



**Issue 41
Summer 2010**

FREE
Please
take one



SHAKES BEER

Newsletter of Shakespeare branch of CAMRA - Real ale in Shakespeare country & The Vale

It's Festival Time again!

Get yourselves down to Stratford-Upon-Avon racecourse over the weekend of **Friday 18th and Saturday 19th June as Shakespeare CAMRA are gearing up for their best beer festival yet.**

Branch volunteers are ready for a weekend of hard work as over fifty real ales and fifteen traditional ciders and perrys and made ready for discerning drinkers.

The festival will have a grand opening at 2.00pm Friday and will run until 11.00pm and from 11.00am to 11.00pm on Saturday. For those worried about drinking

and driving there is camping and caravanning available all weekend and a mini-bus shuttle service running to the racecourse, from Stratford railway station, via The Swan's Nest Hotel at Bridgefoot all day Saturday.

For footy fans wanting to watch the England v Algeria world cup match, it will be screened on the Friday

evening in one of our comfortable lounges.

Saturday entertainment will consist of traditional Morris dancing outside and the SOFA band during the afternoon. On Saturday evening more bands promise a great evening of rhythm and blues to go with your beer.



for full
details see
pages 10
and 11

“Hats on” to GBBF 2010



Hundreds of volunteers are again preparing for a week of hard graft at CAMRA's showcase and Britain's biggest, Great British Beer Festival at Earls Court, from 3rd-7th August.

Over 500 beers, ciders and perrys were drunk at last year's festival, including golden ales, fruit beers, stouts, bitters and international beers. There's plenty to occupy you at the festival; you can play on some traditional pub games, enjoy live music, sample some food, including

good traditional pub snacks, and also attend tutored beer tastings.

Non-member tickets are £10.00 on the door or £8.00 if pre purchased. Members save £2.00 per ticket. See <http://gbbf.camra.org.uk/home> for more information

'Hat Day' will celebrate its 6th

birthday this year on the traditional Thursday (5th August) of the Festival.

Visitors have been encouraged since 2005 to participate in this fun event by bringing a hat along that they have either made or are very fond of. There have been a number of wonderful hats on parade over the years and our judges will again be walking around Earls Court throughout the day rewarding the best hats with free beer vouchers, with the overall best hat worn by a festival goer winning a bag full of CAMRA goodies.

See our website www.shakespearecamra.org.uk



25

WYE VALLEY
BREWERY

1985 2010

HPA

HEREFORD
PALE
ALE

WYE VALLEY
BREWERY

ALC 4.0%
VOL

WYE VALLEY
BREWERY

Pub News...

Alcester

The Turks Head, always worth a visit for its real ales, is also the place to go for golfers interested in taking part in the Alcester Open charity golf day on June 11th. The event will take place at the Vale Golf & Country Club then afterwards on to The Turks Head where there will be a BBQ and live music, all in aid of Macmillan Nurses and Breast Cancer Care. Contact the Turks Head to register 01789 765948 or for further details.

Alcester

Congratulations to the **Holly Bush**. Long standing regulars in the Good Beer Guide and the Good Pub Guide, they have now been voted the **AAS Best Pub in West Midlands**, the guide will be published in 2011.

Alveston

New licencees are in place at **The Ferry**. We welcome Pat and Claire Grimes who have already made their mark on the pub by reinvigorating the interior and introducing a new menu based on local produce. We wish them every success.

Offenham

The Fish and Anchor: You can stop 'watching this space' now, this wonderful pub is up and running again, part of a small pub group, Avon Pub Co. Prior to its full opening on 11th May, The Fish opened its doors for free drinks and buffet over the evenings of 6th and 7th May to allow punters to meet the team. Fine fare it was too with Tetley's Cask and beers from Wye Valley on offer. The pub has a completely new staff and the team consisted primarily of Chris and Celia Sweet, although it was nice to meet Katharene the manager and Alison the Bar Supervisor too. Chris and Celia have lots of experience in the trade having most recently spent 16 months managing

The new team at The Fish and Anchor



The Wellington Inn at Moreton-in-Marsh and before that the **New Inn** at Cleobury Mortimer, (doing B&B and hotel management). Chris intends to maintain the Camping and Caravan facilities, re-establish moorings at Offenham Park and continue with the beer festivals. They want to run a homely, country style pub offering honest food, good real ales and much more. Can't wait.

Alderminster

This is no joke, on 1st April **The Bell** launched their own real ale celebrating their connections with the nearby Alscot Estate. Unique to the pub, *Alscot Ale* is brewed by the award winning Warwickshire Beer Co. and at 3.8% is an easy drinking blonde ale with a delightful aroma. There is lots going on at The Bell, including summer Saturday BBQs and new Sunday pizza nights, so plenty of opportunity to go along and try Alscot Ale.

Bidford

Calling all you budding sailors. **The Bulls Head** will again be organising an August Bank Holiday raft race. Roger and Sharon hope to better last years £3000 + raised for the charity Help For Heroes and are inviting all comers to enter the race. Last year hundreds of supporters followed the eight entries from Barton to Big Meadow, Bidford landing stage before

heading back to The Bulls Head for food and frolics for the remainder of the day. A pig roast and party are amongst the events planned this year.

Alcester

Dave Lloyd is taking **The White Lion** from strength to strength. Real ale is now very much a fixture here with two always on offer. A planned third pump will, for the time being ensure an uninterrupted supply and may in due course lead to a third ale. A very successful cheese festival was held in April and the 3D big screen TV is proving to be an attraction for sporting events. For Rugby fans a 3D screening of England v The Barbarians on 30th June is a must.

Shipston

Congratulations to **The George Hotel** which won **The Sunday Times 'Best Value Rural Hotel'** award for 2010. They describe it as 'funked up but friendly' and it goes without saying, great value for money.



travel BEST-VALUE RURAL HOTEL, UK

More Pub News...



Evesham

Just two months into a four week stint, Carl Hollowday, the latest relief manager at **The Trumpet**, still greets customers with a friendly smile. Carl, whose home is in Bristol, thought he'd retired from the pub trade after more than 30 years as license and relief management. Tempted back by Hook Norton, he comes to Evesham via The Albion at Chipping Norton and looks like he'll be around for some time yet.

Oxhill

Summer fun, good food, good beer and entertainment are on offer at **The Peacock**. June 20th, Fathers Day, coincides with their 5th annual charity 'scarecrow weekend' when dozens, possibly hundreds of scarecrows can be seen about the village. A special Fathers day Lunch will be accompanied from 4.00pm by The Warwickshire Youth Jazz Orchestra. August Bank Holiday weekend sees another Beer Festival there with BBQs, Music and a 'Family Fun Day' on the Monday.

Wootton Wawen

Following a period of uncertainty it's nice to see **The Bull's Head** up and running again. This beautiful and historic pub on the Stratford Road re-opened in April under the stewardship of tenants Mark Kerby and business partner David Ward. No strangers to

the hospitality trade David has 12 years experience as a chef and Mark over 10 years in the pub and restaurant trade, including a spell at Shipston's **Old Mill** in its Michelin Star heyday. The Bull's Head has a separate restaurant area providing high quality food but is still catering for the local drinks trade in its snug and bar areas. Bar food is available all day every day (until 5.00pm on Sundays) and Pedigree, Banks' and Hobgoblin are the regular real ales on offer.

Shipston-on-Stour

We are delighted to see **The Old Mill** open again, even though they have no real ale on tap at present. Ashley James Restaurant now operates from there offering fine dining. Signs of hope though: North Cotswold brewer Jon Pilling did organise the ales for a Good

continued page 5

Situated in the heart of the famous Vale of Evesham...



Open 11.00am til 11.00pm everyday for traditional cask ales, real ciders and fine food

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Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday lunch and Wednesday evening

Sunday £7.50

12.00 - 3.00 & 5.30 - 8.00



NEW Seasonal Menu
starts 1st June



Lunch served
Mon - Sat
12.00 noon - 2.30pm
Dinner Mon - Sat
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Open ALL DAY Friday,
Saturday and Sunday
for Drinks from
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Traditional Sunday
Lunch
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Delicious
**Father's Day
Lunch**
(20th June)

from
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3 courses with
coffee £22.50

For sample menus go
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Delicious, imaginative, locally sourced food,
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Daily changing blackboard, fresh fish
delivered daily from Brixham and Cornwall.

We are dog, child and horse friendly.

The Peacock is nestled in the sleepy village
of Oxhill, midway between Stratford and
Banbury. It has been tastefully modernised but
still maintains its olde worlde charm, with oak
beams, flagstone floors and roaring log fire.

**Main Street, Oxhill,
Warks. CV35 0QU**

Telephone: 01295 688060

QUIZ NIGHT - first Sunday of every month from 8.00pm (in aid of Air Ambulance)

BEER FESTIVAL and MUSIC - August Bank Holiday weekend (27th-30th August)

Friday Beer and Food Gourmet evening
which went down well. North Cotswold
Pigbrooke, and *Hung Drawn and
Portered* are available behind the
bar. Rumour has it that there will be
an event every month in the grounds,
including a beer festival.

Let's hope that with enough beers sold
outside they can be persuaded to install
cask ale inside too.

Alcester

Local couple, Chris Johnson and fiancé
Kate Conway took over the **Lord
Nelson Inn** in late March. They cel-
ebrated with an official re-launch party
on St George's day, 23rd April with live
music, welcome drinks and canapes
as well as the usual menu and drinks.
Bombardier will be the regular beer and
up to three changing guests; Doombard,
Abbotts and Pedigree were on offer
when we visited. Chris has been in
the area for about 12 years and, some
time ago did bar work at The Thatched
Tavern, Honeybourne whilst Kate,



Alcester born and bred, is new to the
pub trade. They were both regulars
in the pub before Dave, the previous
landlord, left. In fact Chris organised
much of the musical entertainment, so
they should have little trouble settling
in. Regular entertainment, good food

and more importantly good beer will
continue to be the order of the day.
At the time of writing the Nelson is
surrounded by scaffolding, so clearly
plenty going on. The branch welcome
Chris & Kate and wish them all the best
in their new venture.



More Pub News...

Great Alne

Building work is proceeding apace at **The Mother Huffcap** which is currently covered in scaffolding. Watch this space for news of when it's likely to open as **'The Greedy Pig'**.

Bretforton

For the second year running **The Fleece** has won Shakespeare CAMRA Pub of the Year for the Worcestershire area. The presentation hasn't yet taken place so expect a report in the next issue of *Shakespeare*. Remember too, your final chance to get

your hands on some of the Vale's most delicious produce and support the local church. Bretfortons Asparagus Auction takes place at The Fleece from 7.00pm on 6th June.

Redhill

The Stag will be holding its annual Stagfest charity music day this year on 29th August hoping to exceed the £1400 plus raised for charity last year. This years beneficiaries include Bidford Boys FC and Warwickshire Firefighters. Along with the great music there will be Pig Roasts in the afternoon and evening and an outside bar with three

real ales, Greene King IPA, Abbots and St Edmunds.

Broadway

The Crown and Trumpet are still trying to decide which real cider will go down best. Currently on offer is *Gwatkins Farmhouse*.

and finally...

both **The College Arms**, Lower Quinton and **The Thatched Tavern** at Honeybourne held singles nights recently. Perhaps they should get together sometime?

Cask Ale Week round-up



Broadway

Do you think the lads from Shakespeare CAMRA had a great time at the Meet the Brewer night, (Alex Pennycock of Stanway Brewery pictured far right), hosted by Andrew Scott, (far left), at **The Crown and Trumpet**.

Tredington

Our roving reporter Jim Sargeant reported that **The White Lion** Beerfest was "most agreeable". He visited on the Saturday lunchtime and enjoyed it so much he returned again on Sunday afternoon "for some more excellent ales". On his second visit he found a trio of musicians playing all his favourite numbers and on the Monday there was yet more music in the form of Nigel Dunne & fellow folkies. There were 5 beers on at all times deliberately and well chosen by Licensee James & his Dad replacing their usual beers. These were: *Young's Special*, *Hobsons Bitter*, *Titanic Anchor*, *Everards Tiger* and their own *Blonde* house beer.

Stratford and Evesham

Sadlers Brewery held Meet the Brewer sessions at **The Bear Freehouse** in Stratford and later at **The Old Swanne**, Wetherspoons in Evesham. Chris, the head brewer, gave an excellent talk and answered questions whilst Steve Bell was handing out free samples of JPA, Thin Ice and Stumbling Badger. A stall with leaflets describing Sadler's range of beers and samples of the malts and hops used were also interesting focal points.

A possible convert at the Evesham presentation, "It's surprisingly pleasant", were Evesham girl Mary Jane Bond's first words when she was enticed from her bottled lager and persuaded to try her first ever real ale, 'Sadlers Thin Ice'. Whilst not blown away she did go on to try other beers and said she would do so again.

Chris Sadler with possible convert Mary Jane Bond



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Serving Lunch and Dinners all through the week using locally produced ingredients to make seasonally cooked home made dishes



Shakespeare's CAMRA Worcestershire pub of the year 2008-09



For Summer the Crown and Trumpet Inn is proud to present our two featured beers shown below as well as other welcome guest ales.



Stroud Brewery

Budding - 4.5%

Champion Beer of Gloucestershire 2006 and 2008 A very popular pale ale with a grassy bitterness, sweet malt and luscious floral aroma.

<http://www.stroudbrewery.co.uk>



Stanway Brewery

Cotteswold Gold - 3.9%

A light refreshing ale with a delicate golding hop. The Summer beer, Cotteswold is the old name for the Cotswolds.

<http://www.stanwaybrewery.co.uk>

01386 853202 - info@cotswoldholidays.co.uk - <http://www.cotswoldholidays.co.uk>

See our website www.shakespearecamra.org.uk



The presentation took place over the weekend 9th - 11th April when, for the delectation of all, Sue Maindonald, Angela Heron and their hard working team laid on the 'Firkín Good Boarfest'. This amazing festival with classic

of course plenty of English beers also. Three ciders and fifteen beers in all, with a range of styles and tastes, in great condition and at a very reasonable price, (we tried fifteen halves and had a meal for £20). Events like this, coupled

Never one to rest on her laurels, after the presentation Sue was talking enthusiastically about her next beer festival and mentioned that she'd like to present one with beers made exclusively by women brewers or Brewsters. A difficult feat I thought in a male dominated trade, or is it? Read the article opposite and watch this space; I'm sure if anyone can do it, Sue can!

You can't get 'Boared' at Hampton Lucy

For the second year running The Boar's Head, Hampton Lucy has been chosen as the Shakespeare CAMRA Pub of the Year for its Warwickshire area.

beers from as far afield as Alloa in Scotland (William Bros. Seven Giraffes), Northern Ireland (College Green, Molly's Chocolate Stout), Caerphilly (Newmans, Wolvers Ale and Celts' Native Storm) and

with excellent beer and food throughout the year, more than justify the pub's nomination. Now going forward for judging in the County competition we wish them the very best of luck.



Sue Maindonald receives yet another certificate from Chairman Bob



Visit our website:
www.theboarsheadhamptonlucy4food.co.uk

Open all day every day from Easter to October

Opening times at other times:
Monday to Thursday 11.30am-2.30 & 5.30pm-10.30
11.30am-11.30pm Friday & Saturday
and 12.00pm-6.00pm Sunday

Contact Sue or Angela on
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Pleasant Surroundings

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Take Away service available

Functions and Private Dining catered for in
house or at a venue of your choice

WiFi available

**"Shakespeare CAMRA Warwickshire
Pub of the Year 2010"**



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Closing date for copy for the next issue of SHAKESPEARE will be 16th August 2010

Who put the Ale in Female?

Although nowadays we mostly associate men with brewing, for thousands of years it was women who were responsible for the production of beer.

Jane Peyton of School Of Booze - independent specialists in food and drink tastings - recently wrote of the massive impact women have made to the history of beer and brewing. This was picked up by a number of national newspapers, some of whom wildly misreported the facts (*surely not - ed.*) but the essence of the story remains true.

In almost all ancient societies beer was considered to be a gift from a goddess, such as Ninkasi the Sumatran goddess, never a male God. For thousands of years, brewing came under the remit of women's duties as part of preparing food and drink in the home for the family. In Norse society for instance, there were clearly defined roles and anything performed in the home such as food and drink preparation and child

care was, by law, the responsibility of women.

In medieval Europe beer was a staple of the diet providing people with essential nutrition and a safe source of water. The average consumption of beer for an adult in medieval England was a gallon a day although some of this would have been low alcohol 'small beer'. Famously Queen Elizabeth I drank beer for breakfast, but at the time, so did most of the population. Beer was still brewed in the home by women and surplus ale was often sold, providing a valuable income for many households. A female brewer was known as a brewster whilst women who sold beer were known as alewives.

As brewing became increasingly profitable men started to show an interest in the trade and over time it

became more and more commercial. Until around 1350 most beer was still being brewed by women, but by 1600 it was the men who were dominating brewing. The Industrial Revolution ushered in new practices and technology. Brewing became capital intensive and women rarely had access to the necessary investment funds. Even brewing at home became less common as people moved from the countryside into the developing towns and cities. Often they then lived in such cramped conditions that there was little room for cooking let alone brewing. Beer became dominated by men and thousands of years of female brewing history were forgotten.

So whilst we now associate brewing and beer drinking with men, bear in mind the debt owed to the women brewsters of the past.

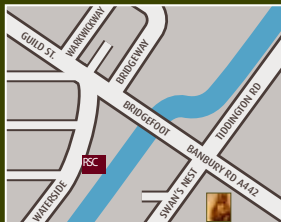
Or as WC Fields put it "*It was a woman who drove me to drink, and I never had the courtesy to thank her.*"



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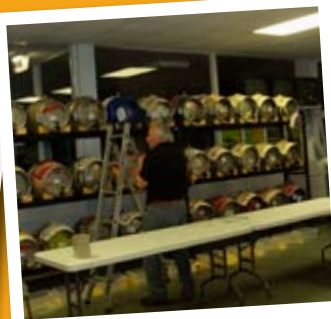




Just rack 'em...



...and tap 'em...



...and keep 'em cool

Last year's festival...

A lot of time and effort goes into any festival but it's not really rocket science. Having selected and purchased your beers...



Invite a VIP to open it



Get the punters in



Serve 'em while it's fresh



...a bit of Cider too...



Feed 'em



Entertain 'em...



...whether they like it or not!



And hope it's all a great success!

Stratford-upon-Avon Beer & Cider Festival 2010

Opening Hours & Entrance Package...

Friday 18th June: 2.00pm - 11.00pm

Saturday 19th June: 11.00 am - 11.00pm

Entry before 6.00pm £2.00. Entry after 6.00pm £3.00. **Free Entry at all times for CAMRA members**

A £10.00 entry package includes your entry fee, a souvenir festival glass (£2.00 refundable), a festival programme and beer and cider lists, the remainder of the £10.00 in drinks tokens. There is a 'happy session' on Friday afternoon between 4.00pm and 6.00pm, when all drinks will be reduced to £2.00 a pint.

No money will be taken across the bars.

Getting there...

The racecourse at Stratford is easy to find - if you're driving it's on the B439 Evesham Road just outside the town centre. It's well signposted. Postcode for 'Sat-Navs' is CV37 9SE.

The railway station is a five minute taxi ride or 25 minute walk. If you're coming on Saturday there will be a mini-bus service, from the railway station every half hour on the hour and half hour, which will also call at The Swan's Nest Hotel at Bridgefoot and on to the festival.

Beers...

This years theme surrounds the **East and West Midlands** although not all of our 50+ beers are themed. We've tried to cater for all tastes with a good range of strengths and styles. About fifteen different ciders and perrys are also on offer with a return of last years very popular *Plum Jerkum*.

Food...

A wide variety of food will be provided at the festival itself and will be available through all open sessions; from meals such as lasagne, jacket potatoes and ploughmans to 'snacks' like home made pasties and sandwiches will be in the lounge upstairs.

The Stable Lads Canteen near the festival entrance, will offer more basic fare: decent breakfasts for campers and festival goers with burgers, sausages and the like available until about 7.00pm each day.

Entertainment...

Although there is no official entertainment on Friday, don't be surprised if the normal 'singalong' takes off. There will be a screening of the World Cup football match between England and Algeria in the lounge upstairs. On Saturday afternoon we present traditional dancing, local band SOFA, with popular music from early blues through the 60s and 70s and modern day favourites and more rhythm and blues through the evening. The Hook Norton Brewery Dray will be at the Festival and around Stratford on Saturday.

Camping on site...

There are facilities for tents, caravans and motorhomes on site, along with washing and toilet facilities, (showers are 50p).

Prices should be confirmed with Stratford Touring Park on **01789 201063**, but start at £6.00 for a single tent and £12.00 for caravan or motorhome per night. Electric hook-ups are available for £2.50 per night.



Proud to be Patriotic

It was a warm spring evening when a mini-bus full of branch members headed into the deep south of our branch area to visit The Norman Knight at Whichford.

Always worth a trip, this time the reason for our journey was to present the pub with the branch **Pub of The Season award for spring**, as voted for by branch members.

The Norman Knight is a delightful stone built pub overlooking the large village green. Recently extended to increase the space for diners, it still exudes character with its flagstone floors, exposed beams, scrubbed pine tables and old photos of the village. Even better, out back is the small but perfectly formed home of the Patriot Brewery.

We were able to choose from Patriot's *Longbow* - a smoky pale brew at 4.2%, *Missile*, a 3.6% session ale and

guest beer *Morgan's Cuckoo Spit*. Cider drinkers were delighted to find Westons cider and Perry. As if great drinks weren't enough to keep us happy we were there on Fish & chip night and were able to tuck into some sublime beer battered Grimsby fish, with home-made chips and mushy peas. The steady stream of locals taking out hot packets of fish & chips attested to their popularity. Chairman Bob presented landlord and brewer Tim with his certificate and thanked him and his business partner Matt, plus the rest of the hard working team, for reviving the pub and starting up the brewery. In such difficult trading times, it is so refreshing to find

a pub on the up and we fervently hope that our award is the first of many for them.

Once again thanks go to Stuart of *Responsive Accessible Transport* for getting us there, watching us celebrate and getting us safely home.



Tim Young accepts the CAMRA Pub of the Season award



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Contact 01384 895 230 or
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for more details

Times:

Thursday 19th - 6pm - 11pm
Friday 20th - 12pm - 11pm
Saturday 21st - 12pm - 11pm

upto
50
real ales
ciders &
perry's

relax &
watch the
cricket

live
music

serving hot
currys
& black country BBQ
Locally sourced
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Brewery News

What's not happening at Purity?

This growing business just keeps on doing that. In February they teamed up with Birmingham's popular Urban Coffee Co. in Church Street, in the city's Colmore Business District. This independent coffee shop, which recently received a license to sell alcohol, has chosen bottles of Mad Goose and Pure Ubu for customers to enjoy along with their cappuccinos and mochas. In April Purity teamed up with local independent cider producer Hogan's in a distribution agreement which will involve it selling the cider to its direct trading customer base across the Midlands.

April's Alcester and Forest of Arden Food Festival also saw the launch of Ragley Pork and Pure UBU sausages. The hand-linked sausages, created by Ragley Estate Meats, are a delicious combination of Ragley rare breed pork with caramelised onions and Pure UBU.



Continuing their 25th year celebration **Wye Valley** have released a limited edition beer using the Maris Otter barley planted at Canon Pyon, just outside Hereford in 2008 and locally grown Herefordshire Hops. The result, just 6,000 bottles of **Dorothy Goodbody's Imperial Stout**. At 7.0% ABV the beer is described as a dark silky beer with sweet vanilla and toffee flavours, which give way to a delicate lingering hoppy character. The result is a warming, rich, full-bodied stout that will improve with age.

Wye Valley Brewery won Gold Awards for Wye Valley Bitter, Dorothy Goodbody's Golden Ale and Dorothy Goodbody's Country Ale at the SIBA Wales & West competition at Ludlow Spring Festival. Dorothy Goodbody's Country Ale was also awarded Supreme Champion Bottled Beer!



Cannon Royall report that sales are up on last year and are on target to increase by 24%. A new hot liquor tank is now up and running which will speed up the brewing process. Recent brew Drakes Drum has been well received. It is a light porter, with complex flavours but well balanced and a rich rosewood colour. It went down particularly well at a recent brewery tour by Redditch & Bromsgrove CAMRA branch who were also happy to sample Fruiterers Mild, Kings Shilling and a well preserved Trafalgar Stout.



Award Winning Uphampton Ales from Cannon Royall...



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www.hooky.co.uk

Brewery News

Buckle Street Brewery

Keen ale drinkers will know that, with Andy Davies as the brewer, Nigel Smith, the landlord of the historic National Trust inn, The Fleece at Bretforton, Worcestershire, has set up the Buckle Street Brewery and that it has been brewing three regular beers:-

No1 Bitter (3.8%) is pale, golden, smooth on the mouth, grassy with slight lemon on the nose and a complex hoppy finish.

Dog In The Fog (4.3%) has a ruby colour and an earthy maltiness, rounding to a bitter finish.

Pandora's Box (4.3%) is copper coloured, with orange on the nose, and is well balanced with a dry hoppiness and caramel undertone.

Those have been going well and I can vouch that their newest brew "Porter" is very tasty indeed! Its tasting notes are as follows:-

Porter (4.6%) is dark, with rich liquorice and intense chocolate malt, smokey overtones and a creamy head.

NORTH COTSWOLD BREWERY

North Cotswold have a full calendar of events this summer including a monthly event in the grounds of the Old Mill, Shipston. Brewer Jon Pilling has created a special Old Mill brew which he hopes will soon be available on handpumps there and throughout the area.

One place you're likely to find it is **The Golden Bee**, Stratford where Jon will be holding a meet the Brewer session at their July Festival. Also coming via The Golden Bee is a competition, open to staff and customers, to select the flavours and ingredients, name and then brew a house beer at North Cotswold Brewery.

A selection from Jon's calendar of events include:

The Cheltenham festival of food and drink on **18th-20th June** where he

will be doing a tutored beer tasting at the real ale tent;

The Bath festival of food and drink on **3rd-4th July**;

The Game Fair at Ragley Hall from **23rd-25th July**;

The Moreton Show on **4th September**.

HOOK NORTON BREWERY

May saw the launch of Hook Norton's latest beer, **Special Dark Mild**. At **4.6 per cent ABV** - the beer has a **fruity flavour typical of a traditionally English dark mild**. It will be available at the **Stratford Beer Festival in June**.

Hook Norton beers have been judged as among the best in the world in the International Beer Challenge (IBC) 2009 - the world's premier competition for bottled beers. The judges awarded Gold medals to *Double Stout*, *Twelve Days*, *Haymaker* and *Old Hooky* - more than any other brewer in the world. Two more Hook Norton beers picked up bronze awards - *Hooky Bitter* and *Hooky Gold* - and all six beers won medals for the quality of their bottle design and labelling.

Winners of Hook Norton's pub awards were selected in April and featured some of our own branch favourites amongst the breweries 47 tenanted pubs:

Highly Commended for **The Gate Inn**, Brailes in the Best Kept Cellar and Best Beer Garden awards.

Highly Commended for Best Beer and Food Matching for **The Castle Inn**, Edgehill and **The George Hotel**, Brailes.

Dave and Sue Wiggins from The George Hotel were also Highly Commended in the Highest Scoring Cask Marque Pub.

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Cask breathers are devices that allow real ale to last longer than they normally would.

The problem with Cask Breathers...

Beer drinkers and publicans alike will be aware of the controversy within CAMRA surrounding the 'cask breather'. It is CAMRA policy not to recommend beers stored using this device and pubs known to use them are excluded from The Good Beer Guide. But what is a cask breather and what is all the fuss about?

The fundamental distinction between real ale and keg beers is that in real ales live yeast is still present in the container from which it is dispensed, whether a cask or a bottle. Keg beers on the other hand are filtered, removing all yeast and other micro-organisms which might affect flavour, then pasteurised to prevent further fermentation. The yeasts in real ale produce natural carbonation which gives the beer its 'condition'. Because the natural yeasts have been killed in keg beers, carbon dioxide, (CO₂), has to be piped in to the beer to provide carbonation. As a result of all the processing, keg beers have a long shelf life and are easy to store and can be connected to a cylinder of gas, chilled and served at the push of a button.

Real ale, on the other hand, has a short shelf life.

When a real ale cask is tapped and the yeasts are exposed to the air, a 'secondary fermentation' begins and this is an essential and indispensable characteristic of real ale. However, once a cask has been tapped and the beer comes into contact with oxygen,

it has a limited shelf life. Exactly how long it's left to stand very much depends on the beer, its strength and how vigorously it ferments. Some weaker beers may clear very quickly, although this doesn't necessarily mean they're at their best and ready to serve. This can only be judged by tasting and it's a matter of skill to judge when the beers have the right

...when a real ale cask is tapped and the yeasts are exposed to the air, a 'secondary fermentation' begins and this is an essential and indispensable characteristic of real ale...however, once a cask has been tapped and the beer comes into contact with oxygen, it has a limited shelf life...

level of carbonation and have lost the unpleasant flavours associated with beer that is too 'young'. Similarly, how long the beer lasts will depend on its strength. Stronger beers are more robust, and may last for weeks. Weaker beers are normally drunk within a few days. This is why turnover is so important for quality -

ideally the pub sells enough beer that you always drink it at its best. Cask breathers are devices that can be fixed to the cask and allow a small amount of CO₂ to replace the oxygen in the cask. Not enough CO₂ to enter the beer or push it up to the hand pumps in the bar, (that's 'top pressure', another matter), but just enough 'blanket pressure' to keep the air from getting to the beer. This significantly slows the maturation processes and prolongs the shelf-life of the beer long enough for the landlord to sell all the beer in the cask.

This is disapproved of by CAMRA who believe the ale should be stored and served without the use of extraneous CO₂ and that there are better ways of keeping the beer fresh. They also believe that beers kept using a cask breather system should carry a notice at the point of dispense informing the drinker of the use of such a device. CAMRA insists that the easiest way to keep beer fresh is to sell more! A pub selling eight beers in mediocre condition is no match for one the down the road which is selling two that are always in superb fettle. Others argue that if the taste of the beer is unaffected and the 'condition' lasts longer then they cannot see the problem.

Either way, the controversy continues. I don't have an answer and it is not the purpose of this article to argue the merits or otherwise of CAMRA policy. I've simply provided the basic background so that you can understand the principles behind the use of cask breathers and what the argument is about.



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The End of an Era?

The 'Monkey House' or to give it its proper title The Cider House at Woodmancote, Defford, is one of just three traditional cider houses left in the country.

You may have heard the very sad news of the death of 'Monkey House' landlord Graham Collins on 18 August. Together with wife Gill, Graham ran this most picturesque of cider houses, with its thatched roof, hanging baskets, wooden barrels, and air of unspoilt charm, for over 35 years. It's been in Gills family for over 150 years.

Originally the Monkey House made its own cider from an adjacent orchard, and in 1850 there is a record of Master Baker John Hayward baking bread and selling cider from the premises. The family line has

remained unbroken with Gill, herself a Hayward, now running the place on her own but finding it very hard going. After buying a pint from the hatch

...the Monkey House made its own cider from an adjacent orchard, and in 1850 there is a record of Master Baker John Hayward baking bread and selling cider from the premises...

under the thatched roof, you may choose to sit on a bench in the garden, or go into the only shelter, a tiny old bakehouse, with basic

wooden furniture and an open fire. Almost everyone who visits takes food to share and whether you like it or not, you'll soon be drawn into conversation with locals and other visitors.

It really is a magical place.

For those who have never visited, now is the time to do so. There is a very real danger that this will be the last summer you will have the chance and it's an experience not to be missed. It lies on the A4104 between Defford and Woodmancote, but you will have to look very carefully to spot it as it has no sign announcing its presence.

Our last information gave opening times Wed., Thur., and Sat. 18.00 to 22.00; Fri. 11.00 to 14.00; Sun. 12.00 to 15.00. Closed Mon. and Tue., but be warned, these times may vary.



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See our website www.shakespearecamra.org.uk



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An alternative way to spend the Isle of Man Members Weekend and AGM



Exploding volcanoes couldn't stop CAMRA members from all over the country descending on the amazing Isle of Man. Although numbers were down from the anticipated 1000 plus, about 700 made it in the end to the AGM and members weekend.

I've no intention of reporting the meeting, (other than that it housed the biggest bar ever assembled on the island), members can get full details from *What's Brewing* and other publications. I can't however contain my enthusiasm for the island itself. Only about 32 miles long and 13 wide this tiny self governing island has many claims to fame: steam railways, electric trains, kippers, probably the most famous

road race in the world, even its own unique breed of cat. In addition, three excellent breweries, Okells being the largest and probably best known in the UK. The other two, Bushy's and Old Laxey, though smaller brew some excellent ales and have some cracking pubs.

Available space here allows only a flying visit to each of the major towns and our pick of the pubs there. I can only apologise to those places which don't get a mention as there are many, varied and excellent pubs on the Island.

My own Douglas gem is **The Rovers**

Return, (which despite its name has nothing to do

with Corrie, as the landlord, a fervent Blackburn Rovers fan, will tell you). Reported to be the oldest in Douglas this busy back street pub is tucked away behind the Town Hall. In the running for the islands Pub of the Year, there are rooms packed with fire brigade memorabilia and in the back, a shrine to Blackburn Rovers with shirts, footballs, pictures and other mementos. (According to the barman the pub once appeared in the Guinness Book of Records as having more doors than any other. Whether true or not the place is like a maze with five separate drinking areas downstairs alone). A fine Bushy's Mild and their ever popular Oyster Stout were the pick of the crop here although some interesting UK guests were on offer.

We visited two **Old Laxey** establishments, the first in Douglas was the **Mereside Hotel's HQ Bar** recommended to us primarily for a first class meal, by a number of CAMRA members staying there. The meal was indeed fine as was the Bosun's Bitter poured straight from the keg. The other was **The Shore Hotel**, Old Laxey's Brew pub situated





in the picturesque village of the same name. The beer was again excellent but I think more people went for the range of over 100 whiskies which were on offer.

We travelled from Old Laxey to **Ramsey**, the second largest town on the island. A traditional freehouse with a fine view over Ramsey's working harbour, **The Trafalgar Hotel** boasts Moorhouse Black Cat Mild as one of its regular beers and one of a good variety on offer. Very nice it was too.

The fine ales available at **The Creek Inn**, on the quayside at **Peel** were almost overshadowed by the excellent food. Local seafood including local crab, kippers and queenies, (the Manx Queen Scallop is another of the islands claim to fame and has its own annual festival), were washed down with beers from Okells, Sadlers and Rudgate breweries.

There were plenty of others available but we just had to move on.

On the other side of the island the quiet little town of **Port Erin** boasts a lovely sandy beach set in a natural harbour. Overlooking it all stands **The Bay Hotel**,

probably my favourite haunt on the island, previously IoM Pub of the Year and in the running again in 2010.

The Bay is Bushy's flagship pub and staged its own beer festival in honour of the CAMRA visit with a total of nine Bushy's beers on offer as well as a large range of Belgian beers always available. I know it's been said many times before but it really was like stepping back in time. The classic fifties style included bar furniture for Double Diamond and Watneys Red Barrel, probably collectors items. A common sight throughout the island also are the Bushy's bottle cars, (based on the Citroen iCV), which advertise the brewery and its pubs. A final, brief stop off on our way back to our digs found us in **The Sidings at Castletown**. Easy to get to by bus steam or electric railway, this is another finalist in PotY 2010. I supped a fine pint of Bushy's

Treskallion, available alongside a good range of other beers. Locals were excited about The Sidings own beer festival in July which offers more than 50 beers over a two week period or, as the landlord said, "until they drink us dry".

I know I haven't done the Isle of Man pubs justice. The ferry home was crammed with CAMRA members most of whom seemed to be discussing the delights of different pubs they visited.

Makes you wonder who went to the AGM doesn't it?

Next year it's Sheffield



Our Minstrel worries about the state of the nation



As I sit thinking what would be a good song about which to write this article a new Liberal Conservative collision government is having its first cabinet meeting. So here is a political song about beer!

It was written by Paddy Ryan (aka Dr R. E. W. Fisher) in 1938 and was recorded by him, with the 'Topic Singers' in 1939. He appears to have been a member of the Unity Theatre, a theatre club formed in 1936, initially being based in St Jude's Hall, Kings Cross, London and continuing until 1983. It had links to the Left Book Club, the Theatre Guild and the Communist Party of Great Britain. By the end of the theatre's first decade, it had spawned 250 branches throughout Britain.

Since that time it has appeared in numerous left wing songbooks, including Wolverhampton, Bilston & District TUC's 'Songbook for Revolution' (2004), the 'Socialist Songbook' by Herb Engstrom (2000) and Chelmsford TUC's collection of 'Trade Union & Political Songs' (2000). It has also been referred to in an article on 'Songs with Teeth' in the Journal of International Socialism (1962). So who has sung it? Well, apparently several well know politicians. Norman Willis, who was the General Secretary of the TUC between 1984 & 1993, sung it when addressing his comrades at the Trades Union Congress, Tony Benn recorded Jim Callaghan singing it at a dinner at a Labour Party Conference and, according to the Centre for Political Song at Glasgow Caledonian University, it is the favourite political song of the new Lord Chancellor

and Secretary of State for Justice, Ken Clarke!
It has also been used as the basis of a parody, The Man Who Taxes The Workers' Ale by Steve Nyman, who I believe had Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown in mind when he wrote it! But I won't trouble you with the words for that version - I'm sure you could them make up on your own!
The song is copyright the Workers' Music Association. Here it is, with the first verse being used as the chorus:-
If you want to hear (and join in with!) such traditional songs being sung try the 2nd Tuesday at The Cottage of Content at Barton (over the river from Bidford) B50 4NP and every Thursdays at The Fleece Inn at Bretforton WR11 7JE.
Alan Whitbread
Ale Taster for the Alcester Court Leet
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The Man That Waters The Workers' Beer

**Now, I'm the man, the very fat man, that waters the workers' beer.
Yes, I'm the man, the very fat man, that waters the workers' beer,
And what do I care if it makes them ill, if it makes them terribly queer?
I've a car and a yacht and an aeroplane, and I waters the workers' beer.**

**Now, when I makes the workers' beer, I puts in strychnine,
Some methylated spirits and a drop of paraffin,
But, since a brew so terribly strong might make them terribly queer,
I reaches my hand for the water tap, and I waters the workers' beer.**

**Now a drop of good beer is good for a man who's thirsty and tired and hot,
And I sometimes has a drop for myself from a very special lot;
But a fat and healthy working class is the thing that I most fear,
So I reaches my hand for the water tap and I waters the workers' beer.**

**Now, ladies fair beyond compare, and be it maid or wife,
O sometimes lend a thought for one who leads a wandering life.
The water rates are shockingly high, and meths is shockingly dear,
And there isn't the profit there used to be in watering the workers' beer.**





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Shakespeare Branch Diary & Beer Festival Round up

Meetings and Branch Events

June 2010

No branch meeting due to beer festival

15th All day Stratford racecourse Festival set-up

July 2010

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

will reconvene

8.30pm Wednesday 12 July

The Holly Bush, Alcester

August 2010

11th Branch meeting 8.30pm meet at **Cottage of Content**, Barton then on to **The Kings Arms**, Cleeve Prior and **The Ivy**, North Littleton

September 2010

8th Branch meeting 8.30pm, meet at **Horse and Hound**, Broadway, then on to **Swan Hotel** and Crown and trumpet.

Keep an eye on the branch website for updates to the diary and what's on at www.shakespearecamra.org.uk

Local Festivals

June 2010

18th-19th

**STRATFORD-UPON-AVON
BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL**

18th-20th Holly Bush Beer Festival, Alcester

July 2010

10th Charlbury Beer Festival

Charlbury Cricket Club

15th-17th Redditch & Bromsgrove Beer and Cider Fest, Bromsgrove Rugby Club

17th Hook Norton Festival of Fine Ale

Rural Fayre Field (adjacent to Pear Tree PH)

23rd-25th Cotswold Beer Festival

Postlip Hall, near Winchcombe

August 2010

3rd-7th Great British Beer Festival

Earls Court, London

12th-14th Worcester Beer, Cider & Perry Festival, Worcester Racecourse

19th-21st Black Country Beer Festival

Lye Cricket Club, Lye

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If you are a CAMRA member in the Shakespeare branch, you should receive a copy of Shakesbeer through the post, (one per household). If you prefer, a PDF copy can be sent to you by email - just let the Chairman know.

If you live outside the area or are not a CAMRA member but would like to subscribe and receive copies through the post, then please send a cheque made out to "Shakespeare CAMRA" for £5 for four issues, published quarterly, to:

**Shakesbeer, 21 Monks Walk,
Bridge St, Evesham, WR11 4SL**

CAMRA Branch contacts

- **Chair & Secretary** - post are currently vacant
- **Branch Contact** - **Laura Bennett**
laura.bennett@hotmail.co.uk
- **Treasurer** - **Julian Stobinski**
treasurer@shakespearecamra.org.uk
- **Membership** - **Katie Williams**
Membership@shakespearecamra.co.uk
- **Young members Coordinator** - **Simon Williams**
BYMC@shakespearecamra.org.uk
- **Social Secretary** - **Bob Kirby**
Socials@shakespearecamra.co.uk
- **Newsletter** - **Bob Kirby**
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The Editor reserves the right to amend or shorten contributions for publication.

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