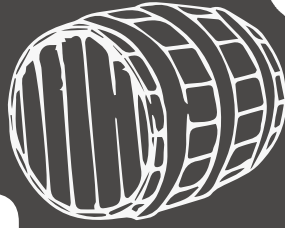


Barrel Organ



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

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

September 2024 - November 2024

WELCOME TO THE CIDER SHACK

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IN THIS ISSUE

CHITTERNE
FUNDRAISERS' SUCCESS

NEW BREWERY WINS
FESTIVAL VOTE

THE HATCHET INN,
LOWER CHUTE

Plus much more...



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FROM THE EDITORS

Raise a glass to the villagers of Chitterne. The 300 people who live in this isolated community on the edge of Salisbury Plain were not prepared to stand idly by when the King's Head, the last pub in the village, closed. They formed the Chitterne Community Pub Group and set about raising more than £200,000 via a share issue. They have now reached this target, with almost 100 people chipping in, and, with further help from an anonymous private investor, have begun the process of buying the King's Head. If all continues to go well, it will represent a triumph for a remarkable community effort.

Cider does not often feature in the pages of *Barrel Organ*, so one of our contributors visited Cranborne Chase Cider. What comes across is the passion that Bill Meaden, who has run the business for more than a decade, has for both his product and his land. That's Bill on our front cover photographed by Jane Foster at the door of the shepherd's hut that served as his original farm gate shop. No wonder the business is a success. Who could possibly resist the charm of 'The Original Cider Shack'.

Finally, in this roll call of local heroes, we salute Paul Bartlett, who runs the Dead Duck Brewery at Hale on the edge of the New Forest. This began life as a home brew on the floor of his London flat. At CAMRA's Salisbury Summerfest 2024, his Knightwood Oak porter was voted Beer of the Festival by a thumping majority. A local CAMRA delegation travelled to Hale to present his certificate and sample his beers. Well, it would have been rude not to!

Kathy, Will & Neil
Editors, Barrel Organ magazine

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Branch area: The Salisbury & South Wiltshire branch covers the whole 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.



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MEET THE GOVERNORS

The Hatchet Inn, Lower Chute

In almost half a century as a landlord Jeremy McKay, who runs the Hatchet Inn at Lower Chute on the Wiltshire/Hampshire border, has seen English rural pub life change almost beyond recognition. The farm labourers and



Landlord Jeremy McKay behind the bar

other workers who used to form the core of pub business have vanished. So too have the youngsters who used to meet and then date in pubs but who now search for love online and who in any case drink less than previous generations. Late night drinkers have become an almost extinct species within the last ten years.

usually want to eat and so the Hatchet Inn has developed a highly regarded menu of traditional pub food to attract customers, the overwhelming majority of whom come from outside the village.

“We are a destination pub”, said Jeremy who bought the pub in 1991, when it was in receivership, and has run it ever since. And what a destination it is. The magnificent thatched building began life in the 13th century as a barn house with animals kept underneath it. It became a pub about 150-200 years ago, the name Hatchet Inn deriving from ‘Hatchgate’ which was a foresters’ entrance to Savernake Forest.



Jeremy McKay at the pub entrance



The Hatchet Inn is a classic, thatched building

In their place have come the pensioners, the all-powerful ‘grey pound’, with both time and money at their disposal. Jeremy says that 90% of his lunchtime trade comes from retired people and in the evening they still constitute 60%. They

Lower Chute is one of a group of small villages known collectively as The Chutes which are somewhat off the beaten track between Ludgershall in east Wiltshire and Andover in north-west Hampshire. The Hatchet Inn is just on the Wiltshire side of the boundary and in 2021 was the county winner of the National Pub and Bar Awards organised in conjunction with *Pub & Bar* magazine. The awards showcase the



UK's finest pubs and bars and to receive it was a considerable accolade.



A doggy in the window

Awards such as this do not just happen but involve a huge amount of hard work and, in the case of the Hatchet Inn, a great deal of investment. The property needed rethatching when Jeremy moved in and then, after more than 30 years, needed the same work doing again last year, which cost £70,000. A new kitchen was built and then extended to reflect the importance of food as a source of revenue.

Many country pubs now do bed and breakfast and the Hatchet has gone for this in a big way, with eight rooms in two buildings that are entirely separate from the main part of the pub. One is a conversion, while the other was built from scratch and both fit in well with the principal building. Bed and breakfast guests are a 'captive audience', likely to eat and drink in the pub but this market also has plenty of overheads such as laundry bills and agents' fees.

Jeremy's grandfather and mother, who were both pub landlords, would not recognise this way of doing business. Nor would the landlords of the Hatchet throughout much of its history. As recently as the early 1960s, the Hatchet only sold beer and did not have a spirits licence. So if a customer wanted a whisky, they had to go across the road to another pub, which has long since closed down.

Beer is still important. When Jeremy ran the Sun Inn at Bentworth, near Alton, for six and a half years he used to have ten different ales on but that is no longer feasible. The Hatchet has three beers on handpumps, with Proper Job and Tribute from the Austell Brewery in Cornwall, regular mainstays. Local breweries such as Stonehenge Ales from Netheravon, Hop Back from Downton and Ramsbury Brewery from Aldbourne, are also to be found at the bar. Jeremy has been in the business so long that he used to buy Benchmark ale, produced by Bunce's Brewery, which was the predecessor of Stonehenge Ales.



The Hatchet's superb interior



One of the bed and breakfast annexes

Now that he is approaching his 70th birthday and the final payment on the mortgage on the Hatchet is coming into sight, he is planning to sell up and retire. "I think that 47 years in the pub trade is enough for anybody," he said. "It was more enjoyable when I first started out and there were some great characters about then. The characters have gone now. I miss them".

Will Bennett



BREWERY NEWS

Stonehenge Ales

The open day on 29 June celebrating 40 years of brewing in Netheravon was a great success with about 150 people stopping by to take a look around and sample some of the product, courtesy of owners James and Nicola Robinson. The specially brewed beer, 40 Summers, named to acknowledge 40 years of brewing at The Old Mill proved to be really popular and was the fastest selling beer at the Summerfest 24 beer festival in Salisbury.



Smiling faces at Stonehenge Ales open day

Pillars of Pale, launched last year, has now been brewed and will be around until the end of September, hopefully being seen in some pubs in the Salisbury area. The awards continue to roll in with two bottled beers, Heel Stone and Great Bustard, winning prizes at the Taste of the West event. Although not bottle conditioned, the beers are always popular with local CAMRA members.

Sixpenny Brewery

The Brewery held a special event on Saturday 8 June to commemorate D-Day (6 June 1944) which was very well attended (over 100 visitors). Many of those wore Second World War clothing and three light aircraft flew overhead. Two casks of a one-off beer, Dead Stick 4% ABV, were available on the day and proved very popular.

A summer beer, Rushmore Gold 4% ABV, became available in the middle of July. Sixty-five casks (4680 pints) were brewed using Nelson Sauvin Hops from New Zealand and I drank the first pint, which was very good. The Rushmore Gold will be followed up at the end of September by a dark beer, Sixpenny Special, 4.8% ABV. The traditional winter beer is Sixpenny Black (usual strength between 4.2% and 4.4% ABV) and will appear in November.

The brewery has recently changed its cider from Purbeck to Cranborne Cider. The six-month trial of Budvar Lager which is imported from the Czech Republic has gone well and is expected to continue at the Tap.

James May, the owner of the Royal Oak at Swallowcliffe, has introduced Sixpenny Best (3.8% ABV) as the pub house beer. Back at the Tap, fortnightly bands still play on the stage in the courtyard on Saturday afternoons and early evenings. The fortnightly quiz will start again in the autumn on Wednesday evenings.

Dark Revolution

The first half of the year has continued to be very busy for Dark Revolution Brewery taproom. The brewery has released 20 new beers and employed two more full time members of staff to keep up with demand. It has also recruited another new full time member of staff in the taproom taking the total overall team size to 18.

This summer Dark Revolution has been pouring all over the UK, at the Bristol, Manchester, London and New Forest beer festivals, and to prove the beers have been going down a storm, their untappd score has increased to 3.71.

Dark Revolution is always striving to work towards a more sustainable production model. It recently installed a keg washer and has taken delivery of 200 custom branded steel kegs which



not only reduced costs but also cuts its carbon footprint by allowing the brewery to reuse kegs rather than taking delivery of clean, rental ones. This has also reduced the need for one way plastic kegs.

With demand for Dark Revolution beer growing, the brewery is already at capacity on its new equipment and is looking to make further investment including installing more fermentation vessels.

Downton Brewery

The upstairs extension to the Tap Room for private functions is now expected to be completed by September. The brewery office has already relocated upstairs. A successful Beer Festival was held in June with another planned for 27/28 September. This will feature locally brewed German-style beers including Downton's own German Pale Ale (4.2% ABV).

The popularity of the brewery's first keg venture, Cave Lager, has exceeded expectations requiring a second batch to be brewed much earlier than originally anticipated. Similarly, 330mL cans of Secret Sobriety (0.5% ABV) are selling very well and a keg version of this low alcohol beer is being planned. The monthly special for August will be Olympic Flame (4.2% ABV) described as a fiery pale ale teaming up new and old hops in a malty background with hints of ginger and chilli.

The 'Thirsty Thursday' club is open to all on the last Thursday of the month from 4pm to 9pm.

In addition to the brewery's normal range of beers, food is available including ribs cooked in a sauce made from the monthly beer special.

Hop Back

The new brewery shop opened over the summer in what was the old front office. Ales direct from the cask, bottled ales and other merchandising are available 0900-1600 Monday to Friday.

Pouring in September will be the new John Barleycorn (4.3% ABV), a malty biscuits ale supported with robust English Hops. This beer takes its name from the legendary poem. Green Hopped (5.0% ABV) will be available in October. It is a fresh hopped ale that is brewed as soon as Jamie Ferguson, the head brewer, arrives back at the brewery with his van packed with the freshest Kentish hops possible. He says the aroma in the cab is incredible and it is even better once they are added to the Copper. November sees the return of both Red Ember (4.6% ABV) and Winter Lightning (5.5% ABV).

Contributors in order: *Gerald Gibson, Derek Ellis, Sarah Hughes, Nigel Allison and John Hinton*

THE CUCKOO INN



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📘 The Cuckoo Inn Hamptworth

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PUB NEWS

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

Happy to start with some encouraging re-opening news around the branch! In the city, the **former Railway Tavern** on South Western Road has now opened under new management as **Hettie Bells**, a café and pub close to the railway station. The café side opens at 7am offering breakfast, a screen showing train times and a left luggage facility for £5 an item, then the pub side opens at 11am. Takeaway (and delivery) will be available if you have a train to catch! The business is part of the Chickpea group which has just bought the neighbouring **Caboose** cocktail parlour/hotel. News of this takeover has only just broken and we are promised more details soon.

Now that summer is here, the annual outdoor bar opened on the Guildhall Square as part of Salisbury City Council's **Fyre on the Square** event. This year it was run by 1227 Charter Catering/The Greek Gringo and had a more open, family feel. Salisbury Feast and Flavour was open every day until 1 September. After 10 years running **The Swan** at Enford, Pete and Emma have handed over to Hannah and team. After being closed for the last few months they opened at the beginning of August. We wish them every success! Another much anticipated re-opening is making good progress at the **former Black Horse** on the Great Durnford estate. Renamed **The Great Bustard**, the pub hopes to be open soon with a restaurant run by a chef with Michelin Star restaurant experience, a treatment room, ten guest bedrooms and a farm shop. You can keep up with its progress by signing up to its newsletter at www.thegreatbustard.uk And in more good news, the recently opened **Royal Oak** at Great Wishford is serving five real ales, including three from Rude Giant, and they seem to be hitting the mark. Good luck also to Patrick and Nicky Chambers who have taken over the **King's Head** at Whiteparish.

Sadly not all the news is good – there was a recent unexpected closure of **The Duck Inn** at Laverstock. Owners Hop Back Brewery are hoping to find new tenants and re-open the pub within a few weeks. The pub (and Tim's famous Sunday roasts!) is a

great loss to the locals and wider community so we are all hoping it will not be closed for too long. And at the beginning of July, Whitbread closed 115 of its pubs attached to Premier Inns saying they will only be open to guests staying at the hotel. Our own **Hampton Inn Table Table** at Bishopdown Farm is unfortunately included in this change.

Talking of roasts, **The Pelican** at Stapleford has now stopped doing its for the summer. Disappointing news from the **Gritchie Brewery** is that they are closing as soon as their current stock runs out which is expected to be around August/September. Mr Ritchie wishes to focus on other projects.

A quick round-up of city news – **The Avon Brewery** has completed its refurbishment of the garden area, **The Market Tavern** has removed its 'extension' in the Square, **The Ox Row Inn** is under new management and **The Salisbury Arms** has applied for planning permission for new signage and repainting the outside. **The Royal British Legion Club** will now be open from 10am on Tuesdays and Saturdays (non-members welcome). And for dog lovers, **Dark Revolution Brewery/Taproom** at Old Sarum has started a Sniffers Dog Walking Group at 11am on the first Saturday of the month. Congratulations to **The Royal Oak**, Devizes Road for being voted Pub of the Year by the readers of the *Salisbury Journal*.

If you fancy a day out there is now a Salisbury to Exeter Real Ale Trail visiting real ale pubs by train. You can even collect stamps to win a t-shirt! The route includes 19 pubs all within easy reach of the stations. The only Salisbury area pubs on the list are **The Haunch of Venison** in the city and **The Benett Arms** and **The Boot Inn**, both in Tisbury. The next entry on the list is in Gillingham and beyond. More information can be found on <https://greatscenicrailways.co.uk/great-days-out/rail-ale-trails/salisbury-exeter-rail-ale-trail/> Other real ale trails can be found on www.railaletrail.com

Sue Turner
Pubs Officer



TINY LOCAL BREWERY WINS SUMMERFEST BEER OF FESTIVAL VOTE

A nano-brewery founded in a converted garage on the edge of the New Forest just two years ago won the Beer of the Festival vote by a clear margin at Summerfest, held by the Salisbury & South Wiltshire branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). Knightwood Oak, a 5% ABV chocolate porter produced by Paul Bartlett of the Dead Duck Brewery at Hale, near Downton, won the vote by festival-goers decisively against competition from 29 other real ales.



Andrew Hesketh, CAMRA branch festivals co-ordinator (left) presents Paul Bartlett with his winner's certificate

"I am blown away by winning this award," said Paul, a teacher who brews in his spare time, when a 10-strong party from South Wiltshire CAMRA ventured across the county line into Hampshire and festivals co-ordinator Andrew Hesketh presented him with his first-ever winner's certificate. They were rewarded with a pint of Knightwood Oak, named after the largest and probably the oldest tree in the New Forest, and another of Colt Pixie New England IPA at 4.5% ABV. Apparently a Colt Pixie is a mischievous creature which takes on the form of a horse or pony to lure travellers astray. It certainly had the CAMRA group, thirsty after a hot journey on a 44 bus, completely under its spell.

Paul, who teaches creative arts at the New Forest Academy in Hythe, began brewing 10 years ago

when he lived in a London flat and was given a home brew kit as a Christmas present. He was determined to make each successive brew better until it became, as his wife Louise put it, "a hobby that got out of control". When they moved to Hale to be nearer their respective families, the garage seemed the perfect building to convert into a small brewery using a two-barrel system.



The CAMRA party – and an admiring dog – toast Paul's success

"I thought that the brewery would never succeed so I gave it the name 'Dead Duck' as a joke," said Paul. "I am being proved wrong." He now brews four beers, the other two being Sunny Haze, a hazy grapefruit IPA at 4.5% ABV, and The Commoner, an ordinary best bitter at 4.0% ABV. These are now available at a numbers of pubs in the area, including The Horse and Groom in Woodgreen and the Royal Oak at Fritham. Paul sold out at a recent beer festival at The Cuckoo in Hamptworth.

Now Paul faces the decision that so many successful home brewers have wrestled with down the years. Do you stick with the day job and remain an evening and weekend brewer or do you expand out of your garage? It is too early for Paul to make this decision yet but an exceptional brewing talent has emerged in this quiet rural backwater.

Will Bennett



ON THE BUSES

Our first May trip was to Fordingbridge and a party of six met two local members to visit the Crown and the George before all joining up at the Ship – everyone's favourite of the three pubs.



At The Ship, Fordingbridge

A trip to Boscombe and Bournemouth took in Chaplin's, the Goat and Tricycle (11 ales on offer) and the somewhat disappointing Brewhouse and Kitchen – those who were still around quickly headed back to the G&T.

A visit to Southampton proved the value of these trips for those members living outside Salisbury. Although only two of us started out on the X7, we accumulated six more *en route*. The Dancing Man Brewery was the first port of call – where we were joined by our then CAMRA Regional Director – a fascinating historical building which also offers an impressive array of both cask and membrane keg beers. On to the Platform Tavern, now happily reopened following a devastating fire last year. After that, group members wandered off to either look into other pubs or the shopping centre before returning home.

In June a select few enjoyed a short local trip on the X3 and 44 taking in the Goat at Downton, Yew Tree Inn at Odstock and Radnor Arms at Nunton, three lovely pubs we are fortunate to have so close at hand.



Smiling at The Blackboy, Winchester

A trip to Winchester was somewhat disrupted due to the breaking down of our bus half way. But we were quickly able to resume our journey using another route, and the four of us joined two others in Winchester who had taken the train there. A beautiful day saw us take in the Old Vine Inn, Wykeham Arms and Black Boy. Three fascinating old buildings which, like so many pubs, have grown and changed over the years ending up with a mishmash of different rooms and areas, all with great beers.

Our early July trip on the X5 took three of us to Pewsey, where we started off at the Crown Inn, home of World's End Ales Brewery, where the Gurt Ale (4.3% ABV) was a clear favourite. We then moved to the Royal Oak, a Wadworth pub, for lunch (the kitchen had closed early but they allowed us to bring in food from the excellent bakery across the road), before crossing the road to The Shed Alehouse with its excellent selection of five ales, all on good form as usual.



Intrepid travellers to the Bankes Arms

Our final trip of July took place in exciting weather conditions for the open-top bus trip across the Sandbanks Ferry to the Bankes Arms. Six ales were available at the time of visiting, including two brewed there, and testament to the range and variety on offer is that we all had different favourites. But all were good beers,

and in great condition, and everyone enjoyed the excellent food too. Well worth getting a bit damp for!

Andrew Ward and Pete Matthews



CAMRA
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Real Ale

Did you know?

Almost three-quarters of UK drinkers have tried a low or no alcohol product, with 32% choosing these products 'semi-regularly'



Source: portmangroup.org.uk, "Consumer views on Low and No Alcohol products" (2022)

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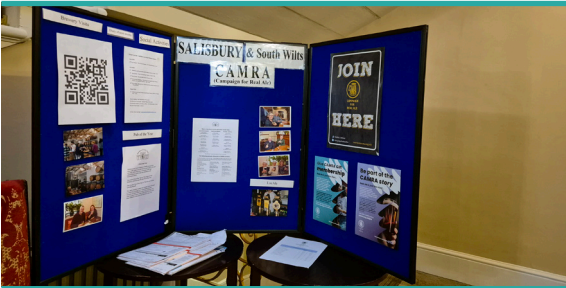


SUMMERFEST WAS A RELAXED SUCCESS STORY - AND WINTERFEST RETURNS IN JANUARY



The scene inside Salisbury Guildhall

Summerfest, Salisbury's new summer festival organised by the local branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), was a relaxed success story with drinkers sampling 30 real ales and four ciders in the Guildhall amid magnificent civic regalia, portraits of city dignitaries and in a former courtroom where once generations of defendants insisted that they had done nothing wrong.



The local CAMRA branch's information stand

The superb songstress Eve N Song serenaded festival-goers with timeless classics from the Guildhall stairs on Friday evening, Labour's local General Election candidate Matt Aldridge took his rosette off and popped in for a non-political thirst quencher on Saturday (he lost, but this is Salisbury!) and CAMRA enthusiasts Terry and Chris Blakeman came all the way from Crewe and South Cheshire branch to help behind the bar. Even the notoriously unreliable English summer weather behaved itself.



Enjoying Summerfest

Knightwood Oak, a 5% ABV chocolate porter was voted Beer of the Festival by a thumping majority. Brewed from five malts, this marvellous ale is named after the Knightwood Oak, which is the largest oak tree in the New Forest and is believed to be more than 500 years old. The vote was a considerable triumph for the Dead Duck Brewery, run by Paul Bartlett, which began life



not too long ago as a home brew on the floor of a London flat and is now a nano-brewery in the village of Hale, on the fringes of the New Forest near Downton.



Singer Eve N Song entertains festival-goers

Second place went to Salopian Brewery from Shrewsbury for its 4.1% ABV stout Port in a Storm and third was Entelea, a 4.5% ABV combination of Southern Hemisphere hops from Vibrant Forest brewery at Hardley on the Southampton Water side of the Forest. Stonehenge Ales from Netheravon provided the first cask to be drunk dry – 40 Summers, a 4.0% ABV golden ale produced to celebrate 40 years of brewing at the Old Mill in the Wiltshire village.

The really good news is that Summerfest – which has replaced the former Beerex festival at Salisbury Arts Centre – will be back next year with provisional dates set for 20-21 June. CAMRA will be exploring the possibility of having outside space now that the Guildhall Square is clear of market stalls on a Saturday. Organisers will also look into the feasibility of extending closing time – this was the only major negative feedback that we got at this Summerfest.



Seeking guidance at the bar

In the meantime Winterfest, its sister winter beer and cider festival, will be back to provide a chink of light in the midwinter gloom with dates confirmed for 24-25 January. After moving around a number of locations in recent years, it was Winterfest which first found a home at the Guildhall last January. It was voted such a hit by festival-goers – relieved to be in the warm after a rather chilly previous venue – that the Salisbury & South Wilts branch of CAMRA decided to have its summer festival there as well.



Terry and Chris Blakeman came from Cheshire to help

So the future for Salisbury's beer festivals looks more certain than it has done for a while – put these dates in your diary. And – by popular request – Eve N Song will be back.

Will Bennett

photos Sue Turner and Will Bennett



VILLAGERS SUCCEED IN RAISING FUNDS TO BUY THE LOCAL PUB BACK



John Dillon (left) and Mike Neve of the CCPG

A determined group of campaigners in a small South Wiltshire village has succeeded in raising enough money to buy the local pub, which closed four years ago, and has begun negotiations with the current owner's representatives. If all goes well, the King's Head in Chitterne could be open by the end of this year.

When the last pub in a village closes it is as though its heart has stopped beating. There is nowhere to meet for a casual drink, nowhere for newcomers to get to know the locals when they arrive and nowhere for someone living on their own to go when they are so sick of staring at their own four walls that they could scream.

In the case of Chitterne, an isolated community of 300 people on the southern edge of Salisbury Plain, the closure of the King's Head four years ago was particularly devastating. It has no shop, no cafe, no school, very little public transport and the next village is three miles away. For almost three centuries the village had had two pubs but when the White Hart closed in the 1960s, the King's Head, open since the mid-19th century, was on its own. It finally shut its doors in 2020.

The community decided that it needed its pub back. A group of activists formed a Community Benefit Society called the Chitterne Community Pub Group (CCPG) and has campaigned to raise £200,000 through a share issue to buy the pub from its locally-based freehold owner, with a stretch target of £250,000. Astonishingly for such a small village, the CCPG has so far received over £200,000 in hard cash from almost 100 people, mostly living in Chitterne, but a good number from further afield, including one ex-resident now in the United States.

Most investments have been in the £250 to £5,000 range with a fair few between £10,000 and £20,000. An anonymous private investor has made a substantial investment, in addition to the provision of a loan to the CCPG at preferential rates, to reach the purchase price of £315,000 that the owner has accepted.

Mike Neve, a member of the CCPG, said: "Now that we have raised our initial target, we have commenced the purchase process with the current owner's agents." However, more shareholders are needed to fund legal and other purchase costs and to pay for work on the building. The CCPG would also like to repay the loan as quickly as possible.

The minimum shareholding allowed is £250 and the maximum is £100,000. Anybody can become a shareholder as long as they are prepared to commit the minimum amount. Further details can be found at www.chitterneCBS.co.uk and there is a short form that can be submitted online by anybody wanting to invest.

The CCPG hopes that, if the purchase can be completed in reasonable time, the King's Head will once again be functioning as a pub



by later this year. John Dillon, a member of the group, said: “We believe this is a really exciting opportunity. It will be so much more than a great food and drink destination, it will be a reinvigorated village hub bringing people together and forging a great community spirit. We would love as many people as possible to invest in our community share offer to make this a vibrant community pub and hub once again. We want to ensure a long term sustainable future for The Kings Head”.



The King's Head, Chitterne

The plan is to lease the pub as a free house to a tenant, who would serve both food and drink, as much of it as possible sourced locally. As South Wiltshire is particularly well-off for small, local breweries, the beers would come from them rather than the nationally-based giants. Re-opening the pub would come as a particular relief to the King's Head darts team, which has been playing away matches only for the past four years!

Just as important is for the King's Head to become a wide-ranging village hub. A prescription dispenser from the nearest doctors' surgery is planned, along with a small shop selling essential items and weekday coffee mornings. These would be run by volunteers working in support of the tenant. An electric car charging point may be installed. “It is important to get it going as a focal point of the community,” said Mike Neve. “We want it to become a community hub as well as a pub with

all local organizations using it. It needs to be a place where the community gets to know each other and this is particularly important for the large number of single and elderly residents in Chitterne.”

The CCPG also hopes that the King's Head will become popular with people from surrounding villages such as Codford, Shrewton and Tilshead, and that some of the tourists who currently drive straight through on the main road from Stonehenge to Bath can be persuaded to stop off for a drink and something to eat.

Will Bennett



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LOCAL CIDER MADE WITH PASSION

In the heart of Cranborne Chase, at the family-run Myncen Farm, award-winning Cranborne Chase Cider is produced by Bill Meaden. The farm has close links with the Rushmore Estate owned by the Pitt Rivers family, and the Meadens have farmed here since 1921.

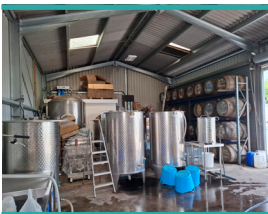
The story started in 2011 when Bill returned from



Bill Meaden in his heritage orchard

travelling abroad. He had visited countries where traditional cider did not exist, and so he began Cranborne Chase Cider to produce the drink he had missed. He built a hydraulic press and, with help from his family,

he hand-harvested Brown's Apples from a disused orchard on the nearby Rushmore Estate. From here the production of cider commenced. During the early years, to supplement his income, Bill did other work, including being a part-time brewer at the Sixpenny Brewery, but he dropped these jobs enabling him to focus full-time on his cider production at the farm, which is between Salisbury and Blandford Forum.



The production centre at Cranborne Chase Cider

– ‘The Cider Shack’, based on the style of a traditional shepherd’s hut.

Over the years the process has become more mechanised, enabling increased production. A shepherd’s hut shop was established at the farm gate named the ‘Original Cider Shack’. Today a wide range of Cranborne Chase ciders and related products are available both at the shop and online.

Bill has planted an experimental heritage orchard of Dorset apple varieties to assess crop growth, and the flavours of different apples. Still using the original Brown’s cider apples to provide the distinctive crisp, dry and fruity base, he has planted a new cider apple orchard with other tried and tested varieties including Dabinett and Knotted Kernel. Bill is committed to using locally produced ingredients and his newer rhubarb and elderflower ciders have used plants grown on Myncen Farm.



Bill Meaden with the oak barrels used for ageing

Bill explores apple blends, and experiments with ageing cider in oak barrels and keeing, which is the artisan method of making naturally sweetened cider; no sugar, no water, nothing else added.

Cranborne Chase Cider produces four traditional still ciders, some of which we have enjoyed at our CAMRA branch festivals. Bill describes his ciders as:

Dry - 6.5% ABV. Nothing added, nothing taken away. This farmhouse dry is made using a blend of heritage cider apple varieties giving you a deep and complex tasting cider with a dry finish.

Medium - 6% ABV. A crisp, fruity easy-going cider that leaves you longing for more. Cranborne Chase’s most popular all-rounder.

Sweet - 5.5% ABV. This farmhouse cider has been sweetened with natural sugar. It has a light, fruity nose and a full apple flavour appealing to those with a sweeter palette.

Vintage - 6.8% ABV. Cranborne Chase has aged its finest cider in oak barrels to enhance the flavour and depth of this. Smooth yet sharp, rich and oaky, this medium dry cider really packs a punch.

Bill’s Cranborne Chase Cider production is wholly underpinned by passion:

- passion for nature
- passion for the farm where he grew up and works
- passion for the orchards and apples they yield
- passion for the quality and taste of the ciders he produces.

Jane Foster



DIARY DATES *Salisbury & South Wiltshire*



SEPTEMBER

4th Open Branch Meeting

7.30pm The Bell & Crown, Catherine Street, Salisbury.

7th Train Trip

10.56am from Salisbury station to Eastleigh and Chandlers Ford.

13th Minibus Trip

6.30pm from Coach Park. The Butt of Sherry; The George, both Mere; The Grosvenor Arms; The Lamb, both Hindon.

18th Amesbury Amble

7.05pm X4 bus from Blue Boar Row. The Bell, The Antrobus Arms, The George, The New Inn, all Amesbury.

25th Bus Trip

10.02am 68 bus from outside the Cathedral Hotel, Milford Street, Salisbury to Stockbridge. Visit Three Cups, Grosvenor Hotel, White Hart, Greyhound on the Test. Return by 68 3.10pm from Town Hall. Option 2 continue to Winchester 1.20pm on 16 bus. Option 3 walk 30 mins to Peat Spade at Longstock. **Note bus times TBC.**

OCTOBER

2nd Open Branch Meeting

7.30pm The Wyndham Arms, Estcourt Road, Salisbury.

5th Bus Trip

10.55am X5 bus, stop N, Blue Boar Row, Salisbury to Marlborough. The Bear, The Marlborough and The Lamb.

11th Minibus Trip

6.30pm from the Coach Park. The Antelope and The Ship, both Upavon; The Red Lion, East Chisenbury; The Swan, Enford.

16th City Saunter

7.30pm. The Five Bells, The Royal George, The Pheasant, The Coach & Horses, all Salisbury.

24th Bus Trip

To Ringwood. 11.25am X3 from Stop M, Blue Boar Row, arrives Ringwood Meeting House Lane at 12.07pm. Visiting Inn on the Furlong, then a choice of Original White Hart, Crown Tap and Star. Return on X3 at 3.31pm from Meeting House Lane, arriving Salisbury 4.18pm. **Note bus times TBC.**

NOVEMBER

6th Open Branch Meeting

7.30pm The Wyndham Arms, Estcourt Road, Salisbury.

9th Bus Trip

10:55am. Bus 2, New Canal, Stop R to Devizes, White Bear, and then Berwick St James, The Boot Inn.

15th Minibus Trip

6.30pm from the Coach Park. The Green Dragon, Alderbury; The Black Horse, West Tytherley, The Lord Nelson Arms, Winterslow, The Hook & Glove, Farley.

20th City Saunter

7.30pm The Bell & Crown, The Wig & Quill, The New Inn, the Old Ale & Coffee House, all Salisbury.

27th Train Trip

To London. Depart 9.21am Salisbury, arrive London Waterloo 10.49am. Take 188 bus from Waterloo station stop E to Deptford (50mins). Alight Sayes Court then 5 minutes walk to Dog & Bell. Five minute walk to Deptford High Street for buses to Canada Water (30 mins). Then 11 minute walk to Mayflower then four minute walk to Rotherhithe Station Stop W for C10 bus to Waterloo (30 mins) for Waterloo Tap and optionally Hole in the Wall. Return train departs 3.50pm, arrives Salisbury 5.20pm - or later to suit you. **Book after 5 September for cheap advance single fares.**

DECEMBER

4th Open Branch Meeting

7.30pm. The Ox Row Inn, Market Square, Salisbury.

*Please check all bus and train times
due to changing timetables*

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