

# MY LOCAL festival tour

Around the country, some communities are treated to a beer festival unlike any other – one that takes place across an array of the area's pubs. Three readers share their local pub beer festival stories



## ISLE OF WIGHT CLASSIC BUSES, BEER AND WALKS WEEKEND

By Trevor Whelan

**At first sight, an autumn weekend** event involving real ale and vintage buses might seem an unusual concept. However, anyone who participated in the Isle of Wight Classic Buses, Beer and Walks Weekend last October will tell you that it's a winning combination. A collaboration between the island's branch of CAMRA and the Isle of Wight Bus Museum, the third such event will take place over the weekend of 15-16 October 2016.

The objectives of the event are to link as many real ale pubs as possible with a modest network of bus routes operated by classic buses. This appeals to transport enthusiasts and real ale aficionados alike, and provides a welcome autumnal boost for island tourism. In addition, the island has a comprehensive network of footpaths, which allow many of the pubs to be accessed by walkers. The 2015 event proved extremely popular and attracted

a wide variety of visitors, with many making the trip from the mainland.

Despite being a major attraction in the island's tourism calendar, it is only possible because of the substantial input of volunteers. Of the 57 preserved buses and coaches in attendance, 43 visited from the mainland at the owners' expense, with some travelling considerable distances. Forty-five were in service at some point during the weekend, while the remaining 12 provided a static display on the quayside in Newport. The Isle of Wight Bus & Coach Museum relocated to the former Southern Vectis depot in Ryde in 2014, and this provides a natural focal point for many of the special services. The remainder operate from Newport Quay. In 2015, seven routes were operated, totalling more than 3,600 miles over the two days.

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The Isle of Wight branch of CAMRA was one of the earliest to be formed and its members provide vital voluntary support to the bus services by acting as

marshals and information points. The 2015 event was hugely successful and social media was buzzing with complimentary remarks and anecdotes. The 50 participating pubs also reported significantly increased patronage. The historic Buddle Inn at Niton received an award for best pub, as voted for by visitors over the weekend.

**Planning for the 2016 event is already** quite advanced and all the signs are that it will be even better than last year. Find information at [iwbeerandbuses.co.uk](http://iwbeerandbuses.co.uk), which will be updated over the next few months as details are finalised. 

**Above:** All aboard for the Isle of Wight Classic Buses, Beer and Walks Weekend