

MerseyAle

CAMRA Liverpool & Districts Magazine

Summer 2014

FREE



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE



The Pigeon Lands in Top Spot



www.liverpoolcamra.org.uk

email merseyale@liverpoolcamra.org.uk

Circulation 11,000

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WEEKLY LOCALE

See Board for future Real Ales

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FOOD

See the board for selection of good value food

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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

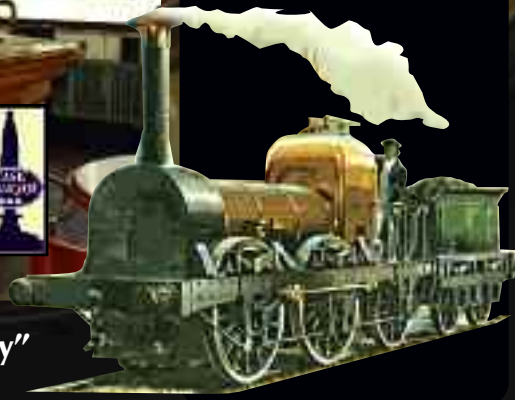
Third Thursday of the Month 8pm

POETRY GET TOGETHER

Fourth Thursday of the Month 8pm

V6 Adventure Club

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MerseyAle

CAMRA Liverpool and Districts Branch

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John Armstrong

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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

Cartoon by Dennis Jones

"The Pigeon Lands in Top Spot"

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

Welcome to MerseyAle and ManxAle



Welcome to our 44,000 readers.

The official CAMRA estimate is that four people see each copy of a CAMRA magazine, so with a print run of 11,000 copies distributed across Merseyside, the Isle of Man and wider nationwide, MerseyAle is read by 44,000 people. Advertisers please note! Advertising in MerseyAle at £100 a half page or £200 a full page is a great value way of reaching a lot of pub goers and visitors to Merseyside. So why not email us on adverts@liverpoolcamra.org.uk to enquire about placing an advert.

This edition brings you news of CAMRA Pubs of the Year in Liverpool, St Helens and the Merseyside Region, the winner of which goes forward to the final sixteen of the CAMRA National Pub of the Year competition – see page 7.

PubCos Reform Glass Only Half Full?

The big national news is that the Coalition Government has finally, after a protracted delay of over a year, taken action on the reform of the PubCos which together run over a third of Britain's pubs. This is a notable victory for the many campaigners who have battled away on the issue of the PubCos for the last ten years. Yet we ask on page 47 whether this is a case of a glass only half full, with the Coalition Government avoiding giving PubCo licensees key rights to stocking a guest ale, to rights to buy beer on the open market

rather than under the punitive prices of the PubCo beer tie, a right to have market only rent levels set plus a mandatory right to seek full free of tie from the PubCo. Will the next Government to be elected in 2015 go further on these key issues?

A Campaigning CAMRA Branch

Liverpool CAMRA is a campaigning Branch and you can read about the 40th Anniversary of the Branch and the importance of protecting our pubs in the 'Inn Liverpool' feature on pages 11-12. Read about the current Liverpool Snowball Campaign which having brought women to real ale, is now bringing them to the pub! Read more on pages 21 and 23.

So this is a very good time to join CAMRA. And even more so with the news that Liverpool has been awarded the 2016 CAMRA National AGM and Members Weekend which is expected to attract between one thousand and two thousand members to the city. It will be held over three days in the magnificent setting of St George's Hall – see page 51.

Finally it's not every day that Bootle has a World first. Find out what it is on pages 17 and 19.



John Armstrong
Editor

The Pigeon Lands in Top Spot



Pat and Jacky Moore Centre

One of the newest real ale pubs in the Branch area has won the **Liverpool CAMRA Pub of the Year 2014 Award**. The Liverpool Pigeon on Endbutt Lane, Crosby, opened on 11th October 2013 and was the subject of a two page article 'The



Pigeon Has Landed' in the Winter 2013 edition of MerseyAle. The Award results were announced at the Liverpool CAMRA Branch Get Together held at the Old Bank, Waterloo, on Wednesday 19th March. It is a remarkable achievement for a pub that has been open for five months to win the Pub of the Year Award. The second place went to the

Dispensary, Renshaw Street Liverpool, the winner of Liverpool Pub of the Year in 2010 and 2011. The third place went to the **Belvedere**, Sugnall Street, Liverpool, a former CAMRA National Inventory pub which was closed by previous owners as not viable and now brought back to greatness by licensee John O'Dowd.




The Award was presented to the Liverpool Pigeon on Thursday 9th May, when the a packed pub saw Branch Chair Geoff Edwards present the Pub of the Year shield to husband and wife team Pat and Jacky Moore. The Pigeon is an example of the wave of 'micro pubs' which are opening around the country. The concept is to run a small pub or



bar which offers a range of quality real ale and real cider supplemented by bottled British and World beers in an environment free of music, television and electronic games in which conversation is king. The judging panel praised the Pigeon for excellent beer quality and a refusal to compromise on beer standards, use of lined glasses to ensure a full pint for the customer, friendly and knowledgeable service including descriptions of the beers, a quiet pub with emphasis on conversation (without television or music) and well kept clean toilets. Additionally the pub is a keen supporter of CAMRA aims by actively promoting real ale and CAMRA campaigns, as befits a pub run by CAMRA members Licensee Pat Moore, surely the only Glaswegian to be a devoted Chelsea supporter, expressed his delight and surprise at winning the Award. In an interview with MerseyAle Pat commented; *"I thought we might win the Best Newcomer Award but to win the Liverpool Pub of the Year is a vindication of what Jacky and I have sought to do in following our dream and developing a new concept of a local micro pub offering quality real ale and real cider in a peaceful environment."* Pat made a big career change giving up his job at the chalk face as a local Primary School teacher in favour of a new life educating customers at the



bar front in the curriculum of real ale and cider. And despite the major change to working hours and established routines Pat has no regrets. *"To run a bar like this has always been my ambition. Business wise it has exceeded all our projections and we have quickly built up a solid regular clientele who make us very busy especially Thursday through to Sunday. The level of demand has meant we have not had to compromise on offering a choice of five real ales. A significant number of customers come in three or four times a week."*

And how has the real and cider curriculum been going? Pat says; *"Most of our customers now ask for real ale and show keen interest in the changing range of beers. We have some customers who started by drinking the European bottled beers but have now increasingly moved to real ale and trying different beer styles. The real cider and perry has been very popular and we usually have three on offer at any one time."* Pat also offers a range of quality bottled beers with a focus on Belgian and German beers plus some British beers. He is planning to expand the range of British bottled beers. 



Another recent innovation has been the introduction at the weekends of artisan baked pork pies from the well respected local bakers, **Satterthwaites**, whose pork pies are legendary. He also plans to introduce a cheese plate similar to those offered in Belgian bars. Pat has a good knowledge of the Belgian beer and bar culture and the practice of serving simple food which complements the beers. The interior of the pub features three striking paintings by local Crosby artist Alex Pellow, depicting the Liverpool Pigeon logo on a hand pump (very heraldic), a trio of famous Belgian bottled beer labels, plus an entirely appropriate exhortation that Beer is Best. The walls also display a fascinating array of old photographs of Crosby and Waterloo supplied by customer and CAMRA member, Alan Lloyd. The building was previously a shop and the decorations add character to the rectangular space. The shop window now proudly proclaims, "Real Ale and Real Cider."

Pat summed up the experience with these words; *"It is very pleasing to know that we are doing something that people want and enjoy."*

So do head to Crosby to see a micro pub in action. It is a few yards along Endbutt Lane from the main bus routes from Liverpool along Liverpool Road Crosby buses; X2, 47, 48, 54. When visiting note the opening times which have been restricted due to planning conditions. They are;
 Monday closed
 Tuesday to Thursday 12 to 2pm and 5pm to 9pm
 Friday 12 to 2pm and 4pm to 9pm
 Saturday 12 to 9pm
 Sunday 12 to 5pm



Judging the Liverpool Pub of the Year

All Liverpool CAMRA members were asked to vote online for their choice of a City pub and a Suburban pub and the votes then generated a shortlist of six pubs. These were then visited unannounced twice each by six judges who visited individually at different times and days. The judges used the criteria used by CAMRA for the judging the National Pub of the Year.

Next Up – the Merseyside Pub of the Year 2014

The next stage after the Liverpool Pub of the Year is the Merseyside pub of the year which judges the winners of the Liverpool, Southport, St Helens and Wirral Pubs of the Year. The winner then goes forward to the Regional Pub of the Year final judging between the Merseyside and Cheshire winners.

The Regional winner then goes into the final sixteen judging for the CAMRA National Pub of the Year. The winner of the current CAMRA National Pub of the Year award was the **Swan with Two Necks** in Pendleton, Lancashire.

The 2014 Merseyside Pub of the Year Winner is The Freshfield for the Second Year Running

The judging has been completed for the finalists for the Merseyside Pub of the Year 2014, the next stage after the Liverpool Pub of the Year, and the winner for the second year running is the Freshfield, Massams Lane, Freshfield, a five minute walk from Freshfield railway station. Judges from each of the Merseyside CAMRA Branches did the judging of the four finalists.

The Liverpool Pigeon came Third in the judging. The results were;

First - **The Freshfield**

Second - **The Cricketers**, Peter Street, St Helens

Third – **The Liverpool Pigeon**, Endbutt Lane, Crosby

Fourth – **The Fox and Hounds**, Barnston, Wirral
 The Freshfield will now go forward to the Regional Pub of the Year judging of the winners of the Merseyside and the Cheshire Pubs of the Year, with the winner then going forward with the other Regional winners nationwide to the Final sixteen of the CAMRA National Pub of the Year 2015.



1. The Freshfield



2. The Cricketers



3. The Liverpool Pigeon



2. The Fox and Hounds

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Brewery news

Wapping Brewery - As You Were

Baltic Fleet Retains its Title as Liverpool's Only Brew pub

Well we did say it was a work in progress. The Spring 2014 edition reported on the decision that the Wapping Brewery plant would be sold to **Mad Hatter Brewery** and relocated in new premises with Mad Hatter then brewing Wapping beers for the Baltic Fleet pub. This was planned to commence in February.



Then in March the owner of Mad Hatter, **Gaz Matthews**, made this announcement;

'As you may have heard, we're not taking over the Wapping brewing system (located under the Baltic Fleet). We've been brewing on the system for the past few months, and realised that it wasn't the right thing for us to do.'

It also became apparent that it would be a good thing for the Baltic Fleet to still have its own microbrewery, so this was very much a mutual decision with the owner of Wapping Brewery and the Baltic Fleet, Simon Holt.

Angus Morrison will be brewing at Wapping, but we'll be making collaboration brews with him under the name 'Mine's Wapping Mad'. So whilst we'll be concentrating on bottles and kegs under Mad Hatter, we'll be making some cask ales with Angus, which we're excited about."

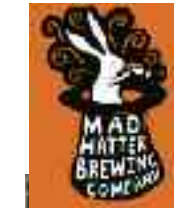
So Wapping Brewery, still located in the cellar of the Baltic Fleet, will continue to brew the range of

Wapping beers, with Angus Morrison replacing Stan Shaw as brewer. Stan did retire at the end of February as planned.

This means that the Baltic Fleet retains its title of being Liverpool's only brew pub, something which can only be of great benefit for the pub's selling point.

Mad Hatter BrewTap Tasting Bar Opens

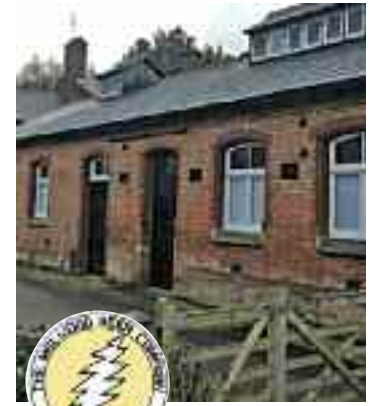
Mad Hatter has opened its new BrewTap bar at 8 Watkinson Street on the corner of Jamaica Street in the Baltic Triangle area.



The brewing equipment is also located there having been moved from its previous location in Toxteth. The bar will be offering cask conditioned, keg and bottled beers from Mad Hatter.

Stan Shaw now Brewing for Melwood Brewery

Having retired from Wapping Brewery, Stan Shaw cannot give up the mash tun completely and is now advising and brewing for the **Melwood Brewery** at Knowsley, which is located in the former Cambrinus Brewery premises. You may find the Melwood Paleface beer reminiscent of Wapping Summer Ale and the Melwood Derby Stout of Wapping Stout. Melwood appear to be striding



John

Stan



Julie

ahead with expansion of their beer range and an increasing presence in pubs around Liverpool. Melwood opened in March 2013 by husband and wife team **John and Julie Marsden**. They have a five barrel plant and three fermenters which enables them to brew four times a week producing 80 casks of beer.

The Dispensary Liverpool

Liverpool CAMRA Pub of the Year
2010 and 2011



A Warm Welcome to the Dispensary (CAMRA Liverpool & Districts Pub of the Year 2010 and 2011) from Pauline, Dave and all their staff

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Bob Thurlow Goes “Inn Liverpool”

Liverpool CAMRA 40th Anniversary Celebrations

Bob Thurlow was the first Chairman of the Merseyside CAMRA Branch which was established on 18th January 1974 – see MerseyAle Spring 2014 pages 11 to 15. Bob spoke to a full room at the April Liverpool CAMRA Branch Get Together upstairs at the Philharmonic Hotel, Hope Street. Bob was introduced by one of the Branch Founder Members from 1974, Clive Pownceby, who said that without Bob’s leadership and knowledge of pubs and beer the Merseyside Branch would not have got going.

Bob began by saying that the signs of his mis-spent youth were; being a passable success at billiards and a knowledge of Liverpool’s public houses. He then nailed his colours to the mast with the following call to arms;

“I believe the pub in general and the Liverpool pub in particular, is a much underrated institution and needs all the attention, both theoretical and practical that we can afford to give it before the ‘powers that be’ turn it into a car park or a Tesco.”

The Importance of Beer in Liverpool

The water supply was a danger to health and milk was often adulterated and dangerous and even more expensive than beer and gin. Beer was a safer option and ‘small beer’ (low strength) was the regular drink rather than water.

Prior to the nineteenth century most beer was brewed in the home, often by women, known as brewsters. It was during that century that beer began to be brewed in commercial mechanised breweries which rapidly grew in number. The history of brewing in Liverpool is a fascinating subject in its own right.

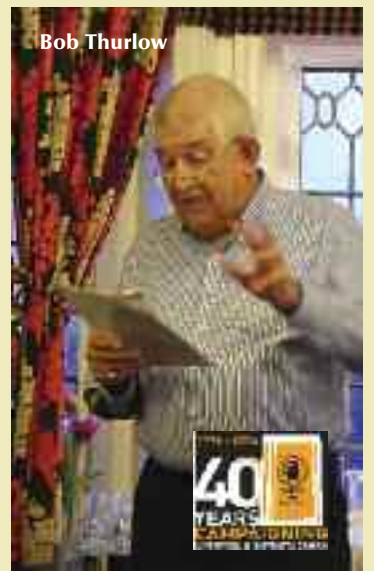
The Hierarchy of Inns and Beer Houses

There was a hierarchy of licensed premises which differed in how they regulated and the drinks and services they offered. There was;

- The Inn for travellers
- The Tavern for casual drinkers and run by licensed victuallers or publicans
- The Ale House which did not sell spirits and was not subject to visits from the magistrates
- The Gin Shop – self explanatory
- The Beer House (post 1830) licensed by the Excise authorities

The Pub as a Centre of Activity

Most people’s homes were cramped and uncomfortable so the licensed premises offered an escape to a place which provided heat, light, furniture, newspapers, sociability, food and lavatory facilities. The pub was the centre for many activities hence the surprisingly large size of many nineteenth century pubs. Just think of everything which used to go on there. It was a centre for news, a meeting place, including for unions (in 1861 forty four of the fifty nine Liverpool Trade Societies gave their address as a public house), a trading centre, a labour exchange, an auction house and an exhibition space. Coroners



held inquests there, doctors saw patients, government officials collected taxes and the army billeted soldiers. While the stage coaches ran it was a station, booking office, waiting room and stabling all rolled into one. Pubs were used for dog and rat fighting. In 1851 one London publican was recorded as having bought 26,000 rats in one year to keep ratting competitions flourishing, and in Liverpool ratting and dog fighting was still active in Liverpool pubs in the 1870s.

The Importance of Pubs to Liverpool

In 1831 there was one licensed house for every 94 Liverpudlians. By 1961 there was one for every 666 Liverpudlians. 1865 was the all time peak of licensed houses in Liverpool with a total of 3,024, and that at a time when Liverpool was just a fifth of the size it is today. In 1884 the National Temperance Congress claimed that “Liverpool is pre-eminent for drunkenness and crime in proportion to its population over every other seaport in the country.” Contrary to popular belief the publican was a highly respected figure in society providing a wide range of services to the local population.

Whittling Away the Importance of the Pub

As society and public health changed so did the role of the pub. Clean water reduced the reliance on small beer and alcohol and several of the functions of the pub moved to other institutions and locations as public services and buildings were created. Homes became more comfortable making it less necessary to escape to the pub for heat and furniture.

Since the 1970s there have been further major social and economic changes which have impacted on the pub, such that currently pubs are closing at the rate of thirty a week.

(Bob then showed fifty slides of Liverpool pubs through the years,

a fascinating glimpse of what was there and what has been lost. Do you recall the Nelson, the White House, the Goat's Head, the Court House, Basnett Bar, the Raven, the Greenland Arms and the Angel? We hope it may be possible to include some of these photos in a future MerseyAle.)

Bob concluded with these words;

"Many of the premises I have shown you are no longer there. As CAMRA members we should do all in our power to make sure that we do not lose any more; either through machinations of local authority planners or the desires of big business."



Liverpool CAMRA 40th at The Philharmonic Dining Rooms.



MerseyAlePubnews

A Tale of Two Refurbishments

Two popular City Centre real ale pubs have received substantial refurbishments, the **Fly in the Loaf**,



Hardman Street (see article page 44), and the **Cross Keys**, Earle Street, off Old Hall Street in the business district, which we will feature in the next edition.

The Everyman Theatre

reopened in February with a new Bistro in the basement, which is run by new management. Four hand pumps dispense Everyman



(specially brewed by **Liverpool Organic Brewery**), plus another LOB beer and two changing guest beers. Unfortunately the attractive new Foyer Bar overlooking Hope Street does not offer real ale. There will be a review of the new Bistro in the next edition of MerseyAle.

Kazimier Garden (entrance on Seel Street) reopened after its spring refurbishment. Opening times are normally 4pm on weekdays and



2pm at weekends. There are usually 3 cask beers on offer supplied by **Liverpool Craft**, including **Organo** that is specially brewed for the Kazimier. A beer from **Revolutions** in Leeds was available in April, one of the swaps arranged by Liverpool Craft.

A new first floor area has opened at the **Shipping Forecast** on Slater Street. The third hand pump continues to offer unusual beers, with a beer from **Liberation Brewery** on Jersey being served at the end of April.

The Hub, at the bottom of Hanover Street, now has five hand pumps, regularly dispensing beers from **Lancaster Brewery and Liverpool Organic**. Two pumps are for guest beers that were from **Beartown brewery** at the end of April.

The Baltic Fleet has been selling beers from **Brimstage** recently, alongside their own **Wapping beers**. A decision has been made to continue brewing at the pub - see story page 9.

The Bridewell, on Campbell Square, continues to serve JW Lees



Governor, usually alongside a beer from Lancaster Brewery and a LocAle. On my last visit **Melwood Derby Stout** was being served.

The Camp and Furnace on Greenland Street now has two beer engines serving **Liverpool Craft beers**.

Also in the Baltic Triangle on the corner of Jamaica and Watkin-



son Street, the **Mad Hatter** Microbrewtap has opened. Check out the website <http://madhatterbrewing.co.uk/> for opening times.





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MerseyAlePubnews cntd

The Victoria Cross on Sir Thomas Street was selling **Liverpool One King's Regiment** during April, a fitting beer for the theme of the pub.

Dr Duncan's continues to serve guest ales following the closure of Cains brewery. Beers from the West Country and London have featured along with brews from Padstow, Horns and Bristol Beer Factory. An update to the report in the last MerseyAle, the **Head of Steam** at Lime Street station is now selling real ale again. **Camerons Gold Bullion** was one of the beers on tap at on my last visit. Access is not now normally available from the station concourse, but only via Lord Nelson Street.

Across the road, **Ma Egerton's** continues to offer two real ales. Numerous different beers from

the plans do not include reopening the bar on the ground floor.

Eight Bar on Allerton Road has closed and has become an Estate Agent, adding to the large number already in the area.

The hand pump has been removed from the **Vauxhall Vaults**. With so many other pubs within easy walking distance, the real ale drinkers were attracted elsewhere.

The Lees Bitter at **Dawsons** on Ranelagh Street has not been available on my recent visits. The hand pump at **the Leaf** on Bold Street has not been in use on my visits. **The Peacock** on Seel Street usually sells a beer from the Marstons stable, but real ale has not always been available when I've visited. **The Old Fort**, opposite the Royal Hospital, has not had any real ale recently. The bar tender told me that nobody ever asked for it.

For the important Liverpool game against Manchester City the **Flat Iron** on Anfield Road offered supporters beers from Kite and Allgates breweries, presumably supplied via **Liverpool Organic**. Before the Chelsea game two Liverpool Organic beers were available.

The Cobden on Quarry Street Woolton was selling a beer from **Joules** in April, whilst along the



Theakstons, including the monthly specials, have been offered. Other beers are sometimes available, with **Clark's Westgate Gold** being served at the end of April. The pub now serves **Ma's Pizza** – see advert on the back cover.

The Royal on Smithdown Road is being developed into student accommodation, which should mean the distinctive exterior blue tiling will be preserved. I presume



Cobden

road, the **County Court** is for sale freehold, should anybody want to set up a free house in Woolton.

The Volunteer Canteen in Waterloo has been selling a good



variety of guest beers. The pub offers table service in the lounge, something which is much appreciated and which other pubs should consider offering.

The Masonic, in Garston, is due to have two more beer engines fitted



bringing the total to six. One is likely to be used for a cider.



Blackburne House Cafe Bar, Blackburne Street, is now selling real ale.

Pub News by Tony Williams

The Wirral Beer Desert Guest Article in Spring 2014 MerseyAle Edition

In the Spring 2014 edition of MerseyAle we ran an article on page 50 entitled 'Wirral Beer Desert – A Point of View From Wirral CAMRA Members'. This was at the request of, and was written by, three members of Wirral CAMRA, Dave Goodwin, Bob Lockhart and Andrew Foster. As many will know Dave Goodwin is Chair of Wirral CAMRA and Bob Lockhart is a founding member of Merseyside CAMRA – see article pages 33. They asked

MerseyAle to run the article as Wirral CAMRA do not have a Branch magazine and the article was intended to open debate on real ale in Wirral pubs.

Well it certainly did that in spades! We received many comments, most of which challenged the claim of there being a Wirral Beer Desert and some which queried the campaigning record of Wirral CAMRA. Given the range of points raised, as Editor I felt it best to prepare an article summarising the comments received, and also to give the original authors and Wirral CAMRA Branch the right to respond to the points made and this will appear in the next edition of MerseyAle.

Editor MerseyAle, John Armstrong

many communities across the UK fighting to save their local by raising the money to purchase it themselves. With 30 pubs closing every week there is still much more that needs to be done to protect pubs, but it is heartening to see that the desire and drive to save pubs is something which is clearly there amongst the pub-going public", says CAMRA Chairman Colin Valentine.

Many of the pubs which have most recently been purchased by their local community came about after being listed as 'Assets of Community Value', or ACVs, which means should they be threatened with closure the local community is notified and given a six month period to raise the money to purchase the pub.

Fifty of Britain's pubs are now run by their communities

New research announced by CAMRA in April 2014 shows that over 50 pubs across the UK are now being run by their local communities. Many of the fifty pubs were facing closure before being saved by the action of local people. The rapidly expanding list of community owned pubs represents a growing trend of communities looking to save their local pub by buying and running it themselves.

"The Great British pub is something unique and deserving of protection and it is inspiring to see so

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CAMRA Liverpool & Districts PUB of the YEAR 2012



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The Largest and Longest Established Pub League in the World

Real Ale and the Merseyside Quiz League

Merseyside can boast of having the largest and longest established pub league in the world. The Merseyside Quiz League was founded in 1959 and is an institution, not just on Merseyside, but also in Cheshire and Lancashire. So really the name itself is slightly misleading, as there are six constituent leagues within the Merseyside Quiz Leagues (MQL), with individual leagues based in Liverpool, Northern (roughly based in North Liverpool/South Sefton), Ormskirk, Warrington, Wirral, and last but not least the league in the area where I now live, the Southport & Formby League. The fame of the MQL is international. In the Spring 2013 edition of MerseyAle we ran article



film he was making about the History of Pub Quizzing. The film was inspired by the model established by the MQL when it formed the first organized pub league in the world in 1959 in Bootle. It's not too often that you can say Bootle leads the world! Jeffrey filmed the MQL in action in Liverpool, along with two Mayflowers, the quiz team at the Mayflower in Rotherhithe, London and his own team at the Mayflower pub in San Rafael, San Francisco, California.



'An American in Liverpool: Serendipity in the Pool of Liverpool' on pages 26 and 27 by Jeffrey French of San Francisco, a film maker and keen pub quizzier, who referred to the documentary

The MQL Matches

Teams play on Monday or Tuesday night, with matches being played simultaneously on each night using the same set of questions, which are sent to team secretaries in sealed envelopes to ensure fair play. The format of the quizzes is for teams of four-a-side playing eight rounds of eight questions per round, with each player getting one individual question in each round. It sounds a

little complicated, but it is a tried and tested format which has produced some of the best quiz players in the North-West if not the country.

Although the league has suffered from the advent of the pub table quiz and the money and other riches such as free beer on offer to the winners, one of MQL's selling points to me has always been the chance to meet and get to know regular players in the local league and simply pit your brains against other teams for the simple pride of two points in the league. Oh, and the fact that players cannot cheat, copy answers or use mobile phones might have something to do with it as well. The home team provide refreshments in the form of sandwiches or some other nourishment (at one quiz recently I was treated to pea and ham soup with crusty bread), and the away team players always get a drink each from their opposite number.

The CAMRA Connection

This leads me on to my link between the MQL and CAMRA. There also happen to be a number of keen real ale drinkers amongst the regular quiz players taking part in the league, which just goes to show that as well as us liking to think we are a well-educated and

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intelligent bunch of people we have also got good taste as well (with the exception of course of the lager drinkers). And another thing of interest: the first-ever Merseyside CAMRA Chairman, Bob Thurlow (see pages 11-12), like me is an MQL team secretary, in his case for the Mersey Bowmen team which plays at the White Horse in Woolton.

There are a number of venues used by teams playing in the Merseyside Quiz League which sell real ale, and probably too many to mention individually in this article. However, just to give you a flavour of some of the pubs, here are some of the real ale pubs which are home to teams in the MQL in the various leagues: Thomas Rigby's and Doctor Duncan's, Liverpool; Bull's Head, Warrington; Abbey Hotel, St. Helens; Zetland, Southport; Old Bank, Waterloo; Disraeli's, Greyhound and Hayfield, Ormskirk; Prince Albert, Westhead;

is a game being played in your area where you can get a good pint of ale and listen in, or, even better, start to take part, look on the Merseyside Quiz League web site at www.merseysidequizleagues.org.uk and click on the tab "leagues" which will give you the link to the individual leagues.

League Benefits the Pubs

My own team, Fisherman's Rest (there have been debates at CAMRA meetings as to whether the pub should be called Fisherman's or Fishermen's Rest - MQL prefer to use the singular and CAMRA have gone for the plural), share a home venue with Vikings, and we can always guarantee an excellent pint of Thwaites Wainwright, Theakston's bitter, Caledonian Deuchars IPA and another guest beer in the best pub in Birkdale, which also happens to be listed in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide



Stork Hotel, Birkenhead and Plasterers Arms, Hoylake. I know there are other pubs and clubs selling real ale and who host MQL teams, but the aim of this article is not to promote individual pubs, but to increase awareness to the readers of this fine publication to the merits of a local institution - Merseyside Quiz Leagues are the largest independent quiz leagues in the world.

So if you have an interest in quizzes and want to find out where there

When I talk to the manager of the "Fish" Eddie Loftus, he says that having a pub which hosts two Merseyside Quiz League teams introduces people to his pub who may not ordinarily go there. And if they have a good night, they will return to the pub for a drink or a meal. And it seems to work, because the Fishermen's Rest is usually heaving with customers and you need to book a table in advance in order to guarantee getting a meal - how many pubs these days can say that?

Join the League

So if you are a pub landlord or regular customer reading this article, why not speak to the person who compiles the pub quiz, or to other customers taking part in the table quiz, and get a team together and enter the local league?

A couple of things before I sign off: if I have got any information wrong then please let me know so that I can put some corrections in the next Mersey Ale; secondly, an apology for not including other pubs and clubs who make up the various Merseyside Quiz Leagues, but perhaps in future issues I can, with the editor's permission, start compiling a directory of the MQL venues selling real ale.

David Williams

And Finally

If you have not heard of the MQL and like quizzes, come along to a match and perhaps join a team. For further information about MQL and real ale in the Warrington area contact General Secretary and CAMRA member Cliff Houghton on 01925 637717 or by e-mail at cliff.angela9@gmail.com or MQL Treasurer Dag Griffiths on 01695 576744 or dag@sfquiz.org.uk For details of pubs and clubs selling real ale, where you can also update the information I have supplied, go to www.whatpub.com or www.camra.org.uk for details of CAMRA membership.
Cheers,

David Williams
Vice Chairman, CAMRA
Southport & District &
Southport & Formby Quiz
League

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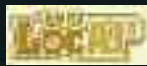
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The Snowball Women's Pub Trail Event

The award winning Liverpool CAMRA Snowballs Campaign which is designed to Bring New People to Real Ale, broke new ground in May with an event to encourage women to explore a number of Liverpool's best real ale pubs. With pubs closing at an ever increasing rate, CAMRA is working hard to promote our pubs and to bring them new custom. An important, yet underdeveloped opportunity, is attracting women to the pub. Women are often cautious about entering an unfamiliar pub alone and feedback had shown that a number of women contacted by the Snowball Campaign had not visited more than a very few of Liverpool's best known real ale pubs. The concept of a women's Snowball Campaign classic real ale pub trail was born.

So it came to pass that the Snowball team arranged for twenty women to meet at the Dispensary Renshaw Street, the Liverpool CAMRA Pub of the Year 2110 and 2011 and many times Pub of Excellence, as the first stop in a tour of four of Liverpool's best real ale pubs.

The Dispensary

A most appropriate start to the event was the presence of a **Mallinsons** beer amongst the fine display of excellently kept real ales on the bar at the Dispensary. Mallinsons of Huddersfield is run by two women, Tara and Elaine, who had previously run a Liverpool CAMRA Snowball Campaign women's real ale event at the Lion Tavern, Moorfields. They are passionate about brewing and the beer tasting they provided at the Lion of a selection of their real ales had led many of the women present to acquire a taste for their beers. So it was a propitious start to the tour to find Mallinsons Columbus on the bar.



The welcome continued with Dispensary licensee Dave Williams giving a short talk about the pub and its commitment to real ale. He also showed the group the framed certificate the Liverpool CAMRA Snowball Campaign had won in 2012 for CAMRA's National Award for Membership Innovation. The very first Snowball event was held in the Dispensary with active help from Dave and Pauline, the licensees, and it is appropriate that the certificate is on display in the pub.

Bringing New People to Real ale... and the Pub



Discussion with the women present showed that three quarters had decided to join CAMRA as a result of attending Snowball real ale events, a remarkable recruitment record and testament to the effectiveness of the Snowball Campaign. Amongst the women present was Susie O'Neil who is the Brewery Manager for Liverpool Organic Brewery. She was there as a CAMRA member keen to visit the pubs, rather than in her professional day job capacity.

The Roscoe Head

Then it was just a few yards around to the second pub, the Roscoe Head



in Roscoe Street, a case of from one Pub of the Year to another. The Roscoe Head won Liverpool CAMRA Pub of the Year 2012 but has an even greater call to fame being one of only seven pubs nationwide which have been in every edition of the CAMRA National Good Beer Guide since 1974. Indeed they are the Magnificent Seven.

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Appropriately the licensee is a woman, Carol Ross, who is a great campaigner for pubs and for a **Fair Deal for Your Local**. She has given evidence to the House of Commons review of the practices of the PubCos. She has fought hard to retain the traditional pub atmosphere of the Roscoe Head with conversation the king, whilst smartening the pub with a sensitive refurbishment. The small side rooms and the unusual feature of a traditional snug create a very cosy atmosphere.

Carol's efforts were rewarded with the comments from the group, including;

"What a gem."

"Why have I never been here before! - I'll be back again soon."

It was noticeable that a number of the women had not visited the pub before and this in itself justified the concept of the women's pub trail.

The Belvedere

A short walk up Hardman Street to Hope Street brought the party to the Belvedere on Sugnall Street off



Falkner Street. This is a Liverpool CAMRA Pub of Excellence and was one of only 200 British pubs to be listed in the CAMRA National Inventory of Unspoilt Pub Interiors. That was until previous owners decided to close it as a pub and sell it for conversion to offices or residential use. In the process sufficient architectural features were removed for the Inventory listing to be lost.

The visit here was instructive in demonstrating the pressures on pubs to survive and also was a

lesson in how pubs can be brought back from closure to greatness. Licensee **John O' Dowd** welcomed the group on arrival. John has turned around the Belvedere and has restored the lost architectural features so you can now enjoy the cosy atmosphere of this two roomed pub with its real fires; a testament to what can be achieved by a committed licensee. John has also introduced original art and posters which shows how a pub can be a showcase for culture and local artists.

A feature of the Belvedere is its support for local breweries particularly Liverpool Organic, so Susie found herself on familiar ground.

Again the Belvedere was new to several in the party and the visit demonstrated the value of organising the Snowball Pub Trail.

The Little Grapes

A walk this time down the hill brought the group to the Little Grapes on Knight Street/Roscoe Street corner. This is a remarkable example of a small street corner pub which has come on by leaps and bounds to attract a wide mix of customers. The number of real ales has been significantly increased



both in number and in the range of beers and breweries on offer. The pub also supports live music with regular sessions including jazz. This pub was new ground for many of the party. It is also reputed to be the most haunted pub in Liverpool.

Return to the Dispensary and Comments on the Event



Most of the group elected to return to the Dispensary to finish off the evening and to mull over the event. Some of the comments included;

"I didn't realise wonderful pubs like these still existed."

"I will definitely be visiting these pubs again. Tonight was a great opportunity to see pubs I didn't know about."



"There are so many other women who like beer. Tonight we had a great range of beers - shame we couldn't try them all!"

"How lovely to have so many good conversations with so many different women in lovely pubs."

The Snowball events are known for the friendly atmosphere and the conversation which is generated, not just about the beer and pubs, but also on this evening about music, theatre, politics, sport and local events. Whether you come alone or with others you are certain to make new friends during the evening and to be part of a welcoming atmosphere and enjoyable and varied conversation.

Find Out More

If you would like to know more about the Snowball Campaign and to receive information about future events please email social@liverpoolcamra.org.uk

Helen McCall

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If they made beer it would probably be

I managed to take advantage of a cheap flight by Norwegian airlines from Liverpool to Copenhagen for a short break, before the route was transferred to Manchester. There are plenty of things to do and see in the city and there is also a very active and exciting micro brewing and craft movement in the country. Of course the drink associated with Denmark is Carlsberg; would it taste better in its spiritual home of Copenhagen (as does Guinness in Dublin)? Well I had no intention of finding out with so many local brews on offer.

A couple of points about drinking in Copenhagen before I suggest some bars to try. Firstly check the size of the serving they are usually either 20cl, (0.35 pint) or 40cl (0.7 pint) but you can get larger sizes. The prices are quite a bit higher than in this country and people tend to drink smaller measures. A 40cl measure will be cheaper than two 20cl measures. Beware some bottled beers can be eye wateringly expensive e.g. A bottle of **Mikkeller's Outgoop 10.4% 66cl, would cost over £19!!!** Price does not seem to always relate to strength, check before you order.

Orsted Olbar Nørre Farimagsgade 13
<http://oerstedoelbar.dk/>

A pleasant, well-worn bar accessed down a few steps from the pavement. They have about 12 beers on tap, mostly from Denmark and over 180 bottles from all over the world. The name of the beer, brewery and price are found

A Copenhagen Pub Crawl

with Alan Lloyd



on the taps. As it is unlikely you will have a clue about the beers on sale it is lucky the bar staff are so helpful giving advice and tasters. We paid 50dkk for 40ml (about £5.60). This is a sort of sports bar with one part of the room with a TV



and another with a table football machine and dart board. I was very surprised and extremely pleased to see a framed Everton shirt hanging on the wall next to one from Barcelona and a Danish National shirt. It just underlined what good taste the people in this bar have!!!

Brewpub Kobenhavn
Vestergade 29
<http://brewpub.dk/en/>

This is one of the larger brewpubs, which is both bar and restaurant. It has a pleasant beer garden/courtyard to the rear. Relatively easy to find, 5 minutes from the Town Hall Square (Rådhuspladsen).

The brewery can be seen as you



enter the large building and you can arrange for a brewery tour and tasting if you have the time. They brew 7 beers covering a wide variety of tastes. It is quite easy to work out what the beers are as the



description is on the taps and in a menu. It is also possible to get a sample of 5 beers. The beers tried were very good I particularly liked the **Vester Weisse 4.9%** and the **Amarillo Red Ale 5.5%**. Both were 40dkk (£4.50) for 40cl. Other beers brewed include, **PJ Harvey - India Pale Ale 6.8%**, **Indian - 5.5%** **Dark US India Pale Ale** and **Cole - Porter 5.2 %**. As it was a Saturday evening the place was really packed with most people eating the rather nice



looking food. However there is space to drink by the bar. We then went in search for possibly the most famous beer bar in Copenhagen, Mikkeller. On the way we stopped off at the

Apollo Brewery, Vesterbrogade 3 <http://bryggeriet.dk/eng/breweries/apollo-copenhagen>

This is very easy to find as it is next to the main entrance to the Tivoli Gardens and only 5 minutes away from Brewpub Kobenhavn. This was the first brewpub in Denmark

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and opened in 1990. They brew a small selection of beers, always have their Pilsner 4.6% and usually have a monthly special beer which may be a cherry beer, hemp beer or a dark rich porter. Here the small size beer is 25cl and the cost is 30dkk (£3.40). The bar is spread over two floors with the 'coppers' in the basement where there is a large seating area.



Food is also of good quality and again the place is crowded at weekend evenings. If we thought the Apollo was crowded!

Mikkeller Bar, Victoriagade 8BC
<http://mikkeller.dk/>

Mikkeller Bar was voted best bar in Copenhagen in 2012. One of the most famous of the new wave of bars it has been around since 2007. The owners wanted to create the best beer bar in the world and to



be known for the quality and variety of craft beers from around the world. To match the beer they wanted to have a specially designed interior, which is very different to other bars. They have 20 taps with up to 15 beers which have their name on. They do not brew themselves but get other

microbreweries to produce their beers. You need to keep your eyes open as it is a basement location easy to miss on a dark rainy night. Very busy in the evening and



everyone seems to be drinking out of cut down 'schooner' glasses, no pint tankards here!! Price of beer depends on what you have, again based on 20cl glasses it would be 35 - 40dkk (£4 - £4.50). They have recently opened a 'sister' bar

Mikkeller & Friends, Stefansgade 35

"Once again we aim to serve the world's best beer in the best possible manner in the best possible surroundings," The new bar is three times larger than the



original Mikkeller Bar and has 40 taps available. They have some beers from around that can only be found here and in their country of origin e.g. **Three Floyds Brewery, USA**. Again the interior is very interesting and feels bright and cheerful. A bit further out from the centre but worth a detour. Prices the same as Mikkeller Bar.

They have recently opened a bar in San Francisco and have made contact with Brew Dog in the UK.

On the last evening we went for a meal at **RizRaz** and were pleased to find the beer on offer was from the **Norrebro Brewery**, Ryesgade 3, <http://www.noerrebroyghus.dk/>.

In the restaurant they had 5 beers, again I enjoyed the **Stuakman Witt 5.2%** and the **Ravnsborg Rod 5.5%** each 40cl for 45dkk (£5).

The last bar visited and possibly my favourite was

Fermentoren, Halmtorvet 29c,
<https://www.facebook.com/fermentoren.cph>



This bar is a bit away from the tourist area (but close to our hotel!). It was a very cosy and comfortable bar lit by candles in the evening with an eclectic mixture of tables and chairs. They have 20 beers on tap, mostly from Denmark although examples from the UK (Brew Dog) and Belgium could be found. The bartender was very helpful and knowledgeable about the beers on offer and after a few tasters I tried beers which were all very different. These included, **Stronzo - Tinky Winky IPA, 7.3%**, **Flying Couch - Black Bitter Bajer, 5.5%**, **Against the Grain (USA) -**



Ryed Chiquen, 8.3% and Beer Here - Ammestout, 5.5%. All these were served in 20cl measures at 30dkk (£3.40). This was an excellent way to end our visit and just to think - not one glass of Carlsberg had touched our lips!

Alan Lloyd

Pubs, Real Ale and original Art



Why the Three Go Hand in Hand

I have been organising art exhibitions in Liverpool for over eleven years in various venues including cafes art galleries and shopping centres. For the last two



years I have been supplying local real ale pubs with original art for sale. I have always had a policy of promoting the work of artists living locally. Although I have a gallery and shop in the centre of Liverpool and have regular exhibitions there, in recent years it has become obvious that many people find galleries to be intimidating places and they often expect prices to be out of reach of the ordinary person. You don't have to persuade people to go to a pub, however. In pubs people are relaxed and can enjoy the art without the pressure they may feel when they visit an art gallery.

Art in Pubs

Putting art in pubs began for me when I first approached the manager of Ye Cracke in Rice Street to see if I could use some wall space in her pub. Ye Cracke has had a long history of displaying original art. With its close proximity to the Liverpool Art School (now closed), it has long been a popular haunt of many artists and musicians. The most famous was John Lennon. Amongst others were Adrian Henri, Dick Young and Pete Wylie, to mention just a few. After discussing the requirements of the pub, it was agreed to mainly have Beatles or music



related themes and local interest. It is not only sensible but also ethical to have a fixed upper price for the art on sale. On principle the art should be kept affordable for those who appreciate it. The experience in Ye Cracke proved the practicality of this approach, but also indicated the need to branch out into new venues. (Editors Note – Ye Cracke won a Liverpool CAMRA Pub and Culture Award for its support for original art in a pub environment.)



Enter the Caledonia

Another real ale pub I enjoy visiting is the Caledonia on Catharine Street especially for the jazz nights. It had



recently seen changes for the better but it was still lacking, in my opinion, some original art on the walls. I approached the landlady with my idea to supply her pub with art for sale along the same lines as at Ye Cracke. Fortunately she agreed. This time the art featured included jazz, other musicians and local interest. I started the

exhibition space in the corridor and gradually added more art around the stage area, over the bar and above the entrance door.

There are still places to be filled and the art certainly adds character to the pub interior. People are interested in the art as they can browse at their leisure and feel under no obligation to make a purchase.

A Win Win Situation



I have found this arrangement to be a good one


for all involved. The pub benefits from having original art on the walls at no cost to the management. The art is constantly changing, is relevant to the pub and the customers. The artists benefit by handling more sales that help keep my shop and gallery open, and as an artist myself, the sale of my work.




The customer benefits by being able to buy affordable art without having to make a special trip to a gallery or exhibition. Indeed many of my customers are people who have never been to a gallery or an exhibition in their lives, but love what they have seen, and indeed many buy more than one piece of art for their walls. In my opinion pubs, real ale and original art go hand in hand.

Lis Edgar





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MerseyAle Cider News

Augustus John Wins CAMRA Regional Cider Pub of the Year Award

The AJ, Peach Street on the Liverpool University campus, has won the prestigious award of CAMRA Regional Cider Pub of the Year.



Above
Linda Harris CAMRA Regional
cider co-ordinator

Having been the winner of the Liverpool CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year for a number of years running, the AJ has gone to the next stage to win the Regional Award and to then enter the finals of CAMRA National Cider Pub of the Year. Over the past years the AJ has steadily built up its range of real ciders and perries and has collaborated with Liverpool CAMRA to run a series of cider tastings, (see MerseyAle Spring 2014 edition). The AJ offers a changing and varied range and is an excellent place to explore the world of real ciders and perries.

Successful Caledonia Cider Festival

The long Easter bank holiday weekend frequently witnesses beer festivals large and small but festivals dedicated to cider are few and far between. The Caledonia in Catharine Street is a fine real ale pub and always has one real cider available but the prospect of having over thirty cider and perries available for five days was going to be heaven for cider lovers. The hugely anticipated festival was no disappointment either with products spanning from Yorkshire

to Kent and Cornwall to Norfolk. We got to try ciders that normally do not set foot in Liverpool like the Ampleforth Abbey 6% with its heavy apple pie notes or the deceptively light Port Wine of Glastonbury 7% made from fruit that produces natural pink juice. For drinkers of a more delicate disposition there was the lovely crisp Cornish Orchards perry at 5% a very rare but welcome visitor to Liverpool, also available was the regular Scottish crowd pleaser Thistly Cross Whisky Cask which weighs in at 7%.

There were several reasons why this was such a great little festival,



Steve Berks

one being the pricing, the ciders were priced on what they cost the pub to buy and not the ABV of the drink, for example one 7% cider was 65 pence/pint cheaper than one of the 6%'s. Landlady Laura King explained that the pub enjoyed hosting festivals, with



cider in spring and the "Americana" themed festival in Autumn. Festivals brought in new faces and regular customers seemed to stay in the pub much longer than usual before moving on, also no product need go to waste. In the case of the cider any unsold during the five days would be re-released over the bar in the coming weeks as bag-in-box

products keep for a long time. With cider carry-outs on sale for a very fair price it was unlikely that leftovers would be a problem anyway.

The festival appeared to be a great success and we congratulate the Caledonia and would encourage other pubs try real cider festivals.

Liverpool CAMRA Cider Survey

Liverpool CAMRA Branch members have been conducting a thorough cider pub survey in the Liverpool area. Twenty five pubs likely to be selling real cider were visited in April alone and the survey will continue through the year. The findings will be published on the Branch website and will contribute to the selection of the Liverpool Cider Pub of the Year Award.

A New Local Cider - Hardshaw

Legendary Liverpool brewer Stan Shaw, (see page 9 and MerseyAle Spring 2014), has released his first production brew of Hardshaw cider made with friend Tom Hardwick. The pressing from late 2013 was made with wild apples sourced from verges and park land across Merseyside. Having been fermenting for over five months first tastings suggest that it will be a dry/medium product of about 6% ABV. The pressing process of Hardshaw cider with photos will be published in the Autumn 2014 Mersey Ale.

Steve Berks



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The 40th The Globe

- and its devoted team of staff



A Local in the City

The Globe, Cases Street, has now been run by Sue and Brian Johnson for 15 years, and the all women staff who welcome everyone who comes through its doors total 72 years of doing so between them – and that's not including the fact that Sue herself has worked there for 22 years!

Linda Richter is the longest serving person who will soon be reaching a quarter century of serving behind that famous bar, always with a smile and ready for a joke with the customers. The more formidable! – but absolutely delightful Kitty McNicholas has kept the place in order for 23 years. Linda and Kitty are ably assisted by Jill Miller, who has been there for 17 years, and Lyn Spence, a relative newcomer of 8 years, but well ensconced within this tight knit team. Such long term devotion is rare and whilst all credit should be given to those individuals, staff commitment is not won without the leadership of a good and caring pub manager, and the Globe has that person plus, plus, in Sue Johnson. Sue is equally at home in direct contact herself with the customers and seems to know almost everyone's name!

Yes, the Globe truly is a 'local in the city' which is why it was awarded the local CAMRA Community Pub of

the Year in 2012. A tasteful refurbishment at the end of that year only enhanced the charm of this cosy, two roomed pub with the renowned sloping floor! (See MerseyAle, February edition, 2013).

The CAMRA Connection

But the Globe has a much more distant and very important link with CAMRA, as 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.

Jean Pownceby approached Sue in the early Autumn and she 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 there in the Globe and was a huge success, as reported in MerseyAle Spring 2014 edition. 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.

Finding the Founding Members

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 that could be thought of – Jean and Clive Pownceby of Liverpool and Districts Branch, Bob Lockhart, for many years a Wirral activist, and Godfrey Boardman of Southport Branch. But a simple appeal in this very magazine brought forth the original Chair, Bob Thurlow, who had been instrumental in bringing several people to that

very first meeting – and landing 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 – although there are now new battles to be fought especially that 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! Just over 30 people crowded into that tiny pub, alongside current committee members, and many memories were shared.

As one of our current younger committee members said:

'For us young ones, the speeches and the passion those people had was very inspiring.'

Long live CAMRA!
Jean Pownceby

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
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5 Handpumps

17 CASES STREET L11HW



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



West Kirby is a part of Wirral where real ale pubs are very much on the up.

It has the advantage of being a compact town with **eight real ale pubs, a bar/cafe and a specialist beer shop.** It is also a designated Transition Town aiming to promote environmental and cultural self sufficiency and to foster community. Starting from West Kirby station (or the final stop of the 437 Cross River Arriva bus), turn right and follow the main Grange Road round for 100 yards to find;

1 The West Kirby Tap and Ale House, Grange Road

This is the new kid on the block having opened on Thursday 8th May and a very well received kid judging by its popularity with a wide range of customers and ages. It comes with good parentage, being the second pub opened by



Spitting Feathers Brewery, the first being the Good Beer Guide listed, Chester CAMRA Pub of the Year, multi award winning Chester Brewery Tap. The building was last used as the Red Door cocktail bar and before that was an undertakers, (insert joke of your

MerseyRAle Wirral Line to West Kirby Transition Town Pubs

The West Kirby Round



choice – full bodied beer, good selection of spirits etc etc), and before that was the British Legion. The Tap opens at 11am. There are eight hand pumps, one of which serves a changing real cider, with two or three Spitting Feathers beers and four or five hand pumps serving changing guest beers. Spitting Feathers brewery does a lot of beer swaps so interesting guests from micro breweries appear. For the first six months it will be managed by the very capable John Thomas who managed the Chester Tap so standards are set high.

Food is available 12 noon to 9pm seven days a week from the open kitchen at the rear of the pub, offering a menu similar to that at the Chester Tap. Light Bites and Starters are £4-£5 and Mains such as Belly Pork with Black Pudding and cider jus, Salmon Fillet, homemade Lasagne, Tap Steak Burger, Chicken Pie and vegetarian Aubergine Bake are £8 - £9 and Rump Steak £13.95. There are also the Tap signature chunky chips.

The interior is L shaped with the main bar having an impressive lofty hammer beam roof and a lower ceiling side room, plus a glass screened snug at the rear which can be used for meetings of around twelve people. The front windows fold over giving a welcome airiness on warm days, whilst a wood burning stove keeps customers cosy during colder weather. The walls are exposed red

brick with some sections of blue wooden boarding. Lighting is striking theatre style spot lights, which gives a sense of performance. Furniture is a mixture of wooden tables and chairs with sofas grouped around the wood burning stove. Outside there are pavement tables which catch the afternoon and evening sun. The Tap retains the flat screen TVs from the Red Door days, but uses them mainly to show major sporting events. Newspapers are provided in a rack by the bar.

2 The Wro Bar, Grange Road

Next door to the Tap is the Wro Bar, winner of the Liverpool Region Tourism Bar of the year 2014 Award. The Wro has successfully



combined being a modern style bar with a strong community commitment, as evidence by the impressive list of activities and local groups that feature, examples being film nights, French and Spanish lessons, philosophy in pubs and regular live music, in addition to the more familiar





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activities such as a book club. The owner is a former lecturer who has built links with local schools to offer work experience and training at the Wro, in addition to encouraging students and parents from the nearby West Kirby Residential School for students with learning difficulties to meet for social events at the Wro.

Just over eighteen months ago the Wro introduced hand pumps offering two real ales mainly from the Marstons range, with **Cumberland and Pedigree** often featuring. The patio and pavement seating is very popular as is the Wro Loft upstairs which is used for numerous functions. The Wro also offers good bar food seven days a week. The Wro Lounge across the road offers a fuller restaurant menu.

From here you have a choice, see the map – either walk back along Grange Road past the station to the pubs listed next, or walk along Banks Road to the Hilbre Court, Hickory's and the Ring o' Bells in the old village. You can also use the Wirral Way railway path and the South Parade promenade to make an attractive two and a half mile circular walk. The 77 bus runs hourly until 6pm (not Sundays) along Banks Road to Hickory's from the stop outside the Dee Hotel.

3 Ship in a Bottle Beer Shop, Grange Road, opposite the station. The beer shop celebrated its second birthday in May and has become well known for its extensive range of beers and ciders, including beers from the USA, Belgium, Germany, Britain and other world beers, plus it's a sweet shop! It is run by the Ship



and Mitre pub in Liverpool and is a sister shop of the branch in Whitechapel. Note that the Ship in a Bottle shops offer a very useful 10% discount to card showing CAMRA members, and is very handy for the train and bus.

4 The Dee Hotel JD Wetherspoon, Grange Road

A couple of doors away is the Dee Hotel, an imposing frontage and former hotel which was renovated and opened as a **JD Wetherspoon** pub over ten years ago. Two of the managers are CAMRA members and it shows in the choice of real ales and in the beer quality. There are ten hand pumps, with **Old Rosie Cider, Abbott and Directors** as permanent and **up to seven**



changing guest beers. The usual range of Wetherspoon food is served from 8am to 11pm. At the rear there is an outdoor patio with table seating.

5 The White Lion, Grange Road Turn right from the Dee Hotel and continue up the hill crossing the road at the pelican crossing. About two hundred yards up the hill find the Good Beer Guide listed, appropriately white painted, White Lion on the right, set back in its front courtyard with garden seating. At the rear of the pub is an extensive terraced garden with many surprise features and which is a very popular place to catch the afternoon and evening sun. The pub interior is atmospheric with the exposed sandstone walls creating a cosy cave like effect. Note the Alistair Houghton Liverpool Echo article on the bar with the heading '**A Taste of Middle Earth in the Wirral!**' Separate levels and seating areas create

privacy yet a buzzing pub atmosphere showing its popularity with local customers. Note the 'Ladies Only' sign in the side room which is a reminder that for some years until the 70s' equality legislation, this area was for women only and did succeed in attracting many women to use the



pub, something which continues to this day. Licensees Phil Roberts and Brenda Harvey have built strong community links supporting local organisations and charities. See the photos by the bar of the Ideal dinghies the pub sponsors for the Wirral Disabled Marine Association. The pub is also noted for its support of local musicians and live music.

The central bar has four hand pumps, two offering permanent beers, **Courage Directors and Black Sheep**, with the other two offering **changing guest beers.** No food is served.

6 The Hilltop, Black Horse Hill From the Lion, turn left and walk up the hill to Black Horse Hill, turning along it to find the Hilltop on the left. This Enterprise pub was previously the Black Horse and is still known to many by that name. There are three hand pumps



selling **Bombardier, Directors and Robinsons Trooper** but no guest beers. It is a large open plan pub

with a centre bar and serves good value food and meal deals M- F 12-9 and Sat – Sun 12-8.

7 Curio, Banks Road – **One to Watch**

Opened Christmas 2013, Paul who runs this informal bar cum restaurant serving locally sourced food, worked at Gallaghers



Birkenhead and the Philharmonic Hotel Liverpool and is a keen beer fan. Plans are underway to introduce a cask beer in the next few months to supplement the established and extensive British and World bottled beer range, which includes an expanding local beer section already featuring **Mad Hatter and Liverpool Craft beers.**

8 The Hilbre Court Banks Road

This modern open plan pub at the end of Banks Road is run by Josie Lee, previously a licensee in Chester, and who is keen support real ale. It has eight hand pumps serving up to four beers, with **St Austells Tribute, Doom Bar and Bombardier** as regulars plus **at weekends a changing guest beer.**



Weetwood, named 'Old Hickory's Ale', at a reasonable £3 a pint. There is some space for drinkers not wanting to eat, plus a large outside seating area at the front and side of the pub.

10 Ring o' Bells, Village Road

Turn left up Village Road and the Ring o' Bells is just a few yards along. Once a multi roomed pub it was converted in the mid 70s' to open plan and was a Loch Fyne restaurant before again becoming



a pub now run by Greene King offering a wide range of food all day. There are four hand pumps and licensee David Wilkinson is keen to promote real ale and guest beers. **Greene King IPA** is the permanent beer, supplemented by a guest from the Greene King stable and also **two changing guest ales** from brewers such as **Copper Dragon.** The interior has a multi level layout with comfortable seating and is very popular for food 11 am to 10pm seven days a week, with various meal deal menus and flame grill. Behind the car park is a large impressive sun trap beer garden.

9 Hickory's, Sandy Lane

Turn right out of the Hilbre Court and follow the main road round as it veers left becoming Sandy Lane, then cross the Wirral Way railway bridge to come to Hickory's on the left. This is now an American Ribs restaurant, but the previous pub name, The Moby Dick, is chiselled into the wall. It has two hand pumps serving one real ale from



From here you have a choice of returning via the Wirral Way, or along Banks Road or continuing along Village Road to meet Grange Road and Black Horse Hill – see map.

John Armstrong

- THE WEST KIRBY ROUND**
1 The West Kirby Tap
2 The Wro Bar
3 The Ship in a Bottle
4 The Dee Hotel JD Wetherspoon
5 White Lion
6 The Hilltop
7 Curio
8 The Hilbre Court
9 Hickory's
10 Ring O' Bells



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WINNER Beer of the Festival 2014 CAMRA Isle of Man Beer Festival Little King Louis IPA 6%



ManxAle

This edition brings exciting news of three successful Beer Festivals, a new real ale pub in Castletown, the second part of the Ramsey Pub Trail and the launch of the bigger and better Rail Ale Guide 2014. We also provide an appreciation of the positive contribution of the Island's largest pub company, Heron and Brearley.

Festival One - Bishop of Sodor and Man Graces the Third CAMRA Isle of Man Beer and Cider Festival

The Third CAMRA Isle of Man Beer and Cider Festival proved to be a great success, and it is now fair to say the event is now firmly established on the Island's social calendar. The Festival was opened by the **Rt. Revd. Robert Paterson, Bishop of Sodor and Man**, who poured the first pint of the brand new Bushy's Airmed Ale, a charity ale from which a proportion of the profits will go to the Rob Vine Fund. This is a registered charity that provides medical support, including helicopter support and rescue, during the Island's numerous annual racing events, the TT and Manx Grand Prix motorbike races being the most well-known of the many events held throughout the year. **Airmed Ale (4.0% ABV)** was particularly smooth on the palate - a classic Bushys signature brew and taste. In total 88 brews and 36 ciders were



available, a quarter of the real ales having been brewed on Island. The Festival showcased the strength of the Island's beer industry to the many visitors from the U.K., many of whom stayed on Island for the week, sampling and exploring the local hostelries and culture, plus the attractions of the unique transport network.

Hooded Ram Brewery Win Beer of the Festival with Little King Louis

The recently opened Hooded Ram Brewery won the Beer of the Festival award with their **Little King Louis IPA (6.0%)**. The award was made by the popular vote of festival goers. Named after the brewer's son, this ale is one of the strongest produced on Island at 6% ABV. As expected of an IPA the beer has a fine hoppy character and finish. Congratulations to brewer Rob Storey and Hooded Ram. Interestingly, another LocAle, **Okells Steam 5.0%**, also featured heavily in the voting. It may be that the Manx palate is changing - the Island has for many years been a traditional session drinker's haven, the majority preferring

lower strength beers under 4.5%. The separate Cider and Perry bar proved popular once again, with **Newton Court Autumn Harvest Perry** from Herefordshire winning the cider/perry competition, again by popular vote. This year the organisers had the measure of the high level of demand, and it is pleasing to report that they delivered the promise of a choice of up to sixty beers remaining available throughout Saturday evening.

Festival Two - the Falcon's Nest Festival and Rail Ale to Port Erin

In Port Erin the Good Beer Guide listed Falcon's Nest hotel ran its fourth Festival of Real Ale, another now well established and supported annual event. The Festival featured over forty real ales, ciders, and perries, with music once again provided by an Oompah Band on the all ticket Sunday evening. The Isle of Man Steam Railway ran the new traditional Rail Ale train from Douglas to Port Erin in connection with the Festival. Rail Ale trains will again be running during 2014 - see Steam Railway timetable.

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Festival Three - Okells First Ramsey Beer Festival

This took place on the early May Bank Holiday, featuring over 25 beers served in the four H&B Ramsey pubs. A bespoke high quality mini-guide with tasting notes and pub venues for each ale was printed. Here once



again, H&B has made significant strides in recent years in promoting real ale festivals across the Island, featuring a wide range of guest ales from Across and not solely Okells products. It is perhaps not known generally, but many of the Island's free house beer festivals along with the CAMRA IOM Beer Festival and the 2012 National Members Weekend, have relied extensively on the technical assistance and equipment from the H&B company.

New Real Ale Pub - The Tap Room, Castletown.

The former Garrison tapas bar and restaurant in Castletown has been reopened as a pub/bar, mixing both the modern with the



traditional. This is a format as yet rarely seen on Island, but increasingly common in the U.K. Less formal than a restaurant, but with ample space throughout the bar for dining, there is an impressive four hand pumps on the bar. Not a café, restaurant, or pub, but a stylish and modern combination of all three catering for all age groups.

Beers available at the time of visit included **Hardys & Hansons**

Kimberley ale, Thwaites Nutty Black, and Thwaites Tap Room bitter at 3.8%. Copper Dragon's Castle Rushen was also available, with the superbly preserved castle visible just yards away through The Tap Room windows. Food is available from an ever changing menu. There is an upstairs function room which can cater for up to fifty people for buffet food, along with an outside raised area with views overlooking the coastal areas. MerseyAle wishes the venture well, and welcomes this addition to Castletown, following



the recent demise of The Ship reported in the Spring 2014 issue.

Ramsey Pub Trail Part 2 - Around the Town

The Spring 2014 edition featured a Ramsey Pub Trail around the harbour area visiting five real ale pubs. This edition continues the trail around the town centre of Ramsey to include another four real ale pubs all found within a few hundred yards.

Starting in the main shopping street, Parliament Street, the first call is the small Good Beer Guide listed free house, The Plough, an



untouched gem. This two roomed pub with interconnecting internal doorway, features two cask ales, usually **Okell's bitter**, alongside a changing, but well-advertised guest ale, Shepherd Neame Spitfire

being available at the time of visit. The pub describes itself perfectly with the advertising slogan 'a traditional pub with modern attitude', and is a proud sponsor of the Shennaghys Jiu Celtic youth festival. The clientele is by no



means all of the older generation, and the pub can be bustling at peak periods. A large mirror featuring the Champions of Champions with Bob Paisley and the 1977 team, adorns the wall, providing welcome succour for beleaguered Liverpool fans following their recent premiership eleventh hour woes.

Directly opposite lies **Bar Logo**. Real ale is no means a certainty, but Okells bitter is sometimes stocked at peak periods in summer, and Okells bottled beers are also available behind the bar. CAMRA



does support venues that only put cask ale on only when there is sufficient demand to maintain quality, as is the policy at Bar Logo. Continuing along the main street you will see two Heron and Brearley pubs adjacent to each other, the **Swan** and the **Central**,



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either side of the TT course. Both pubs were recently refurbished. The Swan is the larger of the two, retaining a traditional public bar with darts and pool table, plus a comfortable lounge with extensive alcoves and raised seating areas. Food is served most lunchtimes and evenings. The public bar also has large TV screens for showing sports events. There is an outdoor seating area at the front and a large attractive garden at the rear. Several real ales are stocked, including **Okells bitter**, **Okells Olaf** and two Okells seasonal beers. The pub is run by Trevor Latus and was a finalist in H&B's managed estate awards 2013 for cask ale quality. It features in The Isle of Man Rail Ale guide. Service is efficient and friendly, with another H&B awards finalist, **Bar Person of the Year** award, **Emma Quigley** serving behind the bar. Immediately across the road, which is also the TT course, lies The Central, a very traditional pub. Here H&B have commendably



elected to invest heavily in recent years with a full refurbishment, despite the plentiful supply of pubs in town and despite the pub being next door to another, the Swan, from its own estate. The Central retains multiple rooms, which include pool areas, TV for the sport and small alcove seating areas. The left hand bar has a traditional wood burning stove providing the heating in the winter months. Whilst Okells bitter is the locals preferred drink, two or three other Okells brews are stocked across the two bars.

Both these pubs represent a significant positive investment by H&B in the local community, which has only a limited customer base.



This commitment has been replicated many times across the Island, through extensive refurbishments of small and large community pubs with limited catchment areas, such as at Crosby, **The Raven** at Ballaugh, and **The Colby**, in Colby. It is a testament to the commitment of H&B that these communities retain their local as an important community asset in these challenging times.

The Britannia opposite the Manx Electric Railway station is now closed, as reported in the Spring 2014 edition of MerseyAle

IOM Rail Ale Guide returns for 2014 - bigger and better!



Isle of Man Railways have once again printed and updated the very popular IOM Rail Ale guide, featuring the unique Electric tram and Steam routes heading North and South from Douglas respectively. More pubs have been added to enjoy on route, along with a thorough revision of the real ales available along the line, so make good use of the Guide during summer months ahead and enjoy the unique transport system!

Pub News

The Terminus Tavern Douglas. MerseyAle congratulates The Terminus on winning the overall Heron & Brearley Pub of the Year award. Situated at the north end of Douglas promenade at Derby Castle, it is known to many as the unofficial waiting room for the Manx Electric Railway and Douglas Horse Trams, with many a



pint consumed whilst awaiting the next tram. The outdoor seating area overlooking the bay is hugely popular in summer, with the empty horse trams stabled outside the pub sometimes used as unofficial additional seating and entertainment for the children.

The pub is popular for food with the dining areas put to great use, yet the pub doubles up as a local's pub, with side rooms for pool and the sport on TV. **Okells bitter** and seasonals are available, with guest ales in the busier summer months. Again, an example of H&B catering to a wider audience including locals, and providing a community asset for those living close to the northern end of the promenade. Pricing at The Terminus for Okells bitter remains at under £3.00 a pint.

The Ginger Hall Hotel on the TT course has changed hands, on a long term lease. Many plans are afoot and a full report will follow.

Jak's Bar a hugely popular sports bar on Douglas promenade has survived a recent small fire, and has now fully embraced real ale.



Late to come on to the real ale scene, some years ago two hand pumps were installed obscured behind a pillar where they were difficult to spot. Later they were moved, but the most positive news is that now eight hand pumps have been installed, four on a side bar and four directly in front of all as they walk in the main entrance. This is perhaps a final testament to the strength of the cask ale demand



on Island, and is hugely welcomed. Bushys bitter, along with **Okells bitter**, **Okells Steam** and **Hobgoblin** were available at time of visit.

An Appraisal of Heron and Brearley

This is an opportune moment to examine some of the Heron & Brearley policies on Island. Whilst on occasion concerns are expressed about the size of the H&B market share on Island, matters such as the frequent moving of managers from pub to pub, and in some cases high pricing, there are many positives for the Island community. As can be seen from the above these include;

- Keeping the vast majority of its considerable pub estate open and serving the community, with the recent exceptions mentioned above of the Ship, Castletown and the Britannia, Ramsey.

- Pub Refurbishments – mostly these have been sensitive and tasteful with the retention of public bars offering pub games such as darts and pool alongside comfortable lounges which mostly offer food.

- Promotion of Real Ale - through pub beer festivals and support for other real ale festivals on Island. A number of pub trail festival guides have been produced.

- Developing its off Island Across pub estate business with the Liverpool and Chester pubs plus the later acquisition of the mainly Yorkshire based Market Taverns pub group which receives very positive reviews.

Dave Halliwell
MerseyAle IOM Correspondent

Fly in the LOAF



The Fly in the Loaf Hardman Street has received a bright makeover in a style reminiscent of that used by Okell's for their pub refurbishments on the Isle of Man. The walls and wood work are a light grey and the seating has been changed to bright colours and light wood bench seats. There are more high tables in the centre of the pub to encourage 'vertical drinking', with table seats in the side areas. The lighting catches the eye with its hanging wiring look. The large



bay windows now have expensive curved glass replacing the old scratched

plexiglass. There is a new outdoor pavement seating area. Food is now run by the Baltic Kitchen and is available all day seven days a week. Beer wise on hand pump there are a greater number of Okell's beers, supplemented by three changing guests and a large selection of craft keg beers.



St Helens CAMRA News

St Helens CAMRA Pub of the Year 2014, The Cricketers Arms

New kid on the block, the Cricketers, Peter Street on the edge of the town centre, has won the Pub of the Year Award 2014, having made a major impact since opening in early 2013. The pub organised a weekend of celebrations with a mini beer festival, cider tasting and a Laurel and Hardy tribute act. The Award presentation was well attended, with CAMRA members from Liverpool, Wirral and Wigan branches joining a large number of regulars to celebrate the achievement with the Cricketers' team of Andy, Denise and Barbara. The Award recognises all their hard work in transforming a struggling keg only pub into a vibrant community local offering seven real ales from local microbreweries. The Cricketers also offers a discount to card showing CAMRA members.

The Cricketers then went on to the next stage of the competition, the Merseyside Regional Pub of the Year judging, where it gained a very creditable Second place – see story page 7. A great achievement for an impressive pub.

St Helens CAMRA Branch Awards Night 2014

The Cricketers was the venue for the St Helens CAMRA Awards Night held on Friday 23rd May. Branch Chair Alan Healey presented the following awards;

Pub of the Year 2014 **The Cricketers**
Pub of the Year runner up the **Turk's Head**
Best Newcomer **the Market**
Pubs of Excellence the **Sportsman and the Brown Edge**

Cider Pub of the Year 2014 **The Glasshouse** (presented at the Glasshouse on Monday 23rd June)

Chairman's Report 2014 on St Helens Branch Successes

Alan Healey, Chair of St Helens CAMRA, reports that the Branch is going from strength to strength with participation levels from members at an all time high and good attendance at meetings. Branch communication has improved with an online newsletter, a twitter account and a revamped website, which includes downloadable pub maps. The number of people submitting beer scores has increased to over seventy. Social Trips have been a massive success. A Mild Trail and a New Members Night were well received, as were Cider Tastings organised by Sandy Gavin, plus a significant increase in the availability of real cider in St Helens.

Issues for 2014 - 15 include raising the profile of the Branch and promoting the real ale message in the town. Having successfully listed the first two pub ACVs, (see below), more pubs now need to be listed. The Branch needs to find a way of staging a successful Beer Festival and steps are being taken.

St Helens Assets of Community Value First Pub Listings

St Helens CAMRA, especially Paul Rooney, have worked with local residents, councillors and the Member of Parliament, to have the **Brown Edge** and the **York** as the first two Branch area pubs to be listed as Assets of Community Value, thereby giving the pubs some added protection under the Localism Act 2011 against any proposals for closure. In particular the ACV gives a six month moratorium on any closure proposal during which the community has the opportunity to bid for the pub or to find another buyer.

Next Branch Meeting Wednesday 9th July at the York, Nutgrove, 8pm (Pub of Excellence).

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PubCo NEWS



After Ten Years
Delay Coalition
Government
Finally Acts on
PubCos

But is the Glass Only Half Full?

Campaigners and licensees have been celebrating the long awaited action to introduce a Statutory Code to regulate PubCos. But after the long wait is it a case of a glass half full?

The Queen's Speech on Wednesday 4th June included a bill to introduce a Statutory Code to regulate the PubCos which should become law before the General Election in May 2015. This follows over twelve months delay by the Coalition Government since it indicated that a Statutory Code was under consideration, and comes more than ten years since the need to curb the power of PubCos was first identified by Parliamentary committees. The intended legislation will give PubCo licensees the right to;

- Request a review if they have not had one for five years and they will have the right to evaluate the information the PubCo used to increase the rent.

- Refer disputes to a new independent adjudicator who will have the power to make a ruling. Setting up the adjudicator will cost £540,000 with annual running costs of £1.8 million which will be charged to the pub industry.

- PubCos with more than 500 pubs will be required to offer rent assessments to current and prospective licensees on request which compare tied and free of tie costs if negotiations break down. The assessments are intended to show licensees whether they are worse off than their free of tie counterparts.

The British Beer and Pubs Association, which has been a cheer leader for the PubCos, has called blue murder over the proposals, which suggests that the Government may be on the right track.

The long 10-year campaign road to reach this result has seen CAMRA contribute to four Business Select Committee investigations, several high profile Parliamentary debates, a Government consultation, an Office of Fair Trading Super Complaint and numerous rallies in Parliament.

CAMRA members and branches have distributed half a million beer mats and posters promoting the campaign in pubs and sent 8,000 letters to MPs on this issue in the last year alone! And the most recent activity saw a petition reach nearly 45,000 signatures which was handed to the Business Department.

In total 212 MPs signed up to support our campaign and debates with MPs such as Toby Perkins, Greg Mulholland and Heather Wheeler were held to promote reforms at the main Party Conferences.

Colin Valentine, Chair of CAMRA, commented; "Thank you to all our CAMRA members, volunteers and supporters, this campaign win would not have been possible without your tireless efforts."

The PubCo campaign has brought together an impressive array of organisations including: **Save the Pub, Fair Deal for Your Local**, Members of Parliament, particularly the tireless efforts of **Greg Mulholland MP** who is Chair of the Parliamentary Save the Pub Group, in addition to CAMRA and a large number of PubCo licensees, including Liverpool's **Carol Ross**, licensee of the Roscoe Head, who gave evidence to the Parliamentary Select Committee review of the PubCos.

However is this a case of a glass only half full?

The planned legislation fails to include some of the stronger measures sought by PubCo licensees and campaigners, including;

- No mention of the right to apply for a mandatory free of tie arrangement.

- No mention of giving licensees the right to a guest beer option to widen their choice of beers beyond those listed by the PubCo, thereby giving their customers a more attractive offer.

- No mention of rents being set at market levels only.

- No mention of the scrapping of the beer tie which requires licensees to only buy their beer from the PubCo at prices which are often twice those on the open market.



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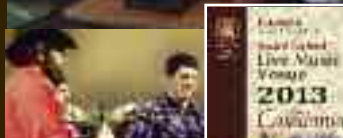
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- * Acoustic Blues (last Sunday of the month)
- * Quiz Night (Tuesday 8.30pm) and much more



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These measures would have given PubCo licensees more protection and the chance to offer customers a better choice of beers at fairer prices, thereby increasing business. The failure to include them reflects the pressure exerted by the PubCos on the Coalition Government. In their absence much will now depend on the effectiveness of the independent adjudicator to set fair rents. After a wait of ten years let us hope that the adjudicator can deliver a fairer deal for licensees.

Save the British Pub

There has been a worrying rise in the rate of pub closures across Britain. Closures have increased from 26 in 2013 to 30 per week in the first half of 2014. At that rate another 1,320 will close before the next General Election in May 2015.

Pub Closures Accelerate from 26 to 30 per Week

Four in Ten Adults Never Visit the Pub

New research released in April by CAMRA shows that 38% of British adults 'never' visit the pub and over a third (36%) of pub-goers visit the pub less often than they did just 12 months ago. The independent research, commissioned by CAMRA, also showed that 80% of pub-goers have never been communicated with by their most local pub but 24% of these people said they would be encouraged to visit the pub more often if they were informed of what events the pub had planned.

CAMRA was also concerned to see regular pub-goers, those that visit pubs 'once a week or more', had decreased from 24% to 15% in the last five years.

Colin Valentine, CAMRA's Chairman said, "In 2009, 27% of adults 'never' visited pubs and in just five years this figure has increased to 38%. Many of these people (40%) state they do not use pubs because they no longer drink alcohol or have reduced the amount of alcohol they drink. Great community pubs are not only about enjoying alcoholic drinks. They are great places to relax, socialise, eat and spend time with the family. CAMRA and the pub industry have to work hard to get this message out and events such as



Colin Valentine

Community Pubs Month give us the platform to do this. Although many pubs excel in communication, it is clear that a lot of pubs need to engage more with their local community if they want to be successful. Organising events that appeal to the local community and communicating what they have planned is a necessity according to this report." CAMRA's previous pub campaigns have highlighted in the media the important role pubs play in our communities. They have raised over £100m for charities, employ over 500,000 people and along with

the brewing industry add £19 billion to the economy.

Colin Valentine concluded,

"Pubs are an important part of our heritage and play a major role in many communities across Britain. We must support them before more close."



Punch Taverns Debt Crisis Deepens

Shares in Punch Taverns slumped by almost a third after the PubCo said it is considering a debt-for-equity swap to reduce its £2.3bn debt mountain. The company, which owns over 4,000 pubs, has been in long-running talks to reduce its debts. The latest proposals will see existing shareholders almost entirely wiped out by a debt-for-equity swap and a share placing that would raise roughly £50m. The proposals have been put together by a group of bondholders that includes Alchemy Partners, Oaktree Capital Management, and Glenview Capital Management. Punch's debt would be cut by roughly £600m, but existing shareholders would be left with just 15pc of the restructured company. Shares in Punch fell 4¼, or 29pc to 10¼p when the company revealed the plan. Punch has warned that it could be forced to default on the debt loans and would have to go into administration, with the pubs falling into the hands of the administrator.

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Liverpool CAMRA Coach Trips



Saturday 12th July. Bishops Castle Shropshire for the annual pubs festival.
Saturday 2nd August. West Yorkshire. Pontefract & Wakefield.
Saturday 6th September. Staveley & Ulverston Cumbria for their pubs festival.
Saturday 11th October and Saturday 15th November – destinations to be announced

Please note coach trips book up very quickly – to enquire about places/cancellations and reserve lists contact social@liverpoolcamra.org.uk Coach departs 10am from Dale Street opposite the Ship and Mitre, return around 9pm – cost £12 for CAMRA members, £15 for non members. It pays to join!

2016 – CAMRA Comes to Liverpool for the National AGM and Members Weekend

Friday April 15th to Sunday April 17th 2016 at St George's Hall Liverpool has been chosen to host the 2016 CAMRA National AGM and Members Weekend, an event which attracts members from across the country, with between one and two thousand people attending not just for the event, but also to spend time experiencing the city and its pubs. Many stay for extra days before and after the event

which starts on the Friday evening and finishes Sunday lunchtime.

A programme of brewery and pub visits and walks will be arranged for the evenings.

This is an opportunity for Liverpool to show itself and its attractions to the delegates and friends. It follows on from the 2015 National AGM which will be in Nottingham.

If you would like to know more about the event and may be interesting in helping with the planning and running then please email contact@liverpoolcamra.org.uk

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The What Pub, Beer Scoring and the Good Beer Guide



You are probably aware of the 'Good Beer Guide', National CAMRA's flagship publication which lists the best pubs in the UK. But what you may not know is how those pubs are selected to appear in the Guide. The answer is that it is largely via beer scores submitted by CAMRA members from all over the country. So if you are a CAMRA member you can send in beer scores, If you've ever wondered why your favourite pub isn't in the Guide, this may well be because you, and others, haven't entered scores rating the quality of beer there. By beer scoring, you can contribute to the process of selection of pubs that go in the Good Beer Guide.

So how do I score the quality of the beer?

You don't have to be an 'expert' to begin scoring your beer. However, it is not about your personal favourite beer receiving the highest scores! You may try a beer that isn't to your normal taste but what you need to

0 No cask ale available

1 Poor. Beer is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment.

2 Average. Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.

3 Good. Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again

4 Very Good. Excellent beer in excellent condition. You stay put!

5 Perfect. Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.

consider is the quality of that beer, how well the pub has kept it and served it, and score it according to the general guide below. It is a simple system of a ten point range from 0 to 5, with half points being used if your opinion of the beer falls between two categories.

How do I submit my scores?

In order to submit your scores you need to login to CAMRA's online pub guide www.whatpub.com either on a computer or by smart phone. Here you will find a list of over 35,800 real ale pubs from all over the UK; these are not all Good Beer Guide pubs, but pubs that serve real ale. In order to start submitting scores via What Pub you need to:-

1. Login. To do this you need your membership number and your CAMRA password which will be your post code unless you have joint membership in which case it may be your surname.

2. You can then search for your pub by name. Be careful here as there are many pubs in the country which share the same name. My advice is to search by the pub name and the town. The What Pub smart phone web page also gives you the option to search for real ale pubs nearby, very useful if you are in an unfamiliar town

3. Once you have found your pub a 'Submit Beer Scores' box will appear on the left hand side of the screen (or on the tab bar underneath the pub photo if you are using a smart phone).

4. Simply fill in the date and your score then as you begin typing the brewery name should automatically appear underneath were you are typing. You do not have to enter the name of the beer your are drinking but if you wish to do so once you have entered the brewery name you should be able to click on the arrow in the Beer box and a drop down list of that brewery's beers should appear. In some cases the beer you are drinking may be new or a one off by the Brewery so may not appear on the list, if this is the case you can simply type in the beer name. Select the correct one click 'submit score' and your score will be entered into the database.

It is as simple as that. An added bonus is that it will keep a record of your scores so you can look back to see what beers you have had and how you rated them.

If you have any queries please feel free to drop me a line, my email address is:- gbg@liverpoolcamra.org.uk

Happy Beer Scoring!

Sonia James-Henry - Good Beer Guide Co-ordinator
Liverpool and Districts CAMRA

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Opinions expressed in MerseyAle
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Liverpool CAMRA Branch Get Togethers

Liverpool CAMRA holds
Monthly Get Togethers – all
welcome. These are an
opportunity to find out what is
happening locally and
nationally in CAMRA. Some
have a theme, a special event
or a guest speaker. You can just
listen if you want, or have your
say and find out how you can
get more involved with the
local Branch – it's up to you,
but do please support these
and keep yourself up to date –
and have a good time doing so!

Wednesday 16th July 8pm Get Together at The Crown in Lime Street 8pm

Meeting at 8pm in the upstairs
room. Join us in this splendid
Grade II listed pub with its ornate
plasterwork ceilings and Art
Nouveau style décor.

Wednesday 20th August – Summer Special Pub Walk Meet 5pm Coffee House or 6pm Edinburgh

We're on the move for this one
with a pub walk from Wavertree to
Lark Lane. Meet at the Coffee
House by Picton Clock at 5pm for a
pre-walk meal or at the Edinburgh
in Sandown Lane at 6pm. For full
itinerary, see website, or email
contact@liverpoolcamra.org.uk
nearer the time.

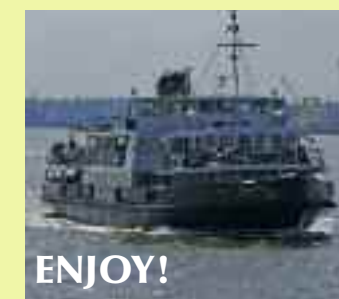
Socials – more summer pub walks!

**Sunday 27th July – Canal pubs
walk from Maghull to Burscough.**
Meet at Liverpool Central station
for 11.10 am train (Ormskirk line) to
Maghull, or meet at Maghull station
at 11.35.

This is approximately a 12 mile walk
but one which proved very popular
when we did it 2 years ago! You
can opt out/in by catching the 300
bus which stops at Halsall Church,
not far from the Saracens Head
pub on the canal.

**Sunday 14th September –
Ferry 'Cross the Mersey pubs
walk from Seacombe to New
Brighton** visiting pubs along the
promenade, Wallasey and New
Brighton

12 o'clock Mersey Ferry from
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office even if you have a Saveaway
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