

MerseyAle

CAMRA Liverpool & Districts Magazine

February - May 2013 FREE



www.liverpoolcamra.org.uk email merseyale@merseycamra.org.uk Circulation 11,000



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

NO

HOPS

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WEEKLY LOCALE
See Board for future Real Ales



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FOOD

See the board for selection of good value food

QUIZ NIGHT

every Tuesday at 9.30pm

BOARD GAME CLUB

Meet every Monday at 6.00pm

ACOUSTIC NIGHT

Second Thursday of the Month 8pm

BOB DYLAN SOCIETY

Meets first Thursday of the Month 8.30pm

MEET THE BREWER

Third Thursday of the Month 8pm

POETRY GET TOGETHER

Fourth Thursday of the Month 8pm

V6 Adventure Club

Meet every Wednesday at 8.00pm

MerseyAle

CAMRA Liverpool and Districts Branch

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Cover
"No HOPS" by Dennis Jones
A revision of the famous Barack Obama election poster "HOPE"



The opinions expressed in MerseyAle are not necessarily those of the Editor, the CAMRA Liverpool Branch or CAMRA Ltd.



Welcome to MerseyAle and ManxAle

Our cover is a revision of the famous Barack Obama "Hope" election poster. Our title, "No Hops", refers to the story on page 11, about the worrying outlook for English hops and the threat to their place in our brewing tradition. The English hop industry is facing possible extinction unless a concerted effort is made to save it, and along with it would go some of our distinctive beer styles. A similar crisis is besetting cider makers, see page 49. 2012 saw the worst harvest of cider apples in fifteen years, with some makers more than 50% short of the quantity of apples they require. So both our national drinks are facing major problems in obtaining essential ingredients.

MerseyAle does also bring you some good news. Real Ale is now outselling Keg beer and more people are drinking it. **The Cask Report** story on page 4 paints a positive picture for real ale and the economic benefits to pubs that stock it. Real Ale is the unique selling point of the pub. You can only drink cask beer in the pub and that is the key to pubs attracting customers.

Liverpool CAMRA is continuously promoting our local pubs. On pages 33 to 37 you can read about the exciting events held during the 2012 CAMRA Liverpool Real Ale Pubs Festival, which is designed to showcase our pubs and draw people to visit them.

We celebrated an important birthday with the Launch of the **40th Anniversary edition of the CAMRA Good Beer Guide** - see pages 28 to 31. Liverpool is proud to have one

of the **Magnificent Seven** pubs, the Roscoe Head, one of only seven nationwide to have been in every edition of the GBG since the first edition in 1974.

The Roscoe Head is a Punch Taverns pub and on pages 13 you can read why the Radio Four "File on Four" programme described Punch as a "**Zombie Company**". At long last there are signs that the Coalition Government might take action to curb the excessive power of the PubCos, which between them own 51% of the nation's pubs. The excessive financial demands of the PubCos have been responsible for driving many pubs to closure.

Another major factor in pub closures is the impact of Government Beer Duty on driving up the price of beer. Beer duty has risen a tooth sucking 42% in four years, with more to come due to the Government's Beer Escalator. Read the latest events in CAMRA's "**Stop the Escalator**" campaign on pages 43.

On page 53 we reveal "**Why You Can't Afford NOT to Join CAMRA**" given the great financial benefits of membership. The current 146,975 members of CAMRA can't all be wrong!

So don't delay - Join CAMRA Today!



John Armstrong
Editor

Good News for Real Ale

Cask Report 2012/13 Shows Real Ale Now Outsell Keg

Report Headlines

- **Cask Beer now outsells Keg Beer**
- Cask sales are growing with a 1.6% increase in 2011
- **Cask outperforms the overall beer market**
- More pubs are stocking real ale
- **Try Before You Buy is key to attracting new people to cask beer and increasing the number of cask drinkers**

The annual Cask Report analyses the market for cask beer and the profile of real ale drinkers and pubs. Written by **Award Winning National Beer Writer Pete Brown**, it paints a very positive picture of demand for real ale and the benefit it brings to pubs. The report uses the term “**cask ale**” favoured by the brewing industry instead of “**real ale**”. The report finds that;

Cask is Growing

Cask ale volumes grew in 2011 for the first time in 20 years, recording a 1.6% uplift.

Around 2.2 million barrels of cask, equating to some 633 million pints, were sold last year.

Over the same period, cask also overtook keg as the most popular format for draught ale, increased its penetration of the pub market to 56%, achieved a 53% ‘ever

tried’ rate among UK adults and increased the frequency with which it is drunk by existing cask customers.

Report author Pete Brown says, *“The Cask Report has been analysing the sector for six years now and while cask has been outperforming the beer market for most of them, this is the first full year of actual growth. Sales growth during a recession is an impressive achievement, doubly so against a background of declining overall beer volumes and a shrinking number of pubs.”*

“This excellent performance speaks volumes for the increasing popularity of cask among consumers, as well as a growing realisation among licensees that cask, as an ‘only in pubs’ drink, can help them drive footfall and sales. Pubs that sell cask are less likely to close than non-cask stockists – as witness cask’s increasing share of the declining pub market.”

Community, wet-led pubs still form the backbone of cask’s distribution base, but it also increased its penetration in café bars and town centre circuit venues, demonstrating its growing appeal to younger drinkers.

How Many Beers to Have on the Bar

For all pubs and bars, the key to a successful cask business lies in stocking the optimum number and styles of ales



Pete Brown

and promoting them effectively to encourage existing customers to drink more cask, and bring new drinkers into the category. Any pub with



more than two or three handpumps should be looking to introduce some less familiar brews, to appeal to more adventurous cask drinkers.

The average number of handpumps on the bar, among pubs that sell cask ale at all, is 3.1, rising to 4 for ‘cask champions’ – a research group of licensees for whom cask ale forms the core



Who Drinks Real Ale?

element of their business. Cask champion pubs rotate at least one of their ales weekly, and are keen stockists of microbrewer beers, but crucially they also recognise the need to offer well-known names.

Who Drinks Real Ale

While cask drinkers remain predominantly male and upmarket, interest from younger and female drinkers is holding steady after significant recruitment from these groups. 58% of cask ale drinkers say they first tried it when aged 18-24, proving its appeal to emerging drinkers.

Over 50% of cask drinkers choose it as it offers “**more variety and flavour than other mainstream drinks**”, while its heritage, natural ingredients and local provenance are also cited as strong influences.

The fact that cask appeals to drinkers seeking variety and novelty means that many of those who drink it, enjoy it as part of their repertoire rather than their main drink. Brown says,

“The typical cask drinker is into discovery, diversity, trying new things - so it’s not surprising that they drink across a wide number of other drinks categories.”

Despite this, cask drinkers are drinking more cask: around 28% are drinking more cask ale than the previous year, while only 18% are drinking less – and most of these are reducing their overall alcohol consumption rather than cutting cask specifically.

Among drinkers who have never tried cask ale, the biggest reason cited – by 28% of respondents – is “I don’t know”. A further 16% “don’t know where to start” or say they need more information.

Brown says, “This means that 44% of current non-cask drinkers are all potential drinkers: they don’t have any dislike or prejudice about cask and are effectively waiting for a reason to try it. All we need to do is give them that reason.”

Persuading these drinkers to buy two pints of cask ale per month – a conservative estimate - would add some 70 million pints to annual cask volumes.

Try Before You Buy is Key

“**Try before you buy**” is the single most effective way of introducing new drinkers to cask. It has long been encouraged by cask brewers as a way to introduce new drinkers to cask.

Brown says, “It’s a big ask to expect someone who doesn’t drink cask ale to choose from a line up of handpumps that mean nothing to them and spend £3+ on a pint they might not like. A free taster removes the risk factor, and starts a dialogue between drinker and bar staff.” Unsurprisingly, in those ‘cask champion’ pubs, ‘try before you buy’ heads the list of sales-building tactics. Over 95% of these pubs offer tasters to new customers, while 90% describe the taste of the beers and around 80% use chalkboards or posters to promote their cask offer.

In summary, cask ale is the unique selling point of the pub and is outperforming the rest of the beer market, making cask a very attractive option for publicans.

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Liverpool Organic Brewery Beer Festivals

As well as keeping busy with our new brews we're also planning **4 beer festivals** this year.

Waterloo Beer Festival will take place from the **18th - 21st April** as well as **24th - 27th Oct 2013**.

We're also very excited about **2 new festivals**, the first being **Liverpool St. George's Hall** from the **26th - 29th September**. St George's Hall is an iconic Grade 1 listed building. This festival will see over **300+ Real Ales and Ciders. Up to 8,000 visitors.**



The end of 2013 will see our **Christmas Festival** at the **Black-E** from the **5th - 9th December**.

Black-E by Athanasius



MerseyAlenews

Pub News

Pub News Now On Line
 As an experiment Liverpool CAMRA will be placing full details of Pub News on line on www.liverpoolcamra.org.uk as soon as it is received. MerseyAle will be printing just the main pub headlines such as new real ale outlets, pub closures and openings plus major pub events. This policy is to be kept under review and comments are welcome to contact@mersecamra.org.uk

South Liverpool Garston



New Real Ale Outlet The Masonic on Gladstone Road Garston village. The pub has been bought freehold by Tony Murray, who has previously been at the **Gardeners** in Woolton. There are two hand pumps in the bar, one selling beer from **Liverpool Craft** and the other featured beers mainly from the **Marstons** stable, but here is no tie. Initially there is a promotional price of £1.75 a pint. Tony has also ordered a real cider.

I hope CAMRA members will support a local pub in Garston village which is selling real ale including LocAle beers. Two more hand pumps will soon be installed in the lounge, and beers from **Liverpool One** brewery will then also be stocked.

Aigburth and the Airport
 The **Toby Inn** on Aigburth Road

opposite Liverpool Cricket Club continues to sell **Thwaites** real ales, including **Original** and **Wainwright**. The adjacent Travel Lodge would be a good place to stay if you need a hotel before flying from Liverpool Airport and want access to real ale, plus a handy bus stop outside with frequent buses to the Airport from 06.45.

A new Toby Inn is being built on Speke Boulevard, not far from the Dobbies store, but it will not have a bar and will be for diners only. It is due to open in February.

The Fulwood Arms on Aigburth Road opposite Sefton Park, is serving real ale again after a change of ownership. There are two hand pumps. **Sharp's Doombar** appears to be a regular with the second changing guest ale having featured, beers such as **Cameron Strongarm** and **Wye Valley Dorothy Goodbody's**.

The City Centre.

New Real Ale Outlet The Rose & Crown on Cheapside off Dale Street. This is now selling real ale, adding to the real ale scene in the



Dale Street area. **Wychwood Hobgoblin** and a **Jennings** beer are usually available.

New Real Ale Outlet Mello Mello at 40-42 Slater Street, although the entrance is round the corner on

Parr Street. This cafe bar and arts centre is now selling a cask beer. This is supplied by **Liverpool Craft**, who also produce a bottled beer **'Mello Mello'** for the bar. However, beers from other breweries that you may not have heard of, are also stocked. There is also a 'left field guest tap' that sells keg beer from around the world. Mello Mello is a Community Interest Company that operates art facilities for the local and grass-roots communities of Liverpool. There is a programme of live music events in the bar. Check out their website mellomello.co.uk. Council support for such organisations is under threat due to government cuts, so please show your support by visiting their bar.



The Clove Hitch is a restaurant on the part of Hope Street close to the Metropolitan Cathedral. Cask beers are available for those who prefer beer to wine while eating, and there is a small bar area for people who just want a drink. There is normally a cask beer from **Liverpool Craft** and on my last visit a beer from the **Buxton Brewery** was also available.

New Real Ale Outlet Bar 23 at the Clove Hitch Hope Street
 This is a new bar in the basement of the Clove Hitch serving real ale from **Liverpool Craft Brewery**. The Bar 23 can be booked for private functions. It has four hand pumps serving real ales from the Liverpool Craft Brewery, alongside six keg

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fonts selling the "craft beers" which are now being produced by brewers in Britain and the USA. This juxtaposition of cask and keg beer demonstrates the confusion that can be caused to the consumer by the use of the word "craft beer". Pity the impact on Liverpool Craft Brewery which has built its business reputation on quality real ale. The controversial issue of the meaningless term "craft beers" was discussed in MerseyAle Spring 2012 edition. Craft beer is posh (and usually expensive) and is not real ale.

The Abbey on Hanover Street continues to offer CAMRA members a 10% discount. This is



prominently advertised both outside and inside. With the discount this might be the cheapest pint in the city centre.

Ye Hole in ye Wall, Hackins Hey. **Liverpool Craft** has produced a Golden Ale as a house beer for Ye Hole in ye Wall which claims to be the oldest pub in Liverpool.



Closed and Lost Pubs

The Gardeners Arms at the junction of Broadgreen Road and Edge Lane Drive has been demolished after being purchased by the NHS trust that operates the nearby hospital.. It is a great pity that such a distinctive pub has been lost. It

adds to the long list of pubs on the Edge Lane corridor that have been closed over the last few years, partly as a result of the road widening and area clearance policies.

The Falstaff on Gateacre Park Drive is closed currently. This pub always sold cask beer in the seventies and eighties, but had not done so for a number of years. With other pubs in the Gateacre/Childwall area selling real ale, perhaps this is the reason for its demise.

The Royal on Smithdown Road is another pub currently closed and for sale. The pub has historic blue and gold tiling on the frontage, plus other features that should be preserved. If they are lost it will be another reason to prosecute members of the government for cultural vandalism.

Oakwell Brewery Pubs

The brewery is reducing its tied pub estate, including the closure of the **London** in Southport. Their two



Liverpool pubs, the **Strawberry** on Breckfield Road South and the **Falcon** on Oakwell Drive in Netherley, continue to trade. People should visit these pubs to ensure the distinctive and good value Oakwell beers continue to be available in Liverpool.

Stonegate Group Pubs

The Brooke House, on Smithdown Road, reopened in the summer after a refurbishment and now sells real ale. There is a house beer brewed by **Liverpool One** named **Brooke House IPA**, This is a stronger beer more like a proper India Pale Ale than other IPAs. A different Liverpool One beer is usually served when the IPA is not available.

The Flute on Hardman Street is regularly selling beers from **Liverpool Craft** alongside those of



Liverpool One. This pub operates a cask beer loyalty card for a free pint and offers a CAMRA member discount.

Most Stonegate pubs that sell real ale encourage people to drink the product with signs on the bar 'ask for cask'. An excellent idea which other pubs should copy.

Pub News by Tony Williams

Woolton Pub News

The Coffee House - New Real Outlet

The Coffee House on Woolton Road has returned to cask ale. The pub had a recent refurbishment and two hand pumps were installed. On offer initially was **Tetley Bitter** and **Sharps Doombar** at a very reasonable £2.00 per pint. Woolton now has eight real ale pubs making the village an interesting pub crawl.

The Gardeners Arms

The Gardeners Arms in Woolton continues to offer an interesting range of guest real ales. The pub can now have three beers of their own choice alongside three regular beers. The licensee is open to any suggestions for future beers to stock.

The County Court in Woolton has changed management. The pub is continuing to sell three cask ales and also has introduced live music acts at the weekends. A full report will be in the next issue.

Woolton Pub News by Neil Lloyd

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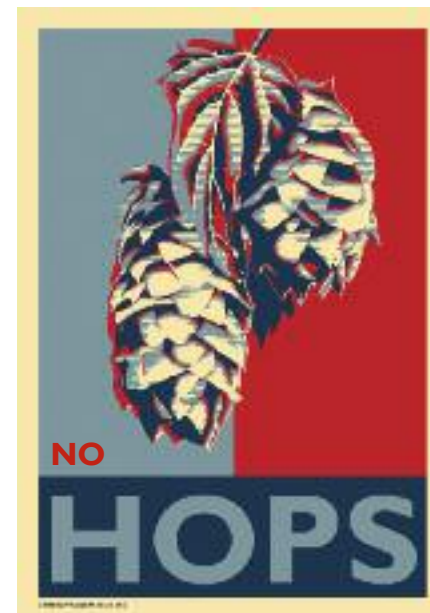
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English Hops Under Threat

British hop farming could die out within a decade as brewers turn away from English hop varieties to imported varieties from countries such as the Czech Republic, the USA and New Zealand. These imported varieties have become popular as brewers experiment with beer styles and look for increasingly fragrant hops. Consequently the sales of English hops have been declining.

The consequences of this decline is

that English hop production is becoming uneconomic, and the English varieties are increasingly hard to source. Many classic British beer styles are based on the distinctive flavours of English hops, and their loss could see the extinction of these beers. Varieties such as English Fuggles and Goldings are intrinsic to English beer styles and their loss would be a sad day for our beer heritage.

Richard Frost, the Head Brewer of Kentish brewers Shepherd Neame, the oldest brewery in the UK, commented;

"It would be a tragedy if this part of our history and heritage was to be allowed to just disappear."

Of the 100 commercially grown hop varieties in the world, a remarkable 20 varieties are English. 95% of the hops used by brewer Shepherd Neame are grown in Kent.

The Hop Decline in Numbers

Acres of English Hops

1872 72,000 acres
2011 2,500 acres
In 1950 there were 400 hop growers in Britain
In 2013 there were just 55

International Comparisons

England	2,500 acres
New Zealand	840 acres
Germany	44,973 acres
USA	29,653 acres

English hops are still important to the nation's brewers but the perilously small size of the British hop industry is a big worry.

"We need to do something about this. Much less than 2,471 acres and the industry becomes less viable." – Ali Capper hop grower Stocks Farm

The challenge is clear. Can we find an answer to save the English hop?

Also at risk is the English tradition of Green Hop beers.

These are brewed with fresh hops within twelve hours of them being picked. The beers are seasonal to the hop harvest in September and October. Green hops give the beer a light and fresh flavour because they retain oils usually lost in the traditional drying process. The green beers are often attractively bitter and full flavoured.

Without a supply of English hops these beers cannot be brewed and another feature of English brewing heritage will be lost.



Whatpub – the new CAMRA pub database and guide

CAMRA has launched an all new Pubs website, Whatpub. The aim of Whatpub is to provide a comprehensive on line guide to real ale pubs on an area basis and eventually to act as a database of all the nation's pubs. You will be able to search Whatpub by area and by pub name.

The site is now live to members. Public access will be granted later. To view go to www.whatpub.com enter your CAMRA membership number and your unique password (if you have not yet set up your CAMRA account your default password is your stated postcode in uppercase with no gaps) and get looking.

Now this is where we need your help. Search for

Liverpool, and you will see some of the pubs require more details to complete the entry, particularly; opening times, beer range and a brief description. Just press the Add/Edit Detail button and follow the screen prompts. We will then be able to amend the information for that pub.

Not seeing your pub? If you unclick the **"Must Serve Real Ale"** button and search again, more pubs will appear. If you know any of these pubs serve real ale let us know and we can change the pub's status. Photographs of the exterior or interior of pubs can also be submitted.

It's over to you now! We will endeavour to upload amendments promptly. Please send amendments and pub information to ianbarton@hotmail.com

Ian Barton

The Dispensary Liverpool

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Punch Taverns is a ZOMBIE company

Says



PubCos Driving the British Pub Out Of Business

"File on Four" on 13th November 2012 reported that Punch Taverns was a "Zombie Company" and that its economic model was driving its licensees into despair and the closure of their pub as economically unsustainable. The definition of a zombie company was one which had overvalued its assets, had borrowed large amounts of money on the back of this valuation, had seen a collapse in value of those assets and was now unable to sustain the debt, being barely able to repay the interest owed let alone the debt.

The programme reported that this definition of a Z o m b i e C o m p a n y precisely fitted Punch Taverns and also other PubCos. Punch's pub estate had been valued at a high level some years ago and large loans in the order of £2 billion had been taken out on the strength of this valuation. Since then the property values had collapsed. The PubCos then found themselves unable to repay the large debt and were struggling even to pay just the interest on the debt. Their only avenue was to bleed their lessees/licensees dry with high rents and the controversial Beer Tie. This required licensees to buy their beer through the PubCo at prices

much higher than on the open market.

Greg Mulholland MP, Chair of the Parliamentary Save the Pub Group commented that PubCos were no more than property speculators and that their economic model was in ruins. It was the pub licensees that were paying the cost of the PubCo failures and were being driven into insolvency and closure of their pub.

"File on Four" reported that this excessive borrowing was a major crisis facing a number of British companies, with between 80,000 and 150,000 companies being classed as Zombie Companies, unable to afford the interest owed on their borrowing and unable to repay the debt. This left them in a position in which they did not have the resources to invest to grow and develop, and were as a result facing a cycle of decline.

This Zombie Company crisis also posed a major threat to the banks which had made the loans, with as much as £100 million at risk of default. There was a direct parallel with the credit crunch bank crisis when toxic loans brought banks to the verge of collapse. The analogy given was that of a pack of cards collapsing.

A spokesperson for Punch Taverns denied that it was a Zombie Company, claiming it was highly profitable and that it was able to invest in its pubs. Pressure is growing on the

Government to take action on the PubCos and to rein in their power to milk their licensees through unrealistically high rents and the high prices for beer charged through the beer tie. Meanwhile the future of the British pub hangs in the balance. PubCos own an estimated 51% of all the pubs in Britain and are therefore central to the future and survival of the British pub as a vital part of British life. Two PubCos between them, Punch Taverns and Enterprise Inns, own 25% of British pubs

Government Beginning to Act to Curb PubCo Power Proposal to Introduce Statutory Code of Practice

"PubCos (are) exploiting and squeezing their publicans by unfair practices and a focus on short-term profits." Vince Cable, Secretary of State for Business



Photo by Steve Punter

On January 8th 2013 Vince Cable, the Coalition Government Secretary of State for Business,

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THE LORD WARDEN LONDON ROAD



announced in the House of Commons that he proposed to introduce a statutory code of practice to regulate the actions of PubCos. This would be policed by an independent adjudicator. However this code would only apply to PubCos that own more than 500 tied leases. This would limit the Code to just the six largest PubCos in the UK ; Punch Taverns, Enterprise Inns, Greene King, Marston's, Admiral Taverns and Star Pubs and Bars. In making the announcement Vince Cable stated that;

"Pubcos (are) exploiting and squeezing their publicans by unfair practices and a focus on short-term profits." He also recognised that, "there is some real hardship in the pubs sector, with many pubs going to the wall as publicans struggle to survive on tiny margins. Some of this is due to PubCos trying to retrieve their own financial situation at the expense of their tenants"

However in a letter from Vince Cable dated 9th January which was forwarded to MerseyAle by Louise Ellman MP for Liverpool Riverside, he indicated that he was NOT going to act to change the highly controversial Beer Tie used by all the PubCos. This is very disappointing as most commentators have called for action on the Tie, especially the introduction of a right for all PubCo licensees to be able to order at least one beer free of the tie. In the letter he wrote;

"I would also like to be clear that I am not proposing to abolish the beer tie. The evidence strongly suggests that the tie, per se, is not the issue: when operated as envisaged and fairly, it is a valid business model being used responsibly by companies both large and small and, were it to be removed, the British brewing industry could be significantly disadvantaged. What is clear is that it is the abuse of the tie, like the abuse of rent calculations and other factors, that is causing problems in certain circumstances."

It should be noted that the proposals for a Statutory Code are subject to a government consultation in the Spring of this year which could lead to changes or even the emasculating of the Code. Further, any legislation is unlikely before the end of this year or later in 2014. We will have to wait to see if the Code has any real teeth to control the PubCos. It is important to bear in mind that the PubCos are a strong lobby which has repeatedly headed off any effective Government action to curb their powers, and doubtless they will similarly seek to influence this consultation.

An early and predictable warning of what to expect from the pub industry came from the Chairman of the British Beer and Pubs

Association, Jonathan Neame. The BBPA has a record of acting as the cheer leader for the PubCos. He said;

"In the consultation we will be urging the Government to ensure that any statutory process is light touch and cost effective, to protect the consumer from bearing the brunt of unreasonable additional costs."

So you have been warned about what is coming!

It is important that at long last there appears to be recognition from Government that a voluntary code of practice will not work and that there needs to be legislation to introduce a statutory code. The Code adjudicator would arbitrate any disputes between PubCos and the lessee publican, and he/she would have powers to impose sanctions and fines on PubCos that fail to comply with the code of fair practice. However we will have to await the publication of the draft Bill to know what the code will say and the proposed level of fines and financial sanctions that can be applied. As always the devil is in the detail.

It is therefore vital that the supporters of curbs on the powers of the PubCos maintain pressure on the Government throughout the consultation period and the drafting of the Bill, so as to ensure that the Code that emerges has some real teeth.

Then there is also the sobering thought of how many British pubs will close in the meantime before a meaningful Statutory Code comes into practice.

Further the economic failure of the PubCo business model and the ongoing crisis of the Zombie Companies will remain the elephant in the room.

PubCos own an estimated 51% of all the pubs in Britain

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Above awards from Liverpool and districts CAMRA. Recommended in the Good Beer Guide



Supermarket S.W.E.E.P

(3,000 square feet) then the retailer can bypass the Sunday Trading Act and remain open all hours on a Sunday.

It has become clear that some PubCos are giving supermarkets first refusal on pubs they are intending to put up for sale, rather than openly advertising them on the open market. The first the public or local councils will know is when the pub closes and the shop fitters move in.

CAMRA is greatly concerned about the trend to conversion to supermarkets and is pressing for a change to the planning law so as to require that the conversion of a pub would need planning permission. This would give communities and local councils an opportunity to object and to make the case for the social value of the pub to the community.

Greg Mulholland MP and Chair of the Parliamentary Save Our Pubs group has challenged the supermarkets to halt the practice of what he describes as their predatory practice of converting pubs.

He is pressing for the Government to step in and change the planning law so that planning permission is required for pub conversions. He is also pointing out that the current law is contrary to Government policy on localism, community and promoting small businesses. John Denham MP for Southampton has raised the need for action on this issue in the House of Commons and the Save the Pub Group has placed a Parliamentary Motion.

So far Liverpool has been relatively unaffected by conversions, although one pub in Whiston, the Horse Shoe Hotel, has been converted by Tesco.

Supermarket Sweep

Not Just Beer – Now it's the Pubs as Well!

To date supermarkets have been notorious for using cut price beer and alcoholic drinks as a loss leader to get people into their shops. Now it is **PUBS** that they are are sweeping up nationwide, as supermarket companies buy up pubs to convert to supermarkets.

Since 2010 more than 140 pubs have been turned into supermarkets, with another 33 currently under threat of conversion.

Unsurprisingly it is Tesco who are leading the way with 91 conversions. Sainsbury's have accounted for 20 pubs conversions, the Co op 10, Asda 4 and Costcutter 4.

Forty pubs in London have succumbed to conversion, 17 in Greater Manchester, Bristol 8, Leeds 5 and South Hampshire 6.

The attraction of pubs to the supermarket companies is that pubs do not need planning permission for conversion. Under current planning law it is legal to change the use of the pub to a supermarket as both are classed as retail use. This leaves local councils powerless to halt a conversion. Additionally if the floorspace is less than 280 metres

Government Plan Minimum Price for Alcohol of 45 pence per unit

The Coalition is planning to introduce a minimum price per unit of alcohol of 45 pence. This is higher than the 40p that the Government proposed in March 2012. In addition multi buy alcohol offers would be banned.

The Scottish Government has moved to introduce a minimum price of 50p from April 2013, but this is being challenged legally by the Scotch Whisky Association and the European Spirits organisation as being incompatible with the European Union's "general principles of free trade and unfettered competition", and on the grounds that it is a matter for Westminster not Holyrood.

The British Coalition Government quotes research by Sheffield

University that a minimum price of 45p would reduce alcohol consumption by 4.3%, resulting in 2,000 fewer deaths, 66,000 fewer admissions after a span of ten years and 24,00 fewer crimes per year.

Opponents of the minimum price strategy challenge these figures on price. They claim that the policy would not deter problem drinkers but would penalise responsible drinkers on lower incomes.



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CAMRA

NATIONAL WINTER ALES FESTIVAL IS ON THE MOVE



Last Orders for Manchester as Festival moves to Derby

It was last orders for the Manchester venue of the CAMRA National Winter Ales Festival in January. For



2014 the Festival is moving to Derby. After eight successful years at Manchester, national CAMRA has decided to rotate the Festival to other cities.

The Derby venue is the former engine roundhouse of the Midland Railway company locomotive works opposite Derby station. The building is now a social and conference centre run by Derby University, and is used for the Derby Beer Festival. Dates for the NWAFF have yet to be confirmed.

The New Manchester Winter Ales Festival

The decision to move to Derby has been somewhat controversial. CAMRA branches in Manchester have decided to run their own Winter Ales Festival in 2014, and this will be held in the National Velodrome Centre on **Thursday**



23rd to Saturday 25th January 2014. The Velodrome is a stunning building which is the home of the Team GB Olympic cyclists. The main bars will be at the central area of the Velodrome surrounded by the banked cycling track, which will remain in use during the Festival. So if you see things flashing before your eyes they are for real! See www.manchesterbeerfestival.org.uk for details.

CHAMPION BEERS OF THE 2013 NATIONAL WINTER BEER FESTIVAL

The opening day of National Winter Ales Festival 2013 saw the judging of the National Champion Winter Beer Of Britain Competition 2013 and the North West Regional rounds for the Winter Ale categories which will go forward to the 2013 national competition.

The full results were as follows:
Champion Winter Beer Of Britain 2013

Overall National Champion Winners

Gold: Elland 1872 Porter
Silver: Bartrams Comrade Bill's E.A.I.S.S.
Bronze: Kelburn Dark Moor

National Category Winners

Old Ales & Strong Milds
Gold: Kelburn Dark Moor
Silver: Jennings Sneck Lifter
Bronze: Purple Moose Dark Side Of The Moose

Stouts

Gold: Bartrams Comrade Bill's E.A.I.S.S.
Silver: Marble Stouter Stout
Bronze: Hop Back Entire Stout

Porters

Gold: Elland 1872 Porter
Silver: Blythe Johnsons
Bronze: Derby Penny's Porter

Barley Wines and Strong Old Ales

Gold: Hogs Back A Over T
Silver: Heart Of Wales High As A Kite
Bronze: Kinver Over The Edge

North West Regional Competition

(Winners Go Forward to the Champion Winter Beer Of Britain 2014 Finals)

Old Ales & Strong Milds
Gold: Bollington Winter Reserve
Silver: Jennings Sneck Lifter
Bronze: Marble Chocolate Marble

Stouts

Gold: Marble Stouter Stout
Silver: Beartown Polar Eclipse
Bronze: Hornbeam Black Coral Stout

Porters

Gold: Dunham Massey Dunham Porter
Silver: Pictish Porter
Joint **Bronze:** Bank Top Port O Call
Joint **Bronze:** Boggart Rum Porter

Barley Wines and Strong Old Ales

Gold: JW Lees Moonraker
Silver: Outstanding Pushing Out
Bronze: Hawkshead Brodies Prime

2014 Date Move for CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival

The 2014 Great British Beer Festival (GBBF) will be a week later than usual. The new dates are Tuesday 13th to Saturday 17th August. Advance tickets will go on sale in April - see www.camra.org.uk The venue will be Olympia

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Mark Wilson - An Appreciation



MARK WILSON
A 'Gentle' Man
A Friend
Rest In Peace.

Mark Wilson the Head Barman at the Dispensary died in October 2012. Before news of his illness was known Mark had won the Liverpool CAMRA Barperson of the Year Award. He was not well enough to be present at the Awards Night so his award was collected by his father Brian.

Here we present some of the appreciations of Mark expressed by customers of the Dispensary. He will be much missed by many and MerseyAle extends condolences to his family.

The speech at Mark's funeral service by Dave licensee of the Dispensary

I just wanted to share a few memories with you today about Mark.

I've known Mark for over eight years; he was always solid, dependable, reliable and a fantastic Bar Man.

Mark was a friendly giant, proud of his work and doubly proud of his reputation as CAMRA's Barman of the Year, which had been awarded to him before his illness had been diagnosed.

Mark was a loving;

• Son • Brother • Partner • Step-dad

But to us he was just Mark from The Dispensary who kept the bar pristine and in order, and loved nothing more than to serve a busy bar and return order out of chaos.

I will remember him for his fantastic sandwiches.

His OCD with the glasses, they all had to be in perfect order.

His betting slips showing us what he could have won if only!

His ready wit and dry sense of humour.

His quips like 'Keep the change' when somebody handed him a £20 note.

Anyone who ever knew Mark, whether it was for 5 minutes or 5 years, would tell you he was a genuine good bloke. He had no side to him. He loved his family, his bets, and his football team.

He loved to have a pint at the end of his shift and looked forward to going home to Donna and Georgia.

Mark leaves a gaping hole in our lives. We'll miss the banter, the cries of 'OFF SIDE' when the opposing team scored!

The girls will miss the chats and the reassuring hugs.

But our lives are all the richer for knowing him.

The Book of Condolence for Mark

A book of Condolence was set up at the Dispensary and many customers wrote their appreciations of Mark. Here are some extracts

"Mark was someone who summed up what was good about this city." Dave Hardman

"We come to the Dispensary, which is so far from home, because Mark made us feel like locals. We are really going to miss you. The place won't be the same without you. I expect there will be a pint of Fernandez waiting for me when we meet again." Sarah and Andy

*"I'll remember you
When I step in here
I'll remember you
When I drink the beer
I'll remember you
As Barman of the Year
But I'll always remember you
As my son."*

Dad -

Brian Wilson Lloyd

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Brewery news



Wapping Brewery

There was a worry in January that the award winning Wapping Brewery might close and be put into mothballs. Owner Simon Holt wanted to concentrate on his other business, the Baltic Fleet pub, which is the main outlet for Wapping beers. He has plans to enhance the pub and felt it was not possible to do that in addition to the brewery business.

Thankfully second thoughts led to a rethink and Wapping is to continue brewing. A significant factor was the offer of Wirral CAMRA Chair Dave Goodwin to come on board at Wapping on a part time basis to help with sales and operations, thereby freeing Simon to concentrate on the Baltic Fleet business. Dave had until recently been undertaking a similar role at Brimstage Brewery on the Wirral.

Wapping's award winning brewer Stan Shaw had indicated that he wished to carry on as brewer for the next two years before possible retirement. During this time he had offered to train a new brewer to take over from him when he retires.

So Wapping beers will continue to be brewed by Stan and to be available at the Baltic Fleet. Dave is looking at extending the sales of Wapping beers in the free trade. A casualty of the hiatus was the plan to brew the CAMRA Liverpool Beer Festival 2013 special Festival beer at Wapping in early January. A group of new young members of

Liverpool CAMRA recruited through the Branch Snowball campaign were set to assist with the brew as an insight into the brewing process, but in the circumstances this had to be cancelled.

You can read about the Liverpool CAMRA Get Together at the Baltic and the tour of the Wapping Brewery which took place during the Liverpool Real Ale Pubs Festival in the article on pages 33-37.

New Real Ale Brewery for Merseyside – the Melwood Brewery Knowsley

This new brewery opened at the end of 2012. It has chosen the same location as the former **Cambrinus Brewery**, in the Home Farm business units at Knowsley. This puts the brewery in the St Helens CAMRA branch area.

Cambrinus was absorbed into the **Liverpool Organic Brewery company**, and LOB have continued to brew the Cambrinus beers at their Liverpool Bank Hall brewery, having bought the rights to the beers from Cambrinus owner brewer John Aspinall, who had decided to retire.

Information about the Melwood Brewery can be seen at www.melwoodbeercompany.co.uk

Peerless Brewery Birkenhead Win SIBA Awards

Following on from their success at the 2011 Society of Independent Brewers Awards (SIBA), Peerless have won more Awards at the SIBA North West Regional competition held in Manchester in November. The winning beers were their new All American IPA which won Silver



in the strong bitters class, Storr lager won Silver in the bottled beer class, and the spicy ginger flavoured Jinja Ninja which won Silver in the bottled speciality beers class and Bronze in the speciality beers cask ale class.

The win came just before the third birthday of the Peerless Brewery.

Liverpool Organic Brewery

Liverpool Organic Brewery has been busy brewing adding 3 new additions to the range. The first is the new Cask Ale Lager, **Liverpool Pilsner** 4.5% abv. This is a crisp, light and hoppy lager.

LOB is really proud to be launching the new **Liverpool Stout** 4.7% abv. A strong, dark and dry stout with a smooth spicy finish.

The final addition to the range is

'Bier head' Best Bitter. This is a 4.1% abv. golden bitter with a bitter spice and floral aroma. It is sharp and hoppy with crisp malt tones. Liverpool Organic full 2013 Product Range is available



to view at

<http://issuu.com/liverpoolorganicbrewerydocs/caskrange2013>

Liverpool Organic Brewery sponsored Beer Festivals

See the exciting news on page 6.

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GLOBAL VISION **Classic Liverpool Gem Tastefully Refurbished**

The Globe in Cases Street has received a very tasteful and successful refurbishment. The Punch Taverns owned pub is one of that special breed of Liverpool pubs which are not found in many other city centres nationwide – the small, cosy, unspoilt local in the City Centre. The pub has been redecorated throughout with a sensitive colour palate of browns, golds, a subtle bronze metallic wallpaper and a few splashes of colour. The bench seating has been reupholstered in tan brown, and a new bench and table has been installed in the window alcove, thereby providing welcome additional seating. The back room now has a wall length mural of the world globe in black and white,

and the brass plaque on the wall commemorating the first meeting of what was then Merseyside CAMRA on January 18th 1974, has not only been retained but polished to a gleaming shine. Importantly the many photographs and artefacts that give the Globe its historic character and visual interest have been retained and made prominent. You can read about “Why the Globe’s a World Class Pub” and that “Kitty is the Cream of the Crop”, whilst admiring the many historic photographs of Liverpool and the famous Liverpool women flower sellers that traded from market stalls nearby. And yes, the floor does still slope upwards from the door – it is not your

imagination and your senses are not deceiving you! The range of real ale is served from six hand pumps including at least two changing guest beers. The pub has a loyal clientele who greatly value the place, and it is also a very handy waiting room for those en route for trains at Liverpool Central station. So make sure you visit one of Liverpool’s classic gems and discover why this is a World Class Pub.



CAMRA is a Campaign of Two Halves - and One of Them is Social !

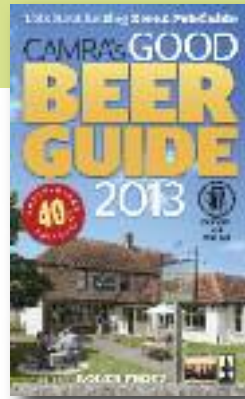
Yes there is the campaign activity, but alongside that and of equal importance, is the social activity and having fun in good company and good real ale.

Liverpool CAMRA runs a busy programme of social events of many sorts. Pub evenings, coach trips to interesting pubs around the country without the worry of having to drive, guided Beer Tastings, brewery visits, real ale walks, music nights, talks by guest speakers and the monthly Branch Get Togethers that bring members together with the accent on the social.

There's something for everyone to enjoy and to have a good time in good company. The activities are well supported and greatly enjoyed. The message is that "Real Ale is FUN !"
So read the Why You Can't Afford NOT to Join CAMRA" article on page 53 and then, Don't Delay, Join CAMRA Today!



Good Beer Guide Celebrates 40 Up with 2013 Edition



Pub descriptions and photos of the **"Magnificent Seven"** can be found on Page 10 of the 2013 Good Beer Guide.

Paying tribute to the 'Magnificent Seven' pubs, Roger Protz said:

'It's a remarkable achievement for the publicans of these pubs to have maintained an exemplary standard of beer over all these years. The special thing about these seven pubs is that they vary so much in their location, size and heritage, showing how brilliantly diverse our pub industry remains, even through weathering the high profile storm of closures in recent years.'

Celebrating 40 years of the Good Beer Guide - the National Launch in London

To celebrate this momentous occasion CAMRA organised a celebration event in one of the **'Magnificent Seven'** pubs, the Buckingham Tavern in London, and invited all seven licensees, M.P's and CAMRA branch representatives from each of the seven areas.

And so on a bright, crisp September morning the Roscoe Head licensee, Carol Ross and

several representatives of the Liverpool CAMRA Branch boarded a train to London for the event. Situated a stone's throw away from Buckingham Palace, the Buckingham Tavern is a traditional London pub, very ornate and adorned with brass and mirrors. A small portion of the back of the pub had been reserved for the event and we were greeted by CAMRA's



Carol Ross

National Director, Nik Antona. It was pleasing that Carol Ross's Member of Parliament, Louise Ellman, had arranged for her Parliamentary Assistant, Becky Rowland to attend. Becky has a Merseyside connection being from Southport. Liverpool CAMRA was particularly pleased as none of the other six pubs had received a positive response from their MPs, all of whom had been invited to the Launch. The celebration represented a great opportunity for all the licensees to share experiences, and the fact that three of the



licensees were woman was particularly heartening. I must give a special mention to Vera Morton-Wilson, the licensee of **'The Star Inn'** in Netherton, Northumberland, who is in her 80's yet travelled down to London on her own to collect her award. Many stories were swapped between the seven licensees over a pint or two, and everyone seemed to relish the opportunity to socialise away from their individual pubs.

As well as celebrating the

'Magnificent Seven', the event was also an opportunity to celebrate 40 year of the Good Beer Guide, and in addition to the current editor Roger Protz, there were many past editors present, including the first Editor from 1974, John Handscombe. This was emphasised during the speech given by Roger in which, as well as congratulating the licensees present, he also praised all those involved in the Guide including the CAMRA branch members, who via beer scoring and writing pub descriptions, make it possible to continue to produce the guide year after year.

Following on from his speech, both Roger Protz and the National Chairman Colin Valentine, presented each licensee with a glass plaque. Photos were taken, one of which can be seen on the front of the October edition of 'What's Brewing'. In fact one of the pull-ups pictured behind the licensees can now be found in the back room of the **'Roscoe Head'**. Thanks must go to National CAMRA for sending it to Carol.

A few weeks later Liverpool Branch organised our own celebration in the Roscoe Head to present Carol and her mother, Margaret Joyce, with two plaques; the original glass plaque from National CAMRA which we have had mounted on wood and also a celebratory plaque from Liverpool Branch. Our Branch Chairman, Geoff Edwards, made a short speech before the presentation emphasising the significance of this award and the achievement it represents. The award is made even more significant by the fact that the pub has been in the same family for all of those 40 years. Why not pay the Roscoe a visit, take a peek at the pull-up and enjoy a pint in a pub which has remained in the Good Beer Guide for 40 years – long may it continue to do so!

Sonia James-Henry

Licensees at the GBG Launch
Praise CAMRA for Saving Real Ale
The Magnificent Seven licensees praised CAMRA's efforts over the years to save and promote real ale.

David and Robert Short, a father and son team who run the **Queen's Head** Newton, near Cambridge, spoke about the vital role they believed CAMRA had played in saving real ale from extinction in the 1970s. David stated that CAMRA **"had transformed the brewing industry"** and had brought about **"an absolute sea change"** and a **"rolling wave that went through the country"**. He expressed his opinion that CAMRA had done a vital job in **"looking after traditional English beer."** David has Merseyside roots as he was born on the Wirral.

A Star Licensee

Vera Morton – Wilson the Licensee of the **Star Inn**, Netherton, Northumberland Vera was born in the pub which she has run since 1987. Her grandfather bought the pub in 1917 and ran it until 1928 when Vera's father took over. So the pub has been owned and run by the same family since 1917. It is easy to see why the pub has been in every edition of the GBG. The Guide describes it as **"Entering this gem is like**



Vera Morton-Wilson

entering the private living room of a big house" with the beer served on gravity from the cellar at a hatch in the panelled entrance hall. The bar area is basic with benches round the wall. On the walls are the pub's many awards." If visiting it is wise to phone to check opening times as these are "flexible".

2013 GBG headlines

The 2013 GBG lists 1,009 real ale breweries in UK, the highest number for 70 years.

- 150 breweries have opened in the last twelve months
- There is one brewery for every ten pubs in the UK.
- The 2013 Guide includes 4,500 pubs of which 1,033 are new entries.
- The Breweries Section of the 2013 GBG lists 1025 breweries and runs to 213 pages. In comparison the 1974 GBG Breweries Section was just two pages.
- Famously the 1974 GBG described Watney's beers as "avoid like the plague". Threat of legal action by Watney's led to massive publicity for CAMRA and the GBG. The wording was amended to "avoid at all costs." CAMRA had taken off as a national campaign.
- The 1974 GBG sold for 75 pence and was 96 pages. The 2013 Guide is 946 pages and costs £10 for CAMRA members and £15.99 retail.

September 2012 saw an important CAMRA milestone with the publication of the fortieth edition of the nationally renowned Good Beer Guide. This edition showed how far CAMRA, real ale and Britain's pubs had come in the last forty years.

The "Magnificent Seven" Pubs

As part of the anniversary celebrations, the Good Beer Guide has heralded the few pubs which have made it into all of its forty editions. These 'Magnificent Seven' are;

- Buckingham Arms, 62 Petty France, London SW1
- New Inn, The Hill, Kilmington, Devon
- Queen's Head, Newton, Cambridgeshire
- Roscoe Head, 24 Roscoe Street, Liverpool
- Square & Compass, Worth Matravers, Dorset
- Star, Netherton, Northumberland
- Star Tavern, 6 Belgrave Mews West, London SW1

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 April - Belgian 15th - 21st
 May - German 20th - 26th



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1



2



3



4



5



6



7

It is certainly significant that three of "the Magnificent Seven" pubs are family run pubs which have been in the same family for many years being run by successive generations; David and Robert Short at the Queen's Head, Liverpool's own Carol Ross at the Roscoe Head, and outdoing even them is Vera at the Star Inn, she being the third generation since 1917. It was notable that Carol and Vera found much to talk about during the afternoon of the Launch.

"Community" is a word much used in connection with pubs. We should also be using the word "continuity" as this is an important element in creating great pubs. Liverpool can be proud to be one of the Magnificent Seven.

Helen McCall

1 Buckingham Arms, 62 Petty France, London SW1

2 New Inn, The Hill, Kilmington, Devon

3 Queen's Head, Newton, Cambridgeshire

4 Roscoe Head, 24 Roscoe Street, Liverpool Square & Compass, Worth Matravers, Dorset

6 Star, Netherton, Northumberland

7 Star Tavern, 6 Belgrave Mews West, London SW1



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CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

Don't Delay - Join Today page 53



CAMRA Discount at the Lion Tavern

Since January the Lion Tavern has been offering card carrying CAMRA members a ten pence discount on real ales. There were no prominent signs to advertise this and in the early weeks bar staff appeared unsure about the discount, so do ask for it and



show your card. The Lion now has an agreement with Punch Taverns for four of the eight hand pumps to be free of tie, so that licensees Sean and Mike have a free rein to buy their beers of choice for those four hand pumps. The other four hand pumps are beers from the main Punch list.

ROSCOE HEAD

CAMRA Liverpool & Districts PUB of the YEAR 2012



The Roscoe Head is a true English public house with lots of character. One of the few pubs in Liverpool and indeed Great Britain to have survived the onslaught of the super pub chains and remains unspoilt. The Roscoe Head is a very special watering hostelry.

The Roscoe Head is a town local with customers from all walks of life, the backroom debates are always entertaining whether it be politics or football on the agenda the banter is always good.

Winner of many awards and one of only SEVEN pubs to feature in every edition of the Good Beer Guide. That's 40 years of Good Beer Guide entries!

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Tetley's Bitter and Jennings Bitter

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GUEST BEERS!**

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**Popular Quiz Nights
Tuesday, General Knowledge and
Thursday Music Quiz
Cribbage on Wednesdays**

CAMRA Liverpool RealAlePubs Festival2012



Liverpool CAMRA Campaigning to Save and Promote the British Pub

The CAMRA Liverpool Real Ale Pubs Festival began seven years ago and has developed and grown year on year to the point where it is a major annual event designed to promote our pubs both with local people and visitors. It is part of Liverpool CAMRA's commitment to campaign to save and promote the British Pub as an essential part of community life.

The Festival is notable for the extensive programme of special pub events designed to encourage people to visit the pub and enjoy real ale. Real Ale is the Unique Selling Point of the pub, for it is only in a pub that you can fully enjoy the joys of cask conditioned beer.



Alongside the events Liverpool CAMRA publishes the free Liverpool Pubs Map (previously known as the Pubs Passport), which now includes 125 real ale pubs not only in the City Centre but in the outlying area and suburbs.

The 2012 Liverpool Pubs Festival spanned the months of September, October and November, providing a special celebration of the great pubs in the city of Liverpool.

If you would like to help with or take part in the 2013 Liverpool Real Ale Pubs Festival please email contact@merseycamra.org.uk and/or come along to a Branch Get Together (see diary at the back of MerseyAle).

There were so many great events during the Festival that MerseyAle will be running two articles. This edition reports on the overall programme of events and the innovative and scary "Shiverpool/CAMRA Pubs Tour". The next edition will cover the highly enjoyable Pub Games event and the L1 Brewery Tour.

John Armstrong

The Programme of Festival Events

The Beer Festivals

This year saw again the excellent one day outdoor 'Why Don't We Do It in the Road?' festival, organised by Carol Ross, licensee of the Roscoe Head, across the road from the pub and serving 60 beers sourced from all over the country. This festival has become a regular feature of the Hope Street Feast and attracts many people to the small side street where tables and chairs are provided, Morris dancers entertain and a general party atmosphere prevails. Unfortunately, afternoon rain dampened a few of the punters, but not their good spirits, and Carol is to be congratulated on yet another very successful and enjoyable event.

Several other city centre pubs organised Beer Festivals, including the Ship and Mitre, the Richmond and the Lion, and Wetherspoons incorporated all their pubs, both in the city and beyond, in a Real Ale Trail over a whole month!

The "Beer Festival from the Other Crypt" held in the Crypt of St Anthony's Church Scotland Road has become an established part of the Liverpool social calendar. Proceeds from the Festivals have helped pay for a memorial statue to the many thousands who died in the Scotland Road typhoid epidemic.

Heritage Walks

These walks, which were led by Committee Member Steve Downing, explored the architectural features and history of some of our classic pubs, from the highly ornate and spacious Philharmonic and the Crown on Lime Street, to smaller but no less interesting gems such as the White Star and Peter Kavanagh's.



Most people had been in the pubs before, and some many times, but the focus on their heritage, and really observing how much there is to admire, proved to be quite a revelation!

Pub rambles

Real ale and exercise do go together! In conjunction with Dave Dent from the Brisk Walker's group, Sonia and Mel James-Henry led two very enjoyable walks during the festival, one in South Liverpool and the other in the Waterloo and Crosby area, each of which involved visiting four or five pubs, but feeling you'd earned your pint by the time you got there!



Volunteer Canteen Waterloo

CAMRA Liverpool RealAlePubs Festival 2012 cont'd

Music and drama

Many of our Liverpool pubs feature music of all kinds throughout the year, but there was a special addition to the regular second Thursday of the month folk music night at the



Lion Tavern Moorfields, featuring an enthusiastic performance of Helen McCall's adaptation of a traditional Mumming play, 'The Punishment of Perfidious PubCos'. This was previously performed at February's Liverpool Beer Festival and reported in the Spring 2012 and late Summer 2012 editions of MerseyAle. Seeing it performed in a pub owned by one of the featured PubCos had a special resonance!!

CAMRA also supported events organised by the **Liverpool Irish Festival**. These included an incredibly popular Saturday night **Irish music session** at **Peter Kavanagh's**, Egerton Street, which no one wanted to end! – and a very impressive one-man drama show on the life and work of Irish poet and novelist, Patrick Kavanagh, that was performed on two occasions at the **Fly in the Loaf**, Hardman Street.

Quiz night

The October Get Together, held at the Old Bank in Waterloo, featured a special quiz compiled by C A M R A Committee member Huw Jenkins. This



tested our general knowledge plus questions on beer and pubs, breweries and music. There were some cleverly devised questions, including pictures of pubs from unusual angles for us to identify! It was a really fun

evening, and thanks to Mark Hensby of Liverpool Organic Brewery for donating the prizes.

Other events

A cider tasting evening, a Shiverpool ghost tour and a pub games night were other major Festival events.

Jean Pownceby

Some More Highlights of the Pubs Festival Events

The CAMRA Get Together at the Baltic Fleet

Branch Get Togethers are held on the third Wednesday of every month and are our new style version of Branch meetings, altered in order to move away from too much 'business' and to allow people to interact and socialise as well as to find out what is going with regard to CAMRA and real ale, both locally and nationally. They are open to both members and non members.



On this occasion, we had a special added attraction, as the **Baltic Fleet** is the city's only brew-pub, with the **Wapping micro-brewery** housed in its cellar, and the brewer, **Stan Shaw**, had agreed to join us and to bring samples of some of his special beers for us to taste!

For those who don't know, the Baltic Fleet is situated close to the Albert Dock and is a Grade II listed building of nineteenth century origin. It has a distinctly nautical theme, as its name might suggest, with its flat iron structure giving it the shape and feel of a ship.

In addition to regular members, the meeting attracted new members and members from other areas, including one person from Norway. We were very impressed, but he then told us he does now live locally! He was most welcome, nevertheless! There were also non members and visitors to the city and, after the usual CAMRA announcements, we all settled to listen to Stan the brewer, whose beers from the adjacent bar we were already enjoying.

Stan Shaw - the Award Winning Wapping Brewer

Stan explained that the brewery had recently celebrated being on the site of the pub for 10 years, with the first brew dating back to late January 2002, and he has been at the helm



from the start. His smiling face clearly indicated that he loves his work, and he proudly passed round tasters of his 8 year old Porter that put a smile on other people's faces too! There was a low but appreciative buzz of 'note comparing' as people savoured it before moving on to a more recent Porter, brewed just last year.

Stan then set up an impromptu brewery tour. We followed him down into the small but rambling cellar that amazingly is the 'birthplace' of all the Wapping beers we know and love! Rumour has it



that there was a myriad of tunnels down there and there has been much speculation about associations with smugglers and press gangs. Stan himself is obviously quite unfazed by all this and we were soon distracted from the rather spooky feel of the place, as he launched into his talk about the brewing process and the beers he brews, followed by a lively question and answer session. Upstairs in the pub the tastings of Stan's beers continued and remarkably these included porters from 2003 and 2005 as well as a recent smoked porter. Everyone mingled and chatted and finally

wended our ways home after a great night. Many thanks to Stan and to the bar staff for making it so.

Stan says he is happy to do brewery tours by appointment and he can be contacted by email stanshaw2110@yahoo.co.uk or phone 07580 984 815.

He particularly asked me to remind people who were there, and to mention in this article, that he will be retiring in two years time, and that if there are any budding brewers out there, then please get in touch with him! (see the Wapping Brewery article page 23)

Jean Pownceby

The Shiverpool and Liverpool CAMRA 'WALE ALE' Tour

Shiverpool is an organisation which runs Ghost Walks around Liverpool. As part of the Pubs Festival, Liverpool CAMRA and Shiverpool worked together to develop a new **Pubs Ghost Walk** taking in four real ale pubs in the Cultural Quarter of the city.

The event was organised by CAMRA Committee member Jan Sorsby in conjunction with Lucy of Shiverpool.



The Event

It was a fascinating tour around some of Liverpool's most historic pubs, with a few ales thrown in.

As we all congregated outside the Philharmonic Hall, we were introduced to our 'beer runners', those brave people whose job it was to ensure a beer was waiting for us at each of the first three pubs we visited. This was a great idea and ensured that everyone had time to enjoy their drinks and that the bar staff in each pub were not overrun

with a host of thirsty tour goers.

This was my first Shiverpool Tour and I honestly did not know what to expect. I had never heard any Liverpool ghost stories and knew nothing about the city's ghostly past. The first thing that struck me when we met our three ghoulish guides was how 'in character' they were, all black teeth, white faces and gothic black outfits. The humour with which they guided us between pubs, bantered with locals and fended off some 'hecklers' really helped to make the whole experience entertaining and fun.

We began outside the **Belvedere** where we were told ghostly stories



of women disappearing through walls and other tales of eighteenth century Liverpool. In order to ensure the tour ran vaguely to time we were introduced to the bell which was to be sounded when it was time to leave and to the 'fingers' which were to be 'wagged' at those who were the last out of each pub. Unsurprisingly these tactics did keep the tour moving. Next we stopped briefly at 'the luggage' near the bottom of Hope Street, here we learnt about 'Body Snatchers' and one 'lucky' tour goer was asked to place his hand into a sack – filled with what...now that would be telling.

Our next pub was the **Grapes** in Knight Street, reputedly the most



haunted pub in Liverpool with a history of body snatching and dissection as well as violent death. Here we heard tales of the pub's previous existence as a private residence, or residences as it was originally two separate houses.

On the way to our next stop, the **Roscoe Head**, we made a stop at St Luke's Church or 'the bombed out church' as it is known, for ghostly tales of the graveyard. The tour involved negotiating many main roads which our guides amiably got us across, with lots of friendly banter, on one occasion standing in the middle of the road and demanding a taxi to stop!

Understandably, the Roscoe Head did not want to dwell on any ghostly past goings on (if indeed there have been any) so here we instead heard tales of the area, and as we made our way to our last stop, the **Dispensary**, we were regaled with tales of 'Springheeled Jack'. This was another moment of audience participation which adds some extra humour to the proceedings, especially at this point in the evening when the 'wale' had been well and truly flowing.



All in all the evening was very enjoyable, not only did I enjoy some great beers in some of Liverpool's best real ale pubs, but I also learnt a lot about the city's grisly past, whether it was factually accurate or not does not really matter. The stories were entertaining and brought to life by three wonderful tour guides.

Sonia James-Henry



Introducing..... **Pi (Rose Lane)**
Great beers....in the 'burbs!




4 Handpulls : 3 Real Ale from Northwest micro breweries, guest real cider
With an emphasis on Quality AND Quantity we have a huge and eclectically obscure range of 8 draught and 60+ bottled beers from all over the world.
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Sister bar of the award winning Pi (Chorlton)

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The Globe



The Globe is a small, very cosy traditional two roomed local opposite Central Station and close to main shopping area. It is a very lively pub and is popular with both locals and visitors alike. Watch out for the sloping floor!

Opening times 11 (10 Sat) -11
12-10.30 Sun 0151 707 0067

5 Handpumps

17 CASES STREET L11HW



CAMRA Liverpool RealAlePubs Festival 2012

Comments by Tour Participants

"Great pubs and scary stories – who could ask for more!"

"It was great to be able to order our beer in advance and know it would be waiting on the bar for us when we reached the next brilliant pub."

"What an eye opener. Why haven't I been in these pubs before? I'll be back!"

"A fearfully good evening!"

Reflections on the Festival

The Festival provided a showcase of all that is best about pubs. If you missed out, don't forget that good things go on all the time in pubs. It's a question of getting out there to explore what's on offer, doing something different in convivial surroundings and company whilst enjoying real ale and supporting our much cherished pubs.

If you would like to help with the 2013 Festival please email contact@merseycamra.org.uk

The latest CAMRA surveys show that pubs are closing at the rate of eighteen a week, with great damage to community life in Britain.

When it comes to pubs the old adage applies, "use 'em or lose 'em."

Jean Pownceby



Britain's Pubs In Numbers

- 16** the number of pubs that are closing every week
- 8** the number of suburban pubs closing every week
- 5** the number of rural pubs closing every week
- 2** the number of high street pubs closing every week

"Suburban and rural areas are under threat as wholesale pub closures deprive local people of a centre of community." Mike Benner, Chief Executive, CAMRA

"Pubs are vital for social cohesion and cultural integration and therefore the Government must act swiftly to repair the damage inflicted on local communities by offering genuine support for enterprising and hard working licenses." Mike Benner

Three Million Lost Customers

Britain's pubs have lost three million customers because of price rises stemming from increases

in taxes on beer and pubs. Beer tax has gone up more than 40% in four years. **More than a third of the price of a pint is now duty and VAT.**

5,800 pubs have closed in the last four years. *"Tax is ripping the heart out of communities. Every community pub that is lost is a tragedy. We are shooting ourselves in the foot."*

Charlotte Leslie Conservative MP

£120,000 – the Annual Social Value of the Pub

The think tank, the Institute for public Policy Research (IPPR), estimates that the social value of the British pub to its local community is up to £120,000 per year, yet this is not taken into account when decisions about pub closures are made.

IPPR identify that pubs are vital social centres not just places to drink. IPPR want to see

- **Business rate relief for pubs which act as centres for the community.**
- Reform of planning laws to prevent pubs being demolished without planning permission.
- **PubCos offering their lessees/licensees a guest beer option and a free of tie option linked to an open market rent review.**





Campaign For Real Ale Isle of Man Welcomes you to

"RACD 2"



2nd Real Ale of Man Beer Festival

Thursday 4th to Saturday 6th April 2013

Masonic Hall, Woodbourne Rd, Douglas, Isle of Man IM2 3EE

Over 100 Real Ales, Ciders & Perries plus Fruit Wines

Thurs 4th April

Preview afternoon, Corporate, Trade & CAMRA members only - 14.00 - 17.00hr

General Public & CAMRA members - Open Session - 18.00 - 23.00hr

Fri 5th & Sat 6th April

General Public & CAMRA members Open Sessions - 12.00 - 16.00hr and 17.00 - 23.00hr both days.

Public Transport - Masonic Hall

Isle of Man Transport Bus leave Stands C, D or E, Lord St Bus Terminal, Nos. 3, 11, 12, 22, 23 & 25

Travel details to the Isle of Man

www.gov.im/transport/airport • www.steam-packet.com • www.visitislofman.com

Contact details and further information...

Event Organiser charlesmiller@manx.net and on 07624 307356.

Visit online - www.iombeerfestival.com

www.facebook.com/groups/iomCAMRA

(& use Facebook to contact Staffing Officer - Julie Jones)



CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE



CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE



ManxAle



Major Developments at the Island's Breweries

Major Heron & Brearley (H&B) Okells Brewery Rebrand plus New Beers and Seasonals

The Island's largest brewer H&B has launched a full rebrand of the Okell's beer range. The news is very positive. In addition to completely rebranded pump clips, glassware and labelling for bottled beers, there are two brand new brews, plus a published schedule for production of a dozen seasonal ales. This is a massive commitment to cask ale and its promotion.

The New Beers - Okells Olaf, Okells MPA and Jiarg

A new dark beer has been launched, **Okell's Olaf**, to be part of the core range available all year. With coffee and liquorice aromas, the beer was surprisingly flavoursome on first tasting, given the relatively low ABV of 3.9%.



The second new brew is **Okell's MPA** (Manx Pale Ale), coming in a relatively low 3.6%ABV. This is to be produced as a seasonal beer and

in 2013 is scheduled to appear in May. Again, a lot of flavour comes through for the strength, with fruit flavours dominating. The official notes describe the aromas as tropical fruit, mango, passion fruit and papaya, which should prove popular in the warmer months (if the sun ever returns!).



The well regarded **Dr Okells IPA** continues in the permanent beer range under a new name **Okells IPA** at 4.5%.

Finally **Okell's Red** has been renamed **Jiarg** (Manx Gaelic for Red), and along with the Okells Bitter, Olaf, Manx MPA and IPA these ales will now constitute the core range, with the dozen seasonals unaffected.



The seasonal will be; January - **Aile**; February - **Castletown**; March - Spring Ram; April - **Okells Steam**; May - **Okells MPA**; June - **1907 and MacLir**; July - **Olde Skipper**; August - **1907 and Saison**; September - **Autumn Dawn**; October - **Alt**; November and December - **St Nick**.

The sole casualty, but both significant and sad, has been the **Okell's Mild**, which for the time being has been mothballed. For five to six years now the sales of this classic northern style mild

have been low, and the current plant at Okell's is unable to produce sufficiently small quantities to sustain quality between batches. For some time behind the scenes there had been a significant effort by head brewer Dr. Cowbourne and the team to retain the Mild, including trialling variations on the style, but the original Mild's demise had been feared for some years.

Four Okells Bottled Beers

Okells will also be producing the 1907, the IPA, the MacLir and Aile in bottles.

The Rebranding

Although H&B report double digit percentage growth in beer sales last year, the group increasingly needs to look across the water to the U.K market for the medium term, in order to secure the future in a competitive market.

The rebrand is designed to do that, with emphasis on three core values, namely;

- independence of the brewery,
- purity (in view of the Manx beer purity law of 1874)
- and the unique nature of the Manx location.

Accordingly the pump clips and signage is of a clear uniform theme



throughout. On Island the links with the former Falcon brewery will be missed, (see the photo left of the enormous Okell's sign featured on the Peveril Hotel in Peel), along with the colourful Celtic splendour of some of the former seasonal pump clips.

The availability of an Okell's product will be instantly recognisable at the bar. A separate pump clip worded 'specially imported to the GB' will be used off Island, and all products will prominently feature the distinctive Manx three legged emblem.

Overall the new signage is crisp, clear and promotes the Island well. There is nothing out there of a similar style, and as with the Thwaites recent rebranding and breweries like St Austell, the design will stand out in the U.K. market very clearly amongst the competition. It must be remembered that with the uniform nature of the new range of signage, although a row of Okell's pump clips may initially take a little scrutiny to differentiate between the beers, when in the U.K. the beers will most frequently feature as a single Okell's product alongside the rest. In these settings the 'Okell's clarity of design will be seen at its best.

According to H&B their real ale sales to the U.K. this year are already predicted to be up six fold on last year and H&B's commitment to cask conditioned Okells appears to be resolute.

New Brewery Opens on Island. Now it's Four!

Doghouse Brewery Jurby

The Isle of Man now has a fourth brewery, with production having commenced on 8th September 2012.

Named Doghouse Brewery, by owner Paul Mercer, it is situated in a unit on the Jurby industrial estate in the north of the island. Whilst Paul is new to the brewing industry, he has long held an interest in beer. The brewery has been in the planning stages since

February 2012, when Paul completed a Brew Lab course on the brewing process.

The brewing equipment was sourced by Paul himself, from plant used by the Freedom brewery in London, and consists of 5 fermenters with a ten hectolitre capacity. The unit in Jurby has been largely adapted by Paul himself, using his knowledge of engineering.

Initially, Paul's approach was to produce three separate brews, a bitter, an IPA and a golden beer. Wisely for a first start up, the approach was to sell the brews through a limited number of outlets, (around fourteen to sixteen initially), mainly in the Island free



trade and with a broad geographical spread.

When asked about the trials and tribulations of setting up the microbrewery from scratch, it appears that the greatest difficulty



has been bringing back into production brewing kit that had been out of use. This took more time than initially thought.

However on the plus side, Paul reports an excellent and cooperative approach and mind set by the Isle of Man authorities in assisting with the paperwork technicalities of the start-up, and an open and enthusiastic response from the first wave of Island free houses approached, with repeat orders already received.

The Doghouse Beers.

Initially a single generic pump clip sign has been used, with a handwritten note denoting the beers and strengths. The beers were not named at first, as the first series of brews were tweaked over the initial period to maximise flavours and establish a house style.

In the first batches, the **bitter** (3.4% ABV) was made using Challenger, Fuggles and Progress hops with a European Bitterness unit (E.B.U.) rating of 36. The **Doghouse IPA** was a darker IPA in style coming in at 3.9% ABV and 40 E.B.U., using Northdown and Challenger hops. The **golden beer**,

(which some landlords reported as being the most popular brew), was made from Styrian Goldings hops and came in with a 3.6% ABV and an EBU of around 20.

For subsequent brews, Paul is minded to increase the percentage strengths slightly. A house brew, specifically for an individual pub may be developed in the future. House brews remain relatively rare on the Isle of Man, with Okell's Jough available in The Mitre (Ramsey) and Albert (Douglas), with Ravens Claw-again Okell's - specially brewed for the Raven (an H&B pub on the TT motorbike course at Ballaugh Bridge). Recently Paul has produced a mild which proved particularly popular, and plans are underway for a bottled IPA to be produced around February/March time.

Undoubtedly there will be more to report in the coming months, and MerseyAle would like to wish Paul well in the new venture. With four breweries now on island there is plenty of competition, but there is certainly scope to replace some guest ales from the UK with locally produced ales or 'LocAle'. Such a move would further enhance the Islands reputation as a prolific producer of locally brewed ale.

The Legendary Bushy TT Tent Under Threat.

In Douglas the Bushy's TT tent for 2013, situated at the end of the promenade, was under threat as



MerseyAle went to print. The site has been put up for tender, with the Island authorities concerned about loss of car parking revenue during the TT fortnight, when the tent is in situ. The Bushy's Tent provides a significant part of the modest sized Bushy's brewery revenue, and owner Martin Brunnschweiler has expressed his concern in the Island media, including acknowledging that a large corporate player could put in a massive bid for the site.

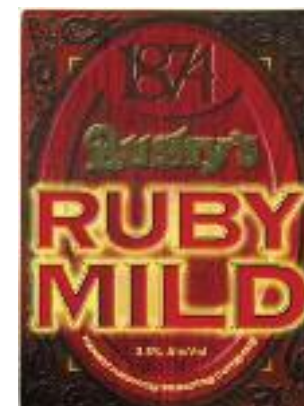
For many TT goers the Bushy Tent

IS the TT and it provides the social heart of the event. Bushy's association and support for the TT motorbike races over the years has been second to none, and the relaxed atmosphere of the TT complements that of Bushy's as a company. For those not aware, the tent is in fact a large marquee, featuring bars, seating and live bands. It is the focal gathering point for Islanders and TT fans alike; a place to relax in over a beer and muse over the day's racing whilst enjoying the unique atmosphere. So synonymous has the Bushy's Tent become with the TT period, that it is simply known Island wide and globally as 'the tent,' and to a man and woman everyone knows exactly what is meant by 'the tent'-the Bushy's TT marquee at the end of the promenade.

It is to be hoped that common sense prevails and the situation is looked at in the round, including the importance of promoting local on Island industry for the general good.

Bushy's Ruby Mild

Mild drinkers disappointed by the mothballing of Okells Mild can



still enjoy a classic IOM brewed mild in the shape of Bushy's Ruby Mild which is a permanent beer as **Bushy's Rovers Return** in Douglas.

RAM2. The CAMRA Isle of Man Beer Festival Returns in April

Following on from last year's inaugural success, the second Isle of Man CAMRA Beer Festival named RAM2, has been announced and is to take place between **4th and 6th April 2013**. (see advertisement on page 38). One hundred beers and ciders will feature, and there will be a planned increase in the capacity at the venue, **the Freemasons Hall in Douglas**.

Falcon Festival Flies Again on Friday 3rd to Monday 6th May 2013

The Falcon's Nest Real Ale Festival is to appear for the third year at the GBG listed pub in Port Erin. The dates will be 3rd to 6th May, and as in 2012 the hotel is participating in the **Steam Railway Rail Ale event** with free entry to the Beer Festival for people showing a valid train ticket. The trains will be serving real ale en route from Douglas station. See www.iombusandrail.info for details.

The Festival beer range will be further expanded, such has been the success of this event in previous years.

The Bay View Hotel Port St Mary Reopens

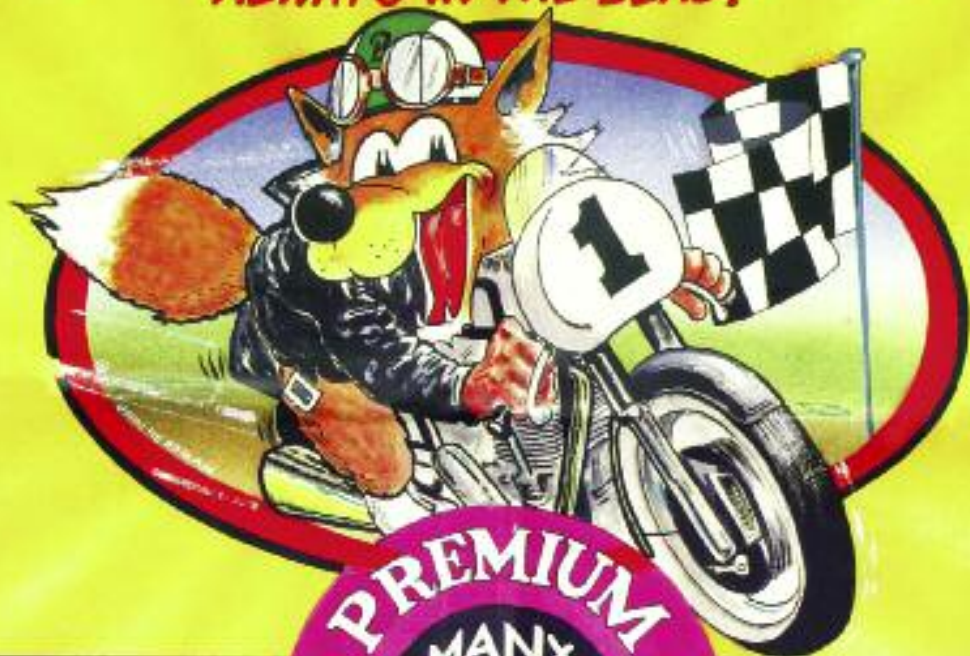


Excellent news from Port St Mary where The Bay View has reopened, having been thought to be lost as a pub.

Bushy's

BRAND

"ALWAYS IN THE LEAD!"



PURE BY LAW

DOUGLAS ISLE of MAN

PREMIUM MANx ALES

1ST AT THE

"ASK FOR THEM BY NAME"

Licensee Tony Waitland is hoping for a long term lease, and there have already been significant works to the dining areas with tasteful refurbishment and decoration. Fresh local produce is now being served lunchtimes and evenings along with Sunday lunches. The intention is to have a special emphasis on locally sourced seafood. The pub features live bands at weekends. The outside terraced garden overlooking the sweeping bay and working harbour offers what is perhaps the most spectacular view on the Island, and is now being renovated. Real ale will feature significantly, and there will be accommodation available. The layout lends itself to catering for many different types of clientele, and it is great news to see the pub reopened. Tony has a wealth of experience in the trade and MerseyAle wishes him well with his new venture.

News in Brief

Many H&B landlords have changed pubs in the last quarter; there will be an update in a future edition of MerseyAle.

The Waterfall in Glen Maye (on the coast south of Peel) was closed with a for sale sign up in January 2013.

The CAMRA Isle of Man Branch celebrated forty years of the Good Beer Guide with a special night in **The Rovers Return** Douglas,



IOM GBG40 Launch
featuring a 40th birthday cake and a beer related quiz night-see photo.

Douglas New Real Ale Outlets
Real ale is now available in **Brendan O'Donnell's, Bar George, and The Pinewood**. Jaks Bar has increased its offering to three cask ales.



Okell's Aile has won the 2012 European Best Smoked Flavoured Beer Award.

Sulby Glen Hotel for Sale

The Island's longest serving licensee, **Rosie Christian**, has decided to retire and has put the hotel and its GBG listed bar up for sale with a £1.3 million asking price. The estate agent has advertised it as a profitable business but has also suggested that it could be converted into a residential care home.

Dave Halliwell
MerseyAle IOM Correspondent

Stop the Escalator Campaign



1,200 attend CAMRA House of Commons Rally and Create a "Real Buzz in Parliament"

CAMRA created a real buzz in Parliament.
This was the largest and best organised lobby that I have seen" Observations of one MP.

The CAMRA campaign to Stop the Beer Duty Escalator reached new heights on December 12th, when 1,200 CAMRA members travelled to the House of Commons to lobby their MP to scrap the escalator. Over 300 MPs were lobbied on the day with the strong message that the escalator was killing pubs around the country. Members hammered home the point that beer duty has risen 42% in the period 2008 to 2012, with 5,800 pubs closing since 2008.



The January 2013 edition of What's Brewing reported on the biggest rally ever organised by CAMRA thus;

Some of the 1,200 attending travelled by trains or boats and even, one member, by plane. South Herts' Ian Boyd had flown into London from Taiwan to see his MP. And 10 coaches brought members from around the country to Emmanuel Hall, Westminster, where activists gathered before heading to parliament to see their MP.

BALTIC FLEET



Baltic Fleet Beers

Liverpool's only Brew Pub - The Home of Wapping Brewery

Award Winning Beers
Winners of Champion Beer of Britain Awards

All your favourites plus our own Wapping Brewery Beers



Stan Shaw,
Wapping's Award Winning Brewer

Food available every day
WE SERVE SCOUSE & LOCAL PIES
(Johnsons Toxteth)

MUSIC SEA SHANTIES
Last Saturday of the month
More Live Music coming soon



10 years and a Million Pints!

The Baltic Fleet Pub and Brewery, Wapping Liverpool opposite the ECHO ARENA



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Peerless All American IPA won Silver in the Strong Bitters class, Storr Lager won Silver in the Bottled Beer class, and the Jinja Ninja won Silver in the Bottled Speciality Beers class and Bronze in the Speciality Beers Cask Ale class.

Some were licensees and brewers but most were CAMRA members, who had taken a day off, to ensure MPs got the message that over the past 40 years there have been few threats to the UK pub industry as severe as the beer duty escalator.

More than 300 MPs met with CAMRA members from their constituency as part of the largest campaigning event CAMRA has ever organised.

One MP said CAMRA had created a real buzz in parliament and it was the largest and best organised lobby there he had seen.

Even Labour leader Ed Miliband wanted to get in on the act, as his office contacted CAMRA to find out if anyone from his Doncaster North constituency was attending.

North Oxfordshire CAMRA branch chairman John Bellinger said the day was the "greatest opportunity, possibly ever, for ordinary people to have a positive effect on the decision makers of this country, to address this ridiculously unfair tax".

And John knows first-hand about the crippling effects of the tax. A former licensee, he used to run the Bell in Adderbury, Oxfordshire until April last year. He says the

beer tax escalator contributed to making his business unviable.

Reflecting on the success of the day CAMRA national chairman Colin Valentine said:

"What you have done has been very special and you have made a difference. You've brought to parliament's and the general public's attention the nonsense of the duty escalator."



e Petition Makes the Magic 100,000 Target and Triggers Parliamentary Debate on the Beer Escalator

The e Petition to Stop the Beer Duty Escalator made the magic target of 100,000 signatures to become only the twelfth petition to meet the target that triggers the right to a Parliamentary debate. Many thanks to all the people who took the time to sign the e petition, and to those who encouraged people to sign. In the ensuing debate over 58 MPs from all parties unanimously backed the call on Government to review the beer duty escalator and present back before Budget 2013. This is a fantastic step in the campaign and a fitting response to the 100,000 signatures on the e-petition.

In truth the most fitting response would be for the Government to realise the escalator is an ineffective out of date policy which is damaging the beer and pub industry and scrap it, but the purpose of the debate was to propose a review and so we must be happy with that result.

Unfortunately the Treasury Minister Sajid Javid gave a luke warm response at the end of the debate, wheeling out the usual Government rhetoric, but the important part is the vote and that the will of Parliament should be adhered to.

To ensure this happens our campaign cannot stop here: we must keep the momentum going.

Colin Valentine, CAMRA National Chairman, said:

"CAMRA was delighted to see the ground swell of support from MPs from all parties in today's debate for a review of the damaging beer duty escalator. Passing a motion for the Government to conduct a thorough review of the economic and social impact of the escalator is a major step forward for the industry and sends out a clear message from inside Westminster that enough is enough."

"At a time when Britain's pub closure rate is back on the rise,

any review must take into account the 5,800 plus pubs which have closed since the Government's punitive escalator system was introduced in 2008. It must also be reinforced that further planned increases will bring in no additional revenue for the next three years, and will only serve the purpose of harming many communities across Britain when their local pub is no longer able to run a viable business."



Colin Valentine and Greg Mulholland MP



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How Others See Us

Read All About It: Beer North West Website Reviews MerseyAle

The Beer North West website run by Mike Blackstone is running a series on CAMRA Branch magazines and the first to be reviewed was MerseyAle. Mike writes:

"No matter what part of the country it covers, I always find the local CAMRA branch and area magazines and newsletters of great interest.

I find them at beer festivals, pubs and occasionally some are passed on to me to read. I'm not bothered whether they are current or otherwise. There is always something of interest within their pages.

It's great that members of various branches leave copies of their magazine at pubs when they are visiting well outside of their area, for I for one am glad to pick them up and take home to read, then pass them on again.

Therefore, I felt it would be a good idea to highlight some of the varied and professional looking magazines that are published by CAMRA branches that I have come across in recent months.

The first such magazine to get a mention is the quite superb 'MerseyAle' which covers CAMRA Liverpool and Districts.

Quite honestly, this particular publication never ceases to impress and would not look out of place amongst the magazines for sale in places like W.H. Smith.

The one pictured is for Winter 2011, and consists of 56 full colour pages. It states it has a circulation of 11,000 and is a highly polished and professional publication.

In this issue there are a whole range of articles, features and photographs, even with a separate section for CAMRA Isle Of Man.

Articles include:- 'Bringing New People To The Real Ale Campaign'; 'MerseyAle News'; 'Damning Report on PubCos'; 'Wetherspoons Chairman Challenges Tax on Pubs'; 'Brewery News'; 'Merseyside Regional Pub of the Year'; 'Manx Ale'; 'Tasting French Ciders'; 'How Others See Us.'

It is literally packed with quality comment, news and features, and is certainly the CAMRA branch magazine to beat as far as I am concerned.



I'll feature another magazine in the future and it won't necessarily be from the North West! So keep looking.

Anyone who would like a copy of their branch magazine to be reviewed on this Blog can do so, by contacting me firstly at merlyn.cat@virgin.net and I will happily forward more details.

Mike Blackstone is a freelance writer living in Heysham, Lancashire who tours the North West writing about pubs and beer. He writes a regular blog under the name Beer North West - see <http://beerstagger.blogspot.co.uk> His interests are beer, pubs, photographing villages and towns and public transport. He is "very much a cat person".

MerseyAle – Now We're a Beer!

MerseyAle is the name of a beer brewed specially for the Ship in a Bottle shops by Liverpool Organic Brewery. Appropriately it described as a strong 5.3% ruby coloured ale with a rich malty taste and a sweet finish. Sounds like us all right !

ROSIE'S

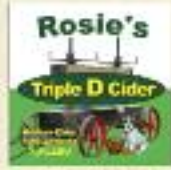
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CIDER APPLES - POOREST HARVEST IN FIFTEEN YEARS



The wet weather throughout 2012, the severe frosts and the consequent inability of bees to pollinate the apple trees, has led to the poorest cider apple harvest in fifteen years. In some cases the trees only produced a tenth of the 2011 harvest, the worst figures in the last thirty years. Cider maker Julian Temperley of Somerset commented;

"This has been a very bad year. I suspect we are looking at 50% of the apples that we need."

The apple shortage threatens the growing market for real cider which relies on traditional cider apple varieties – see Cider Tasting article below.

The number of traditional cider makers has more than doubled since 2005, with a current total of 300 cider makers, including 40 in Herefordshire and 35 in Somerset plus an increasing number in less expected areas such as Wales, Norfolk, Yorkshire, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man.

A Professional Cider Tasting at the CAMRA Liverpool Real Ale Pubs Festival

With October being cider month in the farming community,

it's also the month that CAMRA celebrate all things cider. Real Cider can only be made when the cider apple varieties are ready for pressing in a cider press to extract the juice. This is then left to ferment naturally in wooden barrels until the following Spring when the cider will be ready for sale.

In the Liverpool CAMRA Branch we have celebrated cider month in many different ways over the past few years. Perhaps the most memorable being cider festivals held at the Everyman Bistro and Belvedere pub, and as successful as they were, we felt it was time to try something different this year. Several ideas were discussed and the most popular idea was clearly a cider tasting. All well and good you may think but we needed a venue, several varieties of cider and perry to sample and most importantly of

all we needed someone who knows cider well and would be willing to stand in front of a room of eager cider students.

Nook's Yard Cider Northwich Cheshire

With all plans in place thirty eager drinkers gathered at the Crown Hotel to meet Mathew Veasey from Cheshire. Mathew is the cider maker and owner of Nooks Yard cider at Northwich. He hails from Somerset, so was more than qualified to lead our tasting evening. The evening began with a discussion of the types of special apples used in cider making, the bitter-sharps and bitter-sweets and an explanation of how these are blended to create the taste that the cider maker wants, be that dry, medium or sweet.

At this point our first sample was presented. Thatchers Heritage is a dry cider and most of our tasters reckoned it was a fairly acquired taste. With each sample that was offered Mathew distributed a sample of the type of apple that was likely to be in that cider. The sample that went with the Thatchers was very dry and bitter and it was easy

to see how the cider got its flavour. It takes a ton and a half of cider apples to make 1,000 litres of real cider.

Other ciders sampled with apples during the evening were Hecks Kingston Black, a single varietal cider, one from Ben Crossman, one of Mathew's own from Nooks Yard, (which most of the tasters said was the best!), and a perry from Severn Cider which was a beautiful example of the pear drink. A cheeky sample of Gaymers non-real Blackthorne cider was offered, however the room of new experts soon spotted the impostor.

Non real cider such as Magners and Bulmers uses apple concentrate not freshly pressed apple juice and is bulked out with water and preservatives.

The evening was a great success and the Branch would certainly repeat it in future. Of the thirty tasters around a half were new faces to a CAMRA event and many of them were young people. The Branch would like to thank the Crown Hotel, Lime Street for the use of their upstairs room and most of all Mathew Veasey for giving us his time and a most enjoyable evening. Find out more on www.nooksyards.com

Steve Berks
Liverpool CAMRA Cider Officer



Steve Berks



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CIDER NEWS



Photo Andrew Mathewson

CAMRA National Cider Pub of the Year 2012

The winner of the 2012 CAMRA National Cider Pub of the Year was announced in early October.

The Royal Oak in Wantage, Oxfordshire beat a long list of national entries to win the prestigious award.

Regular MerseyAle readers will know that the Augustus John was entered on behalf of Merseyside & Cheshire, but as excellent as the AJ is, the northern super-regional

winner was the Graduate College Bar at Lancaster University. This came a joint third behind the Royal Oak.

The Next Marketing Ploy – Non Real Fruit Flavoured Cider

Sales Boom by Eighty per cent
A similar marketing push to that which established non real Magners as a leading cider brand, is now being applied to the concept of "fruit ciders". On the face of it a contradiction in terms, the label fruit ciders refers to the practice of adding different fruit flavourings to a basic non real apple cider.

The first fruit cider brand was launched in the UK just three years ago, and the marketing push which is mostly aimed at young drinkers, has led to sales shooting up by 80%. Fruit cider has become the UK's fastest growing drinks sector worth

£113 million a year. Over thirty varieties are now on offer, including pear ciders, berry fruit ciders, elderberry and lime flavoured ciders. The market leader is Kopparberg which has launched a cloud berry cider.

Retail analysts Mintel claim that the added fruit flavour makes cider more attractive to younger drinkers and women. The parallels with the flavoured alcopops phenomenon of the recent past are striking.

However these fruit flavoured ciders are not real cider as most are made from apple concentrate and concentrate fruit flavourings, with added water and preservatives. Real cider is made solely from the juice of pressed cider apples which are then naturally fermented in barrels and left to mature into cider.

Liverpool CAMRA Coach Trips Programme 2013 New Booking System

The Branch Committee has received a number of comments that branch members have been finding it difficult to book a place on coach trips because they were booked up a long time in advance. This was due to people booking for several trips at once at the beginning of the year, leaving no seats for later applicants.

Therefore the Committee have decided that bookings for trips can only be taken three months before the date of the trip. It is hoped that this will ease the problem and give more people the chance to book seats.

Thus the 18th June trip cannot be booked until 18th March and so on through the year. This new system will be kept under review.

New Prices – It Pays to Join CAMRA

Good news is that the price of coach trips for CAMRA Members is being kept at the 2012 price of £12 a seat. You will need to show your CAMRA card when on the coach. In order to reward those people who

are CAMRA members and to incentivise people to join, the price of trips for NON MEMBERS is increased to £15 per seat.

If you go on a number of trips the £3 discount for members will soon enable you to recoup your membership fee. See page 53 for a summary of the benefits of joining CAMRA. **You really can't afford NOT to join!**

An additional incentive to join the Liverpool CAMRA Branch is the offer of one free coach trip which is worth £15 for new members of the Branch. The 2013 Programme of Coach Trips All trips depart from outside the Ship and Mitre on Dale Street usually at 10am with the return at around 9pm. Bookings are now being taken for the following trips;

16/03/2013 East Lancashire, visiting Burnley and Clayton-le-Moor departing at 10am. A few seats are available.

18/05/2013 North Wales, visiting the beer festival at the Welsh Highland Railway at Dinas and Porthmadog. People can travel by train between the two.

This year, as in 2012, we are hoping to run two coaches to the **Bishops Castle Pubs Festival on 13/07/2013**. This would enable NEW MEMBERS to claim their free coach trip. Bookings for this trip from NEW MEMBERS ONLY are now being taken. Others will be able to book for this trip from Monday 1st April.

For your diary coach trips are planned for the following dates: 15/06/2013, 13/07/2013, 10/08/2013, 07/09/2013, 12/10/2013 and 16/11/2013.

Trip organiser Tony Williams requests members to check the Branch website, liverpoolcamra.org.uk, after the 1st of each month for details on the next CAMRA coach trip. Time constraints could mean the website is not updated right away. If this is the case please send an email to social@merseycamra.org.uk.

How to Book

Email social@merseycamra.org.uk
Phone Ian Macadam 07521 741 586
At Branch Get Togethers (see diary page 55 for details)

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You Can't Afford NOT to Join CAMRA!



There has never been a better time to join CAMRA, especially if you choose to be in the Liverpool Branch. The benefits of membership will more than recoup your membership fee including;

- £20 worth of Wetherspoon beer vouchers
- Free or discounted entry to CAMRA beer festivals
- Discounts on CAMRA books and publications

Special offers on a range of other products such as holiday cottages Members' discounts in a large number of pubs nationwide **Brewery discounts on beer offers** Free monthly "What's Brewing" newspaper and the quarterly full colour "Beer" magazine.

PLUS if you opt to join the Liverpool CAMRA Branch you receive further benefits.

- A free Branch coach trip for new members joining the Branch
- Priority booking for the sell out Liverpool Beer Festival
- Reduced ticket price on Branch coach trips, saving £3 for members compared with non members.

Membership of CAMRA branches is based on your post code, but you can join any CAMRA branch you wish to. Just contact the CAMRA Membership Team by phoning 08450 727 807 or visit www.camra.org.uk/joinus and let them know which branch you want to join.

Membership Rates and Concessions

See www.camra.org.uk to join, or fill in application form above, or join online on www.camra.org.uk, or phone 0845 0727 807. Membership rates for individuals are £23, and for joint membership £28, which includes the discount for payment by direct debit. Other payment methods cost an additional £2. There are also Life Membership rates.

There are generous concessionary rates

details on www.camra.org.uk These include concessions for under 26 year olds £15.50; over 60s £15.50. There is also a concession rate of £15.50 for people with a disability, but this is not mentioned on the website, so phone the Membership Team to obtain this.



Wirral Wanderings

Merseyrail Wirral Line and the Cross River buses take you to West Kirby and New Brighton and both places have new real ale outlets.

West Kirby

The Wro Bar on Grange Road A welcome addition to real ale outlets in the centre of West Kirby, the Wro Bar, is two minutes walk from the railway station (turn right). Two hand pumps were installed in September and have been selling **Jenning's Cumberland and Wychwood Hobgoblin**. The bar does meals and has a daily programme of varied events including live music, making it a popular venue.

Further out the **Hilbre Court** on Banks Road has a new licensee and continues to offer a good range of real ales.

The Moby Dick on Village Road, which served Jennings's Cumberland and was extremely popular especially with older people for its reasonably priced carvery, closed in October for a major rebuild. It is to emerge as an American style Smoke House and it is not known whether there will be any real ale.

West Kirby can offer a pub trail which includes Wetherspoon's **Dee Hotel** on Grange Road opposite the station, the atmospheric **White Lion** a five minute walk up the hill on Grange Road – turn left from the station, the **Hilbre Court** on Banks Road, which is en route to the Greene King owned **Ring o'Bells** on Village Road close to the **Moby Dick**.

Ship in a Bottle on Grange Road opposite the station. The beer shop run by the Ship and Mitre continues to go from strength to strength.

Indeed such has been its success that a second Ship in a Bottle has opened in the centre



of Heswall at 184 Telegraph Road, just a few yards from Heswall Bus Station (471/472 Cross River bus from Liverpool), which is also adjacent to the **Johnny Pye** Marston's pub.

New Brighton

The sea front has seen a major regeneration project featuring a revamp of the Floral Pavillion theatre and new buildings including a Morrisons supermarket, cinema and bars and restaurants. Two of these sell real ale, namely;

The Sea Horse is a Greene King Hungry Horse pub and restaurant which serves **Greene King IPA** on hand pump.

The **Marino Lounge** has one hand pump. Nearby there are a number of other positive real ale developments, enabling you to follow a real ale trail around the sea front.

The Queen's Royal Mariners Promenade close to the bus terminus and New Brighton station, is GBG listed and a strong supporter of Locale with **Brimstage and Liverpool Organic** often appearing along with **Hawkshead beers**. There is a separate dining area with an extensive menu and carvery. A new Wetherspoon pub, the **Master Mariner**, is due to open on April 23rd in the former RJs Nightclub premises on Union Terrace off Marine Promenade, following a £1 million refurbishment.

The Harbour 19 Hope Street. This was the former Commercial which was a Cains pub. It has been refurbished retaining the layout of two separate rooms and the bar has an array of four hand pumps **Perch Rock** 7 Grosvenor Road has one hand pump offering changing guest ales.

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By Michael Jackson

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Opinions expressed in MerseyAle are not necessarily those of the Editor Liverpool Branch or CAMRA

Diary

Liverpool Branch Get Togethers

Every month Liverpool CAMRA holds a Branch Get Together which is an opportunity for members to come together for a pleasant evening in a pub.

There is some CAMRA news but the main emphasis is on the social aspect and may include a themed topic or a guest speaker.

Get Togethers are normally held on the **THIRD WEDNESDAY** of the month and start at 8pm.

2013 Get Togethers are scheduled for the following dates;

Wednesdays - March 20th; April 17th; May 15th; June 19th; July 17th; August 21st; September 18th; October 16th; November 20th.

March 20th 8pm at Peter

Kavanagh's Egerton Street, off Catharine Street. Arthur of PKs will be giving a talk and a guided tour of this eclectic arts pub which features in CAMRA's National Inventory of 200 Unspoilt Pub Interiors in Britain. A great opportunity to hear the stories behind the many special artistic features in the pub.

Wednesday 17th. April 8pm at Lady of Mann behind Rigby's on Dale Street. There will be a special performance by the Love History group of The Love History, Love Real Ale tour show, featuring in drama and song the story of Liverpool pubs, sailors and shipping,.

For further details of Get Togethers see
www.liverpoolcamra.org.uk

CAMRA Members' National Weekend

in Norwich Saturday 20th to Sunday 21st April 2013
Attend the Annual gathering and AGM of CAMRA members to discuss the Campaign, and to enjoy one of Britain's best real ale cities. Details and registration see www.camra.org.uk

Next Edition of MerseyAle May 2013

Copy deadline is Monday 8th April – email news and articles to merseyale@merseycamra.org.uk
Distribution in early May

COACH TRIPS

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SEE IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON PAGE 51



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