

BRANCH DIARY

21st March – Business Meeting, New Inn , Shalfleet, 8.30 pm

27th April – Social, Sun at Hulverstone, 8.30 pm (if reopened)

16th May – Business Meeting , Crab & Lobster Tap, Ventnor, 8.30 pm

15th June - Social, Blacksmiths Arms, 8.30 pm

This Years Pub of the Year presentation will be held at the Volunteer, Ventnor.
The date has yet to be fixed but should be before Easter.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in *Wightwash* are not necessarily those of the Editor or those of the Campaign for Real Ale either nationally or locally . Especially in this issue which was produced by the Editors brother and a friend whilst the editor was working in Barbados!!!!

Answers to Winter Quiz

1. **The Buddle, Niton**
2. **The Bugle, Yarmouth**
3. **The White Hart, Havenstreet**
4. **The Cedars, Wootton**
5. **The Old Stag, Newport**
6. **The Old Comical, Sandown**
7. **The White Lion, Niton**
8. **The Red Lion, Freshwater**

This time the quiz was won by Elaine Rice, with Jenny Mew a close second. As Elaine is joint editor of this issue and therefore excluded from entry, we are still looking for a challenger for Jenny's Crown!!

Thank you to our advertisers and sponsors.

Who are (in alphabetical order):

Anchor Inn; Bargeman's Rest; Blacksmith's Arms; Cask & Crispin; Caulkheads; Chequers Inn; Crab & Lobster Tap; Globe; Goddards; Hall & Woodhouse; Old Stag; Prince of Wales; Railway Medina; Spyglass Inn; Steamer Inn; Thwaites; Travellers Joy; Ventnor Brewery; Vine Inn; Volunteer; Wight Mouse.

To enquire about advertisements in future issues, phone Ken Matthews on 294377

Advertisement For Badger Brewery

Wightwash

Volume 2. Number 7

Newsletter of the Isle of Wight branch of CAMRA

SPRING 2001 ISSUE



Who's a Clever Boy Then !!!

Congratulations to Edgar Neighorn at the Blacksmiths Arms. Not only is he featured once again in the Pub of the Year Awards, The Blacksmiths Arms web site (designed by local Chris Murphy) has reached the final three in a National web site competition organised by the Morning Advertiser and entered

Advertisement for Ventnor Brewery

Inside this **Free** Issue:-

Foreign Travel !!
Pubs Past
Alcopops Quiz
Vaguely Sunny
Pub & Brewery News
Spirits in Pubs
My Round
PLUS
PUB AND BEER OF THE YEAR
RESULTS
And much much more!

by over 2000 pubs. The final results will be announced at an award ceremony to be held in London on the 7th March.

Advertisement For Goddards Brewery

Good Beer Guide Entries (A Fresh Start)

This year we have decided to start from scratch, with our selection of worthy pubs to be included in the Good Beer Guide. In previous years the existing entries have been used, loosely, as a starting base, to be retained unless there was good reason to take them out.

But, there has been more shift in recent times; with many new pubs being generated and old ones changing. This year, also, is the first year for the new GBG format, where we are allowed 20 full, descriptive entries and 4 briefer, try-also entries.

The survey teams have all been briefed on the survey criteria – and beer quality is at the foremost! If the quality (condition, temperature and management) is not there, then the pub will not go forward into the final round of selection. In the final round (where all the pubs have already attained quality for their beer) other subjective factors will be taken into account, such as service, ambience, measure, features/ facilities and variety, in accordance with the way that proposals are judged for Regional and National Pub of the Year selections. Each pub nominated for inclusion in the GBG is crosschecked by different surveyors and a democratic decision taken on its ultimate inclusion.

Although the Island really is a beer drinker's paradise, there is some concern over beer quality, particularly with pubs that leave their beer on sale for too long. There can be no excuse for this, as it only damages the reputation of Real Ale. Beers left on sale for too long can be as a result of using inappropriate sized casks (some landlords take 18 gallon casks, when they have not got the turnover to ensure the beer is drunk soon enough), or, in some cases, trying to maintain number of hand pumps when it would be better reduce the range when times are not busy enough to ensure sufficient sales and fresh beer. Beer left on too long oxidises and can taste stale.

In general, standard Bitters and Milds and any dry-hopped beer should be sold within 2 – 3 days of being first served. Porters and Stouts, and some stronger beers, however, do, sometimes, require a degree of oxidisation, that would spoil other beers, in order for them to gain their full flavour and maturity. A fresh Porter rarely has much depth of flavour, but, given several days or more, can realise its full potential, achieving a depth in character and flavour that brings new dimension to that beer (a sound argument, by the way, against the indiscriminate use of the cask breather). After too long, however, these beers become winey and past their best. The skilled cellarman will know his product (and there are few better than Andy Windows, at the Anchor, in Cowes).

This process, along with the tasting and description of our local beers, has to be repeated every year. I don't have to tell you that it is thankless task – but, there, someone has to do it. Volunteers on the right please!

John Nicholson
Chairman CAMRA Isle of Wight

Dubya's Local

The idea of recycling buildings is not unique to Wetherspoons. In Washington D.C. the elegant, former main post office, near Union Station is now the Capitol City Brewery. This enormous barn of a building has a central serving area, with benches and tables round the walls on the ground floor and on a gallery which runs right round the building. As with most of these new breweries in the US, the emphasis is on eating and the food is very good (e.g. blackened catfish), with gargantuan helpings. However, the beer is also well worth the visit, with regulars: Bull Run Bitter (a copper coloured, hoppy bitter), Capitol Kolsch (a pale, rather thin Cologne style) and Prohibition Porter (a really good roast flavour with plenty of hops). There are also seasonal beers: Harvest (an intensely hoppy, amber bitter), Oktoberfest and Pumpkin. Other interesting brews are advertised: St Adrian's Alt (Dusseldorf style old ale), Pale Ride (Burton style bitter) and Blackout Stout (oatmeal stout). So if Dubya takes to the bottle again, he has quite a few to choose from.

There seems to be plenty of scope in Ireland to crack the Guinness stronghold, especially with a rival flavoursome Porter or Stout, like the Porter House or Dwan Brewery are doing in the South (although some of these beers are not strictly Real Ale under present CAMRA definition).

We feel that it was a worthwhile trip in order to lend some support to the burgeoning Real Ale industry in this land, and we hope that our personal experience can be taken constructively. But the most memorable part of our experience remains the welcome we received, even in the distinctly dodgy dives with paramilitary insignia behind the bar and tattooed across the bodies of the our fellow imbibers in that establishment!

Advertisement for The Crab and Lobster Tap

Hoggie and the Sharpetones.

One of the most popular Island bands is Hoggie and the Sharpetones. The line up is Pete Hogman - guitar, harmonica and vocals, Gill Hogman - lead vocals, Brian Sharpe - lead guitar, Paul Armfield - bass and Martin White - drums. The band released their first CD 'Drive On', which was recorded at Martin White's Combley Studio, in the summer of 1999. Back in the sixties, Pete met Rod Stewart on a 'Ban The Bomb' march. It eventually led to him replacing Stewart in Jimmy Powell and the Five Dimensions. It was Pete playing harmonica on Millie's hit 'My Boy Lollipop', not Rod Stewart, as many people think. Pete also had a spell in Chuck Berry's backing band on a British tour before he gave up music for a while to become a postman. At this time, he met folk singer Gill Tibbs in a north London folk club. They have been together on and off stage ever since. Pete and Gill moved to the Island in 1987. The Pete Hogman Blues Band quickly made an impression on the Island music scene. In 1994 the band evolved into Hoggie and the Sharpetones with the addition of the celebrated Brian Sharpe. Brian's long

involvement with The Cherokees, Sharpe and Betchley and Blue Moon needs no further introduction. Drummer Martin White released a superb solo CD 'In Another Time, In Another Place' in 1994. Contact us via our web site at iowrock.net if you want to know how to get yourself a copy. Besides playing in the band, Martin is very talented behind the mixing desk and he did a first class engineering job on the 'Vaguely Sunny' compilation CD of Island bands that came out last year which opens with a solo harmonica piece by Pete. The multi-talented Paul Armfield joined on bass in the summer of 2000. Again, you will know him well through being in bands like Bobby I Can Fly, The Dance Preachers, Boogaloosers and Tzigane. Paul is a great singer/songwriter in his own right and we all hope that he brings out a solo CD very soon. You will catch Hoggie and The Sharpetones at the **Spyglass** on Ventnor Esplanade, **The Fountain Inn** in Sandown, **The Anchor** in Cowes and **The Woodvale** at Gurnard on a regular basis.

Vic King.

Ad for Vine

**Advertisement
for
The Traveller's Joy**

* CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR *
* Joint winners - Travellers Joy & Blacksmiths Arms *
* Runner up - Volunteer *
* CAMRA BEER OF THE YEAR *
* Winner - Goddards Fuggle-dee-dum *
* With close rivals - Goddards GSB - Ventnors Sunfire and Wight Spirit *

**Advertisement
For
The Blacksmith's Arms**

Wightwash has a web site, you can find it at: www.wightwash.org.uk

The **Ushers/Alchemy/Innspired** Empire has had talks with Landlords on the Island. **Steve Williams** told us that all tenants who have signed under the new **Innspired** agreement would now be free to stock the full range of **Oak leaf** beers. Head brewer, **Ed Anderson**, added, “at the moment we are supplying **The Hole in the Wall, The Solent** and **The Cask and Taverners** ;this should be followed by the **Old Village Inn** and the **Painters Arms** pending refits” **Oak leaf**, who are based in England (Gosport to be exact), opened it’s doors last November but with the experience of Ed and his partner Dave Pickerskill, **Oak leaf** are “one to watch” out for in the future. I’ve tried them all (fortunately my wife was on hand to take me home!)

Goddards seem to be going from strength to strength of late and with the best January since records began, (surely not that long ago!) **Natasha Adams** is confident that 2001 will also better any other!

Ducks Folly (5.2%) is now available in bottles at the usual outlets (i.e. anywhere) and with **Inspiration (5.2%)** back for March/April it looks like Trevor “Fireman Sam” Perkis is going to have a busy period ahead! **Wishing Well** and **Billy Bunters** are doing remarkably well taking into account the time of year, and I can only speak well of the **Goddards** Web site of which I personally go to every day, to see if **Jacqui Bowman’s** face has been added to her shoulders on the “**The People**” page! (www.goddards-brewery.co.uk)

On a final note, and I hope the cat’s out of the bag by now, congratulations to **Goddards** for their success in the CAMRA Isle of Wight beer of the year. 1st place went to.... **Goddards Fuggle Dee Dum**, 2nd**Goddards Special**, and when I asked Natasha who came 3rd she said, “**who cares!**” Brewery boss **Anthony Goddard**

Advertisement for The Chequers Inn



The Whistling Ghost

A ghost at Newport’s oldest pub, the Castle Inn, is often up and about in the early hours of the morning. Landlords there always know who it is because they hear him whistling.

“It’s a peculiar, tuneless sort of whistle and you generally hear it between 2am and 3am when the place is very quiet” said Mrs Elizabeth Taylor, who, with her husband Steve, ran the famous 17th century coaching house inn, once a centre for cockfighting. The eerie whistling emanates from the old stables and Elizabeth heard it on a number of occasions, always at the same time, in the dead of night.

The whistle is said to be a phantom ostler - a stable lad or groom who had hanged himself in the old hay loft in the 1600s.

A visiting psychic told the Taylor's that the stable had a very bad feeling but Elizabeth never noticed any atmosphere of menace in the pub. Late one night when she was alone in the empty bar and the doors were locked for the night, she saw a white shape enter through the front door and move slowly through the bar. Oscar, the family’s ginger tomcat, saw something too, as did their dogs. Whenever she went up or down the stairs, the animals would always walk carefully around some invisible obstruction at the halfway point. He may be more than 300 years old but the Castle’s whistling ghost seems to have mastered 20th century technology enjoying watching the Pub’s television and video. “It was quite irritating, we were always having trouble with the television in the bar. The channel would keep changing. Someone was using the remote control because you could see the light flashing. We had it checked out endless times, but the set wasn’t faulty,” Steve recalled. Next the Taylor's started having problems with their video recorder. Channels would be switched while they were recording, but by then they knew who was to blame!

After the Taylor's left the pub, Eddie Duff took over as Licensee. He agreed there was something which wanders around the empty pub at night. After he had been there six weeks, the old staircase door creaked open although it was stapled shut. The bar was shut and Eddie was alone. It was just after midnight. Suddenly old horse brasses, which were nailed to the beam, started to move and the pub clock jumped off the wall attaching itself to a nail lower down.

Eddie also heard the whistling and agreed it always occurred between 2am and 3am. The first time it happened he went down to check, thinking there was someone in the old stable yard. It was completely deserted.

Eddie also had trouble with the television and video. “Perhaps I should have got Sky TV. It might have been more appropriate !!! .”

Gay Baldwin

Postal Action Network

CAMRA's Postal Action Network is a group of individual members, who write letters as individuals to support particular campaigns. Targets might be politicians, brewers or the press.

Letters from individuals are an important part of many campaigns and they do make a difference. The total national response to Government consultation on opening hours reform in 1996 was only 600 letters. Think how much influence only 600 extra letters from CAMRA members would have had.

The network is mailed on average once a month, although this varies widely depending on what is happening. Briefings are provided by post and/or e-mail and HQ staff are always willing to advise if you are unclear on how to proceed.

The network has helped with: brewery closures campaigns; the vital "save the guest beer" campaign; pub hours reform; the battle for full pints; saving popular beers like White Shield.

If you would like to do some real campaigning without leaving your seat write to Mike Benner, Head of Campaigns and Communications, CAMRA, 230, Hatfield Road, St Albans AL1 4LW, or call Nick Ward for a form (299477). You must be a member, but Nick can also arrange that, see below.

Membership continues to climb

The membership of the Isle of Wight Branch continues to grow, it is now 160, the highest it has ever been and well above the national average. The Island has three excellent small breweries producing some of the best beers in the country and some cracking pubs, but there is still plenty to campaign about (see above).

If you are not a member and wish to support the Campaign, you can complete the form in this newsletter, or pick up a form at pubs such as the Blacksmiths Arms, Calbourne, Travellers Joy, Northwood or the Volunteer in Ventnor. Alternatively ring Nick on 299477 for a form or more information.

Advertisement for The Wight Mouse

who expressed some concern over his liver in the last issue has now come up with a solution.... He's going to sauté it with some onions!

Every couple of months (usually over a bank holiday) a rather portly gentleman by the name of Alan comes to the Island. He visits as many pubs as he can with his Rover ticket on the Vectis bus route, and he is a jolly nice chap. You may well have seen him if there is a bus stop within 10 miles of your local. (I would describe him as a full version of a Garden Gnome-minus the hat and fishing rod!) The reason for me writing about him is that he came up with one of his many questions not long ago which was, **who is the oldest licensee on the island?** He seems to think he knows the answer but I'd love to prove him wrong. If you are, or you think you know who is the oldest, drop us a line and I will personally deliver a case of award winning **Fuggle Dee Dum** to him/her and I'll service their Zimmer frame while I'm there!

Ventnor Brewery, or should we call them **Oyster Stout Brewery** after the frequent press articles and accolades, have recently introduced six conditioning tanks and another fermenter to their growing location in Ventnor. Head Brewer, Xavier Baker, said, "as well as Wetherspoons taking our beers on nationwide, we are setting up a bottling operation to take our products to two supermarket chains." We can exclusively reveal (does that sound a bit Daily Star-ish) **TV Chef Rick Stein** is interested in the **Oyster Stout** for his restaurant in Padstow,. Let's hope it's for cooking purposes and not because he wants to end up like Keith Floyd. Visit www.ventnorbrewery.co.uk for a regular update on this and other info.

Advertisement for The Steamer Inn The Spyglass Inn The Bargemen's Rest

Hall and Woodhouse have announced that **Badger Champion Ale** will be returning for a third summer running and will be available from 19th March. After their success with the bottled version of this beer in the Summer 1998 Tesco Beer Challenge, they have won the same accolade with the distinctively flavoured **Badger Golden Glory Ale**. This bottled beer will be exclusively distributed in Tesco stores in 2001.

David Yates will be brewing a second beer this summer. It will be 5% but has yet to be named. **Steve Taylor** reports that **Island Ales** is now the sole distributor for **Yates Beers**.

Island Ales will be featuring various breweries in the next few months and these include:- a selection of beers from **Springhead Brewery** during March and April, **Caledonian (Deuchars IPA 3.8%, 80/- 4.1% and Golden Promise Organic 5%)** last week in March and first week of April and **Hydes of Manchester (Bitter 3.8% and Jekylls Gold 4.3%)** throughout April. Plans are afoot for May and possible breweries include **Itchen Valley, Oak Leaf** of Gosport, **Adnams** and **Batemans**.

HAVE YOU GOT NEWS FOR US?

Please don't assume we know it all, we don't!

You have to tell us

**Phone: 721557 or email
editor@wightwash.org.uk**

Ad for Globe/Anchor

Real Ale in the North Eyre

Following a visit to Belfast by John Nicholson and Nick Ward

What are you on about, you may well ask – and after our experience, you may still ask.

The Emerald Isle is opening to the pressures for Real Ale. There are small Real Ale breweries opening up across Ireland, in the South and in the North. We (Nick Ward and I) went to try the Belfast Real Ale experience.

Flying out on the excellent Southampton BA service, it only took 1½ hrs to fly. It was a bitterly cold Friday 2nd February, when we checked into our Jurys Inn hotel, right in the drinking middle of the city. On our taxi ride from the City Airport, we were given a brief tour of the 'important' drinking establishments, by the helpful driver, who told us that 'this Weatherspoons thing seems a bit of a pointless fad, really; yes, they sell funny Real Ales, but don't sell Guinness – so what is the point!'

There are some wonderful pub buildings in Belfast, none finer than the Crown, with its ornate exterior and interior, and preserved wooden stalls; no Real Ale here though.

We started our tour at the Beaten Docket, where we were assured that the Mill Bitter was supposed to be cloudy (perhaps it was wheat beer). The other bars – Robinsons, Weatherspoons, the Kitchen Bar, Rotterdam, Botanic Inn gave us a fairly exhaustive sampling of the local Real Ales. The colour and condition (and clarity) varied, with, perhaps, the Kitchen Bar producing the best samples, but, being used to more flavoursome and bitter ales, we eventually transferred to the Guinness.

The beers we sampled were, from Whitewater Brewery: Belfast Special Bitter, Mill Ale (and no, it is not a cloudy wheat beer) and Santa Claus. From the Hilden Brewery:- Hilden Ale and Scullions Irish. We did not try any imported UK mainland beers, however, found in the likes of Weatherspoons. **(Continued on page 15)**
(Continued from page 11)

Advertisement For The Old Stag

Alcopops Quiz

Thanks to Pete for this quiz. All the missing words relate to alcohol or drinking in some way. Our absentee editor has kindly donated the prize, a £10.00 book token. Don't forget, in order to win you have to **send your answers in** to Wightwash, Oakdene, Rookley, Ventnor, IOW. PO38 3NH. Closing date **1May2001**.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. ---- and ----- blues | Mc Guinness Flint (4,6) |
| 2. ----- sweet sympathy | Verve (6) |
| 3. Woodstock | Matthews ----- (8-7) |
| 4. ----- in the jar | Thin Lizzy (6) |
| 5. ---- sugar | Rolling Stones (4) |
| 6. Pump up the ---- | Starturn on 45 ---- (6,5) |
| 7. Milk and ----- | Dr Feelgood (7) |
| 8. ----- | Eagles (7-7) |
| 9. Liars --- | Beautiful South (3) |
| 10. Strange ---- | Cream (4) |
| 11. The Fat Lady Sings | ----- Logic (8) |
| 12. Mr Blue Sky | Electric ---- Orchestra (5) |
| 13. Lilac ---- | Elkie Brooks (4) |
| 14. ----- in LA | Van Bran 3000 (8) |
| 15. ----- Supernova | Oasis (9) |
| 16. ----- | Four Seasons (6) |
| 17. ---smooth | Mike Oldfield (4) |
| 18. I've been ----- | Jeff Beck/Rod Stewart (8) |
| 19. Cigarettes and ----- | Oasis (7) |
| 20. A -----s t--- | David Essex (6-3) |

**Advertisement
for
Caulkheads**

Each quarter when Wightwash is issued a willing band of CAMRA members distribute copies to pubs in their area. Brian Cope delivers to pubs in the East Wight and has kindly written us a review of his round. Sounds to me as if he quite enjoys the exercise!!

I deliver the East Wight CAMRA Wightwash magazines, and I mean East !!! So here is my route, and the various pubs as I have found them.

Vine Inn, St. Helens.

My local, 3 real ales that change regularly. Friendly especially Sunday lunchtime.

Roadside Inn, Nettlestone.

Nice friendly pub, good ales. Haven't tried the food yet but I intend to.

Seaview Hotel.

Awards galore, very popular. The back bar is especially cosy with nice ales.

Old Fort, Seaview.

Petes place !! Very popular, good ales, good meals, good company.

Battery Hotel, Puckpool

Nice cosy pub. Nice pint of Bass last time I was in there.

Wishing Well, Pondwell.

Lovely meals, lovely ales, armchairs to sit in !! A favourite !!

Pilot Boat Inn, Bembridge.

Again, nice ales, nice meals, pleasant company. Another favourite !!

Old Village Inn, Bembridge.

An ex Ushers pub now serving several real ales. Good company, haven't tried the meals yet but I will one day (all this food, I must do some keep fit !!!)

Raffles, Bembridge.

A pleasant place, gets packed in Summer. Haven't been there much lately but I will.

Windmill Hotel, Bembridge.

Just re-opened. 3 lovely real ales, comfy seating and a nice atmosphere. Again I haven't tried the food, but it is on my list !!

Crab & Lobster, Bembridge.

Another favourite. Good company, good real ales and a Specials food menu that will make you drool

Propeller Inn, Bembridge.

Good company, good real ales. A lovely large bacon sandwich last time I was in there !!!

Yarbridge Inn, Brading.

Now that it has become established, there is good company, excellent food and 2 good real ales.

Wheatsheaf Inn, Brading.

This is being refurbished. An ex Ushers pub which I haven't really tried recently. No reason why not, it always seems very welcoming.

Red Lion, Brading.

Again good company, good meals and good real ales.

Bugle, Brading.

Another pub with a good reputation. Large menu, good real ales, as you've guessed, another favourite

All this choice !!!! When I win the lottery, I will be in all these pubs every chance I can get !! Keep up the good work, licensees. Last, but not least, come back **The Row Barge Inn, Bembridge**, you were another favourite !!

The Gardeners Rest, Elm Grove, Newport, I.W.

Those who know Newport will recognise Mountjoy down which rises above the town to the south. Today, gravestones cover its northern incline and houses in White Pit Lane and Watergate Road stand right up to its slopes. If you take the time to climb up there the view north is marvellous! Besides the whole of Newport and Carisbrooke being laid out before you, one can see up the whole reach of the River Medina to Cowes and the mainland beyond. The little path that takes one up there is accessed from White Pit Lane just opposite where Elm Grove joins.

Thus it was when some 30 years ago, in August 1970, when after enjoying this sight I strolled back down the little path, and on impulse, instead of going back to the crossroads at the top of St Johns Road where White Pit Lane began, I made my way down Elm Grove towards Nine Acres

field.

As I walked along Elm Grove towards St. Johns Road on that summer's evening, I chanced across a tiny pub in the terrace of small houses. Above the door, the sign read "The Gardeners Rest", over the window, "Mews Ales" advertised the brewer.

I entered and found myself in a small front parlour, behind the tiny bar two nine gallon firkins of mild and bitter rested on a small stillage. Above them, three optics held bottles of whiskey, vodka and gin. Another small shelf held some packets of Woodbine cigarettes and Players Senior Service.

Deep red sunlight poured through the windows and illuminated motes of dust suspended in the still air.



Advertisement for The Volunteer

Very soon a large portly man appeared from a back room and asked me what I required. I was young and aware of not being quite eighteen years old. "Half a lager, please", I ventured.

"Lager! I don't have any lager, nipper. You don't sound like someone from around here, where are you from?" he exclaimed, determined to have some fun.

"Leave him alone, you!" a female voice cried, and a large woman, the landlord's counterpart, entered the tiny bar space, she grinned at me, "give him a light ale!"

I didn't argue with her choice but concurred with an eager nod of my head and watched as the landlord selected the bottle from a small row of light ales, gave it a wipe and poured it carefully into a glass. He left an inch for me to pour myself and set the glass and bottle carefully down on the counter.

As he did so I became conscious of a clock ticking softly and the publican's wife gazing past me at the evening sun's glow which now lit up the tiny pub. It was a timeless moment, one to be savoured and remembered forever, and I was conscious of it passing.

I paid my one shilling and sixpence and retired to a table by the door, the couple lingered, bantering and exclaiming behind the tiny bar.

Finally the portly man grasped hold of his portly wife and roared "come here my beauty!" as she giggled and squealed.

They exited as they had arrived; suddenly, leaving me sipping my light ale and wondering what I had witnessed. I drank up and left, feeling I had stepped back into the past and knowing it would soon all be gone.

I never drank in the Gardeners Rest again,

it closed that year and slipped from my memory, I would give anything to revisit it.

However it was a long time ago, about 100 years before I walked through the door of the Gardeners Rest, that a Catherine Gray opened a little beerhouse in Elm Grove. The houses in Elm Grove were built around 1850 by Henry Morey, who with his neighbour, Joseph Wardale, a timber merchant, started the business H.W. Morey & Sons in Trafalgar Road. Thomas Gray appears as a shopkeeper in Elm Grove in the 1859 White's Directory, presumably Catherine was his widow. Seen in a rare photograph, she poses with her son Henry in 1870. She ran her little beerhouse for some years until he took over in 1887 and held it until 1908. The pub's final closure came on 30th September 1970.

The photograph below shows the premises with its stucco frontage when the left hand side had the bar and the right was a general store. Even today the house retains the two entrances even though it is a single unit. So, what of its name? All I can suppose is that Nine Acre field originally contained vegetable allotments, and this little pub served those who toiled there during those long summer evenings in the years before the world turned lax and sour.

Kevin Mitchell

