

**CAMRA
in
GLOUCESTER**

News & Views

on the REAL ALE scene in
and around the City

No 73

Autumn 2010

*includes
the tippler*

Think Glos ... Drink Glos!

The great success of the Gloucestershire Craft Brewers' Festival at the Gloucester Farmers' Club in early September provided for all who attended a timely reminder that there are plenty of superb beers brewed in our county. With 20 independent breweries (including 2 brew-pubs and 2 lager producers) every style of beer is available from a Gloucestershire brewer.

The county's oldest brewery is, of course, Donnington, which began brewing in 1865 and has virtually stood still ever since! This sole survivor from the Victorian era used to own 17 pubs. These have been reduced to 15, but the brewery has always supplied to a few independent outlets.

The birth of CAMRA in 1971, and especially of its festivals in 1975, led to an increased demand for tasteful beers that hadn't been filtered, pasteurised, packed in kegs, and served under gas pressure. Suddenly beers from the likes of Ruddles, King & Barnes, Shipstones, Harvey's, Marston's and Boddington's were in great demand. The national brewers, who came to be known as the Big Six, responded with some perfectly good cask products of their own, and in the early 1980s most of their pubs were eager to announce that they offered real ales. Sadly not all of their landlords were taught to look after the ales and serve them properly - a problem that equally sadly has never gone away: hence the need even today for the Good Beer Guide and for the Cask Marque accreditation system!

The mid-1980s produced a few entrepreneurs from within the industry who saw an opportunity to produce more distinctive cask ales, which they could sell through free houses or perhaps through a single pub of their own. Uley is an example of the former, Wye Valley in Hereford the latter. Both have just celebrated their silver anniversary.

In 1989 the government introduced the Beer Orders, which permitted tenants of the big brewers' pubs to take a guest ale directly from an independent brewer. Wickwar (1990), Freeminer (1992), Stanway (1993) and Goff's (1994) came into being at this time.

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CAMRA Gloucestershire's

BEERS of the YEAR 2010

as judged at the Postlip Festival

Mild ... Cotswold Spring Old Sodbury
Mild

Bitter ... Wickwar Coopers WPA

Best Bitter ... Cotswold Spring Old
English Rose
(Runner-up ... Severn Vale
Dursley Steam Bitter)

Strong Bitter ... Goff's White Knight

Porter/Stout ... Severn Vale Severn
Sins

Barley Wine ... Battledown 4 Kings

Overall Champion ...
Cotswold Spring Old Sodbury Mild
(brewing re-commences in November)

Congratulations to all!

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However, as we probably all know, the national brewers refused to be dictated to by the government: they split their activities between brewing and pub ownership, and the now highly unpopular pub companies - or pubcos - came into being. The independent brewer now needed to own his own pubs or discover other means of disposing of his product. Some like Freeminer eventually came to specialise in bottled beers.

The new century produced a different type of entrepreneur - the brewer who didn't have visions of grandeur but wanted to spend his time doing what he felt good at, simply making good exciting beer. North Cotswold, an 'extreme' brewer, arrived in 1999 followed by Whittingtons in 2003, Battledown, Cotswold Lager, Cotswold Spring and Severn Vale in 2005, Nailsworth and Stroud in 2006, Festival in 2007, Halfpenny in 2008, Prescott in 2009, and Hetty Pegler in 2010. All of these produce excellent beers that deserve greater exposure to the drinking public. Moreover, at a time when each of us should be considering carbon miles, their breweries are only just down the road. We, the drinkers of Gloucestershire owe it to these brave entrepreneurs to make ourselves aware of their products and to press for some at least to be made available in pubs in which we regularly drink. CAMRA's LocALe scheme is designed to achieve just that, and on page 3 we list the breweries (not all actually in Gloucestershire) that we consider to be "local" to Gloucester itself.

At the same time it is good that the brewers themselves are prepared to bring their beers to the public, either at the annual Food and Drink Festival in Cheltenham or at their own festival in Gloucester. Perhaps, one day they will be able to persuade a millionaire to buy a City centre free house that will sell only local ales!

THINK GLOUCESTER! DRINK IN GLOUCESTER!

Walking down Westgate Street on a sunny morning recently, we all commented on its attractiveness - the mix of architectural styles, the absence of traffic, the growing number of tables and chairs outside pubs and shops selling food, the floral decorations, and the number of people milling about. Fast forward to early evening, and there is no change except that the people have all gone home! It's much the same throughout the City centre except, of course, when the "night time economy" (mainly in Eastgate Street) kicks in towards the weekend. That apart, the City, let's face it, gives the impression of being dead! And yet there is little reason for this. There may not be the range of restaurants to be found in Cheltenham or a venue comparable with its Town Hall, but there are good restaurants, there is the Guildhall, and there most certainly a fine range of pubs - and nearly all sell real ale! It was good to see in The Citizen Lyn Cindery, the City's Ghost Lady, encouraging people to make greater use of the City centre, and it's even better to hear that businessmen and publicans are planning more actively to promote the inner core of our City.

THE PUB SCENE IN GL1-4

We're delighted to note that there is little cause for concern currently on our local pub scene. Even the PARK END (Admiral) in Gloucester has been granted a stay of execution. This large Victorian pub near the Park with its fine lounge bar fittings (which locals now claim to be not original!) was to have been demolished or redeveloped. Darrel Kirby, author of *The Story of Gloucester Pubs*, got The Citizen interested, and it is the paper that has now discovered that a listed frontage prevents the work going ahead. Presumably it will remain a pub ... at least for the time being! There are new faces at the BLACK HORSE at Cranham: David and Julie have retired after over 24 years, but they are not selling the pub. They continue to live next door with Chris and Carolyn running the pub: nothing will change. In the City centre, it's really good to see the NEW INN and DICK WHITTINGTON (both Chapman) with excellent and settled managements: these fine historic buildings deserve to be among the top-notch pubs of the City (we'll say nothing here about the carpet in the New Inn!). Residents in London Road are delighted to see the YORK (was the York House, now Free) open again and doing well: Hooky and Young's Bitter were on when we visited. Sadly we missed the departure of Vicky from the ENGLAND'S GLORY (Wadworth) next door: family reasons caused her to leave after a long time there (we'll always remember her in the days of the Frenchman, Alban). Another lady who has done a good job and is now leaving the pub trade is Debbie at the RED LION (Enterprise) in Arlingham - a pub that villagers feared might be lost a few years back. Well done, Debbie, for boosting the business. Gordon and Ann have vacated the FOX & ELM (Marstons) in Tuffley, and rumours are that it will become an Indian pub. Meanwhile in Eastgate Street the LIBERTY BAR & DINER has opened (next to TNT) and has two real ales.

CAMRA IN GLOUCESTER

19th year - 370 members!

is a sub-branch of CAMRA Gloucestershire covering Post-code Areas GL1-4. Its *News & Views* is sent quarterly with the *tippler* to local CAMRA members, and it is made available in better ale houses for the general public: current and previous editions may be viewed on the web at www.camraingloucester.org.uk

COMMITTEE : Alan Stephens (Chairman - Tel 410237), Dave Winnington (Treasurer & Bookings Sec - Tel 531075), Chris Jones (Webmaster - Tel 545085), Chris Swinnerton, and The Brigadier.

THE NEW 'BIBLE' IS OUT ...

The Good Beer Guide 2011 was launched on 16 September, and our congratulations go to mine hosts and hostesses at the following pubs in GL1-4: the CROSS KEYS, FOUNTAIN, LINDEN TREE, PIG INN THE CITY and WATER POET in Gloucester, the GREYHOUND in Longlevens, the GOLDEN HEART at Nettleton Bottom, the OLD FORGE at Whitminster, and the TUDOR ARMS at Slimbridge. Well done to them all. Copies of the Guide will be available at the CAMRA member price at our social meets in October and November.

HELP!

The number of clubs in and around Gloucester that sell real ale continues to grow, eg Gloucester Farmers Club, Gala Club, Abbeydale Social Club, Churchdown Club, Hucclecote Social Club, Longlevens Social Club. We need a volunteer member to visit these clubs on an occasional basis in order to establish a link between CAMRA and the clubs and to keep our committee informed of their real ale credentials. Could that be you? Call or email, please!

HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS ...

... to the Gloucestershire Craft Brewers and the management of the Gloucester Farmers' Club on putting together a really first-class festival that's bound to be repeated in 2011. See you there!

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	
Blue Bear	St George's	
§ Cotswold	§ Severn Vale	
	Spring	§ Stanway
§ Festival	§ Stroud	
Freeminer	Uley	
Goff's	Whittington's	
Kingstone	Wickwar	
Malvern Hills	Wye Valley	
§ Nailsworth		

§ Gloucestershire Craft Brewers

INCREDIBLE JOHN...

Those who know John Barnard, the much loved octogenerian (a long word for us!) landlord of the Red Lion at Ampney St Peter, will be delighted to know that he has recovered from his recent illness. He must, though, take seriously his doctor's orders: "Give up lifting barrels, no heavy gardening and, please, give up playing rugby." It's a hard life!

THE STORY OF BEER AND PUBS - 2. IN ROMAN AND SAXON TIMES ...

People have been consuming alcohol since far back in prehistoric times and when the Romans invaded Britain they found the inhabitants enjoying ale, which was made without hops and consequently was sweeter than today's beer. Rich Britons also imported wine from the Continent.

Places to drink in the Roman world ranged from the humble wine-shop or taberna (the original 'tavern') through simple inns, where one could find a bed for the night, a meal, and a change of horse, to grand road-houses where officials and rich merchants could stay in comfort, enjoy a good meal, stable their horses and find a blacksmith. In many inns maids doubled as prostitutes! Guides to inns were available giving distances between inns together with little picture symbols indicating their facilities.

Things were more primitive in Anglo-Saxon England. The English drank ale and mead, which was made of fermented honey and water. They brewed at home and also drank in alehouses, about which little is known except that priests were forbidden by the Church from frequenting them. The government also tried to limit them to one per village. These dingy drinking dens were, of course, the ancestors of the British pub ... which now is under threat!

AUTUMN

*Season of mists ...
and mellow fruitfulness*

Wed 22 Sep **COTSWOLD WAY - PART 2** - the continuation of our visits to pubs on or near the long distance trail. Depart from the **IMPERIAL**, Northgate St at 6.30. **BOOK** with DAVE.

Sat 2 Oct Day Out to **WESTON-SUPER-MARE**. MEET at Rail Station by 9.20am for 9.46 departure.

Wed 13 Oct **SOCIAL MEET** at FOSTERS ON THE DOCKS. 8pm

TUE 19 Oct CAMRA Gloucestershire **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** at the **NEW INN**, Northgate Street. 8pm. **Free buffet**.

Wed 27 Oct **COTSWOLD WAY - PART 3**. A little further in our quest to reach Bath by next Autumn! Depart from the **IMPERIAL**, Northgate St at 6.30. **BOOK** with DAVE.

Tue 2 Nov County Branch Meet at the **FOUNTAIN INN**. All welcome! 8pm

Sat 6 Nov **BATH ... by train!** MEET at Rail Station by 9.20am for 9.46 departure.

Wed 10 Nov **SOCIAL MEET at the WATER POET**, Eastgate St. To coincide with the Wetherspoon Autumn Fest (27 Oct - 14 Nov). 8pm

Wed 17 Nov **CHAIRMAN'S CHOICE!** Trust 'Ageing AI' to pick a good spot for an evening out! Depart from the **IMPERIAL**, Northgate St at 6.30. **BOOK** with DAVE.

Sat 4 Dec A pre-Christmas trip to **BRISTOL**. MEET at Rail Stn by 10.20am for 10.42 departure.

Wed 8 Dec **SUB-BRANCH CHRISTMAS PARTY** at the **PIG INN THE CITY** from 7.30pm

Wed 22 Dec **CITY SEARCH FOR THE CHRISTMAS ALES!** Start from the **NEW INN** at 8pm.

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

PLEASE DON'T MISS THIS YEAR'S AGM ...

Tony Aburrow is retiring from Chairmanship of our branch, CAMRA Gloucestershire. The AGM will be our opportunity to thank him for his services over the past 14 years. An election for his successor is already guaranteed, but there is still time for more candidates to come forward. The meeting will be an excellent opportunity to look back over our achievements of the past decade and to set our sights on the future. Discussion at last year's meeting became quite animated: let's hope there's more of the same! Be there! There'll be good ales and a buffet.

Printed at the World of Stationery, Kings Walk, GLOUCESTER

September 2010. Our expressed views may not represent those of CAMRA Ltd or of its officials.