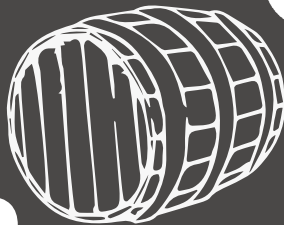


# Barrel Organ



CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE

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

Voted CAMRA's most improved

magazine of 2018

March 2023 - May 2023

## HERE'S TO A WET JANUARY!

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### IN THIS ISSUE

WINTERFEST BACK WITH  
A SELLOUT

MEET THE GOVERNORS:  
THE BENETT ARMS,  
SEMLEY

A BEER LOVER ON  
THE X3 BUS

*Plus much more...*

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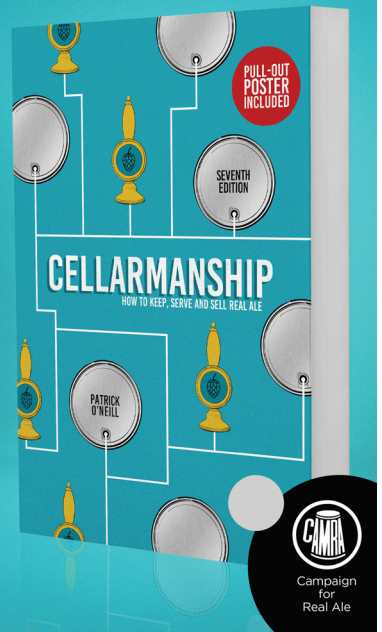
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## FROM THE EDITORS

Every picture tells a story, according to an oft-heard saying and a Rod Stewart song. The one on our front cover this month, which was taken by Eleanor Roberts at a social event held by the Salisbury & South Wilts branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), certainly does. Three of our members are pictured relaxing in The Pheasant Inn in Salisbury. Good company and good beer being enjoyed in a fine pub.

If the finger-wagging puritans who advocate a Dry January had their way we would all be plunged into further gloom at a time of year which is miserable enough already. That is not our approach. Our annual branch social is held in January, thereby avoiding the more numerous events in the run-up to Christmas and providing a much-needed entry in what might otherwise be a thin diary in the first month of the year.

This year Winterfest, Salisbury's winter beer and cider festival, made a welcome return in January after a three year absence due to the Covid pandemic. The need for an event such as this, particularly in the middle of winter, was amply demonstrated by the fact that it was a sellout before the doors opened. More details and pictures can be found in this issue of *Barrel Organ* but the demand for a friendly, conversation-led gathering such as this was overwhelming.

If we did not know it already, the Covid lockdowns taught us that mostly we are social animals craving company, conversation and laughter amid a very troubled world. Pubs and decent beer play an important role in providing this. So Salisbury & South Wilts CAMRA has had an unapologetically Wet January – and we are not talking about the weather!

Kathy, Will & Neil  
*Editors, Barrel Organ magazine*

## SALISBURY & SOUTH WILTSHIRE CONTACTS

**Chairman:** Ian Turner  
Tel: 07795 952374  
Email: [chairman@salisburycamra.org.uk](mailto:chairman@salisburycamra.org.uk)



**Secretary:** Alan Purchase  
Email: [secretary@salisburycamra.org.uk](mailto:secretary@salisburycamra.org.uk)

**Social Secretary:** Bruce Springett  
Email: [social.secretary@salisburycamra.org.uk](mailto:social.secretary@salisburycamra.org.uk)

**Membership Secretary:** Roger Braddick  
Email: [membership@salisburycamra.org.uk](mailto:membership@salisburycamra.org.uk)

**Pubs Officer:** Sue Turner  
Email: [pubs@salisburycamra.org.uk](mailto:pubs@salisburycamra.org.uk)

**Festival Organiser:** Andrew Hesketh (and team)  
Email: [andrew.hesketh@salisburycamra.org.uk](mailto:andrew.hesketh@salisburycamra.org.uk)

**Branch website:**  
[www.salisburycamra.org.uk](http://www.salisburycamra.org.uk)

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.

## EDITORS

Kathy Pascoe, Will Bennett and Neil Beagrie  
Email: [barrel.organ@salisburycamra.org.uk](mailto:barrel.organ@salisburycamra.org.uk)

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Email: [tradingstandards@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:tradingstandards@wiltshire.gov.uk), [www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)

## Campaign for Real Ale Ltd.

230 Hatfield Road, St. Albans, Herts, AL1 4LW  
Tel: 01727 867 201 Email: [camra@camra.org.uk](mailto:camra@camra.org.uk)  
[www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk)

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Neil Richards MBE  
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## MEET THE GOVERNORS

### The Benett Arms, Semley

The Benett Arms, tucked away in the village of Semley in south-west Wiltshire, takes real ale seriously. To emphasise the point, one of its beers is brewed specially by a local brewer, who works behind the bar, and is named after a converted shepherd's hut which provides accommodation for guests. Hoppy Hettie, a 4.2% ABV bitter provided by Matt Glide of the Wriggle Valley Brewery in nearby Dorset, is unique to the Benett Arms and the handpump badge proudly bears the double-headed eagle coat of arms which adorns the pub sign outside.

"It's a real ale pub", said landlady Sam Hatcher, who took over the Benett Arms three years ago just as the first Covid lockdown loomed. Sales of the always available 3.8% ABV classic bitter brewed by Somerset-based Exmoor Ales have been so brisk that the brewery provided Sam and her team with a special 'Benett Arms Ale' Exmoor badge to put on the handpump. Two other guest real ales are always on tap. On the day that *Barrel Organ* visited there were beers from two Somerset breweries - A Game of Two Halves, a 4.0% ABV golden ale from Parkway Brewery Company, and Somerset Soul, a 4.3% ABV autumn special from Fine Tuned Brewery. Such guest beers are usually sold out within two or three days and replaced with something different from small breweries like Stonehenge Ales and the Frome Brewing Company. It is not surprising that the Benett is in CAMRA's *Good Beer Guide*.

For Sam taking over the only pub in the village where she has lived since 1996 was a huge leap of faith. To say that the Benett is a local institution is something of an understatement. The cosy original bar was built in 1604, the building has been used as a pub since 1716 and the weather-battered Grade II Listed freehouse simply oozes a sense of history. But the lease was up for sale and Sam, who had been working as an end of life care nurse, felt that she needed a change of direction.

Sheffield-born Sam had no previous experience as a landlady, although her parents had run a pub. But she nevertheless decided to take out a 15-year full repair lease on the Benett from its private owners in April 2020, and therefore she owns the business but not the building. "We had just gone into lockdown when I signed," she said. "I could have pulled out



*The Benett Arms, Semley, which has been a pub since 1716*



*Sam Hatcher, landlady of the Benett Arms, behind the bar*



*The unique Hoppy Hettie is among the real ales at the Benett Arms*



*The bar at the Benett Arms dates from 1604*

but I decided not to. I had lived in the village for a long time and I knew what the pub could be and hoped it would be.”

The first lockdown was something of a bonus because it enabled Sam to get much-needed work done on the Bennet, including having it rewired. “We were able to get the place sorted out as there was no way that we could have opened when we took it over,” said Sam.

Thereafter it was a matter of finding a path through the business minefield caused by the pandemic. Like so many in the hospitality industry, Sam and her team - her daughter Camilla, Michelle Westwood and John Towson - became adept at finding answers to problems that nobody had ever had to face before. They erected a marquee next to the pub with a van at one end of it converted so that pizzas could be cooked and served. This has been a huge hit with local youngsters. They emphasised that they were dog friendly, sold takeaway meals, made full use of the open area which the pub owns just across the road outside and converted a small horsebox into a travelling bar.

Now that the worst of the pandemic has passed, income from accommodation is crucial. The Bennet has three bedrooms for bed and breakfast guests as well as a shepherd’s hut converted into a comfortable berth for two adults. This is Hettie, after which Matt Glide’s Hopyy Hettie bitter is named, complete with heating and a shower. No shepherd from the past would recognise it, but it provides a charming and unusual place to stay in rural Semley.



*Sam Hatcher outside Hettie, the luxury converted shepherd's hut*

The Bennet does not pretend to be a gastropub, instead serving generous portions of good quality pub grub. Sandwiches, wraps, burgers, salads, ploughman’s lunches, steaks, sausage and mash and pies all feature on a comprehensive menu. “I think that we have started to get a reputation for our food now, people are telling their friends about us,” said Sam.

But business remains unpredictable at a time when people are struggling with the cost of living. “We get more walk-ins and fewer bookings, there is no pattern or logic to it,” said Sam. “The last month has been quite quiet, even Christmas was quiet. I think that people are thinking about what they spend. It is certainly quieter than it was at this time last year.”

Semley, which is between Tisbury and Shaftesbury, is somewhat off the beaten track, and the Bennet has been a crucial part of the fabric of life there for more than 300 years. Sam Hatcher understood this when she took over the lease at a time when the Covid pandemic presented an unprecedented threat to everybody’s way of life. She and her team work incredibly hard to keep the Bennet going and deserve the support of all those who care about traditional pubs and good beer.

Will Bennett

## BREWERY NEWS

### Sixpenny Brewery

Congratulations to the Sixpenny Brewery for the entry of the Sixpenny Tap into CAMRA's 2023 *Good Beer Guide*. This is their fifth consecutive entry since the brewery moved from Sixpenny Handley to Cranborne in 2017. The Tap is adjacent to the brewery both of which are housed in renovated farm buildings.

Their winter seasonal beer, Sixpenny Black (4.4% ABV), was supplied to the Salisbury Winterfest XXIV which was held at the end of January. The current seasonal beer is Cranborne Chaser (3.6%) and a special beer will be brewed to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III in early May.

The Brewery Tap was extremely busy over Christmas, especially on Christmas Eve when approximately 250 people (including 44 walkers wearing black ties and white shirts!) visited the brewery. This caused problems with drinking glasses but fortunately the Tap had a stock of plastic glasses for emergencies. The beer did not run out, but a large quantity of mulled wine was consumed within three hours! Entertainment was provided by local musicians, Phil Humphries Quartet, who played the James Bond theme tunes composed by John Barry. The Tap was open on Christmas Day, 12 – 2.30pm, and again had many visitors. The following week was one of its best weeks for visitors.

On 25 January, the brewery organised a traditional Burns Night Supper which included a bagpiper leading in the haggis, plus beer and whisky of course.

A local author, Michael Leese, has written a short story entitled 'Sixpenny Murders', described as a comedy thriller and based on real characters who work and drink at the brewery. Initially, it will probably be published online, and may later be extended into a longer story.

### Downton Brewery

A lease has been taken out on an additional industrial unit opposite the brewery which over the coming months will be fitted out as a standalone tap room and shop. It is hoped to have this up and running for the Easter holidays. Opening hours will initially be limited to the usual Friday evenings with occasional Saturdays. It is hoped to extend these hours as the summer progresses, according to demand, with coffees also available during the working week.

A batch of Roman Imperial Stout 10% ABV is currently in preparation and, in the coming months, will be available in 330 millilitre cans for the first time.

Preparations are underway for a new brew to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the brewery's opening. This will be an easy drinking IPA at 4.5% ABV generously hopped with Australian and US hops yielding a herbal and floral bitterness balanced against a light malty background.

Looking further ahead it is hoped to relaunch Pumpkin Ale as October's special and a new Christmas Ale (Let it Sloe) next December, flavoured with sloes and spices.

### Stonehenge Ales

March sees in James and Nicola's one year anniversary at Stonehenge Ales - how time has flown by. They have been extremely grateful for the huge welcome and support they have received on their new venture and there is no looking back as they settle comfortably into brewery life.

Sign of Spring (4.6% ABV) is back for another year, this green beer being available between March and May just in time for St Patrick's Day. The Stonehenge Ales merchandise and gift range is now available online for home delivery within a 15-mile radius, or you can pop into the shop on site at the brewery. So far the new collection has been very popular.

## Dark Revolution

The Taproom has new furniture giving it more of a cosy bar feeling and is open for drink in and take-outs Monday to Saturday. There are now 20 lines in use giving a wide range of their own and guest beers with about two thirds of the lines currently on Dark Revolution products. The large fridge gives an even wider range in cans. Most weekend sessions now feature one of a range of artisan food producers. Regular tasting events and quiz evenings are happening with a wider range of events planned. The arrival of a 50 litre brew line will allow a wide range of experimental brews so watch out for regular new innovative beers. For details of events etc. keep an eye on their social media.

## Hop Back

Head brewer Jamie has finalised the special and seasonal brews for 2023. In addition to the regular cask ales we can look forward to some very interesting beers in the coming months.

March will bring us the aromatic Spring Zing (4.2% ABV) made with maize, wheat, barley and European hops. In May Coronation Ale (4.8% ABV) will use three heritage English Hops and Maris Otter malt giving us a premium golden ale with a zesty finish. Later in the year we can savour Green Hopped (5.0% ABV) made with fresh Kentish hops. These are taken directly from the farm and added to the copper in a matter of hours. This technique captures the delicate tastes and aromas that are lost during the normal hop drying process.

**Contributors:** *Derek Ellis, Gerald Gibson, Nigel Allison, Mike Bird and John Hinton*



## CIDER AND PERRY IN SOUTH WILTSHIRE

Since CAMRA began to campaign for real cider and perry, the practices and processes in the industry have evolved so much that the Campaign produced the following definition.

“CAMRA defines real Cider and Perry as being fermented from the whole juice of freshly pressed apples or pears, without the use of concentrated or chaptalised juices.”(Chaptalisation is a process where the alcohol level is increased by the addition of sugar, and then diluted with water to the desired alcohol content for sale.)

The area covered by the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Branch has over 20 pubs indicating in WhatPub (CAMRA's online pub guide) that they serve real cider. I have visited several and

sampled some very good ciders. However, not all these drinks have been *real* ciders. Although some pubs have a good understanding of the CAMRA definition, many do not.

Real ciders and perries are often only found in the areas in which they are produced, and of course at beer and cider festivals, so it is good to see so many real cider pubs in our area where cider is not traditionally produced. It is important that we support these pubs if we want to see the sale of real cider and perry continue.

Jane Foster

## CRAFT BEER IN THE SUNSHINE... AND *BARREL ORGAN* ON THE ROAD

Putting to one side the debate about craft beer and real ale, one important thing to me when travelling abroad is still having access to a decent glass or two of beer. Given that cask beer is pretty much a uniquely British pleasure, compromise is required. My compromise does not extend to drinking the mass produced Euro-fizz products readily available across southern Europe (or smooth-pour John Smith's for that matter) so a little advance planning can turn up some real diamond experiences.

Heading off to sunny climes generally involves heading to areas where the grape abounds and wine is the predominant tippie. Whilst I still enjoy an odd glass of wine, beer is my drink of choice and it is heartening to discover that interest in it is spreading fast in southern Europe and the Mediterranean countries and islands that I have visited. The growth of small breweries and craft beer bars is encouraging so here is some information on my current favourite and stand-out destination, Funchal, the capital of the Portuguese Atlantic island of Madeira, and what it has to offer.

**Fuga Cidade, Rua do Conde de Canavial 22, Funchal.** Definitely the No.1 choice for discerning beer drinkers whose taste lies in the more adventurous beer arena. A small tucked away but easy to find family-run bar fronted by the enthusiastic owner Duarte Chaves, very welcoming and really into his subject (think Jacob of Sips in Salisbury here). The bar has eight taps running with craft beers from mainland Portugal and further afield, alongside a fridge full of bottles and cans from a host of different countries. Slightly hidden away in the back is a "secret" fridge with a selection of limited edition brews accessed only at Duarte's discretion if he thinks you will really appreciate them. In October 2022 a party from the Barona brewery flew over from mainland Portugal to do a "meet the brewer" and tasting evening, with six of their beers on tap. A small menu of home cooked local food and tapas-style snacks is also available. Duarte loves getting CAMRA and other beer magazines, so if you are heading there take some in, or just browse the selection already there. I gave him some copies of *Barrel Organ*.



Gerald Gibson (right) presents Duarte Chaves with Barrel Organ



Drinkers relax at The Beerhouse



Limited edition brews from Duarte's 'secret' fridge

For a small island Madeira has a good number of decent beer drinking spots, and beer does seem to be a bigger part of island life than on the Mediterranean equivalents such as Cyprus, Crete and the Balearic Islands, although things are on the up in those places too. Here are some details of a couple of my other favourites on Madeira:

### The Beerhouse, Avenida da Mar, Funchal.

Probably the best located is The Beerhouse alongside the marina and promenade in Funchal. A brewpub offering an eclectic range of beers, up to around 12 generally, along with a small selection of long-aged barley wines, porters and stouts. Great location with a lovely outside area and quality food. Not all of the beers offered are brewed on site (does it really matter if they taste good?), some come from island brewery Coral, and it is a bit pricey but I am on holiday! A lovely spot to while away an hour or two in the sunshine. The beer menu can be found online at [www.beerhouse.pt/menu/rest.php](http://www.beerhouse.pt/menu/rest.php)

**Musa Lounge Bar, Rua Imperatriz D Amelia, 9000-018 Funchal.** Not owned by the

mainland brewer Musa (I believe) but a stockist of their beers. A modern bar probably aimed at a younger crowd – think cool, trendy décor, music – but there is a good beer offer. Six varied Musa beers on tap and several fridges of bottles and cans from Portugal and further afield. It is located off the main centre of Funchal but in an area of bars and restaurants with a livelier feel to them. For folk of “a certain age” like me it works best earlier in the evening before the music goes up a few notches, when it is time to head to the calm of Fuga Cidade. Plenty of seating inside but a limited offering outside. The website is at [www.musaloungebar.com](http://www.musaloungebar.com)

These suggestions are all located around the centre of Funchal which is a “real” city rather than a purely tourist-orientated area so you are likely to encounter locals and visitors alike. Don't expect everyone to speak English!

Gerald Gibson

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## WINTERFEST RETURNS IN TRIUMPH



*The entrance area at Brown Street*



*James and Nicola Robinson from Stonehenge Ales*



*The inner bar area at Brown Street*

Winterfest, Salisbury's winter beer and cider festival, returned after a three year gap due to the Covid pandemic and proved that absence does make the heart grow fonder. Always a popular event amid the January gloom, the 24th edition of Winterfest, run by the Salisbury & South Wilts branch of CAMRA, was a sellout with all 400 tickets for the two sessions being snapped up before the doors opened.

The 2023 Winterfest was different in some respects from its predecessors. For a start it was held at a new venue, the Brown Street music and entertainment hub just around the corner from The Chapel nightclub, where it last took place. Many thanks to Amanda Newbery, owner of the Brown Street premises, and Adam Batchelor, its manager, for enabling the festival to return.

Then there was a new logo, an appropriately wintery looking pint glass, designed by Salisbury artist Fred Fieber. Another first was a 'meet the brewer' session with James and Nicola Robinson, who took over Stonehenge Ales in Netheravon last year. Finally there was a new organising team in place led by Festival Co-ordinator Andrew Hesketh. An event such as Winterfest may look effortless on the surface but it involved a huge amount of hard work by Andrew and his colleagues.

But the essentials remained unchanged. A selection of 24 cask ales and five ciders gave festival-goers a tremendous choice. Some, such as Downton Brewery's rich biscuity Oatmeal Stout, were from nearby while others, like Jarl, a session blonde showcase for citra hops from the Scottish brewery Fyne Ales, had come from much further afield. There were gluten-free and vegan beers to



*A fine selection of cask ales*

ensure that all needs and tastes were catered for. The Winterfest ‘buzz’ was back as well. The festival is a conversation-led event and the ‘buzz’ is a blend of quiet chat and contented appreciation of good beer and cider. No loud music, no raised voices, no discord other than whether a particular beer billed as “delivering chocolate orange decadence” was a delicious treat, a mere curiosity or an alcoholic abomination.

Many familiar faces from previous Winterfests at The Chapel and other venues before that were back, delighted at this further evidence that life is returning to pre-pandemic normality. There seemed to be more women at this year’s festival, which is much to be welcomed, but there are still too few people in their late teens and twenties. Perhaps conversion from lager to proper beer is something that comes with the acquired wisdom of greater age.



*There seemed to be more women festival-goers*



*Familiar faces from previous Winterfests returned*

Next year will be the 25th Winterfest – a silver jubilee event delayed by Covid. All the evidence from the 24th is that the festival is in excellent health.

Will Bennett



## PUB NEWS

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

Our pubs pulled out all the stops to give their customers a great time over the festive period and they are now doing all they can to rise above the current utility costs. *The Salisbury Journal* is running a series of articles featuring city pubs which are currently doing well and have recently enjoyed bumper trading figures. So far we have read about the successes of **The Royal George**, **The Five Bells**, **The Dust Hole**, **The Duke of York** and **The Ox Row Inn**. Congratulations are also in order for **The Bell and Crown** at Zeals on being named UK Pub of the Year by *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* and **The Ox Row Inn** won the Best Town/Local Pub category in the Fuller's Griffin Trophy.

It was good news and bad news for **The Royal Oak** at Great Wishford when they sadly had to close due to a water leak so soon after re-opening. Hopefully by the time you read this Kerry Leonard, the new manager, will have got the place open again and on the way back to its former glory. **The George Hotel**, Amesbury is still closed for refurbishment and **The Old Mill** at Harnham opened as promised for 'drinks only' throughout December then closed again in

early January for the rest of the refurbishment to the hotel and kitchen. They are hoping to be back open again within a few weeks. **The Bull Hotel** at Downton changed hands last August and closed the kitchen temporarily on 9 January for refurbishment and improvements.

Some changes of hours or service to city pubs include **The Duke of York** opening an extra 40 hours a week which means being open every day from 12pm, **The Boat House** Salisbury will be closed Mondays and Tuesdays (until 1 March) and **The Royal George** has decided to stop serving food.

Finally, news of the **Progress Café and Bar** that's recently opened on Endless Street. It is a licenced café and bar offering a safe space for the LGBTQ+ and wider community open every day offering drinks and hot food, pool table and a meeting space for community groups to hire. The project is being managed by Caroline Corbin who hopes to also house the Salisbury Pride shop upstairs. I don't believe they serve real ale yet but watch this space!!

**Sue Turner**  
*Pubs Officer*

## OUT WEST

Since the demise of the Heart of Wessex sub-branch, and its area re distributed to, in my case, Salisbury and South Wilts branch, there has been little in the last few *Barrel Organs* about the western part of our branch. This is as much our, or my fault as anyone's.

The main body of members of Salisbury branch, I imagine, are in or close to the City of Salisbury. I have no idea how many are out in the western area, the active members of Heart of Wessex

were mostly in Dorset and Somerset and are now within the circulation area of West Dorset CAMRA's *Giant Dongle* magazine.

As, possibly, the most westerly member of Salisbury branch, I will attempt, occasionally, to enlighten you city folk, of the delights of our area.

Firstly, for anyone unfamiliar with the branch area change, although Heart of Wessex sub

group was always part of Salisbury branch, it had within it large areas of Dorset, including Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Stalbridge, and parts of Somerset, such as Wincanton and Castle Cary. My part of Wiltshire, Mere and surrounding villages, was taken in fully as part of Salisbury branch when Heart of Wessex closed.

If you ever plan to travel west please drop into any of the following, some of which you may already know of:

From east to west, we have Semley and the **Benett Arms**. Usually with three to four ales on pump, Exmoor Bitter and Wriggle Valley's Hoppy Hettie are the house beers. Frequently you will find local ales from Twisted (Westbury), Fine Tuned (Somerton, Somerset) and Wriggle Valley (Stalbridge).

Heading north west, avoiding Dorset(!), we find Mere with three pubs here:

**The Butt of Sherry**, Exmoor and Otter are the regulars, on three to four pumps. It is open 11am to 11pm (10.30pm Sundays)

**The Walnut Tree**, always has their Walnut Best (Wessex Brewery) and usually St Austell Tribute.

**The George Inn**, in the centre of Mere, is a Hall and Woodhouse establishment, and often, at the moment, closed by 9 to 9.30pm.

About two miles west of Mere, on the old A303, is our most westerly pub, **The Bell and Crown**, at Zeals, serving Butcombe and Cheddar Ales. They are closed Tuesdays.

Unfortunately, **The Red Lion** just north of Zeals at Kilmington, is now closed. It was for a very long time an entry in CAMRA's *Good Beer Guide*, until its closure in 2020. This is a National Trust property, close to Stourhead, but shows no sign of re-opening soon.

I hope you find this information useful, and the next time you venture westward, please drop in, and tell them Allan sent you.

Allan Glide

*(Editor's note: The city dwellers who compile Barrel Organ fully accept Allan's comments. We hope to have restored the balance in this issue by making the Benett Arms the subject of our 'Meet the Governors' series and also including Allan's column.)*

## DIARY DATES *Salisbury & South Wiltshire*



### MARCH 2023

#### 10th Minibus Trip

6.30pm Hatchet Inn, Lower Chute; Swan, Enford; Dog & Gun, Netheravon; and Stonehenge Inn, Durrington.

#### 15th City Saunter

7.30pm Market Inn, Ox Row Inn, Haunch of Venison.

### APRIL 2023

#### 5th Open Branch Meeting.

7.30pm Ox Row Inn, Market Place, Salisbury.

#### 14th Minibus Trip

6.30pm Fox & Hounds, East Knoyle; Lamb Inn,

Hindon; Beckford Arms, Fonthill Gifford; and Black Dog, Chilmark.

#### 19th City Saunter

7.30pm Old Ale & Coffee House, King's Head Inn, Bishops Mill and Sips.

### MAY 2023

#### 3rd Open Branch Meeting.

7.30pm Wyndham Atms, Estcourt Road, Salisbury.

### JUNE 2023

#### 7th Open Branch Meeting.

7.30pm Winchester Gate, Rampart Road, Salisbury.

## A BEER LOVER'S DAY OUT ABOARD THE X3 BUS

A perennial challenge for CAMRA members in mainly rural branches such as Salisbury & South Wiltshire is actually getting out to some of the pubs you read about in *Barrel Organ* and other branch magazines. Sometimes a willing 'designated driver' can be found, but for those without access to a car or venturing out on their own the options can seem limited. There are however a number of good, relatively high frequency bus routes around the Wessex region with which you can plan a respectable pubs tour.



the estimable London Tavern a mile and a bit out of town. I found myself then at The Inn on the Furlong, on the basis it was right by the bus stop, but it proved to be a respectable start: a homely, clearly well-run freehouse offering the local 49er and Ringwood Best alongside Summer and Winter Lightning.

A brief word on the logistics of the X3 pub tour. Weekdays and Saturdays there are half hourly buses, with hourly services on Sundays. It being the latter, I limited myself to one pint and had a brisk walk around the town before boarding the bus to my next stop, the Old Beams Inn at Ibsley. With its fine thatched roof and large dining area, this is something of a destination gastro pub for the family Sunday lunch, but they always have a couple of ales on. 49er made a second appearance of the day, again alongside the less familiar sight of Dark Revolution's 'Go To' pale ale. Hats off to the Old Beams for supporting one of the smaller local breweries.

It was with that in mind that I ventured aboard the southbound X3 from Salisbury early in the New Year. As luck would have it, in a fit of largesse and rare sense the Government had just a few days earlier announced the launch of £2 bus fares, meaning I could have travelled all the way to Bournemouth on the X3 for the price of a half pint. As it was, I opted not to start the tour on the coast and instead began my day in Ringwood. Aside from not fancying a trip up and down the A338, the pub pickings in Bournemouth along the route of the X3 are pretty slim, though Chaplin's in Boscombe deserves an honourable mention.



*Inn on the Furlong,  
Ringwood*

Despite a population of 15,000 and a brewery in the town, no Ringwood pubs feature in the latest Good Beer Guide, the closest listing being

Ducking back across the busy main road to the bus stop (there is no shelter on the northbound side, so time your departure well) I headed north to Fordingbridge to pay another visit to The Crown. An honest boozier on the main high street, one half of the place is



*The Crown, Fordingbridge*

admittedly dominated by a pool table and some big screens but the bar and seating area is sizeable, with an open fire and a side room. Beer-wise, I recall better options on my previous visit as today it was just Doombar, Doombar Amber and a novelty Christmas beer I steered well clear of. There is a Greene King establishment, The Ship, two doors down if the selection at The Crown is not to your liking but this is the better pub.

Back aboard my trusty red and blue steed, it was a short hop to my penultimate stop, The



*The Bat & Ball, Breamore*

Bat & Ball in Breamore. A fine looking gabled red brick building, the owners have gone all-in on the food side of things and this is a

place that very much wants to be a restaurant. The beer drinker is nonetheless welcome, and on both my visits 49er (again) and Razorback have been on offer. January conditions prevented me taking my pint out to the promising looking beer garden.

And so to the last destination of the day, Downton. Whilst I had wanted to stick to pubs as close as possible to the bus stops, The Bull Hotel on the main road is not much of a draw from an ale perspective. Better to venture a few



*Handpumps at The Wooden Spoon, Downton*

hundred yards into the village to The Goat or allow 15 minutes or so to walk to The Wooden Spoon. I really like this pub - the food here has always

been excellent and the welcome warm. A pint of Honey Blonde from Downton Brewery was my only sustenance on this visit, though Landlord was on tap too had I fancied a second.

With hindsight I should have allowed time for a visit to the Radnor Arms at Nunton (jump off at the northbound Bodenham bypass stop and you are five minutes away, but those doing this trip southbound face a perilous crossing of the dual carriageway). A firm local favourite, landlady Louise and her team continue to offer wholesome pub fare alongside a selection of two and usually three good beers.

As my final bus of the day sped back through the rain into Salisbury I did wonder why I had opted to do this trip in the middle of winter. Still, if a good day can be had when the temperature is about five degrees, imagine how enjoyable this journey would be in the summer months.

**Harold Le Roy**

## THE CUCKOO INN



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## NEW *BARREL ORGAN* SHORT STORY COMPETITION: ‘THE PUB WITH NO NAME’

The *Barrel Organ* editorial team are pleased to announce another short story competition, similar to the one we ran in 2019/2020. This time we are providing you with the title of your story, ‘The Pub With No Name’. It is up to you to construct a story around this title and theme. Good luck!

**Deadline:** 30 June 2023.

**Maximum length:** 1000 words. Single letter words and numbers count as a word.

**Title:** ‘The Pub With No Name’.

**Format:** MS Word or compatible (doc, docx, odt, rtf, txt. NOT pdf or Apple Pages).

**Send to:** Send your entry, as an email attachment, to [willbennett1950@gmail.com](mailto:willbennett1950@gmail.com)

**Filename:** Please ensure your story’s filename contains your name or initials.

**Prizes:** The winner and runner-up will receive beer-related prizes.

Your story must **not** have been previously published. It remains the copyright of the author but must not appear in any other publication until the results are announced and published in *Barrel Organ*. Submitting authors do not need to be beer drinkers (if you are not, you are really missing out!) or even CAMRA members (though we would love you to be).

The entries will be judged by local Wiltshire/Dorset author Michael Hambling, a CAMRA member. Michael advises: “Aspects of a story, such as plot, characterisation, point of view, style, and so-on are important, but to try to judge a story first and foremost by these criteria is to come at it from the wrong end. A story should be judged as a whole. Individual stories differ so much from one another that it is impossible to adopt a fixed set of criteria, and this was the case

in the previous competition. A useful tip: once you think your story is finished, wait a few days then ask a family member to read it aloud while you listen with a critical ear. Alternatively, if you have an up-to-date copy of MS Word, use its *Read Aloud* feature.”

The decision of the judge is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

You can use your real name or a pen-name and only the editor will know who you are until the winners are announced.



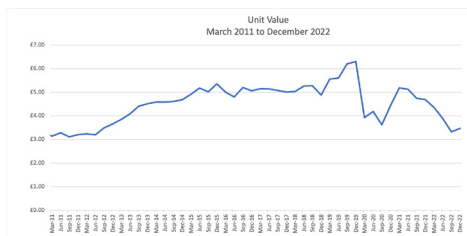
## A UNIQUE INVESTMENT CLUB



Neil Beagrie proving that investing can be fun

Have you ever wished that you owned part of great real ale breweries like our local Hop Back and Ringwood breweries or part of your local pubs? Or had an opportunity to “keep an eye on your investments” with regular brewery tours in the company of like-minded CAMRA members?

The CAMRA Members Investment Club (CMIC) gives local CAMRA branch members an opportunity to do all these things. The Club was founded in 1989 and deserves to be better known, so here is a short list of CMIC key facts and member’s benefits:



CMIC unit value March 2011 to December 2022

- CMIC is now one of the largest investment clubs in the country with over £16 million invested and more than 3,000 individual members.
- It invests in shares of companies whose activities include brewing and/or retailing real ale.
- It is open only to CAMRA members. You can join by investing as little as £5 per month and stop contributions or make withdrawals at any time.
- There are no CAMRA monies involved in the club. The investments are owned by the club’s members and nobody else.

- As a member, you and the elected CMIC committee acting on your behalf, have a say as shareholders on company policies and can encourage the growth of real ale.
- It can also be very enjoyable. CMIC organises regular brewery tours in the UK and one “international” every year so you can inspect and taste your investments: these are great social occasions (and the beer is normally provided free!).
- A selection of shareholder perks and offers are available to CMIC members: for example discounts on accommodation offered by Young’s.



CMIC members on a tour in Belgium

If you would like to find out more or to join CMIC see information on the website <http://www.cmica.uk.com/> or speak to me as CMIC Ambassador for the Salisbury and South Wilts branch.

Neil Beagrie



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A man wearing a tan cap, glasses, a red t-shirt, and a brown apron is smiling broadly while carrying a large, silver metal cask on his shoulder. He is in a workshop or brewery setting with industrial equipment in the background.

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