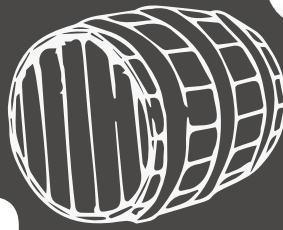


Barrel Organ



*The magazine of the Salisbury & South Wiltshire
branch of the Campaign for Real Ale*

Voted CAMRA's most improved magazine of 2018

September - November 2022

SHOWING FAITH IN OUR PUBS

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IN THIS ISSUE

WINTERFEST RETURNS
IN JANUARY

MEET THE GOVERNORS:
THE GREATER GOOD

AWARD FOR WILTSHIRE'S
VERY OWN DANES

Plus much more...



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FROM THE EDITORS

With economic doom and gloom dominating the news headlines and energy prices going through the roof, we can only be thankful that there are some people still prepared to show their faith in Britain's pubs and the wider hospitality industry. Our front cover picture in this issue of *Barrel Organ* shows Alex and Fritha Seaton with their baby daughter Aurora outside The Greater Good pub in Fovant, near Salisbury. After a series of personal setbacks that might have crushed the optimism of many people, the Seatons are aiming to run the Greater Good as a successful village pub with good quality food. Alex is an experienced chef and has worked as a bar manager but has not run his own pub before. We salute them and hope that people will support them.

Likewise we raise our hats to Maria and Steve Harris and their daughter-in-law Nathalie who are renovating the Boathouse pub next to Salisbury coach station, which has been empty for the past six years. It should be open by the time you read this. Not content with that they have announced that they are taking over the lease of the Old Mill in Harnham, a pub and hotel which recently folded after failing to realise its considerable potential for many years. The Harris family has the right experience having successfully transformed the Stag Hotel in Lyndhurst in the New Forest. We believe that their plans for both venues include having a selection of well-kept real ales but regardless of this, open pubs are better than closed ones. Like the Seatons, they deserve great credit for taking on the Boathouse and the Old Mill in such difficult times.

Kathy, Will & Neil
Editors, Barrel Organ magazine

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Branch area: The Salisbury & South Wiltshire branch covers the whole of the south of the county having incorporated the area around Mere, Hindon, Zeals and Semley. While Salisbury is by far the largest population centre in the branch's territory, there are several smaller towns such as Amesbury and Wilton and large villages like Downton and Tisbury. The branch has nearly 140 open pubs selling real ale, about 70% of which are in rural areas.

Barrel Organ is distributed to these plus other distribution points such as Salisbury railway station.

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MEET THE GOVERNORS

The Greater Good, Fovant



On 3 June this year as the nation marked the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Alex and Fritha Seaton opened the doors of The Greater Good pub in Fovant just six hours after picking up the keys. The bar was stocked but the kitchen was not yet open and even Alex, a whirlwind of energy and optimism, now admits that "in hindsight it was a bit much." But somehow they got through the Bank Holiday weekend and are now forging ahead with their plans for developing the business.



Few couples have faced more challenges than the Seatons over the past couple of years. Alex had set up a business called Alexander Chocolate near Salisbury which won awards for the

quality of its chocolates. But successive Covid lockdowns closed the retail clients on which it depended and the business died. Alex then retrained as a tree surgeon but last November, just two months after the birth of their daughter Aurora, he broke his left leg in three places, when a tree which he was chain sawing flicked sideways and landed on him. Surgeons feared at one point that he might lose his leg.

The Seatons were wondering what to do next when Alex was approached early this year by Barry and Catherine Rimington, owners of The Greater Good in Fovant, seven miles west of Wilton. The Rimingtons were looking to retire after running the pub for some years and asked Alex, who used to be chef at the pub, if he would be interested in leasing it while they retained the freehold.

Alex was initially doubtful but what changed his mind was the fact that The Greater Good has three guest bedrooms and a flat that can be rented out. Having three revenue streams – pub, restaurant and guest house – changed his mind and he and Fritha took out a six year full repair lease from the Rimingtons, who now live in France.



Although 38 year-old Alex has never run a pub of his own before, he has been in the hospitality business for most of his life. After training as a ballet dancer at the famous Italia Conti Academy in London, he left that potential career to work in catering as a teenager and was a bar manager by the time he was 18. He then found that his real love was cooking and he spent the next 15 years as a chef, working in several renowned restaurants.

"I love the science of cooking," he explained. "I am a tremendous nerd and cooking is such a fantastic mix of chemistry, biology and physics." He is self taught – apart from a certificate allowing him to work with liquid nitrogen, which chefs use to change temperature and texture – and he is also a baker and a home brewer.



The Seatons had their kitchen open by 24 June and Alex is passionate about sourcing as many ingredients as possible locally – the meat comes from Farley, near Salisbury for example. He applies the same rule to drinks and now has gins from Shaftesbury, Frome and Salisbury Plain behind his bar. The wine is supplied by the Artisan Wine & Spirit Company of Salisbury, which recently won the Newcomer of the Year award at the national Drinks Retailing Awards. Alex's real ales mostly come from the Gritchie Brewing Company owned by the film director Guy Ritchie at Ashgrove Farm just a few miles away on the Wiltshire/Dorset border. On the day that *Barrel Organ* called at The Greater

Good he had Gritchie's Moon Lore at 3.7% ABV and English Lore at 4.0%. He plans to widen the selection as time goes on but locally brewed beers will remain his priority. "I want to source everything from this area as much as possible," he said. "Keeping food miles low is so important for the environment."

The aim is to produce very good quality pub food rather than emulate some of the high-end establishments where he has worked in the past – a blackboard outside advertising grass-fed sirloin steaks, captures the spirit of The Greater Good. Above all Alex wants it to be a community hub for Fovant. "I will run it as the village needs it to be run and see where that takes me," he said.



Alex has an extraordinary family background – he is a direct descendant of Mary Queen of Scots – and a range of skills that extend well beyond the kitchen. He is a qualified karate instructor and teaches this in Salisbury once a week. While it is unlikely that his martial arts training will ever be called upon in the peaceful surroundings of this south Wiltshire village, the energy and commitment that he throws into that and everything else that he does may help him and Fritha steer The Greater Good through the current turbulent economic times.

Will Bennett

BREWERY NEWS

Sixpenny Brewery

Since the last *Barrel Organ*, two special beers have been brewed: Sixpenny Platinum (3.8%) to commemorate the Queen's Jubilee in early June and Rushmore Gold (3.8%), their summer beer, which became available at the end of June. Both beers have sold very well and the latter will run until early autumn when it will be replaced by Sixpenny Special (4.8%). At the end of autumn, Sixpenny Black (4.4%), the very popular winter special, will become available. The regular beers, Best (3.8%), Gold (4%) and IPA (5.2%) are available throughout the year.



Most of the building work around the brewery and tap is now completed. However, Scott and his team have recently installed a 'Brewery Defence System' which is aligned towards Russia to keep Vladimir Putin out - see the photograph of Scott and Steve operating the 'weapon'! Just in case the Russian president turns out to be a *Barrel Organ* reader, this is a joke Mr Putin!

The Sixpenny Tap has an air conditioning system set at 21C all year which has been especially useful during the summer heatwave. A Cheese Club is held at 5 – 7pm on the first Wednesday of every month (£2 a plate – 12 types of cheese). This is organised by Adele, the Bar Manager, who also organises a collection for

Ukraine. Each day a banned word is posted on the wall and anyone that utters that word has to pay a fine. In July, £122.50 + £30 gift aid was collected for the Ukraine.

Roger Protz visited the brewery on 17 August. Roger has made a major contribution to the development of CAMRA. He is very knowledgeable about real ale and joined CAMRA in 1976. Subsequently, he has written many books on beer and pubs and has edited many editions of the *Good Beer Guide* from 1978, the last one being the 2018 edition.

As previously reported, the large rise in energy and raw materials costs has caused the brewery to diversify to increase income. One additional source of income is the regular Saturday evening music events in the brewery courtyard. The last two gigs in August featured songs from the 1940s and 1950s and "Lost at Sea" who played folk and jazz. Forthcoming groups include: "Spin out UK" (melodic stadium rock) 24 September (TBC) and Six n'Sax (7 piece jazz band) 8 October.

Finally for something complete different! For a special trip to the brewery or elsewhere, you can now hire a Tuk Tuk to take you to the brewery and return you home, if you live within a reasonable distance of Cranborne. The Tuk Tuks are based in Fordingbridge (info@takeatuktuk.co.uk).

Stonehenge

The team which has taken over the Boathouse in Salisbury has visited Stonehenge Ales for a tasting session and a tour of the brewery given by new owners James and Nicola Robinson. They were aiming to have three Stonehenge beers on sale at the Boathouse, which should be open by the time that you read this. Danny, the

general manager, and his colleagues are keen to work with all things local.

Meanwhile everything is going well for James and Nicola, they are busy updating systems and promoting their beers, gin and spring water. Rolling out for October and November will be seasonal beer Mystic, an ABV 4.5 % brown ale brewed using only the finest quality Stonehenge Spring Water, barley, wheat, brown and chocolate malts, whole aromatic hops and the brewery's own top-fermenting yeast.

Brew Shack

There is still relatively little news emerging from the brewery. The three core beers (Bill's Bitter, Pale Ale, and 8 Grain Porter) continue to be available in cans on the website for national delivery and there is free local delivery every Thursday for orders over £30. From social media it appears that a Golden Ale was released as a summer special and was available from a number of outlets.

Dark Revolution

There have been significant changes at the Tap Room over recent months. It is now open every

day for drink in or take away: Mon-Wed 10 to 5, Thur & Fri 10 to 8, Sat 12 to 8 and Sun 12 to 5. The weekend sessions often feature one of a wide range of street food vendors. A further bank of keg taps have been installed with 20 beers now offered on draught allowing them to feature a wider range of their own and other breweries products.

Hop Back

Hop Back's series of seasonal beers is continuing. The September special is Hop Concerto, a 4.5% pale ale which the brewery describes as "a harmony of five hops from across the globe". October will herald the introduction of Red Devil, at 4.6% a new version of Hop Back's usual winter offering Red Ember, which has been enhanced by the inclusion of rye malt in the recipe, while Winter Lightning will return in November. This 5.5% chestnut ale is brewed with Fuggles and East Kent Golding Hops.

Contributors: *Derek Ellis, Gerald Gibson, Neil Beagrie, and Mike Bird*

WINTERFEST RETURNS IN JANUARY

Winterfest, Salisbury's winter beer festival, will be back in January to give real ale and cider lovers a much-needed mid-winter boost after a three-year absence due to the pandemic.

It will be held at Brown Street Entertainment on Friday 27 January 2023 from 6.30pm to 11.00pm with a further single session from 11.00am to 8.00pm on Saturday 28 January. CAMRA is immensely grateful to Amanda Newbery, owner of Brown Street Entertainment,

and Adam Batchelor, its manager, for enabling us to restart this popular event.

Up to 24 ales and five ciders will be served and food will be available. The festival will be selling beers and ciders in units of either one-third or one half of a pint. Details of when tickets will be available will be announced nearer the time.

Andrew Hesketh

SHORT STORY: NEW HABITS IN THE BREWERY

“Beer?” asked the Prioress, raising her eyebrows as she spoke.

The Abbot nodded sadly. “Beer,” he confirmed. The Prioress poured him a cup of tea. He thanked her, and continued. “As you know, our income comes from our beer, and we have earned enough over the years to keep the abbey’s finances in the black, but since Brother Kentigern was struck down so suddenly, things have not gone well.”

“Any chance that Brother Kentigern will be able to return to his duties?” asked the Prioress.

The Abbot shook his head. “No. The stroke was severe. He will have to go into a nursing home when he is discharged from hospital. He needs more care than we can provide, and has lost the power of speech, so he cannot even instruct a successor. Looking back, I should have started young Brother Kenneth much sooner. Brother Kentigern was training him, but he is too inexperienced to run the brewery, and things have gone terribly wrong. Our last batch of Prior’s Pint was a disaster. All the kegs came back; we refunded the purchasers in full, of course, and the bottles never made it out of the storeroom.”

“What happened?”

“They started exploding.”

“Oh dear,” said the Prioress.

“Oh dear indeed. I really don’t know what we are going to do. We need another brewer to run the place temporarily, and instruct Brother Kenneth, but none of the brothers have the necessary knowledge, except possibly Brother Simon who was a biologist before he came to us.”

“Was he involved in food and drink production?”

The Abbot shook his head. “He worked at Porton Down. Something to do with germ warfare.”

“Oh. Not really what you need then.”

The Abbot got up to leave, and the Prioress saw him to his car, before returning to her desk. There was a tap at the door and Sister Jane came in to collect the teacups.

“I don’t suppose you know anything about beer, do you, Sister?” asked the Prioress.

“No Mother, but you might ask Sister Martha. Her family were all in the brewing business,” said Sister Jane.

The Prioress straightened up. “Would you ask Sister Martha to come and see me now, please.”

Sister Martha, freckled and fortyish, smiled broadly at the Prioress’s questions. “Oh yes, Mother. I started in the family business when I left school, and used to help my uncle with the brewing, before I found my vocation here. It’s not the kind of thing you forget.”

“Would you be willing to go over to the Abbey each day, with another of our sisters, to supervise their brewery for a short while?”

"If you would like me to do so, I am quite willing to go and help our brothers. If it is possible I would like Sister Mary to come with me. I think she would be a great help with this project."

The Prioress considered. Then she nodded briskly. "Thank you, Sister. I will email the Abbot straight away."

Brother Kenneth, young, anxious, and painfully shy, was very glad to tell his troubles to the sisters. He found an unexploded bottle of the last batch of Prior's Pint and poured some for Sister Martha to taste. His hopeful expression faded when he saw her face as she tasted it.

"Oh my word," was all she said, putting the glass down. "Right, then, Brother Kenneth, do you have any assistants here?"

"Yes Sister."

"Fetch them please, and then I want all this beer got rid of, and all the brewing equipment cleaned and sterilised before we start again. Sister Mary will help you, and oversee the cleaning."

Sister Mary's eyes gleamed with the enthusiasm of one who truly loved cleaning. Sister Martha felt a brief pang of sympathy for Brother Kenneth and his assistants, but it didn't last. Matters were far too serious for that.

Once the new brew was started, Sister Martha felt much happier. Brother Kenneth may have lacked experience but he was hardworking, listened to her instructions, and, best of all, followed them. The brewery was immaculately clean, and a young assistant displayed an unexpected talent for advertising, which hopefully would reassure the brewery's previous clients.

Finally the day came when the new batch was ready for sampling. The Abbot joined them, and pronounced it delicious, Brother Kenneth agreed, and Sister Martha declared herself satisfied. Then, to the monks' surprise, she asked Sister Mary to give her opinion. Sister Mary tasted, considered, and nodded approval. "You can send it out now," said Sister Martha.

The Abbot asked the Prioress if the sisters could supervise the brewing until Brother Kenneth had enough confidence to take charge himself.

"I can't thank you, and the sisters, enough", he said. "Luckily our customers have forgiven us for that bad batch, and they are delighted with the new stock."

"No more exploding bottles?" asked the Prioress mischievously.

"No more exploding bottles", chuckled the Abbot.

That evening, during Recreation, the Prioress sought out Sister Martha. "It's lucky for us all that you like beer and brewing."

Sister Martha laughed out loud. "Brewing, yes. But I don't like beer."

"You don't like beer?"

"I can't stand the stuff. But Sister Mary, now, she knows exactly how it should taste, which was why I gave her the last word on whether that brew was ready for sale."

Ann Hesketh



PUB COMPANIES

WHO THEY ARE AND WHAT THEY DO

CAMRA's Pub and Club Campaigns Committee feels that many people would find it helpful to have more information about the companies that control many of our pubs. This is the second in a series of articles that 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.

PART 2

THE CURRENT PUB COMPANY SCENE

A pub company is simply a company that owns pubs and there are literally hundreds of them, many with only a handful or even just one pub. However we will concentrate here on the bigger companies who, between them, own over half the country's pubs.

STONEGATE

Founded in 2010 with the purchase of 333 pubs from Mitchells & Butlers, Stonegate grew quite slowly over the next ten years, making a series of acquisitions including brands like Slug & Lettuce, Walkabout and Be At One, until its pub numbers totalled 765. All the pubs were managed houses. A seismic change came in 2020 when Ei Group was bought for £1.27bn, making Stonegate the largest pub company in the UK with 1,270 managed pubs and, as a result of the Ei purchase, 3,200 leased and tenanted businesses.

Ei itself had been founded, as Enterprise Inns, in 1991, initially with 333 pubs from Bass. The company built up its estate, gaining 2,200 pubs in batches by buying them from other companies or taking them over. In 2002, 1,864 pubs were bought from Whitbread and in 2004,

4,054 from Unique. By this time, it owned nearly 10,000 pubs and was in the FTSE 100 list of top companies. However, it was loaded with debt and the 2008 financial crash required a good deal of retrenchment. Ei also started building up its managed estate, including pubs on retail agreements under the Craft Union brand. By the time of the sale, it was down to fewer than 4,000 pubs.

PUNCH TAVERNS

The first article included a brief history of Punch to illustrate the volatility around pubco development. In summary, it grew quickly to around 8,000 pubs, suffered under the crash, sold a lot of pubs including its managed division and was taken over in 2016. 1,900 pubs went to Heineken and 1,300 to Patron Capital, who retain the Punch brand. At takeover time, all pubs were leased or tenanted but it is also now pushing retail agreements (which it calls Management Partnerships). Some pubs were sold but in June 2021 it announced the purchase of Youngs' tenanted division, bringing the current total to 1,282.

ADMIRAL TAVERNS

Admiral was founded in 2003 by two families and grew quickly to 2,300 pubs by 2007. Many of these were 'bottom end' houses disposed of by other pub companies. The financial crash had the usual consequences for over-extended businesses and numbers were down to 1,700 by 2011 and continued to fall. By 2017 it was in the hands of Cerberus Capital Management who sold up to a joint venture by Magners cider-makers C&C Group and estate investor Proprium Capital Partners, by which time there were 845 pubs. The acquisition trail was hit in 2019 with 137 pubs coming from Marstons and 150 from Heineken. The big one arrived in

July 2021 when Admiral bought 674 Hawthorn pubs from property firm New River taking the estate to over 1,500.

Admiral's pubs are all tenanted or leased and tend to be wet-led community operations. It has a relatively good reputation in the trade though there is certainly no aversion to flogging off pubs as 'development opportunities'.

STAR PUBS & BARS

In 1995, Scottish & Newcastle, one of the original 'Big Six' breweries, bought another of them, Courage, making the combined group Britain's biggest brewer. By 2011, the pub arm, then known as S&N Pub Co, had 1,500 tenanted pubs and 600 in management. Come 2008, Scottish Courage was gobbled up by international brewer Heineken and the pub business rebranded as Star Pubs & Bars. Many pubs were sold but then, in 2017, as previously mentioned, 1,900 were snapped up from Punch. Again there were disposals and the estate currently stands at 2,500. Star vigorously promote their retail agreement scheme, Just Add Talent.

GREENE KING



*The Bishop's Mill is one of
Greene King's pubs in Salisbury*

In 1995, Greene King was a long-established family brewer with 900 pubs, nearly all in East Anglia and the south-east. It then embarked on a ferocious acquisition trail, swallowing up many breweries (the likes of Morlands, Belhaven, Morrells and Hardy & Hanson) and other pub companies. GK itself is now owned by a

billionaire Hong Kong property developer. It has some 3,100 pubs, restaurants and hotels, of which 1,200 are tenanted or leased. Its strategy seems to be to move in the managed direction and the 'Pub Ready' retail agreements are pushed hard. GK was once renowned for not letting other people's beers in its pubs but now has a more enlightened attitude.

MARSTON'S

The company was known as Wolverhampton & Dudley until 2007 when it rebranded as Marston's, one of the many breweries it had taken over in recent years. At that time, 2,500 pubs were owned but the total is now down to 1,400. The tenanted estate, in particular, has been reduced through sales such as 200 to New River in 2013 and 137 to Admiral in 2019. In late 2020, the company took on the running of 156 Brains pubs in Wales. Also that year, Marston's merged its brewing operations with Carlsberg but this does not directly affect the pub business.

MITCHELLS AND BUTLERS

Formed originally out of the old Bass estate, M&B has 1,650 pubs and restaurants. The multitudinous brands include Ember Inns, Toby Carveries, Nicholsons and All Bar One – as can be seen, the emphasis is on food. Pubs are mostly managed though around 50 are on a lease arrangement.

JD WETHERSPOON

Since opening its first pub in 1979, 'Spoons has expanded to 925 pubs and 50 hotels, all managed. Plans for 18 new pubs are in the pipeline,

WELLINGTON

Owned by the billionaire Reuben Brothers, the company leases all its 850 pubs on a free-of-tie basis.

Paul Ainsworth

PUB NEWS

Here is a round-up of local pub news since the last issue of *Barrel Organ*.

We start by congratulating **The Ship Inn** at Burcombe for being voted Pub of the Year by readers of the *Salisbury Journal*.

The Black Horse, Great Durnford is still undergoing major building works to the rear but, according to the planning application, intends to continue as a pub when it re-opens and, in other planning news, **The Three Crowns** at Whaddon has applied for partial change of use to a farm shop.



Manager Lionel at *The Pelican, Stapleford*.
Photo: Sue Turner

CAMRA minibus trip. New manager Lionel and his wife Sally have moved from Torquay and are already looking to expand their team. They intend to keep consistent opening hours and are keen to welcome both locals and visitors staying in their rooms.

The Packhorse at Larkhill was closed for refurbishment but should have re-opened by the time you read this and **The Duke of York** in Salisbury is now open from 12pm every Friday afternoon. **The Victoria and Albert**, Netherhampton is still closed and **The Chapel** Nightclub in Salisbury has been sold to an entertainment group called Epic. However, owners Amanda and Jonty Newbery have retained the outdoor venue **Brown Street** which now serves a cask ale.

I'm excited to share the news that **The Boathouse** on the coach park in Salisbury is currently being refurbished by the Harris family who already run the successful **Stag Hotel** in Lyndhurst. The kiosk has been completely rebuilt and is already open as the Boathouse Cabin selling hot and cold drinks, snacks and ice cream. The Boathouse Restaurant and Bar was scheduled to open on 1 September with 10% discount as part of Salisbury City Council's Taste Event. We wish them every success.

We welcome the Seaton family to **The Greater Good** at Fovant. They re-opened on 3 June and intend opening regularly every day except Mondays and Tuesdays. **The Railway Tavern** on South Western Road, Salisbury has changed hands again with Janet and Carl taking over mid-June while Michelle and Daren took over **The Bull Hotel** at Downton on 30 June. The Thai restaurant moved out earlier this year and the **Bull** has gone back to being a pub offering accommodation. There is also a new team at **The Pelican**, Stapleford who we had the pleasure of meeting whilst visiting on a

Some shock news broke recently when a management company was reportedly liquidated causing the sudden closure of the **Cathedral Hotel, Salisbury** and the **Old Mill Hotel**, Harnham. Fortunately for **The Old Mill**, Steve Harris from the Boathouse will be taking over and re-opening as soon as possible with a full refurbishment promised for January 2023.

Salisbury hosted a major Taste Festival from 26 August until 4 September and lots of city pubs (too many to mention) offered special menus, events and discounts. The Salisbury City Garden Bar has been on the Guildhall Square for the summer and continued until 29 August.

And finally the sad news that our neighbouring branch Heart of Wessex has folded which means that we have “adopted” 19 of their pubs. Some were already within our branch area before the formation of the Heart of Wessex branch so for them it’s more of a welcome back.. We look forward to bringing you their news in future updates.

Sue Turner
Pubs Officer

HOOK & GLOVE at Farley



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Bookings recommended

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DIARY DATES *Salisbury & South Wiltshire*



SEPTEMBER 2022

21st City Saunter

7.30pm Chapter House, Red Lion Hotel, Cathedral Hotel (if open) and Haunch of Venison.

OCTOBER 2022

5th Open Branch Meeting

7.30pm Deacons, Fisherton Street, Salisbury.

14th Minibus Trip

6.30pm Crown Inn, Alvediston; Horseshoe, Ebbesbourne Wake; Queen's Head, Broad Chalke and White Hart, Bishopstone.

19th City Saunter

7.30pm Laverstock & Ford Sports Club and the Duck, Laverstock.

NOVEMBER 2022

2nd Open Branch Meeting

7.30pm Wyndham Arms, Estcourt Road, Salisbury.

11th Minibus Trip

6.30pm Railway Inn/Dust Hole, Salisbury; Hook & Glove, Farley; Silver Plough, Pitton and Lord Nelson, Winterslow.

16th City Saunter

7.30pm Devizes Inn, Duke of York, Railway Club and Village Freehouse.

A WELL EARNED AWARD FOR STIG AND ANNA MARIE



Stig Anker (left) and Anna Marie Andersen receive their certificate from Gerald Gibson of the Salisbury & South Wiltshire branch of CAMRA.

Photograph: Roger Braddick.

Stig Anker and Anna Marie Andersen, who recently handed over the reins at Stonehenge Ales in Netheravon after 29 years, have been given a Gold campaigning award by the Wessex Region of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). The certificate was presented to the Danish couple by Gerald Gibson on behalf of the Salisbury & South Wiltshire branch of CAMRA at the recent Beerex XL festival at Salisbury Art Centre.

The award scheme began last year when CAMRA celebrated 50 years of campaigning for real ale and supporting pubs and breweries. Across the UK just 50 certificates were handed out to people, pubs and breweries who had made a national contribution to the campaign.

Gerald said: “Here in Wessex, former regional director John Buckley felt that there were people who had contributed to the cause in our region. So he organised for certificates to be awarded to pubs, breweries and individuals who had gone the extra mile in support of CAMRA’s aims.”

“Nominations were invited from branches and one of the recipients of a Gold Award

certificate were Stig Anker and Anna Marie Andersen, who recently retired,” said Gerald, the CAMRA branch’s Brewery Liaison Officer for Stonehenge Ales. “Congratulations to them both and all involved at the brewery in their contribution over 29 years in Wiltshire.”

In March Stig and Anna Marie completed the sale of Stonehenge Ales to James and Nicola Robinson, who have moved to Netheravon from Essex. The handover and the CAMRA award received substantial coverage in the Danish newspaper *Nordvestnyt*, which is certainly a first in terms of press publicity for both Beerex and the Salisbury & South Wiltshire branch of CAMRA!

Stig and Anna Marie are still living in Netheravon and, now that they have more time, find themselves much in demand as grandparents. Anna Marie, who originally hails from Greenland, is busy writing her autobiography.

Will Bennett



The coverage in the Danish newspaper Nordvestnyt.

BEEREX BOUNCES BACK FOR ITS 40TH BIRTHDAY

The sun shone, the drinkers were back and 55 beers and 15 ciders and perries from brewers and makers as far apart as Cornwall and the Cairngorms awaited them. After a two-year gap because of the Covid-19 pandemic, Beerex returned to Salisbury Arts Centre on 8-9 July, its full title Beerex XL reflecting the fact that it was celebrating its 40th birthday.

The local branch of CAMRA provided the beer, cider and perries, the bar staff and the know-how for Salisbury's summer beer festival which is a joint enterprise with Wiltshire Creative and Rotary COGS. Deacons in Fisherton Street, one of Salisbury's most consistently good real ale pubs, were the main sponsors of the event.

The atmosphere, helped by dry, sunny days and warm evenings and, of course, the tremendous range of beers, ciders and perries on offer was very relaxed. Almost 1,000 people attended the festival with the Saturday lunchtime session sold out, Friday night close to a full house and very good numbers on the Saturday evening. The CAMRA volunteer bar staff – 14 on Friday, 15 on Saturday lunchtime and 11 on Saturday night – were kept fully stretched and when there were delays in refilling glasses the drinkers were unfailingly good humoured.

The warm weather did have some disadvantages. Beer sales were down because people were relaxing outside the Arts Centre, which in an earlier existence was St Edmund's Parish Church (medieval tombs are perfect for perching beer glasses on!), rather than rushing in to get another drink. However they





still managed to consume some 320 gallons of beer and 48 gallons of cider and perry, the latter two proving particularly popular with the female customers. The Saturday lunchtime drinkers proved the thirstiest downing almost 131 gallons of beer compared to 97 gallons that evening and 92 gallons drunk by the more cautious Friday night crowd.

By the time that last orders were called at 11pm on Saturday evening many beers and ciders had sold out including Allsopp's Pale Ale from Yorkshire, Dream a Little Dream and Moonstruck from local brewery Downton, Titanic's much-loved Plum Porter from Staffordshire and Carrot Cake Milkshake from Tiny Rebel in Monmouthshire. Beers such as the latter tend to sell out of curiosity and with the Beerex brochure describing the taste as "aromas of cinnamon and cake, with flavours of carrot cake, sugar and spice", Carrot Cake Milkshake certainly cornered that market. Drinkers voted Inaudible, a hazy pale ale from Vibrant Forest Brewery, Hardley, Hampshire, as the Beer of the Festival.

The other problem resulting from the warm weather – with Beerex later in the summer than in the past due to Arts Centre availability – was keeping the beer cool. The evaporative cooling system struggled to cope but despite that there were no complaints about the beer and plenty of compliments.

Appropriately the Beerex charity this year was Leukaemia UK, in memory of CAMRA's very own Derek Blackshaw, who died from this terrible form of blood cancer earlier this year. Derek, former chairman of the local branch of CAMRA, was passionate about everything he was involved in and that included Beerex. Leukaemia UK supports those affected by leukaemia and blood cancer by funding research

for better treatment and a cure. We urge all readers of *Barrel Organ* to support it.

“Beerex has undoubtedly been the highlight of our year,” said Ian Turner, chairman of the Salisbury & South Wiltshire branch of CAMRA, after the festival. “I would like to thank everyone who helped throughout the week

and beyond. From my perspective, the event was a huge success, especially considering that this was the first Beerex that we have managed since the loss of Derek. We are very much looking forward to Beerex 2023.”

Will Bennett



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