

Wightwash

Volume 2, Number 21

Newsletter of the Isle of Wight branch of CAMRA



Autumn 2004 Issue

Island Brewer wins major award

David Yates, who boasts to be the Island's oldest brewer has picked up the bronze medal in the CAMRA/Guardian bottled beer category at

the Great British Beer Festival with Yates' Special Draft.

All in all it has been a very good summer for Island brewers with Goddards Special Bitter and Inspiration picking up gold and silver medals from SIBA at the Reading Beer Festival and Ventnor Golden Bitter winning the local Beer of the Year. (For more details, see *News and Gossip*.)

Local Beer in Local Pubs - See Page Three



David Yates,
"The Island's oldest brewer".



www.ventnorbrewery.co.uk

Yates' Brewery
at the
Inn at St Lawrence
the "Real" local brewery

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Sir Noël Coward, the Brighton Belle and Kippers

On certain occasions Sir Noël Coward used to commute from his home in Eastbourne to London early in the morning by rail, trying if he could, to travel on the celebrated Brighton Belle.

*Sir Noël Coward*

One day he noticed that kippers had been taken off the breakfast menu. He campaigned vigorously to have them reinstated.

Eventually they were...

“Good morning, Sir Noel” said the waiter “It will be kippers this morning, then”. “No, it certainly won’t” said the great man, “I don’t want kippers, I want the choice”.

And that’s what we want you to have – the choice.

The choice to drink a beer whether it’s a stout or a bitter or light ale or lager or wheat beer or winter warmer or porter or a “smooth beer” (if you really must), but we want **you** to decide what you want.

Not the CEO or the Managing Director, or the Chairman of the Board -

YOU - the consumer.

Join



for choice

This has been a non-party-political-party-broadcast on behalf of CAMRA

There seems to be two hot topics on the Isle of Wight at the moment:-

1/ Local Beer in Local Pubs

Many years ago the pub and beer scene was dominated by 6 companies - all breweries. Even the most benevolent of them sold only what would make them the most profit. With the help of CAMRA, the Beer Orders Parliamentary Act put an end to this and suddenly the beer drinker had a choice of ales that he could only have dreamed of. Here on the Isle of Wight, the dominance of Whitbread was softened by the arrival of several different brewers and the guest beer policy meant that landlords could sell ale of their (and their customers) choice. It is no coincidence that since then we have seen the growth of small local brewers. For several years both locals and visitors have been able to enjoy local beer in local pubs - and bloody good they are too! What a shame then, that certain pubcos have seen fit to "delist" some local breweries. It is understandable that they wish to take advantage of their size by bulk buying from the national mega breweries but inevitably this results with the same few beers appearing on every bar. For those of us that don't particularly like the mass produced stuff, please give us the choice!

2/ Beer Temperature

It may come as a surprise to some of our colonial friends but there is such a thing as beer that is too cold. There are good reasons that real ale should not be served up at the same temperature as lager and cold Guinness (and especially cold Guinness). At a lower temperature, the protein molecules expand and become visible giving the beer a haze. Beer should also be consumed at roughly the temperature at which it was fermented. If it is not, the flavour will be masked. With real ale the temperature should be between 54° - 56°F (11° - 13°C). Serving beer at the right temperature can be very difficult especially during the summer months but help is at hand. If any landlords are experiencing difficulties, please let us know and we will be only too pleased to offer advice. (You might not want to take it - but it's free!)

The Broadway Inn Totland

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3 Island Ales on Tap

Yates' Broadway Blitz

(5.5% alc/vol)!

plus one from both

Ventnor and Goddards

**Free Pool
on
Wednesday Nights**

**Traditional Home-Cooked
Pub Food
Specials to Order**

From *Paul Mattick*

Before we get on to the news, I would like to add my fourpenny worth to the “Local Beer in Local Pubs” issue. It has come to my attention whilst supping in my local that more and more of the bigger breweries are abstaining from letting our Publicans stock **Isle of Wight** beers. A good ten years ago I myself was in the centre of a debacle, which tied our pub with a particular breweries array, of which neither my customers nor I enjoyed. The point I’m trying to make is this – We (or at least “I”) know that you (The Brewery/PubCo) are not particularly interested about the customer in the pub; it’s beer sales. Surely if the tenants reach their targets, can’t you let them stock a little from the Isle of Wight and nearby? And on that note, some rather worrying news just in...

Punch Taverns has sewn up its acquisition of the InnSpired pubs business.

The deal values the 1,064-pub **InnSpired** business at about £335 million, including £258 million in debt.

Punch said InnSpired is an ‘excellent fit’ with its existing 7,334 pubs, with the deal

fitting its strategy of expansion through a combination of organic growth and targeted acquisitions. Around £3 million a year is expected in purchasing benefits and other cost savings.

To meet local competition concerns, Punch said it would sell 88 pubs to **Admiral Taverns** for £22.6 million. Of these, 51 are from the InnSpired estate and 37 are from the existing Punch estate.

Punch chief executive **Giles Thorley** said: “The acquisition of InnSpired once again demonstrates Punch’s ability to secure attractive pub assets at realistic prices. This estate further enhances the Group’s geographic coverage and strengthens its presence in the South and South West in particular”.

“The significant investment opportunity it offers will deliver good returns from the outset and attractive growth potential for the future.” InnSpired was formed four years ago by the merger of Ushers of Trowbridge and **Alehouse estates**, and has grown through acquisitions including a package of pubs from **Scottish and Newcastle**.

Advertisement for Solent Inn

(Excerpt From **The Publican** Newswire.) Robert Feal-Martinez FBII writes: *I was privy to this info a couple of weeks ago and I know of a number of Inspired tenants who are horrified at the prospect and already want out. I'm sure many more will follow. It is totally ludicrous that this values the individual outlets at an average £315'000, with average barrelage of 150. Watch the rents soar. DTI are you reading this.*

N.B. At the last count Punch Taverns have 5 island pubs, InnSpired - 17 including IOW CAMRA Pub of the Year, The Solent Inn .

And here are Andy and Margaret together with Xav Baker collecting their Pub of the Year/Beer of the Year Awards from Isle of Wight Radio's John Hannam.



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And now the rest of the news...

It wouldn't be right if I didn't write about **David Yates** first in this issue as he has (as you all know) just won the prestigious **Bronze Award** at the **GBBF** for his bottled **Yates' Special Draught** (5.5% ABV). At

first he thought it was a wind up. On realising it wasn't he told me he was totally gob-smacked! Special Draught is available in... That's right, you've guessed it - bottles, from many outlets including **Inn at St Lawrence, Arreton Barns** and various local shops in the Niton area. Dave has had a huge amount of enquiries- he's also sent out countless orders by post. The main dilemma at the moment is that David has to employ his local army of dwarves to keep up with demand. The strong beer I told you about in the last issue is still in progress but owing to the GBBF, it was put on hold. Things are getting back to normal now and we can also be assured of a Christmas ale in Nov/Dec.

Goddards have been exceptionally busy throughout the summer months. **Chris Coleman** and the gang are also planning to produce **Ale of Wight** (4.0% ABV) in bottles, which should be available for

Christmas. The Havenstreet Steam Fair saw a very busy Chris producing beers to order for **Derek Bishop** in different colours of his choice. **Inspiration (5.2%)** will now be produced twice yearly so expect it in your local by the end of October. **Goddards** had a surprise visit recently from **Natasha Adams**, who you may remember went to Spain for a new life with her family. She is doing very well and would like to say a big hello to everyone who knows her.

Business is booming at Island Ales where **Steve Minshull** and the staff have ironed out the glitches and everything is running smoothly since the recent move. "Summer is usually a quiet time, and what with the unpredicted weather we were a little anxious about it" added Steve. Now it's over and the Island is about to be invaded in the autumn by the "Saga-Louts" you can be sure of another busy time ahead. One or two products on offer to look out for over the coming months in your local are; **Gales Trafalgar 4.2%ABV** (A celebration ale in honour of something!), **Brakespear Bitter (3.4% ABV)** which is now brewed in its original Oxford locality and a wide variety of bottled beers. Also available will

The Inn at St Lawrence

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Delicious Food and Great Beer

from Yates' Brewery

Live music every Friday with Kelly Burke

be Ringwood, Young's, St Austell and Thwaites amongst the many others. **Steve Barrett** who for quite a while has been pulling pints at the **Yelfs Hotel** in

Ryde has since moved to pastures new. You can now find him at the

Don't forget our website
www.wightwash.org.uk

Seaview Hotel. His past customers are missing him already and are talking of hijacking a Southern Vectis bus to get them there (I don't know if this is a threat or a promise). Anyway the gang, led by **Capt. Robin Tangle-Ferret**, which also includes Corporal 'All day Ray', and Private 'Merv the Swerve' wish him well and the very best for the future.

This year the **Garlic Festival** was a great success considering the weather forecast, and on reaching the entrance on the second day I approached the man at the gate and told him I was from the press to which he replied, "Sorry I'm afraid **Wightwash** doesn't count Guv". It was however a great weekend and albeit a little bit on the pricey side the Real Ale was well kept, as were one or two of the Barmaids! As I was supping a few beers at **Six Hair Studio** in Ryde, purely as a guest



of my sister in laws for the main Carnival this summer, I noticed the **Ventnor Brewery** lorry coming up Star Street with a couple of guys (The Cuban Brothers) who were to be performing at the **Robin Hill 'Bestival'** on board playing their wheels of steel (they were very good). I approached a trendy young man dispensing flyers who told me he was **Airon Baker** and he was surprised at how young I looked, as he'd only ever spoken to me on the telephone in the past! (How can I write awful things about this amiable chap). Anyway it turns out that **BBC Radio 1** had commandeered the vehicle to promote the Bestival, of which **Ventnor Brewery** were to be a part of. The weekend was a great success (once again taking into account the weather), and plans are already afoot for next year.

Xavier and the team have had a great summer, which included the re-installment of **Wight Spirit (5.0%ABV)** to **Wetherspoons** and a one off brew of **Hippy High Ale (4.4%ABV)** was a success. **Anti-freeze** will also be back in October to warm yer cockles.

Ventnor Ales have been cropping up in some very revered places, not only Westminster but even the Palace! Andrew Turner, the Island's MP kindly took the

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time to write to the editor of **Wightwash** to tell him that he had recently entertained two constituents in the **Strangers Bar** in the House of Commons and was delighted to discover that the guest ale on offer was **Ventnor Gold**.

Airon Baker was also delighted when he received a letter (now framed) from Brigadier Sir Miles Hunt-Davis KCVO CBE Private Secretary to HRH Duke of Edinburgh thanking him for a case of **Admirals Ale** that he had sent to Buckingham Palace. **Airon** had heard that the Duke had a glass of the beer to accompany his lunch at Osborne House during his recent visit to the Island and later voiced his appreciation. (Wightwash cannot confirm the words "Bloody Marvellous" although they cannot

be entirely discounted). In the letter, Sir Miles says "Prince Philip looks forward to sampling this ale during the coming weeks and is most grateful for your generosity".

Xavier Baker has asked me to point out that the **Three Bishops** in Brighstone has recently been taken over by Jan Brown who will be remembered for her sense of humour and charm at the **Railway Inn, Ryde**. It appears that the food is in Xavier's words 'Bloody fantastic',

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and when he went there with a party of ten, not one person could fault the meal. The chef even came out afterwards and kissed 'Ma Baker'! Good luck Jan – hope to see you soon.

On that note, what does the future hold for the Railway? Well I can tell you that a very enthusiastic Brian Poulter will, or already has, depending on when you're reading this, taken over the Inn-Spired/Ushers/Punch? Pub and is looking forward to seeing old and new customers equally. Brian, an electrician, has, you could say, gone from cable to table! booom boom! Oh and thank you to **Dan Tucker** for that one.

Tim Green, bar manager of **The Chequers Inn**, Rookley has unearthed a hoard of collectable bottled beers including 10 different Silver Jubilee (1977) ales and such gems as CAMRA's 10th Anniversary Ale. There are 59 ales in all. For further information email

tim@chequersinn-iow.co.uk or call in. The **Volunteer** in Ventnor staged a beer festival this summer with a record 18 beers on offer. If you missed it, then don't let

If you would like us to write something about your pub, just let us know, phone 721557 or email editor@wightwash.org.uk



pass the **Ventnor** festival starting on 15th October. Public houses involved include the **Volunteer**, **The Richmond**, **Spyglass** and **Mill Bay** amongst others.

As reported in the last issue **Badger Brewery** and the **Lake Huron** have sponsored the **Isle of Wight Hockey** club. Treasurer **Dave Reynolds** told me that there are three teams, the 1st team being the expert players down to the 3rd team, which includes the older/inexperienced players, one of who is 70! Training is on Monday nights (6pm) at **Smallbrook Stadium** and if anyone is in-



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terested, go on down and have a go – you can't do any worse than me. Should you get to play there's many a tipple to be had afterwards. Next time I'll be writing about the amalgamation of Rolls Royce, Ginsters and Rice Krispies... by then they will be known as **Sausage Rolls & Royce Krispies!**
And so to bed!

Paul

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Dates for your Diary

- 29th Sept (Back to Wednesdays!) **Business Meeting**, - Wheatsheaf, Yarmouth 8.30
Wednesday 6th October **Boathook Evening** Fowlers, Ryde 8.30
(Come along for a chat about one of our illustrious founders)
15th - 24th October **Ventnor (Beer) Festival** - Various pubs
Sat 6th Nov **Vaguely Sunny** present "Show of Hands" at Medina Theatre
Saturday 13th November **Regional Meeting** - Shanklin Con Club Noon
Wednesday 17th November **Business Meeting** - Yarbridge Inn, Brading 8.30
Friday 3rd December **Branch Christmas Party** - Solent Inn, Ryde 8.30
(food, transport and very good cheer!)

Top Tip

Fed up with getting unsolicited phone calls?
Put a stop to them by registering your number with TPS (the Telephone Preference Service).

www.tpsonline.org.uk or phone: 020 7291 3320

This *Top Tip* was brought to you by *Wightwash*

Advert for the Anchor

In previous issues of Wightwash, Jeff Ledicott outlined the beginning and the consequent rise of the Mew Langton Brewery. Here he continues the story:-

By the 1940's and 50's Mew Langton completely dominated the Isle of Wight scene, owning pubs, depots and shops not only all over the Island, but also Portsmouth, Southampton, Totton and New Milton. However the 1960's saw a dramatic change. Up until then, seventeen of the Mew family and four Langtons had been engaged in the brewery.

In 1964 Mew Langton merged with Strongs of Romsey, a brewery of similar outlook, and together with T. Wetherhead formed a new Strong group of companies. "You are entering Strong Country" was the slogan. A selection of Strongs beers were introduced to the Island outlets from the mainland. With the prize winning (1960) Mews Ale XXXX being introduced in Hants, Wilts and Dorset.

In the late sixties, the Strong Group was purchased by Whitbread Wessex and by 1969 all brewing had ceased in the Newport site. This fell in to dis-



Bob Huxtable and his 1943 Seddon lorry (the oldest working one on record!)



repair and was destroyed by fire in 1980.

For the enthusiast there are still many bits of evidence to remind us of the once great brewery.

At the recent Steam Up at Havenstreet you could have found Bob Huxtable with his Mews lorry or you could have seen my Mew and Co. stillage helping out behind the bar.

If you look carefully round the Quay Art Centre, you can still see the rails that the beer barrels were rolled down to the awaiting barges.

All that remains of the brewery site



are St Cross House, recently refurbished, and the Oast House tower which has been incorporated in the housing development. The Oast House still has the White Horse weather vane; the white horse being the emblem of the The Royal Brewery, Newport, Isle of Wight.

Before I close, during my research I unearthed an interesting fact; in 1968 on average a pint cost 1/10d, of this 10d was tax, in other words 45%. It's nice to know that some things don't change!



Jeff Ledicott

With a catchphrase of -

'Snap, Crackle, but NO POP',



Angel Community Radio has been broadcasting to Islanders since 1999, playing only music recorded between 1900 and 1959. For the last three years the station has been based at Wight Cable in Love Lane, Cowes broadcasting 24 hours a day on cable TV channel 11, a selection of live and recorded shows of music and memories for the mature listener. The premises are provided rent free, which is vitally important

as the station is self-funding and is reliant on the fundraising activities of groups of local listeners and sponsorship from other organisations.

The fundraising activities are mostly aimed at purchasing FM airtime and Angel will be broadcasting on a frequency of 87.9FM from mid October, although, as this is an expensive business, it will only be for a period of 2 weeks. During this time the volunteer presenters and office staff will be endeavouring to provide as many live shows as possible and will be encouraging listeners both old and new to contribute by telephoning the studio to share thoughts and memories and also to request favourite tunes from the station's comprehensive library of records.

If you are interested in presenting, participating, sponsoring a show, advertising or helping in any other way, the station manager Chris Gutteridge would be very pleased to hear from you. The office may be contacted on 246810. Remember though to set the dial on your wireless and make a date in your diary for the Island's favourite nostalgia station -

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Did Roy Orbison Ever Visit The Island ?

Chris Michell of Ryde forwarded this photo to us and it poses some interesting questions, none of which can be answered by our friends in the music scene on the Island. What we do know is Bob Booth a connoisseur of the SRN6 hovercraft, reckons because of the style of skirt on the hovercraft it can be no later than 1966! Also the photo was taken by a W.I. McMahon of Binstead. The name rings a bell to Chris who thinks that the McMahon's were involved in the early days of Britten Norman Cusioncraft / Hovertravel etc. John of Tin Lids fame thinks 1963 could be a candidate, as Orbison toured with an up and coming act called the Beatles.



I have so far established that Roy toured the UK on several occasions, twice in 1964. First with The Rockin' Berries, The Untamed and Marianne Faithful, then with Freddie and the Dreamers, Wayne Fontana, The Federals and Tony Sheridan. He toured in 1965 with the Rolling Stones and 1966 with the Walker Brothers, Lulu and the Quotations and finally in 1967 with the Small Faces, Paul and Barry Ryan and Jeff Beck. It is unclear if any of the shows on any of the tours reached the Southsea, Portsmouth area. But one thing is for sure they didn't get to the Island. But did Roy? If you know anything about this photo or if Roy visited the Island please get in touch via the editor at Wightwash.

Pete Turner

Vaguely Sunny are proud to say that once again we are promoting **Show Of Hands** on 6th November at the **Medina Theatre**. They are England's most successful acoustic roots duo (featuring Steve Knightley and Phil Beer). Their widespread appeal is based on the combined power of Steve's original songs, the quality of their vocals and harmonies, and their multi-instrumental virtuosity. Their performances feature guitars, mandocello, fiddle, cuatro, viola and concertina.

This year they won the Radio 2 Folk Awards for 'Best Live Act.' A gig not to be missed!

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“The Ciderman Cometh”



Steve Baker tells us about some new products appearing in our pubs...

Do you like cider? I mean do you like **cider**, I mean real cider not Strongb*w (steps neatly sideways to avoid the cross bow bolts as they hit the bar). We have all had experiences of Strongb*w in our youth eh?? What joys a 4 pint aka 2 Litre plastic bottle of Strongb*w brought us all somewhere illicitly behind the bike sheds or bushes when young. I will pause here whilst we all think back with a smile to our youth. Now to the real stuff!

The one and only Mr Paul Miller has a passion for cider and every year did his annual pilgrimage to Devon for a selection of Farmhouse Ciders for a few friends and the Budle Inn Niton at Christmas. From this he had a dream that any pub he went in to on the Island would stock good real ciders. That the Isle of Wight would be the cider centre of the Universe. If you go to Kent you drink Kentish cider, if you go to Devon you drink Devonshire Cider, but where do you go so that you can try many ciders from many counties??? That's right, the Isle of Wight!! This dream fermented for some time until it frothed over and he could wait no more..... he decided he must ACT.

So a Safari was planned in to Cider Counties to seek the Great and Good Ciders to supply outlets on the Island. Paul searched in to Kent, Herefordshire, Devon, Somerset and Cornwall. He toured many cider producers and has come up with a list of excellent ciders, and headaches, thus “The Ciderman” was born !!!

He does not wear his underpants on the outside of his trousers but you will know if you have met the Ciderman. He looks like WG Grace the cricketer and he will talk with a passion on cider and bell ringing. Almost as bad as meeting a Morris Man!

He now supplies ciders and perry from Biddenden in Kent, Grays in Devon, Sheppy's in



Each Pub has its own individual style, and the “WATERWIDE” ensures the presence of local produce, including the famous Waterw Ry, Labare and Fish.

*they there
Shipmates...*

*If you have
to get
wounded,
there's no
finer place to
do it than
at one of our
Waterwide
Taverns!*



Somerset and Dunkertons in Herefordshire. This list is not exhaustive as new ones are always coming on stream to Island pubs clubs and restaurants.

They are supplied in bottles and draught to over 36 outlets on the Isle of Wight. Ask at your "local" if they have any Ciderman products. The range of bottles has some superb single apple ciders such as Dabinett and Kingston Black at 7.2%abv from Sheppy's in Somerset. There is even an Organic Perry at 7.5%. This is well liked by the ladies and me it is slightly sweet but delicious, terrific over fruit salad, as the healthy option; and well, Black Rat Cider from Wiltshire squeaks for itself.

Good places to find these areWell it would be a long list to put all 36 outlets here so go to your local and ask if they have any of the Ciderman products in. Some might be offended if one was left out!

To start the season of mellow fruitfulness, look out for Cider and Sausage Festivals across the Island during the Autumn where you will be able to try out the ciders.

These events will also launch the Cider Club. This will entail an annual joining fee of £10 and this will enable members to buy Ciderman products at reduced rates through agents in the North, East, South and West of the Island.

For further details of The Ciderman products and the Club please contact either Paul Miller on 01983 730108 or me, Steve Baker on 01983 730113

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In spite of national gloom the Island weather has come up trumps in the main and August saw a goodly number of visitors though West Wight remains fairly quiet and peaceful. But you should have seen the cars at Colwell Common on the old Bank Holiday Monday and there were over 50 boats in Totland Bay.

In Yarmouth we have the sailors pub THE KINGS HEAD which probably heads the list – an interesting old building which is always busy with good food and beer even if the choice is somewhat limited of which one supposes the Pubcos are largely to blame. Position, space and character mean that they are nearly always working to capacity. None of your bright lights or garish furnishing here.

THE WHEATSHEAF is another character place but there are to be alterations and general refurbishments during October when the pub will probably be closed. It is to be hoped that they will not try not modernise too much. Here again the food is excellent and they run close to the Kings Head in quality and capacity. The big score is however the inspired choice of ale which includes Adnams and Youngs to name but 2 – eat your heart out next door! Or should it be drink? This is mainly due to Jonathan who knows real beer and how to keep it but we gather he and Canny may have left by now to join his parents in the Dominican Republic – good luck to them both. By the way has anyone yet found the White Hart – perhaps it was a deliberate mistake but there might still be a pint in it!

Freshwater Bay now sports a very smart looking hotel in THE ALBION, which in spite of some forebodings seems to have blended in quite well both from the land and sea. The bar continues to disappoint however and one or two regulars now rarely use it though the Bass is usually good. Perhaps there are staffing problems but we gather they could do better. Enjoying one of the best Island sites this bar should be very popular and one asks if they are trying to discourage its use. THE FAT CAT needs no introduction having an ever-changing beer menu – never a dull moment or pint. One hopes that Jay still has his Equity card but why did he not bring some beer to the recent show in Totland? Much building going on to add extra bedrooms to the hotel – perhaps he should annexe the under used bar across the road to allow more drinking space – without the Bass of course! Another beer festival planned?

In Freshwater itself there do not seem to be as many cars lately outside THE VINE – is this simply a sign of the times or do they do well enough from local shimmney pots? It cannot be beer quality and there is always some excitement round about – two paramedic teams there one lunch time a



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while back. A well run pub with good Gales ales in a town centre atmosphere. Another out-of-the-way pub is THE RED LION with an excellent reputation for food with good but fairly standard ales. Not cheap perhaps but it is not always easy to get or even book a table – a pub with an old-fashioned atmosphere next to the Church as in so many places – I wonder why! Probably due to the Morris Dancers, or the ringers giving an opportunity to hold Divine Service and drinks (that is another tale).

No more ramblings for now except to say that I rarely drink in the evening which may colour some of my remarks. At least there is no binge drinking in West Wight to my knowledge.

Brian Snellgrove

The Village Inn

Shanklin Old Village

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Entertainment
Every Night

The VENTNOR BREWERY Prize Quiz

Get a case of Ventnor ale in your house (just like Phil!)

by identifying these 10 famous Isle of Wight personalities.

1. This photographer moved to the Isle of Wight in 1860 when she bought Dimbola Lodge in Freshwater.
2. Born at East Cowes in 1898, this yachtsman was a notable local "character" who included royalty amongst his friends. He designed and built many famous yachts.
3. He was a scriptwriter for Grange Hill and directed Truly Madly Deeply, the Talented Mr Ripley, The English Patient and Cold Mountain.
4. Born in Freshwater 1635 and dubbed the "Father of Modern Science", amongst his many achievements, he designed and built the (Fire of) London Monument.
5. He first rented Farringford in 1853 and bought the house in 1858. The downs above Freshwater bear his name.
6. Born in Newport 1795, he became the headmaster of Rugby school and was immortalised in Thomas Hughes' "Tom Brown's Schooldays".
7. Bass guitarist with Level 42
8. A Shanklin resident, this "Carry On" star has an alter-persona as Alf Ippytittymus.
9. Attended Ryde Secondary Modern School later wrote the hit television comedy, "Some mothers do 'ave 'em".
10. And finally, who is this Cowes Golden Girl?

Answers to - The Editor, Wightwash Magazine, Oakdene, Rookley, Ventnor Isle of Wight PO38 3NH, text 07799 837628 or email editor@wightwash.org.uk by 1st November



The pub chain Wetherspoons have allowed us to put up a plaque in the memory of one of our founder members - **Valentine “Boathook” Fowler** in their Ryde pub, “Fowlers”. Wightwash readers with good memories may remember that we published an article about Boathook in the Spring issue 2001. Since then several people have come forward with their memories of him.

First of all a little recap:

After the initial appearance of the Campaign for Real Ale in 1973, one of the first local branches to form was on the Isle of Wight. Amongst its founder members were Tony Edmonds – Chairman, Brian Arthur – Secretary, Arthur Taylor – Recruitment Secretary and the Events Organiser - Valentine “Boat Hook” Fowler, described by Tony Edmonds as an “absolute autocrat”.

He soon became Regional Director, travelling all over the South of England recruiting hundreds of new members including senior police officers and MPs.

He organised three hugely successful Beer Exhibitions at Ryde Pavillion and Puckpool. Sadly he passed away days before the last one.

Dee Fowler (Boathook’s sister in law) remembers:



“He and his brother, Tony, owned and ran VDS Fowler and Co Estate Agents of Ryde. He was a bachelor and as such had no major family ties. This enabled him to travel to the mainland most weekends and try to persuade pubs all over the south of England to sell real ale. He invariably travelled on his own.”
 “Both brothers were in the Territorials; Tony became a Captain in the REMY and Val was a Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers”

Brian Arthur remembers:

“He rarely used Christian names almost certainly because he disliked his own. Before Des Meenaghan christened him
 “Boathook, he would only answer to “VDS” or “Fowler”. He would call his friends “M’boy”.

He was a keen tennis player and would enter tournaments all over the South of England claiming a desire to be knocked out in

the early stages so that he could retire to the pub for the remainder of the weekend.

Boathook liked to get all of his driving jobs out of the way before 11am allowing him to share his lunchtime custom between The Anglesea Arms and The Castle. Here he would meet and chat with business friends. It was on one of these occasions that he colared me and said. “Now m’boy, have you heard of CAMRA?”

In the evenings he would follow “Fowlers Triangle” – first The Castle and Yelfs Hotel, then to the Royal York to drink whisky and listen to the pianist. He had no truck with modern “pop”, preferring military or organ music.



David Baldwin remembers:-

“Val was a qualified property valuer, whilst Tony (his brother) took care of the firm’s rental and management portfolio. Although the firm called itself an Estate Agency, houses were only sold by ‘mistake’ as Val liked to put it. He always planned his day by reference to the nearest pubs he could visit while carrying out the survey reports i.e. if he was to value a property in Ventnor, his instructions would include the word ‘Volunteer’ somewhere!

I usually saw Val with Tony, Brian Arthur and other CAMRA members in the Anglesea at Ryde each Friday lunch-time.”

Martin Milne remembers:-

“I probably knew Boathook as well as anybody (He was inclined to be a rather insular character). I twice took him to CAMRA Conferences, one at Blackpool and the other at Bournemouth. He had his evening routine drinking halves never pints. He started at the Castle at 6pm (then opening time of course) proceeding to the Anglesea where his brother and brother’s wife were invariably to be found. Then sometimes, but not always, the Prince of Wales and Crown, and finishing at by far his favourite watering hole, Yelfs Hotel. He always left for home at Vernon Square between 9pm and 9.30pm.”

On leaving Yelfs, Boathook had a catchphrase – “Gentlemen, I am now going down the hill by gravity”

Hugh Fowler (Boathook’s nephew) remembers:-

“Uncle Val regularly hired a boat to take a week’s holiday on the Thames. He would provide the rest of his crew with “Fowler’s Riverside Refreshment Maps” which gave details of the local amenities, moorings and, more especially, the pubs, along with warnings about “BBO” (Bubble Beer Only). It was on one of these holidays when he gained his nickname. The boat was approaching a mooring against wooden piles at Pangbourne, with another crew member at the helm experiencing a little



difficulty with the flow of water due to a nearby weir. Always ready to save the boat from damage, Uncle Val tried to fend off with a boathook. To the amusement of the rest of the ship’s company the other end of the boathook went through a side window of the wheelhouse. “Damn ‘em all” cried Boathook – a term regularly used during a week’s cruise. The shattered glass fragments were later presented to him encased in a

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Dimple whisky bottle and labelled "Boathook's Diamonds"

A dyed in the wool Tory, he frequently referred to the new fangled fifty pence piece a "Wilson" as it was "seven-sided and two-faced"!

National CAMRA founder member, **Graham Lees** remembers:

"He was a part-time estate agent and full-time campaigner".

"He wrote a letter to the press after a national brewer had defended the artificial introduction of carbon dioxide, as it was a natural "by-product" of beer

"Sir, Manure (or a word to that effect!) is a natural 'by-product' of a pig, but you wouldn't want it served up with your roast pork, would you?"



Boathook

The next time you decide to have a pint of real ale instead of the other stuff the big boys tell you you ought to be drinking, spare a thought for Valentine "Boathook" Fowler, because without the likes of him, you wouldn't have the choice.

The views expressed in *Wightwash* are not necessarily those of the Editor or CAMRA either locally or nationally



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Name.....

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I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and I agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Signed.....

Date.....