

# Dates for your Diary

- 26th March - **Beer & Stories (Cavemen to Craft)** Goddards Kitchen and Bar 6 - 8 pm
- 30th April - **Beer & Stories (Mew Langton IW Brewing Giant)** Goddards K&B 6 - 8 pm
- 2nd - 4th May - **Real Ale at the Railway** - Isle of Wight Steam Railway, Havenstreet
- 9th May - **Riverfest** - Newport Quay
- 9th May - **Wolverton Folk and Blues Fair** Wolverton Manor TBC
- 14th - 17th May - **Real Ale Festival** - Sportsman's Rest, Porchfield (lots of different beers)
- 14th - 17th May - **North East Ale Trail** (see page 20)
- 16th - 17th May - **Rydabus** - Isle of Wight Bus Museum, Ryde
- 16th - 17th May - **Summer Cider & Sausages** - Isle of Wight Steam Railway, Havenstreet
- 18th - 21st June - **Isle of Wight Festival**, Seaclose
- 17th - 26th July - **Ventnor Fringe** - tickets now available - see <https://vfringe.co.uk/>

Although we make every effort to make sure these dates and events are correct, there may be last minute changes and cancellations so please check first.

Please let me know if you would like to publicise an event in the magazine and/or the website. Just send an email to: [editor@wightwash.org.uk](mailto:editor@wightwash.org.uk) It's FREE!!

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# Wightwash

Volume 2, Number 104

## Magazine of the Isle of Wight branch of CAMRA

# Spring Issue 2026



In this FREE issue...

New Faces

Mollie Downer  
Witch?

WINNERS!

VIEW A POINT OF

POMPEY PUBS

North East  
Ale Trail

Prize Quiz

Brewery News

and much, much more...

 **CAMRA**

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



Wightwash  
website

## Do good pubs and beer matter to you?

In CAMRA, there's something for everyone—whether you're campaigning for the future of pubs or simply enjoy meeting friends in a proper local with character.

Joining CAMRA means standing up for real ale, real choice, and real community. You'll support independent brewers, protect heritage pubs, and help ensure future generations enjoy traditional pubs and well-kept ale.

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## Win a £20 Meal Voucher for the Wight Mouse Inn or a case of Yates' Ales

Just answer these easy questions. The first two correct answers out of the hat on 15th May win the prizes.

Send answers to - The Editor, Wightwash, Oakdene, Rookley, Ventnor, PO38 3NH or email - [editor@wightwash.org.uk](mailto:editor@wightwash.org.uk)

- 1/ What is the fastest bird in the UK?
- 2/ Which country won the most medals in this year's Winter Olympics?
- 3/ Which fruit is traditionally used to flavour Belgian Kriek beer?
- 4/ Which musical features the song "Tomorrow"?
- 5/ In which year did the Channel Tunnel open?
- 6/ Which element has the chemical symbol Au?
- 7/ What is the hardest natural substance on Earth?
- 8/ Who became the first elected female Speaker of the House of Commons in 1992?
- 9/ and 10/ Identify these artists.



### Answers to the Winter Quiz

- 1/ Keeping up Appearances
- 2/ Geoff Hurst
- 3/ Alistair Darling
- 4/ My Fair Lady
- 5/ April
- 6/ 32
- 7/ Barack Obama
- 8/ Bass
- 9/ Porsche
- 10/ Jaguar

Mr S. Drew wins a meal voucher and Gill Lacey wins a case of Yates' beer.

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

**The WIGHT MOUSE INN**

Wight Mouse Inn  
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The Wight Mouse Inn is a friendly, fun, family run pub in Chale on the south coast of the island with amazing views across to the Needles and Tennyson Down. We are well known for value for money, honest pub food and can cater for party's large and small; choose any occasion from popping in for a quick bite to family celebrations. We are open for breakfast (open to non-residents) then full menu from midday and always have a daily specials board to complement our extensive menu.

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Cask Size: 4.5G 9G ABV: 4.5%



Cask Size: 4.5G 9G ABV: 3.4%



Cask Size: 4.5G 9G ABV: 4.1%



Cask Size: 9G ABV: 3.4%



Cask Size: 9G ABV: 4.1%



Cask Size: 9G ABV: 4.0%



Cask Size: 9G ABV: 3.9%



Cask Size: 4.5G 9G ABV: 3.8%



Cask Size: 9G ABV: 3.9%



Cask Size: 9G ABV: 4.3%



Cask Size: 9G ABV: 4.0%

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## Who's Who

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Please note the deadline for the Summer Issue will be 15th May 2026



To the best of our knowledge, these pubs either offer discount to card holding CAMRA members or accept CAMRA vouchers

Any more information is very welcome. [editor@wightwash.org.uk](mailto:editor@wightwash.org.uk)

<b>The Vine</b>	St. Helens	<b>The Folly Inn</b>	Whippingham
<b>The Duke of York</b>	Cowes	<b>The Volunteer</b>	Ventnor
<b>The Star Coffee &amp; Ale House</b>	Ryde	<b>The Crab</b>	Shanklin
<b>The High Park Tavern</b>	Ryde	<b>Merrie Gardens</b>	Lake
<b>S. Fowler &amp; Co.</b>	Ryde	<b>The Anchor</b>	Cowes
<b>Man in the Moon</b>	Newport	<b>The Fountain</b>	Cowes
<b>Hare and Hounds</b>	Arreton	<b>Harry's Bar</b>	Ryde
<b>Hotel Ryde Castle</b>	Ryde	<b>The Solent Inn</b>	Ryde

REAL ALE FINDER  
OR TAP NEAR YOU

live beer list!

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CAMRA Isle of Wight Pub of the Year 2025

CAMRA Isle of Wight Pub of the Year 2025

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GOOD BEER GUIDE 2025 WE'RE IN IT

THE ALE HOUSE

Can you spot the random beer?

The Ale House, High Street Cowes. Find us on Facebook or scan the QR code for up to date beer list

For CAMRA members, this trend underlines the difference between real ale, brewed for flavour, tradition and integrity — and mass-produced beers engineered to fit tax bands. Independent brewers can't compete by weakening their beer, nor should they.

As global brands chase tax savings, it's drinkers who risk losing out on taste, choice and quality.

Perhaps the best response is the simplest: support your local pubs, support your local breweries, and raise a glass of proper real ale — **brewed for flavour, not for the Treasury.**



Based on an article which originally appeared in *Private Eye*

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**Fancy a pint of expensive and watery beer? Alcohol duty rose by 3.66% this month.**

The government reckons the tax rise adds “only 2p to a pint”— a lovely idea, like unicorns or a reliable floating bridge. By the time it reaches the bar, it’s more like 20p — and that’s before the brewery has had its share.



The global brewing giants have reacted in a way that neatly protects their profits: they’ve reduced the strength of their beers. Officially, this is about “balanced lifestyles” and “public health”. Unofficially, it’s about tax. A new lower duty band for beers below 3.5% ABV has created a powerful incentive to water down well-known brands.

CAMRA along with the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) warned this would happen. Small breweries, they argued, can’t simply dilute their recipes without destroying the flavour and character that define real ale. Big brewers, however, can quietly tweak their mass-market products and pocket the savings.

Several major lagers have already been trimmed:

- Carling: 4.0% → 3.6%
- Grolsch: 4.0% → 3.4%
- Sol: 4.2% → 3.4%

Each reduction saves brewers 8–12p per pint in duty.

Ales weakened too

Classic keg ales have also been nudged down:

- John Smith’s Smooth: 3.6% → 3.4%
- Worthington’s Creamflow: 3.6% → 3.4%
- Boddingtons Bitter: 3.8% → 3.5%

These are high-volume keg ales — perfect candidates for duty-cutting because most drinkers won’t notice a 0.2% change.

## Pub of the Year

1. **Ale House, Cowes**
2. Castle Inn, Sandown
3. Newport Ale House, Newport
4. Duke of York, Cowes
5. S. Fowler & Co, Ryde
6. Harry’s Bar, Ryde
7. Volunteer, Ventnor
8. Star Coffee & Ale House, Ryde
9. Sportsman’s Rest, Porchfield
10. Highdown Inn, Totland (*tie*) and King Harry’s Bar, Shanklin (*tie*)



*Reg White and Steph Moorton*

## Beer of the Year

1. **Fuggle Dee-Dum — Goddards**
2. Earl’s R.D.A — Island Brewery
3. Puncheon Porter — Goddards
4. Dark Side of the Wight — Yates’
5. Black IPA — Wight Knuckle
6. Ale of Wight — Goddards (*tie*)
6. Yachtsman’s Ale — Island Brewery (*tie*)
8. Tennyson IPA — Island Brewery
9. Plum Porter — Yates’
10. Gold Otter — Wight Knuckle



Remarking on the Pub of the Year result, John Nicholson, our famous Chairman said:

*“This is wonderful news, and richly deserved. No one has worked harder than Steph and Reg. Their enthusiasm for great beer, coupled with their support for other Island pubs through the regular coach trips they organise, has been truly inspiring. It has been another strong year of voting, and a great reflection of the passion and support our members continue to show for Island pubs and breweries. Many thanks go to our secretary, Mike Hoar who does such a good job of running the competition.”*

**Not a member and want to vote next time? Go to page two.**

# GODDARDS BREWERY



## GODDARDS Bar & Kitchen

*Now open to all!*

For upcoming events at **Goddards Bar and Kitchen**,  
visit <https://www.facebook.com/goddardsbrewery/>

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01983 611011 - [goddardsbrewery.com](http://goddardsbrewery.com) -  
Part of the Powder Monkey Group

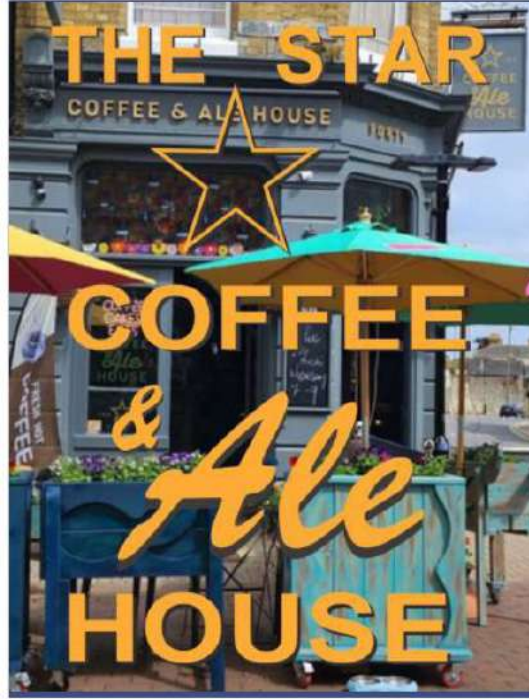


diversity. I've outlined why the issue is complex, but also why it's worth discussing.

Progress is happening, but not as quickly as it could. With a bit more conversation between CAMRA members and their local pubs and breweries, we can help broaden the range of beers available. Supporting and promoting new styles should be part of what we do, alongside celebrating the Island's traditional favourites.



*Paul Sheldon*



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Great British Pub Awards 2025  
Finalist

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**First of all, thank you for voting for Rob Madigan and me as your joint Vice-Chairmen. We both appreciate your support, and we're committed to helping raise CAMRA's profile across the Island.**

This short article looks at the challenges the Isle of Wight faces around **beer diversity** – in other words, the range and choice of different beer styles available. It's not about beer quality, which is subjective and a topic all of its own, but about the breadth of beers offered in pubs and venues across the Island.

One of the things I'd love to see in the Isle of Wight beer scene is **greater diversity** – more styles available, more pubs willing to stock them, and more drinkers discovering something new. CAMRA already recognises 12 beer style categories for the Champion Beer of Britain, and that's before you even get to the huge range of modern craft beers.

I know this won't happen overnight. Broadly, the Island has three groups of beer drinkers, each with different expectations:

1. **Long-standing Island residents** Many have grown up with a strong local brewing tradition and naturally gravitate toward familiar, traditional styles. Newer or less traditional beers can take time to win them over.
2. **Tourists** Visitors often look for well-known Island favourites, alongside a few choices they recognise from home. They enjoy variety, but usually within a comfortable range.
3. **Residents who've moved here** This group often arrives with a taste for a wider spectrum of beers – from DIPAs to sours – and hope to find the same breadth on the Island. Their expectations can be higher, but they may struggle to find that variety, as many pubs are now food-focused and traditional pubs with the space and turnover to offer a larger range of beers are harder to come by.

We also have an ageing demographic on the Island, which naturally means many drinkers have well-established tastes. Trying new styles is understandably not always top of their list. Even so, I believe one of Isle of Wight CAMRA's aims should be to gently encourage greater beer

## Goddards Brewery

Goddards were delighted to take both first and third place in this year's Beer of the Year awards. General Manager Bob Simpson was quick to add that he was just as pleased to see all four Island breweries represented among the top spots — a reassuring sign that the Isle of Wight's brewing scene is in very good health.

Thanks to Powder Monkey's recent expansion, Goddards beers are now appearing in many more places across the country, with wholesalers such as Run Ashore in the Bournemouth area and Black Country Ales helping to widen distribution.

Goddards Bar and Kitchen now has a full entertainment programme lined up for the year, including quiz nights, live music and the ever-popular comedy evenings. On the bar there are 13 ales — three cask (Fuggle, GSB and Ale of Wight) — and ten keg beers, all brewed within a ten-mile radius. Look out for **Night Watch**, a 5% Cascadian IPA, a style originating from the Pacific Northwest of the USA.

Goddards are also looking at bringing back beers from the old Brickwoods Brewery portfolio. This links neatly with a new series of monthly talks at the brewery, *Beer and Stories: An Evening of Brewing History*, held on the last Thursday of each month. The first talk, presented by Bob, will be *The History of*

*Brewing: From Caveman to Craft*, tracing the development of brewing from its earliest origins to the modern day. The following month, Jeff Sechiari will present *The Story of Mew Langton*, looking at the Island's former brewing giant.

These talks are free to attend, and the intention is to open the programme up further. Anyone with an interest in beer or brewing who would like to give a talk of their own will be very welcome.

Bob is also embarking on another trip into local brewing history as he attempts to track down the original yeast strain used for



**Ventnor Golden Bitter.** The beer was a firm favourite in its time and won the branch's Beer of the Year award at least four times. If the search is successful, Bob hopes to reunite the original "Dream Team" — himself, Colin Bond and Xavier Baker — to recreate the beer as it was brewed at **Ventnor Brewery** in the early 2000s.



Meanwhile, Albie is now in his final year of the Level 4 Brewers Apprenticeship scheme at Nottingham University and has reached the point in his development where he can take responsibility for brewing operations.

Finally, keep an eye out for Double Maxim, the famous North East brown ale. When the **Vaux Brewery** closed in 1999, the **Maxim Brewery** was founded specifically to save the beer from disappearing. Powder Monkey are now looking to bring Maxim Brewery together with their newly acquired **Castle Eden Brewery**, with the aim of making this well-known ale widely available once again.



Tim Marshall Goddards BLO

· ISLE OF WIGHT ·  
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**MUSEUM**



**RYDABUS**  
16th & 17th May 2026



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Please note: Wightrider will be on 10th & 11th October (not *September* as reported in the Winter Issue).

tended and pricked with pins, were believed to represent those who had angered her.

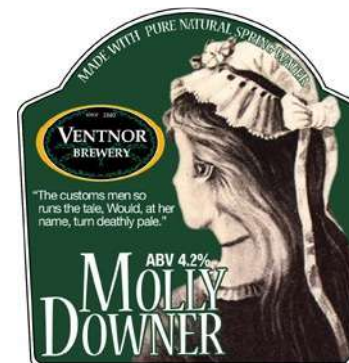
When a young woman named Harriet who had once mocked Mollie was struck by paralysis in 1819 and died on the very day she inherited a £20 legacy, the coincidence hardened local suspicion.

Mollie's death in March 1831 only deepened the mystery. Found lying neatly arranged on the floor

of her locked cottage, she appeared to have composed herself for burial. No hidden hoard was discovered, and shunned even in death, she was buried without rites in Brading churchyard, her grave unmarked.



By the time Mollie Downer lived at Witches Hatch, the true era of witch persecution was long over. Britain's witch hunts began in the mid-1500s, when Henry VIII introduced the first Witchcraft Act in 1542 to tighten state control during religious and political upheaval. Over the next two centuries, thousands were accused — especially in Scotland, where stricter laws and harsher courts made it one of Europe's most active centres of persecution. The last execution took place in 1727, and the Witchcraft Act of 1735 ended the prosecutions by treating magical claims as fraud rather than a real crime.



**What Can You See?**

*In the early 90's Ventnor Brewery came up with a beer named after Molly. It had a very clever pump clip design.*

*Can you see a pretty young maid or a more elderly, "cosmetically challenged" one?*

## Mollie Downer

### The Witch of Witches Hatch?

At the bottom of Hillway, near Bembridge Farmhouse, stood a lonely cottage long known as *Witches Hatch*. From around 1790 until her death in 1831, it was home to Mollie Downer, a reclusive spinster whose reputation as a witch became one of the Isle of Wight's most persistent village legends. Born in 1762, the illegitimate daughter of a Knighton clergyman, Mollie inherited only a small annual allowance at his death in 1784, barely enough to sustain her.

In her youth she hardly resembled the figure she later became in local folklore. Tall, fair-haired and blue-eyed, she was known in the

1780s and 1790s for her neat dress and lively manner. She enjoyed company too, until a close friend's adulterous affairs so offended her strict sense of virtue that, around 1800, she withdrew almost entirely from society.

From then on, she lived in increasing isolation. Neighbours left food on a broken stool by her door, collecting the coins she placed there in payment. Few ever crossed her threshold, and those who did spoke of cobweb-hung rooms and deep neglect. Yet rumours flourished. Bottles suspended in her chimney were said to contain sinister mixtures. Fourteen dolls, carefully

## Wight Knuckle Brewery

It's that time again. Time to get brewing and start prepping for the upcoming season. Over at **Wight Knuckle**, we've got lots on the horizon and a very busy 2026 to look forward to.

After the successful launch of our new 0.5% mushroom fuelled non-alcoholic pale ale, "**Mycro-Pale**", we've set our sights on another project... A truly 100% Isle of Wight premium ale.

Working in conjunction with Isle of Wight Grain and the UNESCO Isle of Wight Biosphere Reserve, who approached us; Ben, our head brewer, has devised a recipe using Island ingredients to create a truly delicious and unique beer that represents the best the Wight can give.

It's called **33 Parishes** after the collective civil parishes that constitute the Island. All the grain is grown here and supplied courtesy of Peter

Thomas and his team from IoW Grain which provides an amazing base to make a clean, crisp, blonde beer to build upon. The hops are Sovereign and First Gold varieties, all grown at Ventnor Botanical Gardens, that lend a gentle spicy, woody and ever so slightly floral taste alongside a subtle citrus tinge. All of these elements marry together in what the team has produced to create a delicious Biosphere Blonde (as we're calling it) that is light and sparkling with notes of orange peel, clove and banana working through a subtly sweet biscuity base that gracefully lands with a gentle bitterness to finish.

This beer is so Isle of Wight, even the CO<sub>2</sub>, provided by IPG, is recaptured from use here in the first place and then utilised to carbonate the beer!

The artwork is all crafted by local graphic designer extraordinaire, Shaun Cuff who has brought his

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ISLE OF WIGHT

# 33

PARISHES

WHERE PEOPLE, NATURE, PLACE AND GREAT BEER MEET.

**BIOSPHERE BLONDE**  
4.6% Alc. Vol.



From Island farms, malt, hops and recaptured CO<sub>2</sub> working in harmony. Rooted in the Isle of Wight's UNESCO Biosphere, this beer is brewed by Wight Knuckle using malted barley from Isle of Wight Grain and hops from Ventnor Botanic Garden.





.....  
A SHARE OF PROFITS SUPPORTS THE ISLE OF WIGHT UNESCO WORLD BIOSPHERE AND NEW NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY.  
.....

vision, creative flair and market expertise to make our beer look as good on the outside as it tastes on the inside. The bottles actually come with six different labels that all highlight local flora and fauna that are part of the Isle of Wight Biosphere. These were all picked from a list of different unique species, provided by Ian Boyd who represents the Island Biosphere Reserve. He has done so much over the years for the protection and conservation of our local green spaces and all the life contained within them so if you're interested in what the Isle of Wight Biosphere is and how we can help look after it then head over to [iwbiosphere.org](http://iwbiosphere.org) to find out more. We

don't have a bottling plant either, so Bob and the team at Goddards are kindly letting us use theirs to keep things local. Good eggs over there, the lot of them! Long story short; it's a delicious 4.6% Isle of Wight blonde beer and a percentage of the profits go back to helping value, protect and sustain our Island. Did we mention it's delicious? It'll be out and Islandwide by Easter or available from our online store at [wightknucklebrewery.com](http://wightknucklebrewery.com).

Have a great spring and see you at the taps soon!

*Team Wight Knuckle*



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The Fawcett may have been the first pub to feature the "Brickwoods Brilliant Ales" slogan in its tiling — a phrase that became well known across their estate.



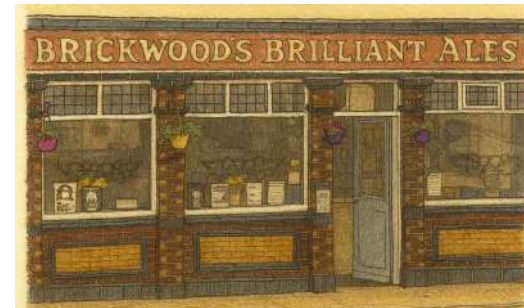
Architect  
A.E.

Cogswell

went on to design many Portsmouth pubs and public buildings, using Bone's ideas as a starting point. His Tudorbethan-style upper floors appeared decades before similar designs in Birmingham.

Another local architect, Charles Vernon Inkpen, built The Seagull for Brickwoods in 1910, continuing the trend of witch's hats, timbered upper floors, and tiled exteriors.

*Paul Hathaway*



THE  
CULVER  
HAVEN  
INN

Located at one of its highest points, The Culver Haven Inn boasts some of the best views on the Isle of Wight

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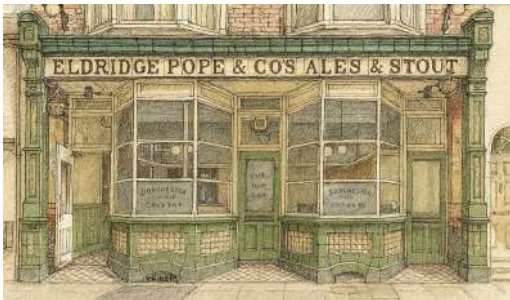
and workers. Portsmouth was even said to have more pubs per square mile than anywhere else in Britain.

Smaller breweries moved quickly. Lush, Peters, and Gibb built or rebuilt three pubs designed by A.E. Cogswell. In 1886, Brickwoods commissioned A.H. Bone to design **The Fawcett** — one of the first pubs to feature “witch’s hat” roofs, half-timbered upper floors, and ceramic tiled exteriors.



These eye-catching designs helped pubs stand out and attract customers.

Out-of-town brewers like Eldridge Pope followed suit. In 1899, they hired architect A.E. Guy to design the **Eldon Arms**, with a striking tiled exterior that advertised their beers.



### Island Ales

Did you catch Island’s Mews recreation **Amber Ale** at Quay Arts? A traditional full-bodied strong ale, weighing in at a robust 5%, packed full of punchy flavours with a creamy mouthfeel and lasting aftertaste. If you did catch it, it would be an ale experience that you would not have forgotten in a hurry. If you missed it, you only have to wait until next year, so don’t worry, just put it in your diary in plenty of time!


Are you ready for the next Havenstreet experience? Island always do something special for those events as well. This next time it will be a Rum Stout. At 5% in should run nice and smoothly, the

rum component generating a nice head of steam. Be careful, though, that it does not blow your head off. I do not have any tasting notes for this new beer, so, anyone with a connoisseur’s palate and a nose to match, please send me your profiled impressions.

Apart from that, Island are rolling along quite nicely, getting ready for another year’s busy seasonal events, featuring their ever popular beers, particularly **Yachtsman’s** and, the great, **Tennyson**.

It seems, over the last few years RDA and **Fuggle Dee-Dum** take it in turns over 1st and 2nd place in the IW CAMRA Beer of the Year votes, with only a few votes between them. This


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year, top prize was the turn of **Fuggle Dee-Dum**, a worthy winner indeed! Pub of the Year is the fantastic new **Ale House, Cowes** (rather than Cowes Ale House). Reg and Steph have really hit the ground running, are very active Branch members and organise beer outings to other pubs across the Island, they also regularly feature bespoke brews, brewed specially for them by Island. The same can be said of that other stalwart, Rod, and the Newport Ale House, who also goes that extra mile for his customers. I do remember the special treat he had, that Island brewed Black IPA, that Chris cheekily named **In Rod We Trust!**

proves that, so, if you are a landlord reading this, or a regular at your local, and you want something different, just ask Ashley at Island. Ashley has the skills to design a special beer to your liking, whether it's to a particular strength, colour or taste or style, or mixture of styles, he can do it for the asking. Smoked, Wheat, Fruit, Traditional, Dark, Light, Heavy – you name it. It was Island that, after all, produced **Pompey Pete's Perfect Pint**, for Pete's birthday, when he and Sam had the good old Travs.

So, don't be shy, speak up, and people will thank you for it!

Drinkers, today, want something different, the popularity of craft beer

*John Nicholson*  
BLO Island Brewery &  
IW Branch Chairman



Telephone: 01983 821 731  
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*In the last issue Paul Hathaway looked at the building of bigger, better pubs in the Birmingham area. In this issue he looks at similar constructions nearer to home.*

By the late 1800s, Portsmouth was home to a thriving brewing scene. Local breweries like Brickwoods, Beehive, Long & Co, Lush & Co, George Peters & Co Ltd, Pike Spicer & Co Ltd, and Portsmouth United Breweries were all competing for customers.

Since 1870, breweries across the country had been buying pubs to secure places to sell their beer. This was partly a response to the growing Temperance movement, which aimed to reduce alcohol consumption, and to licensing justices who wanted fewer — but better — pubs. Portsmouth brewers were ahead of the curve, working with the authorities to replace old pubs with newer, larger, and more attractive ones. With its naval base, dockyard, and shipping links, Portsmouth was a natural home for plenty of pubs.

To stand out in a crowded market, brewers got creative. They built pubs with character — places that appealed to different social groups. At the time, class divisions were strong, so pubs were designed with separate rooms for bosses



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and bottled beers, which are proving popular with both tourists and regulars. At the time of writing, **Yates' Islander** and **Goddards Fuggle Dee-Dum** were on the hand pumps. Non-drinkers are equally well catered for, with excellent coffee supplied by the **Southern Coffee Company**.

A food service is planned to open in March or April featuring primarily locally sourced home cooked food.

For more details please visit the Chine Inn's Facebook page for the latest updates.

It's good to see this well-loved Shanklin pub in such good hands.

*Tim Marshall*



*Martine and Gomez*

**Yates' Brewery**

It has been a hugely successful year for Yates' with cask sales up dramatically and bottles also showing growth. From a CAMRA point of view the huge growth in cask sales is very encouraging.

The supply side of the business, Cork Heads, has also grown and they have just hosted a very successful day at the Newclose County Cricket



Ground showcasing their wide selection of wines and spirits. The increase in sales means they now have about a dozen liveried vehicles, including one for Cork Heads,

making quite a sight when several are on site.

During the quiet winter months Josh has continued to review his recipes tweaking them for flavour



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and also in a drive to use more traditional British ingredients. **Islander** has had its Goldings hops switched to East Kent

Goldings and he is now adding Bramling Cross as well. The recent **Old Man Yatesy** (discussed last time) was built around Crisp's No 19 Maris Otter heritage malt. **Beachcomber** will be back in April for the next six months, covering the summer half

year and replacing **Dark Side of the Wight** – the sale of the range of dark ales has probably doubled over the winter reflecting the popularity of Dark Side and the expanded range of dark beers offered – and they say there's no market for dark beers! We're looking forward to an Imperial Stout, Josh!

Coming soon will be another run of **Don't Look Back in Amber**, this time with the addition of a new American hop, PINK ID158, the first time this has been available in the UK. Josh has also been exploring the old Burts brew brewing books and is soon to reproduce a version

booking a table is recommended, though Martine is keen to stress that half the space will always be kept for walk-ins. Regular performers include Ben Stubbs, Jules Nelson, Sean Goodfield, Sam & Ollie and Making Waves, with upcoming appearances from Sunny & Blue, Lewis Berry, Framp and Honky Tonk Highway. You can catch live music every Friday (7.30–9.30pm) and Sunday (3–5pm).

A programme of ad-hoc events from quiz nights to discos is also on the way, all designed to raise awareness and funds for local charities.

The Chine Inn is proudly dog-friendly, with well-behaved four-legged visitors warmly welcomed. Water stations are dotted throughout the pub, and locals have donated blankets and towels to keep canine guests comfortable. There's even a weekly Doggy Social Morning every Monday from 10am to noon.

As a freehouse, the Chine is able to offers a range of local draught

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**The Chine Inn**, Shanklin has long been one of the Island's most interesting and well-loved pubs. For decades it was a classic **Burt's** house, full of character and stories. After the death of the inimitable Bill Downer, the pub sadly closed its doors. All the more reason why its reopening is such welcome news.



The new face behind the bar is **Martine Capitelli**, the pub's general manager. Martine has been visiting the Island for years, each holiday a little longer than the last, until she finally made the move permanent two years ago. Before settling in Shanklin, she worked as commercial and hospitality manager for

**Watford Football Club**, running the hospitality and commercial team, and on match days, overseeing more than 400 covers in the restaurant.

Martine is clear about her priorities: excellent customer service above all.

"We hope anyone visiting will feel safe, welcome and valued. We are delighted to welcome back former customers and really enjoy listening to them sharing their fond memories of the pub under the ownership of Bill Downer whose memory respectfully lives on".

Building a community hub is important and strong links have already been established with residents and local businesses.

Live music has quickly become a major draw, to the point where

of **VPA**, one the most popular Burts ales. Meanwhile, the family connection at Yates' continues to grow with David's daughter, Lily, joining her brothers in the team. She is helping with the admin and telesales. We wish her every success.

Best wishes from all at Yates' and from me. The longer days and better weather will soon be with us to get out and about enjoying fine cask ales in fine Island pubs

*Jeff Setchiani*  
Yates' Brewery BLO

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We're gearing up for another **celebration of Isle of Wight pubs** — and this time we're taking a fresh, steady approach. As catchy as **Isle of Pubs** was, we realised it's wiser to start small, do it well, and build toward a full Island-wide event in the future.

So this May, we're hoping to expand on last October's successful **Magnificent Seven Independent Pubs** of Ryde with something bigger.

From Thursday 14th May to Sunday 17th May, we'll be launching the brand-new **North East Ale Trail**, covering Wootton, Ryde, East Wight and Sandown. The weekend coincides with both the Bus Museum's **Rydabus Weekend** and the Steam Railway's "**Summer Cider & Sausage**" Festival, making it a fantastic four-day celebration of Isle of Wight pubs.

Every pub in the area is invited to take part.

**Publicans:**

If you'd like your pub to be involved, please get in touch with [editor@wightwash.org.uk](mailto:editor@wightwash.org.uk)

**Mermaid Gin Charts a New Course**

**Mermaid Gin** is entering a new chapter as the **Isle of Wight Distillery** sets its sights on growing the brand in the United States. Despite the international focus, the team is keen to stress that the Island will remain very much at the heart of everything they do. Distillation, bottling and the Visitors Centre will soon be brought together under one roof, keeping production firmly rooted in the place that inspired the gin in the first place.



*Xav Baker with Jim Clerkin*

The distillery continues to build on its B Corp certification, with a strong emphasis on sustainability. Mermaid's bottles remain plastic-free, and the business is actively involved in seagrass restoration projects both locally and overseas.

**Jim Clerkin** steps in as CEO, bringing more than four decades of experience from major global drinks companies.

Co-founders **Xavier Baker** and **Conrad Gauntlett** remain fully involved in the day-to-day running of the business. Xavier becomes Managing Director UK & Europe, while Conrad takes on the role of COO UK & Europe. They continue as significant shareholders and are supported by long-standing Sales Director **Malcolm McClellan** and Marketing Director **Claire Layfield**.

Mermaid's U.S. expansion will be backed by a national distribution agreement with Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits, giving the brand access to key markets right across America. Mermaid is already available in 52 countries.

At the heart of Mermaid's spirits is local rock samphire — known as Mermaid's Kiss — and the range includes three award-winning gins: Mermaid Gin, Mermaid Zest and Mermaid Pink.

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## Wight Whisky Wins World Whiskies Awards Galore

Wight Whisky has added to the Island's growing reputation for quality drinks production after securing **three major honours** at the **World Whiskies Awards 2026**. The distillery's **Signature Malt Blend** impressed judges in several categories, earning **Gold for Taste, Category Winner – Blended Whisky**, and the title of **Best English Blended Whisky**.

Co-founder **Lucy Gregg** said the results reflect the team's focus on careful blending and consistent quality. She described the recognition as "an honour for the whole team", noting that the awards are judged through blind tastings by an international panel.

The World Whiskies Awards form part of the long-established **World Drinks Awards**, which assess spirits from around the globe across more than 35 categories. The competition is known for its broad international judging process, with tastings held in multiple countries to ensure a fair comparison of styles and regions.

Winning the English blended whisky category places Wight Whisky among a growing number of English distillers gaining attention on the world stage. The **Signature Malt Blend** reflects the distillery's approach of combining selected malts with a balance of traditional methods and modern English whisky techniques.

The award-winning blend is available from [wightwhisky.com](https://wightwhisky.com), and the distillery can be found on social media at [@wightwhisky](https://www.instagram.com/wightwhisky). Trade and media enquiries can be directed to [lucy@wightwhisky.com](mailto:lucy@wightwhisky.com).

