

Dates for your Diary

- 16th March **St Patrick's Day Breakfast Celebration** Spyglass, Ventnor
28th - 30th March - **Yarmouth Real Ale Festival** - Wheatsheaf, Kings Head, Bugle
4th - 6th April **Cider and Sausage Festival** Star Coffee and Ale House, Ryde
10th May **Wolverton Folk and Blues Fair** Wolverton Manor
10th May - 18th May **IW Walking Festival** isleofwightwalkingfestival.co.uk
15th -18th May **Spring Ale Festival** Sportsman's Rest, Porchfield
23rd - 25th May **Spring SARfest Beer Festival** Waverley Park Holiday Centre
24th - 25th May **Springfest** Wight Knuckle Brewery, New Farm, Nunwell
(free shuttle service to/from Brading car park)
5th - 9th August **The Great British Beer Festival 2025** NEC Birmingham
Please let me know if you would like to publicise an event, either in the magazine or the website. Just send an email to: editor@wightwash.org.uk

Please note that the deadline for the summer issue of Wightwash will be **18th May 2025**

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Wightwash can be contacted by phone **721557** or email editor@wightwash.org.uk
Wightwash Website www.wightwash.org.uk

Wightwash

Volume 2, Number 100

Magazine of the Isle of Wight branch of CAMRA

Spring 2025 Issue



In this FREE issue...

100

Brewery News

My 100th Issue

Crafty Club

Wight Whisky

Pub of the Year

Beer & the Law

Beer of the Year

Island Characters

and much, much more...



The Campaign for Real Ale exists to preserve and promote good beer and pubs.



Wightwash website

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Win a £20 Meal Voucher for the Wight Mouse Inn or a case of Yates' Ales

Just answer these easy questions. The first two correct answers out of the hat on 1st May win the prizes.

Send answers to - The Editor, Wightwash, Oakdene, Rookley, Ventnor, PO38 3NH or email - editor@wightwash.org.uk

- Which historic Oxford pub is famously known as the meeting place of the literary group 'The Inklings,' including J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis?
- Which West End musical is based on a novel by Victor Hugo?
- Which planet is known as the "Red Planet"?
- In which year did the Titanic sink?
- Which is the smallest country in the world by land area?
- In which French region is Paris located?
- Who became the King of England after the abdication of Edward VIII?
- In which Charles Dickens novel would you find Ebenezer Scrooge?
- and 10/ Name these American Presidents



Answers to the Winter Quiz

- Canberra
- 1989
- Pink Floyd
- Stonehouse
- St Boniface Down
- Piano
- Queen Elizabeth II
- Great Expectations
- Normandy
- Île-de-France,

Dave Filby wins a meal voucher and Roy Roach wins a case of Yates' beer.

Thank you to all the others who took part - better luck next time!

The WIGHT MOUSE INN

Wight Mouse Inn
 thewightmouseinn

The Wight Mouse Inn is a friendly, fun, family run pub in Chale on the south coast of the island with amazing views across to the Needles and Tennyson Down. We are well known for value for money, honest pub food and can cater for party's large and small; choose any occasion from popping in for a quick bite to family celebrations. We are open for breakfast (open to non-residents) then full menu from midday and always have a daily specials board to complement our extensive menu.

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Inspired by the images in Cockram's Yard, the lane that runs between South Street and Pyle Street, we look at the lives of some Isle of Wight characters from history.

George Brannon

George Brannon (1784-1860) was a self-taught artist, engraver, and printer best known for his detailed engravings and prints of the Isle of Wight's coastline and landmarks.

Born in Ireland in 1784, George moved to London with his family, where his father worked as a shoemaker. He was fortunate to obtain an apprenticeship as a printer, during which he became proficient in Latin, Greek, pen-and-ink illustrations, and architectural design.

He married on 17th March 1812, in Alverstoke, close to Gosport. Around 1809, his family relocated to the Isle of

Wight, settling in Landscape Cottage on Wootton Common. It was here that he began work, engraving depictions of the island.

In 1821, he began publishing his collection, "Vectis Scenery," which continued throughout most of the 19th century.

In later life, Brannon became a fervent advocate of the Reform Bill, which addressed the inequalities of the democratic system of the time. He passed away on 23rd March 1860.

Brannon's contributions to the arts and local history have made him an important figure in the cultural heritage of the Isle of Wight.

Post script: George Brannon's grandson, known as Young George, founded the **Isle of Wight County Press** in 1884, exactly 100 years after Brannon's birth.



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Who's Who

Chairman: John Nicholson
juann@zoho.com

Secretary: Mike Hoar
mike.camrai@gmail.com

Treasurer: Brian Jacobs
jcloth14@gmail.com

GBG coordinator and Newsletter: Mike Hoar
mike.camrai@gmail.com

Wightwash Editor and Membership: Tim Marshall
editor@wightwash.org.uk

Social Secretary: Rob Madigan
star@ryde.cafe

Wightwash Advertising Rates

Half page £250 per year | Full page: £400 per year (4 issues).

Enquiries: Tim Marshall **E:** editor@wightwash.org.uk | **T:** 07799 837 628

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It was a pleasant surprise to see so many members at our annual AGM, held at the Wheatsheaf Hotel in Newport on January 25th. The turnout was so impressive that the room was nearly overflowing with attendees.

Our renowned Chairperson, John (Juan) Nicholson, took on the role of Master of Ceremonies, dressed aptly in a tartan suit to celebrate Burns Night. He commended the outgoing treasurer, Ken Matthews, for his tireless contributions to the branch and appointed him, in absentia, to the newly created title of Honorary President.

We were delighted to welcome our new Regional Director, Norman Clinnick, to the meeting—an appearance that showed his dedication and courage! Norman explained the new regional system, which caused a bit of consternation when he revealed that the Isle of Wight had become part of Hampshire. He reassured us that this change was purely for administrative purposes.


Several changes were made to the Isle of Wight CAMRA branch structure. Mike Hoar, already holding multiple roles, has taken over from Alex Lawson as Secretary. Brian Jacobs is our new Treasurer, and Rob Madigan has stepped in as our new Social Secretary.

Special thanks go to the staff of the Wheatsheaf who looked after us so well and provided a splendid buffet.

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Pub of the Year

Beer of the Year

- 1 Newport Ale House, Newport
- 2 Castle Inn, Sandown
- 3 Ale House, Cowes
- 4 S. Fowler & Co
- 5 Man in the Moon
- 6 Volunteer
- 7 Crab and Lobster Tap
- 8 Waverley Park Holiday Centre
- 9 Sportsman's Rest
- 10 Highdown Inn
- 11 Spyglass
- 12 Travellers Joy
- 12 Duke of York, Cowes
- 14 Cedars
- 15 Bargeman's Rest
- 16 Waterfront, Totland
- 16 Vine Inn
- 18 Craft 101,
- 19 Wheatsheaf Inn, Yarmouth
- 20 Painters Arms

- 1 Earl's RDA, Island Brewery
- 2 Fuggle Dee-Dum, Goddards
- 3 Yachtsman's Ale, Island Brewery
- 4 Puncheon Porter, Goddards
- 5 Plum Porter, Yates'
- 6 Dark Side of the Wight
- 7 Ale of Wight, Goddards
- 8 Tennyson IPA, Island Brewer
- 9 Wight Christmas, Island Brewery
- 10 Black IPA, Wight Knuckle
- 11 Yule be Sorry, Yates'
- 12 Islander, Yates'
- 13 Wight Gold, Island Brewery
- 14 South Island Pale, Goddards
- 15 Barista Breakfast Stout, G'dds
- 16 Sea Dog, Yates'
- 16 Nipper Bitter, Island Brewery
- 16 Santa's Ale, Yates'
- 19 Duck's Folly, Goddards
- 20 Holy Joe, Yates'



25% of the membership voted. 62 pubs received votes.

The presentations will be made on Wednesday 14 May at
Newport Ale House at 7pm

The IW branch of CAMRA is indebted to Mike Hoar for organising the competition.



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When John Nicholson, our famous Chairperson (he likes us to call him that) and Nick Ward collared me coming out of a Ryde pub I had no idea what I had let myself in for. I'd made the mistake of mentioning that I was going to spend a little less time working for P&O as a musician (since then, whenever anyone tells me that they are about to retire, I always warn "Don't tell anyone!"). John explained that Nick was no longer going to be able to edit the branch newsletter and could I help out. I agreed on the strict understanding that it would be a temporary arrangement. That was in 1999. Twenty six years later and I'm still here,

Wightwash was started in 1991 although it didn't adopt the name until the second issue. The first one was the "**Newsletter of the Isle of Wight branch of CAMRA**".

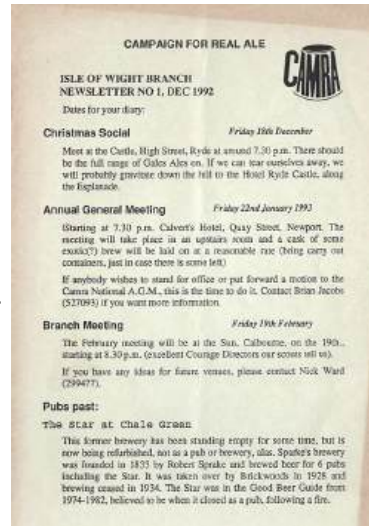
Things were quite different back then. **Burts Brewery** had ceased brewing, and Anthony Goddard had yet to begin his brewing operations, Bob Simpson and Xav Baker were only just starting **Ventnor Brewery**, Dave Yates didn't start his own brewery at the Inn at St Lawrence until 2000, and Tom Minshull (**Island Ales**) wouldn't start brewing until 2010. The only fully operational brewery at the time was the "**Island Brewery**" owned by Geoffrey Hartridge. He later renamed it **Burt's Brewery Newport** after acquiring the name in 1993. He sold it to **Ushers** in March 1998, who promptly closed it.

Here's an interesting excerpt from the first newsletter:

A planning application has been made to change the use of farm buildings near Ryde to a brewery, watch this space. No movement on the plans for a brewery in the Pilot Boat Inn at Bembridge.

Anthony Goddard opened his brewery at Barnsley Farm one year later. But it wasn't until 2021 that brothers Fergus and Ed Bristow opened their **Wight Knuckle Brewery** at the Pilot Boat Inn in Bembridge.

I am currently uploading back copies of Wightwash (including this one) to the Wightwash website. Visit <https://wightwash.org.uk/mag.php>



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to celebrate **Dancing Man's** 10th Anniversary and visit the **Staggeringly Good Brewery** in Southsea.

Notably, Crafty Cans are becoming more widespread, aided by establishments like **Craft 101** in East Cowes and the **Star Coffee and Ale House** in Ryde. Supermarkets are also catching on, with larger selections available at reasonable prices.

We have now grown to 15 core members. One has been successfully brewing his own beer and now hosts gatherings at his "Pirate Bar." Members bring their own beers to complement his brews and hospitality. Recently, a couple joined the club after hearing our discussions in a pub.

The Crafty Club remains a vibrant and friendly social club. Interested in joining? Contact Paul Sheldon via email (mrssesheldon@gmail.com). It should be noted that the Crafty Club operates alongside IOW CAMRA to complement it, not replace it.

Paul Sheldon



My first Wightwash was published in the summer of 1999. The cover featured the closing of the **Roadside Inn** in Nettlestone and the opening of the **Bargeman's Rest** on Newport Quay.

Other items of note included the news that several Island pubs would revert to their original names. The **Cask and Custard Pot** went back to being the **Old Stag** after a 500-name petition, the **Railway**, Ryde was recovering from being the **Cask and Cucumber**. ... and the once **Commercial Hotel** in Sandown became the **Old Comical** after a very brief period of being the **Cask and Codpiece**.

In my first issue, in an attempt to dispel the common image of a CAMRA member. I wrote...

"I don't wear sandals and I don't have a beard or a fat belly".

Well, I still don't own any sandals.

Tim Marshall Wightwash Editor (temporary)



Yates' Brewery

The main news this quarter is that Josh Davies has joined Yates' from Goddards as Head Brewer after Olly left last year. With a young family this new role works better for Josh. He is already planning to make his mark.

The recipe for **Holy Joe** (4.9% ABV) has been changed and has proved very successful in cask since its relaunch.

The hugely popular **Sea Dog** has been tweaked. A new yeast, with a slightly slower fermentation rate than the previous one, is now being used, and malt supplies have been switched to Crisp. It is now available in both bottle and cask at 4.3% ABV, and very tasty it

is too. Every sale of this beer results in a donation to the Lifeboats - so you can feel you're doing your bit whenever you enjoy a pint! Both the bottle label and the pump clip have been redesigned, along with a splendid new glass, and this marks the start of a rebranding exercise with **Beachcomber**

planned as the next in line. This will be at 4.5% ABV and Simcoe and Mosaic hops



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Crafty Club's Latest Adventures

The Crafty Club members celebrated the recent collaboration between Goddards and the Powder Monkey Group, rebranding the brewery as "Powder Monkey, the home of Goddards" with a much enjoyed visit sampling craft beers such as **Drop Anchor**, **Monkey Fist**, and **Bubbleheads Brut IPA**.



Following the Isle of Wight CAMRA AGM in Newport, an 8-seater minibus service was introduced, named **Crafty Crew Land Cruisers**. The first trip to the **Dark Ale Festival** at Havenstreet sold out in three days. **Cowes Ale House** is also organizing transportation to the **Dark Ale Festival** from Cowes. Future plans include expanding to Isle of Wight pub crawls with a 16-seater minibus

The crew recently visited Portsmouth, enjoying Fuller's Ales at the **Custom House** and craft beers at the **Tap and Tandoor**. They finished at the **Hole in the Wall**.

More outings are planned for the summer, including a trip to Southampton

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more recent years who have had near-death experiences as a result of massive advances in resuscitation techniques. Two of his books, Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure outraged Victorian society because of their permissive nature. He put the West Country on the map as a result of setting all his novels in actual locations in and around Dorset (an area he called 'Wessex') and a visit to his birthplace in Upper (now Higher) Bockhampton is well worthwhile.

I shall conclude my article with one of my favourite quotes, this from his poem 'In Time of 'The Breaking of Nations':

*Yonder a maid and her wight come whispering by.
Wars annals will cloud into night ere their story die.*

Brian Jacobs

have been added to increase the tropical aroma. The changes in ABV are so that their range of beers is spread out across the alcohol range.

Josh is planning to have the brewery floor re-laid as it is starting to wear and also anticipates the addition of kegging facilities in the longer term. Once things have settled down, and the major brews for bottling stock have been completed, he is looking forward to playing with the pilot plant.

Have a great spring, hopefully the weather will be ideal for getting out and about enjoying a few pints of Isle of Wight ales in convivial company.



Jeff Sechiani Yates' BLO



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GODDARDS BREWERY



At last the deal has been finalised between **Goddards** and the new owners, **Powder Monkey**.

Operations manager Nick Hall emphasizes that the policy is to "add, not take away."

Goddards will continue making their cask beers and add Powder Monkey's keg and canned beers to their lineup. Goddards will

continue to distribute their products across the island and the South Coast of England. Their core brands will remain **Fuggle Dee-Dum, Ale of Wight** and **GSB** (Goddards Special Bitter) with their other beers appearing as seasonals. It is not anticipated that there will be any significant changes to branding or labelling.

However, the Wightwash award for Pretentious Beer Twat of the Year goes to Brutaltruth from Ohio:

Nose of candied mulled peaches in light brandy, rich caramel, baked apple, subtle booze, and light brown sugars. Flavors take me back to a number of years ago with candied peaches and apricot notes that are awash in brandy verging on cognac notes. White raisin rests on the sides of the taste and fade into a light caramel and brown sugar note with a mild cherry note that again fades into a sherry note on the rear. Excellent. Near perfect mouth feel for this historic ale; low carbonation, medium full mouth feel; and a sweet fruit and booze laden finish that is lightly slick and subtly syrupy making for a near perfect barley wine experience

Let me finish this article with a few words about Hardy himself. He was a gifted author, a true son of the Dorset soil which permeates his writing, and his empathy with the land he was born in and those he shared it with is absorbing and moving. Born in 1840 in Upper Bockhampton, he trained as an architect until the success of his writing allowed him to rely on his novels and poems to make a very successful and lucrative living. In spite of his bucolic prose he was a controversial figure; he championed the poor, he believed in the supernatural and had progressive views on religion, believing God to be part of a new concept of universal consciousness, remarkably anticipating a belief held by many in



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years researching and funding it before releasing it to the Italian market in 2015, where it became much favoured. This will astonish those who thought Italian beer started with Moretti and ended with Peroni and serves to show the folly of preconceptions.

But now, in Hardy's words. the native has returned, not perhaps to Wessex, but to the UK under the custodianship of brewmaster Derek Prentice at Hepworths Brewery in Billingshurst. At the time of writing, this iconic ale was about to hit the market, with numbered and vintage dated 25cl bottles and 10 litre KeyKegs available in a limited number of pubs, ironically none

within spitting distance of Wessex, while the Thomas Hardy's Ale "The Historical" aged in French oak cognac barrels, will be attainable only in 25cl bottles. I have no knowledge of prices or availability but my guess is that the price will be reflected in its limited production. Oh, and bear in mind the cost of Abbeydale's Best Bitter above....

Thomas Hardy's Ale must have one of the longest shelf lives in modern brewing history. The original label boldly stated that it will keep for 25 years and should not be drunk for at least 10. Yeah, right. You might as well tell a wine buff to hold back on the bottle of vintage Margaux his host has just opened. There is a point, though. I bought several bottles in the early '80s and, while not a single one made it past 2 years, the 'young' beer' was so sweet it was almost undrinkable. Oh, how I suffered; how mighty was my fortitude.

So, the question on everyone's lips is 'what does it taste like?' My gut reaction is "absolutely wonderful", being a plain-speaking fellow, and, after some Deep Thought, I would then go on to say it has a very complex palate which becomes more profound as it ages, so complex, in fact, that you can taste everything in it except Doom Bar. But perhaps you crave something more erudite and for this I shall pass you over to those whose palate is more gifted than mine:

"...any headiness it once had was gone, but it poured a syrupy dark brown, releasing aromas of dark chocolate and caramelised sugar. It was delicious: slow moving and relaxed, with the soft bitter sweetness of molasses..."

Succinct and accurate I'd say, wouldn't you? Or this very lyrical description from Adrian Terney-Jones of CAMRA, who must have had a couple of bottles before he wrote it:

....this fascinating and complex beer that...dances on the palate with the grace and elegance of Gene Kelly in his prime



Already on the Firkin Deck bar are several beers from Powder Monkey including **Drop Anchor**, **Golden Drop** and **Cutlass - Black Forest Gateau Stout** .

There's more about Powder Monkey on the next page.

New beers include **Hill Hassel Botanic Lager**, made with eucalyptus. Although eucalyptus is a toxic plant, a process has been developed to remove its toxicity while keeping the aroma and flavour.

Bob has admitted that when he started Ventnor Brewer in 1994 with Xav Baker they gained much of their brewing expertise from

CAMRA's **Home Brewing** Guide (see below).



Tim Marshall Goddards BLO

The Story Behind Powder Monkey Brewing Co.

Powder Monkey Brewing Co. was co-founded by Andy Burdon and Mark Hamblin. Andy, who also serves as the CEO, discovered the historic gunpowder store in Priddy's Hard, Gosport. Mark joined as the Head Brewer shortly after the brewery's inception.



Andy Burdon

Together, they transformed this historic site into a thriving brewery, opening its doors in July 2021.



Mark Hamblin

In 2023 Powder Monkey Brewing Co. expanded its portfolio by acquiring **Willie the Boatman Brewing Co.** in Sydney, Australia, and **merging with Southern Highlands Brewing Co.**

With these acquisitions, Powder Monkey Group now boasts four brewing facilities and three hospitality outlets across the UK and Australia. There are plans for further expansion but more of that in future issues.



One of the Powder Monkey beers available at Goddards Firkin Deck bar is **Golden Drop**. This is a tribute to the historic moment in the 2003 Rugby World Cup Final between England and Australia when Jonny Wilkinson secured a 20-17 victory with a drop goal in extra time. Golden Drop supports the Champions 03 initiative, which helps rugby players transition out of the game by providing care and support.

The name "**Powder Monkey**" derives from the term used for the small boys who, during the Age of Sail, carried gunpowder from the ship's magazine to the cannons during battle.



brews as being 'small beer' to be drunk during the day by children as well as adults. Think about that when you consider a bottle of 3.4% Abbeydale Best Bitter for the attractive cost of £14....

Hardy died in 1928 and his eponymous ale first saw the light of day in 1968 when brewers Eldridge Pope released numbered and vintage-dated bottles of this new barley wine to mark the 40th

anniversary of his passing, having matured the 12% beer in sherry casks for 9 months. At that time it was meant to be a one-off tipping of the hat (or tipping of the vat) to the great man, and was recorded at that time as being the strongest beer in the UK. EP resumed production of the nip, half-pint and pint bottles in 1974 and continued until 1999 when they sadly suffered the same fate as Hardy. Exeter brewers Hanlons took over brewing it from 2003 until 2009 when the brewery concluded that the lengthy maturation period was untenable for their equipment.

Fast-forward to 2012 when the Vecchiato brothers of Italy's Interbrau, long-time aficionados of Hardy's Ale, took over the brand and proceeded to spend 3



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Thomas Hardy's Ale: The Return of the Native.

'It was of the most beautiful colour that the eye of an artist in beer could desire; full in body, yet brisk as a volcano; piquant, yet without a twang; luminous as an autumn sunset; free from streakiness of taste, but, finally, rather heady.'

Well, many of us would proudly admit to being an 'artist in beer', or something like that....and, of course, those same individuals are undoubtedly 'full in body', aren't we, guys? Hardy's Ale is thus a good fit for many, unlike our trousers.

So, what was Hardy waxing so lyrically about in 'The Trumpet Major'? It was 'Casterbridge Strong Ale', Casterbridge being Hardy's fictional pseudonym for Dorchester. He goes on to say: *'The masses worshipped it, the minor gentry loved it more than wine, and by the most illustrious county families it was not despised. Anybody brought up for being drunk and disorderly in the streets of its natal borough, had only to prove that he was a stranger to the place and its liquor to be honourably dismissed by the magistrates, as one overtaken in a fault that no man could guard against who entered the town unawares.'*

This wonderful, deep-brown 12% barley wine harks back to a time when beer was not only a daily drink for most people whatever their age, but the finest examples were highly regarded by all classes. At a time when the average strength of beer was considerably higher than now, they would have recognised today's insipid



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Island Brewery

If you get a chance, do not miss **Black Wight**, (a black IPA) in Island Brewery's new anomaly range. It was available at the Steam Railway's Dark Ale Winter Festival. It's not, actually, a new beer; it was one that former head brewer Chris Coleman brewed to prove that black IPA does not exist, and did it magnificently! I know that they cannot exist, in the logical world, but reality, it seems, at times, is far from logical. A Black IPA is an IPA brewed with some roast malt, so it has a roasted taste on top of the IPA. This is quite different to a Porter or a Stout, Mild or Old Ale, all of which do not have the pronounced

hoppy bitterness that a true IPA carries. There is nothing nicer, I think, to find a beer with pronounced contradictory flavour character.

Another such beer is Island's **Tennyson**, with the extreme bitterness of the Simcoe hops, that initially hits you like smelling salts, then to be balanced by a contrasting and comforting biscuity malt. Placing and balancing flavour and after-taste is a great skill and there is no beer that shows that skill more than Earl's RDA, where the flavour triggers in the aftertaste, in espresso with a hint of chocolate.

I am sure that you will agree that the

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corner of the lounge bar, but as soon as Harry turns up to join in on bass, the landlord could be in serious trouble, so serious in fact that he could face a £20,000 fine or six months in prison. In 95% of the pubs in this country, the ones that can't afford a public entertainment licence, it is perfectly legal to have your ears battered by a lone DJ with a 5000-watt PA system, or Dirk and Sid McNasty, with their tribute to the Sex Pistols. It is, however, quite against the law to have a string quartet or a jazz trio...Let's hope the proposed new bill makes more sense."

Fortunately, it did.



Another shift in legislation was Ken Clarke's sliding scale of brewery size duty, also known as the Progressive Beer Duty (PBD). It was introduced in **2002** and came into operation in **2003**. This scheme was designed to support smaller breweries by reducing their duty rate based on their annual production levels. Over 100 new breweries were established and Dave Yates could afford a new

van. There are now 1,895 independent breweries in the UK, supporting an estimated 10,988 direct jobs. The reforms have also encouraged experimentation and innovation in beer styles with a notable rise in craft beers.

Well done Ken!

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Since I took over, we've witnessed some major changes in licensing laws, especially with the introduction of the **Licensing Act 2003**. This new law came into effect at midnight on 24th November 2005 and replaced numerous previous acts of parliament.



The Act gave local authorities the power to make decisions on licensing applications tailored to their own particular circumstances. When it was announced that the Act would remove the blanket restrictions on pub opening hours, there was a media frenzy with fears that "24-hour boozing" would lead to a "wave of chaos and violence" Not surprisingly, it never materialised.

One particularly welcomed change was the removal of the notorious "two in a bar" rule, which previously limited the number of musicians allowed to perform in a pub.

Here's an extract from **Wightwash Summer 2001**....

"It's perfectly okay for Tom and Dick to play piano and drums in the

problem is with a lot of stouts that the flavour is too punchy and up front. Great for the first couple of mouthfuls, but, after that, it becomes an assault on the taste buds. With



RDA, on the other hand, the drinking experience is not overwhelming, with a delayed punch of some 5 seconds after

swallowing, when it hits you in the back of the mouth/ nose with pure espresso. That delayed effect repays in gratification with every subsequent

mouthful – pint after glorious pint! Have you ever noticed, even with Island's weaker beers, how you can go back to them and they are still refreshing, tasteful, no matter what other beers or strength beers you might have been trying. It can be said that even their lightest beer, **Nipper**, holds its own in this regard, and is a refreshing mouth-cleaner at a beer festival if you have been trying some more heavily flavoured beers, but it also sits nicely with light food, such a salad or light seafood.

I suppose, with the days drawing out again, we start thinking of the beach, garden and picnics. Island Brewery's



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beers are just right for those occasions, refreshing with a light astringency to complement any taste and food. What a lot of people don't realise is that most of Island's beers are gluten free. They just have not been subjected to the rigorous certification process. I am not sure that Island would officially want to, either, as there is still some misconception that gluten free means lack of flavour; in Island's case, that is patently not the case. I know people at my local that look out for Island Brewery beers because they have a gluten intolerance and they find them safe to drink. Don't just take my word for it, if you have a gluten intolerance,

be careful if trying any beer that is gluten intolerant friendly, as people can react in so many different ways to different things, best be cautious, and if it works, you are opening a door to some lovely enjoyment! I do hope, this year, that we see more of Island Brewery's other specials, **Rhythmtree**, **Hop Aboard** and those wonderful Mews recreations, all outstanding beers in their own right, far too good to keep locked away in the annals of some recipe book, Steve, Ashley, Tom, if you are listening!!!

John Nicholson - Goddards BLO

Wight Knuckle Brewery

At the start of a calendar year it is worth reflecting on the previous one. Wight Knuckle have been based on the Nunwell estate for over a year since transferring from the Bembridge site behind the Pilot Boat Inn.

One of my favourite places on the island is still the **Pilot Boat** - they continue to pour the excellent **Wight Knuckle Black IPA** (4.7%) 2024 WKB statistics show a healthy increase - at least 35 new trade stockists, the majority based on the Isle of Wight, with thirteen different styles of beer brewed.

Recent new island stockists include the Duke of York (Cowes), Brading Haven Yacht Club (St. Helens), Dairyman's Daughter (Arreton), Harvey Browns (Arreton),



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I had very little knowledge of whisky until a "Highlands and Hebrides" holiday a couple of years ago.

Whilst I am still learning – not an arduous task I have to admit, I'm beginning to appreciate this most traditional of drinks.

A popular perception is that all whiskies come from Scotland, Ireland or in the case of Bourbon, the USA. This is not true. Indeed, many award-winning whiskies come from Japan.

But we can find fine examples much nearer to home. **The Cotswold Distillery** in Stourton, Wiltshire produce a splendid single malt, and now we have **Wight Whisky** distilled here on the Isle of Wight.



Lucy Gregg, one of the founders kindly sent me a bottle of their *Signature Malt Blend* to try, I would not profess to be an expert, but I can safely say I'm an enthusiast.

Here's my tasting notes:

"This whisky is light in colour. Its aroma features hints of honey on toast with a touch of vanilla. It has a strong and warming taste that stands out compared to many well-known whiskies. The finish is smooth and satisfying, leaving a lasting warmth.

I should add *"Dangerously Moreish"*.

I would imagine that Wight Whisky would be great for making a wide range of cocktails.

Tim Marshall

NB: Should any other supplier of consumables wish me to review their products, my address is Oakdene, Main Road, Rookley, PO38 3NH

Heron (Ryde), Nunwell Home Farm (Brading) and Piano Cafe (Freshwater).

Wight Knuckle have announced a new sponsorship deal with the Brading Haven Yacht Club. This sponsorship is connected with the Open Icebreaker series and, as an added bonus, the award winning **Pale Ale** (4%) is available at the Brading Haven bar.



In December brewer Daz jumped on his skateboard and headed off to pastures new. Having started with Wight Knuckle in the early days in the two small sheds behind the Pilot Boat, he has been a much valued member of the brewing team - thanks Daz. To fill the gap, we welcome Paul to the team.

Following on from the extremely popular **Farmhouse Ale** brewed in the latter part of 2024, is a new classic **Best Bitter** (4.2%) with UK hops

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WIGHT KNUCKLE BREWERY

(Bullion, Target and Kent Goldings). Land use for growing hops in the UK has reduced drastically. According to records in the nineteenth century there were almost 3000 hops growers in the UK, covering 31000 hectares. Recent statistics released show only 45 hop growers, covering 800 hectares. Wight Knuckle are keen to support these few remaining UK hop growers.



park and the Nunwell brewery. For more details please follow WKB on social media and to order beer and merchandise:

www.wightknucklebrewery.com

Norman Hobbs Wight Knuckle BLO

Brewery tours are continuing into the spring and Wight Knuckle have just announced that they will host an "Oktoberfest" type event in May, entitled Springfest. Special beers will be brewed ready for Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 May. See you there!! As before, a free minibus shuttle service will operate between the Brading car

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