

NEWS, VIEWS & EVENTS



The local REAL ALE SCENE
as reported by
CAMRA in GLOUCESTER

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**ON-LINE
EDITION**

Rise again, Westgate Street!

The recent closure of two pubs on one night in Westgate Street, Gloucester led to a headline in *The Citizen* that contained the word 'Crisis'. There is, indeed, a crisis in Westgate Street, and it applies not just to pubs. In the current edition of *the tippler* its editor looks back to a day when the street was buzzing with life - when it had a theatre, hotels, shops, a multitude of pubs, and a bar described as the "most remarkable in England". Today Westgate Street contributes very significantly to the widely-held perception that Gloucester is nothing more than a Ghost-town after 6pm!

Even by day Westgate Street suffers from the same "lack of footfall" experienced by most city and town high streets in Britain as people prefer to shop where it's easy and free to park. However, over the years Ivan Taylor, with his Westgate Quarter concept, has done much to encourage entrepreneurial shops to come to the area and to stay. Millions of pounds, though, are now about to be poured into the Quays complex of cheap shops, perhaps not-quite-so-cheap restaurants and replacement cinemas. That to be followed by a King's Quarter full of (hopefully) better shops, by a Tesco in St Oswald's to challenge B&Q on size, and by yet another supermarket in the Railway Triangle! All that must make Mr Taylor feel like giving up completely! But in no way should he! The Mary Portas report gives positive pointers to reviving dying high streets that even our City Council should be capable of understanding!

The Westgate Quarter simply oozes history - the magnificent Cathedral, the Whittington town house, the Folk Museum, the Tailor of Gloucester, a former church that could be put to much greater use - and Westgate Street itself is Gloucester's best preserved. It deserves investment - perhaps the former Fleece Hotel can be sympathetically re-developed to enhance the "Westgate Quarter" concept. And perhaps the pubs can do something really special - not simply to bolster the concept but to provide a genuine evening alternative to the "increasingly one-dimensional nightlife" of the "Eastgate strip" - as one correspondent to *The Citizen* put it! Co-operation and co-ordination are the first essentials: all business is competitive, and

**A very warm
welcome to the
MAY HILL
and GLOUCESTER
BREWRIES**

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fight to save the PIG!**
also on Page 2

none more so than the pub business. However, business thrives where similar specialists come together to offer a high class selection of products... and nothing is capable of being more high class than the wide range of better ales available in this country today. Three of the pubs are owned by Enterprise, and Peter at the FOUNTAIN (*tippler* Page 17) more than hints at the difficulties that that may present, BUT he has found his own solution: the UNION and the WESTGATE can do likewise. Martyn, now in the OLD CROWN and showing the same enthusiasm that we knew at the Pig, MUST persuade Sam Smiths to restore cask OBB. Norman has made a great start at the DICK WHITTINGTON: he can mix the best offerings from the Molson Coors list with the best local ales. And that leaves a pub and a bar that are crying out to be revived. We write about the PIG INN THE CITY below, but even more important eventually is to revive the MONKS RETREAT as a real ale venue extraordinaire!

OUR PUB OF THE YEAR 2012 ...

Having been our Country Pub of the Year for the past five years, the TUDOR ARMS, Shepherds Patch, Slimbridge has stepped up to be our sole Pub of the Year for 2012. It is amazing how this hotel-like complex, employing a staff of over thirty, continues to develop under the watchful eye of the ever-youthful Rita, assisted, of course, by daughter Sam and son-in-law Richard. Situated seemingly among meadows and a stone's throw from the Gloucester-Sharpness Canal, the Tudor Arms caters for visitors to the famous Wildfowl & Wetland attraction just beyond the canal, and for tourists staying in the pub's own lodge or at the quite separate caravan and camping site immediately behind. It attracts also boat-owners from around the country: one was adamant in the past that if Essex had a pub anywhere near as good he wouldn't have so far to travel! It offers just about everything that a pub should: its main bar serves as the focal point for five separate eating and/or drinking areas, while the public bar has a skittle alley (in use five evenings per week) as well as pool and darts. Rita insists that she tries to meet all CAMRA requirements with six extremely well kept ales, including regulars from Uley(2), Palmers and Wadworth plus local guests and always a selection of real ciders and perries. The pub serves quality food all day, although the menu is reduced a little in the afternoon. The Tudor Arms is also understandably a popular venue for private parties. Well done, Rita, family and staff.

COMMENDATIONS...

In past years we have selected both a City and a Country Pub of the Year. This year, our Committee felt that, although there were extremely good pubs in the City, no one stood out above all others, and so there will be no award. However, recognising the good points of the best of the bunch the Committee has awarded Commendations to (a) the LINDEN TREE, especially for its superbly kept ales which can number 9 or 10; (b) the FOUNTAIN INN, always a smart and popular pub, now with the full range of Purity ales; (c) the DICK WHITTINGTON, where the previous managers gained a very high reputation for their changing range of up to 8 ales, and where there is every appearance that the new management team are going to maintain that performance level. Commendations awarded to pubs where new landlords have instantly made a difference go to the ENGLAND'S GLORY in Gloucester, to the GREYHOUND in Longlevens, and to the HAYWAIN in Quedgeley.

FIGHT, FIGHT, FIGHT FOR THE PIG...

In October we mourned the loss of our City Pub of the Year, the PIG INN THE CITY. It was obvious for some time that Martyn was having problems with the owners, a property company that showed no interest whatsoever in investing in the fabric of the building. It preferred to see a successful business - three times our City Pub of the Year - run down, we believe, with the aim of seeking permission to convert the building to flats. We lost a previous CAMRA Pub of the Year, the BLACK SWAN, to flats, and this year Gloucester has lost the BRISTOL HOTEL to a Chinese restaurant, the WELSH HARP to a Tesco, and both the SEYMOUR and PARK END to yet more flats. There was only a muted outcry as these pubs were lost, but the Pig Inn The City is different. It began life in the early 16th century as the George, adding the prefix 'Lower' when another George opened further up Westgate Street. The interior is now in need of much tender loving care. However, this is a pub that could follow the example of Chez Rose next door and bring new life and excitement to this lower part of the Westgate Quarter. If the present owners are not prepared to upgrade the building as a pub, let them sell it to somebody who is. It would be an absolute crime to abandon a wonderful inn that has been in the hospitality business for five hundred years. We shall give our utmost support to any would-be owner who is prepared to refurbish the building as a traditional real ale pub.

CAMRA in GLOUCESTER

is a sub-branch of CAMRA Gloucestershire covering Post-code Areas GL1-4. Its *News, Views & Events* is published quarterly and is displayed with the *tippler* in better ale houses throughout the area. Current and previous editions may be viewed on the web at www.camraingloucesterg.org.uk

COMMITTEE : Alan Stephens (Chairman - Tel 410237), Dave Winnington (Treasurer & Bookings Sec - Tel 531075), Mark Richards (Webmaster), Trevor Miles (Clubs Contact), Margaret Wilkins, Jerry Ward, and 'The Brigadier'.

MINORITIES' INTERESTS : Ali Turner
BREWERY LIAISON : Kevin Phillips (Gloucester); Alan Stephens (May Hill)
Planning Watchdog : Rob Niblett

WELCOME ...

New on the scene since our last edition are Norman and staff at the DICK WHITTINGTON, Mariusj and Jana (from Gdansk) at the ENGLAND'S GLORY, David and Michelle at the STATION HOTEL, and Jo and Leanne at the UNION. We welcome them all and wish them the very best.

A LITTLE DAILY DOES YOU GOOD!

CAMRA is asking the government to review the recommended daily limits on alcohol intake. Major studies into the benefits of light to moderate alcohol consumption since the government guidelines were updated in 1995 indicate that such drinking can be beneficial in health terms. There is evidence now that alcohol in moderation can often provide a degree of protection against coronary heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, gallstones, senile dementia and Parkinson's disease. Now that IS a relief!

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE 'WATER POET'?

John Taylor, born 24 August 1580, was educated at the Crypt Grammar School before being apprenticed to a London waterman. He had a talent for composing easy rhymes which brought him extra income, but eventually he published many works. In 1613 he was commissioned to arrange a water pageant on the Thames to celebrate the marriage of Elizabeth, sister of Charles I, to Frederic of Bavaria and again in 1641 to welcome Charles I on his return from Scotland. At the outbreak of the Civil War he moved to Oxford where he took a public house and supported the royal cause by penning lampoons against the parliamentarians. For this service the king made him a Yeoman of the Guard. With the surrender of Oxford in 1645 he moved back to London and took another public house called The Crown in Phoenix Alley. After Charles I's execution in 1649 he changed the pub name to The Mourning Crown. For this he was declared a 'malignant' by parliament, and so he hung up his own portrait and renamed the pub yet again: this time The Poet's Head and added a description under the sign: 'There's many a head stands for a sign. Then, gentle Reader, why not mine?' Taylor's last visit to Gloucester was in 1652 when he stayed at the Lower George Inn (the recently closed Pig Inn The City). He died in 1653 and was buried at St Martin's-in-the-Fields. His widow kept the pub going until her own death.
(From Philp Moss's fine book, 'Historic Gloucester')

21st year -
over 370 members!

SUPPORT OUR LOCAL BREWERS ...

Pubs in Gloucestershire that have signed up to the CAMRA Local Ale initiative are listed in the tippler. Under the scheme the publican agrees in the main to stock at least one local ale, and we in return publicize this fact. Within the CAMRA in GLOUCESTER area the local breweries that qualify are:

§ Battledown	§ Nailsworth
§ Cotswold	Prescott
Spring	St George's
§ Festival	§ Severn Vale
Freeminer	§ Stanway
Gloucester	§ Stroud
Goff's	Uley
Kingstone	Whittington's
Malvern Hills	Wickwar
May Hill	Wye Valley
§ Gloucestershire Craft Brewers	

POSTLIP IS COMING...

Here's one way of looking beyond the cold and damp of winter: start thinking of our annual festival at Postlip Hall. The event this year will take place on the THIRD weekend in July, and the organisers will soon be looking for helpers: think about it - it's good fun! For those just wishing to be part of the crowd Dave will start taking bookings for the coach on 1 May.

Into our 21st Year ...

... forget Winter's gloom and enjoy!

- Tue 3 Jan CAMRA GLOUCESTERSHIRE MEET at the DICK WHITTINGTON. Come and make things happen at County Branch level. 8pm
- Wed 11 Jan SOCIAL MEET at the FOUNTAIN INN, Westgate St at 8pm followed by the OLD CROWN (to check if Martyn's secured the cask OBB yet!) and the DICK WHITTINGTON.
- Wed 18 Jan PUB OF THE YEAR PRESENTATION at the TUDOR ARMS, Shepherds Patch, Slimbridge (9pm) following a call at the OLD BADGER, Eastington to meet Elley Sainty in her new pub. Depart from the Imperial at 6.30pm. BOOK with DAVE.
- Thu 2 Feb Members' Night at TEWKESBURY WINTER ALES FESTIVAL Depart from the IMPERIAL at 7pm. BOOK with DAVE.
- Wed 8 Feb SOCIAL MEET at the WHITESMITHS ARMS, Southgate Street at 8pm followed by an invitational tour of the GLOUCESTER BREWERY.
- Wed 15 Feb SPA WINTER DELIGHTS - a Cheltenham treat! Depart from the Imperial at 6.30pm. BOOK with DAVE.
- Sat 3 Mar DAY OUT TO TEWKESBURY. Meet at Bus Station at 10.25am for the 1045 bus.
- Wed 14 Mar SOCIAL MEET at THE WATER POET, Eastgate St to enjoy the first night of the WETHERSPOON FESTIVAL. 8pm
- Wed 21 Mar Visit to STROUD BREWERY and after to the STAR INN, Whiteshill. Depart from the IMPERIAL at 6.30pm. BOOK with DAVE.

NB Pre-booking essential for all boxed events: pay in full for last minute cancellations.

STAY IN TOUCH...

'News, Views & Events' is no longer posted to CAMRA members. Those without email access need to pick a copy up in pubs that display 'the tippler'. Those with email access can read (and print) the news-sheet on-line, and, if we at CAMRA in GLOUCESTER have your email address, we'll tell you just as soon as it's available. Those whose addresses we have also receive our emailed monthly News Update! If you have not previously registered for updates (giving your address to CAMRA HQ is insufficient!) send your email address to camraingloster@aol.com. It pays to stay in touch!