

# MerseyAle

CAMRA Liverpool & Districts Magazine

Spring 2014 FREE



1974 - 2014



CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

# 40 YEARS CAMPAIGNING

LIVERPOOL & DISTRICTS CAMRA

# THE LION TAVERN

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### WEEKLY LOCALE

See Board for future Real Ales

### CAMRA DISCOUNT

Card carrying CAMRA members 10 pence off pint of real ale



### FOOD

See the board for selection of good value food

### QUIZ NIGHT

every Tuesday at 9.30pm

### ACOUSTIC NIGHT

Second Thursday of the Month 8pm

### BOB DYLAN SOCIETY

Meets first Thursday of the Month 8.30pm

### MEET THE BREWER

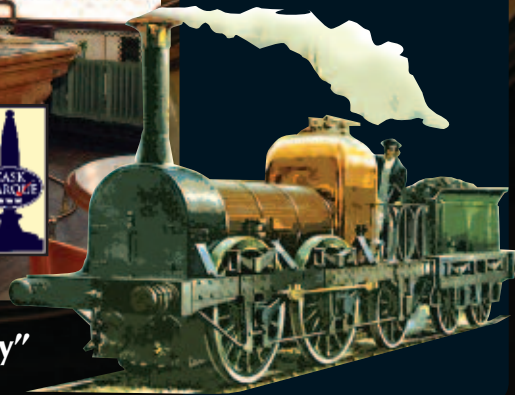
Third Thursday of the Month 8pm

### POETRY GET TOGETHER

Fourth Thursday of the Month 8pm

### V6 Adventure Club

Meet every Wednesday at 8.00pm



## MerseyAle

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QR Codes page 55



Isle of Man CAMRA Branch  
www.isleofmancamra.org.uk

CAMRA national site  
www.camra.org.uk

### Cover

Photo by Neil Lloyd

Celebrating 40 years of Liverpool CAMRA at the Globe, Jean Pownceby, Laurie Hughes, Sue Johnson and the cake!

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



## Welcome to MerseyAle and ManxAle

### 40th Anniversary Edition

Anniversaries are coming thick and fast at the moment. In November we celebrated the tenth anniversary of the launch of the new redesigned MerseyAle with a special anniversary '10' edition. Now this edition marks the landmark of the 40th Anniversary of Liverpool CAMRA, (which was called Merseyside CAMRA when established on 18th January 1974). The inaugural meeting took place in the Globe in Cases Street and you can see the commemorative plaques on the wall in the back room. On pages 9 to 15 you can read about the 2014 event at the Globe which marked as near as possible the exact date of the inaugural meeting. This is the start of twelve months of commemorative celebrations and on the back cover you can read about the next event on Wednesday 16th April 8pm at the Philharmonic Hotel Hope Street.

### Take 10 Minutes to Save the British Pub

This edition highlights the many campaign issues that CAMRA is currently involved with. CAMRA may have won the battle to save real ale and have been described as 'the most effective consumer group in Europe', but as we say on pages 9 and 10 we haven't won the war. Now the war is to Save

the British Pub. The Coalition has failed to act as promised on the PubCos that own nearly half our pubs, see page 31. We ask you to spend a few minutes to sign the online petition, www.pubscandal.org.uk and just a few minutes more to Tell Your MP- see page 29 for list of MPs - that action is needed urgently to save our pubs. Unless action is taken now another 1,456 pubs are expected to close before the General Election in 2015.

### Women, Real Ale and CAMRA

A campaign success is the increased number of women who are drinking real ale and are also joining CAMRA. Women now account for 22% of CAMRA's 160,000 plus membership. And not only drinking real ale but an increasing number of women are now brewing real ale in breweries across the country. Read about Liverpool CAMRA's successful Snowball campaign on pages 36 and 37. We hope you will feel that Liverpool CAMRA has not just talked the talk but walked the walk over the past 40 years



John Armstrong  
Editor

"One of the Hundred Best Pubs in the country"

Daily Telegraph

PUB OF EXCELLENCE 2012 CASK MARQUE CAMRA NATIONAL INVENTORY PUB



## Surprise Move to Sell Wapping Brewery to Mad Hatter

Surprise news in December was that Simon Holt, the owner of Wapping Brewery, had decided to cease brewing at his pub the Baltic Fleet by February 2014 and to sell the brew plant to Liverpool's recently established Mad Hatter Brewery. At a December briefing meeting with MerseyAle Simon revealed the main elements of the plan to be as follows.

**1.** The reason for the decision is that Simon wishes to concentrate on running and developing his pub, the Baltic Fleet, and to divest himself of responsibilities for the brewery. The Wapping brewer Stan Shaw is retiring at the end of February and this has precipitated the decision about the future of the brewery. As reported in the Winter 2013 edition of MerseyAle, the original intention was for Stan to train Angus Morrison to take over as brewer. This training has been underway with Angus being responsible for some of the recent Wapping brews. However Simon's decision to withdraw from the responsibility for the brewery and to sell the brewing equipment to Mad Hatter, has led to a change of direction.

# Wapping Brewery Plans to Go Mad as a Hatter

**2.** The original December plan was for the last brew at the Baltic Fleet to be in February, with the brew plant to then be dismantled by Stan for sale to Mad Hatter. Mad Hatter would then install the plant in new premises they were negotiating for in the Baltic Triangle area. Prior to closure and the dismantling it was intended that Stan would brew a large



Stan Shaw

amount of Wapping beer to ensure continuation of supply to the Baltic Fleet whilst waiting for the new Mad Hatter premises to open.

However in the event there have been delays in finalising the new premises including the need for substantial roof work.

Consequently the brew plant in the cellar of the Baltic fleet has not been dismantled, and discussions were underway for Mad Hatter to use the existing plant for brewing whilst the new premises were finalised.

**3.** The Baltic Fleet would enter into a supply agreement with Mad Hatter for the brewing and supply of around four Wapping beers, the best seller Summer Ale, Baltic Gold and the award winning Wapping Stout. The Wapping Smoked Porter and Wapping Bitter

are possible later additions to the supply agreement. There would be an agreement with Mad Hatter for the use of the Wapping trade name and the use of the Wapping beer names, with the likely addition of 'Brewed by Mad Hatter Brewery' on the pump clips.

**4.** As part of the sale agreement Angus would move to the employment of the Mad Hatter Brewery and would be the brewer of the Wapping beers. The plan envisaged that the Wapping beers would be brewed by Angus on the former Wapping Brewery brew plant once it has been installed in the new premises. Simon's expectation was that the use of the brew plant from Wapping plus Angus's experience of brewing the Wapping beers under Stan Shaw's supervision, should help maintain the style and taste of the beers despite the change of premises. The owner of Mad Hatter, Gaz Mathews, would continue to brew his own extensive range of Mad Hatter beers at the new brewery. It is not decided yet as to what will be the future of bottled Wapping beer, nor what happen regards sales of cask Wapping beer to the free trade. These would be decisions for Gaz as the new owner.

**5.** As MerseyAle went to press the position was that Stan had retired and the new premises for Mad Hatter had yet to be finalised. The existing plant in the Baltic Fleet cellar had not been dismantled and discussions were underway for Angus to continue brewing at the Baltic employed by Mad Hatter and producing Wapping beers for the pub.

As will be appreciated from the above, this is a work in progress and elements of the plan may yet change further.

## Loss of Liverpool's Only Brew Pub Label

The withdrawal from brewing will mean that the Baltic Fleet will lose its unique selling point of being, "Liverpool's Only Brew Pub", but hopefully the continued supply of the most popular of the Wapping beers by Mad Hatter will mean that the pub continues to attract people to its dock road location to seek out those well known beers. So major change for what for over twelve years has been Liverpool's only brew pub.

On pages 6 and 7 we present an appreciation of the work and achievements of Wapping brewer Stan Shaw and an account of the last new beer to be brewed at the Baltic Fleet, the special Festival Ale for the 2014 Liverpool Beer Festival, fittingly named, 'The End'.

*John Armstrong*

## Wapping – "The End"

When you are having a few friends round, you have to make a few preparations don't you? Organise the catering, buy the drinks, perhaps even make some of it yourself. Well Liverpool CAMRA is having a few friends round to the Crypt in February, so we had to prepare as well, so what did we do? We got brewing. This had been pencilled in our "to do" list for over a year, so we hadn't thought it was especially noteworthy, until we knew that our brewing would take place at Wapping with Stan Shaw and that

he was leaving the brewery in February. It really was going to be "the End".

Jean Pownceby and I set forth on the 15th January to learn what we could about brewing and felt that the best way to do this was to do it! Now I could baffle you all with technical terms, and write at length of the Sparge, late hopping, seaweed and sleeping yeast, but there are numerous books and articles which will say all this, so I won't. Instead I will write of the unusual view you get of Wapping when you are putting hops into the Copper and your head is just above pavement level veiled in steam and surprising passers by. People thought we were just going to turn up, have our photos taken and then retire to the comforts of Liverpool One, but we turned up at 8 and left at 2.

As the brewing area is a tad tight and the ceilings a bit low. I did wonder if Stan was 6 feet tall before he moved to Wapping and the low ceiling and pipes knocked him into a size better suited to the brewery, but he says this isn't the case. When we arrived, there was steam coming out of the hot liquor tank and the liquor(or hot water to the non-brewers) was transferred into the Mash Tun, where cold water was added to bring it down to 71 degrees once it reached the Mash Tun bed. Fortunately everything had been



Stan, Jan and Jean

steamed the night before or it would have been even warmer in there and it did get warmer once the Copper was lit.

## So what did we do?

We mixed the liquor and malt and it was a good mix with no lumps according to Stan, we weighed hops, we put hops in the Copper, we dug out the Mash Tun, all of it not just a few shovelfuls and we tried not to get in the way of Stan and Angus when they were doing "important stuff". I admit we didn't take our wellies so didn't take part in the clearing up, but that is a small oversight on our part. And we learnt the importance of temperature and the difference that makes, the importance of a good knowledge of maths and chemistry, why you don't want to get rid of all of the protein, the difference between aroma and bittering hops and why you would want to late hop. And lots more technical stuff that we wanted to know about, but I've promised not to write a brewing article, but we did take notes. Not bad for a few hours.

Jean returned a week later to help Stan rack the beer into casks. So that's how we brewed The End. It featured on the Wapping section at the CAMRA Liverpool Beer Festival Crypt and it will be available in bottles. Its 4 American hops, Chinook, Citra, Eldorado with a smidge of Summit, give it a full hoppy yet surprisingly fruity flavour, and for its 5% strength it is deceptively easy to drink – so beware. And this truly is The End.

*Jan Sorsby*



# Stan the Man

Stan Shaw,  
Wapping Brewery  
Brewer

## The Beginning and The End - Wapping Brewery 2002 to 2014.

In my beginning is  
my end

TS Eliot – East Coker –  
in Four Quartets

Over a pint on one of our many great Liverpool CAMRA coach trips, I asked Stan Shaw, who has been the brewer at Wapping Brewery in the cellars of the Baltic Fleet pub since its inception, about how he got into brewing.

### In the Beginning was a Stainless Steel Kitchen

He told me 'it all started in the Ship and Mitre'. The licensee at the time, Dave Stevenson, was talking about needing some work done in the kitchen fitting stainless steel surfaces, but said the quote he had been given for the work was very high. Stan, who is an engineer by profession and was then working in that capacity, said he could do the work, and for much less money, but it would have to be on Sundays because of his other commitments. Phil Burke, who was then running Passageway Brewery in the Queens Dock business area, heard about Stan's talents and asked him if he could also do some welding work at the brewery.



Stan said he would do it and his 'price' would be the opportunity to brew some beer. Ironically Stan was not personally fond of Phil's then famous St Arnold beer! He and Phil became friends over the next two to three years, and Stan got the chance during that time to help him with the brewing, but then Phil decided to move on. Simon Holt, who runs the Baltic Fleet, bought the brewery, which had already started to brew house beers for his pub, and Stan was asked to install the plant into the basement of the pub. This was in December 2001. Stan, his friend Tommy and other work colleagues, set to on the job and the first beers were brewed there in January 2002, and so Wapping Brewery was born. Stan's engineering company had been going 'down the pan' at that time, he told me, and when Simon asked him if he would like to become the brewer, he said yes. He declined, however, to take on the title of Head Brewer, saying that if things went wrong 'If I'm Head Brewer, I go to prison, if

you're Head Brewer, you go to prison!' The Head Brewer, he explained, holds the licence and is accountable if things go wrong. But to most people, the name of Wapping Brewery is synonymous with the name Stan Shaw and it is he that has won the many awards for its beers over the years. However, looking back, he said that although he had always wanted to brew beer, the request to do it for real full time was initially daunting:

**"It was terrifying at first. Would people like what I brewed? I knew that Liverpool was full of discerning drinkers, and I'd lie awake for hours at night thinking about brewing recipes and what would work and what wouldn't .....But Simon had faith in me and though it felt like muddling through, it soon all fell into place. And out of 130 brews, I've only ever 'crashed' three. But I can still spend weeks thinking about a new brew"**

Well, we discerning drinkers certainly have enjoyed Stan's beers over the years.

## Winner of Many CAMRA National Awards

And not only Liverpool drinkers. Stan's beers have gained the highest national beer awards. Very few of Britain's one thousand plus brewery brewers can say they have won a Champion Beer Award from CAMRA at the Great British Beer Festival and the Winter Ales Festival. Well Stan can point to not just one such award but a fist full, with Wapping Stout, Summer Ale, Wapping Smoked Porter and Baltic Gold all being national award winners.

Fittingly for many years up to 15 of Stan's Wapping Brewery beers have been showcased together on the bar at our annual Beer Festival in the Metropolitan Cathedral Crypt. This February, ten were available to enjoy whilst reflecting on Stan's twelve years of achievements.. They included the aptly named 'Journey's End' and 'The End' as, not only is Stan retiring from Wapping at the end of February but the brewery plant is to be sold to Mad Hatter and moved elsewhere. The status of the Baltic Fleet as Liverpool's only brewpub will also disappear as there will no longer be a brewery on site. See page 4 for the full story. CAMRA committee members Jan Sorsby and Jean Pownceby were privileged to be able to help Stan and Angus brew 'The End', by definition the last of Stan's new beers that will ever be brewed underneath the Baltic Fleet. See page 5 for the story of brewing The End.

That we call the  
beginning is  
often the end  
And to make an  
end is to make a  
beginning

TS Eliot – Little Gidding –  
in Four Quartets

### The Good News is that there will be a Beginning in the End

Continuity of the Wapping beers developed by Stan will be achieved by two means. Angus Morrison who has been working with, and learning from, Stan for



Photo Anthony Abbot

several months, will be brewing the Wapping beers at the new Mad Hatter brewery using the brewing plant relocated from the Baltic Fleet. Both these factors should help to maintain the style and flavour of the beers.

And Stan won't be disappearing either. Brewing is still in his blood and he is seeking a new challenge by helping the recently established Melwood Brewery on a part time basis to further develop their beers.

Some years ago a conversation on another Liverpool CAMRA coach trip in the Three Kings pub in Hanley Castle, led to Stan accepting a challenge to brew a classic 8% India Pale Ale to challenge the Meantime IPA produced by the Meantime Brewery in Greenwich London. The result was the Liverpool Beer Festival Special 'Passage to Liverpool'. That conversation also included these comments from Stan explaining his enthusiasm to accept and rise to the challenge: "My watch word has always been that 'to stand still is to stagnate'. Something I learned from Phil Burke at Passageway was that it is important to always develop and improve and to seek for perfection. If you don't do that you stagnate."

And Liverpool real ale drinkers will raise a glass to Stan for that and his twelve years of achievement.

TS Eliot expressed it thus;

We shall not  
cease from  
exploration  
And the end of  
all our exploring  
Will be to arrive  
where we started  
And know the  
place for the first  
time

TS Eliot – Little Gidding –  
in Four Quartets

Jean Pownceby with additional  
material by John Armstrong

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LIVERPOOL  
ORGANIC  
BREWERY



## Liverpool CAMRA Celebrates 40 Years of Success Fighting for Real Ale - but now the Battle is for the Survival of the British Pub.

Liverpool CAMRA will be holding a programme of events throughout 2014 to celebrate the founding of the Merseyside CAMRA Branch in 1974 and the ensuing campaign that succeeded in saving Britain's national drink, real ale.

When over thirty people packed into the tiny back room at the Globe pub on Cases Street on 18th January 1974, they little realised that they were helping to form what was to be described as the most effective consumer group in Europe. The meeting at the Globe was held to form a Merseyside branch of the recently launched Campaign for Real Ale, (CAMRA). The meeting was to prove to be a pivotal moment in saving Britain's national drink, real ale, in the pubs of Merseyside and across the country.

### A Real Buzz

Jean Pownceby, who was at the meeting and became a founder member of the new Merseyside Branch, recalls;

*"There was a real buzz in the room as everyone resolved to fight for real ale and set up the Merseyside CAMRA Branch. Laurie Hughes who was the Chair of then recently established Chester CAMRA branch made an impassioned speech of how important it was to fight for our national drink and how important CAMRA was in that battle. We set up the Merseyside branch there and then and there is a brass plaque on the wall of the back room at the Globe to commemorate the landmark event."*

*"Within a few months we had launched a CAMRA newsletter called the Mersey Drinker; (later to become MerseyAle), and organised the first Liverpool Real Ale Beer*

*Exhibition festival at the Everyman Theatre to show everyone how good real ales were and the range of beers still available. Merseyside soon proved to be one of the most active campaigning branches in CAMRA and that has continued throughout the forty years."*

### Dark Days

The 1970s were dark days for real ale and Britain's traditional breweries. CAMRA had been established just eighteen months previously by four beer drinkers concerned at the accelerating loss of Britain's national drink - real ale - and its replacement with inferior pressurised keg beers brewed in massive beer factories. Nationally the brewing industry was being dominated by six large beer companies, known as the Big Six, which were taking over and closing down local real ale breweries such as Threlfalls and Bents in Liverpool, and replacing them with nationally distributed and advertised keg beers which lacked



taste and character. Higsons had converted many of their pubs to sell only keg beer and real ale was hard to find across Merseyside and nationwide. It looked as though real ale could disappear from Britain's pubs within a very few years.

### CAMRA Fight Back

CAMRA's fight back was to prove so effective that not only was real ale saved for the nation, but over the following forty years there was to be an explosion in real ale brewing with currently 1,147 breweries in Britain producing over 5,200 different beers, the largest number of breweries since the 1930s. CAMRA has been described as the most effective consumer organisation in Europe. Membership has rocketed from a few thousand in 1974 to over 160,000 in 2014.

**So has the war been won? Unfortunately not** says Geoff Edwards, Chair of the Liverpool and Districts Branch of CAMRA

*"CAMRA's campaigning won the battle to save and promote real ale, but the war is not yet over. The new threat is to the very existence of the British Pub. We are in danger of losing that iconic British national institution, the pub. Twenty six pubs are closing every week due to cheap supermarket beer, the excessive financial demands of the large pub companies that own nearly half the country's pubs and the high level of Government excise duty on beer. CAMRA has saved real ale but without pubs to serve it in real ale will again be under threat."*

# 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 11am (10am Sat) -11pm.  
Sunday 12-10.30  
Telephone 0151 707 0067



## Handpumps

17 CASES STREET L11HW



CAMRA Merseyside's inaugural meeting took place here 40 years ago in 1974



CAMRA is promoting the message that real ale is the unique selling point of the pub, the only place to enjoy a pint of cask conditioned real ale.

Liverpool CAMRA works actively to promote our pubs and to encourage people to visit them.

The Liverpool Branch produces a **free Liverpool Real Ale Pubs map** showing the location of over 125 pubs in the city selling real ale. The Branch holds real ale tasting events in pubs to attract new people to try

real ale and to visit the pub, especially women and young people. In 2012 Liverpool CAMRA won a national CAMRA award for Membership Innovation for its **Bringing New People to Real Ale Snowball Campaign**, whilst MerseyAle was judged **National CAMRA Magazine of the Year in 2005**.

In 2013 CAMRA won a victory in persuading the Chancellor to drop the **Beer Duty Escalator** which increased beer duty annually, thereby making more pubs uneconomic. Beer Duty rose 42% in the period 2008 to 2012 during which 5,800 pubs closed. For the 2014 Budget CAMRA is pressing the Chancellor to freeze beer duty


so as to give hard pressed pubs and their customers some relief. CAMRA is also pressing the Government to introduce a strong Code of Practice for Pub Companies which has the teeth to curb their excessive financial demands which are driving many pubs to close. See page 29 for how to contact your MP and press for a Fair Deal for the Pub.

CAMRA is as needed today as it was in 1974. It is only through campaigning and customer pressure that we will save our pubs and the real ale that is sold in them. CAMRA won the battle of 1974. Now let's win the war of 2014! Join CAMRA today and save our real ale pubs.

## Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Liverpool CAMRA at the Globe

The Branch would like to thank Sue and Brian for their generosity and hospitality and all the staff for their hard work in making it such a great celebration - truly one to remember.

When you are arranging a 40 year celebration, the crucial thing is to find those people who could say 'I was there'!

There were only four people who are currently active in CAMRA who were at that inaugural 1974 event - Jean and Clive Pownceby of Liverpool and Districts Branch, Bob Lockhart, for many years a Wirral activist, and Godfrey Boardman of Southport Branch. 



It was in the back room of this very pub that CAMRA Merseyside was formed 40 years ago, on Friday 18th January 1974. When the current Branch started to think about how to celebrate its 40th year, there was no debate - the first event had to be on those very premises as close to that date as possible.

In the early autumn Jean Pownceby approached **Sue Johnson, the licensee of the Globe**, who was immediately enthusiastic about the idea and willing to do all they could to make it a good night. This was followed by meetings and phone calls over the next few months which flew by, and on Friday 17th January, a very special event was held in the Globe taking over most of the pub and not just the back room. It was a huge success.



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But a simple appeal in MerseyAle brought forth the original Chair, Bob Thurlow, who had been instrumental in bringing several people to that very first meeting – and landing



Bob Thurlow

himself a job in the process! It took a little more 'homework' to find some other people, in particular a certain Laurie Hughes, then of Chester Branch which was up and running before Merseyside, who addressed that very meeting and inspired all present with his evangelical zeal for real ale and the campaign to preserve it. Thanks to Brian Vardy, current Chester Chair, for seeking out Laurie for us, and it has to be said Laurie's 2014 speech was equally as impassioned as his 1974 one – recognising that in 2014 there are now new battles to be fought, especially those to Save the British Pub.

There was also the 'spotting' of vaguely familiar 'blast from the past' faces at beer festivals held in the city during the autumn and early winter, and pleas to people to try to recall others from those early days – and it worked!

We included people not only from that first night, but also those who had been around and actively involved in the very early years and those who had played prominent parts in each of the separate Branches that developed from the core Merseyside Branch – Wirral, Southport and, more recently, St Helens. There were just three apologies from those who could not make the night, but of those who said they would come, it was 100% turnout!

Over 30 people crowded into the tiny Globe, in addition to the current committee members. Many tales were told and memories recounted and shared.

To mark the occasion there was a splendid cake with the Liverpool CAMRA 40 logo baked by 'Sonia's of Waterloo' and a display of balloons around the pub from 'Exclusive Occasions of Waterloo'.

The Liverpool Echo ran a half page article on the 40th Anniversary event with a photo of the founding members grouped outside the Globe.

Jean Pownceby

**Here are some comments we received about the evening;**

- The whole evening was inspiring.
- It was a fantastic night. Thanks for all the hard work.
- Many thanks for last Friday evening - superb organisation, beer, food and company. An excellent "do"!
- Brilliant event, thanks, and so good to see so many familiar faces again.
- I really enjoyed the other night; some great speeches.
- Thanks for last Friday night. Speeches were great and it was good to catch up with several old friends.
- An excellent evening, especially meeting people whom I haven't seen for ages, or in some cases not previously!
- For us young ones I thought some of the speeches were very inspiring. The passion they had. Never realized how involved some were. It's important not to lose those stories, that history.

**Some Highlights from the Speeches**

**It was only when I opened the Daily Post the next morning and saw a photo of myself at the Globe that I read I had been elected the first Chair of the new Merseyside Branch of CAMRA! It must have been a good night at the Globe!**

Bob Thurlow the first Chair of Merseyside CAMRA

**Merseyside CAMRA quickly got to work. Within a few months we had launched the Mersey Drinker newsletter and had run the first**

**Liverpool Real Ale Beer Exhibition on the stage of the Everyman Theatre.**

Bob Thurlow

**Most people try to break out of Strangeways. We must be the only people who have tried to break in!**



**Liverpool CAMRA was protesting about the takeover of Higsons by Whitbread (universally referred to as Twitbread) who had bought and closed many traditional family real ale breweries. The top brass from Whitbread including the Chairman Miles Templeman were at a private do at the Strangeways Brewery. We found a side door was open and went in with our "Whitbread Tour of Destruction" tshirts and Save Higsons badges.**

Kevin Buckley

**If you wanted to run a beer festival in 1974 there was only one way you could get the beers. Hire a van and go to the breweries direct and collect it yourself. We started at Belhaven in Scotland and worked our way down through Yorkshire, to Nottingham, back to Lancashire and into Cheshire. We collected barrels from the last brew at**



**the Yorkshire Clubs Federation Brewery. We truly were the original white van man!**

Colin Batho

**Pouring beer into the Albert Dock. When Whitbread closed Higsons Brewery and transferred the brewing to Sheffield, Liverpool CAMRA gained massive press coverage by emptying a barrel of the fake Sheffield Higsons into the Albert Dock where it belonged. Only it wasn't beer it was tea we had filled the barrel with! It certainly made the point about the fake Sheffield Higsons and the Liverpool CAMRA Pledge badges Not to Fake Higsons.**

Kevin Buckley

**DAFT - Committee member Tony Molyneux used to delight in attending meetings with keg brewery executives, opening the windows and unsettling them by apologising for having a persistent case of DAFT – Disfunctional Anal Flactulence Trauma.**

Kevin Buckley

**It was different back in 1974. Pubs didn't open until 11.30am at the earliest and closed at 2.30 or 3 in the afternoon. They didn't reopen until 5pm or 6pm and closed at 10.30pm. Very few pubs sold food. Most pubs were tied to a particular brewery and only sold that**



Ian MacMillan Brian Vardy

**brewery's beers. Beer choice was limited to just Bitter and in some cases a Mild. Children were usually not allowed in pubs. There were around 650 pubs on Merseyside and only 215 sold real ale. A number of pubs lost real ale and had tanks installed in the cellar into which beer was pumped from a road tanker and served under gas pressure.**

Ian MacMillan – Committee Member and Editor of the Mersey Drinker

**In 1974 you knew who the enemy was. It was the Big Six brewing company conglomerates which dominated the brewing and pub industries. In 2014 it is not so clear cut. Now we have the numerous**

**PubCos with their excessive financial demands on licensees which are driving pubs to closure. CAMRA surveys show that shockingly 57% of pub licensees earn less than £15,000 a year, which for the hours they work is below the statutory minimum wage. Two great losses have been our inner city pubs, many of which sold real ale and have now been**



**demolished, and secondly real ale in the suburbs, where few pubs still offer it and many have been converted into family dining areas.**

Dave Cunningham Chair of Merseyside and later Liverpool CAMRA



Mel James-Henry Toasts the 40th

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Laurie

## Don't Forget - Even Corporates Need Customers

I look back fondly on having had the opportunity to make the main speech at the inaugural 1974 meeting rallying support for joining CAMRA and proposing formation of Merseyside Branch. I am also proud that I was responsible for putting the Globe in the very first Good Beer Guide. We had a simple message in 1974. As customers say NO to being told what to drink. We won that

campaign to save real ale. Now the issue is the survival of our pubs. My message is that don't forget even the powerful large corporate need customers. Tell them and the government as forcefully as you can that they are killing our pubs. The battle goes on and it is a battle to save our pubs. Make your voice heard! Long live CAMRA!

Laurie Hughes main speaker at the 1974 inaugural meeting

Speech Highlights edited by John Armstrong



Clive Pownceby and Sue



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# MerseyAlenews

## PUB NEWS

### News on CAMRA Member Discounts

**Ship in a Bottle** Beer Shops in Whitechapel Liverpool and West Kirby on Grange Road opposite the station, are offering a 10% discount to card showing CAMRA members.

**The Abbey** on Hanover Street continues to offer a good and well advertised discount to CAMRA members. The Abbey was sold separately to an Exeter based company by the liquidators of the Smith & Jones pub group, prior to the rest of the group's pubs being sold to the Stonegate group. The pub continues to offer a good variety of real ales.



Not far away, the **Central** on Ranelagh Street, is also offering a CAMRA discount off their beers supplied by **Thwaites, Copper Dragon and Theakstons**. I have not seen any Moorhouses beers here recently.

Around the corner on Renshaw Street, **Inn Liverpool** is also offering a discount for CAMRA members. They continue to have a couple of changing Liverpool Craft beers on tap.

### New Real Ale Outlets

Return of the **Everyman Theatre and Bistro** – after a two year closure for a complete redevelopment, the new building opens on March 1st. It features a new bistro downstairs

plus theatre bars upstairs. The operation of the bistro and bars has been franchised out to a catering company and there is an agreement with Liverpool Organic Brewery for the supply of cask and bottled beers. The next edition of MerseyAle will carry a full review of the new bistro.

A new pub, **Dawsons**, has opened in the premises vacated by the music shop of the same name which has moved to larger premises on Williamson Street. This is a sports type bar, with two hand pumps serving **JW Lees Bitter**. On my visit the beer was on offer at £2 a pint, but there was no publicity to encourage people to buy the real ale.

**The Milo Lounge** has been trading at 88-92 Lark Lane since September. It serves **Bristol Beer Factory Toga Man** (4.2) which is the house beer for the 'Loungers' group. This joins their other outlet in Liverpool, the **Brasco Lounge** at 27A Mann Island. This group offers a modern style of outlet, a cross between a pub and a



coffee shop. Other outlets on Merseyside are the **Haro Lounge** in Formby, the **Otto Lounge** in Heswall (in the old Kwik Save building) and the **Marino Lounge** at Marine Point, Wallasey.

Milo Lounge is next door to **Que Pasa Cantania** that continues to sell a beer from Liverpool Organic, often **Bier Head**.

**Homebrew** is a new speciality real ale and craft beer store that has

opened at 14 School Lane off Hanover Street and close to Liverpool One. It is located on the first floor above the Home shop. It is very spacious with a wide selection of British, European and other World beers. The difference here is that you can buy the beers to consume in the shop as well as to take away and there are armchairs in which to sit and enjoy the beer. In this respect it is similar to Southport's **Inn Beer Shop** on Lord Street. The venture is connected to [www.homecoffee.co.uk](http://www.homecoffee.co.uk)

### Cains Pubs

The Cains pubs, owned by Hoylake



Inns, were closed at the end of November as the licences were not renewed. **Dr Duncan's** reopened after a week and has continued to offer some guest beers from different breweries, including **Ironbridge, Portobello and XT** during December. **The Edinburgh** in Wavertree is also trading normally again, but the **Brewery Tap** has not reopened.

Real ale can be found down the road from the Brewery Tap at the bottom of Stanhope Street, where the **Coburg** is now serving **Sharps Doombar**.

### Anfield Pubs

**The Flat Iron**, on the corner of Walton Breck Road and Anfield Road, started selling a beer from **Liverpool Organic Brewery** on Liverpool match days during the

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autumn. Unfortunately, several matches have come and gone recently with no beer available.

The **Brunel** has not been serving real ale all the time, with none being available on a few recent match days.

This leaves the **Arkles** as the only pub near Anfield regularly selling real ale. This Greene King pub usually has **IPA, Abbott and Speckled Hen** available.

## Real Ale in Garston

The **Swan** (nicknamed the **Duck**) on James Street in Garston has started serving a real ale again.

I enjoyed a pint of **Wychwood Hobgoblin** at the end of January.

The **Masonic** 35 Gladstone Street flies the flag for real ale in Garston with four cask ales available. Opening times are 12 noon to midnight seven days a week and handy for the 82 bus and Liverpool South Parkway station.

## Woolton Village

Two Woolton Village pubs run by Punch Tavern's have uncertain futures.

The **County Court** on Quarry St has been closed since January,



reopened early March but is up for sale.

The **Victoria** also on Quarry Street closed after the previous licensees left the pub in early February. There is some cellar work being carried out and the pub reopened at the beginning of March, but this is only expected to be for a short term which still leaves the pub with an uncertain future.

It would be a sad loss for Woolton if the village was to lose two very popular village locals which the village has had for many years.

The **White Horse** has a new licensee **Jeff Ainsworth** former licensee of the **Bear and Staff** in Gateacre has taken the reins at the White Horse in Woolton Village. He took over from long serving licensee Mike Morris who retired.

Jeff plans to continue serving four real ales from the Punch Tavern's range and is open to suggestions of other popular beers.. Home cooked food will still be served afternoons and early evenings and on Sundays the popular Sunday Roasts will be on offer. The pub will retain its cosy village atmosphere and continues to have a popular quiz night on Wednesdays.

Jeff has had a great deal of experience in the pub trade having been at the former pub the **Queens** on Williamson Square for three years and **The Vines** (Big House) for eight years. MerseyAle would like to wish Jeff a prosperous future at the White Horse and wish him well as he continues the White Horse success as a popular village local.

## Other Pubs

**Kazimier Gardens**, entrance at 32 Seel Street City Centre, has had a house beer for the winter months, namely **Noir Grano** a dark wheat beer brewed at Liverpool Craft, who also supply the other beers available. Opening Times; Wednesday to Friday open from 4pm; Saturday and Sunday from 2pm; Restaurant open Thursday to Sunday.

The **Cross Keys** on Earle Street in the business quarter, which was taken on by Sean and Mike, the licensees of the **Lion Tavern** on Moorfields, on a three month "Tenant at Will" contract with Punch Taverns (see MerseyAle Winter 2013), has proved a success, especially with the lunchtime home cooked food trade. It will not only be continuing but is also to receive an internal refurbishment by Punch. The spacious upstairs function room now has a regular Wednesday night booking by the ex-Everyman Folk Club. A totally separate venture, 'Radical



Liverpool', takes place on the second Saturday of each month. Singers, musicians, poets and sketch writers with a political slant are welcome to perform.

The **Head of Steam** at Lime Street station now has new owners who, as with the other pubs they own, will not be supplying cask beer. This was often a first stop for real ale drinkers arriving in the city by train. Rail travellers are advised to



head for **Ma Egerton's** next to the Lord Nelson Street station exit or the **Crown** next to the Skelhorne Street exit for a choice of real ales

The **Pumphouse** at the Albert Dock offers beers from **Greene King** including their special beers. In January **American Dark** was available, specially brewed for the group by **Wibblers Brewery** in Essex.

## Another Pub Closure for Conversion to retail use

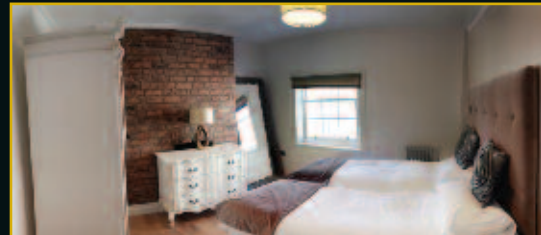
Non Real Ale pub, the **Red House** in Old Swan, has closed and has been converted into a branch of Lloyd's bank.

Pub News by Tony Williams with the Woolton news by Neil Lloyd

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THE LORD WARDEN LONDON ROAD

## Cains Brewery Village Scheme Given Planning Permission by Liverpool City Council

### CAMRA Member Objects to £800,000 Council "Subsidy" for the Scheme

On 19th November the Liverpool City Council Planning Committee granted planning permission for the Cains Brewery Village Scheme. The £50 million project will see the brewery building and surrounding site on Upper Parliament Street developed with a small craft brewery, supermarket, cinema, food court, boutique hotel and designer shops. The scheme is claimed to create up to 800 jobs.

Liverpool CAMRA member David Jones spoke at the meeting and objected to the approval of planning permission due to the fact that Liverpool City Council was waiving a £800,000 contribution from Cains for improvement works to the local area. The company will



instead be allowed to put up just £400,000 rather than the £1.2 million which was assessed as the amount required under Section 106 planning gain payments. Dave claimed that in effect the Council was giving Cains an £800,000 subsidy towards the cost of the scheme.

The City Council Planning report on the proposal identified that an application of this nature would normally be required to pay a £1.2 million contribution in planning gain under Section 106. However Cains claimed this would undermine the viability of the scheme. The planning report states:

#### "Paragraph 5.0 - Section 106 issues

"5.1 Proposals of this nature would generally require a Section 106 agreement for a financial contribution towards public realm, street trees, public art and monitoring works. The amount payable for the current scheme would be approximately £1.2 million (this would be in addition to the cost of providing off-site highways required by the S278

agreement that the applicant has estimated will be in excess of £100,000).

5.2 The applicants have advised that the payment of this sum would undermine the viability of the scheme. To support this assertion, they have submitted a financial/viability assessment to the Council's Development Team (Regeneration).

Having considered the information, the Development Team have confirmed acceptance that the viability of the scheme is relatively marginal and that payment of the full amount would impact on the deliverability of the scheme. They consider, however, that the submitted information demonstrates that it would be appropriate to request some S106 contribution.

5.3 When formulating the required contribution, consideration has been given to the wider benefits of the scheme in terms of bring a vacant listed building back and the replacement of the existing sheds on Parliament Street by buildings of



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a far higher quality which will introduce much needed animation to this prominent street frontage and lift the quality of the area. Furthermore, the applicants have confirmed their commitment to encouraging the involvement and employment of local people and companies in the construction and operation of the development.

**5.4 On this basis, the Divisional Manager Planning considers that a contribution of £400,000 towards street trees, public realm, public art and monitoring should be paid in respect of the scheme."**

This was the reduction in contribution that Dave Jones objected to at the meeting, but the Committee were advised by Council officers that the long term benefits to the area made the reduction a sensible approach. The proposal was approved with one abstention from Councillor Ian Francis over the loss of "historic" iron works buildings and stables.

**The Scheme in Detail**

The Council planning report gave the following details of the Brewery Village scheme. "The scheme includes the following uses, (with indicative floor areas given for the outline elements):

- Food store – 3891sqm gross
- Cinema – 1033sqm gross
- Boutique Hotel – 3919sqm gross (94 rooms)
- Artisan retail (food hall/ make and sell) – 1149sqm gross
- Health and Fitness or Class A1 (non food)/ A5 uses – 1972sqm gross
- Designer retail market – 1749sqm gross
- Ancillary retail – 1401sqm gross
- Restaurants/ pubs and cafes – 1814sqm gross
- Car parking – 100 residential/400 general

**"The applicant has advised that the scheme is site specific, being linked to the existing brewery, and cannot be delivered elsewhere and that the range of uses proposed are critical to the success of the scheme and its overall viability."**

**Craft Brewery an Important Condition of the Planning Permission**

An important condition was incorporated in the planning approval designed to ensure that the proposed craft brewery is operational before work can start on the more profitable element of the scheme, the supermarket.

**"Section 6 D**

The food store to be developed as part of Phase 2 shall not open for trading until the works set out in the attached schedule of essential repairs have been carried out to the listed building and regional craft brewery is operational within the listed building."

In an interview with the Liverpool Post 15th August 2013 the Cains Managing Director Sudarghara Dusanj told the Post he was focusing on setting up their new smaller brewery, rather than on outsourcing the beer – so Liverpool may go more than a year without seeing any new Cains ales. But he also said that the company would look to get that new brewery up and running earlier than originally

planned – and in time for next year's **International Festival of Business** showcase in Liverpool, which runs from June to July 2014. He said: "We're working hard and really starting to move on our craft brewery on site.

"We'll have the application (for the brewery village scheme) back in with the city council by the end of this month or the first week of September.

"I've just been to Germany to look at really modern craft brewing equipment for Cains. It will brew all sorts of beer – milds, stouts, lagers and ales. That's what we have already (at the existing brewery) but it's too big.

"We're planning to have the brewery up and brewing beer by next year's International Festival of Business. The IFB is a good time to showcase a local business."

**So the ball is now in Cains' court to deliver the craft brewery and to sign up development partners able to fund the £50 million cost of the scheme.**

The granting of planning permission for the supermarket, hotel and leisure developments has increased the value of the Cains site considerably. A possible exit strategy for the site owners the Dusanj family would be to sell the site to a developer who would take the scheme forward now planning permission has been granted.





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# MerseyAle Cider News



## Autumn Cider Project and Tasting 2013

Each year CAMRA branches are asked to hold a promotion to raise awareness of real cider and perry. In November 2013 the Liverpool branch ran a highly successful cider tasting at the Augustus John pub in the university district. The AJ, as the Augustus John is more familiarly known, was chosen for several reasons, one being that is the branch's Cider and Perry Pub of the Year, two that it always serves around eight real ciders and three, that its client base were likely to be flexible enough and open to trying new products.

With assistance from the AJ management, eight real cider and perrys were sourced which would represent a cross section of products available in the current cider market. The products were served in one-third of a pint glasses meaning that 250 free drink samples could be served over the evening. Products on offer included "Thundering Molly" cider and "Ravenswood Perfect Pear" perry. Customers were offered any number of samples from the range and were guided through the differences by the branch's cider officer. The evening revealed several positive outcomes-

- Despite the AJ being Cider and Perry Pub of the Year many of its regular customers had never tried real cider before.
- Almost all the tasters said they would buy a real cider now they had tasted it.
- Almost all of the tasters said they would prefer the real cider to a fizzy (Magners type) product.
- Many of the tasters had little idea that real cider could be found readily available in bars around Liverpool.
- Tasters that tried a fruit flavoured cider frequently preferred a plain real cider for their follow up drinks.

quality of the real cider which they will then order for their second and third drinks. Furthermore the CAMRA Cider Officer will get the chance to guide the cider newcomer whilst they ponder the fruity versus real selection at the festival bar. We believe that the fruit cider does have its place on a CAMRA bar as part of converting people to real cider.

Our 2013 cider campaign evening revealed a few lessons both for the Branch's cider team and its guest tasters.

### 2014 Liverpool Beer Festival Beer Festival Cider Bar Report

The cider bar at the 2014 festival featured around 34 products, many never available before at Liverpool. The range of ciders contained several unusual brands from mid Wales. As in the modern way, all ciders will be dispensed from bag-in-box rather than plastic barrels. This allows the bar manager to display more products at any single time as boxes can be stacked and saves cost as the supplier does not have to make a several hundred mile return journey to collect the empty plastic barrels.

Steve Berks (CAMRA Liverpool, Cider Officer)



Linda Harris CAMRA Regional cider co-ordinator

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GOOD BEER GUIDE PUB We're in it 2014  
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CAMRA LOCAL

## Special Day Event 'Buses and Beer' Saturday 22nd March in Ormskirk



Join us 'On the Buses' for the West Lancs Classic Bus Day touring scenic villages in West Lancashire and visiting real ale pubs.

We will travel on the 09.55 Northern Line train from Liverpool Central arriving Ormskirk at 10.29 or you can meet us at Ormskirk railway station booking office at 10.30 for the short walk to join the 11am classic bus at Ormskirk Bus Station. The buses travel around various charming villages

with real ale pubs and run on a regular timetable, offering an opportunity to hop on and off where and when you want. The buses are from the Merseyside Transport Trust Classic Bus fleet which has several buses which once ran in Liverpool, including rear platform buses.

Travel on the buses is free but you are requested to buy a £3 programme which gives the bus times and routes. These can be bought on the bus or in advance by post.

**So Join Us for A Day Out With a Difference !**

### Liverpool CAMRA Diary of Events

Branch Get Together including Quiz Old Bank Waterloo **Wednesday 19th March** see page 55  
Beer and Buses Ormskirk **Saturday 22nd March** see above

Special 40th Anniversary Event **Wednesday 16th April 8pm** Philharmonic see back cover  
May Get Together **Wednesday May 21st 8pm**  
The Abbey, Hanover Street Liverpool

### Join CAMRA Today

Phone the Membership Team on 0845 0727 807 or join on line [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk). Membership by Direct Debit is £23 single, £28 joint, £15.50 Under 26 and over 60. Phone for disability rates. Payment other than by Direct Debit is £2 more.

# The AUGUSTUS JOHN

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The **AJ**

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1. The Coalition Government must act now to introduce a statutory Code of Practice in the next Queens Speech to control the PubCos whose excessive financial demands are driving pubs to closure.
2. 26 pubs a week are closing. If action on PubCos is not included in the next Queen's Speech due in May then another 1,456 pubs will close between now and the next General Election in May 2015.
3. The March Budget should continue the freeze

on beer duty to help pubs survive.

4. Pubs are vital to the community life of Britain As Liverpool CAMRA Public Affairs officer I regularly contact our branch area MPs about these and other CAMRA issues, but contact by a constituent carries extra weight. Our Liverpool MPs, and Bootle and Sefton MPs have been supportive. Yet MerseyAle is read across a much wider area of Merseyside and beyond. If you are reading this then please contact your MP.

You can contact your MP by  
• Writing a letter to them by name at House of Commons, London SW1A 1AA  
• Email to their email address. Merseyside MPs emails are listed below.

Please take five minutes to contact your MP today.

*Helen McCall Liverpool CAMRA Public Affairs Officer*

Birkenhead **Frank Field** MP Labour  
fieldf@parliament.uk

Bootle **Joe Benton** MP Labour  
bentonj@parliament.uk

Garston and Halewood **Maria Eagle** MP Labour  
eaglem@parliament.uk

Knowsley **George Howarth** MP Labour  
george.howarth.mp@parliament.uk

Liverpool, Riverside **Louise Ellman** MP Labour / Co-operative  
louise.ellman.mp@parliament.uk

Liverpool, Walton **Steve Rotheram** MP Labour  
steve.rotheram.mp@parliament.uk

Liverpool, Wavertree **Luciana Berger** MP Labour / Co-operative  
luciana.berger.mp@parliament.uk

Liverpool, West Derby **Stephen Twigg** MP Labour / Co-operative  
stephen.twigg.mp@parliament.uk

Sefton Central **Bill Esterson** MP Labour  
bill.esterson.mp@parliament.uk

Southport **John Pugh** MP Liberal Democrats  
pughj@parliament.uk

St Helens North **Dave Watts** MP Labour  
wattsd@parliament.uk

Wallasey **Angela Eagle** MP Labour  
eaglea@parliament.uk

Wirral South **Alison McGovern** MP Labour  
alison.mcgovern.mp@parliament.uk

Wirral West **Esther McVey** MP Conservative  
esther.mcvey.mp@parliament.uk



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# 1,456

**The number of pubs that are likely to close between now and the next General Election in May if Coalition Government fails to act.**

## Government Fails to Act on PubCos Scandal

*Perhaps a better title for my speech would be, "The Great British Pubco Scam", for this whole sorry saga is a tale of one of the worst examples of reckless, irresponsible capitalism this country has ever seen—a get-rich-quick scheme for a greedy few that has marred lives and closed thousands of pubs and that has caused losses of billions for the UK economy, pension funds and the Treasury.*

**Greg Mulholland MP Chair of Save the Pub Group**

Despite assurances they would act to introduce a statutory Code of Practice to regulate the PubCos before the end of 2013, the Coalition Government failed to act, leading to an opposition day debate in the House of Commons on 21st January. The vast majority of speakers urged the government to act immediately to introduce a statutory Code which had real teeth. It was pointed out that time was of the essence as unless a bill to introduce a Code was included in the next Queen's Speech which announces the Government's legislative programme, then it would be impossible to have a Code in place before the next General Election in May 2015.

At the present rate of 26 pub closures a week that would mean 1,456 pubs closing between now

and the General Election. The legislative process would then have to start anew after the Election, resulting in further delay and yet more pubs closing. Many MPs were scathing about the excessive financial demands of the PubCos, often quoting examples from PubCo licensees in their constituencies of appalling treatment. Merseyside MP Bill Esterson member for Sefton spoke in the debate and is quoted below. Greg Mulholland MP and Chair of the Save the Pub Group, speaking in an earlier debate on PubCos on 14th October, described it as 'The Great British PubCo Scam', "one of the worst examples of reckless, irresponsible capitalism this country has ever seen".

## 26 PUB CLOSURES A WEEK

A regularly used word during the debate was 'frustration'. MP after MP expressed their frustration and dismay at the lack of action by the Government. **Adrian Bailey MP**, the Chair of the Business Innovation and Skills Select Committee said this was a debate he never thought we would ever have to have again. He expressed "exasperation and bafflement" as to why the Secretary of State had not come forward with legislation on the PubCos. Licensees and the public were mystified as to why action had not been taken. CAMRA launched an online petition [www.pubscandal.org.uk](http://www.pubscandal.org.uk) in the week leading up to the debate which gathered over 30,000 signatures in just a few days and which was referred to regularly by MPs during the debate.

## Debate in Parliament shows overwhelming support for pub company reform

CAMRA's campaign to end the Great British scandal closing pubs and win a fair deal for publicans took a huge step forward on 21st January as overwhelming support was shown from MPs on the call to introduce pub company reform. MPs from all parties attended a Parliamentary debate to press Business Minister Vince Cable to stick to the Government's promise to introduce reforms before time runs out and more pubs close. Shadow Business Minister Toby Perkins MP scheduled the debate and called for legislation to introduce a Pubs Watchdog and open market rent reviews. He also called for publicans to be given the option to go free-of-tie and buy their beer on the open market. Calling on the Minister to urgently act in the face of the "great pubco disaster", he declared: "If the Government does not introduce a Bill on this issue in the Queen's Speech [in May], it is impossible to imagine that there will be sufficient parliamentary time to pass one in this Parliament".

CAMRA's Chief Executive Mike Benner said:

**"Yesterday's Parliamentary debate demonstrated overwhelming Parliamentary support for the introduction of a Pubs Watchdog. MPs from all parties spoke strongly of the need for Government action after ten years of slow industry progress on introducing meaningful self regulation. We were pleased that the Secretary of State reconfirmed the Government's view that self regulation has been inadequate and promised that a decision would be made very soon."**





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In perfect timing to coincide with the Parliamentary debate CAMRA's petition ([www.pubscandal.org](http://www.pubscandal.org)) which presses Government to introduce reforms reached over 30,000 signatures. There was fantastic support and campaigning demonstrated from CAMRA members to help reach this number of signatures and an excellent running commentary on the debate was held on twitter.

The next step in the campaign is to keep pub company reform in the public domain and to increase the pressure on Vince Cable to announce his department's intentions for the reforms soon so that this issue can be a central part to next year's legislative programme.

**Please contact your MP and urge them to press the Government for action now – see page 29 for how to contact your MP.**

Mike Benner, CAMRA's Chief Executive said:

*"The Government's indecisiveness on this issue puts the future of many thousands of community pubs at risk. The large pub companies have had ten years to eliminate unfair practices and to properly support their licensees but have failed to do so. The case for Government action is overwhelming. We urge the Minister to come clean and announce whether or not the Government will stick to their pledge to introduce a Code and Adjudicator. Left to their own devices the large pub companies will continue to force good licensees out of business and sell many hundreds of valued and profitable pubs for redevelopment. The solution to a decade of abuse is a Code, Adjudicator and an option for licensees to pay a market rent only giving them freedom to buy beer at open market prices."*

## Key Quotes from the Debate

**Bill Esterson (Sefton Central) (Lab):** May I offer an example from my constituency to support the motion and illustrate the urgency of the matter? A constituent of mine moved into her pub a few years ago with the promise of significant investment being made in the property. Those repairs have never been carried out.

Does not that illustrate why the motion is so important—particularly the part about rent-only tenancies—and why we need action now? Tenants such as my constituent cannot afford to wait any longer for action.

**Mark Tami (Alyn and Deeside) (Lab):** recently met a landlord who has managed to turn around a failing pub and increase the turnover. His reward is for all the extra money to be taken away in increased rent. That destroys the incentive for people to work hard and bring these pubs back.

**Andrew Gwynne (Denton and Reddish) (Lab):** Does he share my disappointment that as long ago as last January he brought a debate to this House during which the Government performed a U-turn saying they would seek to introduce a statutory code, which is absolutely necessary, and we had a lengthy consultation, but very little in terms of the legal framework has changed 12 months on?

**Susan Elan Jones (Clwyd South) (Lab):** With 26 pubs closing every week, a few hundred must have closed in the four months in which we have been waiting for the consultation on pub company reform. That is deeply concerning.

**Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP):** The failure of the pub companies to self-regulate underlines the need for an adjudicator, as does the fact that a number of pubs are closing.

**Robin Walker (Worcester) (Con):** As a member of the Select Committee, I urge the Secretary of State to take action as soon as possible, but I do understand the need to listen to the consultation.

**Pauline Latham (Mid Derbyshire) (Con):** Does my Right Hon. Friend believe that the pub companies

whose business practices force out committed publicans will be dealt with effectively by some sort of adjudicator?

Business Secretary Vince Cable said the Government were still reviewing the responses to the consultation, and Ministers were weighing up the evidence to deliver a decision in due course.

Cable concluded by reassuring MPs and those desperately waiting for the outcome of the consultation that: "We are trying to get this absolutely right and we want the intervention that we make to be proportionate and properly targeted."

**"There is no attempt to kick this into the long grass. We are trying to do this properly".**

## Debate Vote

At the end of the debate the following motion was voted on:

*That this House notes that two years have passed since its resolution on pub companies of 12 January 2012; remains of the view that the Business, Innovation and Skills Committee was right to state in its Fourth Report, on Consultation on a Statutory Code for Pub Companies, HC 314, that only a statutory code of practice which included a mandatory rent-only option for pub companies which own over 500 pubs, an open market rent review and an independent adjudicator would resolve the contractual problems between the big pub companies and their lessees; further notes that pub closures are increasing, and believes that the Government should by July 2014 bring forward legislative proposals to introduce a statutory code of practice of the kind recommended by the Business, Innovation and Skills Committee.*

This motion was tabled by Labour as it was an opposition day debate. The motion was defeated by 311 votes to 244 but this was not unexpected as the Government have a majority in Parliament. The point of the debate was not about the vote but to keep the pressure on Vince Cable and to show the cross-party support for this issue.



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## PubCos Scandal - CAMRA praised for online petition

In just six days, more than 31,500 people signed CAMRA’s online petition calling for a pubs watchdog.

The petition was launched ahead of a crucial parliamentary debate asking for a pubs watchdog, which was called for by shadow pubs minister Toby Perkins.

Now, with 26 pubs being lost in the UK every week, CAMRA says a pubs watchdog is urgently required to prevent big pub companies putting many individual publicans’ pubs under pressure and risk of closure due to unfair practices.

CAMRA’s Chief Executive Mike Benner said: “Pubs are closing as a result of big pub companies squeezing the profits of publicans with costly rents and high beer prices. The Government has recognised that costly rents combined with high beer prices are damaging some pubs.

“We are backing the Government’s plans to act but words and proposals need to be translated into urgent action via the introduction of a statutory code, pubs

watchdog, a guest beer right and a market rent only option for licensees tied to the large pub companies.” Perkins praised CAMRA for organising the petition.

Perkins said: “CAMRA is an immensely important and well-respected body. It has the best interests of the pub in its heart and in its DNA; that is its *raison d’être*. “It boasts a membership of almost 160,000, a staggering demonstration of the importance of real ale and pubs to people across our country.”

Members can support the campaign by going to [www.pubscandal.org.uk](http://www.pubscandal.org.uk) and signing the petition calling for the Government to stick to its promise of introducing a Parliamentary Bill in this year’s Queen’s Speech.

**Remember to contact your MP about the need for the Government to act now – see page 29**



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# Women just want to have fun!

Pictured here are Jan Sorsby and Jean Pownceby of the 'Snowball Team' together with new recruit Carol Cherpeau, all enjoying themselves at the Frodsham Beer Festival in early January. The role of the Snowball team, as has been detailed in many previous MerseyAles, is to bring more people and, in particular, more women to real ale. Several events have been organised specifically for women over the last three years and more and more women have become interested, most have joined CAMRA and then encouraged their friends to come along and give real ale a try – a rolling programme really, hence the title 'Snowballs'!

**“Carol was one of the women who got involved in our women’s events and, following our recent AGM, we are delighted to welcome her to the Branch committee”, says Jean, “and we’re particularly pleased to say that this means one third of the committee now comprises women”.** They are Jean, Jan and Carol, together with Helen McCall and Sonia James-Henry. They all have other roles on the committee, but share an enthusiastic commitment to encouraging more women to drink real ale and have fun doing so!

The team are planning another event in early April and, if you are female and interested in real ale, or want to find out more about it,



they will invite you if you get in touch with Jean at [contact@liverpoolcamra.org.uk](mailto:contact@liverpoolcamra.org.uk) so that she can add you to the email contact list.  
Jean Pownceby

## And Women are Brewing the Beer

The number of professional women brewers is on the rise in

the UK and they are becoming increasingly influential, according to leading industry figures. Female brewers, known as 'brewsters' in medieval times, are adding momentum to the thriving Real Ale market in the UK and helping to attract new drinkers.

More and more women are setting up breweries or

becoming head brewers according to Roger Protz the Editor of the CAMRA Good Beer Guide.

**“It is only in modern times that men have overtaken women as the main brewers of beer, as historically it was women who dominated brewing. Traditionally known as ‘brewsters’, it is fantastic to see more women rejoining the industry and in many cases giving the chaps a run for their money, such as the award winning Brewsters Brewing Company in Lincolnshire.”**

In fact one of the most important brewing positions in the UK is now held by a woman following a recent high ranking promotion. Emma Gilleland was this year promoted from Head Brewer at Marston’s to Head of Supply Chain, covering all five Marston’s brewery brands. She believes beer has become more accessible to women in recent years,

**“The rise in interest in ales by women is because beer is far more interesting these days. Only ten years ago, the perception would have been that ale was bitter tasting and dark in colour. These days brewers are far more experimental and this has led to lighter beers with new aromas and tastes which are bringing women into the category. Once they have found a beer style that they like, they are hooked.”** Marston’s also employ Genevieve Upton at the Burton brewery and Rebecca Adams at Jennings Brewery, who Emma says are now, “coming up through the ranks.”

## Mallinsons Brewery Huddersfield

One female owned and run brewery making a name for themselves nationally is the award winning Mallinson’s

brewery. Founded by CAMRA members Tara Mallinson and Elaine Yendall at a small six barrel plant in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, in 2008, they moved to a larger 15 barrel site in 2012 to help meet the growing demand. “Myself and Elaine set up Mallinsons in 2008 because we selfishly wanted to brew beers we liked to drink. Brewing real ale is a great job, you get to experiment with new hops,

rebrew old favourites and hopefully give the people who drink your beer a great pint.” Tara Mallinson, Co-founder of Mallinson’s Brewery.

Tara and Elaine ran a very well attended Liverpool CAMRA “Snowball Campaign” women’s tasting event at the Lion Tavern – see MerseyAle feature Spring 2013 edition page 48.

## UK Brewsters

### Examples of female brewers around the UK:

- **Tara Mallinson, Mallinson’s Brewery** - Huddersfield, West Yorkshire
- **Sara Barton, Brewster’s Brewing Co** - Grantham Lincolnshire
- **Kathryn Harrison and Amanda Seddon, Wilson Potter Brewery** Manchester
- **Michelle Kelsall, Offbeat Brewery**, Crewe
- **Emma Gilleland, Marston’s Brewery** – Wolverhampton, West Midlands on- Trent, Staffordshire
- **Rebecca Adams, Jennings Brewery** - Cokeremouth, Lake District
- **Carola Brown, Ballard's Brewery** - Petersfield, Hampshire
- **Sue Simpson, Brown Cow Brewery** - Selby, North Yorkshire
- **Frances Moor, Elveden Brewery** - Thetford, Norfolk
- **Claire Simpson, Belinda Sutton and Jennifer Everall (three sisters), Elgood’s Brewery** – Wisbech, Cambridgeshire
- **Ffion Jones, Brains Brewery** - Cardiff, Wales
- **Catherine Murphy, Buntingford Brewery** – Royston, Hertfordshire (Buntingford ‘Twitchell’ won Silver in the overall Champion Beer of Britain Competition at the 2013 Great British Beer Festival).
- **Petra Wetzel, WEST Brewery** – Glasgow, Scotland (West do not produce real ale but Petra Wetzel is German and brews her lagers and wheat beers to the German Beer Purity Law, the Reinheitsgebot).

## Women Account for 22% of CAMRA Members

CAMRA statistics show that the number of women enjoying real ale is on the rise.

The amount of women trying real ale is also up, from 14% to 34% in the last three years, showing that wider availability and variety of beers is having a positive effect on the number of women giving real ale a go in the pub.

Women now account for 22% of CAMRA’s 160,000 plus membership – a growth of 20,000 in the last decade alone.



Brewing Beer at Jamestown by Sydney E King

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**CAMRA Members free admission**

**10th April, Thursday evening 6pm - 11pm – Admission £3, CAMRA Members free**

**11th April, Friday afternoon 12pm - 4pm – Admission £3, CAMRA Members free**

**11th April, Friday evening 5pm - 11pm – Admission £5, CAMRA Members £3**

**12th April, Saturday afternoon 12pm - 4pm – Admission £3, CAMRA Members free**

**12th April, Saturday evening 5pm - 11pm – Admission £4, CAMRA Members £2**

Contact details for further information:

Event Organiser Bill Smith, [bill@iombeerfestival.com](mailto:bill@iombeerfestival.com)

Julie Jones Staffing Officer

[www.facebook.com/IsleOfManBeerFestival](http://www.facebook.com/IsleOfManBeerFestival)

or online [www.iombeerfestival.com](http://www.iombeerfestival.com)



# ManxAle

**This edition we bring you news of pubs triumphing over spring tide floods, brewery gold awards, a pub reopening, a new real ale pub in Douglas, a quayside pubs wander in Ramsey and successful beer festivals both past and upcoming.**

### Bushys Double Header Festival

In November Bushys ran a 'double header' pub beer festival with back to back beer festivals at **The Rovers Return** (Douglas), and **The Bay** in Port Erin. The Rovers festival featured an impressive range of beers over two weekends, including the landlord Guy's first attempt at brewing at Bushys brewery. Named **Cherry Popper** at 4.5%, as the name suggests the beer was certainly not short of fruit flavour. It was brewed to celebrate what was believed to be the pub's 200th anniversary in 2013. The premises have had various trading names over the years. For most of the 1900s it was and is still remembered as **The Albion**, but before that was **The Cross Keys**, amongst other names.

This was closely followed by the festival at Bushys other main Island outlet, **The Bay**, Port Erin, at the end



of November. This featured over thirty beers from around twenty five U.K. breweries, in addition to the

usual extensive Bushys range. Pricing was very competitive for the Isle of Man. The Bay is an imposing former hotel on the sea front with panoramic views of Bradda Head and the beach. It was bought by Bushys after around a decade of closure and extensively refurbished, reopening in 2001. The pub has since been twice winner of CAMRA's Isle of Man Pub of The Year Award.

### Doghouse Brewery SIBA Gold Winner

Congratulations to the **Doghouse Brewery**, Jurby, who after only a year of trading have had significant success in the **Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA)** North West Beer Competition and Festival. **Doghouse Pale Ale** (4.6%) won the Gold medal in the Premium Bitter category of the competition, and also was awarded Bronze in the overall Champion Beer competition, against U.K. competition featuring around 200 different ales. Doghouse beers now feature widely around the Island in the free trade.



### Support Manx LocAle – The Island of Real Ale

With five Island breweries the Isle of Man is a leading example of CAMRA's **LocAle** scheme which promotes beers brewed within a thirty mile radius of the pub where it is served. All the Island brewers are significant supporters of 'LocAle', thereby supporting local industry, local jobs, as well as being environmentally friendly by reducing beer transportation miles, in addition to promoting the Isle of Man as **the Island of Real Ale**.

CAMRA as a national organisation has a policy of heavily campaigning for and endorsing the concept of 'LocAle', whilst also discouraging

**Get Ready for a Bigger and Better CAMRA IOM Beer Festival!**

**Thursday 10th to Saturday 12th April 2014 at Masonic Hall Douglas**

After two successful years the CAMRA Isle of Man Beer Festival will return in April 2014 at The Masonic Hall, Woodbourne Road, Douglas, between Thursday April 10th and Saturday April 12th (the weekend before Easter).

Following on from last year, this third festival will again be a pay on the door event, with live music at most sessions. There will be increased space to accommodate a larger range of real ales, with around 75 beers, and a substantially increased range of real ciders and perries. This year there will be a separate cider and perry bar featuring a choice of thirty to thirty five.

The event will be opened by none other than The Bishop of Sodor and Man, the Right Reverend Robert Paterson, who impressively pencilled the date in his diary a year ago, having had a fixture clash at the time of last year's event! See advert left for Festival details.

**If you are visiting the Isle of Man for the Festival, CAMRA's What Pub online guide is now fully operational detailing all the Island's pubs, their locations, facilities and opening times at [WHATPUB.COM](http://WHATPUB.COM)**



# OKELL'S. PURE PERFECTION.



the use of misleading pump clips that appear to indicate beers come from breweries and brewery locations that no longer exist. Some U.K. breweries have bought out smaller ones and closed them down, and then by what some have called sleight of hand, have continued to use the original pump clip with the original beer and brewery name even though the original brewery no longer exists, with the beers now being brewed at another brewery often many miles away. This problem has not to date been an issue on The Isle of Man, with all five breweries, namely **Bushys, Doghouse, Heron and Brearley (Okells), Hooded Ram, and Old Laxey (Bosuns)**, all producing genuine Locales in genuine on Island breweries.

The CAMRA campaigning message is please support IOM Locale as the landlords are choosing to do so. The Isle of Man is currently in the midst of a golden age of Locale choice with its five breweries. Enjoy it while you can!

## Hooded Ram Brewery Ramps Up

The brand new Hooded Ram brewery continues its start-up, with a second batch of bottled beers being prepared as Mersey Ale goes to press. By



HOODED RAM  
BREWING COMPANY

February the brewery will be open for visitors to sample the ales before buying. Opening times will be Thursday and Friday 3pm until 7pm, and Saturdays 12 noon until 6pm. Brewery tours can be booked for the evenings, ideally for parties of around fifteen in size, and at £10 a head include two free pints, a 500ml bottle to take away, plus discount on beers purchased on the night. The Hooded Ram cask ale has now featured in about a dozen of the free-houses across the Island.

## Okells (Heron & Brearley) Growth in UK Market

Interventions in the U.K. market continue at pace, and it is reported the brewery has plans to sell several

thousand more barrels into the U.K. market in 2014. Many of the large contract brewing deals with chains such as **Wetherspoons** or **Nicholson's** can often be pencilled in up to a year in advance.

On Island, Okells launched the **Christmas St.Nick** brew at the British on Douglas quayside, with a first delivery being effected by Santa and his helpers on the night via an



appropriately illuminated Okells dray. Dr Cowbourn, the head brewer, had slightly tweaked the St Nick brew this year, though it remained a dark beer at 4.5% ABV. In mid - January St Nick was followed by **Okells Aile**, a traditional smoked porter at 4.7% ABV. The beer has won several international beer awards.

## Eating Out Award for The Creek, Peel

The Isle of Man Tourism award 2013 for Best Eating Out Experience was



won by **The Creek Inn, Peel**. By some margin the Creek offers the most extensive cask ale range on Island, combined with an extensive menu featuring specials of local fish and meat produce. Located towards the end of Peel inner harbour, the pub can be extremely busy, but the service is efficient and relaxed in a friendly informal atmosphere. There is also a number of outside tables which help ease the pressure during the summer. In winning the Award, The Creek proves conclusively that an impressive real ale range can sit happily alongside quality food and service in a traditional pub setting.

## New Real Ale Pub, the Thirsty Pigeon, Douglas

Somewhat rarely these days, a new pub in a traditional style has been



opened in Douglas just before Christmas. Superbly located on Victoria Street, close to the Sea Terminal, the finance sector and the



Strand main shopping street, the pub is owned and run by Robert McAleer, whose father (also Robert) runs The **Victoria Tavern**, further down the street. The pub is surprisingly spacious with traditional comfortable button back



seating areas, along with tables, seating by the bar and also ample standing areas for busy times. Three or four ales feature on the single, classically styled bar, with usually two from the **Okells** range in addition to guest bitters. ☞





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Thirsty Pigeon  
Cask Lift

Situated in a former bank, the pub has the original bank vault as the cellar area. For obvious reasons there is no outside access to the vault area, and casks are brought into the pub and moved downstairs via an unusual cask sized lift, which is concealed within a large wooden boxed area to the side of the seating areas. Light food is scheduled to be served, initially a comprehensive selection of sandwiches. All in all the Thirsty Pigeon is an excellent, tasteful and well thought out start up, as locals have come to expect from the McAleer family, with the customary polite and courteous welcome and service for which the family is well known.

### Tynwald Hill Inn Reopens

After a protracted closure, The Tynwald Inn in St Johns has reopened, as the last surviving pub in the village. It retains two separate rooms, one for dining, and one a



traditional bar area complete with real fire for the winter evenings. A library style wallpaper is used to good effect throughout, and two large pictures celebrating the Manx Tynwald legislature and parliamentary system adorn the walls of the bar area. Tynwald hill opposite the pub is the venue for the Tynwald National Day celebrations and gathering, a key day in the Manx national calendar, held each July. Owner Robin has started with one real ale, but is testing the market with a view to more. At the time of visit this was **Bushys bitter**, but the

pub remains a free house and as such can choose its own beers. Food is served on a daily basis from noon until around 9pm, with a carvery on Sundays until 6.30pm. There is to be a 'pie and a pint' night featuring **Tynwald pies** (formerly Manx pies to go), made on the premises, and there is catering for functions available for up to sixty guests. Live music is to feature on Thursday nights, and the pub is soon to have traditional pubs games. For further details contact Robin or Nik on Tel.01624803068.

This is a welcome return for what one local described as the oldest pub on the TT course.

Note that the original TT motorbike course used to run through St Johns, starting at Tynwald Green. The current course is more accurately



called The (Snaefell) Mountain course. They have long memories at Tynwald, which is the seat of the world's oldest continuous parliament. The mountain course replaced the Tynwald route in 1911!

### Glen Mona

Interestingly, one of only two or three pubs on Island not to stock local beers was once The **Glen**



**Mona**, on the coast road to Ramsey (bus 3 and MER stop Glen Mona). In a complete and welcome reversal of this, both **Doghous** and **Hooded Ram brews** are now frequently to be found in this rural outlet.

### Ramsey Quayside Pubs Rise Above the Spring Tide Flooding Enjoy a Five Pub Wander

For the first time in a decade, Ramsey, including the main street, was severely flooded during the January high tides and storms. However, less than a week later, a visit to the quayside area revealed the quayside pub stock to be alive and well, with all pubs fully up and running. Within a hundred yards the quayside features five real ale pubs with no less than **thirteen real ales on offer**, making an excellent real ale pub wander.

First up, **The Stanley**, opposite the famous Ramsey Harbour Swing



Bridge. One of the most traditional of Heron and Brearley pubs, the Stanley has

received a much needed exterior makeover in recent times. There are two separate rooms and a very small bar area. Well-kept **Okells** bitter is the staple here, and the walls feature pictures of the harbour in days gone by. Note the Castletown Ales clock above the television area. Castletown Brewery was taken over and merged with Okells in 1986, and was hugely controversial at the time. A seemingly incongruous Thwaites sign is displayed on one of the beams, though not so incongruous as one might think, as the important yeast ingredient for real ale used by a number of the Isle of Man breweries has over the years been sourced from Thwaites.

A few paces further on is **The Trafalgar**, a bastion northern Isle of Man freehouse which has featured



many times in Mersey Ale, and a winner of C A M R A IOM Pub of the Year. Bushys seasonal Buggane beer was a guest ale along with **Speckled Hen** and the permanent beers, **Okells bitter**, **Moorhouses Black Cat**. The walls of the pub still feature posters detailing Cains' beers, which had a

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long association with the Trafalgar in times past.

Ten yards away is **The Mitre**, formerly a hotel, with its upstairs Harbour Bar and windows giving a panoramic view over the working



harbour. One local who had frequented the Mitre for forty five

years remembered the Harbour Bar being built. The establishment had been starting to fade, but two years ago the Joughin family (owners of **The Albert** next



to bus station in Douglas), secured a long term lease, with Carl and

Selena Joughin of the next generation running the pub. Much refurbishment work is gradually being done, and the pub is increasingly busy, serving excellent good value quality food seven days a week in comfortable surroundings with superb views over the harbour.

There are newly refurbished function rooms which can cater for over 100 people, and there is an increasing buzz about the place. Downstairs a newly refurbished Schooner Bar is to open more nights a week featuring live bands. The real ales available are now spot on quality wise, and more often than not support Manx breweries. **Okells 'Jough'** a house brew only available in The Mitre and Albert Douglas is featured, along with award winning **Doghouse Pale Ale**, and **Okells bitter** on this visit.

Moving on a few yards on the corner of the market square is the **Commercial**, which had on offer



**Okells Olaf, Bushys Buggane and Okells bitter.** There is an unusual

central bar area, with seating available all round the pub, including a small quiet area to the back of the bar, and a real fire to the



right of the pub's harbour entrance. The Buggane was on particularly good form, and is a seasonal malty bitter at 4.4% A B V.

Buggane is named after a huge magical ogre like creature in Manx folklore, a theme Bushys have celebrated on several occasions in their beer naming, most notably the rare occasional **Bushys beer, 'Dalby Spook'.**

Finally, across the market square to the imposing **Royal George**, whose windows overlook the square. A Heron & Brearley pub, two ales were on offer,



**Okells IPA and Okells bitter.** The George is a multi-roomed pub, with a games room to the rear, a small side room to the right of the entrance, and an extensive comfortably furnished lounge.

In summary the Quayside offers an excellent and varied selection of pubs, all within a few yards and overlooking the attractive working harbour. The pricing on this visit was found to be extremely competitive, with beers available at £2.50 to £2.75 per pint.

**Steam Railway Rail Ale 2014 and the Falcon's Nest Hotel Beer Festival**

The Isle of Man Steam Railway will again be running Rail Ale trains from Douglas to Castletown and Port Erin in 2014. See timetable for details. Additionally there will be a rail ale service from Douglas to the Falcon's Nest Hotel Real Ale Beer Festival Port Erin Friday 2nd to Sunday 4th May.

**Correction from MerseyAle Winter 2013 Edition**

Please note that it was reported in the MerseyAle the Magazine that Reaches the Parts Others Don't



Reach article pages 31- 33, that one of the National Pub of The Year winners, The Rising Sun at Tipton (1999 winner), had closed. This had been the case some time ago, but the pub has reopened having been fully and superbly refurbished and features many cask ales.

Dave Halliwell  
 MerseyAle IOM Correspondent

**CAMRA IOM Meetings Diary 2014**

Meetings are generally held around the fifteenth of the month, as well as occasional additional events. All are welcome to attend irrespective of CAMRA membership.

**Sat.15th March 2.00pm.Peel.** Start at the Marine then stroll around town.

**Thu/Fri/Sat/April 10th,11th,12th. CAMRA IOM Beer Festival at Masonic Hall, Douglas.**

**Tue 15th April 7.30pm Railway, Union Mills.**

**Thu 15th May 7.30pm Douglas.** Start at The British, then a stroll around town.

**Thu 5th Jun. 7.30pm Douglas at Bushys Beer Tent TT Social Evening.**

**Sun 15th Jun.2.00pm Laxey.** Start at the Shore, Lower Laxey, then stroll uphill to visit the other Laxey pubs.

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## Pub Closures Hit Island



The Island has been largely immune from the wave of pub closures that have hit Across, where 26 pubs a week have been closing. However economic factors are now biting on Island with the news that three pubs are to close. These are the **Glen Helen, The Ship, Castletown and the Britannia**, Ramsey, the latter two being Heron and Brearley pubs which closed on 1st February. At the Glen Helen on the TT course, brothers Graham and Mike Priest have been forced to make the decision to close their pub, restaurant and hotel to new customers, blaming the economic conditions, and high energy costs. All functions and weddings that have been booked will be honoured – and it will be open for this year's TT and MGP. The Glen Helen had been a regular outlet for Doghouse Brewery beers.

Graham said: *'I feel very sad really. We had six years of looking forward to a successful place and having had a good reputation. It's sad for the staff as well (the Glen Helen employed ten people). There's not a lot of catering jobs around, and at this time of year there's even less. But sometimes you have to make hard decisions and not be governed by your heart. In the end because we are not coming out of recession as far*

*as food, beverages and social nights go, we decided it would be better to just look after our customers that have booked with us. We will look after them well.'*

Referring to the Ship and the Britannia, Heron and Brearley Estates director Steven Taylor said: 'It is always sad to see any pub closed. Compared to the UK, where pub closures are currently up 50 per cent to 26 a week, the Island has proven quite resilient. 'However, trading for these pubs has been tough for some time and so the difficult decision has been made to close them. Across the British Isles, people are going out to drink less often. As such, our focus is on listening to our customers and, where our pubs enjoy a loyal following, we are making investments in both cost-effective refurbishments and improvements to our offer.' 'Our customers in Ramsey and Castletown continue to enjoy a great choice of venues but nevertheless, when any pub closes, jobs are lost and the whole community loses an important aspect of its heritage and culture,' said Mr Taylor.

**Heron and Brearley Awards Night**  
In late January Heron & Brearley, the parent company of the Island's largest brewer Okells, celebrated an internal awards night for its North West and Isle of Man managed pubs. As H&B is one of the Islands largest employers, a number of external guests including Members of the House of Keys were invited. The event was a celebration of the company's pubs and personnel, with

a total of twenty awards on offer. Some related to internal company matters such as financial affairs and product management, but many were customer facing. Liverpool's **Thomas Rigby's**, and Chester's **Bear & Billet** both picked up awards. Thomas Rigbys won **Pub Team of the Year** and was a finalist in **Best Sales of the Year**. Larry Richards from the Bear & Billet won Assistant Manager of the Year and the Bear and Billet was also a finalist in Team of the Year. The finalists were in a pool of three with one going on to win. **The Prospect** in Douglas picked up the Best Cask Ale award. The customer voted **H&B Pub of the Year** was **The Saddle**, on Douglas North Quay, run by Christine Maccuish, who was also nominated as a finalist in the **Manager of the Year award**. The Saddle was extensively featured in a Mersey Ale article in Summer 2013 (p 41). Further details of the award winning pubs will feature in future issues of MerseyAle.

**TT Beer Surprise**  
In an unusual and significant development, MerseyAle has been directly advised by a Director of an established brewing company, that there is likely to be a tie in and special ale available during the TT race period linked to a senior TT rider and well known racing team. Watch this space!

Dave Halliwell  
MerseyAle Isle of Man Correspondent



## Community Pubs Month April 2014

CAMRA will again be organising Community Pubs Month in April following the success of 2013's event. This month of action gives pubs a campaign to focus promotions around and try some new marketing initiatives to attract more custom. Pubs around the country will be organising events and special evenings to encourage people to visit the pub and

see firsthand what an enjoyable and welcoming time they can have. So please encourage your friends (especially those that do not visit pubs regularly), to have a night out in one of your local pubs in April to show your support. With 26 pubs closing every month imagine how you would feel if your local was one of the 26 to close next month! Pubs need our support.

More information from [www.communitypubsmoth.org.uk](http://www.communitypubsmoth.org.uk)  
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- \* Quiz Night (Tuesday 8.30pm)
- \* and much more

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## BREWDOG GRANTED LICENCE TO OPEN BAR IN LIVERPOOL'S COLQUITT STREET DESPITE POLICE OPPOSITION

A licence has been granted to the company who brewed the strongest beer in the country to open a bar in Liverpool - despite objections from police.

Scottish craft beer company BrewDog which operates 12 bars around the country and has two overseas in Stockholm Sweden and Sao Paulo Brazil, applied to Liverpool Council to open a venue in Colquitt Street.

But its plans were met with opposition from licensing police as well as trading standards officers, over fears it would add to violent crime in the city centre. Colquitt Street is in a zone designated as a 'Cumulative Impact Policy' (CIP) area because of high levels of late night disorder. Police Constable Spencer Neal said there had been a 25% rise in assaults in the CIP area, a policy which is supposed to mean the committee tends towards refusing new licensing bids.

Anthony Lyons, representing BrewDog said:

**"The mission of BrewDog is one of education and transformation. It's not about drink as much as you can get down your throat - it's not that at all".**

**"There is a suggestion that we're irresponsible in the way we promote our beer. We absolutely refute that. We don't do price promotions."**

He said BrewDog was asking for a licence to serve beer until midnight and close at 12.30pm, but not to play any live or recorded music.

"It's about appreciating a fine craft beer like you would a fine wine. It's largely seated. It's the antithesis of where guys go and stand, it's not the mini dress, the baseball hat, it's completely the opposite of that."

Cllr Christine Banks, chairman of the licensing committee, said it

would grant the application and urged BrewDog to continue to communicate with residents and police.

She said:

**"The applicant has demonstrated that this will not have a negative effect on the area".**

**"It's something new I think, it's something this council welcomes because it's different, it's completely different. If you were here for a four o'clock licence you wouldn't have got it, put it that way."**

### Brewdog is a Controversial Company

BrewDog began as a brewer of real ale, gaining a reputation for brews such as Punk IPA and Trashy Blond. Within a few years the company moved away from brewing real ale cask conditioned in the barrel and moved instead to brewing keg beers which they designated as "craft beers". Readers of MerseyAle will be aware that "craft beer" is a meaningless term which has no definition of what it means, unlike real ale. See MerseyAle Spring 2012 edition page 29, entitled 'Craft Beer - Keg Beer by Another Name?'

Another point of controversy with BrewDog was their pursuit of publicity in seeking to brew the strongest beer in the world. This became an escalating arms race in which they moved through increasing strengths from Tactical Nuclear Penguin at 32%, to Sink the Bismark at 41% (a riposte to the German Schorschbrau at 40%), and then onward to the End of History at 55%.

Regrettably for all sensible drinkers this did not prove to be the end and it was subsequently deposed as the world's strongest beer by Brewmeister's Snake Venom at 67.5%.



### Nuclear Beers Arms Race

BrewDog has traded on this image of brewing strong beers leading to many challenges by licensing authorities and other organisations. Their advertising has always been in your face and irreverent to appeal to a young audience. Unfortunately this style also appeals to the loony juice brigade.

Real Ale pubs have worked hard to promote sensible drinking in the social environment of the pub. They are very different to the bar binge drinking culture of Concert Square and Colquitt Street.

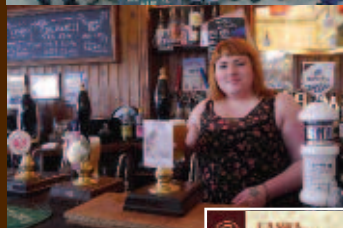
Brewdog's claim that, "The mission of BrewDog is one of education and transformation. It's not about drink as much as you can get down your throat - it's not that at all", sits rather uncomfortably with this nuclear arms race to claim the title of the world's strongest beer.

### Why in a CIP?

It could also be said that if the mission is education then why seek to locate their bar in the premier binge drinking zone in Liverpool which is a designated CIP and has experienced a 25% rise in assaults. There are many other Liverpool city centre locations which would suit an educational mission aimed at people with money to buy and sit and savour the expensive BrewDog beers. Which begs the question "so why go there?" It couldn't be money could it?

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# WIRRAL Wanderings

## Wirral Beer Festivals

The Wirral CAMRA Birkenhead Beer Festival was a landmark annual event for many years. Unfortunately the excellent venue at the Pacific Road Arts Centre was closed two years ago and it has proved difficult to find alternative premises that were a suitable and most importantly an affordable rental. It was hoped that Merseytravel would buy Pacific Road and that it might be possible for the space to again be used for the Festival, but the purchase did not proceed. Pacific Road is now to be converted to a business centre with offices by Wirral Chamber of Commerce. Again for 2014 it looks as though there will not be a Wirral CAMRA Beer Festival due to the lack of a venue.

In the meantime **local beer festivals** have sprung up across Wirral. The latest has been the new **West Kirby Beer Festival** which had its first sell out event in February 2014. It was held in the attractive venue of St Bridget's Church Centre and featured 22 beers plus 5 real ciders. The Festival was organised by the recently formed West Kirby Community Fund, a not for profit organisation whose aim is to support improvements and events in West Kirby. Word is that the event will run again next year. August 2013 saw the first **Hoylake Beer Festival** organised by the Peerless Brewing Company. Again this was a very successful event which will run again 22nd to 25th August 2014 in the Hoylake Community Centre on the corner of Hoyle Road and North Parade, featuring 50 plus beers with tickets being sold only on line.

## Wirral Good Beer Guide Pubs – your guide to quality real ale

There are nineteen Wirral pubs in the 2014 CAMRA Good Beer Guide (GBG). These are the flag carriers for real ale in Wirral and we urge you to visit them to enjoy well kept real ale in interesting pubs.



The view given below does not reflect the presence of Wetherspoon pubs which generally serve a wide range of well kept real ales. Members of Wirral CAMRA have written the article below about the Wirral Beer Desert and what might be done to improve matters. MerseyAle will publish occasional Wirral Wanderings features to report on the Wirral real ale scene and to highlight the quality real ale pubs. Send any comments to merseyale@liverpoolcamra.org.uk

## THE WIRRAL BEER DESERT – a Point of View from Wirral CAMRA Members

Sadly, if you live on the Wirral, you are surrounded by a beer desert. Should you be a lover of Real Ale, from whatever part of the peninsula you live in, the chances are that you will find it difficult to find a Real Ale pub close to your home that offers a range of beers at a quality

and price that can be considered acceptable.

There are a number of reasons for the problem:

1. Many Wirral pubs are tied to a pubco, and therefore restricted in the range of beers that they can purchase, and very often the range and quality they offer are not to the consumers' taste. The number of freehouses, who are able to source their beers from whichever brewery they choose, are a rarity.

2. Quality of beer is frequently a problem due to restricted sales; cask beer, once tapped normally will have a shelf life of no more than 3-4 days. Lack of sales therefore creates a vicious circle in that the poor quality causes consumers not to wish to drink it.

3. Many pubs seem to purchase their beer solely on a cheaper price, without consideration to the desires of their customers. Very often this produces a poor range of beers that do not suit their customers' palates, or less popular high strength beers.

4. Wirral pubs, with some exceptions, fail to offer their beers at reasonable/competitive prices, causing a further reduction in beer sales.

5. Certain pubs are over-ambitious in the number of hand-pumps they have on their bars. If the turnover of their cask sales is low, too many hand-pumps will simply mean that certain (if not all) of the beers fail to be served to a satisfactory standard, and causing reduced sales. Better to restrict the number of hand-pumps to the level of sales, thus ensuring increased turnover and improved quality.

As a measure of the lack of good real ale pubs on the Wirral, the local CAMRA branch has, for many years, struggled to fill the number of entries that the Good Beer Guide has allocated to the branch.

## How can Wirral pubs overcome these problems?

1. They need to offer the type and range of beers that Real Ale drinkers want. This would require pubcos to extend the range of beers



that they permit their licensees to purchase, and landlords not tied to a pubco would similarly be required to extend their range.

2. The general lack of quality could be overcome by pubs simply looking after their cask beer more efficiently. Certainly, smaller 9-gallon casks (for swifter turnover), and a licensee and/or the appointment of a cellarman, who know what they are doing in the cellar, in order to ensure that the

beer is always being looked after.

3. The beer should not solely be purchased on a price ticket. Better to pay a bit more for beers that the consumers will drink at a faster rate, with the added benefit of better quality of the product.

4. Increased sales may allow landlords to offer their beers at more competitive prices.

## Real Ale is the Growth Sector

Currently, Real Ale is the predominant growth area of the brewing and pubs industries, therefore, licensees who do not sell cask beer, or fail to maintain it in an acceptable condition, are losing potential sales and profit. Many Wirral pubs are guilty in respect of these omissions.

However, Wirral beer consumers

are conveniently geographically located to take advantage of the excellent range of pubs and beers offered in Liverpool and Chester, and served by an excellent public transport system, - both rail and bus. Very often it is as convenient to travel to these two areas as to seek out a suitable establishment on the Wirral. Both areas offer what Wirral pubs often fail to offer: a good range of beers, excellent quality and acceptable prices.

Short of moving home, if you wish to enjoy good cask beer, you may wish to consider (with certain exceptions) avoiding Wirral pubs, and travel to surrounding areas, to an oasis, where you are far more likely to find a larger range of beers, better quality, and more reasonable prices.

Signatories: Wirral CAMRA Members Andrew Foster, Dave Goodwin, Bob Lockhart

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# 900 Up for JD Wetherspoon



A pub redevelopment in Lancashire marks the 900th pub opening by pub chain JD Wetherspoon.

**The Poulton Elk**, Poulton Le Fylde was official opened in January 2014 with many in attendance. including the local Mayor, CAMRA regional director Ray Jackson and JD Wetherspoon Chief Executive John Hutson, who heralded the opening as a further sign of the company's continued good fortunes, commenting;

**"Wetherspoon continues to go from strength to strength and I am delighted that the company has reached this milestone. We will continue to open new pubs and create jobs for many more years to come.**

**Wetherspoon success is a result of its fantastic hard-working and talented staff in the pubs and at head office, together with its extremely loyal customers."**

The much needed redevelopment of the pub cost approximately £1.4 million and is hoped to have created around 60 jobs.

The 900th opening is the outcome of the business growth commitment by JD Wetherspoon to open up to 50 pubs a year over the past three years.

## **JD Wetherspoon Open Britain's First Motorway Pub**

On the way home from a recent trip to Eastbourne by coach, our driver announced that we were pulling into Beaconsfield services at junction 2 on the M40 on the way

back to Southport. This is the location of Britain's first motorway services pub: the **Hope & Champion**, a new-build JD Wetherspoon pub, reported to have cost over £1million to create. The pub opens at a remarkable 4am and closes at 1am the next day. Alcohol is served between 9am and 1am.

With only half an hour to spare, I decided to try a quick half. At £1.68 for a half, making it at least £3.36 a pint, the beer is obviously more expensive than the average



Wetherspoon's prices, and more in line with the prices at the company's airport pubs, but I guess the rent and/or Council Tax for the privilege of being sited on a motorway is more expensive than the High Street.

On the day of opening the pub received massive national press coverage, including live interviews by the BBC, with customers and Wetherspoon management. The ban drink and driving campaigners had complained about the dangers of tempting drivers to drink, but

both Wetherspoon management and the customers pointed out that the emphasis of the pub was on tea and coffee and good value food at lower than motorway service area prices. Regards alcoholic drinks they pointed out that it was no different than visiting any pub and driving, as the onus was on the driver to not break the law and their passengers had the opportunity to enjoy an alcoholic drink.

The service was extremely good, in fact much, much quicker than the average Wetherspoon pub where I always seem to wait ages to get served. The beer choice was limited though. I asked for a **Sharp's Doom Bar**, which did not look right and was promptly taken off. Instead I could have had the locale **Windsor & Eton Knight of the Garter**, but instead opted for the **Fullers London Pride**, which was very well kept.

Anyway, the evidence is attached, with a photograph of me outside the pub with beer in hand: my first-ever beer at a motorway services just a few days after the pub opened.

Speaking personally, I don't know what all the fuss is about. I quite often pull off the motorway when I am driving home on a long journey to have a meal and a pint of beer as I will not pay the prices at the motorway services or eat junk food. So what if Wetherspoon's have built a pub on a motorway: it is long overdue that drivers and their passengers can get a decent meal and a pint of real ale without either being ripped off or going miles out of the way to get a decent meal and a decent beer.

David Williams



## **Punch Taverns Ducks Out of Day of Reckoning**

### **Punch Perform U - turn on £2.3 Billion Debt Plan 4,000 Punch Pubs Face Uncertain Future and Punch Tenants Could Lose Thousands of Pounds**

The future of Punch Taverns and its estate of about 4,000 pubs is in the balance again after the company abruptly withdrew a debt restructuring deal two days before a vote was due at a Day of Reckoning Meeting on St Valentine's Day Friday 14th February. The U-turn followed opposition from a group of bondholders whose support was crucial for the restructuring proposal to go ahead. Punch has been forced to drop the debt restructuring plan despite stating that the plan was their final offer. It claimed that if the plan was not passed there was a serious danger of default on the loan, leading to having to go into administration and a "potentially significant loss of value." The main bondholder group are major institutional investors who believe the Punch plan benefits shareholders of the company at their expense and therefore they will not support the plan.

#### **Punch has Unsustainable Debts of £2.3 billion**

Punch has run up debts of £2.3 billion, the result of an expansion spree buying pubs before the financial crisis triggered a downturn in business and a massive drop in the value of the Punch pub properties on which the borrowing was secured. For some time the debt has been regarded as unsustainable and Punch has been described as a 'Zombie Company' barely able to pay the interest on its debt, see MerseyAle February 2013 edition. Punch's plan was their fourth attempt to solve the debt crisis but was always in doubt given the opposition of the major bondholders. The decision to return to reopen negotiations between Punch's management and bondholders marks a U-turn for Punch's management. In January Punch stated that its restructuring proposals were "final". Having ducked out of the Valentine's Day vote, Punch's aim is now to hold further debt negotiations which may lead to new proposals that would be put to a meeting in April.

In 2011 Punch parachuted in a restructuring expert, Executive Chairman Stephen Billingham, to develop a

debt restructuring plan and negotiate a deal between two stakeholder groups. He was confident all classes of bondholders would end up grudgingly accepting that the latest plan, ( the fourth Punch and its advisers have come up with), represented the best viable outcome.

He told the Financial Times:

*"This is the final proposal. You can quite confidently say that. This is the final restructuring proposal. I think they [the senior bondholder groups] have got most things they wanted. You don't get everything you want in life.*

*Nobody wants to have a defaulted bond. It could be a mess for four or five years if it [Punch's two property estates] default."*

*Mr Billingham defended his U-turn saying, "At the time it was our final offer,"*

If no deal is reached the two A and B securitisations which actually own the pubs are in danger of going into administration leaving investors with nothing. Punch management has been able to keep the business from falling into administration by dipping into cash reserves and transferring the money into the company's two over-indebted pub operating companies. This is not sustainable for much longer.

#### **Punch Pub Tenants Could Lose Thousands of Pounds**

Thousands of pub tenants could also lose up to £22.6m in deposits given to Punch. The tenants had to pay an average £6,279 to rent their pubs from Punch, but this had not been ring fenced and could be lost if administrators are called in.

Greg Mulholland MP, chair of the Parliamentary Save the Pub group, wrote to Punch chief executive Stephen Billingham about the deposits but said:

*"I asked Stephen Billingham if he would act to rectify this, and to separate the deposits to ensure they would be safe, but he has simply ignored the question.*

*It was clear that Punch Taverns' creditors were not going to back the proposed restructure and with the writing on the wall, they have managed, it seems, to secure what may only be a stay of execution. So now there is a pause, the bondholders, who surely must realise that the PubCo model is dead, should talk direct to Punch tenants about a realistic and sustainable future."*

#### **Punch Spent £50 Million on Consultants Advising on Restructuring.**

Punch has spent £50 million on consultant advising on restructuring a company which now has a shareholder value of only £80 million.

Punch spent £20 million on debt restructuring advice from Goldman Sachs and Blackstone, plus under former Chief Executive Ian Dyson, there was an outlay of £30 million on advisers to demerge the company into two pub divisions, Spirit group which now contains the most profitable pubs leaving the less profitable pubs in the other division.

The announcement of Punch's U-turn on the debt led to a slump on the already very low share price. Punch's shares dropped 5% to 11.875p, thereby valuing the heavily indebted company at less than £80m.

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## Liverpool CAMRA Branch Get Togethers

### CAMRA A Campaign of Two Halves

Our 'Get Togethers' are held on the third Wednesday of each month and all members, plus people who are interested in becoming members or just finding out more about we do, are welcome to come along. They are held in different real ale venues each month, and these are advertised in CAMRA's national magazine, What's Brewing, here in MerseyAle and on our website [www.liverpoolcamra.org.uk](http://www.liverpoolcamra.org.uk)

They used to be called Branch meetings but we were conscious that many people found this and the style of the meetings too formal. In 2011 we therefore decided to change both the title and the format of the meetings with a view to encouraging more people to come along and providing opportunity for them to interact socially with both the committee and other members and interested parties.

### Special Features

This has proved very successful. Most months we have a special feature to the evening. Last year, for example, we had two Meet the Brewer nights, two Heritage pub nights, a pub walk, a performance by the Love History, Love Real Ale players, a Chair's quiz night and an extremely popular Pub Games night. We have had Pub Games as part of the Pubs Festival in 2012 (see MerseyAle, Spring 2013 edition) and it was clear people wanted another!

We are conscious, however, that we are a 'campaign of two halves' and that the business aspect should not get lost in all the emphasis on the fun element. It is important that people are kept up to date with national and local issues and have the chance to contribute to the debate on these and get actively involved, if they wish. So this will continue to happen at the beginning of meetings but will not dominate the whole evening.  
So what is coming up for the social aspect in the next 2-3 months?

**Quiz and Get Together at The Old Bank South Road Waterloo  
Wednesday 19th March** - 50 yards from Waterloo railway station across pelican crossing and turn left. This will feature a quiz by Branch member Kevin Toal, so do come along and join a team and test your brain power!

See back cover for 40th Special Event and page 27 for Beer and Buses



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May Edition Due out mid  
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# Special 40th Anniversary Event

On Wednesday 16th April 8pm at the Philharmonic Hotel Hope Street in the upstairs Dining Room which has been specially reserved for us.

We are having a special night as part of our 40th birthday celebrations (see article pages 11-15.). We are delighted that the original Branch Chair from 1974, Bob Thurlow, will be coming along to talk to us. There will be a screen and projector for illustrating the talk. Bob opened our celebration evening at the Globe (see article) and he is an inspiring and entertaining speaker. Moreover, he has a wealth of knowledge about the history of pubs in the city, including many that have sadly disappeared. He was a member of the

Victorian Society and is devoted to pub heritage and pub preservation. He has written a forthcoming book titled 'Inn Liverpool'; and last but not least, he can regale people with many stories of outrageous pub jaunts! Don't miss the chance to hear him and to meet him and other people who have helped to build CAMRA locally over the years.

**Some come along and join in the 40th Anniversary Celebrations!**



## Liverpool CAMRA Coach Trips Bookings are now being taken for the following trips.

**12th April – Derbyshire Tour** – this trip is nearly full – enquire re seats available

**10th May – Ludlow Shropshire** for the SIBA beer festival and town pubs

**7th June – Cumbria** probably including Kirby Lonsdale, Dent and Kendal

**12th July – Bishops Castle** for the annual pubs festival.

**2nd August – West Yorkshire. Pontefract & Wakefield.**

**6th September – Staveley & Ulverston** in Cumbria for their festival.

To book email [social@liverpoolcamra.org.uk](mailto:social@liverpoolcamra.org.uk)  
Cost £12. (£15 non CAMRA Members) Coach departs from opposite the Ship and Mitre Dale Street at 10am returning there about 9pm