

Hereford **HOPVINE**

The Newsletter of the Herefordshire Branch of CAMRA

Issue No 56

Christmas 2014

Free



Winter Pub of the Season:
the Chase Inn, Upper Colwall



Historic vote welcomed by CAMRA

SOUTHERN



Brewery, pubs and steam weekend in Sussex



Herefordshire Pub of the Year



MPs VOTE FOR FAIR DEAL FOR PUBCO TENANTS
NEW HEREFORDSHIRE BREWERY
HEREFORDSHIRE PUBS OF THE YEAR
PUB CAMPAIGN NEWS
WHAT'S IN YOUR BEER OR CIDER?
A WALK ON BROMYARD DOWNS
LATEST BEER, CIDER & PUB NEWS



A pint of **WOOD'S** Shropshire beers since 1980

Authentic real ales backed by 35 years' brewing experience



[www.facebook.com/
WoodBreweryLtd](http://www.facebook.com/WoodBreweryLtd)

www.woodbrewery.co.uk



[#woodsbrewcrew](https://twitter.com/woodsbrewcrew)

Wood Brewery tap – The Plough, Wistanstow SY7 8DG
www.ploughwistanstow.co.uk 01588 673251

PUBCOs LOOK SET TO REAP THEIR OWN HARVEST

PubCo share prices dip heavily as an historic Parliamentary vote moves closer to giving PubCo tenants (and pub-goers) a fairer deal

Nobody likes a bully. Unfortunately, the big pub-owning companies (known as 'PubCos') have been pushing many of their pub tenants around for years now. You only have to glance at the on-line blogs in the trade to see how many unhappy PubCo tenants there are out there. PubCo tenants' businesses are regularly characterised by chronic underinvestment in the pub's fabric; high rents; high wholesale drink prices, and a restricted choice of beers (Oh No, not *Doom Bar* again!). This sees pubs close, as different tenants come, fail and leave. There can't be a high street in the UK that hasn't had a PubCo pub boarded up waiting for a new tenant to arrive (and depart) in the past few years. It's got to the stage where the PubCos should give long service awards for their tenants who manage more than twelve months behind the bar. What a mess!

Grossly indebted, due to a mad pub acquisition spree prior to the 'Credit Crunch' in 2008, the PubCos seem to see it as their corporate duty to milk their tenant publicans of every last penny - all in a desperate effort to dig themselves out of a near-impossible financial hole. It is widely regarded that the current Pubco ownership model is not sustainable in the longer term. With this 'broken' business model, too many pubs struggle to compete (due to high rents and high wholesale drinks prices), and ultimately many close for good. And if this isn't bad enough, the PubCos are then quite content to sell pubs to the likes of Tesco, irrespective of whether or not another operator might be interested in taking them on. Consequently their legacy is a miserable footprint of closed pubs across the cities, towns and villages of our nation. Something *has* to change.

By George, it's a right Royal rip-off

You only need to look at the recent case of the Royal George Inn at Lyonshall to see what PubCo ownership can do to a decent pub. Years of physical neglect and a quick succession of here-today-gone-tomorrow leasehold-



ers had left the pub on its knees by 2012. No-one could make the pub work for owners, *Punch Taverns*. Ultimately *Punch* decided to sell-up. Bravo! the locals thought. However, one should never be surprised to find a (financial) sting in the tail whenever dealing with a PubCo. Not content with letting the place be run into the ground, *Punch Taverns* then submitted plans to build a four-bedroom executive house on part of the pub's garden and car park, before hoping to sell the rump of what was left. They weren't the slightest bothered that this would probably undermine the pub's future trading potential and likely deter buyers. So what if it permanently closes? We've got our cash.

Thankfully, the locals in Lyonshall - with a little help from Herefordshire CAMRA - put pay to this shabby and cynical asset-stripping scheme, which was stopped dead in its tracks when planning consent for the house was refused by Herefordshire Council planners earlier this year. Finally sold to a local individual in the late summer, the Royal George is now being fully refurbished (including a new roof) and will soon be re-opened, fighting fit and back at the heart of its village community again. And from now it is intended to be run as an independent and sustainable business.

PubCo Self-Regulation

- possibly the world's unfunniest joke

By the end of 2012 the PubCos had been in the Government's 'last chance saloon' for longer than most people can remember. Our legislators in Westminster were keen to see

more transparency and fairness from the PubCos on the matter of how they set and reviewed their pub tenants' rents. However, the response from the PubCos had been up to this point to offer only self-regulation. Once this had proven as ineffective as the banks' laughable so-called self-regulation, the Government then elected to act decisively. They announced earlier this year that they would introduce a Statutory Code of Practice covering the matter of PubCo rents. This included an independent adjudicator for resolving rent disputes. The big PubCos weren't very happy, but then in November this year things took a turn for the worse for them - a lot worse.

The Government had previously decided not to include in the Statutory Code a suggested clause allowing pub tenants a *Market Rent Option* (MRO), where a pub tenant could buy their beer from whomever they wished (at likely much lower prices). However, as the Statutory Code was progressing through committee stage in Parliament, an amendment was tabled by Greg Mulholland MP.

Chairman of the *All-party Parliamentary Save the Pub Group*, and an ardent campaigner for pubs and those who run them, he sought to include the MRO for PubCo tenants within the new Statutory Code. But this time, the amended MRO proposition could only be adopted by a tenant when a PubCo lease is altered or expires; a rent review takes place, or a pub changes hands. It would also exclude all operators that own less than 500 pubs, thus protecting the interests for all our small and family brewers.

So, what would happen if this amendment were passed and made into law? The good news is that many PubCo tenants would be able to have their rent reviewed independently and opt for the MRO. Thus they would be free to buy their beer wholesale from a supplier of their choice. This would bring to an end the need to buy all of their beer from their PubCo landlords, who heavily load value on to each barrel sold. As a hypothetical example, this would mean a tenant buying beer at a price closer to £75 a firkin (nine-gallon barrel) rather than the PubCos' bargain basement £120. That's a considerable saving and you would expect some of that saving to be passed on to the consumer – i.e. the average pub-goer.

Jackpot! The fight-back can now begin

CAMRA was delighted when the amendment was unexpectedly passed by a vote of 284 v 269 in a lively debate in the *House of Commons* on the 18th November - a date that may yet become an historic day for our nation's pubs. Many CAMRA members had written to their MPs supporting the proposed amendment, and judging by the support across all political parties, this campaigning action undoubtedly helped. Perhaps now the great British pub can really start to fight back?

Not so delighted were the big PubCos, whose share prices fell by 17% in a day. Equally joyless was the response from the incongruously named *British Beer & Pub Association* (BBPA). Shameless cheerleaders for the greedy PubCos, you could be forgiven for thinking the initial 'P' in their title actually stands for 'PubCo' rather than 'Pub'!



... then look no further than

The Rose &
Crown

Tenbury Wells

01584 811336

www.whites.cc



End of Martian Civilisation for PubCos

None other than BBPA Chief Executive herself, Bridgid Simmonds, led a shrill chorus of panic and outrage, suggesting this change amounted to little short of the end of civilisation as we know it. Ms Simmonds was quoted on radio saying that it would lead to pub closures. Really, Bridget, dear? Where have you been for the past ten years? Living on Mars? Have you not noticed many thousands of pubs have ALREADY closed? And, by the way, it's your PubCo chums who have been responsible for closing many of them down. Conveniently, she omitted to mention research by the independent *Federation of Small Businesses* indicates that this measure would encourage much-needed investment in our pubs.

**Pub landlords in charge
- that makes a refreshing change**

It was time for Herefordshire CAMRA to speak to calmer and more objective heads, so we cornered Peter Amor, Chairman of Wye Valley Brewery, who said on the matter:

“This is great news for small breweries and pubs. Pubs will now become a lot more competitive. It will put the initiative back in the hands of the people who really run our pubs – the landlords and landladies. Every publican knows best how his or her pub business works, and this freedom might now provide the incentive for them to finance improvements that so many pubs are desperately crying out for.”

It is now time to wait to see how this Statutory Code is fully implemented into Law. Back in 1989 everyone got over-excited by the Government's now-infamous *Beer Orders*, which in seeking to increase the availability of guest beers ultimately created (as an unintended consequence) the PubCos. That said, early emerging views are that there isn't an easy route out of this for the PubCos, but don't write them off too soon.

There will be a full update in the Spring edition of the *Hopvine*.

MAYFIELDS

BREWERY

AWARD WINNING BEER,
FROM THAT BREWERY IN
LEOMINSTER.

No 8 Croft Business Park, Leominster,
Herefordshire, HR6 0QF

Telephone 01568 611197

www.mayfieldsbrewery.co.uk

Follow us on twitter - @auntiemyrrtle



GOLDEN VALLEY

The brewery is currently concentrating on Dore Pale Ale (DPA) at 3.9%, This is a regular beer in the Bells Inn at Almeley and has appeared in the Tram Inn, Eardisley; Ye Olde Salutation Inn, Weobley; Castlefields and Mortimers Cross Inn plus the Rose & Crown in Tortery Wells. It is now planned to fine tune Knock 'Em Back premium beer ready to hit the pubs in 2015.

HEREFORD

Jim Kenyon reports that Hereford Brewery is "...ticking along nicely and is approaching its 15th birthday in February - we will be doing a special brew for the occasion." Seasonal beers are Christmas Cheer 4.4% ABV and Winters Ale 4.2% ABV. Hereford Cathedral Bitter has been bottled and is selling well locally. In the new year, the brewery will be looking for an additional salesman and brewer to help the current team.

The brewery recently sponsored the military charities concert at Hereford Cathedral and also



the "Battle of Britain" wheelchair rugby tournament at the Point4 (at The Royal National College for the Blind, Hereford). With teams from around the country competing, this was described as a fantastic event. Swindon St George took the crown to be overall winners.

JONES THE BREWER

Damien is now working full-time at the brewery and currently brewing twice a week, whilst Abigail is working on sales. They are keen to broaden their customer base into more of the pubs in the local and surrounding areas and also the bottle range into any appropriate outlets. The latter consists of Wheat Stone Bridge (5.7% ABV Belgium Wheat Beer), Abigail's Party (3.8% Golden Pale Ale) and Malty Python (4.2% Munich Brown Ale) in 500ml bottles. All are all bottle-conditioned, unfiltered and un-

teurised. The IPA that won *Herefordshire Beer of the Festival* at this year's *Beer on the Wye* - Jean Paul Citra (6.6% ABV) will shortly be available in 330ml bottles.

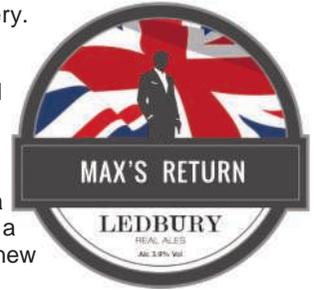
A new beer, The Creature - a 4.0% ABV golden-coloured special bitter - has received its first commercial brewing. Challenger and target hops from the *Hopshires* along with pale and crystal malt give a piney, cedar, citrus flavour with tropical notes and caramel undertones. There's a controlled and balanced bitterness in a biscuity finish.

As part of his new *Epicurious* series, on an irregular basis, Damien intends to produce new beers for a limited trial run. The first is "Rechtifier" (5.7%), a traditional German unfiltered and unfiltered wheat beer (following the *Reinheitsgebot*). It has the characteristic cloudy yellow appearance, a flavoursome citrus grain and banana taste with a subtle lemon tartness into the finish.

The brewery recently held an "open week" featuring beer tastings, a brewery tour and discounted ales. Damien has plans to offer another event specifically for CAMRA members. Also, he is looking to setup a statistically -sound beer tasting panel, with regular tasting sessions, to help maintain the quality and focus of the brewery.

LEDBURY

The brewery is still operating at full capacity. Work in progress at the brewer includes a new cool room, a new dry store and new water supply.



The latest brew is Max's Return, a dark beer at 3.9% ABV, with Phoenix hops. This, and Paiute IPA, are now available in pins.

New pubs now being supplied on an occasional basis are the Crown, Colwall, (Ledbury Gold) the Chase, Upper Colwall (Ledbury Dark) and the Yew Tree, Cliffords Mesne.

MAYFIELDS

The winter seasonal beer is Christmas Minstrel, 4.2% ABV, a dark beer brewed with Minstrel hops, a trial Herefordshire variety.

ODYSSEY

New brewer - see page 8

SAXON CITY

Brewing has resumed, with most of the output being bottled.

SIMPSONS

This year's 'green-hopped' beer once again proved popular being well received at the *Teme Valley Green Hop Festival*. The brewery was fortunate that having produced the two batches that had been scheduled, it was able to secure a further small batch of locally grown 'Fuggles' able to create a third brew.

The demand for bottled beers continues to grow and these are now available in three-bottle gift packs.

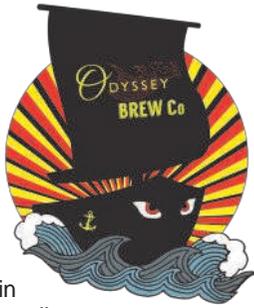
WOBBLY

The original brewer at Wobbly has now left, and a brewer (Tom Barlowe) from the Pixie Spring Brewery is helping out three days a week. As well as the original Wobbly range, new beers are being trialled including Wobbly Williams Ruby, a best bitter at 4.5% ABV; a new biscuity Gold (4.2%), a Black Forest Stout (5.0%), a hop headed Citra (4.2%), and Wicked Wife (5.6%). The brewery is now using a new 30-40 barrel plant, plus a 2.5 barrel test kit. Outlets in Herefordshire include the Volunteer at Marden; Plough and Lads Club in Hereford; and the Harewood End Inn.

WYE VALLEY

A taste of real ale from home bought success for *The Beefy Boys* in the *World Burger Championships* in Las Vegas, with their 'Butty Back' burger (beef brisket smoked with Butty Bach ale together with Butty Bach sauce) claiming top spot in the final round.

The *Beefy Boys* are six amateur cooks from Herefordshire, with a passion for turning quality local produce into BBQ foods. Having won *UK's Best Burger* at *Grillstock* in Bristol in June they qualified for a place at Las Vegas, to compete against fifty of the best burger teams in the world. Wye Valley Brewery helped make this



dream a reality when they came on board to sponsor the team.

Two Wye Valley tied pubs, the Morgan (in Malvern) and the Barrels, have scooped yet more awards for their displays. The Morgan was awarded *Silver Gilt* in their category in the *Heart of England in Bloom*, and was also winner of the *Malvern Traders in Bloom* floral display. Meanwhile, the Barrels has won its third *Gold* in the *Heart of England in Bloom* competition.

The Black Star has opened its doors as the new Wye Valley community pub in Stourport-on-Severn. Tenants Maria and Andy Gooding will be familiar to Ross-on-Wye drinkers, as they also run the King Charles II – and, until recently, the Eagle. Unusually for a Wye Valley pub, food seems to be a significant part of the operation at the Black Star.

As well as its regular Mon-Fri 9-5 opening the brewery shop at Stoke Lacy opens until 7pm on Wed 17th December and 10-4 on Saturdays 6th, 13th and 20th.

HOBSONS

Hobsons have added to their trophy cabinet, with awards for bottled beers in Sweden at the *Stockholm Beer and Whisky Festival*. Manor Ale has won a Gold award, and Postman's Knock Silver in the festival competition.

LUDLOW

Ludlow Brewery has now sourced Citra hops from the USA which it blends with supplies of local English hops from Little Lambswick Hop Farm in order to brew Ludlow Blonde. This beer was trialled in 2013 and grew in popularity last summer. The Citra hop is a high alpha-acid hop which adds a flowery and citrus aroma to the beer; it will be crafted again in the New Year and rolled out into the Herefordshire market. Demand continues to grow at the brewery and a new conditioning tank has been installed to cope with an increasingly busy production schedule.

MALVERN HILLS

MHB have launched a porter. Porter Squint at 4.8% ABV, derives its unusual name from a viewing slit the porter used to use to vet visitors at Malvern's old Abbey Gate.

THE ODYSSEY BEGINS

A new life for a delightfully situated brewery

Having successfully converted a launderette into Beer in Hand, a craft pub showcasing some of the best beers and ciders from around the UK, Alison and Mitchell Evans have taken on another huge task – their own brewery. Earlier this year they found out that the former Brew On/Willoughby Brewery was for sale after being largely dormant for the last three years. The brewery is located in the heart of the beautiful Brockhampton Estate near Bromyard, owned by the National Trust who were keen to see it remain in the restored Oast House barn. Alison and Mitchell made an offer for the brewery and agreed to rent the barn in July, and so *Odyssey Brew Co* was born.



The idyllic setting of the new brewery

The brewery inside the Oast House barn is split into two, with the entrance leading into the smaller section containing the two fermenters and the cold store (which includes two conditioning tanks). A viewing platform separates this area from the main section which houses the six barrel mash tun, hot liquor tank, kettle, dry store and office. It's hoped in the future that a licence can be obtained for a small bar which will make trips to the brewery very worthwhile!

At around the same time, Kelvin Skyrme left Wobbly Brewery so Mitchell invited him to help with the launch of the new company. Once the brew kit had received an upgrade and thorough clean, it was ready for the first test brew which commenced on 22nd September. Brewing is currently being undertaken by Kelvin and assisted by Mitchell, who is providing the majority of the recipes. The brewery's mission statement is much the same as that of Beer in Hand - to bring exciting craft beer to Herefordshire and the surrounding counties. Odyssey are still working on finalising the beer range but have so far brewed the following:-

Uber Pale (3.5%) - A test brew of Syren that has proved very popular, delicately hopped and ultra pale session beer.

Syren (3.8%) – The final form of Uber Pale, a triple hopped beer but the hops will regularly change. The current batch is hopped with Citra, Galaxy and Mosaic so tropical fruit and grapefruit flavours abound and the bitterness is restrained.

New Zealand Smash (5.2%) – The first in the single hop / single malt Smash series features the wonderful Motueka hop resulting in a beer with a surprisingly complex tropical fruit character combined with lemon and lime. An initially sweet beer finishes with enough bitterness to balance.



Inside the brewhouse

American Bitter (4.7%) - A Hoppy American brown ale with orange and citrus notes and a lot of bitterness at the back end. This will be an occasional brew.

Nirvana (5.4%) – This American pale ale musters a citrusy tropical storm which finishes with more citrus pithy bitterness than you can shake a stick at!

Chocolate Milk Stout (5%) – A new recipe from Kelvin and Odyssey's first dark beer which made its debut in Beer in Hand mid November.

Crowd Control (6%) - A flagship American IPA utilizing a frankly uneconomical amounts of hops!

Beat the System (4.5%) – A hoppy American Golden Ale utilizing two unusual hops.
Armadillo (4.2%) - The latest beer is a darkish best bitter with an Odyssey twist, designed by Alison.

Ross-on-Wye Cider & Perry Co, are continuing to develop the **Yew Tree Inn** at Peterstow in line with plans revealed when they took over, back in the summer. A new Cider Room has opened at the Yew Tree, providing much easier access for cider and perry sales than at the Broome Farm cellar, which has now closed. There are three real ales on tap - Hobsons Best Bitter and two guests - plus two of their own ciders. The next step is to add a guest cider and perry from other local craft cidemakers. The full range of Ross-on-Wye bottled cider and perry, plus guests, is also available to drink in the bar or to take home. Diners can expect soup, ploughmans platters and other light meals and desserts to be available at lunch-time, with a "Classic Pub Grub Menu" including daily specials between 6.30pm and 8:30pm.

www.yewtreepeterstow.co.uk

Meanwhile, in nearby Sellack, the reopening of the **Loughpool** seems likely to be delayed until after Christmas.

In November a CAMRA-arranged walk set out from the Seven Stars in Clehonger, having arrived on the new Hay Ho! bus. See page 36.

North of Hereford, the **Rosie** in Munstone, after a period of irregular opening hours, is currently closed.

The **Imperial** in Hereford has longer serving hours following a major refurbishment. The pub now open at 8am Monday to Saturday (an hour earlier) to serve breakfast, and at 11am on Sunday. Closing on Friday and Saturday evenings will be at 1am instead of midnight. Food is available for an extra two hours each day with serving times between 8am and 10pm. The extended opening hours have created ten new jobs.

The Widemarsh Street pub was closed for 18 days to allow the extensive makeover, which was reported to have cost owners, *Stonegate Pub Company*, in excess of £260,000. The bar sports thirteen hand-pulls through which seven regional and local ales are currently served.

NEW BEGINNINGS AT THE NEW INN

The last few years have seen the steady decline of one of Herefordshire's great country pubs, whilst in the ownership of brewers, Marstons. After yet another manager had given up and disappeared, the New Inn at St Owen's Cross was put on the market, and its new freehold owner, Mehdi Zafar of White Moghul Ltd, aims to restore this early 18th Century pub to its former glory.

The New Inn opened as soon as the purchase was completed, on 19th September, with the food service launched immediately, and Wye Valley Bitter and Butty Bach as the core beers.

Although known for his Indian restaurants in London, Mehdi is not turning the New Inn into an Indian restaurant, but rather an English country pub for drinkers and diners, which offers Indian dishes as a bonus. Specifically, the speciality cuisine will be authentic North Indian, with Hungarian dishes to be added in the new year.

Booking is advised for the Sunday Roast Lunches, which are proving to be very popular, and a Christmas menu is on offer in until 23rd December.

Already two film shows have been held, with nostalgic documentaries from the 60s and 70s receiv-



ing good reviews. These are planned to feature monthly, with the next on Thursday 18th December, to include comedy.

The Ross Harriers Fox Hunt have returned to hold their annual hunt at The New Inn. Saturday 1st November saw ten riders gather with their horses in the car park with 39 hounds to start the chase and some thirty followers gathered at the pub later to welcome them back.

A Farm shop is planned to open in spring of 2015, selling best quality local Herefordshire meats, bread, eggs and vegetables from local farms. Further plans include village fetes, local pheasant shoots, classic/heritage car days and art gallery exhibitions to serve the local community.

The **Barrels** in Hereford is the venue for the Leominster Morris' traditional Boxing Day dance-out at which this year's Mummers' Play will be premièred. The fun starts at 12noon, and in the true spirit of the performance, a great deal of ham and ad-lib can be expected.

For those seeking to get into the Christmas spirit early, there will be opportunity on Sunday 21st December, to join in the annual 'Carols @ the Pub', which takes place at the **Golden Lion** in Grandstand Road organised by Holmer Men's Group,

St Michael's Hospice was the beneficiary of a 'Charity Race Night' at the **Swan** on Hereford's Aylestone Hill. The pub has recently undergone a facelift and regulars supported the event by donating prizes, buying horses and punting on races. Several winners returned their prizes to be raffled off, bringing the final total to £525.00.

A Race Night with a difference was held at the **Bridge Inn** at Kentchurch, when an intimate knowledge of the form book counted for nothing. The going was subject to the vagaries of the dice thrown by race organiser and chief steward Clive Lennard, who also supplied the stable of fretwork fillies. The evening raised £230 which was split between *Help for Heroes* and the Bridge boules team.



The **Dog Inn** in Ewyas Harold is continuing to raise money for the Royal British Legion from visitors to the "village within the pub within the village". Jimmy and Lily Croll started the ritual more than a decade ago by building a small yuletide scene for their daughter, but having created the festive scenario for a wider audience last year, have sought to make it bigger and better this year. The miniature Christmas village took more than 200 hours to build and occupies a large section of in the dining room of the pub.

In the same corner of the county, at the **Carpenters Arms**, Walterstone, the two real ales (*Wadworth's 6X* and *Brecon Gold Beacons*) are

FOLK CLUB AT THE ROEBUCK 8pm and runs for a just over a couple of

Monday night at the Roebuck Inn in Brimfield is generally quiet - the bar is open but offering no food ,and owners Philip and Jane Dawson take the night off. Aware of this, a small group of village regulars proposed that live folk music would attract more people into the pub on these quiet evenings. And so a folk club was formed and meets on the first Monday of each month.

hours with a ten-minute break. Things move along at a brisk pace, with speedy changes of acts.

It is not an 'open mike' evening; performers are there by invitation or have requested to appear. It is **also not a folk "session",** where a bunch of musicians might turn up and play to, or with, one another on an ad-hoc basis, mostly for their own amusement. At the Roebuck, a printed running order is established before the evening and performers are limited to a maximum of three songs per half.

There is variety and mix of performers, with everything from keen unaccompanied amateurs to more experienced musicians and singers; solos, duos, trios, groups

and sometimes even a part of the local choir. Local performers, in particular, are encouraged. The music performed is a fairly liberal interpretation of "folk", straying at times into country and acoustic pop, from 17th Century traditional to completely new songs.



The resident group is the Brimfield based trio, *The A49ers* and the club is run and hosted by trio member and freelance cartoonist Roger Penwill. roger@penwill.com 01584 711854



now dispensed by handpump rather than direct from the cask. One benefit is that customers at the bar can now see at a glance that real ale is available.

The **Lamb Inn** at Stoke Prior is reportedly re-opening on December 19th. It is understood that considerable refurbishment work has been carried out there by the new, private owner.

The **Radnorshire Arms** in Leominster which has been closed for several months has been purchased by a local person. Building modifications need to be carried out before consideration to re-opening can be made.

Just up the road, the **Barons Cross Inn** has been taken over by Joe Carr, who also remains

a partner in the **Royal Oak** in Kington, where Casey Floyd has stepped up to take on the day-to-day running. Both of these pubs are owned by Admiral Taverns.

One of the hottest party bands in the Midlands, **Hot Climate**, will be playing at the **Mortimers Cross Inn** on Saturday 13th December. Though a free event, a collection will be made during the evening towards Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research in remembrance of Alex Naylor.

Extending its involvement in community life, the **Stockton Cross** in Kimbolton has opened a small village shop. In addition to a wide range of basics, the shop stocks local produce including Monkland Cheese, fresh and cooked meats from Guy Tudge of Richards Castle and Andrew Francis of Wooferton, and fresh Central Bakery bread. A rare find is the bottled cider and perry produced by the nearby Coldwell Farm. The shop is open 8:30-2pm Monday - Friday and 8:30am-12 Saturday and Sunday, and outside these hours when the pub is open.

The annual Leysters Marrow & Pumpkin Competition held in the **Duke of York** proved again

Great Beer Naturally

Brewery open to visitors daily
Tel: 01584 873291
www.theludlowbrewingcompany.co.uk

The Tram Inn, Eardisley

Traditional Country Freehouse
 Real Ales - Home Cooked Meals
 Lovely Family Garden

Herefordshire CAMRA 'Pub of the Season- Summer 2012'
 Good Beer Guide 2015

The Tram Inn
 Eardisley
 Hereford
 HR3 6PG

www.thetraminn.co.uk - info@thetraminn.co.uk

a keenly fought affair. Having been disabled earlier in the year, landlady Joy Pember had to settle for second place producing a pumpkin some 16lb short of the 51.4lb vegetable produced by Ed Pitt. Having come a close third in the pumpkin category Nigel Legg produced an eleven-pounder to top the marrow section. Runner-up went to Ed Pitt and third to Joy's daughter Lyn. Once again the junior entrants shamed their seniors in both categories by considerable margins - Tim Pitt producing a whopping 80.6lb to clinch the pumpkin title while Tyn Jones took the honours with a 14.2lb marrow. The auction of produce which followed the adjudications raised £730 in aid of the local church at Middleton on the Hill.

The **Live & Let Live** at Whitbourne reopened just as the *Hopvine* went to press. We understand that this ex-Punch Taverns pub, now in private ownership, has received a low key, but high quality refurbishment which has been well received by the locals. As some licensing details remain to be resolved, and the food operation has not yet started, a full report will be held

over until the Spring *Hopvine*. Beers currently on offer are Wye Valley HPA and Butty Bach.

The Mistletoe Fair in Colwall has a new location this year, thanks to the **Colwall Park Hotel**, which has agreed that the organisers, Colwall Orchard Group, can hold their annual fundraiser outside the front of the hotel. The sale, which takes place on 13th December, will commence at 9.30 am.

David and Lisa Grimes are the new licensees at the **Bell Inn** at Bosbury. David has considerable experience in the licensed trade, previous venues including the Malvern Hills Hotel, the Oak at Staplow and the Prince of Wales at Ledbury. The Bell is currently open from 5pm, Monday to Saturday, and from 12pm on Sunday. There are three beers on draught, Butty Bach from Wye Valley, Otter Amber and Bosbury Bitter, a house beer from Marstons. David is hoping to offer a guest beer on the fourth pump in the new year. Food is available on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings and Sunday lunch. It is planned to open for lunch and evening meals from Wednesday to Sunday in the new year.

Seasonal Greetings

From
Tim, Lorna and all the Staff
at

THE
WHITE
SWAN



Eardisland and

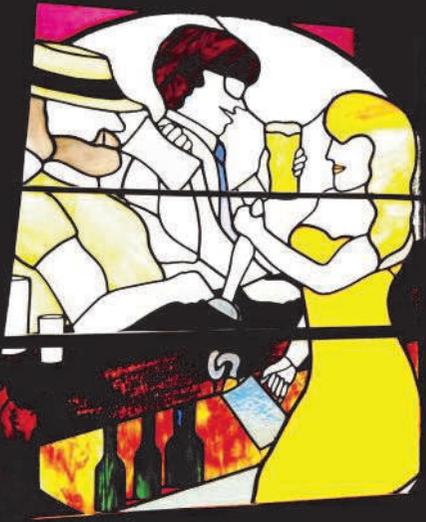
Home to

SIMPSONS

Fine Ales

01544 388 635

THE BARRELS



HEREFORD'S LOCAL
69 ST. OWEN STREET
01432 274968
FULL RANGE OF WYE VALLEY BREWERY BEERS

THE THRILL OF THE CHASE

Hillside pub named local Christmas Pub of the Season

On Thursday 20th November, a group of Herefordshire CAMRA members met up at The Chase in Upper Colwall to present the manageress, Jo Walker, with our Winter Pub of the Season Award, this pub being selected at our last monthly meeting. The presentation was made by Herefordshire branch treasurer, Paul Grenfell, and was well received by Jo - and is now proudly displayed on the shelf behind the bar.



Jo Walker receives the certificate from Herefordshire CAMRA Treasurer, Paul Grenfell, with Charlotte Davies (left)

The Chase is located just off the B4218 on the western side of the Malvern Hills, providing lovely views over to Wales from the terraced garden. The pub serves good meals and snacks and is dog-friendly. It has been a regular entry in the Good Beer Guide for many years now and with generally five real ales on tap with Batham's Best and Wood's Shropshire Lad as regulars and guest beers from around the country.

The Chase was first licensed as a beer house in the 1830s when the beer, a strong, dark malty mild was brewed on site. Gaining Inn status in 1869, it was bought by Worcester brewers, Spreckley Brothers, finally falling to Whitbread through several takeovers. After the latter retreated from the pub industry, the pub was bought by Duncan Ironmonger, who operates St George's Brewery, and the Nag's Head in Malvern. Needless to say there is generally one of the St George's offerings available on tap.

The Chase Inn, Chase Road, Upper Colwall, WR13 6DJ. Telephone (01684) 540276
www.thechaseinnuppercolwall.co.uk Opening Hours 12-3, 5-11; 12-11 Sat; 12-10.30 Sun

Des Clarke



It is with great sadness that we report the untimely death on the 1st December of long-standing CAMRA member, Des Clarke. Des was one of eleven local CAMRA members who attended a meeting at the Barrels in Hereford back in March 1992 to found the Herefordshire Branch. Involved in branch activities from the outset (along with his wife, Alison), he went on to become the formal CAMRA contact with Wye Valley Brewery - where he made a number of friends over the years.

His interest in beer and brewing extended to an interest in beer bottle labels, of which he had an extensive collection. Consequently, he was a member of the *Labolologists Society*, for whom he wrote articles for their periodical and organised postal auctions. Being a maths teacher in Hereford for his day job (up until retirement) it only seemed the right move to become their Treasurer - a post he held from 1995 until his death. He had an encyclopaedic knowledge of the brewing history of Herefordshire in particular, and penned an engaging article on the subject (illustrated with many local historic bottle labels) for the award-winning first CAMRA *Herefordshire Pubs* guide in 2003. In recent years, with Alison, he was heavily involved in the campaign to see their local village pub re-open - the Castle Inn at Little Birch. His quiet enthusiasm for beer, pubs and breweries was a delight to behold amongst those that knew him. Thoughts are very much with Alison, along with other family and his many friends.

SMALL PUB, BIG AMBITION

City micro-pub, *Beer in Hand* voted Herefordshire CAMRA *Pub of the Year*

When CAMRA first learned about plans for the county's first micro-pub we were privately concerned how it might work: outside the city's 'ring road' and in a converted launderette, it didn't sound like an obvious blueprint for great beer success. How wrong we turned out to be! For a start, we hadn't allowed for the effort and business skills of owners Mitchell and Alison Evans.

Hereford had long been calling out for a pub that offered a good range of beers from different small breweries from around the UK. The Beer in Hand has now filled that gap many times over, as is evidenced by its runaway success. The customers have just kept coming across the threshold ever since it first opened back in August 2012. Not stopping there, the operation has gone on to provide the largest selection of real ciders and perries in the county - typically as many as a dozen being available. And just to top this lot off is an eclectic selection of bottled beers and ciders.

In 2013 the pub was awarded the accolade of Herefordshire CAMRA *Cider Pub of the Year*. Now, only twelve months later, it has won the BIG prize - and thoroughly deserved it is too.

The Beer in Hand isn't your run-of-the-mill pub, thus the moniker 'micro' being applied to the Eign Street premises. Besides the enormous range of real ales (plus ciders and perries), the most notable feature is the large enclosed racking unit. Holding up to sixteen barrels behind individually-sealed glass fronts, it is a neat way of efficiently chilling the beers without the need for a traditional pub cellar. This brings the added bonus that the customer can see their beer served straight from the barrel every time.

Otherwise, the Beer in Hand might be best described as basic-cum-minimalist modernist in decor, with comfortable furnishings towards the front and a seated alcove area off to one side towards the rear. Whilst it's nothing like a spit and sawdust boozery, it still seems to engender a good locals' pub atmosphere. Conversation will always hold sway in a place like this.

The owners appear to have the Midas touch for the pub trade. Whatever they do at the Beer in Hand seems to land the right way up every time: such as the introduction of food nights and Sunday lunches, live music and quizzes - all admirably supported by an ever-building number of loyal locals. We've even forgiven them for running a 'Beer on the Eign' festival concurrent with our *Beer on the Wye* festival back in July! Obviously, that was a success too.

Simon Crowther, Herefordshire CAMRA Chairman, explains:

"The Beer in Hand is a very welcome addition to the city's pub scene. It gives Hereford's beer drinkers a chance to try a number of different beers from various UK small breweries, an opportunity they otherwise only get at a beer festival. For visitors to the city, it represents a stellar showcase for local Herefordshire ciders and perries.

"Getting the Beer in Hand established was a big commitment and a massive leap of faith - one that has very much paid off for the owners. Well done and thanks go to Mitchell and Alison for taking the risk and then making it work so well."

A presentation of the *Pub of the Year* certificate will take place at the Beer in Hand in February.



Beer in Hand, Eignbrook House, 136 Eign Street, Hereford, HR4 0AP.

12 (4 Tue & Wed)-11; 11-10.30 Sun; fully accessible; 10p/pint discount for CAMRA members

website: www.beerinhand.co.uk; twitter: @bihhereford



ANOTHER ACCOLADE FOR BORDER PUB

Bridge Inn at Kentchurch is voted Herefordshire CAMRA's Country Pub of the Year



The Bridge Inn Kentchurch is a pub not so much in the centre of the village as in the 'Heart of the Community'. Taking the B4347 eastwards from Pontrilas, one wonders just how the tiny parish of Kentchurch village with so few visible signs of habitation can sustain a pub. Yet since taking over the pub, Nick Phillips and his wife Andi have taken it from strength to strength.

Once part of a mill complex dating back some 400 years, the pub still retains much of its historic character, while the garden, set beside the River Monnow, offers stunning views towards the Black Mountains.

Nick and Andi are committed to offering excellent beers, with three real ales available in winter, increasing to four - plus a real cider - in the summer.

The à-la-carte menu includes traditional "pub grub", plus a range of specials which vary from night to night - all freshly prepared on the premises. Sunday lunches and regular themed nights are very popular and booking is recommended. Andi's homemade puddings are always popular - particularly the cheesecakes!

The pub is surrounded by delightful countryside offering some fine walking, providing a handy refreshment stop along the Herefordshire Trail or the Bagwyllydiart and Pontrilas walk described in the 'Garway Bus' leaflet (<http://news.herefordshire.gov.uk> - follow links *leisure*, then *walking*).

Bridge Inn Kentchurch Hereford HR2 0BY. Tel (01981) 240408

OPENING HOURS Mondays 6pm to 10pm Tuesday Closed Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 12pm to 2.30pm and 5.30pm to 11pm Saturday and Sunday 12pm to 11pm

The Bridge at Kentchurch was runner-up in the *Herefordshire Pub of the Year* competition. The three other finalists were the Green Dragon, Bishops Frome, the Barrels, Hereford, and the Cross Keys, Withington



New beginnings at

The New Inn

St Owen's Cross HR2 8LQ

NEW FREEHOLD OWNERS

The White Mughal Limited

A countryside FREE HOUSE with a simple philosophy to serve great food and drinks with a warm friendly service

(Our varied menu is changed on a regular basis)

For a reservation call **01989 730821**
or just drop by.

- Local Ales such as Butty Bach
- A classic wine list
- Sunday roast lunches
- Authentic Indian curries
- Christmas dinner menu in December



ORCHARD RECOVERY

This year's Indian summer has brought a smile to the county's cider makers. Concerns that the wet Spring would make for a smaller than usual harvest, proved unfounded. And, thanks to the warm summer and an even warmer early autumn many of the county's growers have reported that the sugar content is up and the quality of the apples is superb. It has also been a good year for the perry pear, which was less affected by the exceptional rainfall.

Sadly drinkers will not be able to put this to the test until next May or June, when the fruit juice has fermented and matured.

NEW CIDER MAKER HITS THE MARK

One of Herefordshire's newest cider makers is already collecting awards. Ragged Stone is based on the Bromesberrow Estate, which lies at the southern end of the Malvern Hills and gets its name from the hill which overlooks the estate. The soil is perfect for pears and apples, and the spring water on the estate filters through the pre-Cambrian rock strata that forms the Malvern Hills.

The estate has ten small perry and cider orchards, which had fallen into neglect after the Second World War, but have now been brought back into production - and, like everything on the estate, are managed according to organic principles.

Earlier this year the producer took First Prize in the Novice Cider Class and Third in the Novice Perry Class at the *Big Apple Trials*, while at the *Royal Three Counties Show*, Ragged Stone cider won Second Prize in Class 3.

Yew Tree Inn

Peterstow

near Ross-on-Wye

01989 562815

now managed by

Ross-on-Wye Cider & Perry Co

of Broome Farm, Peterstow



Open every day from 12 noon

Village Pub & Cider Shop

Range of interesting Ciders, Perries & Real Ales

Good Home Cooked Food

Large Garden

Touring caravans welcome

good food good cider good company

CIDER PUB OF THE YEAR ANNOUNCED

Country charm shines through as Castle Inn wins CAMRA's National Cider Pub of the Year

The Castle Inn, West Lulworth, has been named as CAMRA's *Cider Pub of the Year 2014*. The 16th-Century thatched free house pub and hotel, sits on Dorset's Jurassic Coast-line, only a short walk from Lulworth Cove and the natural limestone archway known as Durdle Door.

The pub has a great reputation for offering the largest selections of traditional real ciders in Dorset - with thirteen or more on draught, supported by a bottle range which makes 50 to 60 real ciders and perries available at any time.

The Castle has been run by the Halliday family for over thirty years and current landlord Alex Halliday is the third generation to do so. Alex is fiercely passionate about West Country produce.

The pub has been in the *Good Beer Guide* since 2011, during which time it has been awarded the East Dorset CAMRA's "Rural Pub of the Year" three times. It also offers a large range of six local real ales (some served direct from the cask), plus an occasional guest. For walkers of the South West Coastal Path, the pub offers an extensive range of good value



meals, fifteen-bedroom accommodation and has a dog-friendly policy.

The Castle Inn, Main Road, West Lulworth, Dorset, BH20 5RN. (01929) 400311. Closed Mon-Wed; 12-10 Thu-Sat; 12-4 Sun
www.thecastleinn-lulworthcove.co.uk

The final quartet were adjudged to be the cream of the 16 regional winners whittled down from around 200 which had been originally been put forward by CAMRA branches.

The Three Other Finalists

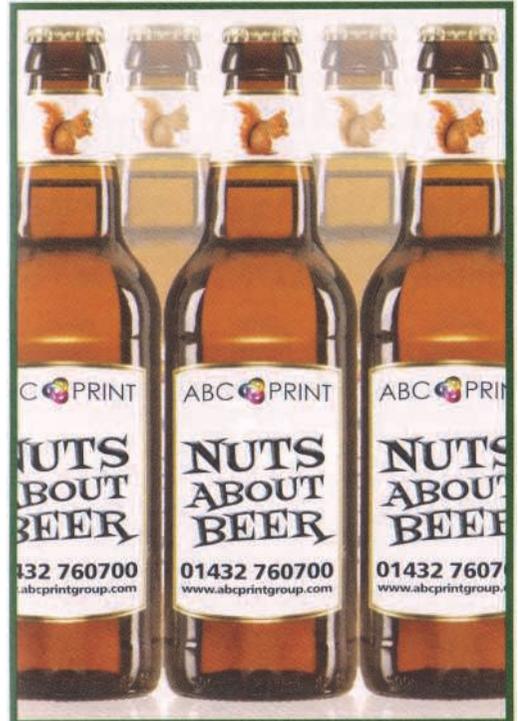
The Railway Arms, Downham Market: a friendly bar located on the station platform and the current national title holder.

@railway-arms.co.uk

The Hop and Vine, Hull: Hull's smallest and friendliest pub was joint national winner in 2010 and has sold 1092 different cask ales over the past eight years, complemented by a selection of bottled Belgian beers, farmhouse cider and perry and draught Czech beers.

www.hopandvinehull.co.uk

The Rising Sun, Berkhamsted: A Victorian canal-side pub which holds four cider festivals a year. The range of ciders shares the bar with five ales including one badged for them by Tring. www.theriserberko.net



THIS SEASON'S EVENTS

As Christmas celebrations fade and the New Year dawns, its time to don scarves and wellies and reconnect with our Pagan past.

This old midwinter tradition of wassailing harks back to the dark ages, marrying pagan tree worship with Roman gods such as Pomona - Goddess of the Orchard, with a bit of good old fashioned horticulture, and of course a drop or two of cider.

The 'Wassail' combines clever words, weird gifts - including toast and cider - and theatre - such as banging saucepans and firing gunshot into the branches of the chose. By tradition Wassailing takes place on or around twelfth night, January 6th - or Jan 17th, which was twelfth night in the old Julian Calendar.

There are three annual Wassails performed by our local Morris sides:-

Saturday 3rd January: Silurian Morris meet at the Weston's Cider, Much Marcle around 6.30. Dancing at 7pm is followed by an atmospheric torchlight procession to wassail a nearby orchards before returning for music and Mummers.

Tuesday, 6th January (Twelfth Night): Leominster Morris will meet at the Nags Head in Canon Pyon at 7pm, processing by torchlight to the neighbouring orchard around 7.30pm returning to the Nags Head for dancing and the second of the seasons performances of the Mummung play.

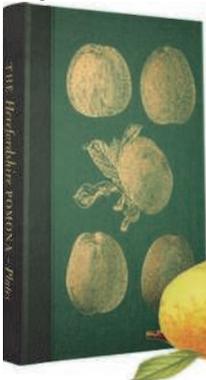
Saturday 17th January (Old Twelfth Night): Though not confirmed, Foxwhelp Morris; can be expected to wassail an orchard in Preston on Wye before returning to the Yew Tree for music and dancing.

Saturday 17th January: Colwall Orchard Group will also be Wassailing in the Community Orchard www.colwallorchardgroup.org

The popularity of these events has grown tremendously over the past few years and attendance can sometimes be restricted for safety reasons, and remember - events may be cancelled or rearranged due to adverse weather.

The Herefordshire Pomona

As the popularity of cider continues to grow and the orcharding of cider and perry trees enjoys its renaissance the reprint of the *Herefordshire Pomona* has been warmly welcomed. A new facsimile edition of the original works has been published by *The Folio Society*.



A unique Victorian encyclopaedia of apples and pears, the *Herefordshire Pomona* was originally commissioned in 1874, by *The Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club*, a group of Herefordshire botanists, who had noted the sad decline of Herefordshire's orchards. It was painstakingly illustrated by Alice Ellis and Edith Bull and in addition to its place as an important work of botanical art, it is one of the loveliest printed books ever published in this country.

The new edition of the *Pomona* is priced at £395, a snip compared to the cost of an original editions which can fetch as much as £12,000 at auction.

The Herefordshire Pomona is the most comprehensive study of the apples and pears grown in Britain ever published, with over 430 different varieties all beautifully illustrated and described with full taxonomic detail. This edition, limited to 980 copies, is the first produced since the exceedingly rare original printing from the late 1880s.

www.foliosociety.com/book/POM/herfordshire-pomona

INSPIRED BY TRADITION

Skilfully crafted by our Master Cider Maker, each has its own characteristic rich style and a flavour simply bursting with fruit. Cloudy or clear, vintage or organic, there's something for everyone.

Easy to dispense either from behind the bar or through a redundant handpull.

Quality maintained from the 1st pint to the last. 12 months shelf life from filling, minimum 3 months when opened if stored at 4°C.

CALL NOW ON 0800 028 4922



WESTONS CIDER

INSPIRED BY NATURE, CRAFTED BY TRADITION.

Please enjoy responsibly

for the facts... drinkaware.co.uk

westons-cider.co.uk

H. Weston & Sons Ltd, The Bounds, Much Marcle, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2ND England

QUOITS AND ALE: A HEREFORD PUB TRADITION

by Mark Shirley

Travel broadens the mind they say, but this is only true if the journey brings with it new experiences. Sadly, the experiences on offer throughout much of 21st century Britain are in fact much the same wherever you go, particularly on our high streets where local distinctiveness has been largely driven out by the financial muscle of national and global brands. Mind-broadening diversity can still be found though, it just needs searching out.

At its best the great British pub is one of the last bastions of genuine local distinctiveness, particularly in the hands of brewers and licensees with a genuine empathy for pubs and the traditions of pub-going. When I travel for a pint, I don't want the same bland decor and national beer brands I can easily find at home. I want locally produced food and drink, served in traditional pubs and community locals which reflect local tastes and traditions. The less bland national branding, and identikit chain bars better, in my view.

Another small part of this welcome local distinctiveness is the survival of traditional pub games, many of which are unique to a particu-

lar area. The pubs and clubs of Hereford and the wider Three Counties and Welsh Borders area, have an indoor version of the game of quoits which you won't find anywhere else in the country. It's likely that this version of the game would have developed as a more comfortable indoor version of the robust outdoor game of "steel quoits", played as a way of keeping your hand in during the colder winter months. Similar indoor versions of the game are known to have existed elsewhere in the country, but only the version played in Hereford and surrounding counties survives as a pub game today.

The Hereford City Quoits League consists of men's and ladies competition, and is now principally a summer game. But sadly the game has declined greatly in recent years, with perhaps as few as half a dozen venues in the city still active in the league. Quoits has already disappeared from the pubs of Evesham where it was once popular, so on a recent visit to Hereford I was keen to find examples of the distinctive red and green boards and soft rubber rings, maybe even a league game in progress, before it too fades away. Needless to say, I also wanted to find good local ales and ciders along the way.

It was unlikely I was going to find locally-brewed beer at my first port of call, no real ale you see. But I'd done my research and the **Herdsmen** was a banker for my quoits quest, being effectively the Hereford City Quoits League HQ. Alongside twin Skittle Alleys, Darts, Pool and Cribbage, the pub is home to two of the heavy-weight concrete Quoits Boards which are standard issue for league play in Hereford.

I liked the Herdsmen, it's a proper, welcoming locals pub, but pints of a well-known brand of Irish Stout were not what I was after [Since Mark's visit it has reintroduced real ale in the shape of Sharp's Doom Bar - ed]. A short walk around the ring road to the **Beer in Hand** brought relief of the most local kind. I'm a cider drinker at heart, and the range of local specialities on offer here proved something of a distraction. Ciders and perry from Newton Court, Oliviers, and Once Upon a Tree were all excellent, and Herefordshire through-and-through. A great



The quoits board at the Herdsmen

place for local beer and cider, and I think a quoits board would really suit the bar here. What do you think?

The very first time I visited Hereford was for the inaugural beer festival at the **Barrels**, home at that time to the award-winning Wye Valley Brewery. It was high-time I reacquainted myself with this beer drinkers classic, and whilst enjoying a refreshing pint of HPA, I took the opportunity to examine the pub's well-appointed and well-used skittle alley. I was delighted to find that darts, pool, and cribbage are also played at the Barrels, a pub which was reassuringly unchanged since my last visit so many years ago.

Onward to the **Victory**, and on one of the hottest days of the year a refreshing pint of Hereford Brewery HLA hit the spot. To the rear of the pub is a Skittle Alley, and on alternate Tuesdays throughout the summer it's quoits night in the Hereford City Men's League. A set of the soft rubber quoits are available here making a casual afternoon game possible.

Continuing out of town I was pleased to see that a Quoits Board has been retained at Greene King 'Meet & Eat' venue the **Rose and Crown**. No local beers on offer though, so it was off to the **Brewers Arms**, a proper suburban local, and home to two quoits boards relocated from the sadly closed Cotterell Arms. Games are at the heart of this pubs offering with a cunningly concealed Skittle Alley, and a chalk board proclaiming that the pub is 'Phat Friendly', referring to a card game which though not entirely unique to Herefordshire, could certainly be considered a local speciality. Another



pint of that other local speciality Wye Valley HPA, fortified me for the riverside walk to the excellent **Vaga Tavern**. Another welcome addition to the Wye Valley Brewery stable, and a great venue for skittles, darts, and quoits in local leagues. The residents of the surrounding Hunderton estate are very lucky indeed to have a local as good as the Vaga.

My final port of call for the day involved another short cider-stop at **Beer in Hand**, before arriving at the **Golden Lion** to catch the final few throws of a Women's Quoits League match. Although there's not much to trouble the real ale enthusiasts taste buds here (I had a cider), the Golden Lion is well worth a visit for the multiple attractions of a warm welcome, a relatively unspoilt traditional layout, some lovely original etched glass windows, a fabulous Skittle Alley, and of course the cut-and-thrust of league Quoits play.

It was great to finish the day spectating a match, World Cup football playing second fiddle to the gentle slap of rubber rings on concrete. This is becoming an increasingly rare sight though. Traditional games like Quoits are disappearing from pubs at a rate which if anything exceeds the decline of traditional pubs themselves. I'm glad I managed to combine a day of good beer and traditional games in the pubs of Hereford. I just hope that this welcome local distinctiveness remains until the next time I visit the city.

We are indebted for this article to cider-maker Mark Shirley, who visited Hereford in June 2014. Mark is proprietor of Rockingham Forest Cider of Middleton, Northants.

The Rest of the County

Our pub database suggests quoits is played in eight other Herefordshire pubs:

Clodock - Cornwall Arms
 Eardisland - White Swan
 Kington - Oxford Arms
 Kington - Wine Vaults
 Little Dewchurch - Plough Inn
 Wigmore - Castle Inn
 Woolhope - Crown Inn

Is this still true? Have we missed any others?
 Please let us know!

hopvine@herefordcamra.org.uk

FOUNTAIN ALL SET TO SPRINKLE BACK INTO LIFE

Orcop pub to change hands after new planning application is rejected by planners

Back in November, Herefordshire Council planners rejected an application by the owner of the Fountain Inn at Orcop to convert the pub into a private dwelling. This was the second such planning application to come a cropper in the space of two years. So, what has been going on in that part of south Herefordshire?

Back in August 2012 there was an identical planning application to convert the Fountain Inn into a private dwelling. On that occasion Herefordshire CAMRA demonstrated to the planners' satisfaction that there had been no meaningful effort made by the owner to market the pub properly as a business. This is a key requirement of the planning process when seeking alternative use for a business premises. Allied with a vociferous outcry from villagers and pub-users, it was probably a foregone conclusion that the application failed. Since then, to their credit, the owners had placed the Fountain Inn on the licensed property market - and at a sensible asking price too. Subsequently, there was some interest in buying the premises as a pub. In fact, it is our understanding that as this *Hopvine* went to press that a sale of the premises was actually proceeding and was well-advanced.

The Fountain Inn seriously struggled in its latter years, although it did have a successful team operating it who made a good living about ten years or so ago. Therefore, after the last planning application was kicked out and the pub placed on the licensed property market, it didn't entirely surprise CAMRA that the local Parish Council elected against a proposition to buy the freehold themselves, and operate it as a community-owned pub - just like with the Crown Inn in Dilwyn. Clearly, the Fountain is going to take owners with strong business credentials to turn it around, especially as it has been closed for over two years, and much remedial work needs to be done to the pub's neglected fabric.

CAMRA didn't make a detailed objection to the latest planning application. There seemed to be no need, for two reasons. Firstly, the locals and Parish Council had all the bases covered adequately with their thorough and copious objections. Secondly, and more important, was that



there was an elephant in the room – a very large elephant. That was the fact that the pub was in the mid-throes of actually being sold when the planning application was made. We pointed out this simple, but inescapable fact to the planners. How can the owners seriously claim that the marketing of the pub business is exhausted, when they were in the very process of selling it? It just didn't make sense. It is still a mystery why they persisted with this latest application in these circumstances. Consequently, their new application was probably doomed to follow their first failure from the outset.

Hopefully, the Fountain Inn will soon be firmly back on the county's pub map, in the ownership of a new publican who will be in a position to lavish some long overdue TLC on the place. We genuinely hope all those in the local community who wrote in support of the pub will now get 100% behind the new owner(s), in what will be a challenging business endeavour. The new owner will need to have good plans and solid marketing skills to re-build the customer base, but also needs to listen to what the locals want from their pub too.

We look forward to reporting on a re-opened and refurbished Fountain Inn in a future *Hopvine*.

Short Measure?

No price list on display?

Contact Trading Standards 08454 040506

consumeradvice@herefordshire.gov.uk

NELL GWYNNE NOT YET THE FULL ARTICLE

Permitted development rights muddies the water in the battle to stop conversion of city pub into offices and flats.

We reported in the last *Hopvine* on the proposal to convert the Nell Gwynne on the city's Monkmoor Street into office space and flats. Regular readers may recall Herefordshire CAMRA was very disappointed to see hearsay and untruths presented as facts in the original planning application, but then it got worse - when we learned the application might now be granted under permitted development rights. Just like with TESCO and the closure and conversion of the Gamecock Inn and the Buckingham - it may be that no planning permission is required.

Yes Minister

However, all is not lost with the Nell Gwynne. CAMRA promptly entered into urgent correspondence with the Government's Pubs Minister, Kris Hopkins, on the unsatisfactory matter of permitted development leading to the conversion of valued community pubs. His response was quite interesting. He stated that council planners are perfectly within their powers to invoke an Article 4 Direction. What this piece of rather arcane-sounding procedure does is to suspend the permitted development rights and require the owners to apply for full planning permission - basically we would be back to where we thought we were. Planning consent would be needed after all.

We have put it to Herefordshire Council planners to invoke an Article 4 Direction for the Nell Gwynne, and we now wait to hear their response. These directions are expressly intended for providing protection and public consultation in cases where a valued community facility is threatened. It is now being used successfully by local authorities elsewhere in England. Let's now see it work for Herefordshire!

Perhaps then we can address the core issue that the current owner doesn't wish to offer the pub for sale to another operator.

There is certainly strong support for this basic backstreet boozery, one of the last of a dying breed in the city centre. There were in the region of 100 objections to this application, plus a 250-name petition from Nell Gwynne locals that was pre-



Are the views of these Nell Gwynne regulars really just going to be ignored?

sented to local Herefordshire Councillor, *Mark Hubbard*. Other objectors, besides CAMRA, included *Hereford Civic Society* and *Wobbly Brewery*. The latter regularly supplied beer to the Nell Gwynne and were in the process of negotiating setting-up their own dedicated bar area in the pub when it closed back in September.

Give People a voice!

The locals who used the Nell Gwynne until very recently aren't generally the people who write lengthy and articulate letters to their MPs or council planners, but that should not preclude them from being heard just the same as everyone else. Are Herefordshire Council really going to ignore all these people's voices, when there is a mechanism available to ensure they are heard and taken into account? We can only wait and see.

In the meantime, a popular community pub - one that until September enjoyed a significant and loyal local following - remains closed and faces arbitrary conversion without any public consultation whatsoever. Such an avoidable outcome would be an outrage in the circumstances.

Do you think it is right for pubs to be converted without the need for planning permission? CAMRA doesn't, and nor do pub-users who have lost their local pubs - at the Gamecock and Buckingham. They only wanted a voice, but were denied even that. Fight this injustice by taking five minutes to sign the on-line petition at www.pubsmatter.org

Remember, it could be your local next.



NEWTOWN INN GETS TWELVE MONTH SENTENCE

Glacial pace of action leads locals to believe Herefordshire Council may be out to kick pub's plight into the long grass

The *Hopvine* hasn't updated readers for a while now on the situation at the Newtown Inn at Newtown Cross, Lower Eggleton. It's not that we're lazy, but we've been having genuine difficulty getting hold of any reliable information.

For those who don't know it, the Newtown Inn is a closed pub on the main A4103 Hereford-Worcester road – just off the crossroads with the A417 Leominster-Gloucester road. Back in November 2012, Herefordshire Council declined planning consent for conversion of the premises into a private residence - this followed complaints from local residents who used the pub, along with Herefordshire CAMRA. Unfortunately for the owners, they had elected to disregard previous good advice from planners, and had already converted the pub into a residence regardless. Oh dear! Perhaps they believe the planning laws are only there for the plebs and not for them? We've been here before.



Whitewash at the Newtown Inn

In the latter part of last year, the owners then appealed the council's decision to the Secretary of State. Subsequently, in November 2013, the council's refusal decision was upheld. In fact, the planning inspector's report was quite damning of the owners' actions at the Newtown Inn. This was the end of the road for the planning process.

Consequently, CAMRA and the locals (who had now been minus a pub for nearly two years) were looking forward to seeing some action from the council. But months elapsed and nothing was heard. It was all quite mysterious. Then, quite recently, CAMRA learned from informed locals that the Herefordshire Council planners had issued an enforcement notice on the owners in July 2014 that gave them twelve months to remedy the situation. That is an unusually long time, however, at least there was now going to be some progress towards getting the pub up and running again – or was there?

Whitewash at the Newtown Inn

Back In July last year it was observed that the pub was having its exterior re-painted. Maybe the owners were doing this ahead of putting the pub on the market to sell it? But hopes were dashed as nothing subsequently happened. CAMRA later learned that at about the same time, two residents (both ex-pub regulars) had initiated an informal meeting with the owners to try and find a sensible way forward. All that was achieved was to glean from them that they intended to do nothing. You've got to give them ten out of ten for being doggedly consistent.

Mortimers Cross Inn



HR6 9PD

01568
709 212

TRADITIONAL COUNTRY
COOKING

SUNDAY LUNCHTIME CARVERY
BOOKING ADVISED

CHRISTMAS PARTY MENU
BOOKINGS NOW BEING TAKEN

LOCAL REAL ALES

www.mortimerscrosspub.co.uk

This is all most unsatisfactory. Two and a half years after the current owners bought the Newtown Inn; and a full two years after they were refused planning permission, and a full year after a government planning inspector upheld that decision, we appear to be not an inch closer to resolution. This is a pub that was converted WITHOUT planning permission into a private dwelling back in the summer of 2012. The owners today still continue to use part of the public area of the pub for residential use - in direct contravention of the planning laws. What is going on?

Few undermine the many

Is it right that the actions of a few can undermine the local community by taking away their last remaining social amenity – i.e. their local pub? We're also talking here about the potential permanent loss of a business and associated rural employment opportunity. Herefordshire planners and a government planning inspector have already made their final decisions firmly in favour of retaining the Newtown Inn as a pub. There is interest from local brewers in taking the pub on. So what is there now left to do?

Herefordshire CAMRA have now formally written to Herefordshire Council to ask if measures are yet in hand by the owners to remedy the situation. We have asked if the council are satisfied that the owners have plans in place: are they either seeking to make good the unauthorised work they undertook on the pub, or are they going to sell it at a price that reflects the



need to re-fit it as a pub (as is recommended by the planning inspector in her report)? Either of these actions will need to be instigated pretty soon if the enforcement notice is to be complied with. We're already five months into the twelve. We are extremely keen to avoid a 'sudden crisis' arriving when the twelve months stipulated in the enforcement notice have elapsed in July 2015, and surprise, surprise we discover absolutely nothing has been done. That scenario would be most convenient for the owners, doubtless helping them to push-on with their cynical master plan of acquiring a large detached house (and land) for a mere £135,000.

Pub not for sale

There are dark mutterings amongst ex-locals that the council are seeking to kick this into the long grass, just hoping it will quietly go away. Well, from what we have heard recently from a number of those same ex-locals, that really isn't going to happen. They still want their pub back, and just to rub salt in the wound, only in October did Herefordshire CAMRA get approached (again) by a local brewer expressing an interest in buying the pub.

A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND
A HAPPY NEW YEAR
FROM ANDY AND MARIA AND ALL AT

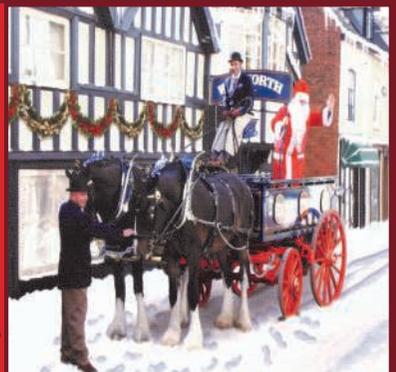
The Talbot

14 New Street Ledbury

01531 632963

www.talbotinnledbury.co.uk

Email: talbot.ledbury@wadworth.co.uk



Bring this advert with your name email and facebook details and get 15% off your total bill when dining with us during January 2015

COUNTING THE BEER CALORIES: THERE'S A FAT CHANCE OF THAT!

A recent suggestion to label the calorific value of alcoholic drinks raises the ugly spectre of ingredients labelling for some in the brewing industry

A suggestion by the Royal Society for Public Health to label alcoholic drinks (including beer and cider) with the number of calories, made press headlines at the end of October, but will have created mild alarm amongst some of our larger, multi-national brewers for some very interesting reasons.

Hopvine readers may not realise it, but back in the early 1970s, the big brewers refused to even declare the alcoholic strength of their beers. Such a situation seems utterly unthinkable today. What was it they had to hide? A then-fledgling CAMRA set about (with others) to shine a light into the murky pool of alcoholic non-information.

It took an independently-sponsored chemical analysis by a reputable university department to start to get to the bottom of it. A full analysis was made of the alcoholic content of a number of big brewers' beers, and the numbers they came out didn't make very good reading, especially when the findings were subsequently splashed across the national newspapers. In the case of one so-called lager (which we won't name to protect embarrassed drinkers of said feeble concoction) it could have been legally sold under the 1930s US Prohibition Laws - such was its paucity of alcohol content. To little surprise, all of the big brewers' heavily-marketed mainstream keg beers that were analysed fared generally badly.

We've come a long way from those dark low-alcohol days. However, there is one area where the big brewers would still prefer not to have a light shone – and that is with the full listing of ingredients. It is interesting that beer is considered a foodstuff for UK food and hygiene legislation, but not so for when it comes to full ingredients listing on the label. It is not a requirement of the law to provide a detailed list of ingredients for drinks over 1.2% ABV. Doesn't that strike you as rather odd? Surely, the big brewers haven't got anything to hide (such as chemical additives or cheap adjuncts)? We'll leave you to speculate about that, as the majority of them are not willing to share such detailed information with their customers.

We can be confident that the big multi-national brewers will ensure neither calorie nor full ingredients labelling happens in a pub (or on a bottle) near you anytime soon. However, if you wish to be absolutely sure of not drinking a glass of the chemically unknown or (quite reasonably) you would like to have some confidence in the provenance and quality of the raw materials that make up your pint, then just stick with the smaller brewers, who use boring natural stuff such as malted barley, hops, yeast and water.

Gloucester CAMRA Pub of the Year 2013

The Pelican Inn

4 St Mary's Street, Gloucester, GL1 2QR

Telephone
01452 387877



2nd "Celebration of Winter Ales" Festival

12th-14th Feb (starting 8pm Thursday) Fifteen real ales available

Beer quality tasting course for CAMRA member (hosted by Vernon Amor, 8pm 12th, booking required)

Cellar tours and demonstration by Michael Hall

Tasting cards offer a taster (quarter pint) of all 15 beers and a pint of your favourite for £12 Admission free

BEWARE ALLERGENS!

There's no escape from the new allergen regulations which will be in force by the time you read this Hopvine

A new statute, which comes into effect on December 13th, now requires food businesses to provide allergy information on food sold unpackaged. The Food Information Regulations EU1169/2011 (FIR Regs) will affect all food service organisations including pubs, no matter what the size.

Outlets will have to supply details of the menu items that contain any of the EU Top14 allergens within the dishes they serve. These are recognised across Europe as the most common ingredients or processing aids causing food allergies and intolerances. Details will have to be listed clearly in an obvious place such as a menu, chalkboard, information pack (Each dish on the menu requires a breakdown of allergens)

- You can no longer state that you don't know if an allergen is present
- You can no longer state that all foods "could" contain allergens
- Oral statements have to be backed up in writing if required
- Your local Environment Health Officers will enforce the regulations, and non-compliance will result in large fines

All staff need to be trained in order to understand the requirements of food-allergic customers and how to prevent cross contamination.

Guidance has been developed by various government and trade organisations and is available from their websites.

All this is not more beurocracy just for its own sake. In the UK about ten people die every year from an allergic reaction to food, and many more end up in hospital. In most cases, the food that causes the reaction is from a restaurant or takeaway.

The Top 14 Allergens

Eggs	Mustard	Sesame seeds
Milk	Soybeans	Sulphites (>10ppm)
Fish	Molluscs	Celery and celeriac
Lupin	Tree nuts	Cereals containing gluten
Peanuts	Crustaceans	

Fred, Sadie & Molly welcome you

The Oxford Arms

*Duke Street, Kington, Herefordshire
HR5 3DR*

Tel: 01544 230 322

www.the-oxford-arms.co.uk



We offer good, wholesome food all cooked on the premises using local produce from local businesses

Food served

Mon. - Thur. 6pm -9pm only

Fri & Sat. - 12noon-2.30pm & 6pm-9pm

Sunday Lunch - 12-2.30pm Roast only

One course - £7.50, Two courses - £10.50

Three courses - £13.50

Sunday Evening - 6pm - 8.30pm

Roast & Normal Menu

During the summer we are open all day on Fri, Sat & Sun

We run an old traditional style pub, (no sky tv or juke box), and serve great local real ales.

We are family and dog-friendly and you will always receive a warm friendly welcome from us and our staff.

A WEEKEND ON THE DARK SIDE

A weekend excursion to Sussex-based Dark Star Brewery seemed a great idea, but would southern beer prices lead to a financial rather than an alcoholic hangover?

This year's *Champion Beer of the Festival* at *Beer on the Wye* was won by Dark Star Brewery from West Sussex with their American Pale Ale (also known as APA). Therefore, it only seemed the right thing to do to pop down there to present them with a posh certificate. So, early on a dull and over-cast Saturday morning in mid-October the Herefordshire CAMRA minibus set sail once more. Sussex isn't the easiest place in the world to get to from Herefordshire. Not only does it require passing within a whisker of both Heathrow and Gatwick Airports, but entails using the dreaded M25 Motorway – the butt of many a seasoned motorists' joke. Isn't it the longest car park in Western Europe? We were about to find out.

Tailbackia, the Greek Goddess of traffic congestion, must have been AWOL on the day we travelled. After a brief encounter with the aesthetically and culinary displeasing Reading Services on the M4, our journey took on a feeling of tip-toeing nervously past a sleeping dragon's lair as we slipped deftly past both airports and along the M25 with barely a hitch. Remarkably, we arrived all rather excited at Dark Star's brewery premises in Partridge Green a whole nine minutes ahead of schedule. Not bad for a four-and-a-half hour journey to deepest West Sussex.

Beer and Paraphernalia all round

Dark Star Brewery have the notorious Dr Beeching to thank for being where they are today, as it was he that closed the Shoreham-Horsham railway line back in 1966, to free up the old station yard that the brewery site now occupies. And it is a substantial and most impressive set-up too: a modern industrial unit that accommodates a spacious and well-equipped brewery operation, fronted by an eye-catching brewery shop which, besides selling their excellent beer range, offers visitors all manner of brewery-related apparel and paraphernalia. It all gives the casual visitor a most professional first impression.



Beer on the Wye Festival Champion Beer presentation to Dark Star's Paul Reed



Loadsakit - investment in the brewery has been substantial over the years

Our party was met on arrival by Paul Reed, who, as one of the original three founders of the brewery, was to be the host for our visit. We were kindly invited to peruse the brewery at our leisure, which boasts an impressive 45-barrel (that's 180 firkins) brewing capacity. It was self-evident from the quantity and quality of the brewing kit that a lot of investment has been made over the years. Paul gave our assembled group a potted history of the brewery and explained his role in its success, whilst we collectively sampled, gratis, five of Dark Star's famously hoppy beers – including the winning beer (American Pale Ale at 4.7% ABV) and a Green-hopped IPA (brewed using freshly-harvested hops) that, despite a 6.5% ABV

strength, was surprisingly quaffable. At this juncture, it was noted a number of the CAMRA party felt they had died and gone to beer heaven.

Dark Star started back in 1994, squeezed into the cellar of the Brighton's *Evening Star* pub, thus the name of the brewery. With very limited space there, and steadily increasing orders for their beer, by the following year they had moved to much larger premises in the village of Ansty, near Haywards Heath. It was at this time the brewery struck it lucky, to paraphrase Paul. It was a seminal moment – when the government introduced Progressive Beer Duty (which reduced the amount of duty paid by smaller brewers) and *King & Barnes Brewery* in Horsham were taken over and closed down.

Whilst the latter was a tragedy for those that enjoyed the erstwhile family brewer's excellent beers, it suddenly opened up a lot of potential business across Sussex, ready to be exploited. Dark Star jumped at that opportunity and the rest is history.

Awards, including CAMRA's *Champion Beer of Britain* followed for the brewery, and paralleled the success of growing beer sales year-on-year. Paul was also keen to emphasise that producing more beer didn't mean they were going to let the quality suffer. It was amusing to learn that in a previous life Paul was a business consultant, and in this role he had always instilled in start-up businesses the need to do their homework; formulate a proper business plan, and (most important of all) not to overstretch yourselves financially. With a wry smile, Paul was happy to acknowledge that he completely ignored his own business advice when the brewery massively expanded in 1995. Ah, don't you just love consultants?!

The festival winning beer, American Pale Ale (APA), is typical of the family of light and hoppy beers produced by Dark Star, although at 4.7% ABV it is stronger than their other more mainstream beers. Light and seriously hoppy is the trademark of Dark Star, as illustrated by their best-selling and multi-award-winner – Hophead. It was Dark Star who, back in early 1995, started the trend towards lighter hoppy beers. This came about after one of the brewing team visited the United States and on their return to the UK started to experiment by using imported American hops in more traditional English beer recipes. Certainly, it appears to have worked a treat, although Paul concedes nowadays they don't seem to win as many awards as they once did. But then there are far more breweries for the same number of awards to go round today – over 1,200 of them, in fact.

Crème Brûlée and a packet of crisps, please

Suitably impressed and already semi-refreshed, it was soon time to move on from the brewery. A tour of some of the local Sussex pubs now beckoned. First on the list was the **Partridge in Partridge Green**. Just a brief walk from the brewery, this imposing multi-room corner pub is one of two pubs owned by Dark Star Brewery (the other is in Brighton), so it was a no-brainer for a lunch stop. A string of five hand pumps along the bar offered a good range of Dark Star's beers including the Green Hopped IPA and a beer called Crème Brûlée which came in at a more moderate 5.9% ABV. Unsurprisingly, every one tried was in great condition. This quickly made ample recompense for the sobering fact that we now had to pay for our beer - and at south of England prices! The Partridge is a pub that was picked up off the floor after years of PubCo (mis)management. It was heart-warming to see how a once-neglected pub could be totally transformed and revitalised under dynamic new ownership. Enjoying our food together, we were able to glance around and admire the quality of the renovation – with quality décor and timber floors in abundance. And we weren't the only people who seemed to appreciate its qualities either – it was buzzing along nicely for a Saturday lunchtime.



A Partridge and a Minibus...



Real living and thriving Pubic Bar at the Windmill

opened-out to provide more space for diners, this remains nonetheless a cosy local pub that welcomes casual drinkers and encourages the old art of conversation. This was ably demonstrated on the occasion of our visit, by viewing the traditional public bar, which was occupied with a friendly and animated crowd. And the only food in sight was a packet of salted nuts – although they were rather expensive. If only more village pubs were like this, even if southern beer prices were in force!

A lengthy westward trek across a landscape of ancient deciduous woodlands and well-to-do commuter villages gave us ample time to digest what we had eaten, seen and drunk up to this point. The village of **Wisborough Green**, near Billingshurst, was where we were to find the **Three Crowns**. It's a large and well-appointed roadside village pub with a traditional painted brick façade and more tiling above, which suggests a lengthy and interesting history. Whilst it's another pub focused on dining, that doesn't mean the place isn't enthusiastic about its beer offering – far from it, in fact. The young, eccentric and alarmingly energetic landlord was very impressed to discover we had journeyed from Herefordshire to drink in his pub, but we were equally impressed that (even before we could choose a beer), out came small taster-glasses which were promptly filled and handed out. The four beers on offer included a special house-beer brewed by the local Downland Brewery.

The next pub wasn't far either – probably no more than a five minute minibus hop around the corner. The **Windmill Inn** at **Littleworth** is archetypal of so many village pubs across this part of Sussex. Characterised by a charming red-brick and tiled frontage, the pub visually entices you across its threshold. You just know you aren't going to be disappointed. On the bar were three beers, including a house beer and the ever-popular Harveys Best from Lewes. Much smaller than the previous pub, the Windmill boasts many original features across several rooms - including a rather grand fireplace, stone flags and, in places, some very low ceiling timbers (ouch!). Although two of the main rooms had been partly



Now slouched comfortably on the sumptuous Chesterfield sofas, one couldn't resist casting an eye around an eclectic and, at times, surreal collection of furnishings and décor. An original illuminated sign from the long-



Front and Rear at the Three Crowns, Wisborough Green

defunct *Friary Meux Brewery* on a 1960s wood-carved bar back was a star exhibit, which momentarily reminded a number of our older party members why they joined CAMRA in the first place. The sun was now coming out, so before departing we took the time to visit the pub's rear garden for a quick group photo.

Cricket and Corpses

Leaving Wisborough Green, the minibus passed a full cricket match in progress on the Village Green. The epitome of rural England – it was a scene that could have come straight out of an episode of *Mid-somer Murders*, albeit minus the dead bodies. A northwards amble in the minibus brought us to **Alford Bars**, at the northern extremity of West

Sussex, and there was discovered a rare beast: a pub that featured in the original CAMRA *Good Beer Guide* way back in 1974. The **Sir Roger Tichborne** can't boast to having been in every edition since, but clearly this place can claim a legitimate pedigree for serving good beer. Our expectations were further raised as the minibus drew into the car park and we caught first sight of the pub's fine unspoiled exterior – it oozes charm. Sadly, that charm didn't extend to oozing into the pub's interior. Frankly, it was a little bit of a let-down. For the first time, the beer didn't quite hit the mark with none of the four beers from Tring, Cotleigh, Firebird and Youngs breweries getting full marks for quality. Moreover, despite having some nice stone flags on the floors, the pub distinctly lacks atmosphere. It has been subjected to one or more major makeovers too many – one of which had opened it out, creating a cavernous and somewhat soulless main bar area.

The sun had now set and daylight was rapidly disappearing as, just for a fleeting moment, we passed into (and promptly exited) the county of Surrey. And a good job that was too, as the beer prices there are even more astronomical than in Sussex. Where would we have got a mortgage for a round of drinks at such a late hour in the day?

The next pub on the itinerary is considered a real treasure. Listed nationally as one of CAMRA's *True Heritage Pubs*, the improbably-named **Blue Ship at The Haven** is absolutely nowhere near any sizeable body of water at all - not so much as a water feature to be found in the garden, in fact. Buried away amongst a bewildering maze of narrow country lanes, there isn't another house in the vicinity of this isolated inn. What brings people to find this traditional Victorian redbrick and (again)



Wot, no water? The land-locked Blue Ship is an unaltered marvel



Better out than in - at the Sir Roger Tichborne

tiled pub is undoubtedly its unaltered interior, and a food offering that pitches towards the gastro-end of the spectrum (with prices to match). Four distinctive rooms make up this splendid pub, although only two of them were lit and in use when we visited. With a basic serving hatch as a bar; old scrubbed-back tables; simple terracotta-tiled floors and bench seating in the small snug bar, this provided a very cosy pub with immense unspoiled character. The Ship is probably how country pubs once were in this part of the world at the turn of the 19th Century – definitely something to savour. However, the beer offer failed to quite climb to the same prestigious heights of excitement with only Hall &

Woodhouse Sussex Bitter available. (the “replacement” beer brewed after *King & Barnes* was shamefully closed down)

Our penultimate pub was considerably easier to track down. The village of **Dial Post** is just ten miles north of Worthing, off the main A24 Worthing-London road, and is home to the **Crown Inn**. From outside it didn't look promising - the matt sage green paintwork and a uPVC conservatory being so ubiquitous of a multitude of gastro-pubs. Expectations weren't raised as we furtively entered the main bar to discover only one beer on offer – the *Good Beer Guide* having led us to expect three, all from local breweries. Thankfully, on closer inspection, things soon started to pick-up. The welcome was certainly friendly and engaging, despite the fact we were in a foodie pub only for the beer (and perhaps a bag of nuts). Then the reason there was only one beer on was uncovered, the cellar was being re-fitted. Just our luck with the timing! The party stayed to enjoy a pint in what turned out to be a family-owned and well-run pub that, despite being food-focused, is still capable of creating a genuine pub atmosphere. The Crown was a good lesson in not making too quick a judgement when first entering an unfamiliar pub.



It's Retro rather than Gastro at the White Horse

The final destination was a village pub where the term traditional needs to be applied with a capital 'T'. The **White Horse at Maplehurst** is the antithesis of every gastro-pub you have ever visited. Even with two conservatories book-ending either end of this two-bar pub, it still feels 100% a hard-core, nuts-and-bolts traditional village local. No-frills, it is delightfully ramshackle in places, with bric-a-brac in abundance, but without ever coming across as either tatty or unloved. It has been run with a genial understated passion by the same licensee for over 32 years - with 29 of those years featuring in the *Good Beer Guide*. Say no more. The group were therefore happy to relax with beers from White Horse and Harveys breweries, whilst taking the opportunity to chat idly with the licensee and a handful of locals. Our evening meals then arrived.

Do they mean jus?

Doubtless in one of the gastro-pubs we had so assiduously avoided all day it would have been possible to order a meal thus: “*Diced West Country beef combined with a medley of freshly-picked English garden vegetables in a hand-wrapped and crimped short-crust pastry fold, accompanied by oven-roasted haricot beans gently marinated in a sun-dried tomato jus, with French fries and a drizzle of Houses of Parliament Sauce*”. At the no-nonsense White Horse, the exact same food order was: “*Cornish Pasty, beans and chips, with a dash of HP Sauce*” - and delicious it was too! It was the honesty of the White Horse that helped make the last pub of the day also the best. It was now time to head for our budget accommodation in Horsham before a fresh day beckoned.

Realising one's inner-trainspotter



With the need to give the beer a rest...well, for the Sunday morning at least, the group set-off the next morning to re-discover their collective inner-trainpotter. This transpired to be a return steam train trip on the famous Bluebell Railway. Running between Sheffield Park and East Grinstead, in East Sussex, this too has a Dr Beeching link. The heritage railway was the only railway the good Doctor ever opened – back in June 1961 – just 18 months before he set about axing half the nation's railways. It's other claim to fame is the Greenwich Meridian runs right through Sheffield Park station.

After picking cinders out of our hair, it was then a brisk zig-zag cross county trip westwards across southern England, planned deliberately to avoid the Sunday afternoon pleasures of the M25. Visiting a few pubs en route, one that is especially worthy of mention is the outstanding **Bell Inn at Aldworth**. A previous CAMRA *National Pub of the Year*, this Berkshire inn is only a short drive from Newbury or Didcot. What makes this pub REALLY exceptional isn't its superb unspoiled multi-roomed interior (which includes fabulous beams, fireplaces, tiled floors and original benches and settles), or the observatory-cum-gents toilet, or the exquisite beer garden, or the fact it always sells a delicious range of fresh hot or cold cobs (even at 7pm on a Sunday evening). It isn't even the warm welcome that's guaranteed from the publican and locals. It is ALL of these things together. How often have you visited a pub and found many aspects to be superb, but then it lets itself down slightly with a niggling flaw? Well, the Bell Inn at Aldworth really does have the lot. Not a niggler or flaw to be found anywhere at this remarkable pub.



Getting steamed-up at the Bluebell Railway

It was now time to finally push home for Hereford, where appointments had already been made to see various debt-counselling agencies, following a full weekend away drinking at southern beer prices.

Thanks are due to Paul G for driving the minibus and Dark Star Brewery for their most generous hospitality and excellent beer.



HEREFORDSHIRE CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR 2013

Fine Cask Ales.
Home-cooked food.
Continental Beers &
Lagers.
Cask Marque accredited.

*Open 11am-11pm, Mon-Sat, and 11am-
10.30pm Sundays.*

Food served 12-2.30; 6.30-8pm

Discover us up the cobbled lane behind the
Market House, on the way to the church.

Prince of Wales, Ledbury

Good Beer, Good Food, Good Times.

Tel: 01531 632250

Website: www.powledbury.com



BRINGSTY AND BROMYARD COMMONS

By our Transport Correspondent

The walk links two of Herefordshire finest common lands; Bringsty which is managed by the Manorial Court and Bromyard Common also known as the Downs and also managed locally. Commoners have a right to graze animals, and in some cases estovers (cutting and collecting wood) and pannage (rearing pigs). Both commons are rich in wildlife too. Bracken-clad Bringsty is home to a small herd of muntjac deer and attracts a wide range of birds including merlin and redwing whilst Bromyard is predominantly grassland which attracts butterflies, wheatear and meadow pipit. The route between the two crosses fields and parkland before a descent into Bromyard with a good range of hostelrys. There are climbs and it's muddy in places.

The walk links two lovely pubs. The Live and Let Live at Bringsty Common needs little introduction. This one time cider house, the only pub in the county with a thatched roof, has gained an excellent reputation in recent years. It has on tap Butty Bach and changing guest beers served in a homely bar. On the Bromyard Downs, you'll also come across the half-timber-framed Royal Oak at Norton. This friendly hostelry serves beers from the Malvern Hills brewery (my favourite is Black Pearl!) and Purity from Warwickshire. Bromyard has many pubs too; we stepped inside the Queens (Butcombe Blonde and Ludlow Gold) and Rose and Lion (Wye Valley) both of which are two minutes from the bus stop in Pump Street.

Bringsty Common

Catch the 420 bus from Hereford (Country Bus



Station) or Bromyard (Pump Street) to Bringsty Common and enjoy a five-mile walk back. The bus drops you off at the turning for the Live and Let Live. Cross the road with care and go ahead on the track. As you walk down the Common there's a panoramic view across Herefordshire to the majestic Malverns; it makes a great start to this ramble. Keep right as the track bends to reach the Live and Let Live which is on the right. Just opposite the wooden pub building, turn left down a track and follow this until you come near to a gate. Go right beforehand on a grassy track with a stream left until you reach a junction with a footbridge below left. Go down steps to the bridge, cross over then up towards two houses. At the track go right and follow this ahead, but before it descends, keep right at a junction and when this track bends right towards a gate continue ahead on a grassy path.

Clater Hall

The path leaves the common through a gate to pass Nuttage, coralled between fences with the farm buildings to your left. Go through a gate to enter a traditional orchard. Climb steadily with hedge and fence left to a gate and stile. Cross it and head slightly right by veteran trees to pass well to the left of Clater Hall, a handsome Georgian building on the brow. Cross a stile by a water tank and maintain the same direction in the next field and onward to another stile to enter a wood.

The path bends right to a fork; keep ahead here as it weaves to a track. Keep ahead on the



track; look for a footbridge on the left. Go over and head slightly right climbing through the wood on a winding path. At the lane go right and right to the main road. Turn right to walk facing the traffic until you see steps up on the other side. Cross with care, go up steps and left along the pavement.

Bromyard Down

For those wanting a shorter walk (2 miles) get off the bus here (Caravan Club stop) and turn right to walk back down to the road peeling off right where you join the pavement. At Brockhampton Academy cross over and turn right at the end of the building through a car park to the common. The path climbs alongside the wood. Follow this well trodden route for a mile, past Warren Wood, and then look for a path which curves left to drop down to a car park and road. Go right until you reach the Royal Oak on the right.

At the entrance cross directly over the road and follow a narrow path to a wide green track. Go left along it, passing near dwellings. When it bends slightly left go right on the track and then immediately left. At the wide grassy area turn



right to drop down to a junction by a cottage. Go left down to a left hand bend; just round the corner go right through a small gate and along a fenced path to a gate. Go through and walk down a small pasture to a kissing gate between an oak and conifer. Proceed through it and ahead down the field through a barred gate to the bottom. Go left through a gate, down steps to Burying Lane. Turn right and left along the pavement to walk into town along Church Street and then right at the Crown and Sceptre into Broad Street. Pump Street is on the left but hopefully you have time for refreshment en route.

Factfile

Map: Explorer 202 Leominster and Bromyard

Travel to Bringsty Common (First 420): from Hereford Country Bus Station on Mondays to Fridays (First) at 0930, 1100, 1240 (35 mins later at Pump St, Bromyard). Saturday times are 0900, 1030, 1240. These buses also pass the Caravan stop for the shorter walk.

Return Buses from Bromyard to Hereford (First or DRM* 420) leave Pump Street on Mondays to Fridays at 1430*, 1451, 1700* and 1831 On Saturdays 1430*, 1446, 1646, 1831, 2220

It is easy to download timetables from the website www.traveline.info.

Traveline: 'Phone 0871 200 22 33 for up-to-the-minute bus times.

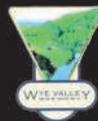
The Pubs (Check www.whatpub.com for details)

The Live and Let Live is open lunchtimes and from 6 in the evening Tuesday-Thursday and all day Friday-Sundays. Closed Mondays

The Royal Oak, Bromyard Downs is open lunchtimes Tuesday-Sunday and from 6 in the evening. Closed Mondays

Bromyard's Leading Ale House

5 New Road , Bromyard
Tel 01885 482381
Wye Valley Brewery
Traditional Ales



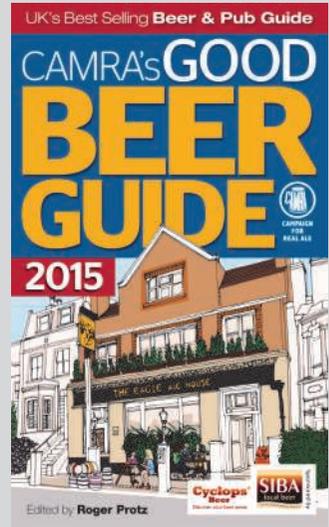
HAY HO WALK!

On a damp Sunday in November Herefordshire CAMRA members joined up with our colleagues from Hope Support Services - plus some Hopvine readers on the Hay Ho bus from Hereford to Clehonger. After a pint at the Seven Stars, the group took to the somewhat muddy footpaths to walk back to Hereford via the Vaga Tavern.

Set up by the *Hay Tourism Group*, the bus makes three round trips each Sunday between Hereford and Hay-on-Wye.



BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS



The nation's definitive pub guide, now in its 42nd year, with listings for over 4,500 of Britain's very best pubs - whether they are in the city, suburbs or country. The *Good Beer Guide* ensures every pub is properly checked-out, by a volunteer army of over 165,000 CAMRA members - the very people who know and enjoy their pubs. Now £10 (RRP £15.99)

SPECIAL OFFER

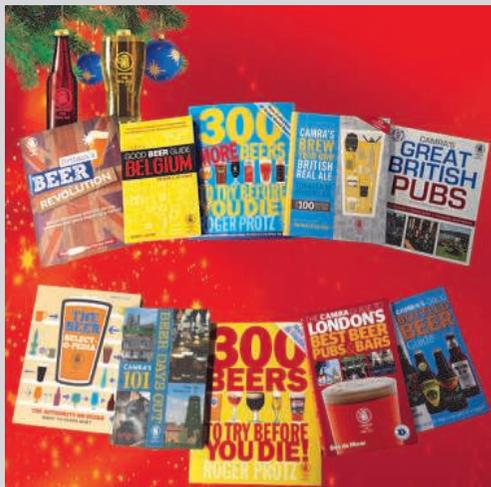
Get any one of these great books for £10 (RRP £14.99):

- Britain's Beer Revolution
- Good Beer Guide Belgium
- Brew Your Own British Real Ale
- 300 More Beers to Try Before You Die
- Great British Pubs

And get one of these 'Great as a Gift' titles for just £5 (RRP £12.99):

- Beer Select-O-Pedia
- Good Bottled Beer Guide
- 101 Beer Days Out
- London's Best Beer Pubs & Bars
- 300 Beers to Try Before You Die

Go to www.shop.camra.org.uk, select *Christmas Gifts* and look for *Christmas Book Pack*



Herefordshire CAMRA

What's on

Branch Meetings

Wednesday 28th January:
8.00pm at the Swan, Aylestone Hill,
Hereford

Wednesday 25th February:
8.00pm at the Chase Inn, Upper
Colwall. Agenda includes Good
Beer Guide 2016 pub selection.

Beer Festival Meeting

Monday 19th January: 8.00pm at
the Barrels, St Owen Street,
Hereford. All members are
welcome to come and join the
team planning Beer on the Wye
XI, whatever skills you have to
offer.

Social Events

Contact social secretary unless otherwise indicated -
see page 39

Sunday 21st December: Lunchtime Christmas
Social at the Barrels, Hereford. Meet at noon .

Saturday 7th February: Visit by executive mini-
bus to Redditch Winter Ales festival, followed by
six(ish) pubs in North Warwickshire. Leave Here-
ford approx 9.30am. Other pickup points can be
arranged.

Saturday 21st February: Lunchtime social and
pub survey in Leominster. Start 11am at White
Lion, near railway station. Contact 07581 692538
to meet up later in the day.

Saturday 21st March: By train to Birmingham to
visit pubs starting in the Jewellery Quarter. Leave
Hereford 9.40am, Ledbury 9.57am. Contact social
secretary to arrange discounted group rail tickets.

If you know of any event that might be of interest please contact the editorial team (details on page 39). Deadline for next issue February 13th 2015



Redditch Winter Ale Festival

Friday February 6th 12noon to 11pm

Saturday February 7th 11am to 11pm

Rocklands Social Club, 59 Birchfield Road, Redditch, B97 4LB.

CAMRA West Midlands Club of the Year 2014

Over 30 real ales plus cider and perry

Club bar with food and other drinks

More details from the festival website www.redditchwaf.org.uk

20th Tewkesbury Winter Ales Festival

Thursday 5th February 7.30pm - 11pm CAMRA members only - join on the night.

Friday 6th February 11am - 4.30pm and 6.30pm - 11pm

Saturday 7th February 11am - 8pm

Watson Hall, Barton Street, Tewkesbury, GL20 5PX

80 real ales, cider and perry. Food available



A Campaign of Two Halves

Fair deal on beer tax

Save Britain's Pubs!



Join CAMRA Today

Complete the Direct Debit form and you will receive 15 months membership for the price of 12 and a fantastic discount on your membership subscription.

Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit www.camra.org.uk/joinus or call **01727 867201**. All forms should be addressed to the: Membership Department, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

Your Details

Title _____ Surname _____

Forename(s) _____

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Email address _____

Tel No(s) _____

Direct Debit Non DD

Single Membership £24 £26
 (UK & EU)

Joint Membership £29.50 £31.50
 (Partner at the same address)

For Young Member and other concessionary rates please visit www.camra.org.uk or call **01727 867201**.

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

I enclose a cheque for _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Applications will be processed within 21 days

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title _____ Surname _____

Forename(s) _____

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

Email address (if different from main member) _____

01/15

Campaigning for Pub Goers & Beer Drinkers

Enjoying Real Ale & Pubs

Join CAMRA today – www.camra.org.uk/joinus



Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

Please fill in the whole form using a ball point pen and send to:
Campaign for Real Ale Ltd, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society Service User Number

To the Manager: _____ Bank or Building Society: _____

9 2 6 1 2 9

Address: _____

Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder

Bank or Building Society Account Number

Branch Sort Code

Reference

FOR CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE LTD OFFICIAL USE ONLY

This is not part of the instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Membership Number

Name

Postcode

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay Campaign For Real Ale Limited Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Campaign For Real Ale Limited and, if so will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)

Date



This Guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay by Direct Debit.
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
 - If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when The Campaign For Real Ale Ltd asks you to.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

HEREFORDSHIRE BRANCH CONTACTS

CHAIRMAN

Simon Crowther
Tel (01432) 820048
chairman@herefordcamra.org.uk

SECRETARY

Paul Lelievre
Tel (01989) 750409
secretary@herefordcamra.org.uk

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Janet Crowther
Tel (01432) 820048
members@herefordcamra.org.uk

TREASURER

Paul Grenfell
Tel (01432) 851011
treasurer@herefordcamra.org.uk

BRANCH CONTACT

Ian Curtis
Tel (01544) 232754
contact@herefordcamra.org.uk

SOCIAL SECRETARY

Mike Tennant
(01432) 268620
social@herefordcamra.org.uk

PUBLIC AFFAIRS & CAMPAIGNS

Mark Haslam
07771 831048
press@herefordcamra.org.uk

CIDER

Post vacant
cider@herefordcamra.org.uk

LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

KINGTON
Geoff Cooper
Tel (01544) 231706
kington@herefordcamra.org.uk

ROSS-ON-WYE

Post vacant
ross@herefordcamra.org.uk

LEOMINSTER

Peter Goody
Tel 07581 692538

HEREFORD

Mike Tennant
Tel (01432) 268620
hereford@herefordcamra.org.uk

LEDBURY

John Lee
ledbury@herefordcamra.org.uk

NEWSLETTER EDITORIAL TEAM

Paul Grenfell (details above)
Mark Haslam (details above)
Alan Simpson
hopvine@herefordcamra.org.uk

WEBSITE
www.herefordcamra.org.uk

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of CAMRA Ltd, or Herefordshire CAMRA branch. Inclusion of an advertisement does not necessarily imply endorsement by CAMRA. Individual copyright devolves to the author after publication.

© Herefordshire Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale and CAMRA Ltd.

December 2014

Landlords! Talk directly to your target market. Herefordshire pub-goers and real ale drinkers.
Advertise in the *Hopvine*

The *Hopvine* is produced four times per year and, of the 4,000 copies of each issue, most are distributed to around 160 pubs in the county, where they may be read many times over by different customers. Others go to real ale pubs further afield, plus beer festivals etc.

Attractive discounts are available for entries in consecutive issues, and even bigger discounts for four issues paid in advance.

Completed ads can be accepted in .pdf .doc, .pub, and .jpg format, or just send us your information, and perhaps a logo, and we can compose the ad for you.

Current advertising rates (from)

Full page	£110
Half Page	£66
One third page	£44
Quarter page	£36

Do you miss issues of the *Hopvine* or live away from Herefordshire? You can get copies by post from David Powell, 18 Chatsworth Road, Hereford, HR4 9HZ. Send any number of stamped, self-addressed envelopes for A5 up to 100g OR 6 x 2nd class postage stamps for 4 copies (11 for 8 copies) OR cheque payable to Herefordshire CAMRA - £2.50 for 4 copies (£4.50 for 8 copies)

WYE'S WORDS No. 2



“ PINT OF BUTTY AT NIGHT, ”
FESTIVE DELIGHT

Winter evenings and Christmas get-togethers are perfect for sharing good times with friends and family. But no festive gathering would be complete without our 'little friend' Butty Bach – a smooth, satisfying premium ale brewed using locally grown Fuggles, Goldings and Bramling Cross hops. 4.5% ABV



[facebook.com/wyevalleybrewery](https://www.facebook.com/wyevalleybrewery) [@wyevalleybrew](https://twitter.com/wyevalleybrew)

Find gifts for real ale-loving friends at www.WyeValleyBrewery.co.uk

SHARE OUR TASTE FOR REAL LIFE