

beer moos

Winter 2009

Issue Fourteen

A Concrete Triumph

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

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CAMRA News

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from the
Chair

Supping
with
Alligators

Join
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Return



Our sixteenth Concrete Pint Beer Festival is now over. Around 800 customers downed 3000 pints of ale and cider, we signed up 15 new members to CAMRA, and we coined enough of a surplus to set up for next year.

The band 'Enquire Within' that played on the Saturday night was very well received, and closed off the festival on a high. They had agreed to play for the right to name the charity to which the spare beer tokens were donated, and chose the Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy Trust. Thanks to the generosity of our customers, over £200 was raised for this very worthy cause.

In a festival with fifty-five beers on offer, fifty-one received votes in the Beer of the Festival competition, which surely is a tribute to the excellent beer quality, for which our cellar crew must take the credit and our thanks. However only one beer can be Champion, and this year the prize went to Pint from Marble Brewery in Manchester.

Thanks to all our volunteers - a record number this year - and to everyone who organised and worked at the event. Also a special thanks to our cask sponsors, and advertisers in our program. Your efforts and support made it all possible. And, of course, thanks to our customers. We hope you enjoyed the festival as much as we did bringing it to you, and look forward to seeing you all again next year.

Carl Dillow (*Festival Organiser*)



Old Red Lion

Traditional English village pub offers a warm welcome great real ales and good home cooked food all at affordable prices.

Toni and Viv have been running the Old Red Lion for 4 years and have a good reputation for well kept beer, home cooked food and good quality wine and this year were finalists and ended up 'highly recommended' in the Aylesbury Vale Village Pub of the Year competition.

The menu has a Spanish influence and through the summer months we offer 'Tapas' evenings which prove very popular. See in pub or Parish Magazine for forthcoming events and dates.


We also offer probably the best view of the area from the garden and through the winter months a roaring log fire ready to warm you as you come in from the cold weather.

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Pub News

Note to Licensees. If you have news from your pub that you'd like to go in the next Pub News, please send details to the editor by February 20th. Tell us what you've got planned for March through to mid June, and report on events that happened earlier. Remember - if you don't tell us about it, we can't print it.

To place a paid advertisement in Beer Moos, please contact Neil Richards on 01536 358670 or email him at n.richards@btinternet.com. Readers PLEASE support our advertisers and patronise their businesses, as without them there would be no Beer Moos for you to enjoy.

News North

Cock/North Crawley – Licensees Tim and Yvonne have moved to the Bedford Arms at Oakley, Beds.

Globe, Hanslope – Beer Moos is delighted to welcome new tenants Emma and Jaime to the Globe and wishes them a successful and pleasant tenure.

News East

Cannon, Newport Pagnell – had a spectacularly successful cider festival in October – a total sell-out! A further festival is planned for later in 2010 - we'll keep you informed.

Lamb, Stoke Goldington – The Lamb reports a very successful and enjoyable 'Wham Bam Thankyou Lamb' music festival in September. The sun shone and all the bands were brilliant. See their website for photos of this, the fourth such event at the pub <http://www.thelambstokegoldington.com>

Royal British Legion Club, Newport Pagnell – bar manager confirms that visitors are free to use the bar and are only asked to join the RBL if they become regulars. Wells Eagle and a guest ale are served, and the club hosted a beer festival over an October weekend.

Swan, Sherington – last time Beer Moos's spy looked, this ex-Charles Wells tied house seemed to have been turned into a residential dwelling.

News West



Sue at the Buckingham Arms

Buckingham Arms, Maids Moreton
Beer Moos welcomes new owner Susan Cunningham to our area. The pub sells Silverstone Pitstop and Batemans XB and when Beer Moos called, seemed to be attracting a lively trade. We wish Sue every success.

Continued.....

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of Beer Moos will be published on: 1st March.
We must have your stories, news and advertisements by: 20th February.
Late copy cannot be guaranteed entry.

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Trading Standards

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Email: tsd@milton-keynes.gov.uk or Buckingham Trading Standards at 5-7 Walton Street, Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 1UP, Tel: 08454 040506
Local Bus information & timetables are available at www.arrivabus.co.uk.

To Advertise

To place an advert or enquire about our rate card please contact: Neil Richards - 01536 358670



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Pub News

Kings Head, Buckingham – now sells real cider, Westons Old Rosie, from a manacube on the bar.

Lone Tree, Thornborough – planning permission has been obtained for this fire-damaged pub to be refurbished and extended, adding 12 bedrooms and a new entrance. Beer Moos is delighted that the sad ruin of what had twice been our Pub of the Year will be restored at last.

Mitre, Buckingham – reports double turnover over the last 2 years, thanks mainly to real ale. The pub continues to showcase the excellent Cotswold Real Lager, brewed by the only lager brewery to be awarded an entry in the Good Beer Guide. For news on live music gigs at the Mitre visit <http://www.lemonrock.com/mitrebuckingham>

Old Crown, Little Horwood – planning permission to convert this free house to residential use has been approved, as the valuation agency agreed the reduced asking price of £475,000 was deemed a realistic market value to tempt those wishing to acquire it as a working pub but had ultimately failed.

Shoulder of Mutton, Calverton – sells a changing Concrete Cow beer as a guest.



The Wheatsheaf - Autumn Pub of the Season



Gary (left) receives Wheatsheaf's award

Wheatsheaf, Maids Moreton – has been voted by this CAMRA branch as Autumn 2009 Pub of the Season. Congratulations to Gary and his staff for this well-deserved award. The Wheatsheaf was also a finalist in Aylesbury Vale District Council's Best Community and Family Pub of the Year award.

News South

Betsey Wynne, Swanbourne – a proposal to extend the car park has been approved by Aylesbury Vale District Council. The Betsey was also a finalist in AVDC's Best Community and Family Pub 2009 award.

Old Red Lion, Great Brickhill – won Highly Commended in Aylesbury Vale District Council's Best Community and Family 2009 awards.

Three Locks, Stoke Hammond – has been awarded the "Best New Build" pub by the Morning Advertiser. According to Citizen First newspaper, the pub's owners, Grand Union Pub Co, invested £720,000 on its refurbishment.

Three Horseshoes, Drayton Parslow – we understand this pub's lease is up for sale.

Wavendon Arms, Wavendon (formerly the Leathern Bottel) – has just been awarded a Cask Masque, The licensee is Claire Frost who used to manage Old Green Man in Little Brickhill. We hear she is pleased to be back in the area, is getting a good reception from old regulars, and reports business up 34% over last year with Taylor Landlord on sale.

News Central

Galleon, Old Wolverton – is in the process of being refurbished and should be open again soon.

Fox and Hounds, Stony Stratford – has reopened with new licensees Paul Hale and Samantha Lancaster, and is busier than ever. Fullers' London Pride and Taylor Landlord are the anchor beers, plus two from a changing range of guest ales. Darts are again being played, and Paul and Sam, helped by bar manager Eddie Newton, hope to return the pub to its glory days when the legendary Ken Daniels was landlord.



Eddie and Sam at the Fox and Hounds

Kingston Tavern, Kingston – according to our source, Tesco has control of the site of this Brewers Fayre (Whitbread) pub and it is currently boarded up, possibly for demolition later.

Moon Under Water, Xscape, Central Milton Keynes – New manager Craig Dooley has taken over this J D Wetherspoon pub, and has invited the branch for a social. Cheers Craig!

Nags Head, Great Linford – has replaced Adnams with Black Sheep Best Bitter.

New Inn, New Bradwell – we understand this Charles Wells pub's lease is up for sale.

Peartree Bridge Inn, Peartree Bridge – is now Cask Marque accredited.

Plough, Simpson – the lease on this Charles Wells house is up for sale via Christies.

White Hart, Bletchley – local press reports that this disused Greene King house has been damaged beyond repair by arsonists, so previous planning permission to build flats on the site was withdrawn.

White Horse, Stony Stratford – we've heard that this pub now regularly sells a guest ale from a local micro such as Frog Island, Great Oakley or Vale.



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Diary Dates

Please note that this diary information is always subject to change – check online for latest information at <http://www.mkcamra.org.uk/diary.htm>

☞ Items marked with a ☞ symbol are 'official' CAMRA events.

DECEMBER 2009

☞ **Saturday December 12.** Annual pre-Xmas Northampton Crawl. Meet 12 noon at Malt Shovel, 121 Bridge St, NN1 1QF.

☞ **Thursday December 24.** Christmas Eve social JD Wetherspoon, Midsummer Bvd. Milton Keynes 2pm onwards.

JANUARY 2010

☞ **Monday January 4th.** Branch Meeting at Cannon, Newport Pagnell 8.30pm.

☞ **Thursday January 14.** Branch Social, Moon Under Water, Xscape, Central Milton Keynes 8 pm.

☞ **Thu – Sat January 20-23.** CAMRA National Winter Ale Festival, Sheridan Suite, Oldham Road, Manchester M40 8RR. (for details visit: <http://www.alefestival.org.uk/winterales>).

☞ **Saturday January 23.** Manchester Pub Crawl as change from Winter Ales Festival.

☞ **Thu – Sat January 20-23.** Cambridge CAMRA Winter Ale Festival, University Social Club, Mill Lane, CAMBRIDGE CB2 1RX. Travel by X5. (for details visit <http://www.cambridgebeerfestival.com/winter>

☞ **Saturday January 23.** CAMRA Central Southern Region's London Pub Crawl round Covent Garden. Start 12 noon at Princess Louise, High Holborn WC1V 7BW (Holborn Tube).

☞ **Monday January 25.** Branch Annual General Meeting, Old Barn, Central Milton Keynes 8 pm.

FEBRUARY 2010

☞ **Thursday February 11.** Branch Social, Ship Ashore, Willen Local Centre, 8 pm.

☞ **Saturday February 20.** CAMRA Central Southern Regional Meeting, Old Barn, Central Milton Keynes 1 pm.

☞ **Monday February 22.** Branch Meeting, Royal British Legion Club, Newport Pagnell 8.30 pm.

☞ **Saturday February 27.** Annual Cycle Crawl to mark Local Pubs Week. *Provisional* start Victoria in Bradwell Village 10.30am, then circuit of 6-7 pubs using Redways.

Cyclists of all levels of proficiency welcome. It is important to check our website www.mkcamra.org.uk nearer the time to confirm details.

MARCH 2010

☞ ***Thursday March 11.** Branch Social, Shoulder of Mutton, Calverton 8 pm.

Thu–Sun March 18-21. Coach trip to Ghent and Ypres, where we will hear the Last Post sounded at the Menin Gate. £265 p/p. Places still available. Contact treasurer@mkcamra.org.uk

☞ **Monday March 29.** Branch Meeting, Fox and Hounds, Stony Stratford 8.30pm.

☞ **Monday March 29.** Marks the start of National Cask Ale Week 2010. We should have further details in the next issue of Beer Moos; meanwhile visit <http://www.caskale-week.co.uk> for regular updates.

LOOKING AHEAD

☞ **Friday – Sunday April 16-18.** CAMRA Members' Weekend and AGM, Villa Marina, Douglas, Isle of Man All CAMRA members are welcome to attend, but early booking of transport and accommodation is strongly advised. Details on www.camra.org.uk

Calling All 534 CAMRA Members in North Bucks

Branch Annual General Meeting on Monday January 25th 2010 to be held in the Function Room at The Old Barn, Secklow Gate West, Central Milton Keynes MK9 3BZ, at 8pm.

This is probably the most important meeting of the Milton Keynes and North Bucks CAMRA branch, for it's there that you, the members – 534 of you at the latest count – elect the branch officers who will keep the show on the road in 2010.

CAMRA is a wholly volunteer-run organisation and the work of our branch has typically been shouldered by a tiny fraction of the 534 members we have. If you are one of that 534, PLEASE come along to the AGM and offer your services. It's fun, it's satisfying, and the more volunteers we have to do things, the less work there is for each one.

You will need an up-to-date membership card to vote at the AGM. See you there – please!

Supping with Alligators

John Callaghan, a previous chairman of MK and N Bucks CAMRA, reviews the Real Ale scene in Florida.

Well over a million tourists from the UK visit Florida each year, but finding a decent beer when they get there has always been a challenge. However, on a recent visit I discovered a brewpub to delight the most demanding British drinker.

The Tampa Bay Brewing Company is located in the former cigar-manufacturing district of Ybor City, nowadays a funky part of Tampa (like a Latino version of Bourbon Street in New Orleans), and is recognisably an American-style brewpub in the modern classic tradition. TBB is large, high-ceilinged, dark and cool, laid out with both dining and drinking areas, plus an al-fresco terrace with its own self-contained bar. The brewing equipment is at one end of the main room, facing out onto the street, and the beers that issue from it are quite superb.

Owner Vicki Doble (originally from Liverpool, via Fife) and brewmaster David (her son) were in-house when I visited, and very keen to discuss their beers. I neglected to "tour" the plant, although it's all visible in one glance. However, I did end up in the cellar and indeed behind the bar, but that's another story (see below)....in the meantime, what about those beers?

In the interests of research, the obvious thing to do was to try a sampler – an annotated tray with small glasses of all the beers on tap, with beer descriptions printed on the tray for reference. There were 11 brews on my first visit and I found all of them highly palatable, with none of the imbalance in flavours, uncertain consistency and occasional weird outcomes that are common in small breweries anywhere. Even the beer styles that I do not particularly enjoy, such as the stout and porter, were recognisably faithful to the style and tasted the way a good beer should.

There were three pale ales available, my favourite



American beer style, and I tried them in ascending order of strength, a challenging exercise, given that the basic brew starts at 5% and the heavy one was somewhere north of 8%. All three were excellent, bitter, hoppy, north-western pale ales in the classic style, with Old Elephant Foot at a strapping 6.8% the best of the best. This was to prove my beer of choice after the sampler had been sampled.

The uncommonly beefy strength of the brews didn't stop there, with a one of the seasonal specials (a Weizenbock) at over 9%, not forgetting Moose Killer Barley Wine at 10%....and even the stout was 8%.

The great thing about the brews was that – despite the alcohol onslaught – none had the sticky, viscous feel of many strong ales; even the strongest were nicely balanced and fiercely drinkable. Full-bodied, definitely, but not like chewing tarmac. And each and every one of them was a pleasure to drink.

Do they meet CAMRA requirements for "real ale" – no, they don't quite (although see the next paragraph below). The beers are kept in a cellar at 36 degrees in a complicated arrangement of tanks and casks (real British firkins, awkwardly equating to a 10.5 US gallon barrel) that seems vaguely akin to light blanket pressure and the beers are rough filtered. Irrespective of temperature and filtration, none of the beers seemed at all gassy, and they all retained a mature, full-bodied character.

But whether it's technically "real ale" or not, the beer tastes great. Come to that, CAMRA has never been too bothered about whether German and Czech beers are "real" by UK definitions, either.

However, TBB do have a 100% CAMRA-definition cask beer each week, normally tapping the cask on a Thursday – which is where my visit to the cellar comes in, even though it was a Wednesday afternoon.....

It seems that I was showing such enthusiasm for the beer in my discussion with the head brewer that when I mentioned the cask beer option, he made me an offer I couldn't refuse – or, at least, resist: they would agree to the cask beer being tapped a day early, so long as I was the one who did it...and served the first pint....and drank it, so that, if my beer handling was suspect, it would be me who suffered. Which is why, a minute later, I was in the cellar amid the tanks (from Bass in Burton-on-Trent, no less), tapping a cask of Old Elephant Foot with the traditional mallet and generic pointed object, thereafter to the bar where I pulled through a splendid pint (see photo), which I then enjoyed drinking. High fives all round!

How good is the Tampa Bay Brewing Company? Well, I'll tell you what I told the owners – I have visited brewpubs in various parts of the USA, from the excellent to the awful, and Tampa Bay is every bit as good as any brewpub I have seen.

Why is it so good? I'd be remiss not to mention that the brewers have been partly trained by visits to the UK, hence they have a broader beer education than most, but I think the "answer" to that question is actually as elusive in the US as it is here. Very few brewers set out to be brew indifferent beer but some just do a better job of it than others. Sure, there has to be a commitment to quality in ingredients and the brewing process, skilled staff, blah blah blah, but ultimately those aren't the reasons that some brewers brew consistently excellent beers across their range while others achieve only mediocrity. They are just, somehow, better at it.

So, if you're heading Florida way, be sure to take in the delights of the Tampa Bay Brewing Company. Further details at: <http://www.tampabaybrewingcompany.com>

MOOSINGS FROM THE CHAIR

In these straitened times, it's good to know that breweries and pubcos have a new source of revenue.

Their tenants' and lessees' life savings....

It goes like this. A couple take on a pub, using a redundancy payout or some such. It costs several tens of thousands to buy in, then there is a rent of 25-40 thousand per annum. So far so good.

Now we come to the Tie; the tenant has to buy all the drink from the owner. We in CAMRA quite like the idea of the tie – it's often the only way for a small brewery to get a regular outlet for their beers. But the big boys use it to extract as much cash as possible from their tenants, charging about twice what the same beer would cost anyone else. The thing is, the beer prices can go up and down (mostly up) at the drop of a hat, unlike rent.

Then there's the dodge known as 'delapidations'. This is where tenants' contracts make them responsible for repairs to the owners' property. A surveyor from the brewery or pubco comes round, sees some minor cracks, then the tenant is forced to rebuild an entire wall and has to use the owner's own building company at inflated prices.

So the tenants are kept hovering at the brink of profitability. When they fall into the negative, they dip into their savings to keep going. Human nature being what it is, they will keep doing so until they go bankrupt. Then the owner, having bled their tenants dry, chucks them out, puts in a salaried manager for a few weeks, and waits for the next sucker to come along.

It's not clear to me whether this is ever a deliberate policy, and it would probably be libellous to suggest it is, but it certainly works. Something to think about before following your dream of running a pub.

Cheers!

Phil Swinbank

CAMRA Welcomes National Brewing Museum

CAMRA is delighted to announce the opening of the National Brewery Centre at Burton-upon-Trent in 2010.

Last summer the former Bass Museum closed its doors due to falling visitor numbers, despite opposition by CAMRA, Janet Dean MP, local and county councils, Burton Civic Society and Chamber of Commerce, and the local media.

However, thanks to the work of a local action group, international brewer Molson Coors UK has reversed its closure decision. The museum will be re-born as the Brewery Centre, and retain key elements of the existing facilities to make sure the building's historic aspects stay unchanged.

Nik Antona, CAMRA Director, and Burton branch spokesperson, said:

'As the capital of British brewing, this is exactly what Burton deserves, and it's especially promising for the White Shield Brewery, which shares the site. CAMRA looks forward to working with all involved in the opening, to promote real ale and celebrate one of Britain's most historic industries.'

More information on the National Brewery Centre can be found at www.nationalbrewerycentre.co.uk

National Winter Ales on the Move!

CAMRA's National Winter Ales festival returns to Manchester in 2010 but at a new venue – the Sheridan Suite at 370 Oldham Road, M40 8RR. This, though not in central Manchester, is just 1.1 miles from it, and within easy reach of the northern quarter where many of the city's best free houses are located.

The Festival runs from Wednesday 20th to Saturday 23rd January 2010. On the Wednesday, the Champion Winter Beer of Britain tasting will be held in the morning, followed by a Trade Session

from 2.30pm, and the general public gets in at 5.00pm. For the rest of the week the festival is open from noon till 22.30, with free entry for card carrying CAMRA members up to 4pm and discounted entry thereafter. There will be Cain's and Robinson's Brewery Bars, the latter dispensing Old Tom on gravity, and food will be available at all sessions. Entertainment on Saturday is from the Road Runners with a Punk fancy dress theme as last year's Pirates theme was so popular (*and very very funny – Ed.*)

Buses 24, 72, 80,82, 83, 88, 180, 181, 182, & 184 and Night Bus 82 all stop outside the venue.

For more details see:

<http://www.alefestival.org.uk/winterales>

CAMRA National Pub of the Year 2009 Finals

CAMRA today announced the four finalists which will fight it out to be named 'Best Pub in Britain'.

The National Pub of the Year or POTY competition has been running throughout 2009. CAMRA members assess thousands of pubs across the UK, scoring on various aspects which make a great pub, including the welcome, service, atmosphere, customer mix, décor, and, of course, the quality of the real ale.

The four National Pub of the Year 2009 finalists are-

Royal Oak Inn, Wantage, Oxon, OX12 8DF
Crown Hotel, Worthington, Gtr Manchester, WN1 2XF

Royal Oak, Friday Street, Ruspur, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 4QA

Kelham Island Tavern, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S3 8RW

The winner will be announced in mid-February, and named in the next issue of Beer Moos.

*Drink strong cider as much as yer please
Loses yer teeth and bows yer knees
Sours yer guts and makes yer wheeze
Turns yer words to the stings o' bees
Thins yer blood and kills yer fleas
Drink strong cider as much as yer please!*

Anon. (source: *New Forest Cider*, Burley)

The history of cider dates back to Celtic times (2000 BC) long before that new-fangled beer. Cider is made from the juice of crushed apples. Cider apples consist of four main types: sharps, sweets, bittersharps & bittersweets - which as you can guess from their type-names provide acidity, sweetness (fermented to alcohol) and tannin. Sharps and sweets are similar to cooking and dessert apples.

Cider is usually associated with the West-country, from Cornwall to Hereford, but it in fact it is a national drink. Different regions have different styles of cider - cider producers in the East of England often use cookers or eaters.

Cider is usually made from the juice of several or many apple varieties. Varietal ciders made from the juice of single apple varieties are often unbalanced in some way, but occasionally a quite drinkable cider can be made from apple varieties such as Kingston Black, Yarlington Mill or Dabinett. Cider can vary from cloudy to clear and the colour can vary from straw-coloured through yellow and gold to red.

Perry is a different thing altogether. It is much rarer because perry has to be made from special perry pears, which are hard to come by. Not enough trees have been planted to produce sufficient perry pears, although once they begin to bear they produce copiously for 300-400 years.

There is a limit of 25% to the proportion of apples which can be used in perry, and of pears which can be used in cider. Sometimes a batch of apples and pears is used which exceeds those limits (being

nearer 50-50) which has no legal name, and accordingly we call that "pider" (better than "cerry"). Hellidon Vineyard near Daventry is a local producer of pider.

(Beer Moos thanks Mid Chilterns CAMRA branch for letting us reproduce this article, which is their copyright.)

A Landlady to Remember

Beer Moos is dismayed to learn that Bev, landlady of the Shoulder of Mutton in Wantage, Oxfordshire, passed away unexpectedly in November, and as we go to press this GBG stalwart remains closed until someone can be found to take it on.

Though it's far outside our branch area, many of our members have visited this marvellous pub, with its warren of unspoilt small rooms, and its flower-festooned outside drinking area nick-named the "Hanging Gardens of Wantage"! What most will remember, though, is the large, unmissable sign on the gable end proudly declaring the Shoulder of Mutton to be a 'Greene King-free zone!' Sadly – and unsportingly - Greene King, which has a virtual local monopoly of former Morland houses in the town, used planning law to have the sign removed. Beer Moos salutes the memory of a heroic lady.

You Don't Have to Sell Booze To Advertise in Beer Moos!

That's right – Beer Moos welcomes advertisements from all businesses. 1500 copies of our magazine are placed in 88 outlets – pubs, libraries, garden centres - and each copy is often read by many people. So why not *beef* up your business and see some *concrete* results by contacting Neil Richards on 01536 358670 or email him at: n.richards@btinternet.com for rates and further details.

Beer Without Barley

The World of Gluten-Free Ale

I was diagnosed coeliac 4 years ago now. This means barley and wheat products must be excluded from my diet. Since beer is made from barley, you might conclude that I can't ever drink it, and this is indeed true of normally brewed ales, but I am pleased to report that, after at least four years of searching, I've found a gluten-free beer on sale in a pub. That's the good news! The bad news from the point of view of coeliac drinkers here in Milton Keynes, is that the said pub is in far-off Clerkenwell, London - the Jerusalem Tavern in Britton Street EC1M 5NA.

I mostly drink cider out these days, but this was an unexpected find, and a real delight. The beer is *St Peter's G-Free* (4.2% ABV) from St Peter's brewery at Bungay, Suffolk, and it's brewed from sorghum, a grain that doesn't contain gluten. This light beer is similar in looks and taste to some wheat beers, with a pilsner style lager finish, and aromas of citrus and mandarin from American Amarillo hops, and it's by far the best gluten-free beer I have tasted so far. All I need now is to find it locally!

Hambleton *GFA Gluten-Free Ale* (4.8% ABV) is a darkish beer that is pleasant to drink - fruity, hoppy, and slightly sweet, similar in many ways to Abbot ale. Hambleton *GFB Gluten-Free Lager* (5.2 % ABV - sorry about the L word. but when you miss real ale as much as I do, even this can taste good!) leaves a fruity taste in the mouth not unlike *GFA*, but is less sweet, less hoppy, and much lighter in colour. Readers of Beer Moos who attended the Great British Beer Festival in August, may have sampled it at the Unusual Ales Bar. If you want more taste though, it has to be *GFA*.

Wold Top brewery near Scarborough has been brewing *Against the Grain* since 2007 Made from maize, malt, hops and yeast, it is a premium, full flavoured bitter beer with a good, creamy head, refreshing bitterness and a citrus hop aftertaste. It

has an ABV of 4.5% and its gluten content is certified at to be well below the Codex standard of 20ppm. Test certificates are available for each brew.

Greens gluten-free ales are available at Coop, ASDA, Sainburys, Morrisons and Waitrose, and tend to be both expensive, and fairly strong. *Herald* is the weakest at 4%; all others are over 6% ABV. Greens brew six ales and two lagers, but I have only found five in the shops. The ales are *Endeavour* and *Discovery* (both 6% ABV) and *Herald* (4% ABV), and the lagers are *Pioneer* (5% ABV) and *Trailblazer* (4% ABV). *Discovery* has porter like qualities; dark, strong and very dry, but at around £2.00 for a 330ml bottle, does it represent good value? Still, it's my favourite from the Green's range.

If anyone finds gluten free beer in a pub in our branch area, please let me know. Email the editor and he'll pass the good news on.

Dave Harris

Visit to Vale Brewery

On Saturday, 28th November, a group of regulars from Vale Brewery's newly acquired pub, the Chequers in Fenny Stratford, visited the Brill-based brewery for its open day.

They enjoyed at least eight of Vale's ales, fresh from the cask; a lunch cooked by the local Indian take-away; and a brewery tour given by the brewer himself.

A visit to the shop was a must, where participants were able to stock up on bottled cask-conditioned ales, ciders, wines and whiskies. Thanks to John Shaddick, landlord at the Chequers, for organising the trip. Vale beers are considered LocAle in our branch area.

Jan Taylor

A Northampton Classic Beer - Ratliffe's Return

Ratliffe's Celebrated Stout is the third revival beer produced by the partnership of Phipps NBC and Tony Davies at the Grainstore Brewery, one year after they relaunched Phipps IPA. It weighs in at 4.3% ABV, and should be available on draught and in 500ml bottles from December.

Phipps Brewery took over its near neighbour Ratliffe and Jeffery in 1899, but Mr Ratliffe stayed on to oversee the continued brewing of his popular stout. During WW2, bottles of Ratliffe's were shipped out to the Northamptonshire Regiment serving with the Desert Rats in North Africa. This was celebrated on the stout's bottle-label in the '40s and '50s depicting a little red rat standing in front of pyramids and palm trees. Not so much "ice cold in Alex" as "quite tepid in Tobruk."

After the merger, the combined company's stout was known as Ratliffe's Jumbo Stout then finally

just Jumbo Stout. As with previous beers, the brewers have gone back to pre-war brewer's records, as well as looking at the form the brew took in its final years. After much discussion between Grainstore brewer Tony Davis and the old Phipps brewers advising the project, it was decided to aim for a strength close to the final 4.3%ABV, but take the recipe's main cues from the pre-war form.

Ratliffe's will primarily be available in bottles but will have a limited release on draught this winter. Tony's tasting notes on this beer read thus: *Ratliffe's is a creamy, full bodied, malty brew, satisfyingly rich with distinct caramel and coffee notes. A combination of crystal and roasted malts give the stout its deep, dark colour and pronounced roasted flavour, topped off with a thick appetising light tan head. The stout is not overly bitter, thanks to careful use of traditional English hop varieties.*

More information www.phipps-nbc.co.uk



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Peter's Puzzles



1. How much do members save on the 2010 price of the Good Beer Guide?
2. What exactly is 'grist' used in beer brewing?
3. What are the two Buckingham pubs listed in the 2010 Good Beer Guide?
4. What was the name of the pub burnt down a few years ago on the A421 near Buckingham?
5. Although just outside our CAMRA area, which popular pub, less than 5 miles north of Stony Stratford, lies on the Grand Union Canal?
6. Everards is a family Leicester brewery established in 1849. What is the location and name of their nearest tied pub to our area?
7. At our last Beer Fest, we had a 'Cow Corner' How many different beers did we have from the Concrete Cow brewery?
8. The Silverstone Brewery recently introduced a second beer to their range. The first was Pitstop (3.8%), what is the name of this second one (it is 4.5%)?
9. Which American global giant now owns the brand names:- Bass, M&B, Hancock's, Worthington's, Charrington, and Stones (amongst others)?
10. In what year did Guinness close its London brewery? All keg and bottles products are now brewed in Dublin.

TIME WASTER

Get nine bottle tops (or coins, or pebbles) and arrange them flat on a table in such a way that you can make TEN straight lines each containing exactly three items.


Have you Scored yet?

CAMRA's National Beer Scoring System (NBSS) is an easy 0-5 point scale for judging beer quality, and to find out which pubs consistently sell well-kept ale. So we invite all real ale drinkers, not just CAMRA members, to send us their beer scores for pubs both in our area, and elsewhere in the UK. We forward scores for out-of-area pubs to the relevant branches. These results help us decide which pubs to consider for the Good Beer Guide.



0 Undrinkable	No cask ale available, or so poor you have to take it back or can't finish it.
1 Poor	Beer that is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment.
2 Average	Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.
3 Good	Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again.
4 Very Good	Excellent beer in excellent condition.
5 Perfect	Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.

E-mail your scores to us at pubs@mkcamra.org.uk, bring them to any of our meetings or social events, or submit them online at www.beerscoring.org.uk. You'll need to give your name, CAMRA Membership Number (if you're a member), Date of Survey, Pub's Name and Location, Beer Name and Brewery, and of course, your score.

one vertical column in the centre.
have two 'long' diagonals, four short diagonals, three horizontal and
of the centre row in towards the centre, so that they are halfway
Time Waster:- Imagine a 3x3 grid, now move the two outside ones
TIME WASTER & BONUS QUESTION ANSWERS
7. Six 8. Chequered flag 9. Coors (of Colorado) 10. 2005
5. Navigation 6. The Barley Mow (in Cosgrove village, on the canal)
barley) 3. The Mitre and The Woolpack 4. The Lone Tree
1. £5.99 2. Ground malt (which is partially germinated
ANSWERS



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