

Wightwash

Volume 2, Number 62



Newsletter of the Isle of Wight branch of CAMRA

Winter Issue 2014

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

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FREE ISSUE:

DEARTH IN VENICE

Brewery News

**By Royal Appointment?*

*(*see page five)*

Island Landmarks

Ron Recommends

PRIZE QUIZ

Totally Trappist

And much, much more...

Seasons Greetings



from

All @ Wightwash



Isle of Wight Born and Brewed

www.goddardsbrewery.com





We could not have hoped for a more successful IW Beer and Buses Weekend on 18th/19th October 2014, when it is estimated that more than 2000 people enjoyed riding round the Island on the various single and double decker buses. In all, 57 vehicles from all over the UK took part in the weekend event, with 19 operating on the Beer and Buses routes, and the remainder either being operated on IW Bus Museum routes or displayed at Newport Quay.

WEEKEND

Feedback from the comment cards that CAMRA stewards handed out and placed on the buses indicate that 67% of our visitors came from the mainland to visit the event. Of course, the event was not only a success for the bus enthusiasts, but also for CAMRA members, who were able to access all the different pubs using the bus services, and the participating pubs themselves, who no doubt enjoyed improved business over the weekend too.

The IW Bus Museum indicated that the event was the most profitable they had ever staged and their management committee are wholeheartedly in support of a repeat collaboration next year, spearheaded by the same organising sub-committee, which includes Tim Marshall as your CAMRA representative to the event.

Planning for the 2015 event (to be held on Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th October 2015) is in its early stages, and we are currently working through various ideas for routes, timetables and pubs based on feedback we received from comment cards, emails, letters, Facebook messages etc.

The involvement of CAMRA volunteers was greatly appreciated by the organising committee, and we hope that those of you who helped out in 2014 will feel able to assist again in 2015, and also encourage fellow members to spare some time over the weekend to assist with selling programmes, giving directions and information to passengers and acting as route pilots on board the buses. Thanks again to all of you who performed these tasks in 2014.



Ben Bartam

Event Co-ordinator
IW Beer and Buses Weekend

Buddle
wins most popular pub
[see page seven](#)

Ben driving his 1981 Bristol LHS/ECW KDL 202W

PUB AND BEER OF THE YEAR 2014

**Members,
It's time for you to vote for the Isle of Wight pub and beer of 2014.**

You should* have received a voting form with this issue of Wightwash. Please take a few minutes to vote. The competition is an important event in the CAMRA year. Let us know which Island pub and beer you enjoyed most in 2014. It's your chance to give a landlord and a brewer a well-deserved pat on the back.

Please post the completed form to Gary Daish by 24th January. The results will be announced on John Hannam Meets on Isle of Wight Radio on Sunday February 8th.

*If you didn't receive a form (joint members should get one each), please contact Gary on 07853 425 622 or email editor@wightwash.org.uk (check inside the envelope first though).

Voting on Line Alternative

Over the last few years we have had several requests to set up an on-line voting alternative. The problem has been to set one up that was not open to skulduggery, yet still anonymous. On each voting slip there is a unique number that has been randomly allocated.

To vote on line, you must enter this number (to reiterate, it is anonymous and randomly allocated). Once this number has been used, it cannot be used again either on-line or by post. Voting on-line will close on the 20th January.

www.wightwash.org.uk/voting

	Join CAMRA Today	
<p>Just fill in the form below and send , with a cheque (payable to CAMRA Ltd) to Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St. Albans, Herts, AL1 4 LW</p> <p>Rates are Single £25 Joint £30 Over 60 and Under 26 £17.50 (Joint £20.15)</p>		
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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.....
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Island Brewery

The success and recognition of the quality of **Earls RDA** continues to grow, after winning 2nd place in this year's SIBA South-East awards this autumn. For those who have never tried it, look out for the pump clip displaying the Earl Mountbatten Hospice sunflower, especially if you like coffee, then when you try it, after your first sip, count to five and it will hit you right at the back of the nose with pure espresso; even though there is no coffee in it. "Yes, we drink it hot and black, in the office, instead of coffee, with no milk in it" says Steve Minshull, with a peculiar large lump in the cheek of his mouth.

The Labologists Society (well I had never heard of them either!) have awarded Island Brewery 2nd place prize in the annual label awards for their **Wight Christmas** label; and, if you don't believe me - look here it is!

Distribution agreements with Wells & Young, and, also, with Wadsworth continue to provide good exposure for Island Brewery beers' in the competitive mainland market. It also gives Island Ales opportunity to distribute some choice beers in return, from these long established brewers, across the Island. If you have tried the Wadsworth range, it has a distinctive taste characteristic that is derived from their own particular culture of wet yeast, a pleasant give away in any blind tasting.



Brewery news; for those who have been following the torch and battery saga over the years (essential equipment in a brewery, along with wellingtons), in the latest chapter technology has caught up and the brewers have invested in a state of the art LED torch, and to celebrate, have treated themselves to a new pair of wellingtons each. "Visitors are welcome!" Chris and

Ashley say.

Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)

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By Royal Appointment?

It seems Island Brewery has made an impression on Prince Philip. Apparently the Duke has a taste for **Yachtsman's Ale** (maybe from visiting the RYS, where they have a stock, I am told), and had Chamberlain's Restaurant in London order a consignment for a special function he was attending. It'll be coat of arms next!



Apart from all this, the brewery will be working on new beers for next year, with a series of small batch brews to test the market. "Following the growing appetite amongst consumers to try new beers in the rising craft beer industry, we will be introducing a new beer, after a series of seasonal beers, from which we will select the favourite" reveals Steve, who goes on to say: "after all, people that know Chris, will know that he commenced his brewing career doing just that; brewing small batch trial brews for Goddards, all those years ago."

Clr John Nicholson BLO

Goddards Brewery

Goddards are making good inroads into the national and international beer scene, with Greene King taking **Scrumdigitty** as their guest beer throughout their estate for November - nearly 1000 casks had been delivered by the middle of the month. JD Wetherspoons are running **Wight Squirrel** on a guest slot nationwide for January through to March. And so to Denmark - the first direct export of casks have been shipped to Copenhagen.

Fancy some Goddards over Christmas?

Orders are now being taken for bag in box beer, delivered to your door – check their website for prices.

www.goddardsbrewery.co.uk

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On the supermarket front, Sainsburys are now stocking Goddards Beers.

Following the successful Facebook competition to re-name the winter beer, the new selected name is...

'Solent Night' (5.2%), and it'll be available by the time Wightwash comes out. You wait till I find the person responsible for that title... Goddards will be running a brewing course on the Island 13th to 17th April 2015. It'll be run by the Institute of Brewers & Distillers, and the qualification will be the General Certificate in Brewing. The tutor will be Tim O'Rourke (technical master brewer), and the cost will be £550. So, if you'd like to get into brewing, professionally or at home (you might need to bribe the neighbours with a bottle or two when they smell those hops boiling), get in touch with Xav at Goddards on xavier@goddardsbrewery.com.

There's a further charge if you wish to take the exam in London in May.

Goddards has just received the first batch of this year's Cascade hops. The UK had ran out!

Brian Jacobs BLO

Yates' Brewery

The move to the new premises went well and everything is up and running. The award winning **Yule Be Sorry** 7.2%abv is now available as is **Wight Winter** 5%abv.

A selection of Reindeer themed ales from Milestone Brewery should be in the pubs shortly. They range from 5.4% to 3.4%. Dayla Drinks wholesalers based in Buckinghamshire and Baby Bottles based in Coventry in the Midlands will be taking ales from the brewery over Christmas and the New

The Volunteer

Victoria Street, Ventnor Tel: 852537

Kim and Sue

Welcome all customers, old and new!

5 Real Ales plus Old Rosie Cider



Year. Yates' Brewery has had yet another successful year both in the retail and brewing side.

I can't believe a year has gone by yet again. With best wishes for Christmas and 2015 to all.

Lorraine Daish BLO

An advertisement for 'The Waverley Carisbrooke'. The top part of the ad has the name 'The Waverley Carisbrooke' in a large, stylized, brown font. Below this, the text 'UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT' is written in a white, hand-drawn style. Further down, another line of white, hand-drawn text says 'Tim, Julie and the rest of the staff are waiting to welcome you'. The background of the ad is a photograph of a two-story brick building with a chimney and a white door. At the bottom of the ad, the phone number 'Tel: (01983) 522338' is printed in a white font.

End of an Era



CAMRA member Ashley Cooper snapped Chris and Wendy Plucknet during their last week at the Prince of Wales, Freshwater as they posed for another well known IOW publication.

East Wight Bulletin

Thanks to our East Wight correspondent Brian Cope for the following reports:- Planning permission to turn the **Roadside Inn** into residential accommodation has been refused. The pub remains closed.

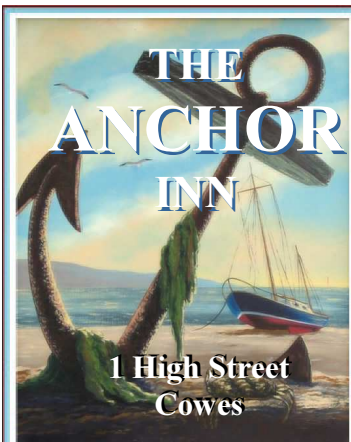
The Windmill Hotel, Bembridge is displaying a sign "Opening Spring 2015."

Beer, Buses and The Buddle



Cllr John Nicholson (IW CAMRA's famous chairman) presents Mandi O'Reilly with the Classic Buses, Beer and Walks Most Popular Pub trophy.

The award for the most popular pub during the recent Classic Buses, Beer and Walks Weekend went to the Buddle Inn, Niton. Despite being caught slightly unawares by a bus load of drinkers arriving at the pub door at 11.20am on a Saturday morning demanding beer, landlady Mandi O'Reilly and her staff coped resolutely. Apparently



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Mandi was still in her Rupert Bear pyjamas at 3pm. The trophy now has pride of place next to the bar. Although it will be awarded annually, Mandi says she's not worried as she fully intends to win it again next year. During the weekend comment cards were handed out to passengers. Over 200 were returned providing extremely positive feedback and useful information. Over 65% of those questioned said had travelled from the mainland to attend the event.

Pub Co's and Beer Ties

On Tuesday 18th November, MPs backed an amendment to the Small Business Bill tabled by Lib Dem MP Greg Mulholland aimed to secure fair rents and cheaper beer prices for licencees tied to big pub

companies.

Shares in Enterprise Inns and Punch Taverns dropped immediately but now seem to be recovering nicely.

Are we likely to see much in the way of change locally?

Well not according to *Private Eye*. The amended law will mean publicans who find themselves losing money under the existing tie can switch to a free-of-tie contract if it looks like a better deal. They can then buy beer independently and pay rent at the market rate. However, only existing publicans are covered and they must wait until specific events such as a rent review or expiry of their contract. Still, it's certainly a step in the right direction!

Diary Dates

Friday 12th December: IW CAMRA Xmas Party - Man in the Moon - 8pm

Friday 30th January 2015: AGM - Traveller's Joy, Northwood- 8pm

Friday 20th February: Branch Meeting Kingston, Cowes- 8pm

Friday 20th March: Branch Meeting - Railway, Ryde (poss visit to W'spoons)- 8pm

Regular Events

Ashley Cooper has informed us that after the December meeting (16th) the IW Keyboard Club will meet at the Wight Montrene Hotel, Sandown every Monday at 8.30

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Horse and Groom, Ningwood

Steve Gilbert is not exactly a new face. In fact he has been behind the bar of the **Horse and Groom** since May 2011. He became bar manager a year later and now he is the fully fledged landlord.

The 17th Century Coaching house is part of the Enterprise pub chain and up until recently the lease was owned by the IOW Family Pubs/Inns of Distinction group. Steve took over the lease in October.



The pub went through a massive refurbishment about ten years ago to extend its capacity. It can now seat 120 diners inside and about the same outside (weather permitting). Despite its size it still has its cosy corners. One particular favourite spot is round the open hearth log fire.

There are three real ales to choose from during the summer months with at least one local. There are currently two, although there will be an extra winter style beer for the Christmas period.

Dan Breslin, the head chef, oversees the food side of things. All food is home cooked and there is a well stocked specials board with changes every day. At the time of writing, winter warmers such as hot pots and stews were proving very popular as is the pre-Christmas three course "buy one, get one free" offer. There is an open hatch carvery every Wednesday and Sunday.

Steve is not planning on many changes - although has reduced the price of wine by £2 a bottle!

Be reassured, your Horse and Groom loyalty cards are still valid.

An advertisement for The Griffin and Horse & Groom. It features a large image of a glass of beer on the left. The text reads: "THE GRIFFIN AND HORSE & GROOM SUPPORTING THE REAL ALE CAMPAIGN". To the right is a circular logo with the letters "CAMA". Below the main text, it says: "At The Griffin and Horse and Groom we offer a great choice of real ales and support local breweries as a priority." At the bottom, there are two small logos: "THE GRIFFIN" and "HORSE & GROOM".

THE GRIFFIN AND HORSE & GROOM
SUPPORTING THE REAL ALE CAMPAIGN

At The Griffin and Horse and Groom we offer a great choice of real ales and support local breweries as a priority.

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HORSE & GROOM · NINGWOOD · PO30 4NW
01983 760672 www.horse-and-groom.com

This is the second part of Gary and Lorraine Daish's **Totally Trappist** Belgian Beer Tour.

Day Four

The first visit was to the Ter Dolen Brewery at Helchteren. In the middle ages the "Ter Dolen" or "Maze" was a fortified refuge for the abbots of St. Truiden Abbey. One of the castle farm buildings was converted into an ultramodern brewery in 1994. The brewery has a range of six beers ranging from 8.1% down to 4.5% abv.



Next stop was the Achel Trappist Brewery and Monastery. As the brewery is in both Belgium and the Netherlands, during World War I the Germans only captured the Belgian side as the Netherlands was neutral. They then dismantled the copper vessels and sent them back to Germany to be turned into arms for the war. Brewing stopped until 1998 when a new brewhouse was built. At first, Achel beers were brewed purely for the Auberge which is a tavern which runs around the brewery and was often joked as being the only Trappist Brewpub in the word. The brewery produces two draft beers: Achel Blonde at 5% and Achel Brown at 5% abv. also bottled Blonde at 8% abv, Brown 8%abv and Extra at 10%.

Last visit of the day was to the LaTrappe Brewery at Koningshoeven Tilburg. Here we had a superb Trappist meal and a chance to taste six different beers. Like most of the Monasteries, La Trappe has suffered the ravages of war i.e. the 100 year war and the French Revolution. In 1815 the abbot Dom Augustin de Lestranger returned from exile and purchased the property from the French Government but it was in a ruinous state so had to be completely rebuilt. The new church was



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consecrated on 30th August 1832. In 1850 the monks were again expelled but after a few years they were able to return. The Monastery was again completely rebuilt under the 45th abbot Dom Etienne Salasc and the new church was consecrated in 1895. The monastery and surrounding grounds are beautiful and very peaceful. The brewery produces nine beers ranging from 4.7% to 10% abv of which we sampled six. Wonderful!!

We moved to to our hotel in Antwerp for a two night stay and an exploration of the bars!

Day Five

Leaving the hotel the first stop was at the Cafe Trappisten in Malle brewery tap of the Westmalle Trappist Brewery. Here we sampled Westmalle Dubbel 7%abv and Tripel 9.5%abv. The Westmalle beers are probably the most available in this country. As the Westmalle Brewery is completely in the inside of the Abbey it is not open to visitors.



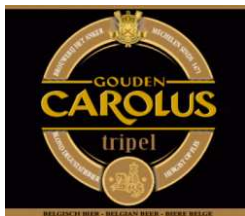
Next a visit to the Het Anker Brewery for a meal and of course more tasting. During the 15th

century, the Beguine sisters baked bread, grew vegetables and nursed the sick. In 1471 Charles the Bold granted permission for them to brew beer for their own use, free from tax or excise. For more than three centuries they brewed their beer traditionally. In 1872 Louis Van Breedam bought the brewery and built one of the first



modern steam breweries. It was renamed in 1904 Het Anker (the Anchor) after the brewer Jan in de Anker. In 1912 Victor Van Breedam (son of Louis) built the first maltings and in 1938 a new brew room with big hanging copper kettles. They produce eight beers of which we sampled the Carolus Classic 8%, Hopsinjoor 8% and Tripel at 9%. They also brew a Christmas and Easter beer and a white beer.

continued →



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We then moved on to the first (of two) beer festivals of the day at the Trappistenfeesten at Niel. This was held in a village hall where we all sat at tables and ordered our beer from the beer menu. Thirty four different beers (all Trappist) were on offer (we didn't try all of them) and the hospitality was excellent.

Our last stop was at the Modeste Beer Festival and the De Koninck Brewery. This festival is modest in the fact that only



small brewers are invited to show off their beers. There were 17 breweries taking part and beer was everywhere. 1/3 glasses were used by everyone (I am glad to say) and brewers were interesting to talk to. It was a very friendly and happy festival with people from many parts of the world there. Very different to festivals

in this country. Back to the hotel and a last drink at the hotel bar.

Day Six

First stop of the day was to the Dranken Geers drink warehouse in Oostakker. Where does one start? Such a choice. However we managed to fill up at least five crates to bring home (not as much as some I may add). On to De Post in Oostvleteren a brilliant new/old cafe with a magnificent beer list. we tried Rochefort 8 9.2%, Rookap brown 6.5% abv, Black Damnation 11% and Mocha Bomb 12%.



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Last stop at In de Vrede cafe at the Abbey of Saint-Sixtus in Westvleteren. The monastery is a closed order so not open to visitors but you do get to “try before you buy” (the only place where you can). The beer is perceived to be one of the best (or maybe **the** best) in the world. Orders are limited and you have to pre arrange an order. However you may buy one box (six bottles) in the café (lucky there were two of us). The Westvleteren Blonde 5.8%, Westvleteren 8 at 8% and Westvleteren 12 at 10.2% - wonderful!

As usual we managed one very last stop - at Kunstmaecker in Steenkerke where our very last beer of the tour was De Struise Black Albert Russian Imperial Stout 13% abv.

All in all a fantastic tour and a super group of people.

Gary and Lorraine Daish



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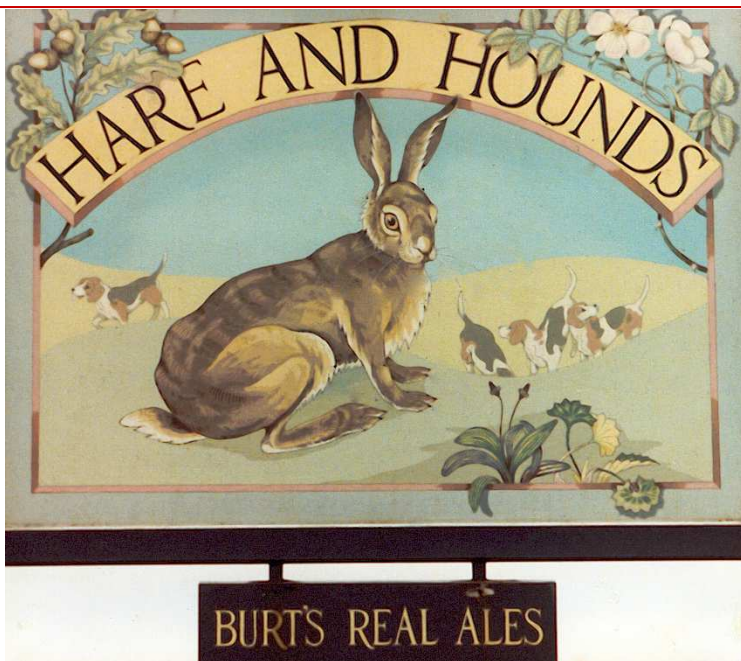


With the advent of colour in Wightwash I asked Tim if he would like me to put together a few articles on some of the old IOW hand painted pub signs.

The oldest and to my mind one of the best signs in my collection is this double sided beauty that used to grace the Hare and Hounds pub, Downside, Arreton.

As you can see this sign hung when the pub belonged to Burt's Brewery.

An advertisement for website design services. The background features a dark beer bottle, a basket of green hops, two glasses of beer with foam, and a wooden barrel. Text is overlaid on the image. In the top left, it says 'Every Pub Needs a Website' with 'Website' in red. In the top right, a red box contains the text 'FREE Premium listing on isleofwight.pub website *for 1 year with your new website includes @isleofwight.pub email address'. At the bottom, it says 'Start your website today www.tldesignworks.co.uk' in large white letters. Below the website name are the phone number '01983 613237' and the email address 'hello@tldesignworks.co.uk'.



I would love to name the artist who painted this attractive sign, but, unfortunately like many pub signs this one is unsigned. If anybody knows the artist's name I would be pleased to find out who he was.

There were 11 public houses owned by Burts and in my next article I will tell you the tale of the Walmer Castle, Ventnor and what happened to its sign.

Ray Scarfe



Salvatore's
Est. 25years

Restaurant open for lunch and dinner
Wednesday to Saturday
Pub open 11am to 3pm and 6pm to 11pm
Sundays 11am to 6pm

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The Last Drop, Edinburgh



Whilst on a business and pleasure weekend in October, our group of piano-tuners, organ builders and the like, visited - on the recommendation of our Edinburgh-based organiser - this wonderful little pub. The name is appropriate, as not only is it drink-sounding, but it is on the site of Edinburgh's last execution at the gallows. Apparently, thousands of people would turn up to watch these executions, and they were regarded as entertainment!

Our party decided to have lunch, and my choice was haggis, tatties and neaps - and very good it was, too, accompanied by a pint or so of a very fine ale - Nicholson's of Cornwall. I have learnt that Nicholson's is in collaboration with the St Austell Brewery, another fine brewery.

I can thoroughly recommend this establishment if you are in the Edinburgh Grassmarket area.


Ron Bird

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It's October, and time for the annual overseas outing of the Sunday Lunchtime Drinking Club, two fat guys called Paul and me, whose philosophy is simple; beer, sightseeing and beer. We've had great weekends in Dublin, Prague and Budapest. Last year was Hamburg, which should have yielded a wealth of wonderful beers, but didn't, so we're hoping to redress the record this year. Two years ago, we were across the Adriatic in Dubrovnik, where we found one good beer and an awful lot of Eurofizz. Or should it be a lot of awful Eurofizz. The Adriatic itself had more flavour.

On the face of it, a beer expedition to Italy might make a night on Doom Bar an attractive prospect. After all, it's the home of Peroni and Moretti, neither of which are likely to feature at the top of anyone's list of 100 beers to try before you die. So will it be Death or Dearth in Venice?



We don't get off to a good start. After arriving at our hotel in Mestre, just across the bridge from Venice itself, we set off in search of a nearby brewpub, the Befed. On my smartphone's Googlemaps, it looks but a short walk away, less than an inch, in fact; and, indeed, on the scale of a walk across Dartmoor, it is. Not only does my underestimate of the distance lead to unvoiced, but palpable, ill feeling, but my casual disregard of opening times as listed on the same smartphone earns me undeserved criticism when we arrive there, as the place doesn't open for another five hours. However, on the way back we find a pleasant backstreet bar (which, paradoxically, we discover is closed when the brewpub is open) which serves some very decent bottled beer. My Italian might be

very limited (helped by a phrasebook on the overworked smartphone) but it's enough to order a 7.2% Moretti la Rossa (Moretti Red) and a 7.7% Danish lager, confusingly labelled Ceres Strong Ale, which we are to encounter many times in the next few days. Ceres is Italy's number one imported beer, and it's not bad; in a land dominated by Eurofizz, it's a positive godsend. We encounter it next in a little café/bar adjacent to the hotel, a place we are to return to so many times (the bar, not the hotel) during our stay, that the Chinese owners ply us with a never-ending supply of free snacks. The price of Ceres in



Mestre is three and a half Euros – around £5 a pint – which is very much the bottom end of the price scale in Italy. Still, we keep it in perspective; on a trip to Cherbourg in 2013, Guinness was an eye-watering £8 a pint.

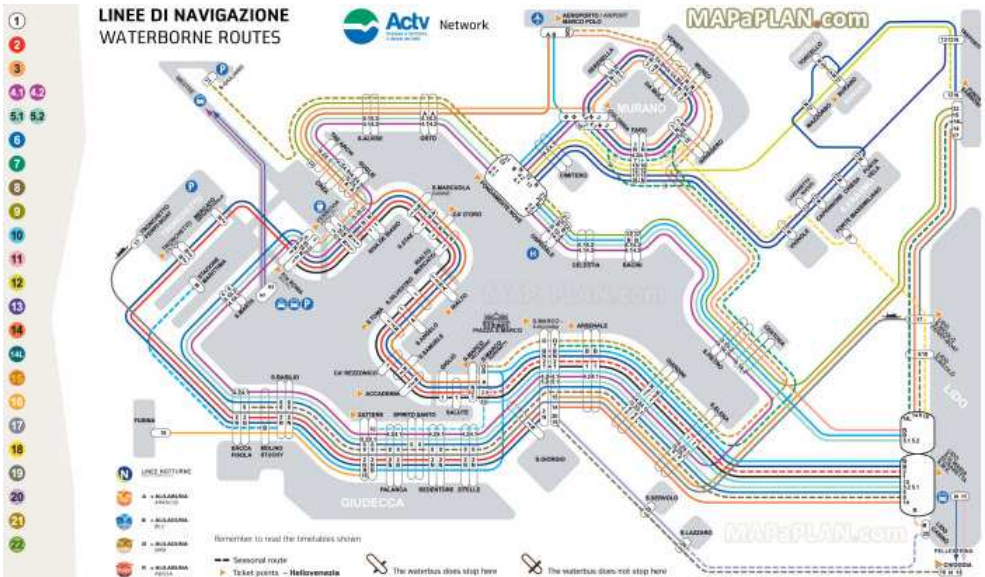
In the evening we have our only encounter with Peroni, at a local gay bar. We do not return.

The next day we head for Venice itself. Since none of us are willing or able to fork out 80 Euros for 20 minutes of



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gondola experience (considerably more if you want a serenade as well; I offered to do it for 10 and a bottle of Ceres), we decide on a season ticket for the waterbus. However, the map for the plethora of waterbus routes is unfathomable, rather like a cross between the London Underground schematic and a bowl of spaghetti. Completely baffled, we do what every Englishmen does when faced with such a predicament; we take the first one that comes along. The scenery from the waterbus is probably breathtaking, but we're oblivious to it as our view is blocked by 500 other passengers, which we discover is quite normal; the waterbus operators don't use ramps to load customers, but jemmies.



Eventually we're deposited near St Mark's Square, where two thirds of the population of Italy has also gathered, supplemented by 3 cruise liners brimful of other races. However, the area is largely free of the plethora of tourist tack shops which outnumber the bridges in Venice by a significant factor. They all sell the same produce, which is basically

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bobbing model gondolas, paperweights and ball masques. The common factor is that it is all overpriced and tawdry.

Elbowing our way through the throngs, we end up somewhere near the Rialto Bridge and feeling in need of beer, when we experience a light on the road to Damascus (no, I know it isn't in Venice) in the form of what is clearly a pub sign down one of the narrow alleys, the Calle Stagneri in this case, which constitute most of that bit of Venice

which doesn't contain water. This turns out to give us one of the highlights of the trip, namely an English style pub called the Devil's Forest, and it is delightful. A reasonable range of beers is available at not unreasonable prices, and the pub is clearly favoured by the locals. A number of bottled beers, including the ubiquitous Ceres, are available, but our



attention is drawn to a draught lager, Slalom, which weighs in at a mighty 9%, and it is delicious! I have since tried to discover the provenance of this beer, and I believe it started its life being brewed by Caledonian in Scotland, and is now brewed by Alken-Maes (part of the Heineken Group) in Belgium. Notwithstanding, it's an easy-drinking beer which packs a real thump of alcohol in the taste, and we have little trouble downing a few.

We stagger off over the Rialto, admiring the wares in the tacky shops lining the bridge, and happen upon a square where we intend to enjoy a pizza and a Ceres. A small, Chinese-run café/bar affords both, as well as the entertaining spectacle of a Chinese Basil Fawlty in the form of a chef who keeps darting out of his tiny kitchen, slams the dishes he's just cooked on a table, and retires shrieking and gibbering back to his kitchen. Before he comes round with a collecting box for this bizarre performance, we eat our Pizza and leave, to spend the next two hours wandering the delightful alleys and bridges of back-street Venice in an attempt to find our way back to the Grand Canal to take a waterbus. Town Planners clearly had little influence on the growth of Venice, which accounts for its beauty and lack of a coherent street layout. When, by means of the good old smartphone satnav, we eventually arrive at the waterbus stage, we conclude that the route map is possibly based on the street plan as it's just as unfathomable. However, we're now compelled to come to terms with it, as we need to get back to the station. We study the map in some detail, abandon the attempt, and board a waterbus whose prow is pointing in the general direction of the station. In due course we arrive there, board a train, and renew our acquaintance with the Little Chines Bar by the Hotel (let's call it LiChiBaHo – we never do find out its name) and have yet more Ceres. We return to the hotel and sleep well.

Next day is a re-run of the previous day (one part of Venice is very like another, making navigation a real problem), save for the fact that, having consulted the Internet on my trusty smartphone and found a more sensible map of the waterbus routes, we are now ready to use the facility with wisdom. We hope that, being a Monday, the City and the waterbuses will be less crowded. To a certain extent this is true, though the difference between sharing a location with 10,000 other people and only 9,500 is not easy to perceive. As in the day before, we wander down many alleys, by the side of numerous canals, and cross at least 200 bridges, all of which help to generate the sort of thirst

which can only be satisfied by good beer. Our first attempt, at the only bar on the little islet of Saint Giorgio, is not a success. The most interesting beer on offer is a German lager, Warsteiner, which proves to be almost as interesting as Peroni, only considerably more overpriced. However, we console ourselves with the knowledge that, according to the Internet, some poor sod paid 100 Euros for 4 coffees in St Mark's Square in 2013. Viva la Venezia! Still, the church of Saint Giorgio Maggiore is breathtaking, unlike the hideous modern sculpture outside it.

On return to the south bank of the Grand Canal, our attempts to break into a bar are thwarted by the fact that most of the transient population of Venice has already done so. Eventually, we cross a bridge to the north bank, and, after a long period of panic, part of which was spent in searching for the renowned Harry's Bar, only to find that it serves no beer, only very, very expensive cocktails, we find a pavement café which serves us the ubiquitous pizza (has anyone ever found a pizza that doesn't taste like cheese on toast?) and Moretti La Rossa, which is acceptable.

By this time, we have spent a day and a half wandering the streets of Venice, and it really is time for some serious drinking. Don't get me wrong. Venice is delightful, charismatic, and, if you can tolerate the crowds, the gift shops and the breathtaking prices, should be at the top of everyone's Places to Visit. However, if you want the Beer Experience, you have to look for it, and look for it we do, in the form of a reunion with the Devil's Forest. However, finding it is more of a problem. We can see it on the satnav, but getting to it when you're in a catacomb of identical streets with minimal signage, is not easy. Of course, true to the spirit of Scott, Drake and other intrepid English explorers, we are successful, though it must be confessed that the satnav gave us an indispensable advantage over those other clever dicks.

Several pints of Slalom in the Devil's Forest leave us very, very mellow, to the point of making brief contented grunts. This encourages Banbury Paul, who works in computer cabling and won't keep quiet about it, to have a long and earnest conversation with a Dutch guy on the adjacent table, who shares a similar profession. Needless to say, the rest of us are less than riveted by this subject, but the situation is relieved by the female half of the Dutch contingent explaining the whereabouts of a good beer bar some streets

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away to the north. We take our leave of the Netherlanders, explaining to the Dutchman that he is the second most boring person in the world next to Paul (and for similar reasons), and partner concurs. Remarkably, we find our way to the bar she's described. How on earth we do so after 3 or more (it really is hard to keep count) pints of Slalom I can only put down to Divine



Guidance (not the satnav on this occasion, though it sources information from a similar area), but find it we do, and it doesn't disappoint. However, we are so mellow at this point that we would applaud a glass of canal water, though we would draw the line at Doom Bar. From an astonishing range of international craft beers, I have two glasses of an excellent dark continental brew whose name I shall never be able to recall. Subsequent research has shown this bar to be Il Santo Bevitore; it carries Trip Advisor's Certificate of Excellence, and it is one of Venice's best kept secrets. Until now, of course.

Continuing our journey within a fog of Divine Mellowness, we astonishingly happen upon the railway station in a nearby street, and even manage to locate the correct train (which isn't actually that difficult, as they all go to Mestre), which takes us smoothly back to the LiChiBaHo, a pasta meal and a few more glasses of Ceres. Unsurprisingly, we are nearly asleep by the time the hotel lift reaches our floor, but not before a certain bemusement when we notice the lift is manufactured by a firm called Schindlers (Schindler's Lift – get it? Those crazy Italians).

Venice is a fascinating place and if you haven't been there, do so as soon as possible. Did it give us a beer experience to die for, or a dearth? Well, neither really, though I'm more inclined to the former. There is good beer in Venice if you take the trouble to find it, and I personally can't wait to do so again.

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St Dominic's Priory, Carisbrooke

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During her lifetime she had financed its building and was prominent in the construction of several Roman Catholic places of worship on the Island. Although not a catholic by birth, she became a major supporter on her conversion and both St. Mary's Church at Ryde and its priory benefitted from her patronage.

Until 1989 the Carisbrooke Priory was home to nuns who specialised in needlework but also set up a printing press to produce greetings cards. After the nuns left, it was been taken over by The Carisbrooke Priory Trust, a charitable institution which offers Christian Healing and respite. Its aim is to "Welcome everyone and especially those looking for peace of mind. Some may be searching for meaning and direction in their lives, while others are as much interested in helping as being helped".

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- 1/ Which cartoon character had a girlfriend called "Olive Oyl"?
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- 3/ From which film does the song "White Christmas" come from?
- 4/ How many Nobel prizes are awarded annually?
- 5/ The "Gillette Cup" was associated with which sport?
- 6/ In which country is Lake Eyre?
- 7/ Who wrote "White Christmas"?
- 8/ Who is Scotland's new First Minister?
- 9/ and 10/ identify these two breweries from the past.

9



10



Answers to the Autumn Quiz

- 1/ Sakari Oramo
- 2/ Bat
- 3/ Central Line
- 4/ Ireland
- 5/ Showboat
- 6/ Kerry
- 7/ 1,000 (a thousand)
- 8/ Pink Floyd
- 9/ Four Seasons
- 10/ Traveller's Joy

John Williams of Marlow wins a meal voucher and Jenny Mew of Chale wins a case of Yates' beer.

Thank you to all the others who took part - better luck next time!

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