

# NEWS, VIEWS & EVENTS



*The local REAL ALE SCENE  
as reported by  
CAMRA in GLOUCESTER*

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**ON-LINE  
EDITION**

## Twenty Years **YOUNG!**

It seems only yesterday that a group of us met at the OLD CROWN in Westgate Street to discuss the possibility of a regular get-together of CAMRA members in Gloucester. The date was 15 October 1991, and the Old Crown was then a thriving pub offering Sam Smith's Old Brewery Bitter and Museum Ale - each regarded as a pleasant change from the Big Six Brewers' fare at most other pubs in the City. Both beers were available in cask form, and the OBB was delivered in wooden kilderkins (18 gallon casks). How different things are today!

Till that meeting most CAMRA activity in the county had centred around Cheltenham with little active participation by Gloucester members. A search through the membership list in July 1991 showed that 49 CAMRA members had addresses in or close to Gloucester. We attempted to contact all, but with mixed results. Some were "too busy", some "not interested", some "gone away"! Thankfully, though, nine attended that first meet, and we were subsequently to form what was the first CAMRA sub-branch in Gloucestershire, the fore-runner of a system that now applies across the whole county.

Shortly afterwards we were joined by Stephen and Ruth who had previous close connections with the Loughborough Branch. They told us of activities that they had been used to up there, and Stephen was promptly installed as our first Social Secretary. The pattern of activities that he established - an away day on the first Saturday of the month, a social meet on the second Tuesday (now Wednesday), and an evening activity on the third or fourth Wednesday - has continued ever since. Today we can boast of having enjoyed 162 days out, 90 brewery visits and 55 evening mystery tours in our twenty years. We have had weekend tours to the North East and Bruges, and we have linked with other sub-branches for a number of events including seven highly successful Severn Cruises.

We have never considered organising our own beer festival, giving support instead to pubs and clubs that have shown initiative in this direction. We are doubly thankful, therefore, to the Gloucestershire Craft Brewers for filling a gap, and we very much hope that members - active and not-so-active - will fully support this year's Fest at the Farmers Club.

NATIONAL  
Cask Ale  
WEEK  
1st-9th OCTOBER 2011

**Ask YOUR landlord  
what he's doing about  
it ...**

CAMRA CELEBRATING  
40  
years  
OF CAMPAIGNING

**... but for us it's a  
mere 20!**

## *OH FOR SOME STABILITY!*

Much has happened on the pub scene in Gloucester during the 20 years of our existence! In 1991 we were about to go through the most disruptive and challenging decade in the whole history of the British pub. For many years the "big brewers", as we called them then, had been doing all in their power to grow ever bigger. Having killed off many smaller brewers and their products, they had even done their best to kill off the traditional British beers that had helped them to grow in the first place. However, what had happened over several decades hardly matched the upheaval that was now to take place during the 90s.

At our birth Gloucester had 93 pubs and hotel bars. No fewer than 43 of these were owned by Whitbread. Bass had 11, Courage and GradMet between them had 12, Allied had 4, Banks's 2, and Wadworth one. One entrepreneur, who cashed in on the growing popularity of real ale (thanks to CAMRA's campaigning!) was Michael Cannon whose Inn Leisure company had by then converted the Malt & Hops (now demolished), the wonderful Waterfront (now seeking a new purpose in life at the Quays), the Dick Whittington, the Golden Cross (now Robert Raikes's) and the Crown & Thistle (now Zest) into thriving ale establishments.

In 1991 the Government's Beer Orders were beginning to take effect. Whitbread closed two pubs and sold 15 - some to regional and family brewers (Wadworth's England's Glory, Arkells' Whitesmiths Arms, and Banks's Avenue, Fox & Elm, and Lower George, now the Pig Inn The City), but others were bought by the newly emerging pub companies (notably Discovery, later bought by Enterprise) that went on selling Whitbread products as though nothing had changed! Mike Cannon took Inn Leisure into Devenish (of Weymouth), closed the Devenish Brewery, and then sold out to Greenalls. His former pubs in the City went into decline as real ale was hit by a succession of marketing gimmicks - nitrokeg beers (Caffreys et al), alcopops (Hooch et al), Bacardi Breezers, etc etc ... the list continued, and still does!

In 1996 the trend away from real ale was bucked by the arrival of Wetherspoon's Regal superpub with its bargain ales and food and, thankfully, no musak! (OK, it's a Lloyds No 1 now!) Suddenly the City was besieged by rival companies wanting to open superpubs in just about every vacant building. The few that secured planning permission were the Old Bank (that soon became Spoofers and is now Wetherspoon's second pub, the Water Poet), Chicago Rock (that became Jumpin' Jaks and is now long closed), Whitbread's Hogshead (that started magnificently, went downhill fast and is now Sloanes), and Scottish & Newcastle's The Chambers (currently under threat, it would appear, from proposals to revamp Kings Square)!

In the meantime Mike Cannon was back in Gloucester where he established the headquarters of his growing Magic Pub Co in no less a building than the glorious New Inn. Having remodelled the ale bar and turned bedrooms into offices, he eventually sold out to Greene King, who placed the Inn on the market and then closed it. For months what had once been the major social centre of the City was a forlorn sight as appeals went out on the Internet for a saviour (can we expect the same now for the Fleece?). The Chapman Group eventually responded to the appeals, and ten years ago we were able to report that the New Inn then stood "alongside the Black Swan as a truly free house prepared to support small British craft brewers whose products are so very exciting". Sadly the Black Swan is now apartments, and the New Inn, despite recognition in the new Good Beer Guide, is less "truly free" than it once was! The Dick Whittington, also now in Chapman hands, enjoys a little more freedom, but for how much longer?

One especially sad aspect of the past 20 years has been the frequent turnover of landlords or landladies. Most pubgoers agree that success in the pub trade does not come overnight. It takes time, and every change of management resets the clock. With this in mind we must congratulate Tom at the Imperial, Lynn at the Great Western, and, away from the City centre, Catherine and David at the Golden Heart (Nettleton Bottom), Andrew and Joan at the Anchor (Epney) and Jackie at the Little Thatch (Quedgeley) for being there throughout our existence. Jackie, in fact, not only beats our 20 years: she beats CAMRA's 40 as well!

## 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 some previous editions may be viewed on the web at [www.camraingloucestergroup.org.uk](http://www.camraingloucestergroup.org.uk)

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

### DO HELP US TO CELEBRATE OUR 20TH!

On Page 4 you'll find a programme that extends the series of special activities worthy of our 20th Birthday year! It includes the normal range of Social Meets, Days-Out and Brewery Visits but with some significant firsts among them.

We had already planned to have a social meet again at the Water Poet during the Wetherspoon Autumn Beerfest. Past visits have been very well supported - usually with around 30 members present. Perhaps on this occasion by converting the evening into a kind of Birthday Party we can push that number up! DO COME, everybody, BUT DO call Dave if you intend joining us: that way we'll ensure that everybody gets a seat!

Then on Saturday 29 October we have been invited to the Butcombe Brewery. Our group is restricted to 35 (which is a lot more than the normal 16 that we take on brewery visits). It is an all-day trip: we shall aim to be at the Brewery by 11.30am and we shall stay until 2pm. We are working on ideas for a couple of stops on the way back with the aim of arriving in Gloucester in the early evening. If you are interested, please let Dave know and we'll keep you informed as we firm up arrangements.

### GLOUCESTER'S NOT ALONE IN HAVING GHOSTS!

In Niagara-on-the-Lake in Ontario, Canada, you will find the Angel Inn. It began life as The Harmonious Coach House in around 1790. The town was then known as Newark: it became the first capital of Upper Canada, and in 1793 its new Assembly passed an Act outlawing slavery - the first such law anywhere in the world. The Coach House was badly burnt in the War of 1812-14 and was rebuilt as the Angel Inn in 1815.

In May 1813 a Canadian militia officer, Captain Colin Swayze, was killed at the Coach House after he delayed joining the British retreat in order to see a young lady believed to be his true love. Surprised by American soldiers sent to search the Inn, he hid in an empty barrel in the cellar. The invaders used bayonets to prod into every corner and possible place of concealment, and the unlucky lover received a fatal wound.

Some believe the ghost of Captain Swayze is fated to walk the Inn at night, perhaps still longing for his love. There have been reports of noises coming from the empty dining room, re-arranged place settings, and other unexplained occurrences. It is said that his ghost will remain harmless, though, so long as the British flag flies over the Inn - a precaution that continues to be prudently taken by the proprietor!

← 20th year -  
over 370 members!

### SUPPORT OUR LOCAL BREWERS...

*Pubs in Gloucestershire that have signed up to the CAMRA LocAle 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	Prescott
§ Cotswold	St George's
	Spring
§ Festival	§ Severn Vale
Freeminer	§ Stanway
Goff's	§ Stroud
Kingstone	Uley
Malvern Hills	Whittington's
May Hill	Wickwar
§ Nailsworth	Wye Valley
§ Gloucestershire Craft Brewers	

### CHRISTMAS IS COMING...

After two most enjoyable Christmas Parties at the Pig Inn The City we have booked again for this year. Martin will arrange a selection of Christmas ales and some entertainment, and Kay and family will ensure that we are again very well fed. We'll have a raffle as usual. PLEASE BOOK with Dave so that we can assure you of a seat.

# It's our 20th Birthday Quarter ...

Fri 9 Sep **SOCIAL MEET** at the GLOUCESTER FARMERS CLUB at 8pm to coincide with the Gloucestershire Craft Brewers' 2nd Gloucester Beer Festival. Join us briefly inside and we'll keep the meeting short!

Wed 14 Sep **THREE PUBS, THREE BREWERS - A MYSTERY.** Depart from the Imperial at 6.30pm. **BOOK with DAVE.**

Sat 1 Oct **DAY-OUT TO BRISTOL.** Meet at Gloucester Rail Stn at 1025 for the 10.42 departure.

Wed 12 Oct Our **20TH BIRTHDAY PARTY** at the WETHERSPOON BEERFEST at the WATER POET. 8pm (See Page 3) **BOOK with DAVE.**

Thu 20 Oct **CAMRA GLOUCESTERSHIRE AGM** at the NEW INN, Northgate St at 7.30 for 7.45pm. Buffet.

Sat 29 Oct **GRAND 20TH BIRTHDAY DAY OUT.** Travel with us for a special invitation lunchtime visit to the BUTCOMBE BREWERY, Wrington, Somerset. (See Page 3) **BOOK with DAVE.**

Wed 9 Nov **SOCIAL MEET** at THE YORK, London Road. 8pm.

Wed 16 Nov **CHAIRMAN'S CHOICE.** The Old Man's 28 yet again! Depart from the Imperial at 6.30pm. **BOOK with DAVE**

Sat 3 Dec **DAY OUT TO LEDBURY.** Delightful small town with some excellent pubs. Meet at the Bus Stn at 1045 for the 1100 departure.

Wed 14 Dec **CHRISTMAS PARTY** at the PIG INN THE CITY, From 7.30pm. (see Page 3) **BOOK with DAVE.**

Wed 21 Dec A Festive **WORCESTERSHIRE WASS-ALE** Special taking in the National Trust's FLEECE INN at Bretforton and our old favourite, the CROWN & TRUMPET in Broadway. Depart from the Imperial at 6.30pm. **BOOK with DAVE.**

NB Pre-booking essential for all boxed events: last minute cancellations subject to full payment unless replacement(s) found.

## **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 send your email address to [camraingloster@aol.com](mailto:camraingloster@aol.com). It really pays to stay in touch!**