

WIGHTWASH



CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE - ISLE OF WIGHT BRANCH NEWSLETTER NO 17, Spring 1997

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Social: Fri 25 April, Woodmans Arms, Wootton, 8.30 p.m.

Beer Festival: 16/17/18 May, Sandown Brewery & Stillroom, St Johns Road.

Business: Wed 21 May, Travellers Joy, Northwood, 8.30 p.m.

Social: Wed 18 June, Prince of Wales, Newport, 8.30 p.m. (plus walkabout).

Business: Wed 16 July, Pointer Inn, Newchurch, 8.30 p.m.

Great British Beer Festival: 5-9 August, Olympia.

Social: Wed 20 August, Volunteer, Ventnor, 8.30 p.m. (including rings match).

Business: Wed 17 September, Highdown Inn, Totland, 8.30 p.m.

NEWSFLASH ---- Blacksmiths Arms placed 4th in Camra National
Pub of the Year Awards

BREWERY NEWS

Burts

The Hole in the Wall (St Johns Road, Ryde) celebrated its 100th beer at a well-attended festival on 14/15 February. The beer was an excellent 5.5% brew called Old Nick (in honour of landlord Nick Boycott) from Burt's Sandown brewery.

The Cask & Codpiece in Sandown has now been renamed the Sandown Brewery & Stillroom or the Cask & Comical, recalling the local name for the old Commercial. There will be a beer festival there on 16, 17 & 18 May.

Goddards

The capacity of the Barnsley Farm Brewery is being increased fourfold, with new plant being manufactured on the Island and installed under the supervision of the new assistant brewer (and former IOW Camra chairman) Chris Coleman. A trial brew of "Bazooka", a part wheat, lager beer should be available shortly. Initially this will be sold as a cask-conditioned beer, but there are plans to keg it for the holiday trade on the Island. Sales of sterile filtered, Fuggle Dee Dum, bottled by King & Barnes, are expanding in supermarkets along the South coast.

Ventnor Brewery

Ventnor Golden Bitter has become quite widespread as a guest beer and is a regular in several outlets. The dark mild and Winter Warmer tend to be more restricted, but can be sampled at the Volunteer or the first Ventnor Brewery pub, the Central Hotel.

PUB OF THE YEAR 1996

The Blacksmiths Arms has won the Wessex Region Pub of the Year and also the super-regional finals. It is in the *last five* for national pub of the year. This is a great opportunity to publicise Island pubs in general and we hope to make the most of it.

Congratulations Edgar!

PUB OF THE YEAR 1997

The way we vote for our pub of the year was the subject of heated debate at our Branch Meeting in March, without any conclusive result. Therefore we have to stick with the old system for this year and a voting form is enclosed (if this newsletter is mailed to you as a member). Joint members should have one form each. If you do not have a form contact Nick on 299477.

SWAN-NECKS & SPARKLERS

Another controversial issue! We have the onerous task of selecting the best 24 pubs on the Island for the national Good Beer Guide. The first criterion is, of course, good beer. We can't include beers served under blanket pressure or pubs which have a misleading form of dispense (e.g. a handpump serving pressurised beer). Less clear-cut is the situation with swan-necks and sparklers. These devices, designed to give a thick creamy head to the beer, have become very common in recent years. Some Camra members would leave out beers served through them, or exclude the pubs altogether. Some argue that they are OK for beers intended to be served that way (e.g. Tetleys and Boddingtons), but there is no clear definition of which beers are suitable.

The Brewery Liaison Officers for the three Island breweries are trying to establish some ground rules by asking the brewers whether they want their beers served in that way and if so, whether they are brewing the beers with this method of dispense in mind. In general it is considered that beers need to be more heavily hopped in order to retain their bitterness, when forced through a tight sparkler, since use of a tight sparkler forces bitterness into the head and makes the body of the beer blander.

There is also the question of glasses - it is impossible to serve a full pint, with a thick, creamy head, in a brim measure glass. Therefore it is logical to expect the use of lined, oversize glasses with tight sparklers.

Then there is the question of hygiene. The swan-neck is intended to be placed at the bottom of the glass, under the surface of the beer, in order to get the full effect. Therefore it is essential to use a clean glass every time, in order to avoid cross-contamination.

Interestingly, a lot of pubs surveyed recently have taken the sparklers off and use the swan-necks like a normal pump nozzle, so maybe the trade is not convinced either. Let us know what you think.

MEMBERSHIP

CAMRA membership nationally has now passed the 50,000 mark, the highest it has ever been. On the Island we have about 110 members, above the national average and rising gradually. CAMRA gets results, people see it in the choice of beers available, in the awards given to pubs, in national and local beer guides, national and local beer festivals. Support your local branch, come along to a meeting and see how we operate. We can guarantee you won't be bored!

PRAGUE PROSIMI!

Imagine the scene - a dark passageway off a narrow cobbled street, the sound of subdued voices as a queue forms. A light goes on above a door and a ripple of excitement runs through the growing crowd. At 3 p.m. the door is opened and everyone files in.



All the tables are reserved, but at one or two, if you ask, they will let you join them. Within 5 minutes the pub is full and the waiter walks up and down whisking away any empty glasses and replacing them with full ones.

This was our experience of the 'Golden Tiger' in Stare Mesto (Old Town) whose presence is given away by a brass tiger above the door. This pub is special. Regulars include writers and film makers and President Vaclav Havel took Bill Clinton there.

Prague is a wonderful place for good pubs and excellent beers as well as having a time warp atmosphere and beautiful architecture. We strongly recommend the GBG (although the map pages are a waste of space). It is as useful as our own in that it tells you of pubs you would never just happen upon (e.g. Lilies of the Valley at Zabealice), as well as details of opening hours, beers available and even which tram to catch! Walking is a joy in central Prague, but trams add to the old world atmosphere and are cheap and very frequent. Trips to the end of the line were very rewarding!

It is worth remembering that although the GBG is dated 1996, the sheer pace of change and the scramble for the tourist trade means that new places are opening (and some closing) all the time so it is worth trying others.

One such we chanced upon in Mala Strana, the area below Prague Castle made up of tangled web of narrow, old-fashioned streets. Most of the foreign embassies are here and outside the British one Winston Churchill gazes sternly down the cobbled street to the 'Hippopotamus'. When we say new, anything in this area is in an old building and the Hippo is a typical Czech pub with plenty of tables and bench seating where you wait for a man in an apron to ask what you want. A tip here, don't just learn "two beers please" as you then need to know "dark" or "light" and 10, 12 etc (all helpfully in GBG). Food is available in most pubs although sometimes the menu is limited and difficult to translate.



Another pub of particular note is the 'Black Ox' in Hradcany near all the tourist traps around the Castle. However this remains a gem of a beer hall with a brick-tiled floor, leaded windows and lots of dark wood. There are contrasting frescoes on the wall and the barman's apron tells you this is the place to drink Kozel. The cheese on toast was excellent, so probably is everything else.

Czech brewing is a proud tradition with many different beers to try. Budvar was surprisingly hard to find ('Three Kings', Nerudova).

Others included Radegast, Krusovice, Staropramen, Branik and Regent. Pilsner Urquell was the most widely available.



A trip must be made to 'U Fleku' in Novo Mesto (New Town, but still very old), although it is a bit of a rip off - still under £1 per pint, but others were nearer 20p per pint. U Fleku's claim to be the oldest brew pub (since 1499) sounds fair enough and the dark 12 can't be found anywhere else.

We would guess that out of season (to be recommended) accommodation would be easy to find. It can be expensive to book a package deal although we found our British Airways City Break

good value. It is worth remembering that once there, costs are very low.

In a week we tried around half the pubs in the GBG and there were no disappointments. The Czechs are working hard to join the West and to our mind are overdoing it a bit. (McDonalds, M&S and the strangest Tesco you've ever seen).

However, one aspect of their culture sits so happily with our own - that of welcoming pubs and good beer. The queuing at the 'Golden Tiger' began 5 years ago, presumably to exclude tourism and the modern world. It is our hope that this shared culture enables us (and maybe only us) to blend in just perfectly!

Mo Love & Barry Nuttall

SHORT MEASURES

The problem of short measures has always been with us, but seems to have got worse since the inconclusive judgements of recent years. Trading Standards Officers are reluctant to take action because they are not sure of obtaining a conviction.

A recent Camra survey found that 80% of pubs sold short measure pints, that at least a quarter of pints were below industry guidelines (at least 95% of the pint should be liquid) and many pubs served less than 90% liquid.

Clearly the beer drinker is being ripped off on a large scale and nobody other than Camra is doing anything about it.

There are two direct steps you can take:

1. Ask (politely) for a top up, if you are served less than a pint. If refused, let us know and we will collate reports of persistent short measures for possible action.
2. Try to persuade your local to use lined glasses. This is the only proper solution to the problem and it has widespread support, both among customers and in the trade.

CLUBS

CAMRA campaigns for beer drinkers wherever they choose to drink. We're not just interested in pubs - there are over 30,000 clubs in the UK, serving millions of drinkers. CAMRA wants to encourage clubs to sell real ale and real cider and to offer a wider choice. The smaller brewers often have difficulty breaking into this market, because of loan ties from the nationals, but club members can influence choice of beers.

In order to encourage club members to join CAMRA, they are being offered a discount of £2 until 1 July. CAMRA runs annual awards for clubs with a commitment to real ale. If you think your club deserves an award let us know.

GBBF

The Great British Beer Festival will be held at Olympia, London, from 2 - 12 August. This is the biggest real ale festival in the country and is a major fund-raiser and campaigning event. It features beers from all over the UK and abroad, food music and traditional pub games. It is staffed by CAMRA volunteers, carrying out a wide variety of jobs, including, of course, serving beer. If you might be interested in helping, contact us for a staffing form, or ring CAMRA (01727 867201).

BEER QUALITY

Surveying for the new Local Guide (due out in May) gave rise to concern about beer quality in several pubs. Responses to complaints such as "it's supposed to look/taste like that" indicate that there are still some in the trade who don't know (or care) how to look after real ale. Bad practice such as filtering slops back into the cask may also be a contributory factor. Although this problem was not particularly associated with Island beers, we felt it was serious enough to merit discussion with our local brewers and a letter to them elicited a very positive response. We don't wish to be accused of telling landlords how to run their pubs, but if the brewers are alert to the need to monitor the quality of their products at the point of sale and can provide guidance where necessary, this may help to ensure that the excellent products of the Island breweries reach your glass in excellent condition.



*Brewers of
Traditional
Real Ales*

Our award-winning beers -
Goddards Special Bitter
and Fuggle-Dee-Dum
are widely available on the Island.
Try them. You won't be disappointed.

get burtified !!!

Visit a Burt's Tavern

The pubs with the friendly atmosphere



Mr Burt

*The Cask & Taverners
High Street, Godshill.
Telephone 840707*

*Cask & Custard Pot
Cowes Road, Newport.
Telephone 522709*

*Hole in the Wall
St. Johns Road, Ryde
Telephone 615405*

*Cask & Crispin
Carisbrooke Rd, Newport.
Telephone 520666*

*Cask & Codpiece
St. Johns Rd, Sandown.
Telephone 403848*

*Now's the time to discover Burt's Real Ales
traditional brewed on the Isle of Wight since 1840*

VICTORY!

Camra has won a significant victory on the Guest Beer issue. The European Commission had questioned the Guest Beer provision in the UK Beer Orders, which allowed pubs tied to the major brewers to sell a cask-conditioned beer from another brewery. This has had major beneficial effects in increasing choice and encouraging small brewers. Following strong lobbying by Camra, nationally and locally, the Commission appears to have accepted a minor amendment to current legislation, extending the guest beer provision to include bottle-conditioned beers.

In order to ensure this amendment gets through safely some further lobbying is needed. Please write a short letter of support to:

Mr G. Zebedee (seriously), DTI, EC/International Competition Policy Division, 6.J.8., 1, Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET.

FROM OUR AFLOAT CORRESPONDENT

My port information sheet tells me that Fiji's main export is sugar. If that's the case then the second biggest must be Fiji Bitter t-shirts. I don't know many who have been to Fiji and not come away with a t-shirt informing all that Fiji Bitter is "the sportsman's beer". Although not a bitter in the British sense, Fiji Bitter has a lovely nutty bitterness not found in most other lagers.

During the second half of this year's (and the Canberra's last) world cruise, I managed to organise a visit to the Carlton Breweries in Suva. Three of my musical partners in crime and myself were shown round by the Production Manager, Michael Stoneman. Michael, an Australian has a background in zoology and microbiology. Prior to moving to Fiji, an opportunity which he says he jumped at, he worked for Carlton and United

Breweries, while the remaining 33% represents local investment. The brewery situated in Suva, Fiji's capital, was built in 1958, the initial staff being 2 Australians and 30 or so locals. To start with the only product was draught beer, but now this only constitutes 10% of output, a trend the company is trying to reverse by leasing out the expensive dispensing equipment.



In 1977 Carlton bought the four year old South Seas Brewery in Lautoka, 200 km west of Suva, from its New Zealand owners. Now the breweries between them employ 130 people (90 in Suva and 40 in Lautoka) turning out an average 110,000 hectolitres of beer a year. Not bad when you consider Fiji's population of 727,000.

Up until very recently, the beer either came in kegs or returnable bottles. The bottle collecting is run by 16 freelance collectors who go from house to house, bar to bar buying the empty bottles at 70 cents a dozen and then selling back at one dollar 20 cents. The bottles have a life of about 10 fills. Whereas the system works very well locally, the problems of sending the beer overseas and trying to get the bottles back has made export nonviable.

All this could soon change. Four weeks ago, launched by the Minister of Finance at a full traditional Fijian ceremony, the brewery and in fact Fiji got its first canning line. The company's new product, Fiji Export "The Taste of the South Seas" is really Fiji Bitter in a can. But hopes are that a market can be opened up in other island groups: Kiribati, the Solomons, Tonga, Samoa and maybe even further afield.

They are experiencing some teething problems with their new machine (well, it's not quite new, bits of it are, some bits are secondhand and some are home made). For instance you have to make sure the supply of cans and beer are switched off simultaneously. Otherwise you get a whole load of cans full of fresh air, or as we witnessed, the heart-rending spectacle of beer pouring out all over the factory floor.

The brewery has one other product, Fiji Gold. Attempts to get drinkers to try Fiji Light and Fiji Stout petered out several years ago, but Fiji Gold seems to be having more success. It is the same strength as Fiji Bitter 4.6% abv, but by adjusting the recipe to include more sugar it has a more gentle, vapid (look it up!) Flavour. Designed to appeal to the young and the fairer sex, it has strangely found a niche market among the elderly. There has been some pressure from the anti drink-driving lobby to produce a low-alcohol beer. But as Michael pointed out "We tried it before with Fiji Lite and no-one would drink it." No, Fijians like Fiji Bitter. It has the strongest brand loyalty of any beer I've come across. As many hoardings across the islands testify "Fiji Bitter, Ahhh, our beer."

Fiji Bitter is made from Tasmanian Pride of Ringwood hops, Australian six row barley malt, local water and "a very hardy" yeast. It is fermented at 18.5 °C and stored and filtered at -1 °C.

Apart from having a very interesting and enjoyable afternoon, there was one other reason I'm glad I managed to organise the visit. Many years ago a similar trip was planned. Musicians were informed that they were not eligible. The trip was "for officers only". The tour party left and to the undisguised glee of the musicians, returned only twenty minutes later. The dates had been muddled up and the brewery was still closed for its Christmas recess. Which only goes to prove that some P & O officers couldn't organise (if you'll excuse the quaint old English phrase) a piss-up in a brewery.

Tim Marshall

COMMITTEE

At the AGM on 24 January 1997 the following were elected:

Chairman	John Nicholson	299436
Secretary/Branch Contact	Derek Smith	298024
Treasurer	Ken Matthews	294377
Social Secretary	Richard Sussex	874962
Press/Campaigns Officer	Brian Jacobs	527093
Membership/Branch Diary	Nick Ward	299477
Committee Members	Alec Lawson, Elaine Rice	
Hon Auditor	Roger Barlow	

I/we wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale and agree to abide by its rules.

Title _____ Surname _____

Forename(s) _____

(Partner) _____

Address _____

Post Code _____

Telephone Number(s) _____

Single Membership £14


Joint Membership ADD £3
(Partner at same address)

Residents outside British Isles and European Union ADD £4

Student, Pensioner, Unemployed, Disabled £8
(Please provide proof of status)

Two pensioners at same address £11

Life membership rates on request.

1. Complete a Direct Debit and we will give you an extra three months free membership. Send no money now. 

OR

2. Please charge my Access / MasterCard / Visa / Delta / Switch Card Number _____

Issue Number for Switch Cards _____

Name on Card _____ Expiry Date ____/____

Signature _____
(or phone 01727 867201 with your card details)

OR

3. If you wish to pay by cheque, please post this form and your cheque, payable to CAMRA, in an envelope.
We regret that Direct Debits cannot be accepted from students or unaged.



Direct Debit instructions should be addressed only to banks in the United Kingdom. Banks may refuse to accept instructions to pay direct debits from some types of account. Please complete parts 1 to 5 to instruct your bank to make payments directly from your account.



1. Please write the full postal address of your bank in the box below.

To the Manager _____

_____ Bank

2. Name of account holder _____

Address _____

3. Account Number _____

4. Bank Sort Code _____

5. Your instructions to the bank and signature.

- Instruct you to pay direct debits from my account at the request of Campaign for Real Ale Limited.
- The amounts are variable and are to be debited not more than once annually.
- I understand that Campaign for Real Ale Limited may change the amounts only after giving me prior notice.
- I will inform the bank in writing if I wish to cancel this instruction.
- I understand that if any direct debit payment is made which breaks this instruction, the bank will make a refund.

Signature _____

Date _____

CAMRA Membership No. _____
(for office use only)

Originator's Identification No. 926129

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Editors or the Campaign for Real Ale, either locally or nationally. If you have any adverts or material: articles, information, pictures, recipes, please contact Nick Ward (299477 or e-mail: nward@globalnet.co.uk) or John Nicholson (299436 or e-mail: jnl02@msn.com).