

Dates for your Diary

2nd July

Isle of Wight Pub/Beer of the Year Awards, Yarbridge Inn, Brading - 7.30pm
(music from Pete's Sake)

11th July

Branch Meeting - Winter Gardens (Bell Bar), Ventnor - 8.30

24th August

Branch Social - Havenstreet Steam Up (music from Smoke and Mirrors)
Transport - Phone John -524222

12th September

Branch Meeting - Union, Cowes - 8.30

21st - 23rd September

Isle of Wight Folk and Blues Festival
see page 9

for more news, features and events log on to www.wightwash.org.uk

Disclaimer

The views expressed in Wightwash are not necessarily those of the editor or The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) either locally or nationally.

To contact *Wightwash*
phone 721557 or email
editor@wightwash.org.uk



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Rates are Single £22 Joint £27
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Name.....

Address.....

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Post code.....

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

Signed.....Date.....

Wightwash

Volume 2. Number 31

Newsletter of the Isle of Wight branch of CAMRA

Summer Issue 2007



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



No More Smoky Old Pubs!

There was never a better time to visit the pub.

As the smoker stubs out his fag in the ashtray on the bar for the last time, there was never a better reason to visit the pub.

Many Island pubs will feel the pinch as the nicotine slaves decide to

stay at home, especially the "wet pubs" that rely entirely on their income from drinks.

They will need your support in these early "no smoking" days.

Introduce a friend to the delights of the great British pub and its new non smoky atmosphere.

Better still, introduce them to the delights of a tasty REAL ALE!!



"Spreading a little hoppiness"
www.goddards-brewery.co.uk



www.ventnorbrewery.co.uk



www.yates-brewery.co.uk



More results inside

PLUS

Kerry's Page

BEER IN THE USA

News and Gossip

and much, much more....

Pub of the Year 2006/7

Thanks to all those who voted in the Pub of the Year

– not so many of you as last year, but a good response, all the same. The top five are still there, just a little difference in the order. No change, though, for the winner, the Yarbridge, still under the stewardship of beer nutter Paul Jenner – I wouldn't be surprised to go in there one day and find the bar extended by another three feet to accommodate another six beer engines! It was especially pleasing to see that the Solent was still there, in spite of a change of landlord – Graham and Helen are doing a cracking job, and anyone who hasn't been there since they took over should give it a try. The Traveller's moves up to second, and the Fat Cat and the Volly are still there - and it's easy to see why all these pubs consistently make it to the top of the table. They all have a great range of well-kept beers, and, what makes their success even sweeter, **they're all locals and locally run.** Take note of that last remark, it's VERY important - there's a big push by CAMRA to preserve community pubs, because they're a fast-disappearing species and we desperately need to hang on to them. If they go, you'll be left with nothing but soulless road-houses and restaurants masquerading as pubs. There are many people who love that sort of hostelry, and plenty of them serve excellent ale, but where better to enjoy a good beer than in a pub where the landlord and half his customers know your name? Finally, congratulations to all the pubs that got a vote – the fact that someone thought you were good enough to earn a place in the POY means you must be pretty damn good!

The Beer of the Year was the last time in its present format. Next time, you'll be voting for the best local beer in its specific category to fall in line with the national CAMRA Beer of the Year contest – and to meet their timetable, there'll be a SECOND Pub/Beer of the year later on this year. But how fitting to see each of the local brewers in the top three – and special congratulations to Chris Coleman for making it to the top at last, to Dave Yates making it to number three with the superb Yates Blonde, and to Xavier for still fighting off the strong beers to only slip one place with the excellent Ventnor Golden.

Here are the results.

1. The Yarbridge Inn, Brading
2. The Traveller's Joy, Northwood
3. The Fat Cat Bar, Freshwater Bay
4. The Volunteer, Ventnor
5. The Solent Inn, Ryde
6. The Fighting Cocks, Arreton
7. King Harry's Bar, Shanklin
8. The Prince of Wales, Freshwater
9. The Ship and Castle, East Cowes
10. Railway Medina, Newport

Other pubs that were voted for included;- The Union, Cowes; The White Hart, Havenstreet; The Chine Inn, Shanklin; The Crab and Lobster, Bembridge.

Win a **£20 Meal Voucher** for the **Chequers Inn** or a **Case of Beer** from the **Ventnor Brewery** just answer these easy questions. The first two correct answers out of the hat on 1st August win the prizes.

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

- 1/ Who won this year's Canadian Formula 1 Grand Prix?
- 2/ Whose phone number used to be Whitehall 1212?
- 3/ What is the longest bone in the human body?
- 4/ What year was decimal currency introduced into the UK?
- 5/ Who wrote the "Just So Stories"?
- 6/ What do the letters TARDIS stand for?
- 7/ Who topped the bill of the 1969 Isle of Wight Pop Festival?
- 8/ In music, what does the term 'pizzicato' mean?
- 9/ and 10/ To which organisations do these crests belong?



Answers to the Spring Quiz:

- 1/ Ida Amin 2/ Ted Heath 3/ Des Browne
4/ Shannon 5/ 1953 6/ Fullers
7/ Lennon and McCartney
8/ St. Boniface Arms.
9/ Beatrix Potter 10/ Reg Smythe

Brian Jacobs of Newport wins a £20 Meal Voucher for the Chequers Inn and Jean Blow of Yarmouth wins a case of Ventnor Beer.

Mac & Paulette
Welcome YOU
to the
Vine Inn
Freshwater

Ales from George Gale
HSB GB Guest Ales
Gales Country Wines

Well supported Pub Quiz on Monday evenings
(with excellent Quiz Master!)
Snowball and £25 First Prize

Live Music **Good Food**

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The Philadelphia (Beer) Story

On a trip to friends just outside Philadelphia recently we were taken on a trip into the city to see places of historical and Naval interest, but they also knew we were into beer, so they took us to two places of real ale interest.

The **City Tavern** is mainly a restaurant but it serves four speciality draught ales brewed to 18th century recipes and served in English pint measures - **George Washington's Porter**, **Thomas Jefferson's Ale**, **Ben Franklin's Ale** and **Philadelphia Pale Ale**. A very useful item on their menu is the **Colonial Ale Sampler** - a wooden platter with four glasses each holding one third of a pint of one of the ales, so we were able to try all four before plumping for our favourite. The second venue was **Monk's Cafe**, a Belgian Bar and restaurant which, apart from serving the best burger we have ever tasted, had a list of around 200 Belgian and imported beers, mostly bottled, but including at least half a dozen on tap. When we ordered our food we were spoiled for choice but then we noticed an old friend - **Gales Prize Old Ale** - so we ordered one each. Brilliant! Not only was it a genuine 'Corker' but it was brought to our table intact and upright, at room temperature and carefully opened. With so many bars in the UK now serving even draught Real Ale overchilled this was a delight and one of our hosts was also impressed with the POA.

If you would like to investigate further try the web addresses below, or better still take a trip to Philly and visit them yourselves. But a word of warning - if you have never tried them before be wary of the Philly Cheese Steaks, they are instant cholesterol on a bun!

<http://www.citytavern.com/private.html>

<http://www.ripsneakers.com/monks/>

Roger Lovell



SPECIALTY DRAUGHT ALE
GENERAL WASHINGTON'S TAVERN PORTER
 BREWED FROM A GENUINE RECIPE ON FILE IN THE RARE MANUSCRIPTS ROOM OF THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY. A RICH, DARK BEER LOADED WITH FLAVOR. MADE EXCLUSIVELY FOR CITY TAVERN.

THOMAS JEFFERSON'S TAVERN ALE
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BEN FRANKLIN'S TAVERN ALE
 A TRUE KEG-CONDITIONED ALE WITH A SACK FULL OF BRITISH EAST KENT GOLDENING HOPS IN EVERY KEG. THE FLAVOR OF THIS UNFILTERED ALE IS A COMPLEX, LIVELY BALANCE OF MALT, HOPS AND FRUITY ESTERS.

PHILADELPHIA PALE ALE
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YOUR CHOICE \$7.25

COLONIAL ALE SAMPLER
 TRY THEM ALL, SERVED IN AUTHENTIC COLONIAL TASTING GLASSES.

\$9.00



From *Paul Mattick*

Thousands of council staff across the country are being trained to impose £50 on-the-spot fines on those who breach the smoking ban, when it comes into force on July 1st.

Town halls have been given £29.5 million to hire new staff, or train existing officers, to police 3.7 million restaurants, bars, shops and workplaces in England.

Here on the Isle of Wight, pubs are gearing up for the scheme by holding workshops and incentives. One in particular is a favourite of mine, the **Lake Huron** in Ryde. Becky tells me that at the moment, eight of her patrons regularly attend on a Monday evening. You truly can't miss those that have given up though, firstly there's Becky's other half, "Darts Mad" Martin, who only throws two darts now, as he keeps the other one in his mouth. The best one has to be Mick Elliott, who you'll see sitting at the bar with his pint in front of him and at least 1/2 a dozen packets of chewing gum next to it!

One of the things they tell you to take your mind off smoking is by taking up a hobby. A word of advice... Don't take up pottery

f JACK'S JAZZ
 (1 TO 7 PIECE)

For those who like Jazz
 AND those who don't!

JACK TAIT
(01983) 854403

like I did... the first thing we had to make was a ruddy Ash Tray!!
 On a serious note, and if you are one of the many about to give up, the main ingredient is will power if you've got that you're half way there already.

I've been told that Jeff Uncle has taken on the **Roadside Inn** Nettlestone. Jeff, you may remember from Ryde's Partlands Hotel in the early 90's, has also (or maybe still is, depending on when you read this) been selected to play in Channel 4's Deal or No Deal. Good luck Jeff with both!

Beer of the Year
 2006/7

1. Goddards Fuggle Dee Dum
2. Ventnor Golden Bitter
3. Yates' Blonde
4. Goddards GSB
5. Goddards Inspiration
6. Undercliff Experience
7. Yates' Special Draught
8. Goddards Ale of Wight
9. Goddards Winter Warmer
10. Yates' Yule B Sorry

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 Extensive Menu of Hot and Cold Food
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The **White Hart** in Havenstreet recently made the headlines for its witty jokes and signs on the blackboards outside. As I pass every morning it brings a smile to my face and sees me through the day. I am looking forward to visiting soon and meeting Ron Stone and the crew. And on that note, always check your tyres when going on a long car journey...there should be four of them!

Goddards are really delighted in winning the Isle of Wight Beer of the Year with **Fuggle Dee Dum** after so many years as "bridesmaid". It came as a real surprise especially as the **Special Bitter** has always seemed to be the most popular of the Goddards range. They would like to thank everyone who voted for them.

Ale of Wight with it's new strength of 3.7% is now a regular beer and is selling well especially on the mainland. 120 barrels have been brought in to help with the new demand and the newly acquired van now makes several trips a week to mainland

The Village Inn
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 Open lunchtimes and evenings
 for lunches, snacks, evening meals and REAL ALE
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Check out Specials Board

Live Entertainment Every Night

pubs under the SIBA direct delivery scheme.

In Errata
 Fans of Goddards beers may have been misled into believing that there were two more beers to choose from after reading our Spring Issue. Sorry to disappoint but "Isle of Wight Ale" was in fact "Ale of Wight" and "Fuddle de Dum" was of course, "Fuggle Dee Dum". We apologise to the fans and Goddards Brewery.

Yates Brewery are also pleased with the Beer of the Year results with **Yates' Blonde** coming a creditable third. It is proving to be popular not only with Island residents but also with fellow landlords on the mainland.

Yates' Best Bitter 3.8% is now creeping up the popularity pecking order. David says that due to the energetic sales force of three, the wholesale trade is going from strength to strength and Haley is making new friends every day!

STOP PRESS. Yates will be supplying 4 barrels of Blond to the Great British Beer Festival together with 20 dozen assorted bottles. Goddards will be supplying 4 barrels of Ale of Wight

Ventnor Brewery News

When I spoke to Xavier, the first thing he wanted to do was congratulate Chris Coleman and the rest of the team at Goddards for their success in Beer of the Year. What a nice man!



King Harry's Bar
 the old village Shanklin
 Come and try our wide variety of Real Ales
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 Tel: 863119
 thekingharrybar@aol.com
 SCARATE RESTAURANT OPEN in the evenings

The Plough and Barleycorn, Shanklin



The Plough and Barleycorn was taken over in March by Serena Meah who runs it with friends and family including her two sons Kurtis and Marlon.

Serena has a background in caring but entered the pub trade about 7 years ago. Many people may remember her as bar manager of the Aviator at Sandown Airport.

This attractive Shanklin pub is very much a 2 bar pub with a lively public bar and a quieter family lounge. The lounge has a wonderful period feel to it due partially to the Tudor wood panelling that the pub inherited from the long gone Green Dragon. Apparently the pub has also inherited the Ghost of the Green Dragon. Serena has on occasions left a glass of rum out for it, but is not totally convinced that its disappearance is due to the supernatural.

There are 2 - 3 real ales on offer which Serena plans to rotate. Entertainment in the pub includes a live band every Friday or Saturday, karaoke every Thursday with Jim and a regular appearances of talented local pianist Eddie Mac. The Plough and Barleycorn is the official sponsor of the Isle of Wight Radio Gig Guide.



Marlon, Kurtis and Serena



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The Old Comical, Sandown

Helen Blake and partner David (The Hobbit) Edwards decided they would like to buy a pub. Not just any pub; The Old Comical in Sandown. At the time it was not possible so they

bought a cottage opposite the Hare and Hounds where David could keep his collection of military vehicles. (Yes, *that* cottage.)

A year later the pub became available. This time enter Helen's daughter, Wendy. Wendy persuaded Helen and David to try again and this time they got it.

The Old Comical has a rich history. Unfortunately

there is not enough space in this issue to do it justice. We may do this in a future article. In the meantime, please see the current issue of the Sandown Chronicle where there is a comprehensive article from Dave Bambrough. There is also a growing history corner in the pub itself. Suffice to say that in the past it has been the Commercial Hotel, The Cask and Codpiece/The Sandown Brewery and Still Room and finally the Old Comical.

Helen was keen to point out that Wendy is the landlady and she and David just lend a helping hand.

Looking at the front of the pub it is difficult to perceive just how big it is. Apart from the two bars, there is the old stable block – soon to be a smoking area/mock bar, a petanque terrain, a coach house still with the old arch, a flat, a manager's cottage, a large beer garden and a children's garden with the Island's biggest blackboard. The pub has its own banqueting marquees for special occasions and is keen to encourage charity events.

The Old Comical is a proper backstreet community pub with bags of atmosphere. It has three stock ales (currently Hobgoblin, Greene King IPA and Abbot) and during the summer will rotate a guest ale.

Entertainment includes live music several nights a week, a fun quiz and a very popular "open mike" night every Thursday.



Wendy, David (The Hobbit) and Helen
- and the Island's biggest blackboard

Rock Samphire is currently the Ventnor seasonal ale. It is brewed with First Gold hops and a lager malt to give a light 4.2% beer to go with seafood. The other ingredient is, of course, samphire picked from a secret location. Pickled samphire is available from the brewery shop together with a host of other commodities. Old brewery tankards are proving particularly popular.

Anyone for tennis? Not quite! Darts was order of the day at the **Volunteer** in Ventnor. Charity spirited landlords Mike and Heather Janvrin hosted a "mile of darts" to raise money for young people of Ventnor. In all 10,560 darts were thrown during the event which ran from noon to 11.15 pm on 3rd June. £602.10p was raised.

The Volunteer got involved to help when a community project promoting active youth citizenship ran into trouble. The intended "Street" a showcase of skateboarding, music and graffiti art lacked a functional skate park as it had fallen into disrepair. Now that the Volunteer and some other local pubs are helping to raise repair funds, the

The
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Live Jazz Jam 1st Tuesday of every month

11th August performance looks set to go ahead.

Have you got news for us?

Tell us about what's happening in your pub.

Just phone 721557 or email
editor@wightwash.org.uk

More Ventnor News...

The team at the **Crab and Lobster Tap** have their work cut out for them. They are currently running two pubs with the Punch acqui-

sition of the Richmond Arms. Darren and Jaime are sharing chef's duties. **The Crab and Lobster** will feature more music in future and aims to be the Island's Music and Dining venue. The latest line up looks something like this:-

Every second Friday each month "Mick's travelling Klassics Music Show (open



**8
Real Ales**





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mike/singalong 50s, 60s etc. Every last Friday Boogie Woogie Dave and First Tuesday of every month the popular "Jazz Jam Session" with Jim Brooks. They will be serving their famous Fish and Chips on Jazz nights. Punch Taverns have also acquired **The Battery** in Appley. A major refurbishment is planned.



Sinister goings on in Over Milton are the theme in Sam Stirling's first novel, **Myrtle's Bee**. Sam Stirling is the nom de plume of ex-Rookley resident Derek Fountain now settled in Vanuatu in the South Pacific. Although the fictitious village of Over Milton is situated in Hampshire, Derek assures me that it is based on his memories of the Isle of Wight. **Myrtle's Bee** is a "darn good yarn" and available from Zeus publications. Even though this is an Australian operation, my copy turned up in 4 days!

http://www.zeus-publications.com/myrtles_bee.htm

(Derek, hold out for the best bid on the screen rights - it will make a great film.)

Kim ("Miller" wot was), the landlady of the **Broadway Inn**, Totland, has tied the knot with Dave Filby, also a CAMRA member. Congratulations to them both.

Yet another prize for Goddard's head brewer Chris Coleman - not only has Fugle Dee Dum won Beer of the Year but Chris also picked up a prize for entering the correct solution in a photo competition in Ale Mail, Wightwash's sister publication from the Portsmouth branch. Normally the prize would have been a Good Beer Guide but as it was assumed that Chris already had a copy, he was presented with a very large tin of tuna.



A delighted Chris Coleman

Food all Day

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Always 6 Guest Real Ales

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Union Street, Ryde

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CASK MARQUE

CASK MARQUE

Great Beer at Great Prices

The Propeller Inn, Bembridge



Business partners Mike and Sharon decided it was time to take to lend their expertise to something new. The duo's other venture is the popular Culver Haven Inn and similarly the Propeller Inn is "a room with a view". Visitors are not only treated to the picturesque country backdrop but also a close encounter

of the comings and goings of Bembridge Airport. Plane enthusiasts and pilots alike have already marked their seat in readiness of the famous Schneider Trophy Air Race.

This year will mark the 75th anniversary of the cup and 75 year old Beryl King will be walking the wing of the Utterly Buttery Spearman Aircraft on the 19th August. The main event will take place on the 2nd and 3rd of September and this aviation spectacle is set to be the largest yet. Participating aircraft will include a Reims Cessna (amphibian), several Yaks, a Jodel and a Second World War Auster displaying speeds of up to 240mph.

The Propeller Inn now boasts a full refurbishment and serves an array of traditional food. The bar sports 3 regular Real Ales and 1 guest ale. Currently at the pumps are Tangle Foot, Badger Ale, Badger Ale Extra Smooth and new to the bar, Sussex Bitter. Sussex Bitter is a 3.5% ABV cask beer and has been brewed from the time King and Barnes Brewery records began. It is typical Country Bitter, clean tasting hoppy without being over bitter. Sussex Bitter is the most popular King and Barnes beer.



Kerry

Editor's Note -

In recognition of the contribution that Kerry Ashmore has made to Wightwash, we have decided to give Kerry her own page(s) where she can tell you about pubs that she has visited. This page is also available on the Wightwash website www.wightwash.org.uk

The Bugle Coaching Inn - Yarmouth



For those thirsty Real Ale seekers travelling to west Wight have a peek at the **Bugle Coaching Inn**. Landlords John and Ray, have been resident for some 12 years and welcome locals and tourists alike. The well stocked Real Ale bar is a prominent feature and the

choice of ale changes regularly.

According to a local historian the name 'Bugle' is Latin for 'Buculus' which means "wild bull" and the "wild bull" was a bull noise sounding musical instrument. This was a supporter of the Coat of Arms of Henry Beauchamp, Duke of Warwick, who around 1439 was the govenor of the Isle of Wight.

The Bugle Inn is a traditional hostelry that has been quenching thirsts for many centuries. The bar area is cosy with interesting curios displayed about the pub. It's a pub for all seasons and you can choose to sip your ale in the conservatory or on colder days enjoy the warmth of roaring log fires.

The Real Ale menu is displayed at the door and if you fancy airing your song, go along to the pub on the third Saturday every month for a session on the open mike.



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Ken "Buzzy" Matthews in May, has retired as secretary of the Wessex Region of CAMRA. At a meeting at the Richmond Arms, Southampton John Buckley, the regional director, thanked Buzzy and presented him with a certificate, book tokens and a boat so that he will continue to cross from the Island to future meetings. Actually the boat is rather tiny so the redjet will probably still be used ! Ken expressed his gratitude with a speech .



In the Autumn Issue of 2004 we reported on the Island's nostalgia radio station Angel community radio. Well in case you haven't noticed the station is now broadcasting 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 91.5 FM. It has a policy of only playing music recorded between 1900 and 1959 and has the wonderful catchphrase "Snap, Crackle but no Pop".

Since our last issue, the Island has seen two very successful beer festivals. Last week the Island's favourite pub the **Yarbridge Inn**, held a 4 day festival and featured over 30 ales including **Last Rites** from the **Abbeydale** brewery a mighty ale weighing in at 11%. The beer of the festival was the porter style **The Dark Side** from the **Boggart Hole Clough Brewery**. Music included contributions from Pete's Sake and Desperado. Landlord Paul Jenner was delighted with the turnout.

The Fat Cat Festival was the biggest and most ambitious so far with ten days of music and beer. The new format featuring a full size stage with sound and lights was well received but organiser Jay Chapman plans to revise it for next year. **The Fat Cat**

Fat Cat Bar
Sandpipers



Freshwater Bay
www.fatcatrading.co.uk

Festival 2008 will have a single price entry for weekend evenings with free admission for midweek and weekend daytime sessions. (see over for photos of this years festival.)

THE WAVERLEY
CARISBROOKE



Steve, Rachel and the staff
Keith, Little Em, Emma
Brian, Heather, Cat and
(oh yeah!) Zoë
will make you feel most welcome

Sky Sports with Live Football
Live Music every Saturday
Tuesday and Thursday
are Curry Nights
(£6.95 inc a drink)
Sunday Lunch from £5.75

Food Served 12 - 2.15 6.30 - 9.15
Sunday 12 - 2.30 not evenings



Tel: (01983) 522338

Apparently in the last issue our proof reader had a record number of spelling mistakes and “typos” to correct. I can only apologise and as a form of apology offer a little poem.

Eye halve a spelling chequer
It came with my pea sea
It plainly marques four my revue
Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.

Eye strike a key and type a word
And weight four it two say
Weather eye am wrong oar write
It shows me strait a weigh.

As soon as a mist ache is maid
It nose bee fore two long
And eye can put the error rite
Its rarely ever wrong.

Eye have run this poem threw it
I am shore your pleased two no
Its letter perfect in it's weigh
My chequer tolled me sew.

That's it from me I'm of too Bulgerya
four mi holyday.
Ta Ta.

Paul



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Totland
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ALWAYS ON TAP
Lunches and Evening Meals
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Live Music
every Saturday
w i d e s c r e e n t v
for major sporting events
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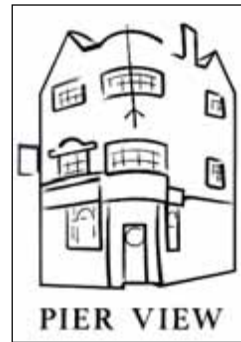


Hang them High

This is the last of four articles from Ray Scarfe about our own local pub sign artist Peter J Oldreive.

So we have designed, drawn and painted a new sign the only job left is to hang them outside the customers' pub. In the summer this is a really pleasant task but in the middle of winter it's no joke having to spend time freezing on top of a ladder.

Peter recalls occasions where the heads of signs have been broken by the wind and the sign has fallen down.



This usually ends up as an insurance job and a new sign, so a record is vital. Mind you even Peter could not have legislated for an occurrence involving one of his works. "A gang robbed three pubs in one night and stole the signs, one of them was mine, The Barley Mow at Walderton, West Sussex. These sort of things usually end up in antique shops or eBay," he recounts. The life expectancy of a signboard painted by Peter in the traditional way can vary depending on the location in which it stands. "The worst environment for pub signs is the seaside or very strong sunlight," confides

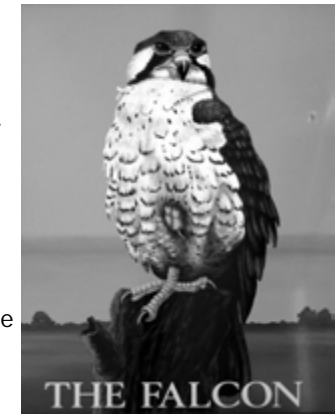
Peter. "All of the signs that I painted for Whitbread were given a guarantee of 5 years. With the high quality paints that I use many of my signs have lasted more than 10 to 15 years."

So while you are enjoying your pint of real ale spare a thought for what our pubs will look like in a few years time without real hand-painted signs. It's time to make a stand, like CAMRA, against a sea of bland corporate pub signs (new Greene King signs etc) and computer generated plastic signs that soon degenerate into sun bleached 'Yellow Perils' or shrunken laminated 'Stripy Zebras'.

Don't let traditional handcrafted signs and real sign artists fade away which for so long have been a proud part of our traditional pubs. Don't let plastic win.

If you want a new 'real' pub sign or more information about pub signs please contact Ray Scarfe on rayscarfe@hotmail.co.uk

Pictured signs - The Falcon, Shanklin; The Pier View, Cowes and The Star Inn, Ryde





ing beverage (the milk on its own is not very palatable –the hot climate, you know). If you like coffee, Cuban coffee, like their cigars, is amongst the best in the world, and it is a matter of hospitality to offer a visitor some espresso when they visit. Another gem, that is claimed to put lead in your pencil, is the raw sugar cane juice. And, I have it from my dentist, that, in its natural state, it has no harmful effects on the teeth!



Cuba is a country that manages itself incredibly, given all that is against it. About the size of England (smaller than the UK), its national health budget is around that of Southampton General, and, yet, they have, what is reported to be, one of the best health services in the world. I believe that they are, also, the most literate country in the world. With the dreadful and unfair US embargo that penalises the people of Cuba so, and Castro being just about the US's biggest failure, having tried to kill him (and failed) over 600 times, they are a resilient and resourceful people, who, contrary to US propaganda, are recognised throughout the Latin world (and Scandinavian world, I think it's fair to say) for the progressive attitude, human rights and stable society. Amidst all this, and something, that being a simple Real Ale drinker, impresses me most of all; all their beers label their ingredients, something that we cannot even do!

John Nicholson
IW Branch Chairman
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Isle of Wight Folk and Blues Festival

A fourth major music Festival is taking place on the Island later this year. The **Isle of Wight Folk and Blues Festival** is being held in various venues in Ventnor on September 21 to 23 inclusive.

The headline concerts are as follows :

Friday, September 21 -

Renowned New York bluesman **Guy Davis** is playing a much-anticipated acoustic set in St Catherines Church.

Saturday, September 22 -

The highly-regarded eleven piece Latin/Celtic band **Salsa Celtica** bring their fabulous rhythms to the Winter Gardens, so bring your dancing shoes.

Sunday, September 23 -

The closing concert of the Festival will be perennial folk/rock favourites **Fairport Convention** who are celebrating their 40th Anniversary this year.



Besides these headline events, there is a huge range of other great music on offer over the weekend including blues rockers **The Hamsters** - a band hugely popular with Island audiences. Among the other acts taking part in the Festival are:-

The Papa George Band, Tony Mc Phee and Jim Moray.

In addition, several Island bands including **The Dance Preachers, Smoke 'n' Mirrors** and **The Hoops** will also be part of the line up. A wide range of ticket options are available.

For full details please ring the Festival Office on 01983-856206 or visit www.iowfolkblues.co.uk

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What to Drink in Cuba

One of the things that a CAMRA member misses most when abroad is real ale. Fair enough, in some countries with a brewing history, they have enough delights in their own tradition to make the absence, at least, bearable, if not interesting. I'm thinking of the diverse Belgian beers and Bavarian masterpieces. But, if you are visiting a country where they have no standing brewing tradition, what do you do?

Well, in Cuba, I for one, quite enjoyed tasting the rums and rum based variations. Vintage Cuban rum has to be amongst the best in the world, and comparable to fine brandy, but the mixes are quite nice too, especially the Mojito, a national drink now fast spreading throughout the drinking world. To make, you squeeze a good half lemon into the bottom of a glass, add a generous spoon of sugar, drop in some hierba buena (a sprig of our mint will do), mash it about, then some ice, a substantial amount of soda or mineral water, some 3 year old rum (to taste), and a splash of angostura bitters, if desired. This last bit is rather controversial in Cuba, and, depending on which bar you go in, and who you ask, they are or are not part of the official recipe. But, who cares, put them in if it tastes good!



The Mojito serves several functions. Yes, it's an alcoholic drink, but the lemon refreshes, the sugar replenishes and the mint type herb helps you sweat (to keep cool). It's damn nice too, and just fits in with the Cuban atmosphere, the music, dancing, and the craic. I use that word advisedly, because, my wife is Cuban, and when I took her to Ireland (Dublin and the Galway Oyster Festival) she commented on how Cuban the Irish were in their enjoyment of life – so there you have it, the Cuban Craic is the correct way to describe it!

But, if you are suffering withdrawal symptoms for beer, then you should know what is about. There are various foreign imports, mainly Dutch brewed, and of various quality, not too different to what you would avoid here. The way I looked at it was, if in Cuba, and you wanted a beer, you should drink the local stuff, provided, of course, that it is palatable.

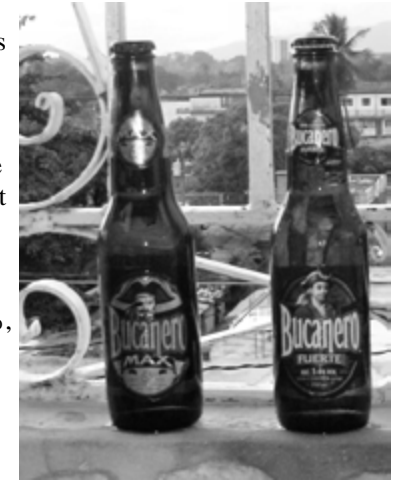
There are four brewery brands in Cuba: Cristal, Buccanero, Hatuey and Mayabe. Cristal is promoted as being Cuba's favourite, although, in certain parts, the fridges are crammed with Buc-

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canero Fuerte and Buccanero Max. It's a struggle to find Mayabe and, more so, Hatuey (although this does vary from region to region – but, on the whole it is).

From a beer taster's point of view, I found that Cristal, at 4.9%, has a fruity nose and is very pale straw in colour. It has a rather watery texture and light flowery fruitiness that disappears into an unpleasant astringent bitterness.

Buccanero Fuerte, on the other hand, at 5.4%, is light yellow and well balanced, with a softer finish than the Cristal, and, to my taste, far preferable.



Buccanero Max, however, weighing in at 6.5%, is still very pale in colour, but has much heavier malty tones, that carry right the way through to the finish, and would withstand drinking at a warmer temperature (if circumstances dictate). It is not an unpleasant beer, by any stretch, and is much enjoyed by locals and visitors alike.

The best, by far, for me, was the Hatuey, named after the indian chief so barbarically slaughtered by the Conquistadors in the name of civilization. At 4.5%, it is a safer bet for the warm climate. Still pale in colour, its maltiness gives it flavour, body and substance, which, together, with its hops, brings a distinctive and appetising nose and satisfying finish, with only a slight astringent bite, the mark, I always think, of a craft brewer.

As for the Mayabe (4%) - as far as I was concerned, with a flavour of watery acid drops, it could have originated from a horse, and was only fit to wash down the drain.

There are lots of other drinks to try in Cuba as well; from honey, fruit and herb wines, to liquors, white rums, 3 year old rums, 5 year old rums, anejo (mature) rums, reserve and vintage rums, and a whole wealth of specialty rum based spirits (e.g. coffee, local beans and seeds).

Apart from the alcoholic drinks, there is a wealth of exotic fruit drinks and the Cuban's have a tradition of whisking various fruits with milk to make a wholesome and appetis-

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