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LONDON DRINKER

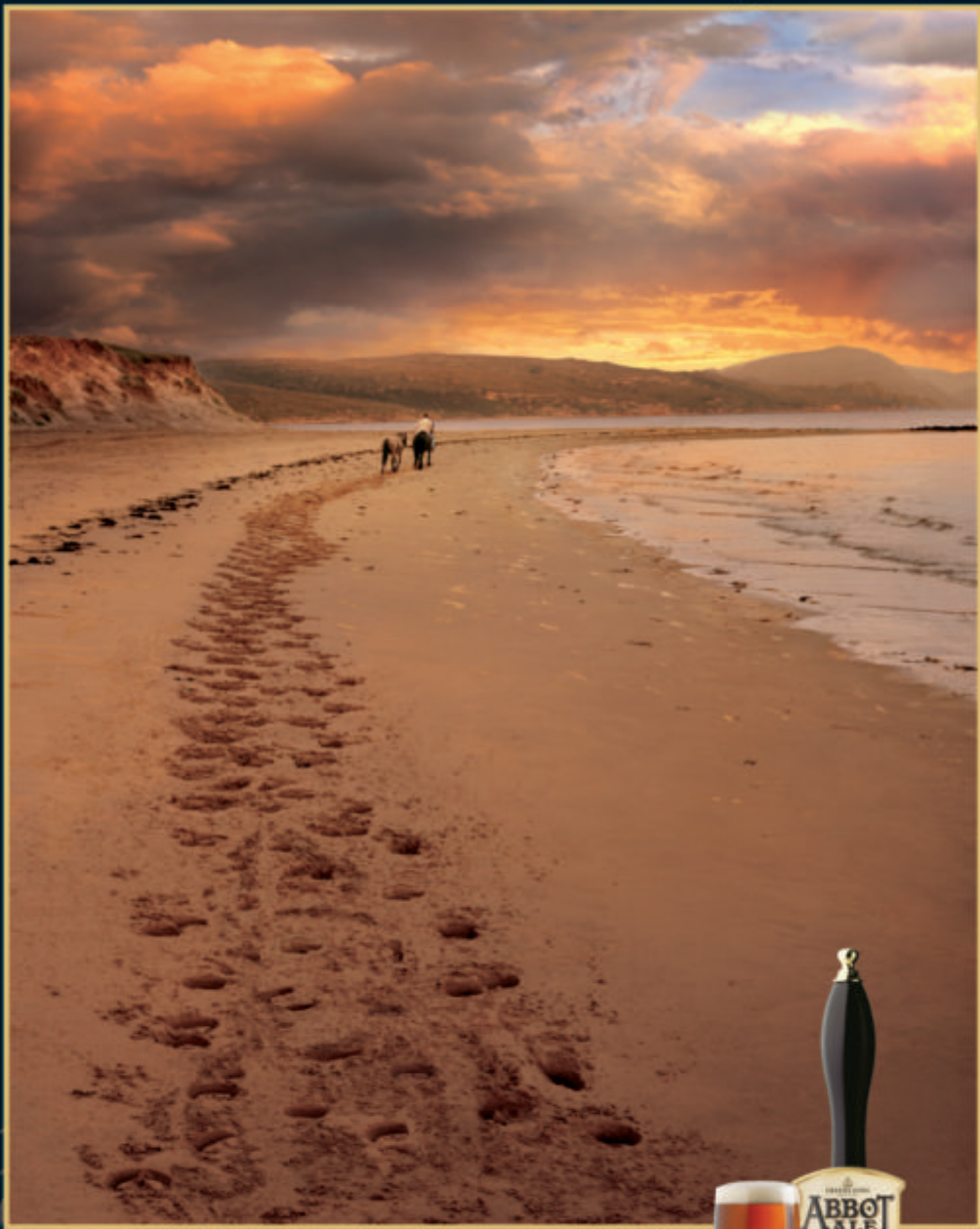
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The Forester, West Ealing (see page 43)

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London Drinker is published by Mike Hammersley on behalf of the London Branches of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale Limited, and edited by Geoff Strawbridge.

Material for publication should preferably be sent by e-mail to geoff@coherent-tech.co.uk.

Press releases should be sent by email to Tony Hedger, ldnews@btinternet.com

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Pubs, pricing and responsible drinking

A week before the Chancellor's latest budget increase in beer duty, CAMRA's annual Conference carried an emergency motion:

'This Conference condemns the response of leading politicians in rejecting the Chief Medical Officer for England's proposal to introduce minimum unit alcohol pricing in England to prevent irresponsible alcohol price promotions on the grounds that it would hit at the majority of responsible drinkers rather than targeting the minority of irresponsible drinkers. Conference supports proposals from the Scottish Government to introduce minimum pricing.'

This Conference instructs the National Executive and all CAMRA Branches to make every effort to point out that the Government's current policy of the alcohol duty escalator hits the responsible majority of drinkers who drink in pubs and has a minimal impact on drinkers who source their alcohol from the off trade and point out that the Chief Medical Officer's proposal for a minimum unit alcohol price would not increase prices in well run community pubs but would prevent the use of alcohol as a loss leader in the off trade.'

Proposing the motion on behalf of CAMRA's National Executive, Campaigns strategy chairman Bob Jones cited evidence that supermarkets were now selling alcohol on average at a seventh of pub prices, and that domestic violence fuelled by off-trade alcohol now accounted for the biggest increase in violent crime

statistics.

Back in September, when launching the latest Good Beer Guide, Roger Protz spelt out why 36 pubs were closing every week: 'People are abandoning their locals because they can buy cheap supermarket beer at a fraction of the price charged by pubs'. At the same time, the Department of Health noted in its 'Safe, Sensible, Social' consultation that the scale of harmful drinking and associated NHS costs had risen as beer consumption had declined in favour of stronger drinks and as alcohol off-sales from supermarkets had become so much cheaper than on-sales in pubs.

Making all alcohol more expensive through the Chancellor's duty escalator only widens the price gap as supermarket chains can afford to absorb the tax increases, while most pubs have no alternative but to pass them on to the customer, topped up with VAT. As Bob said at the conference, support for the escalator shows total, arrant hypocrisy.

Such hypocrisy is well illustrated by Government's recent response to the All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group Community Pub Inquiry:

'While there is good evidence that cheap alcohol is linked to people drinking more and subsequent harm to their health, it is important that any Government interventions reduce harm without impacting unduly on the majority of responsible drinkers.'

With the 50p per unit minimum that SIBA had recommended, a pint of beer at 4% ABV would cost £1.14. As Sir Liam Donaldson tried to explain, such a minimum price would not touch the pockets of responsible drinkers paying normal pub prices: most London pubs these days charge nearer £3.

Wetherspoon's are the exception and, sadly, there are many Londoners who can afford to drink in no other pubs. Moreover, they often charge as little for strong beers as they do for session beers and they double

up spirit measures for only £1. I enjoy many of their pubs and appreciate their competitiveness, but of course they can only benefit as other pubs close, and more of those are likely to do so if thirsty CAMRA members take up Wetherspoon's offers.

I would argue that we can either listen to what Sir Liam Donaldson and his departmental colleagues are saying, and help to campaign for responsible drinking, or we can have none of it and campaign for cheap alcohol instead. In the first case, we offer the promotion of pubs and their

cask ale as part of the solution to the perceived problem of increasing alcohol abuse and we may, at some point, expect our arguments to be taken seriously. In the second, we simply become part of the perceived problem, we lack credibility and our arguments deserve to be dismissed as special pleading.

It seems to me that CAMRA members have made the right decision in carrying the Conference motion.



Geoff Strawbridge

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CAMRA Greater London 2009 Pub of the Year Competition

This year's competition for the award of CAMRA's Greater London Pub of the Year includes three previous winners: the **Bricklayer's Arms** in Putney, the **Dog & Bell** in Deptford and the **Robin Hood & Little John** in Bexleyheath, and five other previous entrants: the **Britannia**, Barking; the **Claret Free House**, Addiscombe; the **Red Lion**, Ealing; the **White Horse**, Parsons Green; and the **Willoughby Arms**, Kingston.

Four local Pub of the Year winners enter for the

first time: the **Beehive**, Lower Edmonton; the **Bree Louise**, Euston; the **Dispensary**, Aldgate; and the **Roebuck**, Hampton Hill.

The current, 2008 Pub of the Year, the Trafalgar in, South Wimbledon is ineligible to defend its title as SW London Branch rules do not allow the same pub to win Pub of the Year two years running.

Contact your local CAMRA Branch (see pages 38 and 39) if you would like to join their travelling judging panels to help decide the 2009 winner.

STILL MAKING HISTORY - SE LONDON'S 2009 PUB OF THE YEAR

The old dog is still winning awards. That's to say Deptford's Dog & Bell is once again SE London's pub of the year. It is at least 186 years old and this great boozer deserves at least some of its history to be told.

William Boyes ran a victualling business on the short length of Dock Street in 1749 which was also then known then as Dog Street. Situated on the other side of the street from Deptford Dockyard, he supplied ships' biscuits (which were made in Deptford) and other victuals, plus small beer which was presumably for shipwrights etc who worked on site. In fact the dockyard's victualling yard wall, though built later, is still partly in place and dominates the view from the front of the pub today. Back then in the 1700s Deptford Dockyard had the highest output of navy ships in the country, no mean achievement.

By 1823 the victualling premises was replaced



by an alehouse named *The Dog and Bell* which sold beer to workers from the dockyard and round about. The publican at this time was David Archer, who unfortunately soon fell foul of the law, being reported in 1825 to a Justice of the Peace by a constable for "being kept open at

twelve at night and at that hour liquor had been served to riotous parties who inhabited a disorderly house nearby".

At least three publicans later, the 1860s saw the building of a Royal Marine barracks on the massive dockyard site. The alehouse became a tavern, which allowed the sale of beers and wines, and it became *The Royal Marine*. One can guess who its intended clientele were. But by 1872 the dockyard and its military presence were at an end, and rather ignobly the launching slips were converted to sheep and cattle pens, for much of the yard became the 'Foreign Cattle Market', which also had a huge on-site slaughterhouse.

In the late 1800s this area of Deptford and its inhabitants were being criticised by both the temperance movement and other moral reformers; however the pub remained open. In 1913 the never very financially successful cattle market closed. The dockyard was changed again during the subsequent world wars to wharfage and was renamed Convoy's Wharf. Today the wharf is euphemistically described as 'a riverside regeneration opportunity', but the pub just keeps on going.

The Dog & Bell's present licensees and owners, Charlie and Eileen Gallagher have been there since 1988. Before them the pub was part of the Truman chain and still called the Royal Marine, as shown in Charlie's 1952 photograph, but they turned it into the award-winning real ale freehouse that it is today. In 1994 it won its first CAMRA Pub of the Year award, and has since received numerous and diverse other commendations. Part of its secret would seem to be its consistent, modest and uncomplicated approach, with an emphasis on great ales. The Dog & Bell truly is a special example of Deptford's unique character, a complex mixture of new elements with survivals from the past.

Julian Stone

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Pubs of the Year

TEN YEAR TROPHY FOR BEXLEYHEATH LOCAL



Branch chairman, Martyn Nicholls, presented the Bexley Branch Pub of the Year certificate on 13 May to Ray Johnson of the Robin Hood & Little John in Lion Road, Bexleyheath. This is the 10th consecutive year that the Robin Hood has been the winner and to commemorate the event Ray also received a CAMRA 'Pulling Power' mirror.

THE BRICKLAYER'S ARMS BUILDS ON ITS SUCCESS



Staff at the Bricklayer's Arms in Putney are celebrating becoming SW London Pub of the Year for a second time. Branch chairman, Martin Butler made the 2008 award presentation on 29 April to a packed pub of regulars and CAMRA members.



The Roebuck

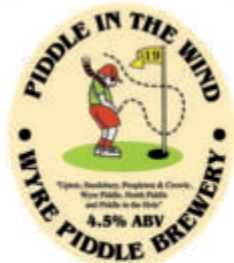
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wetherspoon

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Thanks for nothing

The recent budget saw the expected 2% increase in duty on beer and nothing else. It could have been worse but then it could have been better. The British Beer & Pub Association may have gone slightly over the top when they commented, "Today's Budget signs the death warrant for thousands of Britain's pubs and for tens of thousands of British jobs" but certainly an opportunity was missed to acknowledge the current perilous state of the pub trade by introducing something more imaginative than the blunderbuss 'duty escalator'.

An outbreak of common sense

The well respected 'think tank', the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), supported by CAMRA, has produced a report called 'Pubs and Places – The Social Value of Community Pubs'.

This is a valuable independent assessment of what is a complicated set of mixed messages from the Government, the trade, the health lobby and all. The headline is that blanket 'one size fits all' policies regarding regulation and taxation must be stopped and the vital role that pubs play in their communities should be rewarded, not punished.

Amongst the recommendations are a beer duty freeze, minimum unit pricing of alcohol, and 50% rate relief for pubs at the centre of their communities. It also looks at pubcos and suggests that the relationship between the companies and their tenants be improved, not least by a mandatory and transparent code of conduct for the calculation of rents.

The author, senior research fellow Rick Muir, said, "The research shows that community pubs aren't just places to drink but also places where people meet their

neighbours; where local clubs hold meetings and events; and which support many important local services such as village post offices and general stores." CAMRA's Chief Executive, Mike Benner, commented: "The Government needs to recognise the benefit well run community pubs bring to society and reward those that deliver community benefit". Even Alcohol Concern said that it supported IPPR and CAMRA's efforts to improve retail standards.

I wonder if complimentary copies have been sent to 10 and 11 Downing Street and if they have, whether they will be read. If you want a copy – and it is very readable – try the website www.ippr.org.

Health and welfare

At their recent Members' Weekend at Eastbourne, CAMRA condemned the rejection by both main political

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SPBW London Pub of the Year 2007



The Pembury Tavern in the 1890s

MORE GREAT SUMMER ALES FROM WETHERSPOON



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parties of the Chief Medical Officer's proposal for the minimum pricing for alcohol by unit. Although the alcohol units concept is not perfect, it would control 'loss-leader' and ridiculously cheap pricing in the off-trade without hitting responsible drinkers in the controlled environment of the well run pub. Remember the £3.39 bottles of Frosty Jack that I mentioned last issue? What publican would sell those for consumption on their premises? Alas, both main parties appear to be somewhat reluctant to take any action or voice any view that might offend the big supermarket chains.

Recently, in the Farlington district of Portsmouth, a Sainsbury store has its licence suspended for two days because of incidences of under-age selling of alcohol. Sgt Wendie Douglas of the local police commented: *"Just because you are big does not mean you can get away with it"*. What do you say to that then, Messrs Brown and Cameron?

Whilst CAMRA has been wary of the health lobby, it is comforting to note that our stance has support from that direction. In evidence to the all-party House of Commons Health Select Committee, Professor Ian Gilmore, President of the Royal College of Physicians, blamed supermarket deals for binge drinking and for the habit of young people drinking at home before going out to bars and clubs. His view was that there was overwhelming evidence that a minimum price would affect only heavy drinkers. Whilst the supermarket price of a bottle of cheap cider would rise five-fold, it would not affect the price of a pint in a pub. He added, *"I think the biggest change in drinking habits in this country is buying from supermarkets at heavily discounted prices and drinking relatively quietly at home and developing either dependency or physical problems. It's never been*

cheaper in real terms than it currently is and it's never been more available."

In fairness, I must add that Professor Gilmore also questioned the effect of extended opening hours but as regards community pubs, we will have to differ, simply because where there has been any extension, it has only been for two or three hours a week.

In reply, Richard Dodd from the representative body for supermarkets, the British Retail Consortium, said, *"There is no relation between price and irresponsible consumption. All you will do by changing the law is penalise the vast majority of people who buy alcohol as part of their regular weekly shop and consume it perfectly responsibly. A minimum price will do nothing about irresponsible consumption, which is to do with culture and education."*

A spokesman for the Department of Health said: *"Alcohol is one of the most challenging public health issues we face. We are working harder than ever to reduce alcohol-related hospital admissions, and to help those who regularly drink too much or are dependent on alcohol."* As Professor Gilmore also commented, it was unfortunate that the Government's campaign against 'binge-drinking' started at the same time as the change to the licensing rules and therefore produced a mixed message – but not as mixed as their refusal to criticise the supermarkets.

Law and order

Sadly, the 'bash the pub' brigade are still with us and in particular, in Oldham, Lancashire (I refuse to call it Greater Manchester when there is still a Lancashire County cricket team). Trading Standards have decided to review the licences of all of the town's 22 central pubs and clubs. They are looking to introduce such refinements as customers having to form a queue to be served, with the queue being

controlled by a 'door supervisor' and not more than two drinks being served per visit to the bar. Pubs will also be expected to pay for at least two police officers during promotions and promotions are to be severely limited, with no drinks for vouchers or tickets, discounts over 20% or 'all you can drink for £10' deals.

I believe that it makes sense to limit the more extreme promotions but treating customers like cattle can only lead to trouble, not avoid it. It seems however that there are doubts as to whether Oldham Council has the legal powers to impose these conditions. Watch this space...

Punch reduce debts

According to the *Morning Advertiser*, Punch Taverns has stabilised trading in both its leased and managed estates. In addition, two-thirds into its financial year, they have repaid £318 million of their overall debt – reported to be £4.6 billion – at a cost of £203 million.

The debt repayments are however being funded by the sale of pubs, and not just any pubs. These are what I would call the Crown Jewels of Punch's estate and some have been sold for less than the amount that they are valued at in Punch's accounts, although a Punch spokesman explained that others were being sold above book value and the transactions would even out.

Rather than list the sales here, I have listed them as others' acquisitions below.

Further measures include cutting 100 jobs and a pay freeze for all staff except bar staff. Their statement on the subject said, *"As part of our overhead cost review, we have taken the decision not to review salaries this year for all head office and salaried pub teams"*. This specifically includes senior management but it added: *"...we will be making some adjustment to our bonus schemes*

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THE 'STARS AND STRIPES' TO FLY OVER SW6

The White Horse, that stalwart champion of real ale in Parsons Green, hosts its second American Beer Festival this July.

Recent winner of CAMRA's West London Pub of the Year and named as the *Times*' Number One London Pub, the White Horse is hoping to repeat the success of last year's similarly themed event. Timed to celebrate

Independence Day, the fest kicks off on Friday July 3rd and will carry on throughout the weekend.

Ben Lockwood, a manager at the White Horse, says "We hope to engage customers with some craft beers from America to extinguish the myth that all American beer is tasteless.

"The tremendous choice will include cask ales from the Sierra Nevada, Victory and Stone Breweries. 'Stone' alone is offering 'Smoked Porter' with vanilla beans in the cask, 'Pale Ale' with coriander and 'Arrogant Bastard' with extra oak chips in the cask. Other keg beers will include a choice from the Goose Island, Flying Dog, Anchor, Great Divide and Left Hand Breweries. For the lighter touch there's 'Victory Prima Pils'. 'Stone' are putting extra dry hops in the casks to help them arrive in tip-top condition.

"To complement these great ales we've proudly organised for a very special 320 pint sized whisky cask from Greenwich's Meantime Brewery, filled with their Special London Porter. Alastair Hook, Brewer of the Year 2008, will be on hand to mark the start of this beer festival by



tapping Britain's rarest beer. A definite must for all beer enthusiasts, and just adds another dimension to the beer range on offer to our customers that weekend. On top of all that there is going to be a selection of English Ales using American hops, like



like Saltaire's 'Cascade' and Brodies' 'Californian'.

Alastair Hook, Brewmaster and founder of Meantime, said "We are great fans of the hugely innovative beers being produced by the world's most imaginative brewers. We are delighted that the White Horse have let us throw down the gauntlet to the American brewers by giving drinkers a

comparative taste of an extremely traditional beer, a six-month old porter vatted in the original London brewing style, and brewed with a little imagination of our own."

As you would expect from the White Horse, the beer quaffing will be accompanied by appropriate live music from 'The Steelers' on Friday night, and there will be live barn dancing on Saturday Night with 'Cut A Shine'.

Additionally there will be a book signing by author of *Hops and Glory* Pete Brown, as well as guest appearances from respected beer journalists Ben McFarland and Tom Sandham.



where we feel this is necessary". Oh yes?

Fuller's expand

Fullers have been prominent in buying pubs from Punch. They purchased six formerly Spirit managed houses in all, for £21.1 million, reportedly £4.5 million less than the book value. The pubs include the Old Mitre, Ely Place, the Scarsdale, Kensington, the Queens Head, Brook Green (near my office – Yippee!) plus, in a separate deal, the Roundhouse, Covent Garden. These purchases bring Fuller's total managed pubs and hotels estate to 163 and the total estate size, including leased and tenanted pubs, to 366. Michael Turner, Chairman of Fuller's, said that these purchases were *"an indication of Fuller's commitment to expanding their estate with the very best pubs when the opportunities arise"*. Managed houses boss, Simon Emery added, *"We know these pubs very well and identified them as pubs we'd love to have"*.

On the beers front, Gales Butser is to move from being a regular to a seasonal beer whilst Seafarers Ale will now become an all-year-round brew. A donation to the Seafarers charity will continue to be made from each barrel sold.

The Brewery Shop reopened after refurbishment in March. The official opening was performed by Oz Clarke in the company of Head Brewer John Keeling and Chairman Michael Turner. If ever you visit the shop and park by the river, do check the tide table...

One point that occurred to me recently is that although Fuller's are looking to become a national brand, London Pride especially, they are not playing down their London identity. I'm sure that various marketing experts will have told them that a London connection would be damaging to sales anywhere north of Watford or west of Reading; so good on

them for being proud of their roots.

Young's hold their fire

There are no reports of Youngs buying any Punch pubs, which is odd because they still have funds from the sale of the Wandsworth site. Meanwhile, the redevelopment there appears to be on hold and there were 'to let' signs on parts of the building when I passed by recently. Their partners in the W&Y Brewing Company, Wells, have acquired 17 pubs from Punch at an undisclosed price.

Rum doings at Sheps

Shepherd Neame have taken a total of 13 pubs from Punch in a £15 million deal which brings their tied estate to 378. The best known of their recent purchases was acquired from a private source, however. This is the Jamaica Wine House, one of the City's most atmospheric pubs which Sheps have repainted and redecorated throughout, enhancing its Victorian architecture, including an oak-panelled bar, high partitions and ornate ceilings.

The pub is hidden in St



Michael's Alley, amongst the courts and alleys off Cornhill and Lombard Street and started life in 1652 as one of London's first coffee houses, counting Samuel Pepys among its earliest patrons. Must see if he mentions it in his

diary...

Sheps report reduced profits for the six months to December despite a 6.7% increase in beer sales by volume, especially in its London pubs.

News from Wetherspoons

JDW have announced that they will not be passing on any increases arising from the budget, even though this may cost them £14 million. Chief Executive John Hutson commented, *"We don't think customers are in a state of mind to take higher prices in the pub"*. The 99p per pint promotion has however come to an end. Ruddles Best now sells at £1.29 a pint but a Greene King tenant was quoted in the *Morning Advertiser* as complaining that, even at that price, Wetherspoons are still selling it almost as cheaply as he could buy it. JDW's like-for-like sales recently increased by 0.5% in the February to April period and they are looking to an annual profit for the year ending July of £58 million.

One sour note has crept in, however. The complimentary biscuit with hot drinks has disappeared. Chairman Tim Martin, who often drinks tea or coffee in his visits to up to ten of his pubs a day, commented that this was saving his waistline – although he conceded that the Abbot might also have some part to play.

Wetherspoons won their legal action against their former property agents, Van de Burg and Christian Braun. It appears that the agents, who were acting as JDW's 'outsourced' property-finding operation, found a number of sites which they offered to other companies instead of giving JDW first refusal, as their contract required. Mr Justice Peter Smith was reported to have found Tim Martin to be 'impressive' both as a witness and a businessman. In turn, Mr Martin commented: *"We are delighted. A lot of people think that anything goes in the*

property market and this shows that's not true". JDW are said to have been awarded £17.5 million in damages.

Pubs to supermarkets

Alas, if only what Tim Martin said was so, especially given the number of pubs that are sold with restrictive covenants that prevent future owners from reopening them as pubs.

Perhaps more worrying is the acquisition of pubs to be turned into supermarkets. This is an attractive proposition because as the premises are already licensed to sell food and alcohol, no change of use application is required. The physical conversion still requires planning permission, however, and Tesco reportedly lodged ten applications in the first three months of the year alone. Tesco denied that they were targeting pubs and said that they "*look at sites on merit*". Costcutter

however admitted that they had recognised the potential of pub sites and were looking at some 30 to 40 possible ones around the UK.

The anti-pubco campaign, Fair Pint, claimed that both Punch and Enterprise were actively selling sites to supermarket chains with specific restrictive covenants preventing the sale of draught beer but both companies denied this. The Federation of Licensed Victuallers commented on the irony of supermarket chains buying up pubs that they helped put out of business.

'Stuff the Supermarkets'

Tony Brookes, owner of the Head of Steam chain, is reintroducing his 'Stuff the Supermarkets' campaign. The idea is to sell take-away bottled beer cheaply to regular customers so that they do not buy from supermarkets. Mr Brooks tried to

get CAMRA to adopt his idea as policy at their recent AGM but he failed because people did not like the name and the image that it presented. That said, I can see a lot of merit in the concept as a sort of 'loyalty card' scheme.

Around the trade

SIBA has changed its name to the Society of Independent Brewers. It has also decided to limit membership to breweries producing up to 200,000 hectolitres (no, I can't work it out either) which means that firms like Fullers and Shepherd Neame can only now be associate members. This is to bring them in line with the European definition of a small brewer.

SIBA's leader, Julian Grocock of Castle Rock Brewery came in at No. 30 in the Pubcan's 'Power List' of the 50 people who are making the most impact on the pub trade today. CAMRA's Chief Executive, Mike Benner came in

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No. 24. Then again, Alistair Darling came in at No. 2 so be careful what you read into this.

Despite SIBA's encouraging forecast mentioned last issue, there are still some casualties. The Hampshire Brewery of Romsey has gone into receivership after 16 years with the loss of 13 jobs and the Ventnor Brewery on the Isle of Wight – the successors to Burts – has closed with reported debts of £114,000. Archers of Swindon, who have had a somewhat chequered history, have also gone into administration again, having done so before in 2007. The administrator is currently running the brewery, which employs 20 people and brews 10,000 barrels per annum, as a going concern; so there is hope.

Sambrook's are going from strength to strength. CAMRA's liaison officer for the brewery, Steve Williams, reports that they

now have about 30 permanent or regular outlets. They will launch a second beer, possibly a summer ale, once they get a third fermenting vessel installed: brewing is now close to capacity. The overall plan is for up to three main beers plus a couple of seasonal choices: no more than five beers. The bottled version of Wandle Ale has also just been launched.

Westerham Brewery has acquired its first tied house, the Royal Oak at Crockham Hill, less than half a mile from the brewery. It is described as a traditional community local and was purchased from Shepherd Neame. There is a historic link as the pub had been supplied by the Black Eagle Brewery until its closure in 1965. Sorry to belabour the point but I cannot resist quoting the local MP, Michael Fallon, when he opened the pub: "A good local pub like the

Royal Oak provides alcohol in a controlled and sociable environment. This is better for young drinkers and everyone in the community". Well said, Sir. Are you listening, Messrs Brown and Darling?

Ascot Ales, the family-run four barrel brewery in Surrey, won four awards at the recent Reading Beer Festival. Their 8% ABV Anastasia's Imperial Stout 8.0% won the Gold Award in the Stouts, Porters & Olds Category and went on to take the Silver in the 'Overall LocAle of the Festival' competition. The Anastasia's Exile Stout at 5.0%, a special brew for the event, won Bronze in the Stouts, Porters & Olds Category whilst On the Rails (3.8%) won Bronze in the Milds Category.

Adnams have picked up three pubs in Suffolk from Punch for £2.7 million, including the historic Butt & Oyster at Pin Mill.



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Adnams are however feeling the pinch with operating profit for the year ended 31 December falling from £4.2 million to £1.5 million. Still, £1.5 million isn't exactly going bust, although Adnams directors will not be receiving a pay rise in 2009 and the five year plan, to which directors' pay is linked, is being reviewed.

Greene King have made a rights issue of 80.7 million new shares aimed at raising some £200 million to fund the buying back of bonds and to finance the purchase of further pubs. The South-East is said to be a target area. Bet they would love to have got their hands on the Butt & Oyster.

Coors, as part of their Bittersweet Partnership project, are launching a 'clear beer', intended for people – primarily female drinkers, they say – who dislike the colour of lager or bitter. The concoction can be flavoured with green tea or exotic fruits and will have a taste similar to an alcopop drink. It sounds to me as if that is exactly what it is: a draught alcopop. It has yet to be given a name (don't tempt me...) and will be trialled in selected pubs this summer. Whatever happened to the brewing heritage of Burton-on-Trent...

According to reports in the Czech press, Anheuser-Busch InBev are considering selling the Staropramen Brewery because of

their need to refinance their merger deal.

Heineken, a possible buyer for Staropramen, have bought into the Globe Pub Company by acquiring £60.2 million (30%) of its debt. This follows on from the company reportedly having defaulted on loans totalling £275 million and its creditors threatening to have the 400 pub chain put into the hands of a receiver. Heineken have an interest to protect because they now own Scottish & Newcastle Pub Enterprises, which operates Globe's pubs on Globe's behalf and they want to secure their beer supply contract with the chain. Heineken said that it was purely a financial decision and nothing more.

Geronimo, the London gastropub chain, have had a promising increase in turnover in 2008, up from £10.16 million to £12.84 million, spoiled by the need to review the value of their estate, leading to a £2.32 pre-tax loss. One particular pub, the Bullfinch in Sevenoaks, accounted for £1.3 million of this. The pub has since been sold to McMullens.

Following the closure of the Wheatsheaf at Borough Market, which they leased from Youngs, the Red Car Pub Company have reopened the former Hop Cellars wine bar in Southwark Street under the same name. This could get confusing if the original Wheatsheaf does reopen.

Contrary to what some are saying, the new site is not what was once the (in)famous Becky's Dive Bar.

Small rooms can be beautiful too...

There is now a website for those who appreciate the joys of the pub toilet. On www.pubtoilets.com you can find pictures and reviews, based on character, décor and history. A spokesman explained, "*Pub toilets are part of our heritage, as are our pubs. With more and more shutting each week, we need to archive and preserve them*".

And finally...

Ask any CAMRA member who was at the recent Members' Weekend to repeat Miles Jenner's joke about the three-legged pig...

A Newcastle bar called Sinners recently ran a campaign offering free 'shots' to women customers who showed their breasts. This was brought to a swift end by a student boycott involving the daughter of a local MP. The bar's operators said that after an investigation, a male member of staff was disciplined.

I recently sent an e-mail which included the word 'Wetherspoons'. The spell checker suggested an alternative: 'waterspouts'.

Tony Hedger

SAMBROOK'S SPREAD THE LocAle MESSAGE

Six more pubs in the CAMRA South West London branch area have joined the London CAMRA LocAle scheme besides the **Trafalgar** and the **Westbridge**, reported in February. These are:

Coach & Horses, Clapham Park Rd, SW4 (Sambrook's and often another)

Eagle Ale House, Chatham Rd, SW11 (Westerham)

Bricklayer's Arms, Putney (Sambrook's)

Earl Ferrers, Ellora Rd, Streatham SW16

(Sambrook's and usually two other local microbrewery beers, plus Fuller's)

Roundhouse, Wandsworth Common North Side, SW18 (Sambrook's)

Brewery Tap, Wimbledon Village SW19 (usually at least one local microbrewery beer besides Fuller's)

Local CAMRA branches will now be promoting the London scheme through beer mats listing those breweries located within 30 miles of pubs in London: their number is increasing!



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ANNIVERSARY ALE FOR 25TH LONDON DRINKER FESTIVAL

The London Drinker Beer and Cider Festival celebrated 25 years at the Camden Centre in March. Trevor Unwin, Steve Barnes and John Cryne from the North London Branch of CAMRA, have worked at most of the festivals. This time they became assistant brewers for a day at Brodie's Sweet William Brewery in Leyton to brew five barrels of their 25th Festival Anniversary Ale under the watchful eyes of Lizzie and Jamie Brodie. The 4.5% ABV beer used three malts and all British hops.

Right to left: Lizzie Brodie, Maddie (Lizzie's assistant), Trevor Unwin, Steve Barnes



CLUBBING TOGETHER IN WALTHAM FOREST

A group of real ale enthusiasts from the Waltham Forest Corporation Sports & Social Club (WFCS&SC) arranged a Spring Beer Festival in April, the theme being the Wars of the Roses, celebrating beers from Lancashire and Yorkshire.

A total of 22 ales plus three ciders and a perry were available during the festival with voting for the Beer of the Festival split between Kelham Island Pale Rider, Pictish Sauvign Blanc and Hambleton Nightmare Stout, the last of these winning by a narrow margin.



Both this festival and the previous 'Beers from the Fringe – a celebration of Celtic Ale' event were hailed a success. WFCS&SC expects to continue to hold two festivals each year in spring and autumn, with the next event scheduled for November 2009.

The Festival was also enjoyed by local CAMRA members and activists who declared an interest in working closer with the club in the future. The club, which has been selling cask ales for more than forty years, has now also agreed to welcome card carrying CAMRA members as guests at all times, although there may be a small door charge when there is live entertainment. Located in the grounds of Waltham Forest Town Hall, the club is open from midday to closing time Sunday through to Friday.

Steve Woodhouse, Festival Organiser

Check the Beer Festivals Calendar and visit the Travel Pages at www.londondrinker.org.uk

Raise a glass with Paul Dabrowski in memory of Ken Brewster! Visit Franconia with the Campaign for Authentic Lager on the Travel Pages at www.londondrinker.org.uk

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ESB. THE CHAMPION ALE.

Egham United Services Club – North Surrey's best kept secret!

Located just on the outskirts of south-west London close to Junction 13 of the M25, the United Services Club in leafy Egham has had an eventful 18 months since first being 'discovered' by the North Surrey branch of CAMRA. Back in January 2008, after being badgered by a drinking buddy for several weeks, I finally paid a visit to the club and was immediately struck by the warm welcome and excellent quality of the two Rebellion ales on offer at fantastic prices, Rebellion being a brewery that we didn't normally encounter in our 'patch'. It transpired that a few months prior to my first visit, the club had elected a new Secretary, Richard Griffin, a man possessed with a passion for real ale I have rarely encountered in any other licensee in my 35+ years of imbibing the real stuff! During an early conversation Richard made it clear he was keen to foster links with the North Surrey branch of CAMRA, a mutual relationship I am very happy to say continues to this day.

In the intervening period the club has increased handpumps from two to five and introduced an ever increasing range of unusual beers for its members to enjoy. It can be no coincidence that such a range of well kept ales has seen club membership applications rise in leaps and bounds and many former smooth and lager drinkers have made the transition to tasty real ales, many from local brewers such as Rebellion, Waylands, Twickenham, Pilgrim, Ascot and W.J. King among others. In this short period of barely 18 months the USC's achievements have included: its first ever entry in the Good Beer Guide (and certainly not its last!), introduction of real ciders plus a permanent mild, LocAle accreditation, and winner of local, regional and super-regional rounds and currently a finalist in the national Club of the Year competition.

The club decided to hold an inaugural beer festival in mid-December 2008 with volunteer staff provided by North Surrey CAMRA, where more than 50 beers appeared on the list, many from breweries that were only a few months old such as Art Brew, Andwell and Dorking and with three casks of Wandle Ale from the brand new Sambrook's Brewery. The eclectic beer list drew visitors from as far afield as Wakefield, Bath, Yeovil, Manchester, Southampton and Norwich! Not bad for a first effort, considering the inclement weather with which we had to contend!

Following this initial success, a second festival was held over the Easter 2009 weekend with a similarly interesting brewery list that seemed to be well appreciated by the 'scoopers': Concrete Cow, Corvedale, Cotswold Spring, Farnham, Full Moon, Ironbridge, Pitstop, White Park and of course our

local brewery Waylands to name but a few. The event was even more successful than the first and drew visitors from far and wide. The club decided to offer a free pint to the visitor who had travelled the furthest..... Wakefield, Manchester? Not this time....on Friday two visitors from Toronto, Canada had made a special effort to visit during a 4 week holiday in the UK. Ian Shimmim, an expat who was born on the Isle of Man and is a lifetime CAMRA member and a subscriber to *London Drinker*, together with his partner Lorna Bond, spent a pleasant afternoon enjoying the hospitality and the wonderful beers. Thinking that record couldn't be beaten, the club were amazed when Stanzi Harris from Washington State, USA arrived the following day! Stanzi is a real ale nut and had actually rearranged her travel dates to accommodate a visit to the USC festival. She enjoyed her 7 hours at the club and drank several pints.



Easter Beer Festival imbibers join the Cask Ale Week toast to real ale at 7pm on Saturday 11 April.

From the two successful beer festivals and ad hoc visits by CAMRA members and GBG holders, the club is gaining a well earned reputation as a bastion of excellent ales. If you haven't yet visited the USC, I urge you to make the effort soon! Egham is only 30 minutes from Waterloo by South West Trains which makes the United Services Club easily accessible to London drinkers. After leaving the station it is a short 5 minutes walk to the club, which is open all day every day from noon and welcomes CAMRA members at all times on production of their membership cards. Details of the next beer festival, from 20 to 23 August, can be found at www.eghambeerfestival.co.uk or via the clubs website www.eusc.co.uk.

Bob Inman
USC member and Social Secretary, North Surrey CAMRA

Getting the taste at City Hall

Encouraging locally sourced, indigenous products, London Assembly Member Jenny Jones hosted the Green Party spring reception in February, at which real ale was served for the first time in City Hall to over a hundred guests.

Delegate John Barker, an active member of South West London CAMRA, supplied and served the ale, gravity-dispensed from a firkin. The ale was received with much enthusiasm, particularly from people who declared themselves not normally beer drinkers; amongst them former mayor Ken Livingstone, pictured here with Jenny and John. Impressed by the positive response, Jenny has



written to Boris Johnson encouraging more functions at City Hall to serve real ale. A longstanding supporter of real ale and microbreweries as an example of local craftsmanship and quality, natural products, Jenny opened this year's Battersea Beer Festival, finishing her speech "Hail to the Ale".

Sample Crookham Travel's tour of the West Riding with Paul Kirsten on the Travel Pages at www.londondrinker.org.uk

Letters and articles for publication in London Drinker may now be submitted online at www.londondrinker.org.uk

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Complimentary, dear Watson

Fuller's Brewery Liaison Officer, John Cryne, hands over a voucher for his complimentary pint of London Pride at the Doric Arch, Euston. As a part of National Cask Ale Week, Fuller's distributed a free pint voucher to each member of the CAMRA/Fuller's Complimentary Club. Fuller's were the first brewery to open a club but there are now six of them, the latest being Wells and Young's.

These clubs are open to any CAMRA member and represent yet another benefit of joining as they will offer members a variety of free promotions throughout the year which could include free pints of beer, free bottled beer, free brewery trips, competitions etc. So if you are a member and are not in a club, then go along to the national CAMRA website:

www.camra.org.uk/page.aspx?o=compclubs to sign up. And if you are not a member, well, with £20 worth of Wetherspoon's vouchers awaiting you, plus benefits such as the complimentary clubs, what's stopping you?

Talking of Cask Ale Week, this was deemed a great success as around 6,000 pubs joined in the week's events, well over the original estimate. The launch took place at St Pancras International station where five regional brewers, including Fuller's, operated a tasting bar on the main concourse. Those drinkers showing a bit more interest were handed a voucher for a free half upstairs at the Betjeman Arms pub.

Once there, there was a chance of meeting Oz Clarke who got the week underway in his usual



impassioned way, advocating the benefits to be found in drinking cask-conditioned beer. The picture shows Oz in the centre presenting the pub with its newly acquired Cask Marque certificate.

John Cryne

LOCAL BOTTLING FOR SAMBROOK'S

Sambrook's brewery held a public open day on 4 April. This followed the visit by CAMRA's London Tasting Panel in March. There had also been a trade open day on 1 April – let us hope that this will all lead to a longer list of outlets than that published in the last *London Drinker*.

During the course of the afternoon 100 people visited. In return for their entrance fee, each visitor received two pints of Wandle Ale, a tour of the brewery and a souvenir glass. The very informative tours were led by either director Duncan Sambrook or his partner David Welsh, founder of Ringwood brewery.

The public open day was also the opportunity formally to launch Wandle Ale in a bottle. It is bottle conditioned: but may not strictly be 'real ale in a bottle'! The beer is filtered, but not pasteurised, and then reseeded with yeast, and a little CO₂ is added.

It is not possible to bottle at the brewery but,

in keeping with the low food miles discussed in last edition's article, bottling takes place in Clapham – at a plant usually bottling gin. Another case of Beer Street versus Gin Lane!

Many of the visitors at the open day took this first opportunity to buy the new bottled Wandle Ale.

Stephen Blann
SW London Branch

The bottled version of Wandle Ale alongside the draught version in the brewery shop.





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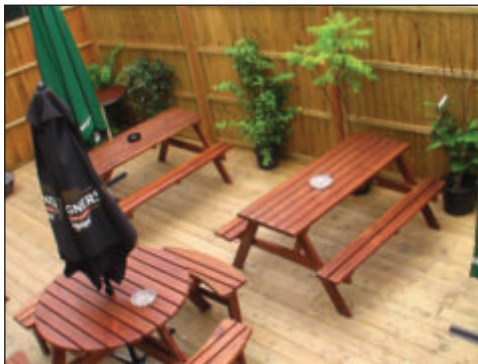
Well, blow me down with a feather if I haven't found another one! The Charles Dickens and landlord Andrew Keeshan represent the case of a traditional, real ale-led pub bucking the trend and prospering. While the doom merchants tell us how many hosteleries are closing their doors (5 a minute or some such!) this little pub, nestling in Southwark, is positively *thriving*.

Alighting from Southwark Tube, I was struck by the rejuvenation of the whole area. The station itself is newish and as I walked down Union Street away from the Cut, the amount of redevelopment in progress is astounding. Then, rounding a slight corner, one finds this little gem. The late 19th century frontage is very attractive and the one-bar interior traditional: all wooden floor and walls, with surprisingly ample seating and Dickensian character prints - cosy is the word. Through the bar there is an enclosed garden with umbrella-covered tables, chairs and benches and, on this chilly day, the heaters worked just fine.

Like many, I was here for the beer, and there are always six real ales including Adnams Best and their own Charles Dickens Bitter (brewed for the pub by Nethergate). On my day the choice included Slater's Top Totty, Twickenham Winter Cheer, Wentworth Early Fruits, West Berkshire Good Old Boy and - there's always a mild - Elgood's award-winning Black Dog. These great beers ranged from 3.6% to 4.5% ABV: something for everyone and, for me, a case of being spoilt for choice. Yes, I lingered for quite a while. There are also two draught ciders. The food blackboard offered a great variety of tempting dishes at extremely reasonable prices: none of the overpriced 'designer food' I'd seen in another pub nearby. Well, I couldn't do the beer range justice *and* eat and, besides, I had a landlord to interview.



Hailing from Co. Tipperary, Andrew is a twinkle-eyed Irishman who's been in the hospitality trade all his life. Our conversation was as sprightly as the man himself. "I feel I've been over here for ever. I took over the pub five years ago. It was pretty run down or, should I say, full of potential! There were no real ales and the rear garden was a tip. I'm a bit of an anglophile and have always been interested in CAMRA and English ales, in particular the amazing choice from today's smaller and micro-breweries. I have a passion to support the little guys to the best of my ability."



That much was pretty self-evident. And what of the future? "I like being my own boss- never be able to retire. I'm too sociable and 'into people'. This is now very much an up-and-coming area. The pub buzzes with office folk lunchtimes and early evenings and we are blessed with a big theatrical rehearsal studio close by. You'll often see celebrities like Peter Postlethwaite and Michael Ball enjoying a sup. We host a lot of wedding receptions too. I rely on my long-serving staff, Jean and Camilla to run the place, and they do a great job."

I 'collect' special pubs all over London: ones I feel at home in and that make me feel warm inside. And just in case regular readers think I over-enthusiase on occasion, you should see the ones I choose *not* to write about. There are some cracking pubs within the triangle of Waterloo, the south of Blackfriars Bridge and the Borough and 'the Dickens' is a little star amongst them. Keep twinkling, Andrew; may you never retire and may your pub continue to prosper. I'll be in again very soon.

Peter Tonge

Kingston & Leatherhead Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale



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More details from Graham Harrison on 07971 547738 or
www.ealingbeerfestival.org.uk

A Pint of Plain - Bill Barich

There must be something about Americans called Bill coming over to Europe to immerse themselves in local heritage and culture. The UK has benefitted from the words and deeds of Bill Bryson for many years and now *New Yorker* journalist Bill Barich moves to Dublin and has written a eulogy to the pubs of Ireland.

I nearly wrote Irish pubs there, but one of the contrasts Barich brings home is that, while the pub in Ireland faces a future even more challenging than that in the UK; the Irish pub, as a concept or commodity for export, seems to have been an unbridled success. Indeed, he says that for each traditional pub closed in Ireland a fake 'authentic' pub opens overseas! You do wonder what will happen if all these overseas consumers of cod Oirishness, as James May* would have it, head for Ireland and find an island denuded of one of its main perceived selling points.



Using the pub as its central focus, the book diverts into areas with which it is closely associated in Ireland. There is Francis O'Neill and his contributions to both music and the Chicago Police Force. We delve into literature and the exploits of legendary characters such as O'Casey, Behan, Kavanagh, O'Nolan and Joyce – many fearsome drinkers in their own right. And the links between prostitution and the pub in districts such as Monto, where some 1,600 prostitutes were at one time said to work.

We find out about the 'trophy pubs' of Dublin and how many are now "tenderly curated museum pieces not the hub of distinct and vital communities", as we do about the Irish refusal to accept the

concept of time as being anything other than arbitrary.

But most of all, we learn about the slow but quickening death of the pubs of Ireland, especially those in rural communities. And this is carefully tied to the recent and dramatic economic and social change in Ireland; the Celtic Tiger in this respect has much to answer for. As one publican put it, it is the idea that Ireland's sudden prosperity might have a downside. Explaining the ways of being a publican, he says, "to do it right, you need a small, manageable unit, where the owner is around all the time and accepts full responsibility for the trade." Many pubs have forgotten this.

At its core this book is "an image of the loss that seems linked to the decline of the traditional pub and the values it embodies" as, for Barich's friends, "the pub is old fashioned. It speaks of yesteryear."

Sometimes it takes an outsider to tell the locals what they are in danger of losing. Whether anybody in Ireland is open to the message is, of course, another issue. If you are interested in the pub or if you are interested in Ireland or just interested in how change impacts societies, then do read this. If the remorseless pace continues, Barich may have captured something essential about pubs in Ireland just in time.

A Pint of Plain is published by Bloomsbury and has a cover price of £10.99.

John Cryne

*See *Oz and James Drink to Britain* reviewed in the last issue of *London Drinker*.



Imperial Hotels pub crawl - 31 March 2009

First up on this unique crawl was the Café London in the Bedford Hotel, where I was shocked by being asked for only £2.30 for a pint of Greene King IPA. I'm not sure when that price was the norm for a London hotel bar but I suspect I was not of drinking age at that time.

Next, just up the road was the Night and Day Bar in the Imperial Hotel, where they had a guest ale, Old Hooky on tap....at least they did until 30 minutes after our arrival. This is a very modern hotel bar with a nice view out onto Russell Square.

From there we moved onto the simply named 'London Pub' at the Royal National Hotel. A spacious bar with the look and feel of a London pub, its layout and the TV screens on the wall also make you think of an American bar. Here one member of our group, Chris Wilson had the mixed fortunes to be asked for proof of age, despite having celebrated 10 years of legal drinking not too

long ago.

Fourth stop was the Tavistock Bar at the Tavistock Hotel (on Tavistock Square). This was the first bar of the evening where you actually need to go through the main entrance of the hotel to get access to the hotel bar. It had a much more old fashioned feel to it than the more modern bars which preceded it.

Our final port of call was the County Bar at the County Hotel, another bar with a more old fashioned feel, the wood panelling reminiscent of a gentlemen's club. Despite the fact I thought that a hotel pub crawl would be an expensive evening out, it was only here that I broke into my second tenner. It was a pub crawl unique in more ways than the just the obvious.

Chris Fisher
North London CAMRA

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Ale & Whisky bar launched



Full details of the discount scheme can be found at www.northnineteen.co.uk Register on-line or call 020 7281 2786.

North London CAMRA's Autumn 2008 Pub of the Season, North Nineteen is at 194-196 Sussex Way, N19 4HZ. The closest tube is Archway, the nearest overground station Upper Holloway, or take a bus that traverses the Holloway Road.

John Cryne

Landlord Tony Cullen has a dream and it's one which CAMRA members will share – namely to bring back to life a pub that, to say the least, was in the doldrums. Tony's pub, the North Nineteen in Upper Holloway, previously traded as the Enterprise and eventually closed owing to operating in a way that was totally unsuited to the locality.

It is described in the North London pub database as a "back street community pub, recently modernised and re-opened after a period of closure, with a major refurbishment now decidedly up market from the previous offering." This is perhaps a bit of an understatement of Tony's efforts. But what is clear is that the pub is located in a residential area and it needs an offering to appeal to both locals and discerning visitors alike.

So to build on his first steps, Tony launched his new Ale & Whisky Bar on 9 April, which was followed by a beer festival. In one of the bars all the lager taps have been removed and six handpulls have been fitted, thanks to support from Skinner's and Fuller's. As a result Betty Stogs will be a regular alongside either Fuller's ESB or Gales HSB. It is also planned to have a regular porter, Nethergate's Old Growler and a mild.

The intention is to try and take as many beers as possible from the SIBA Direct Delivery Scheme. Drinkers can get a permanent 40p off a pint by registering to become a North Nineteen member.

An advertisement for realale.com. The background is dark with several beer bottles of various brands. A pink banner with white text reads "realale.com". Below it, white text says "Over 90 quality ales, ciders and perries, including a European selection, available online or call 020 8892 3710". Further down, it says "Visit our shop: 371 Richmond Rd Twickenham Middlesex TW1 2EF". At the bottom, a pink circular badge with white text says "JOIN OUR ALE CLUB FOR 3, 6, 9 or 12 MONTHS".

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of N.London
CAMRA Pub of
the Season
Autumn
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John Cryne, Chairman and
Christine Cryne, Publicity Officer
CAMRA N. London branch

There are no strangers here, just friends you haven't met yet

Brewery trip for auction

Hoofing around Horsham

How about a trip to Horsham, a town which boasts three brewers? At each session of the Great British Beer Festival (Earl's Court, 4-8 August), places on a special brewery trip to two of the town's brewers will be auctioned. Horsham is an old brewery town, being the home of King and Barnes Brewery which brewed there until it closed in 2000.

The trip will start at Hepworth & Co, run by Andy Hepworth, who was King and Barnes' head brewer and is well known for its bottling plant that can produce bottle-conditioned beer. They bottle for many small brewers as well as producing their own.

After a quick visit to a hostelry, the next stop is Weltons, a small brewery that originally started in Dorking in 2005. It has a growing and deserved reputation. You can find beers from these two breweries around London from time to time but there is nothing like drinking it at the brewery itself. The trip will take place on Saturday 19 September. If you can't get along to the Festival, you can use a postal bid.

Contact Bill Austin: baustin@supanet.com; 01923 211654 (answerphone).

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Branch diaries

Welcome to our regular details of London CAMRA contacts and events. This is where branches can say what is happening in their areas that might be of interest to drinkers across London. Events for June and July are listed below.

Branch meetings and socials are open to all - everyone is welcome to come along.

LONDON REGIONAL EVENTS

July – Wed 22 (8pm) London Liaison Committee (Regional co-ordination meeting for London Branches). Royal Oak, Tabard St, SE1. Secretary: geoff@coherent-tech.co.uk

LONDON PUBS GROUP

Jane Jephcote 020-7720 6327, jephcote@waitrose.com

June – Sat 20 Daytime crawl of Wood Green, Hornsey, Crouch End, Finsbury Park and Harringay: (12 noon) Gate, Station Rd, Wood Green N22; (1.15) Great Northern Railway, 67 High St, Hornsey N8; (2pm) Queens, 26 Broadway Parade, Crouch End N8; (3.45) Harringay Arms, 153 Crouch Hill, Crouch End N8; (4.45) Brownswood Park Tavern, 271 Green Lanes, Finsbury Park N4; (5.30) Beaconsfield, 357-9 Green Lanes, Harringay N4; (6.15) Salisbury, 1 Grand Parade, Green Lanes, Harringay N4. Public transport will be required at times.

July – Wed 15 (7.15 for 7.30) Mtg. Royal Oak, Tabard St, SE1 (upstairs). All branches and members interested in pub research and preservation welcome.

Website www.londonpubsgroup.co.uk

YOUNG MEMBERS GROUP

London co-ordinator Matthew Black 07786 262798, youngmembers@selcamra.org.uk

June – Sat 27 (1pm) Social at Kingston Beer Festival (see page 29). **July – Sat 11 (1pm)** Social at Greenwich Beer and Jazz Festival, Royal Naval College (see page 30). - **Fri 24** Old Street crawl: (7pm) Masque Haunt, 168-172 Old St, EC1 (Wetherspoons); finishing (9pm) Wenlock Arms, 26 Wenlock Rd, N1 for live jazz.

BEXLEY

Martyn Nicholls 01322 527857 (H), contacts@camrabexleybranch.org.uk

June – Wed 10 (8.30) Mtg and PotY runner up presentation. Black Horse, Bexley. - **Wed 17 (8.30)** Branch AGM. Old Wick, Bexley. **July – Wed 8 (8.30)** Mtg. White Cross, North Cray.

Website: www.camrabexleybranch.org.uk

CROYDON & SUTTON

Peter McGill: 07831 561296; pete_mcgill@hotmail.com

June – Mon 1 (8.30) Beer Festival working party. Hope, West St, Carshalton. - **Sat 6 (7.30)** 35th Anniversary celebration social & buffet. Glamorgan, 81 Cherry Orchard Rd, Croydon. - **Thu 18 (8.30)** Selhurst social. Two Brewers, 221 Gloucester Rd, Selhurst. - **Tue 23** Mtg. Dog & Bull, 24 Surrey St, Croydon.

July – Wed 8 Croydon 2-pub social: (8.30) George, 17-21 George St; (9.45) Royal Standard, Sheldon St. - **Mon 20** Beddington 2-pub social: (8.30) Plough, The Broadway, Croydon Rd; (9.45) Harvest Home, 27 Beddington La. - **Thu 30 (8.30)** Mtg and London Drinker pick-up. Windsor Castle (Cottage Room), 378 Carshalton Rd, Carshalton.

Website: www.croydoncamra.org.uk

EAST LONDON & CITY

John Pardoe 07757 772564, elacbranch@yahoo.co.uk

June – Fri 12 (8pm) PotY presentation. Dispensary, 19A Lehman St. E1. - **Mon 15** PotY runners-up presentation night: (8.30) Rose & Crown, 55 Hoe St, E17; (10pm) Nags Head, Orford Rd, E17. - **Tue 23** PotY runners-up presentation night: (8.30) Old Fountain, 3 Baldwin St, EC1; (10pm) Pembury Tavern, 90 Amhurst Rd, E8. - **Sat 27** Visit to Box Steam brewery for Pig's Ear Beer of the Festival presentation: meet coach (9am) outside the Cricketers, Woodford, 299-301 High Rd, Woodford Green IG8. Contact branch for availability.

July – Tue 14 (8pm) Mtg. Carpenters Arms, 73 Cheshire St, E2. - **Sat 18** Proposed Roberts ramble: details to be finalised by Ron

Andrews and Peter Needle - **Sun 26 (1pm)** Joint social with N London branch. King William IV, 816 High Rd, E10: (1pm) tutored Brodie's beer tasting led by Christine Cryne followed by brewery tour(s); (3pm) inter branch darts match. Good Thai food is available and the pub has a small beer garden. At 5pm we will go to the Drum, 557-559 Lea Bridge Rd, E10.

Website: www.pigsear.org.uk

ENFIELD & BARNET

Brian Willis 020-8441 1892 (H), Branch mobile 07757 710008 at event.

June – Tue 2 (8.30) Garden social. Rising Sun, 137 Marsh La, Mill Hill. - **Thu 11 (8.30)** Branch AGM: card carrying CAMRA members only. Enfield Town Club, Old Park Ave, Enfield EN2. - **Wed 17 (8.30)** Garden social. Prince of Wales, 2 Church Hill Rd, EN4. - **Sat 20** Gibberd Garden beer festival, Harlow. Details from branch contact. - **Thu 25 (8.30)** Garden social. Greyhound, Enfield Lock EN3. - **Tue 30 (8.30)** Garden social. Five Bells, 165-167 East End Rd N2.

July – Thu 9 (8.30) Garden social. Winchmore Hill Cricket Club, The Paulin Ground, Fords Gro, N21: bring CAMRA mem. card or 2009 GBG. - **Wed 15 (8.30)** Garden social. Cock & Dragon, Chalk La, EN4. - **Tue 21 (8.30)** Garden social. Gilpins Bell, 50-54 Fore St, Upper Edmondton N18. - **Thu 30 (8.30)** London Drinker pick-up and garden social. Old Mitre, 58 High St, Barnet EN5.

Website: www.camra-enfield-and-barnet.org.uk

KINGSTON & LEATHERHEAD

Clive Taylor 020-8949 2099 (H) 020-8540 1901 (W), ctaylor2007@freuk.com

June – Wed 3 (8.15) Mtg. Barley Mow, Pikes Hill, Epsom. - **Thu 11** Claygate pub crawl: (8pm) Foley Arms; then Hare & Hounds etc. - **Fri 26-Sat 27** Kingston Beer Festival (see page 29).

July – Tue 7 (8.15) Mtg. Running Horse, Bridge St, Leatherhead. - **Sun 19** Day trip on train (dep. Surbiton 10.30) to Watercress Steam Railway, Alton, incorporating bus rally. - **Sun 26** Walton on Thames afternoon crawl: (1pm) Ashley Park (outside rail station), then pubs in town and by the river.

Advance Notice – Sat 22 August. Evening trip to Watercress Steam Railway for RAT (Real Ale Train): fare £10; bookings with payment by 22 June.

Website: www.camrasurrey.org.uk

NORTH LONDON

Social contacts: Stephen Taylor, 07531 006296,

stephen.taylor2@selexgalileo.com; John Adams, 07970 150707, J.Adams@ucl.ac.uk. Branch chairman: John Cryne, 07802 174861, john.cryne2@googlemail.com

June – Tue 2 (8pm) PotY presentation. Bree Louise, 69 Coubourg St, NW1. - **Tue 9** Gospel Oak and Hampstead Heath social: (7.30) Bull & Last, 168 Highgate Rd, NW5; (8.15) Old Oak, 1 Mansfield Rd, NW3; (8.45) Stag, 67 Fleet Rd, NW3; (9.15) White Horse, 154-155 Fleet Rd, NW3; (10pm) Roebuck, 15 Pond St, NW3. - **Tue 16** Upper Holloway social: (8pm) Swimmer, 13 Eburne Rd, N7; (8.45) Landseer, 37 Landseer Rd, N19; (9.30) North Nineteen, 194-196 Sussex Way, N19. - **Tue 23** London Drinker beer festival review meeting. (8pm) Wenlock Arms, 26 Wenlock Rd, N1. - **Tue 30** North London Line social: (7pm) White Swan, 255-256 Upper St, N1; (7.45) Old Eagle, 251 Royal College Street, NW1; (8.45) Garden Gate, 14 South End Rd, NW3; (9.25) Railway Tavern, 100 West End La, NW6; (10.10) North London Tavern, 375 Kilburn High Rd, NW6. Train times in branch weekly electronic newsletter. **July – Tue 7** NW1 Somers Town social: (7.30) Somers Town Coffee House, 60 Chalton St; (8.15) Prince Arthur, 80-82 Eversholt St; (9pm) Royal George, 8-14 Eversholt St; (10pm) Doric Arch, 1 Eversholt St. - **Tue 14** NW10 Kensal Green to Kensal Rise social: (7.30) Masons Arms, 665 Harrow Rd; (8.15) William IV, 786 Harrow Rd; (9pm) Paradise by way of Kensal Green, 19 Kilburn La, W10; (9pm) Regent, 2 Regent St; (10pm) Chamberlayne, 83 Chamberlayne Rd. - **Tue 21 (8pm)** Branch AGM. Calthorpe Arms, 252 Kings Cross Rd, WC1. - **Sun 26** Joint social with ELAC branch. King William IV, 816 High Rd: see above. - **Tue 28** N7 Holloway social: (8pm) Bailey, 81 Holloway Rd; (9pm) George, 9 Eden Gro; (10pm) Coronet, 338-346 Holloway Rd.

Website: www.camranorthlondon.org.uk Email list: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/camranorthlondon/>

RICHMOND & HOUNSLOW

Brian Kirtin 020-8384 7284(H), briankirtin@blueyonder.co.uk
June – Thu 18 (8pm) Mtg. Shaftesbury Arms, 121 Kew Rd, Richmond. - **Wed 24** Isleworth crawl (all pubs in London Rd); (8pm) Bridge Inn (457); (8.45) Rising Sun (407); (9.30) Rose & Crown (333); (10.15) Coach & Horses (183).
July – Wed 15 (7.30) Visit to Sambrook's Brewery, Unit 1&2 Yelverton Rd, Battersea SW11 3QG, 7/8 mins from Clapham Junction (if interested e-mail roby.hurry@westendtravel.co.uk). - **Thu 23 (8.30)** Mtg, Anglers, 3 Broom Rd, Teddington.
 Website: www.rhcamra.org.uk

SOUTH EAST LONDON

Neil Pettigrew 07751 989310 (M) evening or weekends only, branch.contact@selcamra.org.uk
June – Wed 3 (8pm) Cttee mtg and social. Cricketers, 93 Chislehurst Rd, Orpington. - **Wed 10** Social crawl to Dulwich;(8pm) Railway, 7 Station Rise, SE27; (8.45) Rosendale, 65 Rosendale Rd, SE21; (9.30) Alwyns Head, 100 Park Hall Rd, SE21. - **Wed 15** Social crawl to Chelsfield BR6: (7.30) Bo Peep, Hewitts Rd; (8.45) Five Bells, Church Rd. - **Mon 22 (8pm)** Beer Festival mtg and social. Prince Albert, 72 Royal Hill, SE10.
July – Wed 1 (8pm) Cttee mtg and social. Dacre Arms, 11 Kingswood Pl, SE13. - **Wed 8-Sun 12** Greenwich Beer/Jazz Festival, Royal Naval College, SE10 (see page 30 and www.greenwichbeerandjazz.com). - **Mon 20** Social crawl to Downe, BR6: (7.30pm) Queen's Head 25 High St; (8.30) George & Dragon, 26 High St. - **Tue 28** Social crawl around Southwark SE1: (7.30) Shipwright's Arms, 88 Tooley St; (8pm) Barrow Boy & Banker, 6-Borough High St; (8.45) Mudlark, 4 Montague Clo; (9.15) Rake, 14 Winchester Walk.
 Website: www.selcamra.org.uk

SOUTH WEST ESSEX

Alan Barker swessex@essex-camra.org.uk.
June – Tue 2 (8pm) Working social. Thurrock Beer Fest, Thurrock Civic Hall, Blackshots La, Grays. - **Tue 9 (8.30)** PotY presentation and social. White Hart, Kings Walk Argent St, Grays. - **Thu 11 (8pm)** Out of area social. 3rd Braintree Beer Festival, Braintree Institute, Bocking End, Braintree. - **Tue 16 (8.30)** Social. Bell, High Rd, Horndon-on-the-Hill. - **Sat 20 (1pm)** Gibberd Garden Beer Festival, Marsh La, Old Harlow. - **Thu 25 (8.30)** Summer beer festival social. Theobald Arms, 141 Argent St, Grays. - **Sat 27 (1pm)** All-Essex games afternoon. White Hart, Swan La, Margaretting Tye.
July – Thu 2 (8.30) Out of area social. Nags Head, 9 Orford Rd, Walthamstow E17. - **Tue 7 (8pm)** Chelmsford summer beer festival social. Admiral's Park, Rainsford Rd, Chelmsford. - **Sat 11 (12.30)** Summer beer festival social. White Horse, 173 Coxtie Green Rd, Coxtie Green. - **Wed 15 (8.30)** Out of area social. Prince Of Wales, Woodham Rd, Stow Maries CM3, by minibus from Chadwell Heath, Romford, Upminster and Stanford-Le-Hope: contact Graham Platt on 020-8220 0215. - **Thu 23 (8.30)** Out of area social. Moletrap, Tawney Common, Stapleford Tawney CM16. - **Thu 30 (8.30)** Social. Rising Sun, 144 Ongar Rd, Brentwood.
 Website: essex-camra.org.uk/swessex

SOUTH WEST LONDON

Mark Bravery 020-8540 9183 (H), 020-7147 3826 (W), markbravery@blueyonder.co.uk
 Cricket contact: Tom Brain 07796 265972, tom.brain@horwath.co.uk Matches Sunday afternoons
June – Tue 2 Battersea crawl: (6.45) Roundhouse (latterly Freemasons), N Side, Wandsworth Common SW18; (7.45) Bolingbroke, 174 Northcote Rd SW11; (8.30) Eagle Ale House, Chatham Rd; (9.30) Merchant, 23-25 Battersea Rise; (10.30) Falcon, 2 St Johns Hill. - **Thu 18 (7.30)** Cttee mtg. Pied Bull, 498 Streatham High Rd, SW16
July – Tue 7 (8pm) Open meeting on Battersea Beer Festival organisation. Hand in Hand, Crooked Billet, Wimbledon Common

SW19. - **Sat 18** GBBF publicity crawl: meet (11.45) Alexandra, 33 Wimbledon Hill Rd, SW19; late joining point (1.30) Rose & Crown, 55 High St, Wimbledon Village. - **Wed 29 (7.30)** Cttee mtg. Lighthouse, 441 Battersea Park Rd, SW11.
 Website: www.swlcamra.org.uk

WATFORD & DISTRICT

Andrew Vaughan 01923 230104 (H) 07854 988152 (M)
June – Fri 5 Rickmansworth High Street social: (8pm) Coach & Horses; (8.45) Pennsylvanian; (9.30) Fox & Hounds; (10.15) Druids. - **Wed 10 (7pm)** Hooper's, 28 Ivanhoe St, East Dulwich SE5. - **Sat 20** Watford Heath social: (2pm) Royal Oak, 24 Watford Heath; (3pm) Load of Hay, 207 Pinner Rd; continuing to Oxhey later in the afternoon. - **Mon 29 (8pm)** Mtg. Estcourt Arms, St John's Rd, Watford.
July – Sat 4 Sarraat WD3 stumble: (12.45) Plough, Dunny La, Belsize; (1.30) Boot, The Green, Sarraat; (2.30) Cock, Church La, Sarraat. - **Thu 23** Oxhey WD19 social: (8.30) Villiers Arms, Villiers Rd; (9.15) Railway Arms, Aldenham Rd; (10pm) Victoria, Chalk Hill. - **Mon 27 (8pm)** Mtg. Estcourt Arms, St John's Rd, Watford.
 Website: www.watfordcamra.org.uk

WEST LONDON

Kimberly Martin 07717 795284, KimberlyMartin@yahoo.com
June – Tue 9 West Kensington W14 social: (7.30) Colton Arms, 187 Greyhound Rd; (8.15) Famous Three Kings (F3K), 171-173 North End Rd, W14; (9pm) Hand & Flower, 1 Hammersmith Rd; (9.45) Albion, 121 Hammersmith Rd. - **Tue 16 (7.30)** White Horse, Parsons Green, SW7. **Branch AGM** (bring CAMRA membership card) followed by beer tasting led by Christine Cryne. - **Mon 22 (7.30)** Cadogan Arms, 298 Kings Road, SW3; (8.15) Crown, 153 Dovehouse St, SW3; (9.30) Anglesea Arms, 15 Selwood Terr, SW7.
July – Thu 2 Covent Garden WC2 crawl: (7.30) Ship & Shovell, 1-3 Craven Passage; (8.15) Salisbury, 90 St Martin's La; (9pm) Montagu Pyke, 105-107 Charing Cross Rd; (9.45) Harp, 47 Chandos Pl. - **Tue 7** Wetherspoons crawl: (7.30) Moon under Water, 28 Leicester Sq, WC2; (8.30) Lord Moon of the Mall, 18 Whitehall, SW1; (9.30) Willow Walk, 25 Wilton Road, SW1. - **Mon 13** Local Pubs Week kick-off. Albion, 121 Hammersmith Rd, W14. - **Sun 19 (12 noon)** Local Pubs Week round-up, Cleveland Arms, 28 Chilworth St, W2.
 Website: www.westlondon-camra.org.uk

WEST MIDDLESEX

Social secretary Bob O'Brien 01895 673266; Branch contact John Bush 07739 105336, info@westmiddx-camra.org.uk
June – Fri 5 (7pm) Working social at Brencham Club Beer Festival, 38a Meadvale Rd, Ealing W5. - **Wed 10 (8pm)** Branch & Ealing Beer Festival planning mtg, West London Trades Union Club, 33-35 High St, Acton W3. - **Tue 16 (8.30)** PotY presentation. Red Lion, 13 St Mary's Rd, Ealing W5. - **Tue 23 (8pm)** Final Ealing Beer Festival planning mtg, Woodman, Breakspear Rd, Ruislip HA4. - **Thu 25** St Mary's Rd Ealing three-pub social: (8pm) Red Lion (13); (9pm) Castle (36); (10pm) Rose & Crown, Church Pl. - **Mon 29** Ealing Beer Festival publicity crawl Uxbridge: meet (8pm) Queen's Head, 54 Windsor St, UB8.
July – Thu 2 Ealing Beer Festival Publicity crawl Ealing: meet (8pm) Sir Michael Balcon, 46-47 The Mall, W5. - **Wed 8-Sat 11** Ealing Beer Festival XX (see page 31 and www.ealingbeerfestival.org.uk for details. - **Wed 15 (8pm)** Mtg. Crown on Colham Green, Colham Green Rd, Uxbridge UB8. - **Tue 21** Uxbridge UB8 social: (8pm) Abrook Arms, 191 Harefield Rd; (9.30) Swan & Bottle, 98 Oxford Rd. - **Thu 23** GBBF publicity crawl Acton: meet (8pm) Duke of York, 86 Steyne Rd, W3. - **Sat 25** Trip to Brighton/Shoreham: Contact Bob O'Brien for more details. - **Mon 27 (8pm)** Ealing Beer Festival washup mtg. Drayton Court, 2 The Avenue, West Ealing W13.
 Website: www.westmiddx-camra.org.uk

Electronic copy deadline for the August/September edition: 8 July 2009. Please send entries to geoff@coherent-tech.co.uk.

Dear Editor

At last a good news story about a local pub!

My husband and I, and several of our friends, had watched the demise of our local pub, the Coach and Horses, London Road, Isleworth. It was earmarked by some scoundrel, who shall remain nameless as I refuse to give him any publicity, to be turned into a hotel or gastropub or basically anything other than a real ale public house! Most days five people in the bar was considered busy and on several occasions there was no beer at all! We really thought our days of drinking real ale in our local had come to an end when suddenly Young's started to listen to our pleas for help, our desperate e-mails listing disaster after disaster. Another regular user of the local, a successful businessman, Kevin Adams offered to invest time, effort and monies (all of which had been missing under the previous management) and lo and behold the pub is rising from the ashes like the legendary Phoenix!

Under his direction the whole pub has been given the TLC it so desperately needed. The locals have their pub back, Young's are selling more beer and against all the odds I feel the pub will survive even if we do have tough times ahead. An Open Day last Sunday was very well attended and even the Mayoress was persuaded to pull a pint! Pubs all over London are closing due to lack of support and

I felt it was time a success story was highlighted. Thanks Kevin from a very grateful local!

Jacqui Keane

Dear Editor

I learned that the Dispensary in Leman Street is the East London and City Pub of the Year for 2009 (London Drinker Vol 31, No 2) and I was very keen to visit; so I went down to Aldgate and turned at Gardeners Corner, by which time I was in the City of London (I assume). With some trepidation, I approached the corner of Leman Street and Alie Street, opposite the site of a branch of the Old Monk I had often visited in the past (now a gentlemen's club). I knew that there are few pubs open in the City at the weekend, but since this was Pub of the Year, I assumed that meant 365 days.

This was a Saturday evening; of course, I wasted my time. The pub is shut both Saturday and Sunday. Perhaps a note on the opening hours should have gone in to the article in the London Drinker? Or does that detract from the accolade?

Gordon Joly

Yes, sorry, we should have mentioned the restricted hours. Annie at the Dispensary writes, "We would love to open weekends but as you may be aware it has proved very unprofitable in this area due to lack of

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football. As a gesture I ask Gordon to come and visit us Monday to Friday and I will happily buy him a pint."

Dear Editor

I have just spent a pleasant evening with Adnams Bitter and your magazine. During the evening I scanned your adverts for a new pub. Unfortunately it appeared that I am only welcome in one.

You see, I live with a dog. The dog in question is very well behaved, and under constant supervision. He has been inoculated against a number of diseases (which I haven't) and he has been flea'd and wormed (which I haven't). So obviously I'm a bigger health hazard than my dog.

Would it be possible for your advertisers, should they read this, to include two words if I am welcome in their houses? If not, I shall obviously take my infections elsewhere.

Dave Wright, Epping

Dear Editor

Having not long moved to London I read a lot about the 2009 London Drinker Festival, mainly lamenting the fact that the venue could be lost and the festival having to find a new home. Intrigued, I went along, and can only say that having to find a new venue will be the best thing that could happen

to it, as the festival has clearly outgrown the venue. I have never had to queue to get into a beer festival before – ever – and so it was quite a shock to have to queue for 35 minutes before getting in, because the hall was full to capacity. Once in, I found there was not only nowhere to sit, but only a few very small tables to rest my pint on. Getting from one part of the bar to another was an operation requiring a military level of planning. In short, it was the most unpleasant beer festival experience I've ever had.

If the festival stays at the Camden Centre I would recommend a ticketing system so that you can better control numbers – the festival as is clearly needs to be scaled back to better fit the venue. Otherwise, a move will provide a welcome opportunity to find a venue that can actually cope with the demand. I'll happily pay more for entry for a pleasanter atmosphere and a chance to sit down and enjoy the beer.

Simon Hall

Festival organiser, Christine Cryne replies, "I have some sympathy with Simon's views but those who have been attending Drinker for a number of years would have realised that 2009 was a pretty extraordinary year. Our attendance for many years has been static. Because of where the Festival is, we

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more details in the
next London Drinker"*

Pat

have in the evening both an early after work crowd and a later, usually younger clientele. This means that, although we are busy, it has usually been intense as the early drinkers start to leave, giving more room to the later drinkers.

In 2009 this did not happen. Our attendance figures were up 1400 on 2007, reaching a phenomenal 5500, the largest attendance for over 10 years. We reached our fire limit around 40 minutes earlier than normal and people stayed longer. We also had a beer reorder (thanks to Crouch Vale and Brodies breweries), making the number of beers we had on sale over the Festival over 80. None of us can remember the last time we had to do this. We did expect to see an increase in the number of CAMRA members attending due to the fact we had let them know that this might be our last event at the Camden Centre. However, the growth came mainly from non-members, resulting in us signing up over 40 new members, three times our usual number.

Regardless of the numbers, there were always empty seats on the balcony, which we opened every evening. We announced this regularly and therefore there was always somewhere where people could sit. We did not put seating in the main hall in the evenings after Wednesday as, because they would have to be in the centre of the hall, I was advised that this would be an evacuation hazard.

We will not change to a ticketed event. The complexity and extra effort we would need is not possible with the small team of volunteers that put the event on. If we move, and it is probable that we will have to, it is unlikely that we will be able to find a venue that we can afford in central London and so, if Simon chooses to attend again, he is probably going to have to suffer the crush for only one more year."

Dear Editor

I have been around long enough to remember when Wetherspoon pubs served beer in pint-to-line glasses, had no television, no muzak, and did not permit children. Now all these policies have been reneged on and I imagine Mr Wetherspoon asking his sales team again at a monthly meeting, "How much will my customers endure for their cheap pint?"

Quite a lot, it seems. If you ever deign to visit the King's Tun, Kingston, for your cheap pint, be careful in the low (sorry, ambient) lighting. The children and buggies are easy enough to negotiate on your way to the bar, but please beware of the babies crawling about on the floor.

Peter Vizard

Wetherspoon's Eddie Gershon replies, "Mr Vizard obviously feels strongly on a number of issues, however, we beg to disagree. People of all ages (including families with children) enjoy going to Wetherspoon pubs. We are not aware of any specific issues relating

to children, buggies and crawling babies at The Kings Tun, though we will certainly look into the situation.

As for his assertion that things have changed at Wetherspoon over the years, well, he is right to a certain extent, in that children were never previously allowed in and also the pubs had no TVs, but things change. However, children are only allowed in the pubs up until a certain time and only if they and the adult order a meal. Although it is not a perfect situation for some customers, including Mr Vizard, we feel that we are able to cater for those people with families who want to enjoy a Wetherspoon pub and those who don't want children in pubs at all.

As for TVs in our pubs, they are only on at certain times and always with the sound off and subtitles on. The pubs certainly don't have any muzak."

Dear Editor

As a former resident of Eltham may I say how infuriated I was to read 'Peter Tonge's Pub Profile' in the April/May *London Drinker*. What a patronising and pompous slur against an inoffensive and actually rather green, spacious and historic London suburb. Not everyone can live in Kensington or the trendier parts of North London. How dare he suggest that Eltham is unsafe and that all the pubs there had the 'wrong' atmosphere. He says that 'bearing in mind the location' the Park Tavern is 'nothing short of a miracle'. I can assure Mr Tonge (and anyone else who, having read the article, thinks that Eltham is a bit like the South Bronx) that the residents of Eltham are normal people, just like millions of others in London - simply getting on with their conventional suburban lives. They don't go in for gang wars, drive-by shootings or even bottle fights at closing time. As to the pub itself I went there many times when I lived in Eltham. It was always a genuine old-fashioned local with a basic public bar and a cosy saloon. When Truman's reintroduced real ale the Park Tavern did too. Finally, may I correct his assertion that Leffe is a 'lager'. It isn't - it's ale.

David Flett, London N11

Dear Editor

Curiosity Corner

May I take your readers back 100 years, to an age long before the credit crunch. In those golden days you could sit in a pub in Ealing, the 'queen of the suburbs', amid varnished wood panelling and art nouveau stained glass. Desiring of refreshment you would simply push an electric button at your seat and a uniformed barman would promptly appear to serve you a pint of mild or porter, or a gin. If you think this is a romantic fantasy, make haste to the Forester, a Grade II listed pub in Leighton Road, West Ealing. There you can see the bell pushes still in place, possibly the only ones remaining in London.



Sadly, they no longer work and you have to walk to the bar for a pint of Hop Back Summer Lightning or Courage Best. You can, however, still admire the handsome decoration in this immaculate Edwardian local, which serves a mean Thai curry. You can also discover how popular

it is with TV production companies, recently in the first episode of the BBC's Reggie Perrin remake, where a stuntman for Martin Clunes did a back-flip in the public bar!

Bob Barton, Hayes, Middx

Dear Editor

The Wheatsheaves, SE1

The new Wheatsheaf has now opened under the Old Hop Exchange, on Southwark Street, under the aegis of a former licensee of the Stoney Street pub of the same name. As we have been assured that the latter will reopen in due course, it seems to me that we now have a provisional Wheatsheaf and a continuity Wheatsheaf; or am I just being frivolous?

Richard Larkin, London NW3

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The Nags Head, Walthamstow

How can this be, you ask, a pub can't be both 800 and 150 years old! Well, it almost can. Some time after the founding of St Mary's church in Walthamstow, nominally in 1108, a public house was built on the then main through route, diagonally opposite the church and across what is now Church End. It is known that there was certainly an alehouse on the site by 1208, as there was a curiously modern report of a stabbing outside! What the alehouse was originally called we do not know, but it continued operating down the centuries that followed.

In 1764, or shortly thereafter, the pub, by then known by its present name of the Nags Head, was taken over by the Wragg family, who also made a sure supplement to their income by running stagecoaches from Walthamstow to London. When the railways came, the then incumbent, Thomas Wragg, adapted his operations to run an omnibus from the 'Nags' to the nearest station, at Lea Bridge, from 15 September 1840, as well as continuing the stage operations. By this time, the building was becoming somewhat worn out and, in the spirit of the times, Thomas decided to build a completely new Nags Head, rather than refurbish the original mediaeval building.



The new pub opened, as a local-history plaque on the frontage reminds you, in 1857, in a slightly old-fashioned, more Georgian than Victorian style, with purpose-built accommodation for the omnibus carriage through the arch on the south side to the rear of the building. At the same time, the original pub was partially demolished as 'unsafe', though parts of it still remain. The cellars of the original 'Nags' still survive, under the paving

stones, and are supposed to be inspected by a council official, once a year!

The two buildings' sites are very close together, as the original pub stood where the signpost stands in the picture and the present pub can be seen behind.



Thomas Wragg's stagecoach and bus operations came to an end in 1870/71 when the line to Chingford was opened, but there is still a strong railway connection, as the trains pass directly beneath the premises in Nags Head Tunnel! Since then the Nags has had its ups and downs, the lowest being during the period 1970-2000 when it was owned by the dreaded Watney's and their successors.

Now, however, it has been taken over and improved enormously by Roger and Flossie, who are still, slowly, improving the place. The beers, especially, are superb, and the Nags well deserves its good Beer Guide listing. Currently there are usually five beers on handpump, Mighty Oak Oscar Wilde mild, Fuller's London Pride, Timothy Taylor Landlord, a variable guest, and St Austell Tribute. What your author calls "the barmaids co-operative" will give you excellent, cheerful service, the seating is comfy, and "Billie" (short for Wilhelmina) the pub cat may come around to supervise.

The 'Moon under Water', as Eric Blair well knew, does not exist in real life and, from this writer's perspective, the only real defect at the Nags is the sometimes overly loud piped music. Nor does it do food, though Roger-and-Flossie's other pub, the Castle (an ex-Bass house) which is only about 300 metres away, does so.

But, if you are in E17 after 4pm Monday to Friday, or after 1pm at the weekend, and want a really good pint, I don't think you can beat the old/new Nags Head.

Greg Tingey

Capital Pubcheck - update 206

The aim of 'Capital Pubcheck' is to share information about the latest happenings on the London pub scene including new pub and bar openings, name changes, acquisitions, closures, notable changes to beer ranges etc.

Information is gathered from a variety of sources including London Drinker readers, individual CAMRA members and branch contacts, breweries, pub operators, landlords etc. If you would like to contribute to 'Pubcheck' please send your news to the address below.

This time we welcome a new independent free house in SE19 Crystal Palace, and a new Wetherspoons, formerly a Hogshead, in Sidcup. Fuller's have acquired six Spirit pubs from Punch in EC1 Hatton Garden, SW1 Westminster, SW7 South Kensington, W2 Lancaster Gate, W6 Hammersmith and W8 Kensington to add to the three acquired from M&B reported last time. A popular GBG pub in WC2 Covent Garden has been acquired from Punch by the landlady and it is rumoured that more disposals will follow from the troubled pubco. M&B's Toby Carvery pub/restaurant chain is reintroducing real ale into most of its pubs.

Owing to production constraints, we are holding over until next time 50 pubs reported closed, demolished or losing real ale.

Cross references to CAMRA's various pub guides covering Greater London are provided to enable easy updating. The numbers in brackets after each entry refer to the page numbers in the following guides: BM - Balham to Morden Pub Guide; BRP - Barnes to Raynes Park Pub Guide; CE - Camden & Euston Real Ale Guide; CSL -

Clapham & South Lambeth Pub Guide; E - East London & City Beer Guide, 3rd edition; H - Hertfordshire Guide to Real Ale, 2000 edition; HB - Holborn & Bloomsbury Pub Guide; HH - Hampstead & Highgate Real Ale Guide; IS - N1 Islington Real Ale Guide; K - Guide to Kent Pubs, 10th edition; 8K - Real Ale Guide to Kent Pubs, 8th edition; KT - Kingston Pub Guide; N - North London Beer Guide, 3rd edition; RHP - Richmond to Ham & Petersham Pub Guide; SE - South East London Pub Guide, 4th edition; 3SE - South East London Pub Guide, 3rd edition; SW - South West London Pub Guide, 2nd edition; W - West London Pub Guide, 2nd edition; WB - Wandsworth & Battersea Pub Guide; X - Essex Beer Guide, 9th edition.

If you would like to report changes to pubs or beers, please write to: Capital Pubcheck, 2 Sandtoft Road, London SE7 7LR or email: capitalpubcheck@hotmail.com.

NEW & REOPENED PUBS & PUBS CONVERTED TO REAL ALE

CENTRAL

EC1, CHEQUERS, 44 Old St. Adnams: Bitter; St Austell: Tribute; guest beer. Reopened. (E13, U108, U113, U187)

EC3, COCK & WOOLPACK, 6 Finch Lane. Shepherd Neame: Bitter, Spitfire, Bishops Finger, seasonal beer; guest beer (e.g. Oakham JHB). Former Free House acquired and reopened by Shepherd Neame in 2002 but not previously reported. (E39, U131, U156)

WC1, LA SIESTA, 49-53 New Oxford St. Renamed

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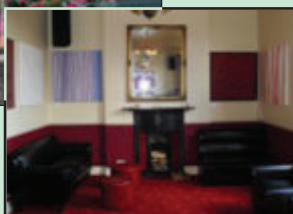
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Capital Pubcheck - update 206

SHAFTESBURY (BAR & DINING). Caledonian: Deuchars IPA. Formerly NAMA (when the main entrance was at 245 Shaftesbury Ave, WC2). (W36, U201)

EAST

E4, GARDENERS ARMS, 18 Burnside Ave. No real ale. New pub believed opened at least 10 years ago but not previously reported.

E8, LONDON FIELDS, 137 Mare St. Greene King: Abbot. Reinstatement of real ale. (E163, U163)

UPMINSTER (RM14), BAR 3 ZERO, 30 Corbets Tey Rd. No real ale. Independent bar opened in late November 2008 in former laundrette premises.

UPMINSTER (RM14), BRIDGE, 167 Upminster Rd. Refurbished and renamed WINDMILL. Three varying Greene King beers. Now has a quieter, much improved atmosphere aimed at more mature adults. (X121, U125, U196)

NORTH

N1, LEXINGTON, 96/98 Pentonville Rd. Adnams: Broadside Formerly CLOCKWORK, previously FINCA TAPAS BAR. (N43, U113, U179, U204)

N11, ORANGE TREE, 2 Friern Barnet Lane. No real ale. Reopened. Formerly BIG HAND MO'S for a while, originally GROVE. (N101, U106, U110, U155, U200)

N16, YUCATAN BAR, 121 Stoke Newington Rd. Adnams: Bitter. Formerly RUMOURS WINE BAR. (N130, U165)

N17, BOOTLACES, 841 High Rd. No real ale. Reopened. Now Enterprise, ex-Bass. Formerly CHEQUERS. (N133, U160, U205)

N17, VOLUNTEER, 131 Chesnut Road. Wells: Bombardier. Reopened. (N137, U166)

BARNET (EN5), AFTER OFFICE HOURS, 70 High St. No real ale. Reopened. Formerly XCALIBAR, BUENA VISTA, BAR TEN and originally JUG & TRUMPET. (N250, U157, U164, U166, U170, U180, U189, U205)

NORTH WEST

NW1, ABBEY, 124 Kentish Town Rd. Adnams Bitter. Formerly ABBEY TAVERN. (N161, U175, U180, U183, U195)

NW3, SWISS COTTAGE (YE OLDE), 98 Finchley Rd. Sam Smith: Old Brewery Bitter. Real ale was reinstated in 2005 by the then new licensees, but not previously reported. Could this inspire other fizz Sam Smith pubs to reinstall handpumps? (N190, U109)

SOUTH EAST

SE5, OLD DISPENSARY, 325 Camberwell New Rd. No real ale. Reopened. (U195, U196)

SE19, JACK BEARDS AT THE PALACE, 2 Anerley Hill. Renamed GRAPE & GRAIN and now an independent free house since early April. Eight varying real ales from Adnams and local microbreweries Sambrook's, Twickenham and Westerham. The new guvnors formerly ran the Woolpack, a GBG pub in Banbury. CAMRA members receive a discount. A welcome addition to the SE London pub scene. Formerly OCCASIONAL HALF and SPORTSMAN, originally CRYSTAL PALACE. (SE181, U147, U168, U189)

SE25, ALBION, 26 High St. Fuller: London Pride. (SE214, U157)

BROMLEY (BR1), CROWN, 46 Plaistow Lane, Sundridge Park. Fuller: London Pride. The new licence requires drinkers to sit down with table service only, but food is not compulsory and tables are available for drinkers only. Now Punch, ex-Spirit. (3SE216, U107, U196)

FARNBOROUGH (BR6), FRANKIE & BENNY'S, 2A Farnborough Way. No real ale. Substantial bar area for non-diners available in this restaurant chain outlet.

ORPINGTON (BR6), PRIORY TAVERN, 105 High St. Adnams: Bitter, not always available. Reopened after brief closure. Formerly BLACKSMITH (YE OLDE), originally ARTICHOKE. (3SE265, U107, 8K130, U163, U196, U199, U200)

ORPINGTON (BR8), TONY'S (BAR & GRILL), 332 High St. No real ale. Italian bar and restaurant with bar area in front.

SIDCUP (DA14), HOG'S HEAD, 47/49 High St. Reopened in late April and renamed TAILORS CHALK by new owners Wetherspoons, ex-Laurel. Named after the Tailors shop that occupied No 49 in the early 20th century. TV screens, WiFi and children's certificate. Open 9-11 Mon-Thu, 9-11,30 Fri/Sat and 9-10.30 Sun, Formerly HOGSHEAD. (U126, K127, U189, U204)

SOUTH WEST

SW8, VAUXHALL GRIFFIN, 8 Wyvil Rd. Fuller: London Pride. Reinstatement of real ale confirmed. Formerly WYVILS, originally BUILDERS ARMS. (SW76, U167, U199, CSL38)

SW8, WHEATSHEAF, 126 South Lambeth Rd. Courage: Directors; Marston: Pedigree. Reopened. (SW80, U144, U204, CSL39)

WEST

HOUNSLOW (TW3), BLACK HORSE, 203 Lampton Rd. Courage: Best Bitter. (W167)

HOUNSLOW (TW3), LORD CLYDE, 77 Inwood Rd. Fuller: London Pride; guest beer (e.g. Twickenham). Under new management. (W170)

HOUNSLOW (TW3), ROYAL ALBION (JALANDAR JUNCTION), 58 Hibernia Rd. Reopened and reverted to simply ROYAL ALBION. No real ale. (W170, U186, U202)

NORTHOLT (UB5), OFFICE (THE), 17/18 Oldfields Circus. No real ale. New independent bar run by J&D Properties Ltd in former hairdressers premises.

OTHER CHANGES TO PUBS & BEER RANGES

CENTRAL

EC1, MITRE (YE OLDE), -Adnams: Bitter; -Rooster: Yankee; +Fuller: London Pride; +guest beer. Acquired by Fuller's from Punch (Spirit) in April. (E20, U185)

EC3, JAMAICA WINE HOUSE, -beers listed; +Shepherd Neame: Bitter, Kent's Best, Spitfire, seasonal beer. Free House acquired by Shepherd Neame in April. (E40, U69, U99, U131)

WC2, HARP. In process of being acquired by the landlady from Punch. (W33)

WC2, ROUNDHOUSE. Due to be acquired in mid-May by Fuller's from Punch (Spirit). (W39)

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NORTH

N1, DUN-A-RI. Renamed **MILLERS**. Retains Courage: Best Bitter and Directors. Formerly **QUEENS ARMS**. (N56, U120, U184)

N6, FLASK. -beers listed; +Fuller: Chiswick Bitter, London Pride, ESB; +guest beer (e.g. Highgate Special Bitter) following acquisition by Fuller's from M&B in February. (N82, U151, U192, U204, HH6)

N15, MOLL CUTPURSE. Renamed **CROWE BAR**. (N125, U166)

NORTH WEST

NW1, LIBERTIES BAR. Reverted to **CAMDEN HEAD**, -Fuller: London Pride; +Adnams: Bitter. (N169, CE12)

NW1, KENJI. Reverted to **PHOENIX**, still no real ale. (N171, U180, U191)

SOUTH EAST

SE1, TOWNHOUSE. Renamed **LIBERTINE**, -beers listed; +Caledonian: Deuchars IPA; +Shepherd Neame: Spitfire. Now independent, ex-Whitbread. Formerly **SKINNERS ARMS**. (SE34, U125)

BECKENHAM, EDEN PARK, 422 Upper Elmers End Rd. Renamed **TOBY CARVERY (EDEN PARK)**, -beers listed; +Fuller: London Pride; +Greene King: IPA; +Young: Bitter. Now has an 'Innkeepers Lodge' hotel attached. Formerly **EDEN PARK HOTEL**. (3SE204, U156)

SOUTH WEST

SW1(SJ), RED LION, 2 Duke of York St, -beers listed; +Fuller: Chiswick Bitter, London Pride, ESB, Gales Seafarers Ale (3.6%); +two guests or seasonals, following acquisition by Fuller's from M&B in February. (SW46, U204)

SW1(W), RED LION, 42 Parliament St, -beers listed; +Fuller: Chiswick Bitter, London Pride; +three guest beers (e.g. Morrissey Fox Blond Ale, Brains Rev James). Acquired by Fuller's from Punch (Spirit) in April. (SW49, U187)

SW7, HEREFORD ARMS, -beers listed; +Fuller London Pride, ESB, Gales Seafarers Ale, seasonal beer; + guest beers (e.g. Butcombe Bitter, Highgate Special Bitter). Acquired by Fuller's from Punch (Spirit) in April, ex-S&N. (SW72)

SW17, GARDEN HOUSE. Renamed **MANOR**, a 'bar and grill', -Wells: Bombardier; +Black Sheep: Bitter. Formerly **GEORGE**, previously **FREEDOM & FIRKIN**. (SW109, BM12, U189, U198)

MITCHAM (CR4), PARK PLACE, -beers listed; +Fuller: London Pride; +H&W: K&B Sussex Bitter. Now an M&B Toby Carvery, ex-Whitbread (Beefeater). (SW147)

WEST

W2, SWAN, -beers listed except Fuller: London Pride; +Fuller: Chiswick Bitter, ESB. Acquired by Fuller's from Punch (Spirit) in April. (W80)

W6, QUEENS HEAD, -beers listed except Fuller: London Pride; + Gales Seafarers Ale, HSB. Acquired by Fuller's from Punch (Spirit) in April. (W104)

W8, SCARSDALE TAVERN, -beers listed except Fuller: London Pride; +Fuller: Chiswick Bitter (or Gales: HSB); +guest beer (e.g. Butcombe Bitter). Acquired by Fuller's

from Punch (Spirit) in April. (W111)

TEDDINGTON (TW11), ANGLERS, -beers listed except Fuller: London Pride; +Fuller: Discovery, Gales HSB; +Adnams: Bitter; +Harveys: Sussex Bitter; +Aspinall: English Cider following acquisition by Fuller's from M&B in February. Formerly **ANGLERS HOTEL**. (W194, U204)

CORRECTION TO UPDATE 204

NEW & REOPENED PUBS ETC

EC4, PRINT HOUSE. Should read: **PRESS HOUSE**.

CORRECTION TO UPDATE 205

PUBS CLOSED ETC

UXBRIDGE (UB8), COWLEY BRICK. Should read: freehold for sale.

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New Abbey beer bound for Old Brewery

The formal agreement between Meantime Brewery and the Greenwich Foundation for a new bistro and brewery operation in Greenwich was celebrated on 6 April. The brewery will be an important aspect of the Discover Greenwich centre at the Old Royal Naval College.

Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive of the Greenwich Foundation (pictured left), hammered the bung into the first wooden cask of beer to be filled at the existing brewery site prior to it travelling to its new home. The beer, a 8.8% Belgian Abbey-style ale, will spend a year in 350 litre oak Syrah casks before being tapped at Meantime's new brewery, due to open in early 2010.

The new brewery will be called the 'Old Brewery'. It will occupy the 1836 brewhouse building on the same site as the original brewery built in 1717 to supply beer to the pensioned sailors who occupied Sir Christopher Wren's seamen's hospital.

Meantime are scheduled to take possession in October for their own fit out and brewhouse installation. It is expected that the brewery will be opened in time for the 10th anniversary of Meantime's very first brew, which took place on 24 February 2000 at its Penhall Road home, a short mile and a half away in Charlton. Meantime brewmaster and founder, Alastair Hook said, "Discover Greenwich is an amazing opportunity to tell the one million plus visitors who come here every year the great story of brewing in the city that was the brewing capital of the world. Here, visitors will be able

to see the brewing process, enjoy an astonishing range of beers, which we are going to produce as we recreate historic long-gone beers and innovative new beers, as well as learn about the history and cultural significance of beer and brewing.

There are so many brewing associations on this site and we are discovering more all the time. We have recently learnt that the land, on which the brewery stands, was once owned by the Abbey of Ghent. Indeed, it belonged to them from the ninth century until it was confiscated by Henry VIII. It is therefore not just a happy coincidence that the first of many beers, which we will be maturing in wood at the new brewery, is an Abbey style beer which originated in the late nineteenth century in Flanders."

Duncan Wilson said, "Once again we will be brewing beer and, rather than retired sailors, we will be refreshing visitors to Greenwich and local residents. The Old Brewery will be a great complement to the new interpretation displays and services for our visitors."



GWATKIN AND THE COMPLEXITY OF THE APPLE

As well as campaigning for real ale, CAMRA campaigns for real cider and perry (like cider but made with pears). As sometimes people say they don't like real ale, there are also people who say that they don't like real cider but, as with the vast variety of real ale, it can also be said that one swallow of a real cider is not representative.

An excellent way to try a few ciders is at a CAMRA beer festival, such as Reading, which took place over the first May Bank Holiday. Reading hosts CAMRA's annual Cider and Perry Awards. The six ciders on the final panel were not only distinctly different in appearance but miles away from each other in flavour profile. The winner, Gwatkin's Yardlington Mill of Herefordshire, looks like what drinkers would think of as a traditional cider, cloudy dark gold. However, as well as the (not unusual) citrus notes with some sweetness, there was a distinctive spirit (rum) character on nose and flavour, with a pleasant dry finish, that made this smooth cider

stand out.

The next award winners were so close that they were awarded joint silver. Orchard's Wye Cider from Gloucestershire was another cloudy cider but lighter in colour, yellow. There was some butterscotch and melon in the flavour but the overall impact was the dryness. The cider was mouth puckering initially with a dry bitterness on the palate that lingers into the aftertaste.

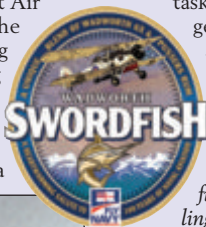
In comparison, the Welsh Triple D Cider from Rosie's, the other silver winner, was a clear pale gold cider with apple on the nose, palate and aftertaste. It was refreshingly light and easy drinking with the sweetness balanced by some acidity.

Three ciders, all with different tastes so that, if you think you don't like cider, perhaps it's time to have another look. And if you want to find out more about cider, CAMRA's new guide to cider is out now: £12.99 from www.camra.org.uk.

Christine Cryne

A RUM DO FROM DEVIZES

On board HMS President at St Katherine's Dock on 7 May, Wadworths launched Swordfish, their new 5% bottled beer, to commemorate the centenary of the Fleet Air Arm. Affectionately known as the 'Stringbag' the slow, torpedo-carrying biplane distinguished itself often during World War 2, most remembering the heroic crippling of Germany's 'Bismarck' battleship. Well, Shepherd Neame has done a fine job associating its beer with a



Battle of Britain Fighter; so be it with 'Swordfish'. No doubt due to the brewery's proximity to the FAA's HQ in Yeovilton, Wadworths rose to the task of perfecting the brew and spent a year getting it right, using the draught 6X recipe as a base. During the process the Navy's favourite tipple, Pusser's Rum was added, thus celebrating another tradition.

Their tasting notes say: *"The process of blending beer with rum has involved developing some pioneering techniques. The finished ale has a full mouth feel and leaves lingering flavours on the palate with the rum adding body and subtle aromas to the beer which develop with ageing."*

Hardly a session beer at 5%, the 'jury' agreed it tasted even stronger than that. There's a touch of the Christmas Ale about it. For those not planning to visit Wiltshire in the immediate future, we are reliably informed selected Wetherspoons will be stocking it and, for off-sales, look in Tesco's shelves during the late summer.

Peter Tonge

IT'S A CHALLENGE, JIM, BUT SOMEBODY HAS TO DO IT

Early in April, eleven sharpened palettes, including yours truly, gathered at Sainsbury's Headquarters in Holborn to carry out the initial judging to select the finalists in the Sainsbury's 2009 Beer Challenge. With a 10am start and over 115 beers from 57 brewers to taste, it's an enormous challenge. Each judge is given a selection of around 27 beers to assess for appearance, aroma, flavour and aftertaste.

After that a separate team evaluated their presentation in terms of bottle style and labelling. By running the competition this way Sainsbury's look to acknowledge the fact that a great beer will be bought and enjoyed again and again but one which is poorly presented may never be bought at all!

There's a real commercial importance in the decisions being taken as the top 15 finalists enjoy a five week listing in the majority of Sainsbury's stores in the summer and the first two to sell 40,000 bottles are then deemed the overall winners. This gives Sainsbury's customers the final say. The top two go into more wide-scale

distribution in October with a guaranteed six month listing. Some of the runners-up may be offered regional listings.



The only disappointment, from my perspective, was the small number of bottled conditioned beers. In part this may be related to the requirement that the submitted beers must not be stocked by multiple retailers with more than 15 stores nor must they be entered into other competitions which might affect their exclusivity to Sainsbury's.

Of the 15 finalists, a staggering seven come from Scotland, dominated by Williams Brothers. I would be on the look out for their Ceilidh and from Hambleton, Taylor's Tipple. It is good to see a national supermarket promoting what are, in the main, locally produced beers with a huge variety of flavours, as opposed to the slabs of mass-produced lagers that can otherwise dominate shelf space. If you do drink at home, these are the beers you should be aiming for, such as 2008's winners – Bath Ales Barnstormer and from the Isle of Man, Doctor Okell's IPA.

John Cryne

The Five Bells, Smock Alley, West Chiltington, West Sussex



We awoke that Saturday to the clip-clopping sound of horses passing through the lane below us. Opening the curtains we saw rabbits hopping around the field opposite, under the watchful eye of

the biggest fox I've seen for a while.

The observant among you will have guessed this isn't going to be one of my usual inner-city pub reports. My wife and I had gone country – and I *do* mean country.

Our adventure started the previous morning from Victoria Station. The train journey to Pulborough takes a little over the hour and the landlord, Bill Edwards, was there to drive us the remaining four miles or so to West Chiltington's Best Kept Secret (Good Beer Guide quote). My first impression was that this rose and clematis-clad pub was nowhere near as old as it looks in the photographs. Nevertheless, with half-closed eyes, it was easy to imagine it featuring as 'the Meet' in one of those old hunting prints: all pink jackets, horses and hounds! The inviting bar had a great choice of real ales available, my favourite proving to be Oakleaf Pompey Royal at a healthy 4.5%. Alongside Appledram Cider (a whopping 7 per cent) there were also Harvey's Best, Hogs Back T.E.A., Palmer's Copper Ale and Sharp's Mild (there's always a mild). Several of the beers are guests and constantly changing. Ploughman's lunches somehow seemed right to accompany our beer, and the Brie and Stilton platters were delicious: no 'Primula'-sized little triangles of cheese here and I'd swear the chutney was homemade, like everything else on the menu.

Now, a warning to you cynophobes! Just as we were finishing lunch, a door swung open and out

dashed two frolicking Airedale terriers. "They like to hold your hand with their teeth; some call it biting!" Bill quietly advised. It transpired these were just two of the four beloved pub Airedales and there are pictures of the breed everywhere, right down to the coffee coasters in the rooms. Indeed, dogs are as welcome as people in the Five Bells and staying guests are even invited to bring their pets. Bill and Joan had to leave for a funeral around 2pm and we stayed nattering with a couple of locals and the two young guys behind the bar. I discovered Bill was something of a perfectionist in all things: only the best beers, in top condition, and the finest locally sourced food for the homemade menu. Locals urged us to try the fish and chips (so popular it's available take away) and the steak and kidney pie. That night and the next lunchtime we tasted both.

I have never tasted haddock like this before: the batter melted in the mouth. The same goes for the pastry on the steak pie (and I'm something of a connoisseur in the 'meat pie and pudding' department). Meals on the blackboard ranged from sea bass and steak to our choices, with prices ranging from £8 to £14 for mains.

Retiring for the night we found the ensuite accommodation immaculate, right down to the glistening bath taps! Prices vary from £60 single and £80 for a double, and include a full English breakfast. I think it's the only way for visitors to really enjoy the food, beers, ambience, oh and the doggies, in 'the Bells'. Unless you're a keen and fit rambler I would advise driving. The pub is 15 minutes drive from both Arundel and Petworth and just a half hour away from Brighton; now there's a thought for you Brighton lovers wishing to escape the town at night!. Goodwood racecourse and motor racing tracks are not far and West Chiltington has its own beer Festival in early June. And for the keen golfers among you, there's a top club 5 minutes drive away.

Bill and Joan love their pub. "It's a community rather than a destination pub" and they have owned the ex-King and Barnes freehold since 1989. It's a fiercely free house. The windows are festooned with Good Beer Guide, *Which* Country Pub, Real Pub and Beer, Bed And Breakfast accolades and it has won the local CAMRA Pub of the Year award in 2007 and 2008.

Fair to say, then, that Sylv and I are hardly the first to discover the Five Bells' charms but, if I have my way, we certainly won't be the last! Thank you Bill and Joan for your hospitality (and the lifts back and forth to the station).

Peter Tonge



Brown Cow Brewery weekend

On the weekend of 21st/22nd March ten members and friends of Richmond & Hounslow CAMRA Branch travelled up to a beautifully sunny Yorkshire to present a certificate to Sue Simpson and her husband Keith of the Brown Cow Brewery in Barlow near Selby. This was for their Captain Oates Dark Oat Mild which was voted Beer of the Festival by the customers at the Tenth Twickenham Beer & Cider Festival last October. A splendid time was had by all from the time we were collected from outside Selby station until we were returned there after a 'tour' of the brewery and visits laid on to two local pubs by Sue and Keith.

It was particularly pleasing that the accolade was won by a beer from such a small brewery (in a converted garage) such a long way from the area, but mainly that it was a mild ale that did it.

And what is the beer like? – brilliant! It's a 4.5% ABV brew produced from no fewer than fourteen different malts including (if my memory is not playing tricks) a large proportion of crystal with some wheat and rye and quite a lot of (as you might have guessed) oats. And it tastes particularly good in a back garden in shirtsleeves weather in late March.

By the way, if you are in the area we can strongly recommend the Wheatsheaf at Burn and the George & Dragon in West Haddlesey where we were treated to Keltic Moon and White Dragon respectively. Both are only a few miles from Selby.



Our photos show Branch Treasurer Andy Pirson presenting the certificate to brewster Sue while her assistant Keith looks on and Sue standing beside the

unusual and labour-saving tilting mash tun.

FIVE BELLS INN

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Five beers always available including a mild, a guest, a premium ale, plus local Appledram cider.

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The Five Bells recently converted into an Inn providing five rooms all en-suite with bath and shower and we have four doubles and one twin room.

All rooms have TV, tea making facilities and all face the morning sunshine. Every room is neutrally decorated, all have a view of the countryside and dog lovers will be pleased to know there is a relaxed attitude to customers bringing their pets to stay!



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Just ring Bill & Joan Edwards for more details
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Idle Moments

As promised, here are the solutions to the puzzles set in the April Idle Moments column.

NUMBER PUZZLES:

1. 6 Spots on a Snooker Table
2. 12 is a Hurricane on the Beaufort Scale
3. 8 Engines on an Avro Shackleton
4. 75 Lives Lost in the Tay Bridge Disaster
5. 3 Points on the Mercedes Star
6. 32 Miles is the Length of the Channel Tunnel
7. 10 Points for the Z Tile in Scrabble
8. 1773 Year of the Boston Tea Party
9. 30 Old Pence in a Half Crown
10. 6 Tudor Monarchs of England (including Lady Jane Gray)

SBY4:

The lengths of the rivers of Europe are as follows:

1. Thames – 215 miles
2. Rhine – 820 miles
3. Shannon – 240 miles
4. Elbe – 706 miles
5. Rhone – 505 miles
6. Severn – 220 miles
7. Volga – 2,194 miles
8. Tagus – 626 miles
9. Danube – 1,776 miles
10. Loire – 625 miles

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE:

1. The city of Napier the centre of which was completely rebuilt in 1931 in the Art Deco style

following a major earthquake is in New Zealand.

2. Eli Whitney was a firearms manufacturer but first he invented the cotton gin
3. And talking of inventions, the device invented independently by Sir Joseph Swan and Thomas Edison was the electric (incandescent) light bulb.
4. Although she was possibly the best known British actress of the fifties and sixties, Audrey Hepburn was born in Brussels.
5. The name of the river that flows through Moscow is the Moscow (or Moskva) River.
6. And the capital city which stands on the River Spree is Berlin.
7. And talking of Spree, the actress who appeared in a film of that name in 1967, shortly before her untimely death in a motoring accident, was Jayne Mansfield.
8. The Riesenrad in Vienna which featured in the film, 'The Third Man' is a large Ferris Wheel (about 60 metres high).
9. The best answer to how many moons does Saturn have is "Lots." 61 had been identified up to 3rd March 2009 – of which 52 have been officially named so far.
10. The sporting connection between High Wycombe, Watford and Reading is that the relocated "London" Rugby Union Premiership teams play at their football grounds (Wasps, Saracens and London Irish respectively).



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Well here we are again – Easter has passed and we've not been flooded out yet so it must be Spring. It was a lovely day yesterday so I sat indoors creating this rubbish to taunt you with instead of enjoying a ride out on the motorbike – that's deadlines for you.

Let's have another snippet liberated from the Devil's Dictionary by Ambrose Bierce:

Circus (n): A place where horses, ponies and elephants are permitted to see men, women and children acting the fool.

Right, let's have some number puzzles:

1. 5 FOWC of JF
2. 21 RSTTH
3. 2 S in a Q
4. 8 HB on NA
5. 10 FO in a HP
6. 4 F on the GWC (or BB)
7. 12 T of I
8. 9 I per T in a G of B
9. 3 LM from S (from the M by G and S)
10. 6 H on a CP

This time for 5BY4 I have tautologically reverted to the Guinness Book of Hit Singles again and come up with Another list of hits. All you have to do is match them to the performers in the second list:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Another Part of Me | A. Sam Cooke |
| 2. Another Suitcase in Another Hall | B. Phil Collins |
| 3. Another Brick in the Wall | C. Walker Brothers |
| 4. Another Saturday Night | D. Queen |
| 5. Another Day in Paradise | E. Mike and the Mechanics |
| 6. Another Cup of Coffee | F. Michael Jackson |
| 7. Another Day | G. Paul McCartney |
| 8. Another Tear Falls | H. Barbara Dickson |
| 9. Another Night | I. Aretha Franklin |
| 10. Another One Bites the Dust | J. Pink Floyd |

And so we come to the next bit – call it general knowledge, call it trivia, call it what you like – all you have to do (or not if you don't want to) is answer these questions, maybe even correctly:

1. As we all know, Elaine Paige's real name is either Elaine Bookbinder or Elaine Bickerstaff - but which? And by what name is the other one better known?
2. Currently riding high in the Formula 1 championship the Brawn team was bought by Ross Brawn (formerly of Ferrari) from which company?
3. The first series of American manned space flights was named Mercury; what was the name of the following series of two man flights?
4. After Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tensing, when did the third man to conquer Mount Everest do so? - and if you are really clever, who was he?
5. And talking of mountains, which mountain was first conquered by German geographer Hans Meyer in 1889?
6. What do Michael Faraday, Karl Marx, Jacob Bronowski and Michael Redgrave all have in common?
7. And similarly, what is the link between Isambard Kingdom Brunel, William Makepeace Thackeray, Wilkie Collins, Harold Pinter and Anthony Trollope?
8. Among much publicity a brand new A1 Peppercorn class steam locomotive was recently completed. What is its name?



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ALE AT AMBERLEY

The annual celebration of ale from Sussex and further afield at the Amberley Museum and Heritage Centre takes place this year over the evenings of Friday 4 and Saturday 5 September (6 to 11) and 'drink up day' Sunday 6 September (11 to 5-30).

The ales are also available from 11 to 5.30 during the 'Food, ale & craft festival' on the Saturday and Sunday.

For more details, visit the Amberley Working Museum website: www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

9. And still on locomotives, apart from Mallard how many A4 Pacifics have been preserved?
10. What is the name of the area of west Lancashire between the rivers Ribble and Wyre?

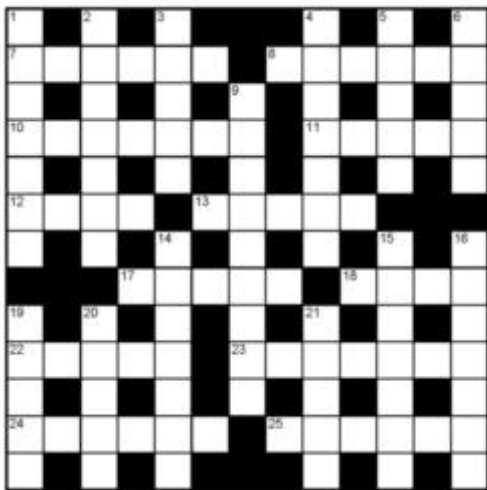
And that's about it for this time. What's the betting the weather will be rubbish next Sunday when I shall be free to get the bike out? Of course by the time you read this you'll know what the weather was like (if you can remember).

See you next time. (What a ridiculous thing to write; of course I shan't be able to see you from the pages of a small magazine!)

Andy Pirson

Crossword

Compiled by DAVE QUINTON



Name _____

Address _____

All correct entries received by first post on 15th July will be entered into a draw for the prize.

Prize winner will be announced in the October London Drinker. The solution will be given in the August edition.

All entries to be submitted to:
London Drinker Crossword, 25 Valens House,
Upper Tulse Hill, London SW2 2RX

Please Note: Entries on oversize copies of the grid will not be entered into the prize draw.

APRIL'S SOLUTION



£20 PRIZE TO BE WON

ACROSS

7. He is going to write article in bar. [6]
- 8 & 24. It's reported East Midlands copper caught jockey. [6,6]
10. Cause spots taking second drink. [7]
11. He's a worker, working. [5]
12. Eat up, girl! [4]
13. Composer in tangle . . . [5]
17. . . . over unknown food. [5]
18. Give up offspring, say. [4]
22. Selected ultimate in chic stockings. [5]
23. Dies, wrongly positioned in the field. [7]
24. See 8.
25. Allow Henry to be deadly. [6]

DOWN

1. Initiate ban on medical pioneer? It's a sore point. [7]
2. Top up if in charge of lots of water. [7]
3. Cuts down rotten pears. [5]
4. Fed up with service, leading diner caused disturbance. [7]
5. Good man's worried condition. [5]
6. Man enters church to find old woman. [5]
9. Organisation of revolutionary movement. [9]
14. Arrived before many in court. [7]
15. Please put in the dark. [7]
16. Rings again and cancels. [7]
19. Manage to follow snow-capped range. [5]
20. Look to leave country. [5]
21. Bid to remove top of chest. [5]

Winner of the prize for the February Crossword:
Ms.E.A.Whalen, Grays, Essex.

Other correct entries were received from:

Ted Alleway, Tony Alpe, Pat Andrews, Hilary Ayling, Jack Bass, Guy "Blacksheep", P.S.Blakemore, Steve Block, Norah Brady, D.Brand, Mark Broadhead, John Butler, Eddie Carr, John Cattemull, Brian Collins, Richard Conway, Carole Cook, Charles Creasey, Kevin Creighton, Paul Curson, John Dodd, Richard & Clever Clogs Douthwaite, C.J.Ellis, Brian Exford, Conor Fahy, Big Eric Farrelly & Richie, Mike Fletcher, Arthur Fox-Ache, Sally Fullerton, Anthony Gdula & Jess the border collie, Chloe Gilbey, Peter Giles, B.Gleeson, Marion Goodall, Paul Gray, J.E.Green, Alan Greer, Stuart Guthrie, M.Hargreave, Graham Hill, W.Hill, David Hughes, Roger Jacobson, Chris James, A.Jenkins, Clare Jenkins, Les Jenkins, David Jiggins, P.Kerrigan, Pete Large, Terry Lavell, Francis Lucas, Steve Magin, Marcus of Guildford, M.J.Moran, Mike Morrison, Al Mountain, Bill Neville, Paul Nicholls, Ann Nunn, Alan O'Brien, G.Patterson, Mark Pilkington, G.Pote, Jeanette Powell, Derek Pryce, John Redwood, Dave Reynolds, Keith Richardson, Alph River, Richard Rogers, Selhurst the cat, D.Shaftoe, Lesley Smith, Ken Taylor, Bill Thackray, Dave Thomson, Paul Tiffany, Ella Vastori, Vic the beard, Andy Wakefield, Leo Walshe, Martin Weedon, John Williamson, Sue Wilson, Peter Wright & the Missus.



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