

FYLDE ALE



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

The Magazine of the BLACKPOOL FYLDE & WYRE Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale

ISSUE 98 - AUTUMN 2017



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THE ED SAID...

How are the mighty fallen! I'm afraid things have not fared too well since our last (hard copy) Summer edition. For reasons I will not trouble you with, we have parted company with our last publishers, Studio Capital, and seem to have run out of alternative publishers. Our immediate choice is therefore to present you with Fylde Ale in this on-line form only. Not ideal, I admit; as a lover of the hard copy myself, I prefer to feel it between my fingers (so to speak). But, believe me, I and the Branch think this is the best choice for the time being.

Certainly, we have to give it a go and you can give us your opinions.

One of the advantages is that we are no longer so hide-bound by publishers' deadlines and can get the latest news out quicker. Perhaps we are on the verge of blogging, though I am not sure precisely what that involves.

So I suggest we make as good a virtue of necessity as we can. Many newspapers - including CAMRA's "What's Brewing" - are now available on-line, so we are in good company.

And we still have important and (I hope) interesting things to tell you about. In particular, there are some exciting developments in prospect on the local pub scene, which we will be following closely in future editions. But it has to be said, the entrepreneurs involved are taking a big risk and making a huge investment - financial, personal etc - in a commercial sector that is very troubled. Pubs are closing at an alarming rate, nation-wide, so it's heartening to see some courageous folk ready to have a go at bucking the trend. It's also good to see that many of the new micropubs (including our two - No 10 in St Annes and the Craft House in Lytham) seem to be doing well. As Wardy suggests in his article, there is maybe an existential challenge for all pubs these days in attracting customers. It's not merely what you do but the way you do it.

The current tax regime makes life that much tougher for pubs too. So please support them, at least with your custom, if nothing else.

CAMRA is campaigning hard to support pubs and has achieved some notable successes recently. But the fight must go on. Why not get involved in it yourself? At the very least, if you aren't already, you could become a member of CAMRA and help us preserve this vital part of our economy and society.

Neil Pascoe

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

FYLDE ALE welcomes letters, photographs, news, views and ideas for possible articles. Please keep things short and to the point. Please supply your name and address (which will only be published with your permission).

Deadline for Winter Edition (99): 31st October 2017

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YOUR RIGHTS AS CONSUMERS

Complaints about short measures etc. should be addressed initially to pub landlords. If you are still not satisfied, you should contact your local Trading Standards Officer, namely:

LANCASHIRE: County Hall, Preston. Tel: 01772 254868
BLACKPOOL: Enforcement & Quality Standards, Progress House, Clifton Road, Blackpool FY4 4US Tel: 01253 478359

CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE (CAMRA)

230 Hatfield Road, St. Albans, Herts, AL1 4LW.

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Web: www.camra.org.uk

FROM THE CHAIR

Hi, I'm Rob Wheatley, and I'm Chairman of the Blackpool Fylde and Wyre Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale.

Our mission is simple: to promote quality Real Ales and Ciders, and to support the pubs that serve them.

We've come a long way since the dark days of the early seventies when we were founded, when we were at peril of drowning in a tide of fizzy keg blandness, to a point where we have an active and thriving independent brewing scene, with all manner of new and interesting quality beers.

More recently, Real Cider and Perry producers have enjoyed a similar renaissance, and Real Ciders are increasingly available in pubs. Not for nothing have we been called "Europe's most successful consumer pressure group"

But we need to keep on; nothing stands still. Some change is positive, such as the appearance of a new breed of micro bars, almost all showing dedication to quality products. Some change is less so, such as the amalgamation and closure of often much loved breweries as the economies of scale begin to look more attractive to shareholders than the maintenance of quality and choice.

It is in this constant churning that we must continue to make our voices heard, standing up for quality and individuality. But more than this, it is fun! If you haven't done so already, book yourself in on one of our social trips (on the Trips organising page on the website), or come to a branch meeting and meet us!

If you're not a member, join us, as we take the cause forward for a new generation.

Rob Wheatley

CALDERDALE BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

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Hebden Bridge Town Hall, St George's Street, Hebden Bridge.



'Beers of the Roses'



**50 beers, ciders & perries from both sides of the Pennines and from around the UK.
Some specially commissioned festival brews and beers from the wood.
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THURS 28TH SEPT (2pm – 10pm) – CAMRA FREE, non-members £1

FRI 29TH SEPT (12noon – 11pm) – CAMRA £1, non-members £2

SAT 30TH SEPT (12noon – 5.30pm) – CAMRA £1, non-members £2 - Free to all after 5.30pm

HOT AND COLD FOOD UNTIL 9PM EVERY DAY

More details at www.hxcalderdalecamra.org.uk

GETTING BULLISH IN POULTON

OUR AUTUMN POTS

We are pleased to announce that our Pub of The Season (POTS) award for Autumn 2017 goes to the Bull in Poulton-le-Fylde.

Landlord Alan Clarke received the award from Branch Chairman Rob Wheatley on Wednesday 19th July in front of branch members and regulars. Rob explained how our seasonal Branch award recognises the achievement of local publicans in promoting real ale in their pubs. "The range and quality of real ales in the Bull have increased splendidly over the last few years," he said. "But so have the pub's ambience and service to customers. We've seen this for ourselves and had reports from others about how welcoming the place is and how good it is to eat and drink here."

In his reply, Alan explained how hard he had worked, since his arrival two and half years ago, to build up the beer range from one to six real ales and improve beer quality. "It hasn't been easy and we have had to take our customers' views fully into account as we have gone along. This award means so much to me and I would like to thank not only CAMRA but also my wife and staff for all their help and support."

Alan's last pub was in Newcastle-under-Lyme but he comes originally from Moston in Manchester. He has always wanted to run a pub on the Fylde, though, not least because his wife, Louise, comes from Fleetwood. The Bull is in the Stonegate pub group and has to use their beer list, but he is hoping to bring in more local beers such as Moorhouse's.

His real ale turnover has gone up to over 15 firkins a week. So clearly the regulars are supporting him and he's been running some brewery trips to encourage them further. He took part in the last annual Stonegate beer festival not so long ago and plans to do so again, so watch his space. One change he has introduced is a widget system for dispense, which he was very wary about at first but now finds more efficient than the previous stillaging approach.



So the Bull joins the Thatched House and the Old Town Hall as local CAMRA award winners, and they are all within a few minutes' walk of each other. Alan thinks the proximity of pubs on the Poulton real ale scene has actually boosted business and community spirit rather than the opposite. There is inter-pub cooperation too and he has good working relations with Simon at the Old Town Hall in particular. The pub does good food, including breakfast, which is going well despite Spoon's Poulton Elk being just round the corner. It also has a buy-7-pints-and-get-one-free scheme and offers a ten per cent discount to card-carrying CAMRA members.

There is a good bus and train service to Poulton, so every reason for you (if you haven't done so already) to pay the Bull and its fellow pubs in the town a visit.

Neil Pascoe

KEEP UP WITH THE PACK

Time was when a pub was a pub and that was that. Take it or leave it. Happily, the times they are a-changing and recent visits by yours truly to two very different places confirms how the pubs industry is responding to the need to attract and retain customers and refresh our interest in going to the pub, which of course is a cornerstone of CAMRA's raison d'être. The first place is the seemingly unlikely destination of Leyland, one rail stop south from Preston and an anonymous town unless you care to look closer.



Greg at the Leyland Lion

Opened five years ago, the Leyland Lion is not only one of the best Wetherspoon pubs in the north-west, having in the recent past been voted Branch Pub of the Year by Central Lancs CAMRA, it also has the hallmarks of high quality throughout the operation, with efficient management, friendly staff (and enough of them!), excellent beer quality and smart and attractive decor. When I called in at lunchtime with the Fylde Wrecking Crew (BF&W members Pat, Sean and Bob) in March the place was busy with a wide range of customers. By contrast in terms of scale, just over the road is the Market Ale House, a micro bar similar to our own No.10 Ale House in St Annes, selling top notch real ale and ciders in a smart, comfortable and friendly atmosphere.

Then there's the Golden Tap, near to the rail station, another micro bar and closer to Lytham's Craft House Beer Cafe in terms of decor and feel;

it's very modern, clean and crisp, just my sort of place.



James at the Golden Tap

Over to Leeds city centre a few days later and what a fantastic range of pubs there is to go at. Starting at Veritas Ale and Wine Bar on Great George Street opposite the magnificent Leeds General Infirmary building, this really does feel like a wine bar that also does good beers, with good food and world beer menus.



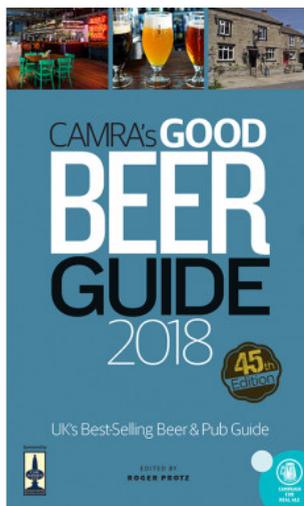
Veritas

At the other end of the Headrow, next to Leeds Minster, you'll find the Lamb & Flag, another superb restoration by Leeds Brewery of a Grade II listed building, selling eight real ales and as usual with this brewery all are in top notch condition. We tried to get in Tapped Leeds but it was packed, so instead re-visited a nearby previous favourite of ours, Friends of Ham on New Station Street, which to me seems to have a bohemian atmosphere, although others may describe it as shabby chic.



The Lamb & Flag

What marks out all these places is that they are not run of the mill. They focus on quality products based on real ale, they are smart, clean, modern and bright, with thoughtful use of colour, and the staff are efficient, enthusiastic and customer focused.



Good Beer Guide 2018

AVAILABLE NOW

CAMRA's Good Beer Guide is fully revised and updated each year and features pubs across the United Kingdom that serve the best real ale.

Now in its 45th edition, this pub guide is completely independent, with listings based entirely on nomination and evaluation by CAMRA members.

This means you can be sure that every one of the 4,500 pubs deserves its place, and that they all come recommended by people who know a thing or two about good beer.

Published September 2017

This edition of The Good Beer Guide is sponsored by Cask Marque.

Roger Protz is a campaigner, broadcaster and the author of over 25 books about beer and brewing, including CAMRA at 40. He appears regularly on radio and TV and contributes to the Guardian and the Publican's Morning Advertiser. In 2015, Roger gained a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society of Independent Brewers SIBA.

Online price to CAMRA Members £12.99

Price to non-CAMRA Members £15.99



Friends of Ham

In short they are on the ball, and reap the rewards accordingly.

There are far too many pubs on the Fylde coast that fall far short of these standards, through lack of maintenance and/or commitment, and I imagine you can bring to mind places that fit the grubby / dismal / couldn't-care-less stereotype.

It's time to keep up with the pack - or pack up.

Wardy

GONE FOR A BURTON

It was a trip I had been determined to make after reading an article in last November's "What's Brewing" about Burton Bridge Brewery. Its two founders, Bruce Wilkinson and Geoff Mumford, had decided to sell up and retire after 35 years' ownership, so it seemed important to enjoy the distinctive world of BBB before all this happened and it maybe disappeared forever.

Bruce and Geoff had both cut their teeth with Ind Coope in an earlier life but, seeing the warning signs there, they cast about for an opportunity to start a brewing business of their own. It came in 1982 when they spotted a pub for sale in Burton-upon-Trent, with enough spare room at the back for a brewery.

At the time, the pub was called the "Fox and Goose", but it became the Burton Bridge Inn, in honour of an ancient, nearby bridge, and the brewery's name followed suit. As business expanded, other pubs were added to the business. At one time, there were eight of them but now it's down to five.

I first encountered BBB in 2006 on a branch trip to the town. Bruce showed us around the brewery then and it was delightful. What appealed at the time and still does is BBB's dedication to traditional real ale. They have a wide portfolio of beers but it pays little attention to the current obsession with whacky flavours and exotic hops. On the contrary, they have been keen to recover beer styles and names from the past, such as an authentic India Pale Ale and the much loved Ind Coope Burton Ale (the respective BBB versions being Empire Pale Ale [in bottles] and Draught Burton Ale). Their flagship brew, which many of you will probably know, is Stairway to Heaven, a golden 5% with bags of flavour.

I was only around for the weekend and Bruce was a busy man, so we managed just a brief chat and a snap. The brewery and its pub chain are still awaiting a buyer, but he and Geoff want that buyer to follow in their footsteps and respect the traditions and staff in their business. So national or global big boys aren't likely to be front runners.



The Burton Bridge itself is a splendid, ivy-clad pub, as traditional in layout and style as the beer, with separate bars back and front and nice, comfortable lounge areas. Keeping things the way they are seems to be the BBB philosophy. Landlord Carl, who comes originally from Cullercoats in the North East, showed me his cellar, where the Bridge Bitter is still kept in 36 gallon barrels. They don't need to be rolled that far either; the brewery is right behind the pub. I could have happily spent the whole weekend here!





The National Brewery Centre is only up the road. It is a fascinating place and, with organised tours, an excellent way of appreciating the brewing heritage of the town.

Although the site is leased from Molson Coors (who closed their visitor centre here in 2008), the Centre is now supported by an independent Heritage trust. It brews its own beer and the famous Worthington White Shield, has a well-appointed brewery tap and even its own dray horses. If you are in the area, check out their website (www.nationalbrewerycentre.co.uk) and pay them a visit.



Amongst other things, you will soon see how brewing once dominated the whole town, from the eighteenth century onwards. The mineral quality of the local water was a primary reason. Bass even had its own railway system for transferring ingredients and products within the town and beyond.

Many of the famous breweries - Bass, Ind Coope, Allsopps and Worthington's - are long gone and the hand of Molson Coors lies over much of what remains;

and even that may be slackening its hold in the near future. But one long-standing, historic brewer remains - Marston's.



Its commercial centre of gravity may have shifted to Wolverhampton, but it is still producing Pedigree here, using the traditional Burton Union System, and now has an on-site nano-brewery, DE14 (the site's postcode).



Of course, as BBB proves, there are other newer breweries in the town. One is the Tower Brewery on Glensly Way.



It takes some finding and its co-located tap has unusual opening hours, so do your homework first and you will be rewarded with a most interesting experience.

Originally, it was the water tower for a nearby maltings (of which, unsurprisingly, there were once quite a few in the town). It has a large open drinking area close to the brewery and a charming little bar, dispensing up to three of its beers at a time.

One bore the title of this article - for which there are apparently several explanations, the most popular being the supposed standard reply to any enquiry about a missing airman in WW2 (he'd "gone for a Burton" in the local pub or, more likely, the English Channel). However, charm apart, I'm not sure Tower beers were my favourites of the weekend; there were better Burtons to go for.

As you might expect from its history, there are lots of pubs in Burton, even in these uncertain times, and I could not possibly have visited them all, nor am I going to bore you with a complete recitation of all the ones I did visit. So here's a short selection instead.

Fuggle & Nugget: High Street. A pleasant, well laid out micro pub in a former hairdresser's. Four beers on gravity, mainly from Ashover brewery on visit. The table service was a nice touch but it was a Friday evening, so it may not be a regular feature. (Alas, I missed out on the other two micros in Burton: the Castle & Pottle and The Last Heretic. Something for next time.)



Coopers Tavern: Cross Street (opposite the vast conditioning towers of the Molson Coors empire). A CAMRA Inventory pub (and deservedly so). Formerly owned by Bass, now Joule's. Gravity beers. It would be rude not to drink the Bass in such a revered local shrine. However, I sometimes feel that shrines like this have a slightly "preserved" feeling to them, and you might prefer to adjourn afterwards to a more "normal" pub.

Devonshire Arms: Station Street. One of BBB's other pubs. Multi-roomed, with a splendid red-tiled floor. A pub to relax in and enjoy the Draught Burton Ale. Bruce Wilkinson suddenly reappeared after his civic duties of the night, but maybe soon realised that, for some reason, I seemed unable to sustain the intelligent tone of our earlier conversation in the Burton Bridge. Well, perhaps he shouldn't brew such drinkable beer!

Alfred Ale House: Derby Street. One of BBB's backstreet pubs with a central bar and drinking areas either side. Perhaps not as classy as the other aforementioned BBB places but still with three BBB beers on handpump, including a very tasty Burton Porter. Great craic too with landlady, Holly, and one of BBB's stalwart workers, Steve Harris.

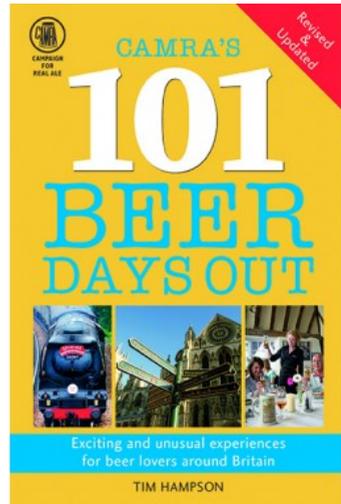


Elms Inn: Stapenhill Road. Wonderful Bass-signed exterior and a bustling multi-roomed interior with a fine central acanthus-clad wooden bar. Four beers. Had to be Bass again for me. However, the noisy gaggle of what looked like second-hand car salesmen alongside spoilt the ambience. At least they didn't try to sell me anything.

Brickmakers: Newton Solney (strictly speaking outside the town but the V3 bus drops off and picks up right outside). Another BBB place and maybe the most enjoyable for me after the Burton Bridge. Five beers (including guests). A wonderful, characterful country pub. I was told (afterwards) there is another good pub in the village, but it would have to be out of this world to beat this one. Note, though: no food.

So, there we are. A truly brilliant weekend. Excellent beer and most friendly company. Cannot wait for the next time I go for a Burton!

Neil Pascoe



101 Beer Days Out

Availability: In stock

QUICK OVERVIEW

Explore 101 of the best beer and brewing-related days out from around, Britain. This second edition contains many new entries and is packed with details including local accommodation and other nearby attractions.

Published October 2015

'You will find museums, stately homes, farms, battlefields, coastal paths and, of course, some of the UK's most fascinating pubs, all gathered together, and arranged by region, in this neat, clearly laid-out volume.'

Jeff Evans, *Inside Beer*

This book is a sheer delight. It underscores the way in which beer are brewing are part of the warp and weft of the British way of life.'

Roger Protz, *Protz on Beer* Tim Hampson is Chair of the British Guild of Beer Writers, and an established beer writer and author. He writes for the Guardian, the Telegraph, the Independent and What's Brewing, CAMRA's monthly newspaper.

Online price to CAMRA Members £10.99

Price to non-CAMRA Members £12.99

RESTORATION MAN

In our last issue, we told you about the attempted community buy-out of the Blue Room on Church Street in Blackpool. The pub had been closed since 2015 and this was a brave endeavour to reopen it, but it failed to raise the necessary wherewithal.

However, come the hour, come the man! Local businessman, Robert Wynne, has stepped in and bought the pub instead - with the very clear intention of keeping it as a pub and restoring it to glory.

Rob has several other businesses in the town, including the Pump & Truncheon, the Rose & Crown and the West Coast Rock and Choc Cafés, but this, his latest, acquisition is "really personal" - as he told me when we met. He had been the landlord there for eight years until 2008, when he became Blackpool's mayor and other matters claimed his attention. He watched the pub's subsequent struggles with dismay and, when Enterprise Inns decided to sell it two years ago, put in a bid to buy it, only to see this de-railed by an ACV (Asset for Community Value) listing secured on it by the community buy-out. Sad that two such well-intentioned moves should collide over a technicality in the law governing ACVs, but, thanks be, Rob returned to the fray as soon as the community buy-out collapsed.

In the end, Enterprise chose to sell the pub by auction and Rob put in the winning bid of £140,000. He now owns it lock, stock and barrel, and he has an inspirational vision for its future. "This will be my lifetime's work and a shrine to beer," he told me. He has resisted any offers of "help" from big boys such as Molson Coors and Marston's and is investing £350,000 of his own (and the bank's) money.

He intends installing a 10-gallon brewery at the back of the pub (there's plenty of room) with the help of Cross Bay brewery in Morecambe, and the brew kit itself could be coming from as far away as Oban. So, at last, we will have a brewery back in the heart of Blackpool.

Needless to say, real ale will feature prominently, with in-house beers and others from small, independent breweries, dispensed by ten or more



hand pumps.

There will be "craft" lagers, including a special in-house one, and real ciders. But Fosters and the like will not even get a look-in!

Rob wants CAMRA to be fully involved too. He plans to cultivate a circle of "beer buddies", who will enjoy "fantastic" discounts and can join in special brewery events - at no cost, bar one: they must be members of CAMRA. And he wants our help in signing up any newbies, of which he hopes there will be many. (He has yet to meet our branch membership "team" but I'm sure that won't put him off !) The buddies will also have a big input in deciding guest beers.

Another key ingredient reflects Rob's lifelong love of Blackpool Football Club. It was actually founded in the pub back in 1887. The house lager will be called "1887" and there will be an 1887 lounge. 1887 could also figure in the pub's name. There only remains the delicate matter of who to invite to the inauguration from the club. Rob would love it to be his hero, Jimmy Armfield. Happily, it sounds as if many of the club's other supporters are right behind the whole idea.

Rob wants to remove the tackier remnants of the



old Blue Room and is keen to restore the pub to its Victorian splendour (it was opened in 1881). The external signage linking it to the Stanley family (from whom it got its original name of the Stanley Arms) will remain, as will many internal features, especially the handsome bar and wainscotting. Sensitive re-decoration rather than massive alteration is the order of the day. As Rob says, "even a million pounds cannot buy over a hundred years of tradition".

One novelty, though, will be the showcasing of the brewery itself. People will be able to inspect it and drink alongside it. But it is to be a pub for the discerning drinker, not a cheapo magnet for all and sundry - there's more than enough of those already in Blackpool. So, there's a question mark over things like pool tables and darts boards. The aim is not to be run-of-the-mill, but attract a good range of good clientele, including (for example) Opera House and Grand show-goers. Being away from the tourist hubbub could actually be an advantage, as it has been in the past for other classic town pubs like the Rammie

. Food. Rather than follow the standard menu-driven approach, this will be varied and "event-driven" to suit the occasion. Mexican or chicken wings or bangers & mash, and so on. There will be a more imaginative emphasis on soft drinks too. Many young people (wise beyond their years) opt for these now rather than alcohol.

Rob kindly walked me around the place, enthusing about his plans at every turn. It is a truly MASSIVE establishment, and either a bargain at the price or a potentially cash-guzzling liability - maybe both. There are three storeys, with ample room upstairs

for his other idea of establishing a "Creative Hub" for musicians and other artists (there's still an old sound-proofed room for recording). And plenty of room(s) for CAMRA meetings (hurrahh)!

Of course, this cannot all be achieved at one fell swoop. It is a massive project that can only be progressed in stages, but Rob is definitely up for it. Naturally, he wants to integrate it fully with his other business interests, especially the Pump and Truncheon, which will showcase the new brewery's products. The P&T will also be providing him with an ardent trainee brewer in Andy Daubney (its current manager), who will be learning his craft with Nick at Cross Bay. Rob's nephew, Alex Gauthier, will be at the helm as manager.

I have neglected to mention the pub's new name. Actually, at the time of writing, this hasn't been finally decided, but, almost certainly, it will no longer be the Blue Room. Yet it seems to have been the "Blue Room" from way back. This may be a link to a one-time police station nearby, but Rob's sister remembers the name from the 1960's, when the place was a student haunt and they foregathered upstairs in an actual blue room (it still is). So, with a bit of wordplay, Rob fancies turning the name into "Brew Room". But it could be the "1887 Brew Room" or the "Stanley Arms Brew Room" or ... who knows what! We must wait and see.

Oh, the other key thing, I guess, is the opening date. This isn't finalised yet either, but look out for something around November/December-ish (this year).

I can only hope that, like me, you find all this immensely exciting and good news. Good for beer lovers, pub lovers, music lovers and Blackpool lovers - and, well, lovers generally. I think that, if things go to plan (and let's not get too OTT too soon, they rarely do), this could turn out to be the very thing Wardy is praying for in his "Keep Up with The Pack" piece. Here's someone reopening a pub instead of closing it, and ready, able and keen to be enterprising, imaginative and different. Someone surely we have to thank: Robert "Restoration" Wynne. Unless you feel we should also thank Enterprise Inns for shoving off and letting the light back in.

Neil Pascoe

MICROCOSMIC

Inspired by the growth of micro pubs over the last couple of years, Kev Leah, Peter Joy and I planned a day out visiting some of them, far and near.

On 7th July, we set off from Blackpool North station on the 09:11 train to Bradford, using the £10 Day Ranger ticket which allows travel anywhere on Northern Rail. (You only need two tokens from the Blackpool Evening Gazette, with which you can buy up to 4 tickets. You can get details by registering your email address with Northern Rail.)

We arrived in Bradford at 11:00 and had a ten minute walk to the Record Cafe on North Parade, followed by the Sparrow Bar, just over the road. Both are excellent micros serving a wide range of cask, keg and bottled beers, and real cider. Then a five minute walk to Bradford Forster Square station to get the 12:11 train to nearby Shipley.

In Shipley we called in at the Fox, a short two minute walk from the station. I enjoyed the Shipley Stout, brewed at the on-site BeeSpoke brewery run by Chris Bee from Blackpool. Returning to Shipley station we got the 12:49 train to Skipton.





Arriving at Skipton station at 13:20, we walked three minutes to the Sound Bar. Here we browsed the vinyl records for sale while supping a tasty half pint. Next was a short walk to Early Doors. Good beer and the cheapest round of the day.

Our lunch was then a delicious steak and potato pie from Drake & Macefield bakery on Otley Street. Our next micro was the Beer Engine where the beer barrels are stored in glass cabinets behind the bar. Our fourth micro here was the Boat House, which overlooks the canal. We still had time for a quick half of dark mild in the Narrow Boat pub. Leaving Skipton bus station at 15:45 on the X43 "Witch Way" bus to Colne, as there is no direct train link.



We arrived at Colne at 16:25 and walked three minutes to New Market Street, where the three micro pubs Cask 'n' Keg, Boyce's Barrel and Tapster's Promise are handily located next door to each other. After an enjoyable half in each, we headed to Colne station for the 18:21 train to Burnley.

The final micro of the day was The New Brew'm in Burnley, which is the Reedley Hallows brewery tap. I enjoyed a bottle of Konrad's Stout 10.4% from

Norway. We then had time for a last half at the Ministry of Ale, home of Moonstone Brewery, before getting the 20:12 train back to Blackpool.

A great day out and we would thoroughly recommend all the micro pubs visited. With traditional pubs sadly continuing to close, it's good to see new micro pubs opening up and providing such excellent outlets for good beer and cider.

Chris Harring



AL'S ALE TALE

HEAT'S ON FOR LAMBIC

Often called wild beer, Lambic is a style of beer confined to a small valley on the outskirts of the Belgian capital, Brussels, called Payottenland. An ancient style of brewing, there were dozens of Lambic breweries before the World Wars, today half a dozen survive.

The beer uses the traditional brewing ingredients of liquor (water), malted barley, hops (old hops which are used for preserving only, not for flavouring or bittering) and yeast. However, the yeast isn't the commercial brewers' yeasts used all over the world. Yeasts used in Lambic brewing are air-born natural yeasts that enter the brewery through open windows and vents and find their way into the huge, shallow wort cooling vessels. The resulting brew then goes into huge wooden barrels.

Unlike traditional beer which rarely stays in the fermenting and maturation barrel for more than three weeks, Lambics require up to three summers' bubbling and fizzing away. These natural unfiltered Lambics are regularly blended, young with old, to produce its unique, compelling flavours, and we now have Geuze. This blending produces a more approachable, sweeter, milder, lighter bodied beer than the single Lambics.

The beers are exceptionally dry and an acquired taste. Michael Jackson, the Beer Hunter, comparing them with other beers said, "it's like live music versus impeccably engineered recorded music, Django Reinhardt versus Yehudi Menuhin, bebop versus Baroque." Drinking the beer, you have to get over the sour dryness and you begin to find complex flavours, woody, winey, acidic, fruity, spicy, and faintly smoky.

If you visit Brussels you must find the Cantillon Brewery, it's in the suburb of Anderlecht, close to the city centre. It prides itself on being a living museum to Geuze, but is also a fine place to sample Lambics. More like a fantastic wizard's lair than a brewery.



CANTILLON / Brasserie-Brouwerij

Rue Gheude Straat 56 / Bruxelles 1070 Brussel
Tel. +32 (0)2 521.49.28 - Fax +32 (0) 2 520.28.91

On a recent visit to an event in Belgium, I had a chat with the owner of Cantillon, Jean Pierre Van Roy. Like most brewers, J P is never totally happy with the brewing business. I was surprised to be told that it is hard for him to sell his beers in Brussels. But that is America's gain, as they buy 50% of his production.

He told me he would like to keep brewing for many years, but is fearful that global warming may halt production. He told me, "The brewing of my beloved Lambic is seasonal. Fermentation takes place on cooler, autumn evenings from October onward. On quite a number of occasions recently temperatures were too warm and production had to be halted. This could be the end of Lambic!"

What a tragedy it would be if the world's rising temperatures resulted in this great beer disappearing.

Alan Daggart

BOOZE NEWS

ON LOCAL PUBS & CLUBS

An update on the watering holes of Blackpool, Fylde & Wyre. With thanks to the following contributors: Phill Marquis, Mark Lewis, Rick Pickup and Lee Rawlings. PLUS a plea for MORE contributions: don't keep it to yourself, tell Fylde Ale about it !

OPENINGS

The former Sacred Heart Infants School on Talbot Square has been transformed into the **Little Black Pug Bar**, and it is offering real ale (Doom Bar on recent inspection). **Winston's Bistro Bar** on Highfield Road has also entered the world of real ale, with up to five beers available. The news on the **Blue Room** is covered elsewhere in the mag, but the other "Great Expectation" is in Kirkham (which could do with it): Lytham Brewery has taken over a former health food shop in the centre and is converting it into a brewpub. Planning permission has been granted and the necessary licences have seemingly been obtained. It will have a 2½ barrel plant and be called the **Tap & Vent Brewhouse**. If all goes to plan, it should be open towards the end of November (this year). More news anon.

CLOSINGS & OTHER CHANGES

Uncle Tom's Cabin has been sold to the Ma Kelly's group and is destined to become a "themed" entertainment venue of some kind. The prospect of real ale continuing there would seem meagre. The **Auctioneer** has once again been put up for sale, by the current owners, Hawthorn Leisure, this time without the protection of an ACV (Asset of Community Value) listing (the previous one lapsed). "Entrepreneurs" are still sought to run **Gillespie's**, and the **Fairhaven** in Ansdell continues to be available as a "business opportunity" under the unencouraging hand of Enterprise Inns (though at least it retains its ACV listing). Landlordly changes have seen new managers appearing at the **Queen's** in Lytham (Andy) and also the **Station** (Sue). We wish them both well.

The future of real ale at the **Cedar Tavern** is looking uncertain. The **Washington** now seems to be the main flag bearer in that part of town. After a long period of closure, the **Dinmore** on Grange Park is now in the process of being demolished.

REFURBS

The former **Queensway** in St Annes is now a full fledged Miller & Carter Steakhouse, but the real ale position has still to be confirmed. Likewise the **Mount** in Fleetwood has only just re-opened after its transformation and is looking very nice - with its real ale offerings fully intact. The **Old Bridge House** on Lytham Road in Blackpool is also undergoing some kind of makeover.

FESTIVALS

Sadly, we have had to can our plans for a **Lytham beer festival** this year, for various reasons, but hope we can resume operations next year. Pleased to say, though, that preparations for the annual **Fleetwood Beer & Cider Festival** in February are about to start, so get 8th-10th February in your diaries now. Better still, come and help us run it ! (See our website and festival Facebook page for details soon.)

However, there has been no shortage of other beer festivals in local pubs and clubs (and brewery) over the Summer. Excellent news !

The most recent being at the **Wrea Green Institute**. It was their second festival, with 23 beers on offer, and reflects the 'Tute's commitment to real ale under its manager, Andy. Usually, it has 4-5 beers on hand pump and has become a place of choice for serious imbibers in the parish. It is a members' club, but visitors are welcome provided they are signed in (which can easily be arranged, seemingly). So, why not pay it a call ?

SUNDRIES

After its earlier refurb and change into a "pizza" pub, the **Plough** in Freckleton has just received a Cask Marque award. Let's hope that stimulates the real ale interest in the village.

On a sadder note, some of you may recollect **James "Jim" Ryder**, a former licensee at the Washington, who has just died at the age of 86. Our condolences go to his family.

BREWS NEWS

YOUR LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

Our range of local breweries is expanding all the time - with two newcomers below (Rock Solid and 3 Piers) and potentially more in the pipeline. Here is the latest picture on the patch.

With many thanks to Rick, Julie, Mark and Tim for their contributions.

CHAPEL STREET BREWHOUSE

www.thatchedhousepoulton.co.uk



Following the departure of Vin Hamer as brewer, the range of beers is being reviewed and slimmed down. They are now mainly concentrating on Brewhouse Gold, Brewhouse Blonde and Stout.

Rick Pickup

FUZZY DUCK BREWERY

www.fuzzyduckbrewery.co.uk



Trade continues to be steady at Fuzzy Duck. Ben was recently happy to win his first ever award for a golden beer (having won many for his dark ones), when Golden Cascade won its category at Gosport Winterfest in February. Happily, his beers continue to

gain outlets on the Fylde, recently appearing for the first time at Bar 19 (who have already re-ordered) and the Elletson Arms. All his standard beers and many of his single-hopped beers are now available from the brewery in bottle-conditioned form, although, if you're thinking of visiting to get some, it's better to call Ben first on 07904 343729 to make sure he's there.

Rick Pickup

LYTHAM BREWERY

www.lythambrewery.co.uk



We have just had our annual beer festival at the brewery over the August bank holiday weekend. It was a great success from our point of view and featured in the Lytham Express. Our next big event will be the opening of our brewpub, the Tap & Vent Brewhouse, in Kirkham around the end of November - a lot of work, but we can't wait! [see Booze News for more details]. Our Autumn range of beers will be Crafty Devil (a 5.2 % ruby beer), Harvest Gold (a 4.4 % pale session ale, using only one traditional lager hop), Pilsner (a 4.2 % pale ale, using only pilsner malt and traditional German hops) and Witch Wood (a 3.9 % full-bodied golden session ale). The forthcoming specials in our "Animal" range will be Viper (a 5.6 % pale - in September), Twit Twoo (a 4.6 % dark - in October) and Ape Ale (a 4.2 % blonde - in November). We are also pleased to announce the birth of Sebastian to Victoria and Will (our brewer) - another addition to the Booker family!

Julie Booker

ROCK SOLID BREWING CO

rocksolidbrewingcompany@gmail.com



Vin Hamer, formerly of the Thatched House, has set up his own brewing company with his beers first being seen at Poulton Gala. Initially, he was using spare capacity at Lytham Brewery, but is now brewing at home until he can find better premises and brew plant (maybe late 2017/early 2018).

His beer range currently includes Rock Solid Blonde, Gold and Citra. So far, he is mainly concentrating on private sales and events, but his beers have appeared at a number of local pubs, including No 10 Ale House.

Rick Pickup

SKIPPOOL CREEK BREWERY

www.skippool.creek.co.uk



We have been regularly attending the Thornton Farmers' Market at Marsh Mill, offering bottled-conditioned beers direct to the public. We currently have Top Sail Pale Ale, Skipper's Dark Ale, Crow's Nest Bitter and Black Oar Stout in bottles - with Red Duster (Raspberry Wheat) coming soon

(possibly in time for the next market on 9th September). (The market is on the morning of the 2nd Saturday of the month.)

We continue to supply local outlets with cask ale and have had frequent repeat orders from No 10 Ale house, Strawberry Gardens (Top Sail), Royal Oak (Top Sail), Craft House (Black Oar Stout) and The Venue (Skipper's Dark Ale). Our beers featured in the recent Strawberry Gardens and The Venue beer festivals and were the first to sell out at The Venue. Top Sail Pale Ale will also be appearing at the Wrea Green Institute's beer festival on 1-3 September.

We are now providing Top Sail Pale Ale in keg form to the Bridge 42 Bar and Bistro in Poulton. (I know some CAMRA members are against keg beer, but this is natural beer that is not pasteurised or filtered, and was requested to replace their mass-produced pilsner.)

We continue to have good sales and we are brewing to order to keep up with demand.

No news on expansion as yet, but it's in the pipeline.

Mark Tomlinson

3 PIERS BREWERY

www.3piersbrewery.com



3 Piers Brewery is based on Poulton Industrial Estate. Its owner, Michael Henry, has been a real ale enthusiast for many years, and, born and bred in our illustrious region, he has long had a vision of opening his own brewery. Previously a mechanic and photographer, he decided to down tools and cameras for a hydrometer.

The brewery was incorporated on 29 March 2017 and Michael subsequently bought and built the brewery from scratch. All the equipment has now been tried and tested, and, with all the paperwork completed, he can concentrate on brewing the beverage we all love to drink and enjoy.

Michael intends using a varied range of hops, such as Summit, Pilgrim, Citra, Fuggles, Bramling and Cross Goldings, along with German malts. He wants to sell his beers locally and nationally and the first ones should be with us soon.

More details next time.

Tim Shipway

MIKE PURCELL

A FOND FAREWELL

It is with sadness that the Branch report the passing of one of its members, Michael Purcell. Mike was a proud Yorkshire man who considered his time this side of the Pennines as missionary work.

He was born in Bradford in 1935, the son of a doctor, and was brought up in Silsden and was always proud of his upbringing in Old Cobbydale. As a youngster, he suffered a serious injury playing rugby and spent the next few years in a back brace. Unable to play rugby, he became a cricket umpire and that started his association with Marton Cricket Club near Skipton until the family moved to Fleetwood in 1978.

Mike's first job was as a surveyor for a local lumber merchant estimating the yield of timber. Most of the rest of his life was spent working in the car trade in Yorkshire and on the Fylde Coast. He used to tell us about trips he made abroad, especially to countries behind the Iron Curtain to look at different makes of cars. He always claimed he was the first person to drive a Mazda in Yorkshire!

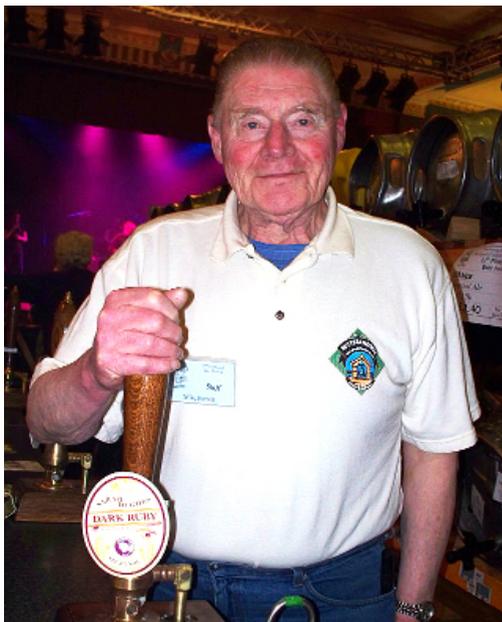
One of Mike's other passions was his model boats, and the Fleetwood boating lake was one of the reasons why Mike and his family moved to Fleetwood. Mike spent many an hour building his boats and soon his flat was full of them. He was often seen at the boating lake sailing his boats. Another reason he liked living in Fleetwood was that he could always see Ingleborough, a part of his beloved Yorkshire from the promenade.

Mike next became the shopkeeper at Fleetwood Lifeboat station. This job he loved because he always liked meeting and talking to people. He also became part of the Lifeboat shore team, which had various jobs around the Lifeboat station to make sure everything ran smoothly. After retiring from the Lifeboat shop, Mike became a volunteer on the Jacinta trawler near Freeport in Fleetwood.



Mike's other "hobby" was being a member of CAMRA and he was a regular on our social trips to breweries and various towns and cities across the country, from Newcastle to Bishops Castle near Shrewsbury and from the Isle of Man to York. On every trip into Yorkshire, Mike was always heard to say "I hope you buggers have got your passports". You can imagine what our reply was when we made the return journey back into our beloved Lancashire!





Yorkshireman's Motto: (often quoted by Mike to us Lancastrians)

*'Ear all, see all, say nowt,
Eyt all, sup all, pay nowt,
And if ivver tha does owt fer nowt,
Allus do it fer thissen.*

On one occasion we made a visit to Mike's favourite brewery, Sarah Hughes at The Beacon at Sedgley in the West Midlands. At the end of the visit, the landlord presented Mike with a brewery T-shirt recognising his adoration of Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild. This adoration continued for many years, especially at the Fleetwood Beer Festival where Mike could always be found guarding his beloved Ruby Mild.

On another occasion, we made our annual pilgrimage to Cumbria and at the third pub, The Farmers at Portinscale, it was Mike's round. After ordering three pints of bitter, a shout of "How Much?" was heard throughout the pub. Apparently the two previous rounds had only cost £6 each, but when Mike came to pay for his round, it cost £6.90. From that day on whenever someone on one of trips complained about the price, a chorus of "How Much!" rang out.

One of Mike's favourite pubs was The Eagle & Child at Wharles. This pub he said was where it all began for Real Ale on the Fylde Coast, so he called it the Centre of the Universe.

In later years, Mike ran errands for stall holders on Fleetwood Market and he was a frequent passenger on local buses and trams making the most of his free bus pass. No matter what the weather Mike liked to go out for a pint at night and would either visit The Steamer or The Thomas Drummond.

Mike passed away on 14th June aged 82. A well attended service was held at Carleton crematorium on 29th June where his coffin was draped in a RNLI flag and was carried in by family and members of Fleetwood RNLI. Mike's ashes were scattered into the sea near Fleetwood's Lower Lighthouse on 4th July.

So Mike has sailed his last boat, ridden his last tram and supped his last pint. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

Steve & Andrea Walker, Dave Owen & Mike's family

CHAMPION BEER OF BRITAIN 2017

As many of you will know, each year CAMRA makes awards to those beers that it considers to be the "tops" in the UK. This takes place at its annual Great British Beer Festival in London, usually in August, and is the culmination of a year's worth of beer tasting and judging activity across the whole country. To call the process "complex" is beyond understatement! But the winners do eventually emerge, sometimes like mice from a quaking mountain.

There are winners in each different category of beer style, then there is a trio of overall winners, and, finally, one "supremo" winner - the Champion Beer of Britain (CBOB).

This year's CBOB is **GOAT'S MILK** from **Church End Brewery** in Warwickshire. Nick Boley, the CAMRA National Director

responsible for the whole CBOB process, said it was "a stand-out beer - it has a lovely balance of malts and hops and a full flavour. It is a very fine example of a bitter and incredibly refreshing." Needless to say, Church End Brewery seem rather pleased: "It's our best selling beer." Well, they can expect to be selling a lot more of it now - which is often the problem facing CBOB winners: the demand for them can suddenly and vastly exceed supply, and smaller breweries often struggle to cope.

So, if, by some happy chance, you are able to try it, do - and see if you agree with our CBOB judges!

For your further interest, here are the full CBOB results



OVERALL WINNERS

Award	Beer	Brewery	Location
Gold	GOAT'S MILK	Church End	Warwickshire
Silver	RIDLEY'S RITE	Bishop Nick	Essex
Bronze	CWTCH	Tiny Rebel	Wales

MILD

Award	Beer	Brewery	Location
Gold	RUBY MILD	Rudgate	Yorkshire
Silver	MAGGS MAGNIFICENT MILD	West Berkshire	Berkshire
Bronze	MILD	Winter's	East Anglia

BITTER

Award	Beer	Brewery	Location
Gold	GOAT'S MILK	Church End	Warwickshire
Silver	RIDLEY'S RITE	Bishop Nick	Essex
Bronze (2)	ALTON'S PRIDE WANDLE ALE	Triple fff Sambrook's	Hampshire London

CHAMPION BEER OF BRITAIN 2017

BEST BITTER

Award	Beer	Brewery	Location
Gold	CWTCH	Tiny Rebel	Wales
Silver	PIKE	Blackedge	Manchester
Bronze (2)	SHERE DROP GOOD OLD BOY	Surrey Hills West Berkshire	Surrey Berkshire

GOLDEN ALE

Award	Beer	Brewery	Location
Gold	INFINITY	Blue Monkey	Nottingham
Silver	JARL	Fyne	Scotland
Bronze (2)	CITRA GOLD	Oakham Ludlow	Peterborough Shropshire

STRONG BITTER

Award	Beer	Brewery	Location
Gold	AFGHAN PALE ALE	Greytrees	Wales
Silver	RED BULL TERRIER	Barn gates	Cumbria
Bronze	AUTOMATON	Salopian	Shrewsbury

SPECIALITY Award

Award	Beer	Brewery	Location
Gold	TRIPLE CHOCOHOLIC	Saltaire	Yorkshire
Silver (2)	BLACK PORT PORTER RED ROCKER	Blackedge Cromarty	Manchester Scotland

WINTER CBOB WINNERS

Award	Beer	Brewery	Location
Gold	RUTLAND BEAST	Grainstore	East Midlands
Silver (2)	BLACK GALLOWAY DARK ARTS	Sulwath Magic Rock	Scotland Yorkshire
Bronze	OLD FREDDY WALKER	Moor	Bristol

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