – will you be back? As my competitor?"

"I'd rather be your collaborator," she said, fishing out her bag.

"Getting mucky in the *Duck*, eh?"

"I might even let you introduce me to what you've got in your pipes."

"If me missus'll let me."

"Have you got one?" she asked, alarmed.

"Not yet. But who knows!"

And she smiled and ran.

[**Lohengrin* – a romantic opera by Richard Wagner, part of the Knight of the Swan legend]

DEREK BLACKSHAW



“They don’t realise what a stubborn old ‘person’ I am” was what Derek said to me after being told the terrible news that Leukaemia was going to beat him. It was as though his fight was to persuade the medical profession rather than the disease itself. Stubborn, tenacious, resolute... this was Derek and what made him a great leader.

Derek joined CAMRA in 2007, keen to be a part of an organisation that supported a passion for real ale. He started to take an active role in the branch in 2010 and in 2014 was appointed as chairman of the branch. Clearly well-versed in meeting etiquette, branch meetings seemed to be a touch more formal from then on. Not content with the chair, Derek was also a huge part of the *Barrel Organ* team, contributing regularly with his ‘Meet the Governors’ articles and many other literary contributions as well as coordinating delivery; interrupted only by his trips to New Zealand to visit his daughter and grandchildren.

There is no doubt that his favourite part of being a CAMRA member was beer tasting; no, not just popping down to the local on a Friday night, Derek headed up our local tasting panel and arranged countless tastings. If you look into your *Good Beer Guide*, many of the tasting notes that accompany the beer listings, were written by Derek and his small team of tasters. The pinnacle of this role was being invited to the Great British Beer Festival in London to be a part of the tasting team who award that most prestigious title of Champion Beer of Britain; something he dined out on for many months afterwards.

Derek relinquished his chair in 2018 but retained the position of vice-chair until his illness forced him to step down in 2021. With his wife, Sue, telling him to take things easy, he still seemed to keep a watchful eye on what was going on in CAMRA even ensuring he could read his emails while he was in hospital... there really was no stopping him!

We will miss him enormously. He was a tremendous asset to the campaign and a very good friend to all of us. A beer tasting panel, somewhere, has just received a new member. Rather than flowers, his family has asked that donations be made in his memory to Leukaemia UK on this page: www.leukaemiauk.org.uk/fundraisers/in-memory-of-derek-blackshaw

Ian Turner

*Chairman Salisbury & South
Wiltshire Branch of CAMRA*

And what the *Salisbury Journal* said about Derek:

For many years the Director of Nursing at The Old Manor psychiatric hospital in Wilton Road and he went on to hold senior positions with Wiltshire Health Authority.

One of the country’s leading consultants and expert witnesses in nursing, a role he continued part-time until only four weeks before his death. Presented with an Award of Merit by the Royal College of Nursing in 2012.

His daughter Liz described him as a loving father and doting grandfather. She said: “He loved me and my sister and my mum absolutely. My mum says that my sister and I had him wrapped around our little fingers, but he had us wrapped around his as well.

“He knew how to serve his community, which is something that my sister and I have both taken forward.”

A FESTIVE TASTING

Why “wine and dine” when you can enjoy good food with an equally good glass of beer? For the past few Christmases, Simon Jackson, a Salisbury local and Master Brewer, has been presenting a festive tasting evening of good beers together with good food, the latter being supplied by his wife Gill. Simon has spent nearly 40 years advising on all aspects of the brewing industry, including a 10-year stint as a director of our very own Hop Back brewery. Now in retirement, he has become a Trustee of Salisbury Museum and it is to help the museum’s fundraising that he hosts this event each December.

Simon summarises the long history of beer before moving onto the best bit. The origins of beer go back into the mists of time and it was known that the first recorded civilisations in Sumeria were brewing it 5,000 years ago. Very early forms of beer would have been liquid bread – bread would have been cooked, dried and then pounded before water being added. The natural occurring yeast in the atmosphere would then move in and add its ‘magical’ fermentation abilities.

From these early days of brewing it was taken up in Europe (especially in the north). It is known that the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans and Vikings all brewed beer. Medieval beer was in fact mainly ‘ale’ – that is to say beer brewed with herbs and spices rather than hops. Hops came along in the 1500s and ale made with hops was called beer. For many years ale and beer brewers co-existed.

Up to modern times beer was brewed mainly in the household or famously in monasteries as the local supply of water was often unfit to drink. The boiling of the malt solution and the presence of alcohol made beer safe to drink. This “gruit ale” (flavoured with herbs and spices) was usually of very low alcohol content and is very rarely seen today. Simon produced for us a medieval-style Stone Angel ale produced by Kettlesmith, a brewery based in Bradford-on-Avon.

For the main event of the evening Simon and Gill presented five more beers with accompanying food to match:

Hall & Woodhouse Tanglefoot with cheese: a full flavoured malty ale which works well with rich, creamy Cheddar.

Ringwood Old Thumper with pigs in blankets and sausage rolls: Another full flavoured beer which carries the richness of pork.

Theakston Old Peculier with Stollen: A magnificent dark full beer which is the perfect match for Stollen or Christmas cake. A Yorkshire treat improved even more if you have some Wensleydale cheese to hand!

Palmer’s Tally Ho with mince pies: A dark old ale – full of dried fruit flavours and a big rich nose – just perfect with a seasonal mince pie.

Hop Back Pickled Santa with Maltesers: A beautifully richly spiced beer – the maltiness, chocolate and sweetness of the Maltesers accentuates the depth of flavour of the beer.

A good time was had by a full house of tasters. The following day had me setting off to the supermarkets to track down some of these beers for a very merry Christmas! Look out for the next tasting from Simon later in the year.

Andrew Hesketh



Simon Jackson at the tasting held at Salisbury Museum.
Photograph: Roger Braddick.



Our tasting selection of festive beers.
Photograph: Neil Beagrie

Love beer?

Love pubs?



CAMRA Membership is for you!

We're leading the fight to keep pubs alive and thriving in every community, serving quality ales and ciders.

Find out more camra.org.uk/joinup

From as little as **£28.50[†]** a year. That's less than a pint a month!

Includes **£30**** Real Ale Cider & Perry Vouchers



Campaign for Real Ale

Or enter your details and complete the Direct Debit form below and you will receive 15 months membership for the price of 12 and save £2 on your membership subscription

Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit www.camra.org.uk/joinup, or call **01727 798440**. * All forms should be addressed to Membership Department, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

Your details:

Title Surname

Forename(s)

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

Address

Postcode

Email address

Daytime Tel

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title Surname

Forename(s)

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

Direct Debit Instruction

Please fill in the whole form using a ball point pen and send to: **Campaign for Real Ale Ltd. 230 Hatfield Road, St. Albans, Herts AL1 4LW**
Email: membership@camra.org.uk Telephone: 01727 867201

Name(s) of Account Holder

Billing Address

Bank or Building Society Account Number

Branch Sort Code

Postcode

Payments will show as CAMRA Membership on your bank statement.

I understand that CAMRA has partnered with Stripe, who collects Direct Debits on behalf of CAMRA and confirm that I am the account holder and the only person required to authorize debits from this account.

Signature



This Guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit, Stripe will notify you 2 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request Stripe to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit, by Stripe or your bank or building society you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
- If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when Stripe asks you to.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.
- Setup of Direct Debit Instruction with Stripe on behalf of CAMRA.



Campaign for Real Ale

[†]Price of single membership when paying by Direct Debit. ^{*}Calls from landlines charged at standard national rates, cost may vary from mobile phones. New Direct Debit members will receive a 12 month supply of vouchers in their first 15 months of membership. The data you provide will be processed in accordance with our privacy policy in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations.



THE SHIP INN

BURCOMBE, SP2 0EJ

Newly refurbished riverside gastro village pub.
Locally sourced seasonal menu, regional ales
and a warm and friendly welcome.

Tel: 01722 744 440

Email: shipinnburcombe@gmail.com

Website: www.shipinnburcombe.co.uk



The Benett Arms Semley

A true freehouse with 4 Real Ale pumps
2 ever-changing guest ales sourced locally and
nationally. Plus real cider always available

Home cooked Food served 7 days a week
with a Roast every Sunday

Join us in our new covered & heated outdoor
area and try out our new pizza oven

• Accommodation • Dog Friendly • Real Log Fires •

www.thebenettarms-semley.co.uk
01747 830221

The Village Green, Semley, Shaftesbury Dorset SP7 9AS



THE SMALL
BREWERY

**WRIGGLE
VALLEY
BREWERY**

MAKING
BIG BEER

STALBRIDGE, DORSET

01963 363343 07599 677139
www.wriddlevalleybrewery.co.uk



Horse & Groom

This handsome pub in a small village on the edge
of the National Park was originally two cottages.
It has been sensitively extended, and within are
numerous discrete, cosy and contrasting areas.
Some tables are cask conversions, and benches remain
attached to the walls of one of the brick porches.
Food includes locally-sourced produce, and is served
all day at weekends (not winter Sunday evenings).
The Avon Valley Path is ¼ mile away.

Regular cask ales

This pub serves 1 regular beer.
Sixpenny 6d Best Bitter

Changing cask ales

This pub serves 3 changing beers.
Changing beers typically include:
Downton (varies), Exmoor (varies), Hop Back (varies)

Open Everyday

Midday - 11.00pm

Meal Times

Mon - Fri noon - 3pm, 6pm - 9pm
Sat & Sun noon - 9pm

01725 510739

High Street, Woodgreen. SP6 2AS
www.horseandgroom-woodgreen.com



DOWNTON BREWERY

NEW FOREST



Telephone:

01725 513 313

email: sales@downtonbrewery.com

WWW.DOWNTONBREWERY.COM