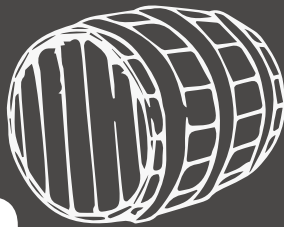


Barrel Organ



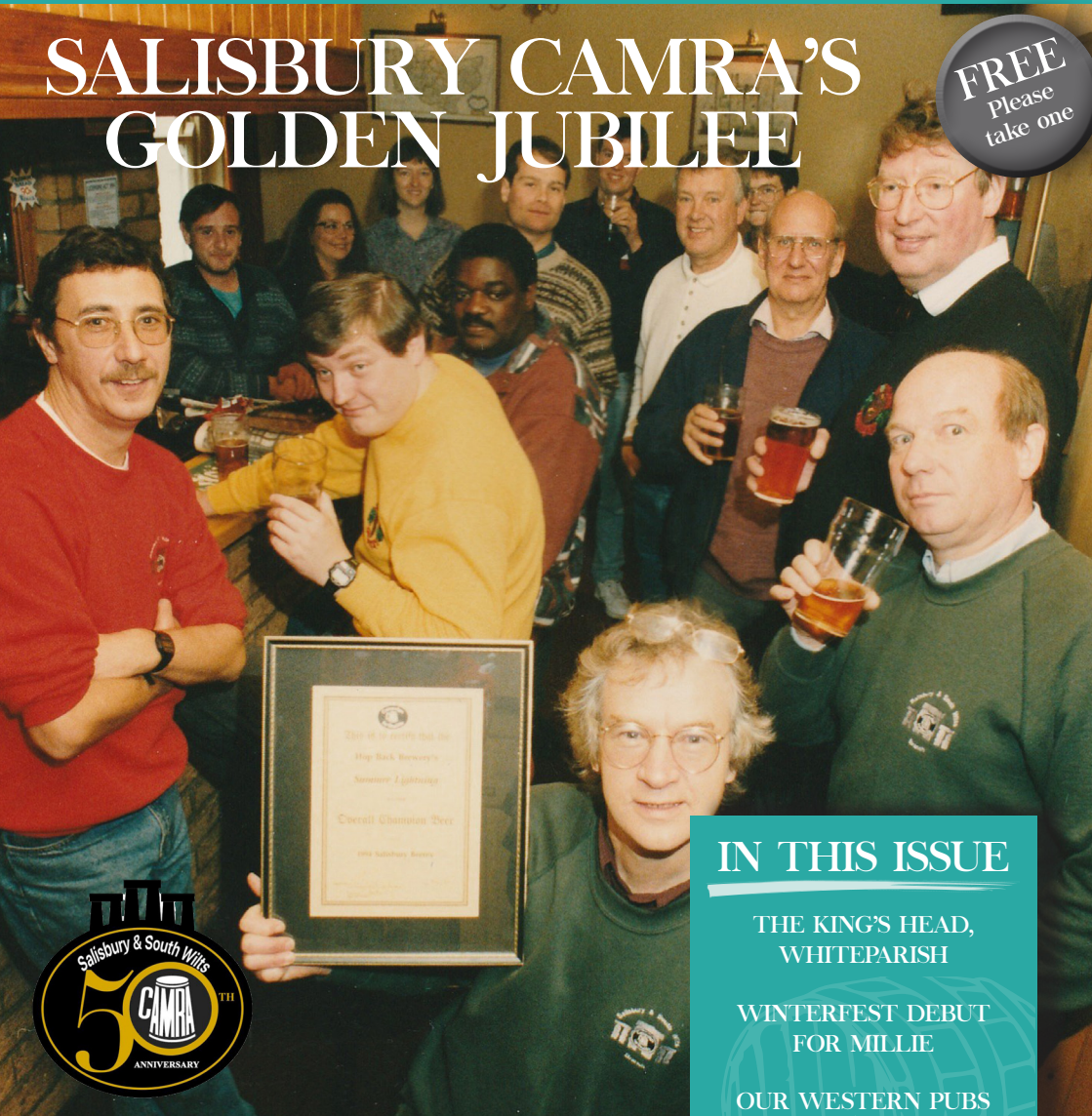
CAMRA

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

March 2025 - May 2025

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IN THIS ISSUE

THE KING'S HEAD,
WHITEPARISH

WINTERFEST DEBUT
FOR MILLIE

OUR WESTERN PUBS

Plus much more...



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FROM THE EDITORS

The CAMRA branch in Salisbury and South Wiltshire is celebrating the 50th anniversary of its foundation this year. It has plenty to be proud about in its Golden Jubilee Year. The first-ever branch chairman, Ed Garman, recalls in this issue of *Barrel Organ* how when he moved to Salisbury in 1974 there were just two pubs selling real ale. Already a member of CAMRA, founded nationally in 1971, Ed sought out fellow enthusiasts and found three of them meeting in a village pub. On 17 June 1975 Ed was voted in as chairman at the inaugural meeting of what was then the Salisbury sub-branch.

Today the branch estimates that there are 140 pubs and clubs selling real ale across South Wiltshire and the recent pub map of Salisbury published by CAMRA shows that there are 27 in the city centre alone. Although the branch is numerically smaller than those in big conurbations, it punches well above its weight. It runs two annual beer festivals, publishes this quarterly magazine, and has a busy and varied social programme. Its choices as local pubs and clubs of the year help it keep a high profile with both press and public and it has campaigned on local issues.

Despite this, danger lies ahead. The first threat is complacency, thinking that the battle has been won when in reality pubs are still closing at an alarming rate and giant brewers still swallow up smaller ones. The second is that younger people are no longer joining CAMRA. Most of the active members of the Salisbury branch are pensioners or will soon qualify for their bus passes. Without younger members CAMRA may not have another half century.

Kathy, Will & Neil
Editors, Barrel Organ magazine

SALISBURY & SOUTH WILTSHIRE CONTACTS

Chairman: Chris White
Email: chairman@salisburycamra.org.uk

Secretary: Steve Stringer
Email: secretary@salisburycamra.org.uk

Social Secretary (Co-ordinating): Steve Stringer
Email: social.secretary@salisburycamra.org.uk

Membership Secretary: Roger Braddick
Email: membership@salisburycamra.org.uk

Pubs Officer: Sue Turner
Email: pubs@salisburycamra.org.uk

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

Branch website:
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.

EDITORS

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

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Wiltshire Council, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge,
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Campaign for Real Ale Ltd.
230 Hatfield Road, St. Albans, Herts, AL1 4LW
Tel: 01727 867 201 Email: camra@camra.org.uk
www.camra.org.uk

Advertising, Published & Designed by:
PAPER RED MEDIA

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

MEET THE GOVERNORS

The King's Head, Whiteparish



The attractive exterior of the King's Head, Whiteparish

Pat and Nicky Chambers had hankered after running a pub for many years. A sales and marketing man born in Nottingham, Pat had run a number of successful businesses, while his wife had worked in hospitality. But a pub would be a new venture, a real challenge and they set out from their home in the Lambourn Valley in Berkshire to look for a suitable candidate.



Nicky and Pat Chambers in the pub's bay window

When they came to view the King's Head in Whiteparish they knew that they had found what they were looking for. The pub, which began as a coaching house in the 16th century, had long been an important part of life in the village near Salisbury but had hit troubled times recently. It was closed for several years before being reopened in 2017 by a new owner whose plans were then held below the waterline by the Covid pandemic.

Pat and Nicky bought the business and took over in May last year. Currently they are living over the pub but their plan is to buy the bricks and mortar, which they currently rent, sell their house in Lambourn and find a home in Whiteparish. If all goes to plan then their move to south Wiltshire should be complete by the end of this year. It is a big upheaval for a couple who might have been expected to take things easier at this stage in their lives – Pat is 64 and Nicky is 56.



Nicky and Pat behind the bar

The Chambers are bursting with enthusiasm for their new business. They realise that its core is to act as a village hub where people can come for a drink or maybe just a coffee, chat and, if necessary, unburden their woes. Nicky, who has a natural warmth, says she has already had grown men crying on her shoulder. "It's a safe place, a haven," said Pat. "The King's Head is an important part of the community."

Just how important was demonstrated on the day that *Barrel Organ* went to talk to them. That evening they had 54 people attending a fully booked Quiz Night and the following evening Whiteparish Women's Institute was holding a pasta night. The local drama group, the Pepperbox Players, rehearse there and the village Fete Committee has meetings in the King's Head.

Beer is an important part of what they do – drink still accounts for just over half their revenue – and the King’s Head always has four cask ales on tap which is twice as many as under its previous owners. On the day of *Barrel Organ’s* visit they were offering two IPAs – Danish Dynamite from Netheravon-based Stonehenge Ales and Proper Job from the St Austell Brewery in Cornwall – and two session bitters – Double Drop from Flack Manor Brewery in nearby Romsey and Antler produced by Exmoor Brewery in Somerset. Great Bustard from Stonehenge Ales was waiting to come on and the King’s Head has replaced Guinness with a local stout from Rude Giant, which brews in the Wylve Valley. Not surprisingly, the Chambers are members of CAMRA’s LocAle scheme, which encourages pubs to sell locally brewed real ales.



The King’s Head pub sign

Head as a good quality gastro-pub. Restaurant bookings have risen with an average of 250 covers at the weekend when the pub does a Sunday roast.

The King’s Head has eight guest bedrooms with the added advantage that in a village of about 1,500 people, anyone staying is likely to drink in the bar and have dinner as well as bed and breakfast. With 1.5 acres of land at the back facing south-west, the Chambers are also looking to expand their income from events. There is plenty of room for a marquee but with people often planning weddings a couple of years ahead, the King’s Head has not yet fully tapped into that market.



The interior of the pub



*The King’s Head is a member of
CAMRA’s LocAle scheme*

Food is the other lynchpin of the pub’s income and Pat and Nicky have hired Peter Goodridge-Reynolds, who used to cook at the Horse and Groom in Woodgreen and who is a former member of the scholarship scheme run by Raymond Blanc of the famous Le Manoir aux Quat’Saisons restaurant in Oxfordshire. The Chambers are not aiming to emulate Blanc but want to establish the King’s

Pat and Nicky refer to everyone who comes in as ‘guests’ rather than ‘customers’ even if they have just popped in for a cup of coffee and impress on their staff the need for good service. Pat said: “I say to them that every day we have got to be the best version of the King’s Head that we can possibly be. The competition for the leisure pound is intense, whether from other pubs and restaurants or because people can decide to entertain at home”.

Less than a year into their new life they say that so far it is going better than they expected. “The support that we have had from locals has been fantastic,” said Pat. “They have embraced us and were worried that the King’s Head might close.” By the time that they have completed the purchase of the freehold and bought a home in Whiteparish, the Chambers will be even deeper into their new project than they are at the moment. So they have no plans to go anywhere.

Will Bennett

BREWERY NEWS

Hop Back Brewery



Hop Back brought bottling all their beers back to site several years ago but have had reliability issues with the old plant and have taken the decision to invest in a new one.

The new bottling line is rated for approximately 2,000 bottles an hour, a 30% increase or so in productivity and is due to go live in April. Head Brewer Jamie Ferguson is hopeful that in the future it will allow them to increase their range of bottle conditioned ales due to the increased reliability.

The brewery shop is becoming increasingly popular and is open from 0900 – 1600 Monday to Friday. You can also ring 01725 510986 to ask what is available or order your beer 48 hours in advance. The monthly specials will include: April – Spring Zing (4.2% ABV) a session beer that combines European hops with maize, wheat and barley malts, May-July – Dragonfly (4.8% ABV) a zesty pale gold ale that showcases heritage English hops and also in May - Slovenian Rhapsody (3.8% ABV) a crisp, hoppy and flowery session ale.

Dead Duck Brewery



Following the success of Dead Duck's chocolate porter (Knightwood Oak - 5.0% ABV) winning Beer of the Festival at our Summerfest last year, production has steadily

increased. To keep up with demand Paul Bartlett, who runs the tiny brewery in Hale on the outskirts of the New Forest, has doubled its capacity from 1.5bbl to 3.5bbl by adding a new fermenter to his set up.

Dead Duck recently joined SIBA (Society of Independent Brewers and Associates) and has

updated its new can labels with the 'Indie Beer' logo. Indie Beer is supported by CAMRA as it helps customers navigate the large choice of beers available to purchase. Dead Duck beers can be found at a growing number of pubs in the Salisbury and New Forest area and also at groceries and wine merchants in Fordingbridge and Ringwood.

Dark Revolution Brewery



The beginning of a brand new year and Dark Revolution continue to stay committed to their values; to make great quality, standout beer while experimenting with new ingredients and techniques.

In 2024 the brewery expanded their beer portfolio, launching an impressive 68 new beers. They brewed a whopping 420,000 pints, the team packaged over 97,000 cans, filled over 5000 kegs and 700 casks. From their taproom they served over 65,000 pints. This year they are planning to increase that. In 2024 they added an extra 70% of additional brewing capacity to their new brew house. In order to increase capacity and future proof the business they are planning on expanding the brewery even further.

Growth and sales continue to go from strength to strength, so much so that there are also plans to expand their cold store into another premises. Throughout 2025 Dark Revolution have plans to get involved in more national and local events showcasing their beers to an even larger audience.

Stonehenge Ales



A great start to 2025, the safe arrival of baby Millie and two awards for Stonehenge beers in

the CBOB competition. (see elsewhere in this issue). In terms of this year, with a new baby to look after, little change to the programme is scheduled with old favourites returning. Right now annual favourite Sign of Spring will be rolling out of the brewery and will as ever be found far and wide – I have discovered it in Inverness in Scotland and Douglas, Isle of Man and it travels well!

Thursday of the month, the tap room is opening for ‘Games Night’ on the last Thursday of the month. The monthly specials for February, March and April are Apple Scumble (4.2% ABV), Mad Fox (4.4% ABV), and Dragon IPA (4.5% ABV), respectively.

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

Downton Brewery



The Downton tap room was very well attended on Fridays leading up to the festive season and this has continued into the New Year showing that regulars are bucking the ‘Dry January’ trend or consuming Downton’s excellent 0.5% ABV Secret Sobriety, which is now also available in 30L kegs and 440mL cans. In addition to Fridays, and the regular Quiz Night on the first

Barrel Organ

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PUB NEWS

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

I'm pleased to start with the good news that having closed suddenly several months ago, **The Duck Inn** at Laverstock reopened on 3 December. No news on future food offerings yet but they have already held popular live music nights and new landlord Ricardo is keen to restore the pub to its former glory! Other re-openings include **The Crown** at Cholderton, opened in November and continuing to be dog-friendly, and **The Old Railway Hotel**, Porton re-opened at the end of November, having been taken back into the management of the community. **The Great Bustard Inn** (formerly The Black Horse) on the Durnford Estate has now opened but currently has no plans to serve real ale and **The Swan** at Enford has re-opened with a fresh new look.

Deacons in Salisbury closed for two weeks in January for painting and a tidy up and also in the city a new café has opened in the former Byron premises on New Canal called **The News Café**. In addition to food and soft drinks they serve cocktails, spirits, lagers and beers with a special offer of two pints of draught beer for £10 on Tuesday nights 5pm -10pm. There was some shock news in the city mid-December that, after only 14 months, the **Rude Giant Beerhouse** on Brown Street planned to close its doors for the last time on 28 December. The premises are now closed, awaiting new management.

New landlord, Coby, has just taken over **The Pheasant**, Salisbury and after seven years, Polly and Phil have retired from **The Earl of Normanton**, Idmiston leaving the pub in the capable hands of Toby and Lisa who have been working there for five years. **The Penruddocke Arms**, Dinton has just appointed Israel-born chef Raphael Avni with more than 30 years hospitality experience, including Michelin-

starred restaurants run by Gordon Ramsay and Marco Pierre White. On the downside the pub has no real ale, saying there is not the demand. However, they are open to suggestions!

Mark and Sam Cassidy have semi-retired from **The Walnut Tree** at Mere and new owners Simon and Will Friend-James have pulled their first pints. We wish the twin brothers good luck. Following refurbishment **The Talbot Inn**, Berwick St. John re-opened under new management on 1 December - the new team of Polly and Mark Waddington and Coco the labradoodle are looking forward to offering a dog friendly welcome! Also on 1 December, **The Black Dog** at Chilmark reopened having been bought by the community group in the village. **The King John Inn**, Tollard Royal has re-opened following refurbishment and **The Goat** at Downton has also undergone a mini-refurbishment.

Jess Coughlan and her family have moved into **The Greater Good** at Fovant and will be opening as soon as they can with traditional pub food, live music and accommodation. After being empty for almost ten years, **The Stag Inn** at Charlton-All-Saints has finally been bought by Select Country Inns. Their plans following renovation have not been announced yet. A planning application has been submitted to restore the burned out **Crown** at Alvediston and the purchase of **The King's Head** at Chitterne has been completed. The community group which now owns it has had an initial look around the pub to see what needs doing and work will start as soon as possible. The search is on for willing helpers and ultimately a new tenant.

The Fox and Hounds on the Green at East Knoyle has been put on the market by the

retiring owner. The community is looking at ways it can be saved as a pub. Finally, **The Avon Brewery**, Salisbury now offers a loyalty card with five stamps being awarded a free pint.

Other offers are available such as free juke box nights, free pool nights and a weekly thrift club.

Sue Turner
Pubs Officer

OUT WEST

Our annual look at the west of our branch area.

Hello again from the Wild West – after two storms in in as many weeks, it is not so wild at the moment. Another year on and there are some changes again.

The Benett Arms, Semley is still going strong with Exmoor Ale as its house beer after the demise of Wriggle Valley brewery, which closed in February 2024. It usually has at least two guest beers, mostly from local breweries - Twisted from Westbury and Fine Tuned from Somerton are often to be found.

Over here in **Mere**, there have been a few changes. After more than 20 years, Mark and Sam have sold **The Walnut Tree**. The new landlord admits that he is not a real ale drinker but still has Bath Gem and St Austell Tribute on the bar. Time will tell. **The George**, a Hall & Woodhouse pub, has a new tenant who is serving Badger Best, Firsty Ferret and, when last in there, H&W's Winter Warmer.

Unfortunately there is no change at **The Butt of Sherry** in Mere, which is still only open three evenings a week. Once again the best ale to be had in Mere is **The Prince of Wales Social Club**. Since the aforementioned closure of Wriggle Valley, it is now serving Wickwar Bob, which I believe is brewed by Butcombe (the Wickwar Wessex Pub Company does not actually brew anything itself). A second pump has been in action recently dispensing London

Pride and currently Topsail from Bays Brewery in Paignton, Devon. The club is open from 7pm to 11.30pm, except Sundays, when currently closing at 9pm, and non-members are welcome.

The Bell and Crown in **Zeals** is open 11am to 11pm, seven days a week, according to its website, serving Rude Giant. Up at **The Spread Eagle, Stourhead**, the opening hours are 11am until 4.30pm, Sunday to Thursday, and 11am to 9pm Friday and Saturday, serving St Austell ales. Opening times may change by the time you read this, so it is worth checking if you are heading out this way.

All the best from the West.

Allan Glide

Did you know?

Pubs raise over £100 million a year
for charity



Source: pubaid.com (accessed 2020)



THE EARLY DAYS OF CAMRA IN SALISBURY

By Ed Garman, first Chairman of Salisbury & South Wilts branch

Before I moved to Salisbury, I was working in Crawley in Sussex. My girlfriend worked and lived in London. At that time, the *Guardian* newspaper had a column on Saturdays dealing with beer and pubs. It was through this column that I learned of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) and also the Society for Preservation of Beer from the Wood. The column also noted the pubs in London that still served draught beer. There were not many even in a large city like London. We started visiting these few real ale pubs and I joined CAMRA. I seem to remember that the Prospect of Whitby had real ale in those days and it is still in the *Good Beer Guide*.

In April 1974, I moved down to Salisbury to work at Boscombe Down. I started to look for pubs in the Salisbury area that served real ale. From memory, there were only two in Salisbury at that time: The New Inn in New Street and The Railway Hotel near the railway station. I also looked for any other members of CAMRA and found that some met at The Boot in Berwick St James. I went to the pub and found three CAMRA members.

They hoped to start a Salisbury branch. But, at that time, CAMRA was expecting there to be only one branch in a county and there was already an active branch in Swindon. So the chap at The Boot who was leading things (I am sorry but I cannot remember his name) got in touch with the Swindon branch. They were happy for a Salisbury branch to start provided it recognised that it was a sub-branch of the Wiltshire (Swindon) branch.

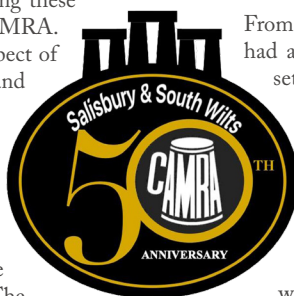
So the few of us meeting at The Boot started plotting to form the Salisbury sub-branch. We planned to hold an initial meeting at The Railway Hotel. We advertised this meeting in the *Salisbury Journal* and invited any interested people to come along.

All was arranged but, shortly before the meeting, our leader from The Boot was killed in a motorcycle accident. So, I had to lead the meeting and became the first Chairman of the branch. In doing so, I got in touch with the Swindon branch, explained what had happened and agreed to meet up with the Swindon committee. They happily agreed to meet with me in Pewsey. Thus, for some time, I travelled to Pewsey once a month to meet with the Swindon branch.

From our first meeting in Salisbury, we had a committee for the branch and we set out to have monthly meetings at The Railway Hotel. A few of the new members knew of other pubs serving real ale and we began to list these together with details of their beers and breweries.

As this was happening, CAMRA was getting known nationally and a few pubs were re-stocking real ale. One of the first of these new real ale pubs was The Haunch of Venison. Members of the Salisbury branch started visiting every pub in Salisbury to find out if the licensees would start serving real ale. This turned out to be a long and slow process but gradually we saw more pubs in Salisbury and South Wiltshire serving real ale.

I was Chairman of the branch for about three years. At the third Annual General Meeting of my tenure, a group of members decided that they could run things in a better manner and stood for every committee position and voted in new post holders. Thus, my term as Chairman was ended, although for many years I remained an active member of the branch. In recent years, as all current members will know, most pubs in Salisbury and South Wiltshire serve at least one real ale, although this does not mean that all examples are drinkable!



SUCCESS ACROSS TWO CENTURIES SALISBURY CAMRA'S LATER HISTORY

By Ian Turner, twice branch Chairman

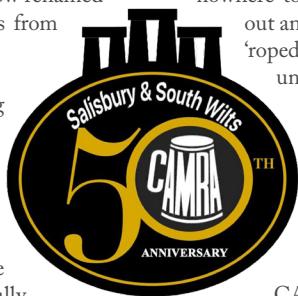
Following a short period as a sub-branch, Salisbury & South Wiltshire CAMRA became a branch in its own right and with it, Beerex or, more accurately, 'Salisbury Beer Exhibition', which started in 1978 and featured 28 real ales from some 15 breweries, was born. The event was a success and has been run, most years, since. The event peaked (in volume) in the mid-1990s with 40 beers in more than 80 Kilderkins (18 gallon casks)... over 11,500 pints. Beerex has shrunk in volume since then but, now renamed Summerfest, still 'exhibits' real ales from both near and far.

A winter beer festival had been long talked of, and in 1997 Winterfest was born. Featuring darker ales, stouts and porters, the festival did not prove a big success in year one but over the next couple of years more and more people came along to try beers not normally available in the city.

Pete Woods chaired the branch for over a decade in the 80s and 90s. Under his tenure, Beerex became a phenomenon attracting coachloads of visitors from near and far. The day that tickets went on sale, there were queues of hundreds of people at the Arts Centre and the Wyndham Arms. Pete was also a keen cyclist (he never drove) and organised cycle trips to many of our rural pubs. Keeping off the main roads, getting lost was not uncommon, particularly on the way back!

As well as the chair, Pete was social secretary and organised meetings and outings. We have always tried to organise presentations to the breweries who have won at our beer festivals. In some cases a few intrepid members made long weekend visits

to breweries from Cornwall to Shetland! One of the most memorable, however, was a coach trip to Otter Brewery in Devon. It was a glorious summer day, the brewery visit was excellent, the views over the Otter Valley were incredible and after the visit, we went to a local village for lunch at the pub. That day was the village fête, so the afternoon was most entertaining for both the adults and the children. As we got ready to depart, we had someone missing. Jacqui, who worked at the Wyndham, was nowhere to be found. A search party was sent out and eventually found her. She had been 'roped' into the tug-of-war and had to wait until the final!



It was often said that CAMRA was a private drinking club and to some degree that was true. Our trips always involved drinking; that was, quite simply, why we existed. However, in the mid-90s CAMRA, the organisation, began to get more professional and took more control of branches and their activities. For many, that meant the fun had gone out of the movement and for our branch it triggered a change. In 1997, Pete stepped down as Chairman and I took over. Changes did follow: Beerex tickets were reduced to reflect fire limits at the Arts Centre. Branch finances were scrutinised by Head Office and we were forced to follow strict rules on how we spend 'their' money. We did, however, introduce monthly mini-bus trips to visit and support our rural pubs.

Following a refurbishment at Salisbury Arts Centre, Beerex returned in a new format. Organised by Mike and Hilary Bird, the festival featured less beer but more choice. Gone were the 18 gallon Kils and in came some 60 firkins, each different. The change proved popular and stayed in that format

until 2022. Winterfest also changed: not so much in format but moved from Castle Street Club to the Royal British Legion Club, then to the Chapel nightclub and finally to the Guildhall which now hosts both festivals.

As we recollect the last 50 years of the branch, it would be negligent not to mention others who have chaired it, namely: Richard Knox, Hilary Bird, Derek Blackshaw and the current Chair, Chris White. All have brought their own experience and knowledge to the branch. We must also thank the dozens of others who have supported the branch in other roles and the hundreds who have helped with the beer festivals.

CAMRA has been a success. We see quality real ale in almost every pub we visit. That success has brought about some apathy, and we no longer see the same enthusiasm from younger people; there is no need! Without looking, in detail, at CAMRA policies and aims, it does not attract the interest it once did, and we are literally growing old. Almost all of the festival staff and organisers are pensioners (or soon will be) so if you want to see our great beer festivals survive, please consider joining the cause and help keep the branch alive for another 50 years.

SALISBURY & SOUTH WILTS CAMRA IN PICTURES

This Golden Jubilee issue of *Barrel Organ* is publishing a small selection of the many photographs of Salisbury & South Wilts CAMRA events down the years. Pictures from the earliest days have proved elusive but we hope to give a flavour of the mixture of fun and serious purpose that has always characterised CAMRA. Our front cover shows a presentation to Hop Back in the Wyndham Arms for winning the 1994 Beerex beer of the festival. CAMRA branch chairman Pete Woods is at the front, Hop Back founder John Gilbert to the right.

We would like to thank Mike Woolf, Ian Turner, John Palmer, Andrew Hesketh, Sam Fortes and Chris White for their help in compiling this record.



Salisbury CAMRA on a visit to Fuller's Brewery, London in December 1990



The CAMRA team from the first 'Pork Pie' cricket match with the Wyndham Arms in 1990 – so called because the CAMRA players ate all the pork pies while the Wyndham was fielding. Front (l to r): Ed Garman, Geoff Norton, Jim Battersby, unknown, Pete Woods, Sam Fortes, unknown. Back (l to r): Phil Read, unknown, Jim Garriock, unknown. The 'Pork Pie' series lasted until about 2012



CAMRA volunteers at Beerex 1993. Left to right: Chris White, Sam Fortes, Phil Read, Bob (surname unknown), Andrew Hesketh, Ed Garman, Bill Fortes, Chris (surname unknown), Lisa Fortes, Pete Woods, Geoff Norton, Tony Butt, Mike Maidment, Sue Maidment and John Palmer



Archaeologist and Time Team TV personality Phil Harding with branch chairman Pete Woods at the launch of the branch's pubs guide at The Bull, Downton in 1999.



Longstanding branch chairman Pete Woods apparently seeking divine inspiration in 2000



*All very scientific.
Jim Battensby at Beerex 1994*



CAMRA members outside the Wyndham Arms, which has always been a key branch meeting place



Morris dancers at Beerex



Salisbury CAMRA members have toured pubs by bicycle...



A much younger Ian Turner smiling for the camera at Winterfest.



....and by bus



Into the modern era – CAMRA members proving that 'Salisbury is open' after the 2018 Novichok attack. Branch chairman Derek Blackshaw, who died just a few years later, is second from the right

HOORAY FOR HENRY



Anyone attending meetings of the Salisbury & South Wiltshire branch of CAMRA will soon get to know Henry, the amiable Clumber spaniel, who comes along with branch vice-chairman and festivals co-ordinator Andrew Hesketh. Henry, a rescue dog, has become so much a part of branch life that his attendance is now recorded on the minutes by secretary Steve Stringer.



Branch members were therefore delighted to hear that Henry has been recorded on the 'dogs wall' at the Coach & Horses in Winchester Street, Salisbury by sign writer and mural artist Charlie King. The pub, which reopened almost 18 months ago after being closed for nine years, is run by Chris and Theresa Meaker, who are passionate dog-lovers. First onto the wall were their own dogs Hector, an English bulldog, and Bertie, a cockapoo and since then

other hounds who have come into the pub regularly have been added.

The Coach & Horses also made Henry its 'dog of the month' in December, which involved him being photographed for a poster wearing a Santa hat and looking distinctly uncomfortable. To spare him any further embarrassment, we are not going to republish that but it is nice to know that others appreciate Henry as much as his friends in CAMRA do.

Will Bennett

THE TALBOT INN



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GOLDEN START TO 2025 FOR JAMES AND NICOLA



left to right: Nicola, Millie and James Robinson of Stonehenge Ales, Netheravon are presented with their certificates by Gerald Gibson of the Salisbury & South Wilts branch of CAMRA.

This year got off to a momentous start for James and Nicola Robinson, who run Stonehenge Ales at Netheravon, with the safe arrival of their first child Millie, born on 20 January. She was introduced to local CAMRA members during a quick visit to Winterfest 2025 at Salisbury Guildhall. Millie may now have to wait until Winterfest 2043 to be able to buy a round! Who knows we may be sampling a brew specially produced by herself.

There was another reason for James and Nicola to appear at Winterfest and that was to collect special certificates for the success of two Stonehenge beers in the London and South East region competition for the CAMRA Champion Beer of Britain. Danish Dynamite topped the bill with the gold award for the Premium Pale, Blonde, and Golden Ales category while Pigswill came second and picked up a silver in the Standard Bitter category. Danish Dynamite will now go forward to the national

final of the competition with a good chance of picking up the award for Champion Beer of Britain 2025. Pigswill will be on standby to go forward should the category winner not be available to progress. What an achievement for Team Stonehenge Ales so early into their time at The Old Mill, Netheravon.

This is the first time for many a year that a local beer has gone this far in the national competition, I have been trying to find out just when the last one was without success so if you know please drop a line to the Barrel Organ editor Will Bennett. The venue for the final judging has not yet been announced by CAMRA so we will keep across this story and get something out promptly when we know.

Gerald Gibson
Stonehenge Ales Brewery
Liaison Officer



WINTERFEST WOWS BEER AND CIDER LOVERS

Over 400 beer and cider lovers attended Winterfest, Salisbury's popular beer and cider festival, at the city's Guildhall at the end of January. It was the second year that Winterfest, which is organised by the Salisbury & South Wiltshire branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) had been held in the municipal magnificence of the Guildhall. The Saturday session was a sellout and most of the tickets for Friday evening were also snapped up.

The youngest attendee by some distance was five day-old Millie Robinson, the daughter of James and Nicola Robinson, who run local brewery Stonehenge Ales at Netheravon, north of Salisbury. They popped in for a brief visit with their first child after a check-up at Salisbury District Hospital, where Millie was born on 20 January. Apart from introducing Millie to CAMRA members, they also picked up two CAMRA award certificates for their beers – see Gerald Gibson's report elsewhere on this in *Barrel Organ*.

Half the 24 real ales on sale at Winterfest came from local brewers such as Stonehenge. Old Sarum-based Dark Revolution supplied two beers, including Dark Matter, a smooth oatmeal stout which is a blend of eight different malts, and which was voted Beer of the Festival by attendees. Local microbreweries were represented by the Dead Duck Brewery from Hale on the outskirts of the New Forest and another one-man outfit, Small Paul's Brewery from Gillingham, north Dorset, whose Gylla's IPA came fourth in the poll.

"The reaction from festival-goers to Winterfest has been overwhelmingly positive and the atmosphere was really good and very relaxed," said Andrew Hesketh, festivals co-ordinator for the Salisbury & South Wiltshire branch of CAMRA. "We are looking forward to **Summerfest**, our summer festival, which will be held at the Guildhall on **20-21 June**."

Will Bennett



DIARY DATES *Salisbury & South Wiltshire*

MARCH

5th Open Branch Meeting

7.30pm The Pheasant, Salt Lane, Salisbury.

8th Bus Social

To White Hart, Bishopstone and Talbot Inn, Berwick St John. Depart on Bus 29 11.50am, Blue Boar Row, Salisbury, Stop N. White Hart arrive 12.20pm, depart 1.50pm; Talbot arrive 2.28pm, depart 3.26pm. Food available and dogs welcome at both.

14th Minibus Trip

7.00pm pick-up Salisbury Coach Park. Winterbourne Arms, Winterbourne Dauntsey; Earl of Normanton, Idmiston; Malet Arms, Newton Tony; and The Duck, Laverstock. New tenants at Earl of Normanton and The Duck.

19th City Saunter

7.30pm start at Five Bells, then The Pheasant, The Royal George and The George & Dragon, all Salisbury.

26th Train Social

To Gillingham and Sherborne. Depart Salisbury station 11.47am, arrive Gillingham 12.16pm Ten-minute walk to The Phoenix. 2.17pm train to Sherborne, arrive 2.32pm. Digby Tap two minutes walk from station. Return on the 3.35pm train or later if preferred.

APRIL

2nd Open Branch Meeting

7.30pm The Wyndham Arms, Estcourt Road, Salisbury.

5th Train and Bus Social

To Southampton. 2.56pm train from Salisbury station to Southampton Central, arrive 3.34pm. Suggest no 18 bus (every 10 mins) to Witches Brew, Shirley (opens 4pm) and/or other good pubs. Return from Southampton 6.37pm train.

11th Minibus Trip

7.00pm pick-up Salisbury Coach Park. Plume of Feathers, Shrewton; King's Head, Chitterne; Prince Leopold, Upton Lovell; and The Bell, Wylve. New tenants at Plume of Feathers and King's Head.

16th City Saunter

7.30pm Old Mill Hotel, Rose & Crown Hotel, Greyfisher, all Harnham. If Rose & Crown and Greyfisher scrapped then head into town from the Old Mill via the Town Path.

17th Bus and Train Social

Thirsty Thursday with Southern Hampshire Branch at The Park Inn, Southampton. Depart 11.40am on X7R bus from Endless Street, Salisbury stop D.

Arrive Southampton Central station 12.50pm and take local bus to The Park Inn. Return by bus from Southampton Central at 4.14pm, 5.19pm or 6.14pm. You can also go there and/or back by train.

24th Bus Social

To Amesbury. Depart 11.40am on Active8 bus from Blue Boar Row, Salisbury, Stop M. Arrive Amesbury 12.00 for the Antrobus Arms, George Inn and Bell, all within a few minutes walk. Return buses depart every 20 minutes.

25th and 26th Chippenham Beer, Cider and Perry Festival.

Olympiad Sports Hall, Chippenham SN15 3PA. No branch outing but tickets available from www.nwwiltscamra.org.uk or The Three Crowns, Chippenham.

MAY

7th Open Branch Meeting

7.30pm The Wyndham Arms, Estcourt Road, Salisbury.

10th Bus Social

To Romsey. Depart 11.40am, Endless Street, stop D, bus X7R. Arrive Romsey bus station 12.22. Visit pubs in Romsey, including Three Tunns, six minutes walk from bus station. Flacks Tap Room opens 2.00pm. Return from Romsey bus station 2.47pm or 4.47pm (last bus) or by train (which is nearer the Taproom)

16th Minibus Trip

7.00pm pickup Salisbury coach park. Black Dog, Chilmark; The Lamb, Hindon; The Boot, Tisbury; and The Greater Good, Fovant. New tenants at Black Dog and Greater Good.

21st City Saunter (Wilton Wander)

7.30pm The Pembroke Arms, The Greyhound and The Bear Inn, all Wilton.

28th Bus Social

To Malet Arms, Earl of Normanton and Crown Inn. Depart 11.50am on the 67 bus from Endless Street, Salisbury, Stop C, arrive Newton Tony 12.32 for Malet Arms. (Short visit, 45 mins.) Depart Newton Tony on the southbound 67 at 1.18 pm to Boscombe arrive 1.24pm for Earl of Normanton. Depart on the northbound 67 at 2.25pm to Crown Inn Cholderton arrive 2.37pm. Depart on the 67 at 4.29pm to Tidworth and return on any suitable service.

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

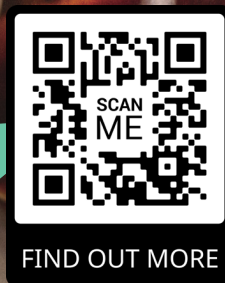
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