

# Hereford HOPVINE

The Magazine of the Herefordshire Branch of CAMRA

Issue No 68

Christmas 2017

Free



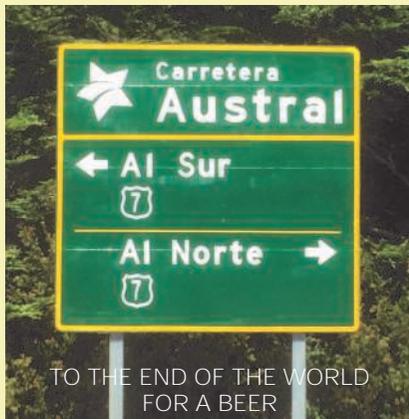
WELLINGTON  
RE-BOOT



NEW CIDER TAX - ALL THIS COULD BE THREATENED



HEREFORDSHIRE PUB OF THE YEAR 2017



TO THE END OF THE WORLD  
FOR A BEER



WINTER PUB OF THE SEASON  
MINIMUM PRICING ARRIVES  
TWO NEW MICRO-PUBS  
IS BEER TOO CHEAP?  
MID-WALES FESTIVAL  
A WALK AROUND ROSS  
LATEST BEER, CIDER & PUB NEWS



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FOR  
REAL ALE**

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TASTE THE DARK!



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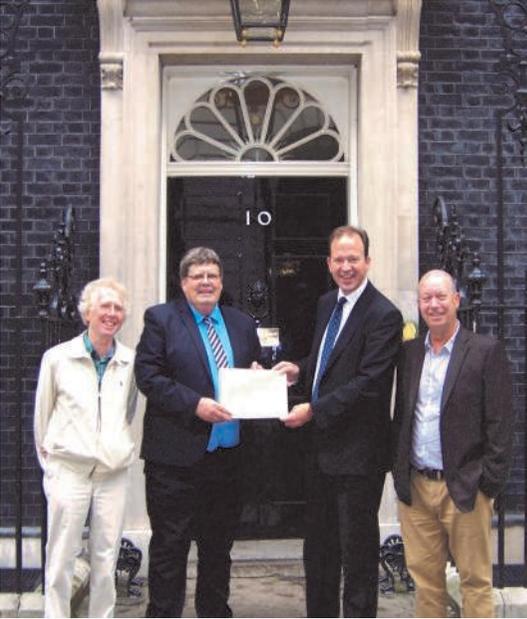
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**WYE VALLEY  
BREWERY**

## CIDER TAX – IT’S NOT QUITE BLACK OR WHITE

*Just after escaping one tax threat, our local cider and perry-makers are now facing another - one that could prove to be very painful in its consequences.*



Flashback to 2015 when Herefordshire CAMRA's petition was presented to No 10. Pictured are (l to r) Simon Crowther and Mark Haslam, both of Herefordshire CAMRA, Jesse Norman MP and Lewis Scott of Cleeve Orchard Cider

It was only back in 2014 that our cider and perry-makers faced a tax bombshell, when the *European Union* (remember them?) threatened to remove a UK Duty exemption enjoyed by small-scale cider and perry producers. Its removal would likely have seen many of them cease production - thus in Herefordshire we stood to lose a great deal. So it was that Herefordshire CAMRA happily stepped up to the plate. Besides publicising the damage that was about to be wrought upon a centuries-old rural industry to anyone that would listen, we also set about lobbying Government. After collecting a petition on the Cider Bar at *Beer on the Wye* in 2015 we were soon on our way down to 10 Downing Street to present it.

To their credit, the Government listened and backed our cider-makers' cause by resisting the proposals from Brussels. This resulted in a delay and bought valuable time, but then events elsewhere intervened when, in June 2016, the nation voted in a referendum to leave the EU; the threat was finally gone.

However, just as one major threat to our local cider and perry-makers is seen off, another one appears over the horizon: this time originating from the Chancellor's Despatch Box

itself. In his budget speech back in November, Phillip Hammond outlined new measures to counter-act anti-social drinking. And the target for his ire was so-called white cider. To the uninitiated, so-called white cider is a high-strength, factory-made "cider" that our supermarkets and other less scrupulous shops happily offload at absurdly low prices. In turn this fuels an alcohol dependency problem amongst some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Addressing this on-going sore has been a campaigning objective for CAMRA for many years. So, you'd think we'd be delighted by the measures announced at the budget, but unfortunately we're not. And the reason for this is the method chosen for addressing the matter. Rather than going down the route of alcohol minimum pricing (as they are now doing in Scotland), that would sort the issue at the stroke of a bureaucrat's pen, instead there is to be a punitive increase in Duty on ALL ciders in the alcoholic range between 6.9% and 7.5%. It's what one might call a blunt instrument.

This will affect many of the ciders and perries produced by our small, local producers. As an entirely natural product, real cider and perry often ferments out in this range - it's the way nature intended. At this summer's *Beer on the Wye*, the cider bar stocked over 130 different ciders and perries - every single one of them from small, usually farm-based, producers. If this tax is introduced as proposed in 2019, there won't be anything like that number on the festival cider bar in the future. And those that remain will either be considerably more expensive or adulterated to reduce their strength - two things neither the producers nor customers want to see.

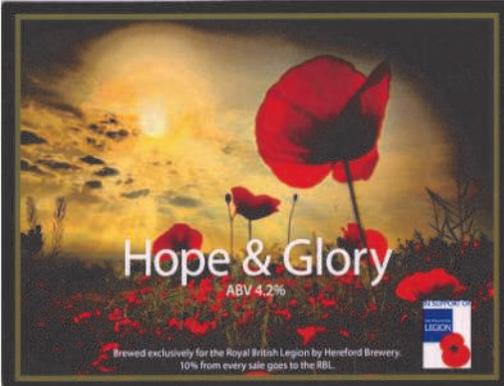
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## LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

### HEREFORD

Launched at the beginning of November, Hope & Glory is a 4.2% beer brewed exclusively for the *Royal British Legion* (RBL) by Hereford Brewery, which is owned by Councillor Jim Kenyon.

A total of 10 per cent from every sale will go to the RBL. The beer will be available for the next year in bottle and cask.



### KELPAUL

There is lots going on with Paul and Kelvin, who are brewing on a 4-barrel plant at what was Mulberry Duck brewery:- ongoing sales of the core range Bonneville, Lambretta, and Sunshine in bottle and cask; plus Smee, Hibiscus and Mango Bango in bottle only.

The latest new brews have been Fatboy - an American pale ale 3.9% ABV, and Black 'n' Gold - a blackcurrant porter 4.6% ABV (both in cask and bottle)

### LEDBURY

Ledbury Real Ales are continuing to brew at maximum capacity.

### ODYSSEY

Following recent additions and modifications, the capacity of the Brockhampton plant is now 24 brewers barrels, but demand continues to outstrip supply.

Odyssey were at the *Indy Man Beer Convention* in Manchester in October, one of the best show-cases in Europe for new breweries and for more

interesting selections from some of the bigger and more established breweries.

Collaboration brewing has continued through the Autumn, including with London Brewery, Weird Beard, and later the more local Unity, who specialise in Belgian styles.

### SIMPSONS

Having produced two batches of their 'green-hopped' Beer Jolais Nouveau using hops grown less than three miles from the brewery, the Eardisland brewer obtained a small batch of hops from a small-scale trial being piloted this season by a local grower.

To evaluate their potential, a simple batch of pale malt with a hint of crystal was used in the mash and flavoured with a triple addition of the trial hops. The resulting beer was a 5.0% ABV pale ale with subtle grapefruit notes and a clean dry finish. The brewery intends to repeat this beer when a further supply of this new hop variety becomes available.

### SWAN

The festive beer this year is Seven Swans, a crisp blond ale at 4.2% ABV, hopped with Olicana from Townend Farm in Bosbury - a fairly new variety offering new-world hop character.

The 2018 beer calendar is looking busy already. Swan Gold and Ruffled Feathers will remain the in-stock lines, with Mortimer Ale - a 4.5% ruby ale with Instone Court hops - being the first seasonal ale on the calendar in January. Then a brand-new ale is being launched to support the *A L Lewis VC Memorial Fund* which aims to erect a statue commemorating Herefordshire's only county-born VC.

Arm Breaker IPA is performing extremely well in bottle, and has been joined by Black Swan, the 4.5% roasted coffee stout.

The brewery shop is open on Friday December 22nd from 9am to 4pm.

Recent new outlets have included the Wheel-

**Short Measure?**

**No price list on display?**

**Contact Trading Standards 08454 040506**

[consumeradvice@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:consumeradvice@herefordshire.gov.uk)

wrights Arms in Pencombe, the Old Boot in Wellington, the Live and Let Live in Neen Sollars and the Black Swan in Much Dewchurch.

**WOBBLY**

Wobbly are continuing with contract brewing, while maintaining supplies to their established local outlets plus their own Volunteer Inn at Marden.

**WYE VALLEY**

A new bottled beer has been launched – Night’s Watch a bottle-conditioned winter beer at 5.0% ABV. Described as smooth and warming, with hints of chocolate molasses and biscuity toffee flavours, this ale is designed to be enjoyed during long winter nights at home.

In keeping with trends throughout the industry, Wye Valley are producing some experimental brews. The first was Space Hopper a dark ale at 4.8% with the characteristics, aroma and taste of an IPA. These beers are being made available on a very limited-edition basis – only nine 9-gallon casks in the case of Space Hopper.

A new online shop has now been launched, designed to be much more user-friendly with an improved look, clear navigation and an easy-to-follow checkout system. Go to <https://store.wyevallybrewery.co.uk>

The 2018 programme of seasonal beers begins

with Summit, a light ale with a hint of grapefruit, at 3.4% ABV. It will be followed in February with another re-run of Supreme (4.3%), a classic recipe for those who still like to taste the malt in their beers. In March, expect to find Goddess, a 4.0% golden ale, hopped with local Target, Fuggles and Goldings.

**WOODS**

The main focus of the South Shropshire brewery over the spring and summer has been the development of a new core beer to replace Parish as the company’s low gravity session beer. The project started early in the year, with the first in a series of seasonal beers launched using old Shropshire dialect words as names. The first one was Jonnack, which was a term used to describe a good, honest fella to know and to do business with.

The recipe was tweaked on further seasonal beers; Rebbling, Knabit, Whirligog, Ewkin, in order to find the right balance of malt and hops, taking on board feedback from drinkers in the local pubs.

Finally, the new permanent beer was launched at the end of June at the *Shrewsbury Food Festival*. Called Shropshire Born n Bred, it’s a golden 3.8% ABV session. With a floral aroma, it delivers a full hoppy, fruity flavour with a hint of classic British bitterness in the background.




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from page 3 ► Yet, the real irony of this story is that the offending “white cider” producers will retire to their factory labs and simply “reformulate” to a lower alcoholic strength below 6.9% and therefore side-step the tax completely - leaving our local cider and perry producers to pick up the bill on their own.

This is a disaster waiting in the wings; a classic example of unintended consequences. If this tax is implemented as proposed, it will seriously undermine an industry that is growing in size and visibility, and one that employs increasing numbers of people and adds to tourism income in a very rural area. But the greatest frustration of all is that as Herefordshire CAMRA looks to roll out its ‘Press2Pub’ initiative – a scheme to see more of our local ciders and perries in our pubs - we are in very real danger of the plug being pulled out of the bath before we start.

So, we’re going to ask the Government to pause and think. The remedy is entirely in their hands... and it won’t cost them a penny to sort it out. For the sake of the future of our local cider and perry-makers it can only be hoped they will listen again.

## LOCAL PUB NEWS

Early in 2017, the **Cross Keys** at Whitchurch was taken over by new tenants, Mandy Turner and John Bufton who hail from nearby Monmouth. Now, with a new chef in place, they are setting about re-energising this pub, which has had more than its fair share of operators in recent times. The pub is open daily and serves meals at most times. The regular beer is Wye Valley Butty Bach and the guest beer is frequently from Untapped Brewery of Raglan. The new telephone number is 01600 890873.

In early December, the **Boat Inn** at Whitney-on-Wye hosted an event to raise awareness of Lance-Corporal Allan Lewis who was born in the village and was awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry in the First World War. A campaign is gaining momentum to erect a full size statue in memory of Allan, whose name already appears on a pub in Neath where he signed up.

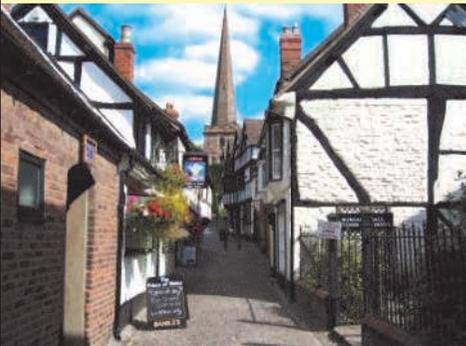
New licensee, John Grey, who took over the **Swan** in Kington this Autumn, was initially offering Greene King and Wye Valley real ales, with a happy 'hour' from 4:30 to 7pm on weekdays - when the beers were £2 per pint.

In October, the **Lamb** reopened as a pub, and is offering Brains Rev James as its real ale.

Also in Kington, a new wine bar, called **No.36** has opened. It only sells bottled beers, but the new bar was one of six participants in a competition held as part of the annual *Festive Food From The Borders* event. This involved tasting and identifying an unnamed beer in various outlets from the six names provided.

The protracted planning application for major works at the **Royal George** at Lyonshall, has finally been approved by Herefordshire Council, albeit with conditions. The permission covers the pub, along with a detached red-brick barn and a piece of agricultural land across the road. The work includes a car park; a new basement to the pub, and above-ground extensions to both buildings to accommodate a new cinema/exhibition space, shop, lavatories, entrance hall, children's soft play area, general storage, and café. It is only hoped that there's room left to fit a village pub in!

As reported in the last *Hopvine*, Mitchell and Alison Evans have now sold Hereford's first micropub - the **Beer in Hand** - which they opened back in August 2013. Pub regulars, Neil "Boxey" Box and Ben Owens took over the helm of the



### HEREFORDSHIRE CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR 2013

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## Prince of Wales, Ledbury

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Eign Street premises on the 1st November. Neil has been a regular at the pub from the day it opened and Ben (a farmer from Allensmore) is a team-mate of his from *Burghill, Tillington & Weobley Cricket Club*.

Commenting on their new venture, Neil said: "The Beer In Hand is more than just a pub, and the supportive regulars and real friendly community feel that exists made our decision to take it on that little bit easier."

So far the pub and kitchen has had a bit of a make-over, with help from the regulars and the four staff - all of whom are staying on. They have already hosted their first live music event, and the ever-popular pub quiz was planned to return on the first Wednesday of each month. An ever-changing range of cask ales will continue to complement the Odyssey beers, and there will be some additions to the established pizza menu.

In Hereford, in conjunction with the city's annual late-night Christmas shopping, the **Barrels** is hosting a festive market in the Brewery Bar on Wednesday evenings in the run-up to Christmas. For full details, have a look at the *Beer on the Wye* Facebook page.

The nearby **Victory**, which discontinued Sunday opening some time ago, is now not opening every weekday evening. Pub owner, Jim Kenyon said: "On days when there is no match or event planned, and in bad weather, there's not enough business to justify opening". One evening when the pub is sure to be opening is Tuesday, when the still-successful quiz is held.

The **Queens Arms**, in Broad Street, Hereford, is closed for refurbishment.

The **Kings Fee** and Leominster's **Duke's Head** have both received Platinum awards in the *Loo of the Year* competition organised by the *British Toilet Association* (sponsored by various companies in the hygiene industry). We understand that they are both flushed with success!

It may have been 'Black Friday', but customers who supported a charity race night, held at the **Swan** on Aylestone Hill in Hereford, dug deeply into their pockets raising over £760 towards the *Eric Bayliss Nurses Fund* for St Michael's Hospice. This is the fourth year the Hereford pub has held the event and licensees, Craig and Linda Simpson, would like to thank all the sponsors,

# WOOD'S

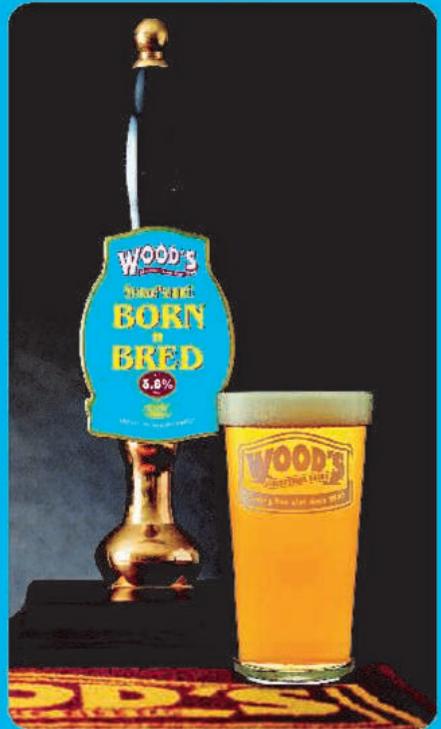
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Pale Ale with a  
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especially Steels of Hereford, Coffee#1, and Legges for their generous support.

In mid-November surprise news came from the **Godwins** in Bartestree, which had reopened to local fanfares exactly two months previously. Of the original managers, Filip Lubiarez has returned to Poland whilst Monika Lubiarez is still on the staff, but under the direction of new managers, Declan Williams and Anne Warren. The new team hasn't come from a pub background - Declan is a carpenter and Anne worked as a sales rep for a radio station.

Commenting on their plans, Anne said: "We hope to make a difference; our vision is to be a focal point for the local community. Godwins was launched as a hotel with a bar, but we see it more as a bar with rooms. Once we have found our feet in the new year we hope to introduce themed nights – such as quiz nights (any volunteers to organise!) and special offer food nights."

Anne added: "We have been really touched by how kind and welcoming the people of Bartestree have been."

The Marston's-owned **Royal Oak Hotel** in Ledbury has a new licensee in the shape of Emma Smith. Unfortunately, she got off to a bad start as the hotel was burgled on Halloween night, the day before she was due to take over. Virtually all the spirits and optics were stolen together with three TVs and the pool table, plus a fruit machine was damaged. The bar serves two ales, one Wye Valley and the other from the Marston's portfolio.

Newly on offer at the **Seven Stars**, Ledbury Bitter is reported to be selling very well, accompanied by Shepherd Neame Whitstable Pale Ale. Sadly the

latter company's Spitfire, on the third handpump, is not cask-conditioned. This constitutes a misuse of the handpump, which in Britain at least, is universally accepted as a symbol of real ale.

It all happened at the nearby **Retreat** on Thursday 30th November, when police raided the pub and carried out a full search. The pub was consequently shut for two days. Temporary management are now in place; it is understood that there will not be many changes to the pub, although the pool table has been removed.

As this *Hopvine* went to press it was learned that a planning application had been submitted that, if approved, would see the **New Inn** at Storridge converted into an executive house - complete with a swimming pool. Previously owned by *Admiral Taverns*, the pub sits astride the Worcestershire/Herefordshire border on the main A4103 Hereford-Worcester road. Historically it has focused on dining, and has been closed for some months now. Anyone wishing to comment on the planning application should go onto the planning section of Herefordshire Council's website, click on 'search for planning applications' and type in reference 174416. The deadline is the 16th January.

The Summer issue of the *Hopvine* reported that the **Paul Pry** in Worcester had reopened, in the hands of the Pope family, and added the comment that their brewery had been taken over by Loyal City Brewery. We now understand that, although the latter company was using the brewery facilities they had not taken over. We apologise for that confusion. However all that has been overtaken by events as a fire at the brewery has left its future in doubt - and Popes beers are not currently to be found at the Paul Pry.

## HAY HO! REVOLUTION



**HAY HO!**  
**39A**

Beer Revolution, the up and coming craft beer shop and tap in Hay-on-Wye, is offering a discount for people who ride into Hay on the Hay Ho! Sunday bus. All you need to do is to show a valid Hay Ho! bus ticket to receive a 10% discount on all purchases. Beer Revolution stocks Herefordshire ciders including Little Pomona, Olivers and Orgasmic as well a range of traditional bottled beers from across the UK. Buses (39A) leave Hereford Railway Station on Sundays for Hay at 1015, 1315 and 1615. Return buses from Oxford Road are 1125, 1455 and 1725. Give it a go; avoid drinking and driving!



## ROLLING OUT THE BARRELS

*City favourite is voted Herefordshire Pub of the Year for 2017*

Today the Barrels in Hereford enjoys an almost cult following from many Herefordians and visitors alike. Just like the Cathedral, River Wye and chronic traffic congestion, it feels like it's an intrinsic part of the city's fabric, but that hasn't always been the case.

To many who know the Barrels, it can seem like it's been there forever, but it might surprise some to learn that it was only created in 1986 - when Peter Amor took over the



The Barrels Beer Festival in full swing

closed Lamb Inn on the city's St. Owen Street; installed the fledging Wye Valley Brewery into out-buildings at the back, and renamed the pub the Barrels. The rest is history...and a lot of hard work.

The Barrels is no stranger to recognition and adulation. It's been named *Herefordshire Pub of the Year* on five previous occasions, and *Runner-up* more than a few times too. It's also the only pub in the county that can boast to having featured in 30 consecutive CAMRA *Good Beer Guides*. It's even been mentioned in the *Lonely Planet Guide* to Great Britain on at least one occasion. It's probably now time it was appended onto the *Mappa Mundi*.

However, it isn't the awards *per se* that makes the Barrels what it is, it is the people that run it and use it. It is remarkable that it has won awards so consistently over so many years. It isn't just a survivor, but as other pubs and venues in the city have raised their game, the Barrels, somehow, has evolved and always managed to keep at the head of the pack. Moreover, it has defied those who suggest its better days were in the past; it is still recognised today, generations later, as a great pub. There is something very special about the place – very special indeed – that makes it so popular with so many different people.

On the surface of it, the pub shouldn't be that remarkable. Its four bars are thoroughly traditional in nature, it doesn't sell food and it's on the edge of the city centre. However, once you scratch below the surface, you start to understand what it is that makes this place so enjoyable to visit. Obviously there is the beer and cider (with a dozen or more hand pumps stood proud on the bar), but also over the years there have been numerous small improvements, most recently with the addition of the Brewery Bar.

However, it is the day-to-day, that manager Phil Pryce and his dedicated staff get right time and time again, by simply doing the things that keep the place alive and thriving. It seems to be intuitive: whether it's the quiz night; live music, or just nibbles on the bar – it's all done with a light touch and to the exclusion of no-one.

It's helpful that the pub's regulars are like an extended family, and will happily sit and drink with whoever might be passing through - whether it's a group of visiting football fans; live music aficionados, or just the younger set on a lively weekend evening - you will never feel threatened at the Barrels. It is this overarching friendliness that is the pub's strongest suit.

## HEREFORDSHIRE PUBS OF THE YEAR 2017

Without doubt the jewel in the Barrels' crown is its annual three-day beer festival, which last August Bank Holiday ran for its 30th year. It's not just a beer festival either, with live music and a great atmosphere crammed into the cobbled back yard, it's the city's end-of-summer party, and probably the nearest thing Hereford has to the *Notting Hill Carnival*. Moreover, the festival has raised an astonishing £500,000 over those years for local and national charities - of which there are too many to even start to list here. And a final thought: if it wasn't for the *Barrels Beer Festival* there probably wouldn't be a Herefordshire CAMRA branch, and there certainly wouldn't be a *Beer on the Wye* festival. So, you now know who to blame!

Commenting on the award, Barrels licensee Phil Pryce said: "The Barrels is honoured and extremely pleased to be voted the Herefordshire *Pub of the Year* and are proud of our continued association with the Campaign for Real Ale."

*The Barrels*, 69 St Owen Street, Hereford, HR1 2JQ [www.wyevalleybrewery.co.uk/the-barrels](http://www.wyevalleybrewery.co.uk/the-barrels)  
Telephone: (01432) 274968 Open 11-11.30 Mon-Thu; 11-Midnight Fri & Sat; 12-11.30 Sun

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## BLACK SWAN RUNNER-UP FOR THE SECOND YEAR

It was a very closely-fought contest that saw the Barrels in Hereford win the title of *Herefordshire Pub of the Year 2017*. Hard on its heels, and earning the title *Herefordshire CAMRA Country Pub of the Year 2017*, was the Black Swan at Much Dewchurch. This in effect repeats its performance in 2016, when it was runner-up to the Alma at Linton. The Black Swan was fully described in the Christmas 2016 *Hopvine*, and we will update the story in the next *Hopvine*. Close behind the Black Swan was the New Inn at Pembridge.

## GREEN DRAGON, GREAT CIDER

Another serial award-winner is the Green Dragon at Bishops Frome, which has reprised the title of *Cider Pub of the Year*, having also been *Pub of the Year* in 2010 and runner-up several times. Watch out for the full story and presentation in the Spring edition of the *Hopvine*.

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## 2016 WINNER, THE ALMA MOVES TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Celebrations and congratulations are regular occurrences to be witnessed at the Alma Inn at Linton. The village pub has been an almost annual award-winner, even after it changed hands in 2015.

In fact, this year the popular village inn with a big heart, has won a second award - taking the *Marches Area Pub of the Year* accolade. This means it saw off four other pubs to be judged to be the best of all the pubs across the counties of Herefordshire and Shropshire.



In this photo are owners and licensees, Gemma and Dan Evans, who can be seen happily receiving their latest award back in October from Herefordshire CAMRA's Simon Crowther (left).

The Alma's progress in CAMRA's national competition was halted when it came up against Weavers Ale House in Kidderminster, in the West Midlands Region round of the competition.

## RED LETTER DAY FOR RED LION

*The Red Lion in Pembridge is named Herefordshire CAMRA's Winter Pub of the Season*



The Red Lion, Pembridge in 2012

The object of Herefordshire CAMRA's *Pub of the Season* awards is to recognise pubs in the county which seem to miss out on the higher-profile awards, but which nonetheless are doing a thoroughly competent job of purveying real ale and providing a social base for their communities. The Red Lion is one such, sitting in the centre of Pembridge in the shadow of the venerable New Inn. It even misses out on a description in the fine series of books published by *Logaston Press* on the social history of the pubs of Herefordshire and surrounding counties - except to say that it is listed in an 1858 trade directory as a 'beerhouse'.

Today the Red Lion is an unpretentious, welcoming pub right in the heart of Pembridge - a village renowned for its numerous black & white half-timbered buildings. It does all the things that village pubs should do, with two darts teams and an air gun team - and the visitor is likely to find groups playing cribbage. It also hosts live music, with a group playing every fifth Saturday.

Lunches are served daily in the bar and 26-cover restaurant. Evening dining is just on Thursdays when steaks are featured. Four real ales normally include one from Three Tuns, plus other local breweries.

Up behind the pub is a small beer garden, that looks across to the 14th century St. Mary's church, with its almost unique 13th century detached octagonal bell tower.

Unfortunately our scheduled presentation of the *Pub of the Season* certificate on the 10th of December had to be cancelled due to the severe weather, and with it the chance to update our library photo of the pub! We look forward to meeting the Red Lion's owner Cliff Price and his team on a rearranged date. Watch out for more in the Spring *Hopvine*.

*The Red Lion, High Street, Pembridge, HR6 9DS. Telephone (01544) 388007.*

**THE BARRELS**

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

## NEW BLOOD FOR LUDLOW

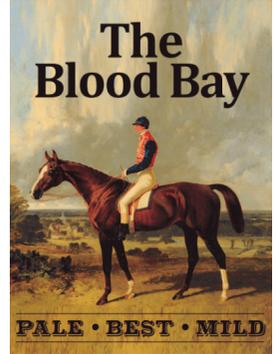
***In 1932, the Grand National was won by Forbra, a blood bay, owned by then Ludlow Mayor, William Parsonage. And now the name is set to appear above the door of a new micro-pub in the centre of the town.***

Following the pain of getting Change of Use planning consent, Listed Building consent and an alcohol licence, *Son of Saxon* - the company behind the Dog Hangs Well and the *Ludlow Ledger* free newspaper - work was well advanced at 13 High Street, Ludlow, as this *Hopvine* went to press. The premises was previously a closed charity shop.

Full support has been provided by *Shropshire Conservation*, therefore permitting the four-storey over-cellar, Grade II-listed building to be sympathetically restored to its late-Victorian landscape on the ground floor (which includes full reinstatement of pitch-pine boxing of all of the beams; vertical wall boards, and room divide) and early-Georgian wainscoting of the first floor and stairwell. It is currently being restored, with the largely missing chair rail dado trim being recreated with well-matched wood sources and workmanship. Period doors now feature throughout.

The building has been completely re-wired, to ensure a minimal electrical load and provide for visual modern amenities on all of the floors, but with original gas light routes being used to reinstate converted gas lamps. Further, a close replica of an original pattress (located under a floorboard within the building) has been recreated by local joiner Richard Woodward, who is overall responsible for restoration of the building's woodwork.

Most of the fixtures and fittings once served in London pubs of the Victorian era, including an original mahogany bar, glazed room dividers, and early beer engines. For those of you familiar with the superbly-restored Dog Hangs Well, this place is set to be of equally high standard. The aim is to be up and running in the New Year but there's no fixed date as yet. Keep an eye on our Facebook page to see when it opens. There will be a full report in the next *Hopvine*.



A hint of what's to come in Ludlow...

## LEOMINSTER TO GET ITS ORIGINAL DUKE'S HEAD BACK

***Leominster may be on the cusp of finally losing the Hop Pole, but it isn't all bad news for the town's pub-goers.***

Permission is being sought to change the use of the former Tourist Information Centre (TIC) in Corn Square, Leominster, into a drinking establishment. The building has been empty since early in 2017, when the TIC moved to new premises across the square.

The planned micro-pub will be a first for Leominster, and will be only the third micro-pub for the county, as is acknowledged by Richard Franklin, of Tenbury Wells-based agents *Franklin Gallimore*, when he says: "Leominster is one of the only places in the area without a modern-style parlour pub"

A decision on the application by Herefordshire planners is expected during December. The name of the operator, who will take on the running of the pub, has not yet been made public, but is expected to be a licensee with a longstanding association with the town.

The building was a pub once before - the Duke's Head - as is mentioned in local records dating from between 1780 and 1862. Some time after this it became the home of the *Leominster Printing* ►



## WELLINGTON GETS A RE-BOOT

*Villagers celebrate as their pub re-opens following an extended period of closure.*



Andy Churcher serving at the newly-revamped bar

Wellington – just a few miles north of Hereford – has been without a local pub ever since the village’s Wellington Inn closed back in February 2017. Wellington deserves better; it’s certainly a large enough community to support a pub, in fact it once had two until the Old Comrade - a rather lacklustre ex-Whitbread roadside boozier - closed back in the early 1990s.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> November the doors opened, with the pub now called the Old Boot – so, it’s now Wellington’s Boot! Running the new enterprise are business partners Chris Tipping, Andy Churcher and Brad Lee, with the latter in charge of the kitchen.

Refurbishment work has included the fitting of posh new floors; a fine new bar-back, and a deli-counter. All round it’s had a good refresh, with vibrant paintwork and new furniture. The old Wellington has certainly had a thorough re-boot and in the process has become the Old Boot..

The pub’s basic layout of a large ‘L’-shaped restaurant area and cosy front bar area hasn’t altered, but with the arrival of the deli-counter in particular, the roles of the areas have subtly changed: the pub now opens at 9am as a café, offering light meals, with the bar offering drinks from 10am (12noon on a Sunday).

The Wellington has always had a reputation for pub dining, and chef Brad is looking to build on this, with a ‘modern-style’ menu offering some traditional pub staples, with another menu offering pizzas and tapas. It’s a case of good food rather than aspiring to ‘fine dining’.

Drinkers are still very much welcome (along with their dogs) and currently the core beers are Sharps Atlantic and Sea Fury, with a guest beer coming from a local brewery – including Swan Brewery, which is most appropriate as brewery-owner Jimmy Swan lives in the village. A decision has still to be made on having a local real cider.

However, the improvements are far from concluded. There are plans to create a new, separate entrance to the restaurant/function room, which will free up space in the small front bar area. And there will soon be live music on a fortnightly basis.

*The Old Boot, Wellington, HR4 8AT Tel (01432) 839233 [www.oldbootpub.co.uk](http://www.oldbootpub.co.uk)  
Open 10-11 Mon-Sat; 12-10.30 Sun  
Meal times 9-2.30, 5.30-9; 12-3.30 Sun Bus service 492 stops outside the pub.*

► *Company and Leominster News.* The proposed name is currently a secret, although it has been hinted that it may be related to the former function of the building as a print works. Reviving the original name of the *Duke’s Head* is not an option, as the Wetherspoon’s researchers got there first back in 2011, when they took over the old post office next door.

The cellar of the old pub, with its cask ramp and cellar hatch (the latter which can still to be seen in the pavement outside), still exists from those days. Mr Franklin added that the building needs little alteration to create the “right gentle atmosphere, where conversation would rule”. He expects the pub to concentrate on local and unusual beers. If the plans are approved, the new micro-pub is likely open in February - and will be fully covered in the Spring edition of the *Hopvine*.

# LWC DRINKS



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<b>WEEK COMMENCING - 2/11/2015</b>	<b>WEEK COMMENCING - 9/11/2015</b>
<b>WELLS GOLD 4.3%</b> A classic golden beer with a subtle hop character and a clean finish. It has a soft, malty character.	<b>SHROPSHIRE GOLD 4.5%</b> A classic golden beer with a subtle hop character and a clean finish. It has a soft, malty character.
<b>WEEK COMMENCING - 16/11/2015</b>	<b>WEEK COMMENCING - 23/11/2015</b>
<b>BLACK SHEEP BEST BITTER 3.8%</b> A classic golden beer with a subtle hop character and a clean finish. It has a soft, malty character.	<b>COURAGE DIRECTORS 4.8%</b> A classic golden beer with a subtle hop character and a clean finish. It has a soft, malty character.
<b>WEEK COMMENCING - 30/11/2015</b>	<b>WEEK COMMENCING - 7/12/2015</b>
<b>RICHMOND RUDOLPH 4.2%</b> A classic golden beer with a subtle hop character and a clean finish. It has a soft, malty character.	<b>SNOW BELLE 4.3%</b> A classic golden beer with a subtle hop character and a clean finish. It has a soft, malty character.
<b>WEEK COMMENCING - 14/12/2015</b>	<b>WEEK COMMENCING - 21/12/2015</b>
<b>ABBOTT ALE 3%</b> A classic golden beer with a subtle hop character and a clean finish. It has a soft, malty character.	<b>WEEK COMMENCING - 28/12/2015</b>

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<b>OTTER BITTER 3.6%</b> A classic golden beer with a subtle hop character and a clean finish. It has a soft, malty character.	<b>OTTER AMBER 4.0%</b> A classic golden beer with a subtle hop character and a clean finish. It has a soft, malty character.
<b>GLOUCESTER GOLD 3.9%</b> A classic golden beer with a subtle hop character and a clean finish. It has a soft, malty character.	<b>GLOUCESTER CASCADE 4.2%</b> A classic golden beer with a subtle hop character and a clean finish. It has a soft, malty character.
<b>WOODS SHROPSHIRE LAD 4.5%</b> A classic golden beer with a subtle hop character and a clean finish. It has a soft, malty character.	<b>WOODS SHROPSHIRE LASS 4.0%</b> A classic golden beer with a subtle hop character and a clean finish. It has a soft, malty character.
<b>RESPOKE SAVED BY THE BELL 3.8%</b> A classic golden beer with a subtle hop character and a clean finish. It has a soft, malty character.	<b>RESPOKE RUNNING THE GAUNTLET 4.4%</b> A classic golden beer with a subtle hop character and a clean finish. It has a soft, malty character.

**Please Contact Telesales on: 01568 616193**

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CIDER EVENTS IN AND AROUND HEREFORDSHIRE



TRADITIONAL YULETIDE CELEBRATIONS

Our local Morris sides will be making several appearances during the festive season adding to the colour, sounds and general Yuletide merry-making.

On **Boxing Day** Leominster Morris make a return visit at 12noon to the New Inn in Pembridge where they will perform the first of their season's "Mummers Plays" before a session of traditional dancing.

Also that day, at 11am, as the Ledbury Hunt leaves the market square, the Silurian Morris Men will appear from beneath the Ledbury's Market Hall. Following a display of traditional 'Border Morris' style dancing, the side will embark on its annual **Boxing Day** tour of the Malvern Hills, visiting British Camp (12noon), the Morgan in Malvern (1pm), and the Three Kings at Hanley Castle (2pm).

The practice is traditionally associated with twelfth night celebrations and takes place during early January. The traditional "Leominster Morris Wassail" moves around North Herefordshire (this year's hosts will be the Crown, Dilwyn), but is always held on twelfth night (**January 6<sup>th</sup>**). Leominster have a further appearance booked for the following Saturday (**13th January**) with a Wassailing evening at Hereford Archives & Records Centre at Rotherwas.

As usual, Silurian will carry out their wassail ceremony in Much Marcle, which this season will be on **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> January**. Dancing will begin at 7pm to be followed by the torchlight procession into ancient cider orchards. After the ceremony of singing, carousing and general merriment there will be music and Mummers at the Slip Inn, Much Marcle.

The third of the county's regular wassailing sides, Foxwhelp Morris opt for celebrating twelfth night using the old Julian Calendar (**January 17<sup>th</sup>**). No details of this season's appearance have yet been released.

In the east of the county the Colwall Wassail is due to take place the following Saturday, **Janu-**

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At a Glance	
Dec 26	Leominster Morris: New Inn, Pembridge
Dec 26	Silurian Morris: Market Hall, Ledbury; British Camp; Morgan, Malvern; Three Kings, Hanley Castle.
Jan 6	Leominster Morris Wassail; Crown, Dilwyn
Jan 6	Silurian Morris Wassail: Slip Inn, Much Marcle
Jan 13	Colwall Community Orchard.
Jan 13	Leominster Morris Wassail; HARC, Rotherwas
Jan 13	Isca Morris: Ostrich, Newland
Jan 13	Various groups: Stroud
Jan 20	Wassail and Mari Lwyd: Chepstow
Jan 20	Chepstow

## Wassail: Useful Contacts

[www.leominstermorris.wordpress.com](http://www.leominstermorris.wordpress.com)  
[www.silurianmorris.org.uk](http://www.silurianmorris.org.uk)  
[www.foxwhelpmorris.wordpress.com](http://www.foxwhelpmorris.wordpress.com)

[www.allaboutmalvernhill.com/  
bosbury\\_wassailing](http://www.allaboutmalvernhill.com/bosbury_wassailing)  
[www.colwallorchardgroup.org](http://www.colwallorchardgroup.org)

[www.thewidders.co.uk](http://www.thewidders.co.uk)  
[www.chepstowwassailmari.co.uk](http://www.chepstowwassailmari.co.uk)  
[www.stroudwassail.com](http://www.stroudwassail.com)

ary 13<sup>th</sup>, meeting for 5.30pm. The procession will lead to the orchard at Colwall Village Garden. The evening will also include Morris dancing, singing, food... and cider.

For anyone wishing to travel further afield, Wassail and Mari Lwyd will be held in Chepstow on **Saturday January 20<sup>th</sup>**. This recently-revived event begins in Bridge Street at 2.00pm with morris dancing and capers outside the Three Tuns. During the afternoon the activities move to the Chepstow Bridge and then on to the Museum for repeat performances of the dancing and Mari Lwyd, ending with a Country Ceilidh Dance at the Drill Hall.

Isca Morris will hold their **Boxing Day** Dance at the Ostrich, Newland in the Forest of Dean. The Ostrich will also host the wassail on **Saturday, January 13<sup>th</sup>**, at 7pm. On the same day the town of Stroud will be filled with members from

more than twenty Morris sides from around the region, with performances in the streets throughout the morning followed by a procession to the park for more mid-winter revels and a Mumming play.

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 – please check before travelling.

The date has announced for next year's *Down on the Farm Festival*. This will be the seventh year the event has been hosted by Gwatkins' Cider and will take place over the weekend 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> August 2018. More information is available on the website, [www.gwatkinscider.co.uk](http://www.gwatkinscider.co.uk)

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[www.westonscider.co.uk](http://www.westonscider.co.uk)



## DEVON CREAM

### ***Devon pub wins accolade for second time***

Now in its thirteenth year, CAMRA's *National Cider Pub of the Year* competition has recorded its first repeat winner. In 2011, licensee Richard Knibbs, had been running Ye Olde Cider Bar in Newton Abbot for over 40 years. Current landlords, Jonathan McCool and his partner Kim Leonard, are new to the trade, having only taken over the running of the pub in November 2015.

The pub has sold cider since the 1900s, when it is believed to have been a farm, and what is now the main bar area would have been a cobbled yard entrance, where cider was consumed with only limited protection from the elements. Certainly, as late as 1962, hogsheads of cider were stillaged on the floor amongst the customers, with glasses kept in the kitchen and drinkers indicating their request for a refill by clinking their glasses.

Today the cider bar retains a traditional feel: with settles, benches and a real fire complementing the panelled walls and stone floors - with barrels of cider stillaged behind a fontless counter,

which adds to the impression of earlier times.

Ye Olde Cider Bar is one of the few remaining true cider houses in the country - there's no lager, beer or ale - simply a choice of seven ciders, plus guests. It also sells perries and a large variety of fruit wines. With bar snacks available, the clientele is varied and the entertainment is very much conversation.

*Ye Olde Cider Bar, 99 East Street, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 2LD. (01626) 354221.*

*Opening times 11-11.30 Mon-Thu; 11-12.30am Fri & Sat; 12-11 Sun*



CAMRA's West Midlands region was represented in the final selection by the King's Ditch in Tamworth.

The town's first micropub, it serves up to six gravity-dispensed ales and 20 real ciders. It opens Tuesday to Friday evenings and all day at the weekend. *51 Lower Gungate, Tamworth, B79 7AS*

## HEREFORDSHIRE'S MODEST CHAMPION

*Ross-on-Wye Cider Maker strikes perry gold for a second time*

The cold wind whistled through my hair as I talked to John Teiser outside his cider barn on the side of Bull's Hill near Ross. We are looking down a steep slope over the Wye Valley, it's a beautiful spot that his father bought in the 1960's and John has used to make cider, on and off since he was a teenager.

The process of cider making is well practiced here and you can see the efficiency built in. A trailer empties the apples onto a wooden trough and they roll slowly down to the production area where John removes bad apples and rinses them with water before they drop into the mill which breaks them up into small chunks.

This leads to John's pride and joy, an Italian steel electro-hydraulic bucket press. It was the cost of this that pushed him into selling his cider.

So currently he sells wholesale under the name Springherne Cider to distribution companies that sell to festivals and pubs. Though sales have dropped 80% compared to 2 years ago, mainly due to the upturn in interest in Cider making, with many hobby cider makers supplying local festivals and pubs. Take somewhere not so famous for cider production, Peterborough, John used to supply the cider festival but this year all the cider was from local Cambridgeshire producers.

Not that this knocks John, to him, for the last 2 decades its been all about the apples. He loves to find and collect old varieties and see what cider it makes. A good example is his current favourite, an apple called 'Bedan'. A French variety brought over by Bulmers but used in France since the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. In the tank right now is a cider made from 50% Bedan, 25 % Skyrmes Kernal, and 25% Strawberry Norman, the other two being traditional Herefordshire apples. Watch out for this delicious brew at next years *Beer on the Wye* festival in Hereford.

To keep the adventure going, John walks the orchards of Herefordshire seeking out old varieties. He is active in registering apples to the DNA database and is involved in the Pippin

trust, a charity that is planting orchards with the old trees so they are never lost.

Experimentation and decades of practice led to John winning the 'West Midlands Perry of the Year' twice. His secret to good cider and perry? – don't mess with it, once its in the container leave it till it's ready to drink. Also different apple varieties need different processes, some you leave late till the juice is ready to burst out of the skin, some you don't. Experience and experimentation leads to the best way.

It got colder on the hilltop later that afternoon but standing and watching cider being produced whilst sipping from plastic cups of cider with flavours ranging from smooth and refreshing to fruity and complex, it's all worthwhile.

*James Thornley*



John Teiser, in his element!

## A VIEW FROM THE ORCHARD

### *Time to enjoy the mistletoe?*

During the winter, the view of the orchard can look quite stark with all the leaves gone. Usually there will be a few leaves and apples hanging on until the new year, but this autumn they were all blown off by storm Brian. It is at this time of year that the mistletoe is really apparent in the trees.

Mistletoe is a very mysterious plant because it appeared magically on trees and has thus been endowed with a variety of intriguing myths... their origins lost with the passage of time!

The association with kissing comes from the Norse legend of Freya the goddess of love, fertility and beauty, whereas the Druids cut their mistletoe from oak trees for its mystical and medicinal properties.

Just as mysterious is mistletoe's abundance in orchards especially around Herefordshire!

Traditional orchards are an important refuge for a range of wildlife and were designated a priority habitat in the *UK Biodiversity Plan* of 2007. However, as they fall out of cultivation, the attractive mistletoe can hasten their demise.

The parasitic nature of mistletoe means that it can overpower a tree, resulting in it being drained until it eventually dies. Mistletoe's evergreen nature also causes problems because it remains over the winter when the tree's leaves have fallen. This produces an increased wind resistance during the winter months making the tree vulnerable in high winds.

Clearly, in a managed orchard, the mistletoe will be harvested or removed to keep the fruit trees



healthy, but without that attention it can increase to a level which destroys the complex habitat.

If we want to have traditional orchards for the next generation to appreciate, we need to maintain this distinctive heritage, especially as new orchards are not being planted in a way that will sustain the landscape we enjoy today. The other thing to remember is that the old orchards have old varieties of apples - especially cider apples. If you get chatting to any cidemaker they will extol their own favourites!

For those interested in more detail about mistletoe, you will find that Jonathan Briggs book "A little book about Mistletoe" is a fun read.

The traditional Mistletoe Festival at Tenbury Wells is on the first Saturday in December, so make a note for 2018. [www.tenbury-mistletoe-festival.co.uk](http://www.tenbury-mistletoe-festival.co.uk)

*Russell Sutcliffe*

*Gloucester CAMRA City Pub of the Year 2014 2015 and 2016*

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## SETTING MINIMUM STANDARDS - IN SCOTLAND, AT LEAST

***A recent legal ruling means that a minimum price per unit of alcohol will now be introduced in Scotland.***

It's funny how the Scots often lead the way, with the English sadly lagging behind. It happened with the smoking ban, and now it's set to happen with Minimum Pricing legislation for alcoholic drinks.

The Scottish Parliament originally passed legislation to introduce a minimum price per unit of alcohol back in 2012. But - surprise, surprise - it was immediately contested in the courts by vested interests in the alcohol industry. However, it will now come into effect in Scotland on the 1st May 2018, after it was declared legal under EU Law following an EU Court ruling in November. The minimum price will be set at 50p a unit.

So, what will this mean for drinkers in Scotland? Well, for those who drink in pubs there will be no effect at all. A typical pint of beer has 2.3 units of alcohol, so would have to be priced at below £1.15 to fall foul of the new rules. However, if one's preferred tippie is a super-strength lager or cider, bought from a supermarket for less than the cost of bottled water, and enjoyed in an underpass or on a park bench, then it's probably bad news. Or is it? Scottish Health Secretary, Shona Robinson, believes that this will deter

problem consumption and reduce alcohol-related deaths in Scotland by 392 in the first five years, with an associated reduction in hospital admissions of 8,254 over the same period.

Whether or not these figures come to fruition remains to be seen, but it has to be a good thing that (in Scotland at least) the worst excesses of the supermarkets in selling alcohol at ridiculously cheap prices are set to be curtailed. CAMRA has always believed that cheap alcohol consumed in unsupervised premises - as opposed to in the pub - leads to anti-social behaviour and long-term harm to the most vulnerable in society.

Elsewhere in this *Hopvine* (see page 3) is the story where the Chancellor has decided to raise Duty on ALL ciders in the range of 6.9% to 7.5% ABV. Whilst the super-strength rocket fuel sold in our supermarkets will neatly avoid this extra duty by simply reformulating to a lower ABV, our traditional cider makers are in real danger of becoming the collateral damage. Of course, a 50p per unit minimum for England would solve the problem at a stroke.

## BUDGET NEWS: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

### ***There was a mixed bag of news for the drinker in the Chancellor's Budget back in November***

The good news is that Beer Duty was frozen. This means that there won't be a tax increase on the price of a pint, but alas you can count on the big multi-national brewers making up the gap via their annual above-inflation price hikes.

The bad news is that whilst freezing Cider Duty (alongside Beer Duty), the Chancellor also announced a new tax on so-called "white ciders", the sort sold by the supermarkets at less than the cost of mineral water, that are invariably enjoyed by those whose prefer a bus shelter or underpass to the pub as a venue to do their drinking. Whilst the sentiment to address 'problem drinking' and related anti-social behaviour is to be applauded - and is a policy supported by CAMRA - it is the method chosen to do this that is going to create serious harm to our local cider makers. The proposal is to place an additional tax on ciders with a strength in the range of 6.9% to 7.5%. At a stroke this is going to hit our local cider producers hard. (see the full story on page 3)

The ugly news concerns the ongoing problem of pubs and the increases many have received in Business Rates. In his budget speech, the Chancellor announced the continuation of the £1000 relief for pubs that have a Business Rates valuation of less than £100,000 for another twelve months. Clearly, this is very welcome news and shows that the Chancellor (and the Government) have listened. However, it is still only a temporary fix to a structural problem - merely a sticking plaster. What is needed here is that the unfair rating system that is applied to pubs (and pubs only) should be brought in line with other commercial premises.

## NOT YOUR BOG-STANDARD BEER FESTIVAL

*A trip to the Mid-Wales Beer Festival in Llanwrtyd Wells presented an excellent opportunity to ride on one of Britain's most scenic railways.*



The train's behind you!...well, half of it is

With a population of just 850 souls, it's claimed that Llanwrtyd Wells is Britain's smallest town. Irrespective of the veracity of that claim, what can't be disputed is that this remote Welsh community punches well above its weight.

In the valley of the fast-flowing River Irfon and on the southern fringes of the imposing Cambrian Mountains, the town lies in remote countryside twelve miles west of Builth Wells. It doesn't boast many facilities and services, and a few years back its

last bank closed when *Barclays* baled out. But the locals have never shown any inclination to give up on the place. Far from it, in fact, as there is always something going on – annual events include a *Saturnalia Beer Festival*; the *Welsh Open Stone-skimming Championships*; a *Man Versus Horse Marathon*; a *Summer Cider Cycle*; and a four-day walking festival. But the undoubted highlight of the Llanwrtyd calendar must be the internationally-famous *World Bog Snorkelling Championships*, which are held in a (very) wet patch of ground just outside the town each August Bank Holiday weekend. You've probably seen the soggy antics on TV.

The objective of the day wasn't to go bog-snorkelling, but to partake in some serious beer snorkelling instead at the *Mid-Wales Beer Festival*, which is yet another annual event hosted in the town. And so it was, on a damp and cold mid-November Saturday morning, that a CAMRA collective assembled at Hereford station to catch a northbound train. To get to Llanwrtyd Wells requires a change of trains at Craven Arms onto the scenic *Heart of Wales Line*. Thankfully, the train from Hereford was near as damn it on time at Craven Arms, which was a good job, as there are only four trains a day on the *Heart of Wales Line*, thus missing the connection would have condemned us to a 4 hour 58 minute wait for the next train!

There were around 20 or so fellow travellers waiting on the platform at Craven Arms to catch the same train, thus it was a relief to read on the passenger information screen it was due to be a two-carriage train. However, what rolled into the platform a few moments later was only half of that promised - in the shape of a single carriage. Anxieties increased further as it was observed to already be quite well-loaded. Would we get a seat? Would we get on? Surprisingly, somehow, everyone melted away into seats, and the accommodation situation improved further when - just two stops down the line - a party of walkers alighted less than enthusiastically into the murk and drizzle.

### Half-train, Half-man

Give or take, it's a ninety-minute run from Craven Arms to Llanwrtyd Wells down the single-track *Heart of Wales Line*, and what a pleasure it is. For the first half-hour the train (well, single carriage) rattles along through some of Shropshire's most delightfully unspoiled pastoral and woodland scenery, moving on to more wild and hilly terrain (complete with various viaducts, streams and tunnels) once the border into Wales is discreetly crossed at Knighton. The stations along the line - nearly all of which are request stops - have almost magical, tongue-twisting names. One can only wonder who might ever get on or off at the likes of Llanbister Road, Llangynllo, Dolau and Cilmeri. One big

surprise was to learn that our little train would normally have a trolley refreshment service on board, but this was absent due to “staff unavailability” on the day. Perhaps, just like the train, only half the person presented themselves for work at the depot that morning! However, it was no real loss, as our refreshment at the festival would be far superior to a Nescafé with a sachet of UHT milk.

As progress was made deeper into mid-Wales, the gloom and drizzle dispersed to present blue skies and bright winter sunshine. Arrival at Llanwrtyd Wells was nine minutes late, but no-one seemed to care. There was most of the day at our disposal, so it was a snake of thirsty humanity that headed off on the ten-minute walk into town. By now our numbers had swelled to ten, after two others joined the train en route, and two more were to join us at our first call - the Neuadd Arms.



Eight about to become ten outside the Neuadd Arms

### Drinking in the Hills: Wobble, Ramble and Ale

The Neuadd Arms is one of three pubs in Llanwrtyd Wells – along with the Stonecroft Inn and Belle Vue Hotel – that hosts the *Mid-Wales Beer Festival* each November. It's been running since 1983, when it replaced a winter farmers' fair that had been held in the town since before time started. The beer festival runs continuously over ten days, encompassing two consecutive weekends. It's claimed to be the longest duration beer festival in the country [*Another superlative to check.* Ed], with the first weekend featuring a *Real Ale Wobble* (where eager mountain-bikers set off into the hills and drink beer furtively behind trees, in gullies and on mountain tops), and the second weekend features a *Real Ale Ramble* (which is hopefully self-explanatory). However, you don't need to bring your mountain bike or walking boots to take part in proceedings – everyone is welcome.

Neuadd (Pronounced “Nye-ith”) is Welsh for “new”, but like a lot of other New Inns nationwide, there's nothing particularly new about the place. Sat dominating a road junction (with its river bridge) in the middle of the town, it comes with a separate restaurant and letting rooms to complement its two very traditional bars. The bars have a charming, relaxing and decidedly lived-in feel about them – comfortable, like a pair of favourite shoes. Old leather sofas are corralled around a



Barrels of fun in the temporary taproom at the Neuadd Arms

fireplace replete with a large wood burner, and original fittings abound – all of which ensures there is always oodles of unpretentious rural character on tap. On the walls are numerous posters, photos and press cuttings featuring the many bizarre events that are organised from the pub – including the Horse versus Man race and, of course, the famous World Bog Snorkelling Championships. Signed photographs and notices confirm it was once even the offi-



Comfy sofas, Beers and Raving Loonies at the Nueadd Arms

cial HQ for the *Monster Raving Loony Party* - a political party run by the self-styled Screaming Lord Sutch. Now sadly deceased, he was famous in the 1970s and 1980s as a maverick by-election anti-hero.

To the rear of the pub was a room stacked full of barrels, where 55 cask beers from 16 different Welsh breweries were being lovingly dispensed straight from the cask. One of which, the Heart of Wales Brewery, is actually based on the premises. It doesn't get more local than that! There was also an admirable selection of ten ciders and six perries on offer, with Gwatkins Cider and Perry flying the flag for Herefordshire. Where were we going to start?

The train homewards wasn't until 3pm, and with noon still a good 30 minutes or more away, there was ample time to sample the brews. Further, some excellent quality bar meals would also help by soaking it all up. Most of the party paced themselves by starting with a Small Beer Cryo Hop at 3.2% ABV; it's an unfiltered, light-coloured beer from Lines Brew Company - a new farmhouse 'eco-brewery' based near Caerphilly. It had a flavour that was very hoppy, but without being over-powering. For such a low strength beer it set the bar high for the other beers that were yet to be tasted.

### Wrexham Lager eclipsed

Among the lighter-coloured beers, Appaloosa, a 4.5% ABV brew from Big Hand Brewery of Wrexham and Twti Frwti (that's *Tootie Fruitie* in English) at 4.0% ABV from Bragdy Twt Lol from Teforest in South Wales, were especially worthy of praise. Turning to the darker and more mysterious brews, Stouty McStoutface, a 4.5% ABV stout from Pontypool's Mad Dog Brewery was only eclipsed by the velvet-smooth and finely-polished Baby Porter, a slightly sweeter brew at 4.5% ABV, which hails from award-winning Otley Brewing of Pontypridd. Reflecting between pints, it was refreshing to recognise the high quality of beers coming from such unlikely places as Treforest, Pontypool and Wrexham – hardly places with a brewing heritage. Does anyone honestly lament the demise of Wrexham Lager?



The Stonecroft with its new coat of paint

It was probably ten years ago that Hereford's *Beer on the Wye* festival featured 20 or so Welsh beers from smaller brewers. Sadly, it wasn't to prove a great success. Too many of the beers were 'identikit' in nature: tawny-coloured, thin-bodied and characterless - they simply didn't cut the mustard. How much things have changed for the better! We were to learn at this festival how far those brewers have come. Without doubt they now represent the very best of the brewers' art. There were some truly excellent beers, and amongst the many there wasn't a single rotten tomato (well, maybe there was just one very strong beer that raised eyebrows...and curled teeth slightly!)

## Screaming Loony

The festival isn't just about the Neuadd Arms, so it was time for those in the party who could be dragged screaming (but not in the fashion of Lord Sutch) away from the fire, to briefly move on. But before leaving it was interesting to reflect on some of the more unusual beer names in the barrel room, such as Crazy Peacock, Horny Goat, Cymryd Y Pyst and Ding Dong. You did wonder if his Screaming Lordship was there in spirit overseeing proceedings.



The colourful line-up at the Belle Vue Hotel — where it was strictly pints only!

The Stonecroft Inn was definitely the better of the other two pubs participating in the jamboree. Looking smart with its new exterior paint job, it's unashamedly a locals' pub first and foremost, with the scars of battle to prove it, and to their immense credit each year the licensees erect a marquee in the pub's back garden – all of which overlooks the river. On the stillage were 24 beers out of a total of 50 brought in for the festival, split roughly evenly between Welsh and English breweries, and slightly more mainstream in nature compared with the selection at the Neuadd Arms.

The weather being decidedly at the chilly end of the spectrum, it wasn't the optimum time to be loitering in a marquee full of barrels, so it was only a brief visit, but it wasn't difficult to imagine how it would warm up quite nicely in the evenings, especially with a hog roast for company!

The final venue, the Belle Vue Hotel, is just up the hill in the opposite direction from the Neuadd Arms. Hiding behind scaffolding on the day, it wasn't busy, but would also presumably get livelier in the evening. Less obscure Welsh breweries including Bulmastiff, Brecon and Glamorgan were represented among its nine festival beers - which, bizarrely, were not being offered in half-pint measures.

The *Mid-Wales Beer Festival* is a thoroughly welcome diversion in what is otherwise a fairly dull time of the year. Moreover, with a total of 88 beers on tap - and more than a few ciders and perries too - across its three venues, it is just one of a number of regular well-run and well-supported events that Llanwrtyd Wells can be rightly proud. It was an added bonus to travel there and back on the train, and the beers were of sufficient quality that, rest assured, more than a few will be finding their way onto the bar at next July's *Beer on the Wye*.

## Let the train take the strain

If you fancy going to Llanwrtyd Wells – either for one of the three annual beer and/or cider festivals, or perhaps to one of the other events, then for more information have a peek at: [www.green-events.co.uk](http://www.green-events.co.uk) To travel from Hereford to Llanwrtyd by train via Craven Arms and the scenic *Heart of Wales Line*, it is highly recommended to buy two separate tickets for your journey at the outset: a day return Hereford-Knucklas and another day return Knucklas-Llanwrtyd. This is entirely above board, and reduces the fare from £40.90 down to a more sensible £21.40 (and it's a third less than that if you have a valid Railcard).



Final countdown for the journey home

## TO THE END OF THE WORLD...FOR A BEER

***The second, and final, part of a South American odyssey throws up a few beer-related surprises in Chile and Argentina.***

Chile is a very different place to the previous calls on this trip – Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. In fact, Chile seems to be a very different place to anywhere. Hemmed-in between the Pacific Ocean and the majestic Andes mountain range, it has a coastline stretching over 2,670 miles, but is only 217 miles wide at its widest point. The climate ranges from blistering hot to freezing cold. In the far north is the Atacama Desert, where there are places it hasn't rained for decades, whilst in the extreme south it faces across to Antarctica. In between it has countryside like Europe (parts could even be mistaken for rural England), then moving down into Patagonia can be seen rainforest and glacial vistas that wouldn't look out of place in Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park*.



It's Chile in the sunshine

Arrival in Chile was via the nation's sprawling capital city - Santiago - on a direct flight from Montivideo that crossed the spectacular Andes. It was while flying this very same route that, in October 1972, Uruguayan Air Force Flight 571 crashed during a storm. The survivors, most of whom were from a touring Uruguayan rugby team, found themselves stranded on remote, snow-covered mountains in below-freezing conditions - with only the aircraft's wrecked fuselage for shelter. Later the subject of a film, eventually they were forced to resort to cannibalism to survive, before being miraculously rescued 72 days later. Thankfully, this journey proved to be more straightforward.

The plan was to head south and pick up a 4x4 off-roader to drive to the very bottom of South America – to the end of the world, in fact. Or the *Fin del Mundo* as the locals say in Spanish. This would involve driving along both Chile's Carretera Austral and then Argentina's Ruta 40 – both considered to be world class road trips in their own right. The 1,600 mile trek would involve multiple border crossings between Chile and Argentina, plus getting the vehicle onto local ferries to get round a number of spectacular mountains and ice-fields – and the majority of it would be on un-

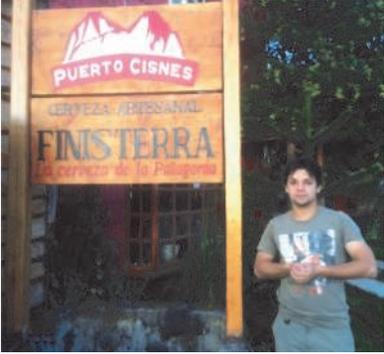


Not quite the M25 - driving in Chilean Patagonia

made gravel roads. Hundreds of miles separates towns with little or nothing of humanity between them, yet along the way were to be discovered interesting beers - and a few breweries as well.

### Road to Hell

The 770-mile long Carretera Austral (that's Southern Highway in English) starts in the ramshackle port city of Puerto Montt, and ends in the rather unlikely-named Villa O'Higgins in the remotest of the Northern Patagonian wilderness. Also known as Chile's Route 7, the



Brewmaster, Camilo Saavedra

road was a project of the much-reviled Pinochet Regime, designed to link remoter parts of the country. It only opened in 1988, and construction has been in progress ever since. It's not a journey for the feint-hearted motorist (with potholes, landslides and loose gravel being the norm).

After several days on the road one comes across the remote settlement of Puerto Cisnes. The name translates to *Port of Swans* in English, but although there wasn't a swan to be seen anywhere in or about its tranquil and picturesque harbour, it did boast a brewery. It was time to pitch-up and investigate.

The Finisterra Brewery produces what it describes as Cervasas Artesanal - which sounded right up our street. But where was the stuff to be found? Being a Sunday evening in a Catholic country there was little point in going to the brewery,

and so a small restaurant was visited that sold their beers. Job done! However, the disappointment was almost palpable when it was discovered they were out of stock. Oh no! The restaurant-owner, no doubt keen to please, apologetically explained he would order some more and it would arrive in 30 minutes – before the meals now in front of us were finished and cleared away. Whilst his eagerness to please was to be commended, expectations were that nothing was likely to happen. Therefore, it was more than a surprise when 25 minutes later, not only did the beer turn up, but the brewery-owner as well...along with an invitation to visit his brewery. How's that for service? Wetherspoons eat your hearts out!

### Brewery break-in and a prize-winning Porter

It's not often one gets to visit a brewery at night, that is without the need to break-in to the premises. But there it was - in the back-of-beyond, twice-removed - a visit to a Patagonian micro-brewery in full flow at 10pm. And while there, a passing couple joined in the nocturnal fun too. Brewery owner, Julio Gallardo - who speaks more than reasonable English - is fiercely proud and passionate about what he does. He employs a young Brewmaster in the shape of Camilo Saavedra, who didn't speak a word of English. Unfortunately, our Spanish language skills didn't quite extend to include terms such as fermentation, mash tun, or brewlength, but with some friendly arm-waving and helpful interventions from the owner, we soon got a good grasp of how it all clicked together. Basically, they brew for "local markets" (which probably means a radius of at least 200 miles in these parts). Four beers, all of around about 5% ABV, are supplied in bottles and on keg draught: a Pale Ale; an Ale con Aji (that's made with chilli – in Chile!); a Munich Helles (which possibly explains the Germanic term used for the brewer), and a Porter.



Late night brewery visit with Camilo Saavedra (back to camera), and a man in a hat

Julio was very keen for us to try his Porter, and there was a very good reason for this. He explained that it had won a brewing competition in 2015. Named *Beer of Chile*, in the process it knocked Fullers of Chiswick into second place! No mean feat. However, one wonders (rather uncharitably, perhaps) that if it hadn't been a competition held in Chile, and judged by Chileans, if the outcome would have been quite the same. However, we were soon able to judge for ourselves, when Julio's hospitality moved up another gear. He promptly fitted-up a barrel of the prize-winning brew to be sampled and, yes, it was excellent. Smooth, dark, not too sweet, and with a depth of character, it was as good as you might expect to drink back home. Drinking beer of such quality in such a re-

mote place just doesn't seem to make sense, but in other ways it is somehow reassuring. If you can brew good quality beer this far off the grid, then you could probably brew it on the moon!

**Following BBC's Top Gear, but without getting deported**

The first crossing of the Andes was soon upon us. Crossing into Argentina, following in the very wheel tracks of Jeremy Clarkson's less-than-successful visit with his BBC *Top Gear* team, thoughts moved to what sort of reception might be afforded at Argentine customs. After a long, spectacular and exhausting drive along precipitous ledges, past glacial lakes and mountain ranges of breathtaking beauty, one didn't fancy getting involved in a diplomatic stand-off at the border. It all passed off OK, so the Carreterra Austral was left behind and Argentina's Ruta 40 was our companion for the journey southwards through a much more arid Argentine Patagonia, and latterly on through Chile and into Argentina (again) to the Tierra del Fuego – which is the bit at the very bottom.

Before arrival on a wet and windy Tierra Del Fuego, there was time to stop in Puerto Natales, which acts as the base for Chile's astonishing and unworlly Torres del Paine National Park. Here beers of the world and the local region were enjoyed (alas there was no resident brewery). Rather helpfully, outside one bar, various breweries are signposted. It was interesting to see only Sam Smiths and Fullers representing the UK. Oh well, at least Doom Bar didn't get a mention!

**Welsh Language lesson**

Tierra del Fuego, or *Land of Fire* in English, takes its name from long-gone native tribesmen that once lit bonfires on the island. These were observed by passing ships, including doubtless Darwin's *HMS Beagle*. It's also a place where the Welsh language is spoken by some of the natives. So, having visited Brecon, Llandrindod Wells and Porthmadog on many occasions before, confidence was high that there'd be no language problems here. Out of the glove compartment came the Spanish-Welsh dictionary, as the vehicle clanked onto the ferry that makes the short crossing to the Tierra del Fuego. Biting cold wind and rain made it feel more like a crossing to Skye on a January's day, and acted as a keen reminder of how close it is to Antarctica. It was all quite a shock to the system after Rio and the jungles of Brazil the previous month!



Which way for beer...?

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**Don't mention the war...or Puerto Williams!**

Sat on the north side of the impressive Beagle Channel, the end destination for this the epic trek was to be Ushuaia (pronounced "Ush-wire") in Argentina. Described by the Argentines as the most southerly city in the world, its inhabitants (probably keen for those tourist dollars) conveniently ignore the fact that Puerto Williams – a small Chilean town that lies diagonally across the Beagle Channel from Ushuaia – is actually further south! It's most recent claim to fame is for being where the locals drove Jeremy Clarkson and

friends out of town – and out of the country – while filming their BBC *Top Gear Christmas Special* here. It's also famous for being the port from where the *General Belgrano* set sail before having a serious disagreement with a British nuclear submarine in 1982. Interesting is that a large sign on the town's promenade exclaims that it is the capital of the Malvinas - and you thought it was on the Worcestershire-Herefordshire border didn't you? Joking aside, it was decided not to include the Falklands War amongst topics for conversation with the locals... just in case!

The Beagle Channel is named after Charles Darwin's ship, which sailed this way more than once (but historical records make no mention of him being hounded out of town), and from this one of the town's two breweries takes its name – Beagle Brewery. Another is Cape Horn Brewery, which is named after the local landmark peninsula with lighthouse. It was learned that Cape Horn Brewery had recently merged with Beagle Brewery. However, both of their beer ranges were still widely available in the town (and further afield) so it was time to sample...



Luck of the Irish, Argentine-style

An unusual place to enjoy the three Beagle beers was at the Dublin Pub – Ushuaia's take on the concept of the Irish pub. This place didn't have the usual overpriced Guinness (despite the advertising hoarding saying it did), for competing for consumers' attention - alongside the trademark leprechauns and shamrocks - was an eccentric assemblage of marine and other paraphernalia. However, the Beagle beers on draught were good for their class. Those from Cape Horn are only available in bottles, and weren't anywhere near as adventurous as the Beagle draught beers. With the Cape Horn bottles usually for sale in presentation packs, their lack of distinctiveness might be explained by the fact the main customers are tourists arriving daily on large cruise liners.

A few days later a 15-hour flight from Buenos Aires to London would draw a line under this epic adventure – and as to the final reckoning? Clearly, some parts of South America have embraced the new interest in brewing, but it's a decidedly patchy picture. No doubt many of the issues their brewers face resonate in Britain today, such as: punitive taxation; the cost of ingredients, and access to retail markets. However, the knowledge and enthusiasm demonstrated by the breweries that were encountered along the way confirms the genie is now firmly out of the Latino beer bottle. Things are only going to get better.

Things are only going to get better.

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## WILTON AND ROSS-ON-WYE

*By our Transport Correspondent*

Looking out from the Wilton Bridge along the River Wye you can see why the likes of Coleridge, Turner and Wordsworth were captivated by the scenery. However, the rush to explore these parts came about decades beforehand encouraged by a local man, the Reverend John Egerton. By the mid eighteenth century rich dilettantes, painters, poets and writers descended on the Wye to admire and record the beauty of the landscape, and enjoy a few jars of ale at the end of the day. This seemingly gentle pursuit of boating down the Wye soon became a booming business, so much so that in recent years it has been dubbed as the birthplace of English tourism.



Now it is your turn to explore the very locale where boats set sail down the Wye. The walk is no more than a mile and a half, is easy enough with only one short climb. One final note, do not attempt when the river is in flood!

Ross is well blessed with pubs; I have selected four of my favourites to call into as you explore the historic corners of the town. The starting point is the White Lion in Wilton, a long standing riverside pub, followed by the Hope and Anchor, another Wye-side hostelry. A few minutes up from the Hope is the Man of Ross and finally there's the King's Head. You might also like to squeeze in the Royal Hotel en route (Greene King beers and a tasty pint of Wye Valley HPA when I called). On the last leg towards Cantilupe Street you might also pop in to the Mail Rooms, a popular Wetherspoon pub.

### Wilton

Alight from the bus at Wilton, the stop after the large roundabout. Cross the road and right into Wilton Lane. The White Lion stands on the left. Enter the bar on the right; there's a welcome wood

burner and a good view of the river where boats once departed. On tap is Wye Valley Bitter and Butty Bach. Return to the main road, cross over and go right towards the Wilton bridge. Just beforehand, cut left for a closer look at Wilton Castle, although please note that it is a private property. It was built by the Normans in the 12th century and a manor house added in the 14th century, one which has seen much alteration through the centuries. Return to the Wilton Bridge, first built in 1597, and with a fine sundial adorning the central point. At the end of the bridge go left towards the riverside, easing right to pass by a Walenty Pytel sculpture along a grassy path around to the Hope and Anchor Inn; it can be muddy. The Hope and Anchor offers beers from Marston's in a bar which reflects its connection with boats, for the bar is boat shape and there's a boat hanging from the ceiling too.

#### Factfile

Map: Explorer 189 Hereford & Ross-on-Wye

Travel from Hereford: Stagecoach West #33 from Hereford Railway Station -

Monday-Saturday: at 0947 and hourly until 1547, then 1652, 1752 and 1957.

Sunday: at 0947 and two-hourly until 1747 then 1939

(Country Bus Station +5 min; Broad Street +15 min)

Ask for Wilton and return from Ross.

Return from Ross: Stagecoach West #33 from Cantilupe Road -

Monday-Saturday: 1245 and hourly until 1545, then 1655, 1905

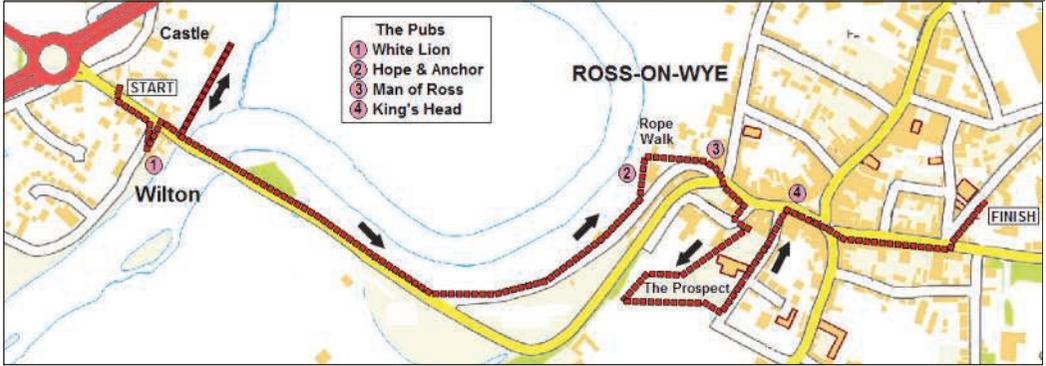
Sunday: at 0845, and two-hourly until 1845

The Pubs

All the pubs are open all day. Check details with What Pub. <https://whatpub.com>

### Rope Walk

Turn right to climb up the Rope Walk, referring to the one time rope works near here. You'll



probably want to take a closer look at the Thomas Blake gardens maintained by a group of dedicated volunteers. This is a memorial to 19th philanthropist and benefactor to Ross. On reaching the Leaping Salmon sculpture, step inside the characterful Man of Ross for more refreshment. This comprises a cosy bar and small restaurant area. When I called there was Wye Valley Butty Bach on tap as well as Fullers London Pride. Walk over Edde Cross Street into High Street, and soon turn first right into St Mary Street. Walk up to a corner and on the right is a folly tower and also the Royal Hotel, a popular haunt since the coaching days of the 19th century.

**The Prospect**

Go left at the corner into Church Row and turn immediately right to walk up to the magnificent 12th century church of St Mary the Virgin with a tall spire which is a landmark for miles around. Continue beyond the church to a garden, The Prospect, and pass through the fine pillars on the right to the viewpoint across the Wye. The gardens were financed and laid out by another of Ross’s benefactors, John Kyrle, and then saved for public use by Thomas Blake in the 19th century.

Walk around the park to go through another gateway. Turn left along a path, ahead at a crossroads and then left at the second. The path descends to the bottom right corner, down steps into Church Street. Keep ahead to High Street and the King’s Head Hotel, originally 14th century, but the current building is a Georgian coaching house. Enter the lobby and right into a small bar which offers Wye Valley Bitter and Butty Bach as well as a guest beer often from Purity Brewery.

On leaving the hotel, turn left and walk by the 17th century Market House. Look out for the tributes to John Kyrle, known as the Man of Ross, on the timbered stationers opposite. Cross the street into Gloucester Road ahead; this leads to Cantilupe Street on the left where buses depart. Perhaps you’ll have time to step into the Mail Rooms on the right before catching the bus back!

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## IS BEER REALLY TOO CHEAP?

***Do you think your pint is too cheap? Some brewers do, and unfortunately it's not just the greedy multi-nationals who hold this view.***

The big multi-national brewers have no qualms about hiking up the price of a pint by more than inflation every year. With institutional shareholders to keep happy and loadsamoney 'executive packages' to fund, there's hardly a year passes when they don't. We've become as familiar with their corporate greed as much as we have with the weasel words despatched from their PR departments to justify these unjustifiable increases.

Any regular reader of the Hopvine can see for themselves that CAMRA campaigns hard to persuade Her Majesty's Government that an already punitive taxation regime directed at our brewing and pub industry is damaging our

pleasure by closing cherished local pubs. At the recent Budget in November, another CAMRA campaign bore fruit when the Chancellor, Philip Hammond, handed out some largesse in the shape of a very welcome freeze on Beer and Cider Duty, plus further extended Business Rates Relief to pubs for another twelve months (see story on page 21). No doubt there were sighs of relief in pubs and breweries the length and breadth of these isles.

Therefore, it is alarming to see some small brewers saying that beer is too cheap. Only a few weeks ago, a northern brewer (who shall remain nameless to protect the guilty) said real ale was too cheap and that he was looking to "repackage" his beer to be able to make a profit. He's not the first to say so too. Moreover, even the Chairman of SIBA (the Society for Independent Brewers), Buster Grant, has come out and said as much. Buster, who runs Brecon Brewery and is a good friend of Herefordshire CAMRA - he's definitely one of the good guys - is arguing for a premium on beer. To be fair, this needs to be put into context, in that he believes (quite rightly) that there needs to be more training and education in the brewing industry - and this needs to be funded. But can you trust all the brewers to deliver on that training once the prices have gone up? That's the \$64,000 question. Sadly, the brewers' track record isn't a great one.

Part of the 'problem' - if it can be called that - is Craft Beer. One CAMRA wag - who shall also remain nameless - opined that the main difference between real ale and craft beer is about £2.50 a pint! Whilst no doubt intended as a flippant remark, it does actually have a grain of truth running through it. By its very nature and design, what is called Craft Beer is fundamentally different to the standard real ales you typically buy across the bar in your local pub. Inspired by a wave of new American breweries, UK Craft brewers typically produce beers with more adventurous ingredients; rarer and more exotic hop varieties, and brews that are usually

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Open all day Fri - Sun, evenings only Tue - Thurs

#### Food served

Tuesday - Thursday 6pm - 9pm only

Friday & Saturday 12noon - 2.30pm & 6pm - 9pm

Sunday Lunch 12noon - 2.30pm Roasts only

Sunday Evening 6pm - 8.30pm Roasts & Normal Menu

#### Bed & Breakfast

We have six rooms available with their own bathroom  
facilities, either ensuite or private.

We will be taking a break after Christmas and  
therefore will be closed from 2<sup>nd</sup> January and will  
reopen Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

**Keep an eye out for our Valentine's Menu on our  
website and facebook page.**

For more details please check our website  
[www.the-oxford-arms.co.uk](http://www.the-oxford-arms.co.uk) and/or our  
facebook page

a lot stronger than traditional real ales. *Ipsa facto* they are going to be more expensive to brew, and therefore more expensive to buy. What is significant here is that they are generally not the same as real ale - including their price. It is this distinction that is relevant to any debate on the value (and price) of beer.

Collectively our brewers must not fall into a trap. The industry is in danger of sending (at best) a mixed message to our legislators – i.e. those people who set our taxes. Whilst we have some brewers (including some who don't brew real ale) shouting from the cyber-rooftops that beer is too cheap, we can't assume that those who see the industry as merely a tax cow to understand the subtle distinction that exists between different types of beer, i.e. real ale and craft. And the threat



to our beers and pubs from increased taxes is greater than ever at the moment – after all, who is going to pay the nation's divorce bill from the EU? It is frustrating to campaign hard to keep Duty down, while some in the industry elect to relieve themselves inside the tent.

So, is beer really too cheap? It would be interesting to learn how many publicans in Herefordshire subscribe to that view, and how many of their customers do too for that matter. The brewing industry - whether they brew real or craft-style beers - needs to remember who the real enemies are here. The people who are selling beer too cheap are our supermarkets. It should be a cause for great concern that in November Morrison's supermarket started piloting cut-price (what else?) draught beer in their Guiseley store.

## Herefordshire CAMRA

### What's on

#### Branch Meetings.

Wednesday 31st January: The Britannia, Cotterell Street, Hereford; 8pm. chance to visit this delightful old pub and learn the latest beer, cider and pub gossip from across the county.

Wednesday 28th February: The Bakers Arms, Orleton; 8pm. Another opportunity to keep in touch with local news and events. Final decision on Good Beer Guide 2019 entries. All welcome.

#### Beer on the Wye Festival Meeting

Tuesday 6th February: 8.00pm at the Barrels, St Owen Street, Hereford. Come along and join the team as we set out on planning an even better Beer on the Wye for next year. Help required in all areas!

#### Social Events

Sunday 17th December - Lunchtime social at the Barrels, Hereford (starting at 12 noon)

January 2018 - Wassails. Details to be confirmed

February 2018 - possible Chester trip (walk round walls and visit pubs en route).

March 2018 - presentation to Abbeydale Brewery, Sheffield

Contact Social Secretary Mark Haslam - for details and booking, See page 35.

Updates on:

[www.herefordcamra.org.uk/diary](http://www.herefordcamra.org.uk/diary)

If you know of any event that might be of interest please contact the editorial team (details on page 35). Deadline for next issue February 9th 2018



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December 2017

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 190 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. Deadline for next issue: February 9th.

Current advertising rates (from)

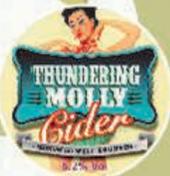
Full page	£110
Half Page	£73
One third page	£49
Quarter page	£40

Rates refer to an inside reverse page, prices subject to VAT

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 - £3.00 for 4 copies (£5.00 for 8 copies)



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