

MERSEYALE

CAMRA Liverpool & Districts Magazine

Autumn 2014

FREE



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE



www.liverpoolcamra.org.uk

email merseyale@liverpoolcamra.org.uk

print run 11,000



THE LION TAVERN

www.liontavern.com

67 Moorfields Liverpool L2 2BP Telephone 0151 236 1734

The Lion Tavern (Grade II Listed) is Liverpool's finest Edwardian Pub. It is an extravaganza of etched glass, carved wood and beautiful tiling. It has a wonderful ornate wood carved bar plus two cosy side rooms one with a fantastic stained glass dome. The Lion Tavern is an award winning pub serving excellent cask conditioned ales, cider and a large selection of the finest malt whiskies. You can also enjoy a fine selection of tasty food from our food menu.



8 HANDPUMPS

supply a varied selection of prize winning Real Ales (including at least one locally brewed ale) plus hand pulled Cider

Over 80 Malt Whiskies

The Lion Tavern has one of the largest selections of malt whisky on Merseyside

BAGUETTES

- Ham
- Cumberland sausage
- Hot beef & fried onion
- Beef & raw onion
- Beef & tomato
- Cheese (Please choose from our cheese menu)

OPEN SANDWICHES

Homecooked ham served as an open sandwich with mustard mayo & salad

HAND RAISED PORK PIES

Served with mustard or brown sauce

SOUTHPORT POTTED SHRIMPS

Served with salad & toast

SAMOSAS MEAT OR VEGETABLE

Served with mango chutney & Tzaki

WEEKLY LOCALE

See Board for future Real Ales

CAMRA DISCOUNT

Card carrying CAMRA members 10 pence off pint of real ale



FOOD

See the board for selection of good value food

QUIZ NIGHT

every Tuesday at 9.30pm

ACOUSTIC NIGHT

Second Thursday of the Month 8pm

BOB DYLAN SOCIETY

Meets first Thursday of the Month 8.30pm

MEET THE BREWER

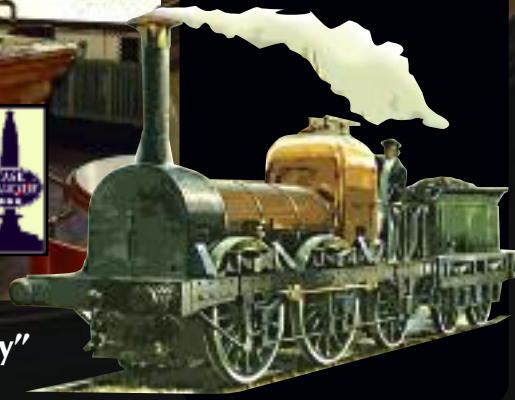
Third Thursday of the Month 8pm

POETRY GET TOGETHER

Fourth Thursday of the Month 8pm

V6 Adventure Club

Meet every Wednesday at 8.00pm



"One of the Hundred Best Pubs in the country"

Daily Telegraph

PUB OF EXCELLENCE CASK MARQUE CAMRA NATIONAL INVENTORY PUB

MerseyAle

CAMRA Liverpool and Districts Branch

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John Armstrong

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Web Sites

Liverpool and Districts

CAMRA Branch

www.liverpoolcamra.org.uk

www.facebook.com

/CAMRALiverpool



@LiverpoolCAMRA



QR Codes page 55

Isle of Man CAMRA Branch

www.isleofmancamra.org.uk

CAMRA national site

www.camra.org.uk

Cover by Dennis Jones

After the style of Dutch painter Piet

Mondrian

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

Welcome to MerseyAle and ManxAle



This edition has something of an 'over the water' theme.

MerseyAle can claim to be CAMRA's only international magazine. Why? Fifteen hundred copies are distributed to every real ale pub on the Isle of Man; that is over eighty pubs, in addition to a number of tourism outlets. The Isle of Man is a Crown Dependency, not part of the United Kingdom or the European Union. It has its own Parliament, the House of Keys, and is fiercely independent. Hence MerseyAle being an international magazine. MerseyAle and our regular ManxAle section (see pages 33-39) have played an important part in raising the profile of CAMRA on the Isle of Man. CAMRA's National Executive held their weekend meeting on Island and saw firsthand the strides that Isle of Man CAMRA have made over the last five years (see page 33). The Island can rightly claim to be 'the Island of Real Ale' with just one of its eighty plus pubs yet to introduce real ale (see page 39).

Wirral

Closer to home we go 'Over the Water' for a Liverpool CAMRA Pubs Walk using the Ferry 'Cross the Mersey to Seacombe, with a walk along the promenade to New Brighton (page 53). We also return to the Wirral Beer Desert debate which clearly brewed up a storm, with readers' comments on the original article and responses from the original authors (pages 28-31). The Wirral story is a reminder of the power of the PubCos over both

drinkers and licensees; a long running topic in MerseyAle. Page 51 updates you on the PubCos Crunch and the urgent need for the stronger measures to be included in the forthcoming Government Bill on PubCos.

Oscars Night

Liverpool CAMRA has its Oscars Awards Night to recognise contributions to real ale and pubs. Pages 8-10 picture the proud winners. Special congratulations to Steve Downing for his substantial contribution to Liverpool CAMRA and the internationally renowned CAMRA Liverpool Beer Festival.

Get Involved

If you are interested in becoming involved with Liverpool CAMRA activities then come along to any of the events listed in the Diary on page 55. You can make use of the Google calendar to keep in touch with events, see page 21. This is the first in a series of articles on involving our local members. If you were an early member of CAMRA and life meant you dropped out of involvement, then page 7 encourages you to re-engage. If you are not a member of CAMRA, then now is the time to join - see page 53 for details.



John Armstrong
Editor

St George's Hall Liverpool Beer Festival

September 25th - 28th 2014

300+ Real Ales & Ciders in the Main Hall

Ales from 100+ Breweries Across the UK

Live Music at All Sessions in
the Main Hall

Continental Beers & Lagers

Locally Sourced Food

*VIP Reserved Tables
Available

Tickets sales and details visit:
www.stgeorghall.liverpoolbeerfestival.com
*Telephone: 0151 933 9660

Organised by



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ORGANIC
BREWERY

Waterloo BEER FESTIVAL

200+ Real Ales & Ciders

20 November 2014 - 23 November 2014 Old Christ Church
Waterloo Rd Waterloo
Buy Tickets Online www.waterloobeerfestival.com
Organised by Liverpool Organic Brewery

8

Sponsored by



The Tony Molyneux Award SPECIAL AWARD FOR CONTRIBUTION TO REAL ALE and CAMPAIGNING

goes to Steve Downing

The Tony Molyneux Award commemorates the campaigning vigour of one of the early Chairs of CAMRA, the said Tony Molyneux, who tirelessly promoted the cause of real ale and real pubs, both locally and nationally, until his untimely death in 2004. He was a larger than life character and the award



is in honour of both the much loved and admired man, and of all his hard work and achievements within CAMRA.

As such, it is a prestigious award and it is not one which is given routinely every year. It is reserved for special recognition of a person who has made a very important contribution to CAMRA, and whose commitment, enthusiasm, and campaigning zeal Tony would have applauded. This year it was decided that there was a particular person who would be a worthy recipient of the Award



Geoff Edwards Steve Downing Ken and Kevin

and it was duly presented to Steve Downing at our Annual Awards event at KIND on July 15th.

Steve has been a dedicated member of the Branch committee for over 25 years, taking on a variety of campaigning roles over that time and being, by far, its longest serving member. But he will be better known to the wider membership and public as the 'face' of Liverpool Beer Festival, our annual event held at the Metropolitan Cathedral Crypt in February. He first joined the Beer Festival committee in 1988 when the festival was held at the Stanley Dock. It was his idea to have free sponsored glasses for the festival there – a first not only here, but within CAMRA as a whole – and the original sponsor was Higsons brewery.

Steve subsequently took on the mantle of festival organiser during the 1990s when the festival was at St George's Hotel (now the Holiday Inn), and has held that post ever since. It was he who arranged its move to its very successful 'home' at the Cathedral crypt in 1999. It is no mean task to have established and maintained the huge popularity of this event, work for which Steve starts planning, with

the help of a committee he chairs, six months in advance.

Even long before his time on the committee and as festival organiser, he was an avid campaigner for real ale and real pubs. He joined CAMRA in 1975, but before he was even legally entitled to go into a pub, he had visited all 60 Strongs pubs in Dorset on his bike and completed their pub passport! After joining CAMRA, he worked at the Great British Beer Festival (GBBF) at Ally Pally for both years it was run there. In 1977 he met Ken Gellion at Imperial College in London, where they were both students. Ken recalls that:

'Steve was an established real ale drinker before I even knew the difference between cask and keg! He started the Imperial

'Steve was an established real ale drinker before I even knew the difference between cask and keg!'

College Real Ale Society soon after we met and arranged a number of somewhat ad hoc

The Dispensary Liverpool

Liverpool CAMRA Pub of the Year 2010 and 2011



Liverpool CAMRA PUB OF EXCELLENCE 2014



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

Good Beer Guide singles out **“the landlord’s impeccable attention to beer quality”.**

Up to **8 BEERS**

Available at any one time kept in superb condition

The Dispensary provides a varied and interesting selection of real ales from the best Micro Brewers in the country. You will be surprised at the choice

RENSHAW STREET, LIVERPOOL
(Formerly The Grapes) 0151 709 2160



brewery tours which are a story in themselves!

Steve also organised a Beer Festival at the college and arranged for an unusual, hard-to-source beer to be available at each of the Society’s meetings. Clearly, he had soon converted Ken to real ale as they completed the Youngs’ 135 pub trail together – and Steve did it a second time!

Ken returned to Liverpool in early 1979 and Steve came up to visit him and worked at the Beer Festival when it was held at Aintree that year. Dave Cunningham, who was then staffing officer, first recalls meeting Steve there and being very impressed by his knowledge and enthusiasm. It seems Steve got the taste for Liverpool as he returned to work at the festival at Albert Dock and

Kevin Buckley, who was then Chair of the Branch, recalls asking him to join the committee there and then! Not long after, Steve came to work and live in Liverpool and the rest is history.

Amongst his early achievements here was his campaigning work in the face of Whitbread’s closure of Higsons brewery and, before its demise, he was one of only three people to complete the Higsons 100 – then all real ale pubs – in 1988. He played a longstanding role as Cains’ Brewery Liaison Officer, which was not without its challenges, particularly towards the end! In 2013 he played a very active part in the successful campaign to save the Caledonia pub and he proposed and spoke to a motion at the National CAMRA AGM in Norwich that concerned

CAMRA developing a strategy to address the health lobby’s anti-alcohol stance in order that a more balanced view is conveyed to the public. This was unanimously carried and has subsequently been acted upon at national level.

Such longstanding commitment to the ‘cause’ – and he shows no signs of giving up, thank goodness! – as well as recognizing the social and fun aspect involved – has made Steve Downing a very deserving winner of this important Award. We congratulate him yet again, and thank him for all he has done and all we know he wants to continue to do in the future in the interests of real ale and pub preservation.

Well done, Steve!
Jean Pownceby

Calling Early Members of CAMRA



Calling Early Members of CAMRA MerseyAle’s 40,000 readers will certainly contain a number of early members of CAMRA who were active in the initial years when CAMRA was fighting to save the very existence of real ale. Thankfully due to your efforts then, that battle was won – see MerseyAle Spring 2014 Liverpool Branch 40th Anniversary article. We are also aware that many other members who joined may have found that life events intervened to limit their involvement in CAMRA, but now may again be able to have the time to consider engaging in CAMRA activities. We now face a new battle - the

very survival of the one place you can drink cask conditioned real ale, namely the British Pub. CAMRA needs you more than ever to help the campaign to Save Our Pubs and to attract new people to enjoy drinking real ale. If you are an early member or one who found responsibilities made it difficult to become involved with CAMRA, and would like to again to contribute to saving real ale in real pubs, then please get in touch with the Liverpool Branch contact by emailing contact@liverpoolcamra.org.uk Nationally CAMRA will be launching a campaign to re-contact early members and to

engage them again with local branch campaigning. There is a massive pool of experience and talent amongst the early members which is currently untapped. This is the chance to engage again, even in small scale activities such as attending Branch Get Togethers, helping distribute copies of MerseyAle to pubs and public places such as libraries (we don’t want to just talk to the converted!), helping with the running of Branch Get Togethers, assisting running a beer tasting to attract new real ale drinkers, or sharing your knowledge of Liverpool pubs past and present. We have an archive of Liverpool pubs which we are always keen to add to and expand and would value your information. Whatever you want to do, we’ll be delighted to hear from you and to welcome you back. So please get in touch by emailing contact@liverpoolcamra.org.uk
Helen McCall
Joined CAMRA in 1976

Liverpool CAMRA, Oscars Night 2014

The Annual Liverpool and Districts CAMRA Awards evening took place at the KIND Centre on a warm July evening. Once again, we were indebted to Steve Yip and his Staff for looking after us and a light buffet plus a variety of beers and ciders from local suppliers was enjoyed by all. In addition to confirming the Branch Pub of the Year and the Pubs of Excellence voted by the Membership, the event seeks to reward licences and individuals who have delivered excellence throughout the year or contributed significantly to local and national campaigns. Occasionally, we reward excellence in campaigning over a longer period by presenting the Tony Molyneux Award that on this occasion went to Steve Downing whose

campaigning activities can probably be traced back to the birth of the local Branch in 1974. Numerous anecdotes were shared with the audience by former Branch Chair Kevin Buckley and Steve's friend and long-standing member, Ken Gellion. Other notable highlights were the presentation of the Roger Kirby Award to Carol Ross for her tireless campaign against unfair practices of major pub companies and the Bar Person of the Year Award co-presented by Branch founder member Clive Pownceby to Kitty McNicholas from the Globe in Cases Street.



Geoff Edwards
Chair Liverpool
and Districts CAMRA



Geoff presents Steve Downing with the Tony Molyneux Award



Carol Ross receives the Roger Kirby Award from Geoff Edwards and Wirral Branch Chair, Dave Goodwin

Ian Garner (Regional Director) with Pat and Jacky Moore of the Liverpool Pigeon CAMRA Liverpool & Districts Pub of the Year 2014



A delighted Dave Williams Dispensary receives another Pub of Excellence Award



Community Pub Award goes to the Volunteer Canteen



Pub of Excellence John O'Dowd the Belvedere

Jay Smith accepts his Cellarmanship Award



Jim Tyson accepts his Cellarmanship Award for his work at the Augustus John



Steve Hughes receives a special Cider Award for Rosie's



Kitty Mc Nicholas of the Globe Award for Bar Person of the Year Presented by Clive Pownceby



Best Live Music Venue Award The Caledonia



Most Improved Beer Range the Masonic in Garston





Tony of the Augustus John with Steve Birks receiving the award for Cider Pub of the Year



Lost the Plot..... and its Heart and its Soul

'a poor player
That struts and frets
his hour upon the stage
And then is heard
no more.'
Macbeth



The New Bistro



Staff from the Crown Hotel with Pub Renaissance Award

Liverpool CAMRA, Oscars Night 2014



All the winners!

When someone tries to replicate a Liverpool icon that was a legend in its own lunchtime they are facing a tough task. A task made even tougher in the case of the new Everyman Bistro when the theatre Executive Director Deborah Aydon gave MerseyAle this statement about the intentions for the new Bistro;

"We respect and love the Bistro as much as you do and its style and ethos are entirely right for the Everyman and for Hope Street now and in the future. Quality beers and wines; affordable prices; locally-sourced food; a friendly atmosphere; great staff; a room for music, poetry and parties; cosy nooks; big tables which bring people together – all these elements and more will be carried forward into the new Bistro.

When the new Everyman opens its doors, I look forward to welcoming you and your members into the new Bistro and the new theatre. I do hope you'll feel we have kept the Bistro's spirit intact. For now, and for the next two years, we will be working very hard to get that right."

The key decision by the Everyman Theatre was to

contract out the Bistro to BaxterStorey, which describes itself as 'the UK's leading corporate restaurateur and independent provider of workplace restaurants, delis and coffee bars'. BaxterStorey is the the biggest brand within catering giant Westbury Street Holdings (WSH), which employs more than 12,000 members of staff across the UK and Europe and has a turnover of over £310

MerseyAle decided to give the new Bistro a full six months to prove itself before passing judgement.

So what is the verdict? Sadly in theatrical terms, it has lost the plot.

So what's gone wrong? Just about everything. Most importantly BaxterStorey's new Bistro has no soul or heart. It is what it is, a soulless and faceless corporate catering operation with disappointing standards of both food and drink. An operation which does not put its own name, BaxterStorey, on what it does.



Very Brown

million a year. It runs catering for the likes of the BBC, Goldman Sachs and the British Museum. Hard to think of a company any further away from the traditions and spirit of the original Everyman Bistro than that.

The original Bistro gained its reputation for its excellent standards combining quality food and drink at affordable prices, featuring well kept real ales and a menu which changed daily.

Gone is the daily changing menu **Gone** is the knowledgeable, friendly, personable service.

Gone is the counter service with its food display

Gone is the hallmark large selection of inspired salads which themselves attracted a loyal clientele.



The WHEATSHEAF

Public House and Restaurant

The Wheatsheaf is a unique building which boasts a number of exciting and homely rooms. The fantastic bar and pool room is perfect for those sports enthusiasts. They contain a number of legendary memorabilia, and two huge big screens to watch the latest sporting events.

Visit us today to avoid missing out on fantastic, food, service and atmosphere.

The pub is a British heritage building, as its historic interior has remained intact for many years which adds to its traditional and architectural importance.

The unique building attracts customers from all over the country and even international visitors. The slanted floors alone, are worth visiting the business for! The traditional and homely decor provides the perfect surrounding for a family occasion. The building boasts a fantastic beer garden and bowling green, which is an ideal place to spend a hot summer's day, and if that wasn't enough the sports bar exhibits a vast range of memorabilia for those sports enthusiasts!

The Wheaty - Real Ale Real Food

visit: thewheaty.com



Visit us on facebook at www.facebook.com/TheWheatsheafOfficial for all the latest updates on what sporting events are being shown at the Wheatsheaf.



Our award winning food is definitely worth visiting the pub for. We serve fresh, fast and home cooked food for every occasion. Our homemade chunky chips are the best around! We would advise to book a table, especially on weekends to avoid disappointment.



Mill lane Sutton Leach St Helens Telephone 01744 813994

Lost the Plot...and its Heart and its Soul

continued

Gone is the tempting display of desserts and pastries that tempted many to try something naughty but nice.

Gone is a great Liverpool institution

What does still feature is real ale. There are four hand pumps which usually offer two Liverpool Organic Brewery beers and two guest ales. Very creditable - until you come to order a pint. Does anyone in the new Bistro know how to serve and look after real ale? On too many visits the real ale has been in poor condition and poorly served. The staff appears to have difficulty with the concept of a full pint, needing repeated prompting to top up the glasses. On some occasions the real ale has verged on undrinkable, which is down to poor cellar skills. The original Bistro was a regular entry in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide. As the saying goes, the new Bistro is unlikely to trouble the scorers.

Equally surprising for an operation in a theatre, the staff appear to be unprepared for the theatre interval rush when people need serving quickly, something the original Bistro always handled well.

So does the new fixed food menu save the day for the new Bistro? Sadly not, and this is the most disappointing aspect of the operation. When the first ten of seventeen entries on Trip Advisor all place the Bistro and the food in the 'terrible' category with comments like 'dreams crushed', 'shocking' and 'left in disgust', the alarm bells should be ringing. When the Sunday Times food Correspondent AA Gill gives the new Bistro a savage slating for an awful spiced cauliflower vegetarian dish, hard and drab like permanent Lent, shin of beef chilli with chocolate assessed as an unexceptional stew made with the fatal error of using sweet chocolate, and a 'local' beef burger with a ball of meat that tasted of nothing, then someone in the kitchen should be sitting up and taking notice. All of this is served in a space that

can best be described as very brown. Unremittingly brown. Depressingly brown.



The verdict must be that the Everyman Theatre got it very wrong giving BaxterStorey the contract. The failure with the Bistro is all the more marked when set alongside the plaudits received for the excellent, sympathetic rebuild of the main theatre building and the exciting and innovatory productions it houses. Everyman Food and Beverage Director Tom Lang needs to check out whether the contract with BaxterStorey has a break clause before the clientele decamp elsewhere on Hope Street.

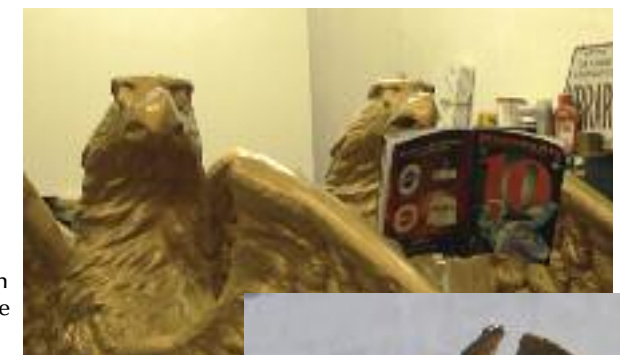
Twa Eagles

- Meet Our New MerseyAle Readers

At MerseyAle we don't just do Twa Corbies, we do Twa Eagles. And not just any eagles. These are American eagles flown from the frontage of what was the first US Consulate in the world opened in 1790, later to be the Eagle pub, in Paradise Street Liverpool, (and now a shop unit in Liverpool One).

The Eagle wooden pitch pine sculpture had deteriorated over time and was taken to the Merseyside Museum Conservation Centre. There the original was restored for display in the Museum of Liverpool and a fibreglass copy was made to go back on the building.

Naturally they both wanted to catch up on Liverpool CAMRA news and what better reading than the 10th Anniversary edition of MerseyAle.





ROOSTERS

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BEERS SUCH AS *Yankee*

SOON STARTED TO ATTRACT THE ATTENTION OF JUDGES
AT BEER FESTIVALS, BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD, WINNING
• **COUNTLESS AWARDS.**

FAST FORWARD 20 YEARS AND WE'RE STILL

🍷 **CRAZY ABOUT HOPS** 🍷
FROM

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BUT THAT'S NOT TO SAY WE DON'T ENJOY PLAYING WITH
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PUB SIGNS

Kittens and Cricket

In every other way Mrs W has been a model wife. But sad to relate there was a single incident in 1983 that has had a significant impact on her life ever since. Undoubtedly, and unwittingly, she contributed to what now regards as a 30 plus year punishment!

Howzat! Kittens and Cricket

In that year we extended our family by acquiring a new kitten and it needed a name. The children offered up some bland and soppy ideas so my nomination of Howzat seemed to me to be unusual and highly suitable. After a pint or two down at the cricket club all the 3rd XI blokes thought it was a great option.

Being a passionate cricket fan it seemed only natural to me that I should want to give it a cricket themed name and Howzat seemed like the perfect choice. I should have greatly relished standing at the kitchen door at midnight and enthusiastically appealing for the moggy to return to its pavilion from the depths of the garden. After a gruelling day in the office it seemed like a perfect way to release any languishing tension before retiring for the night.

Of course, I am bound to underplay the outcome but suffice to say my suggestion was not popular and was not unanimously endorsed. The harsh

reality was that the gloating voting panel (made up of Mrs W and the two kids) rejected my preference point blank! My representations were unceremoniously disregarded and for the sake of family unity the decision was accepted albeit with the reluctance of an opening batsman who had just been given out leg before wicket to the first ball of the match.

The Cricketer

Nursing a bruised ego I retired to the lounge with a pint and picked up a back issue of 'The Cricketer' magazine. I immediately stumbled across an article which mentioned that Nettlebed CC, (it's near Henley on Thames), had arranged a match against Henley Brewery and in a fortnight their opponents were to be the Temperance XI! Talk about one extreme to the other but it did get me thinking about how social drinking and cricket go hand in hand. Half way down the glass I started to recall some of the cricket related pubs I had visited over the years and it was at this stage it occurred to me that I should start compiling a list..... and so the journey started!

Lunchtime Research

Each civil service lunch hour was liberally interpreted as I laboriously worked through each 'public house' section of every Yellow Pages in my local library in an effort to put together a core list. A definition - by association through the pub name or related through the pub sign quickly emerged.



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- LIVE ENTERTAINMENT



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Open 7 days a week from 11am til 12midnight

ROSCOE HEAD

CAMRA Liverpool & Districts PUB of the YEAR 2012



www.roscoehead.co.uk



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

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

6 CONSTANTLY CHANGING GUEST BEERS

Try our delicious home-cooked food served Mon- to Fri 11.30am - 2.30 pm

QUIZ NIGHT

Tuesday Commencing 9.30pm - max 4 players to a team

FREE BUFFET

PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT FOR CASH PRIZES

Tuesday night after quiz

MUSIC QUIZ

Every Thurs Commencing 9.30pm

CRIBBAGE NIGHT

Every Wednesday Evening

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

24 Roscoe Street L1 2SX Tel: 0151 709 4365

Articles published in 1984 and 1985 in cricketing magazines drew national and international interest and the list was expanded. Business meetings, day trips and family holidays suddenly took on a new meaning as unscheduled detours had to be accommodated as potential new pubs had to be visited and sampled! The family invariably, and patiently, stayed in the car as a landlord or customer was interrogated and inns signs photographed. More than three decades later I have far too many box files of paper and a substantial collection of beer bottles, drip mats, ash trays, napkins, menu cards and match boxes. On one occasion I nearly acquired an actual pub sign but it wouldn't fit in the boot and Mrs W was very reluctant to nurse it for the 150 mile home journey!

Over the years the list grew but inevitably it became much more difficult to find new ones but occasionally up popped another and the list swelled to over 300.

Inns and Outs

A book was always a possibility but work got in the way. Eventually retirement created the opportunity



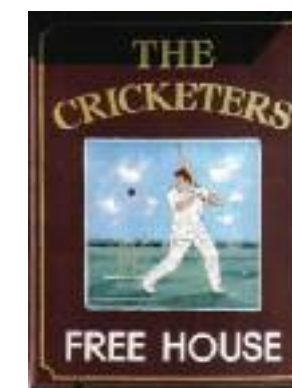
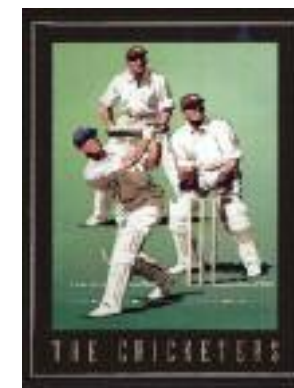
to produce Inns & Outs, an A4 hardback with a reference to 330 pubs and 500 colour photos, with co-author Anthony Collis, from the Inn Sign Society. Speaking engagements the length and

breadth of the country arose.

In Merseyside and the immediate area there are eight pubs featured in the book. Inevitably, following the national trend, some are now closed but the photographs of the inn signs help us to recall a key part of our shrinking pub heritage.

Oh, and by the way, we called the cat Topsy!

Geoff Wellsted





The Belvedere

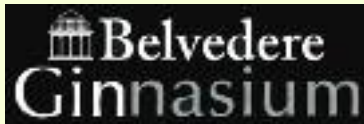
Traditional 2 room community pub
Grade II Listed situated in the heart of
Liverpool's Georgian Quarter. Winner
of CAMRA pub of culture 2011

**Cask Ales from Local and
Regional Brewers**

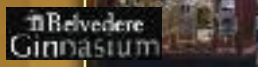
One minute from Philharmonic Hall
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Lined Glasses for Cask and
European Lagers**

Large Selection of Gins available at the



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No Fruit Machines
Real Fires
Real Conversation
Food Available



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SAVING YOUR LOCAL PUB FROM CLOSURE

**With pubs closing at a
rate of 30 a week, it
becomes even more
important to do all you
can to safeguard your
local pub.**

As a first step you can have your pub listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) which gives a six month breathing space should the pub be put up for sale. See the article on ACVs in MerseyAle Winter 2013.

However there is also the issue that pubs can be converted into retail outlets such as supermarkets without any requirement to obtain planning permission. The existing planning law gives no protection to pubs faced with change of use to retail. Over 200 pubs have been closed and converted into supermarkets in the two years between 2012 and 2014.

MP Presses for Change to Planning Law to Protect Pubs

Charlotte Leslie MP for Bristol North West has tabled an Early Day Motion calling on the government to update the rules on pub developments so supermarkets are forced to put in a formal planning application.

According to Leslie current development rights are leaving pubs in England vulnerable to demolition and local people are being denied a say. She is urging the government to bring forward

amendments to the General Permitted Development Order 1995 so any demolition or change of use involving the loss of a pub would require planning permission.

CAMRA is writing to MPs asking them to support the EDM. Go to www.bitly.com/pubsmatter to lobby your MP to support EDM 208.

Councils Should be 'Last Line of Defence' for Pubs

CAMRA and think-tank LGIU (Local Government Information Unit) have launched a report calling on councils in England to be the "last line of defence" to protect pubs. They have also called for more powers to be transferred to local councils from central government.

With 30 pubs closing every week, CAMRA says they desperately need the support of local authority leaders who have the power to stand up for their community, by blocking planning applications from would-be developers.

Recent legislation, such as the National Planning Policy Framework and Community Right to Bid, has extended the rights and powers of councils to protect valuable community pubs, however the extent to which these powers have been adopted varies across the country.

Following interviews, case studies and a survey of councils across the country, the report sets out the number of ways local authorities can help protect pubs.

They include;

- adopting strong pub planning protection policies in local plans,
- listing pubs as Assets of Community Value,
- using Article 4 Directions to ensure planning permission is always required before pubs can be demolished or converted.

Taking Over Your Local Pub – Form a Co-operative.

More and more communities are forming co-operatives to buy their local pub to save it from closure. A Plunkett Foundation report has found that 2013 saw an explosion of community buyouts, with a 64% increase.

Co-operative Pubs 2014: A Better Form of Business also reported there are 27 co-operative pubs trading in the UK (eight opened last year).

To date no co-operative pubs have closed, more than 4,000 people can say they own their village pub and, on average, communities raise more than £200,000 themselves through community shares.

Plunkett Foundation chief executive Peter Couchman said; ***"Pubs are a national institution, and after feeling powerless to protect them, 2013 was a "breakthrough year" for communities wanting to save locals in danger of closure. From small villages to cities, communities are forming co-operatives to save their local and we're delighted to celebrate this."***

The Plunkett Foundation, runs a national co-operative pubs advice line, and provides advice and support to communities looking to form a co-operative to save their local pub.



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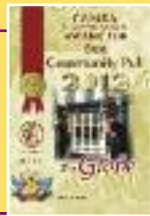
The **Globe** is a small, very cosy traditional two roomed local opposite Central Station and close to main shopping area. It is a very lively pub and is popular with both locals and visitors alike. Watch out for the sloping floor!

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Handpumps

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



MerseyAle Cider News



Wetherspoon CAMRA Vouchers Now Accepted for Real Ciders and Perries

JD Wetherspoon now accept the 50p CAMRA vouchers for real cider and perries. This follows demand from CAMRA members for the vouchers to also be used for real cider and perry. If you encounter any problem using the vouchers for cider and perry email jay.norton@camra.org.uk

Manx Cider Company Treble Sales

The Manx Cider Company which has been producing cider for three years has trebled its sales following the 2014 TT fortnight. The Manx company range of real ciders has caught the imagination of both locals and visitors leading to this substantial increase in sales. Company founder Benn Quirk set up the company in 2012 using Dabinett and Michelin cider apples from the Cornaa estate in

the north of the Island, close to the Manx Electric Railway. Currently four ciders are produced; Jimmy Kickstart a medium cider; Jenny Laidback a sweeter cider; Johnny Jump Up a drier cider; and Jinny the Bitch, named after a Manx Hop Tu Naa story, a medium cider with juice from Manx blackberries.

Involving Our Local CAMRA Members How to keep up with events using Google Calendar

This is the first in a series of articles on how to keep in touch with what's happening in our Branch Area.

Over the next year we have a lot of social events planned, in addition we also regularly publicise events being run by neighbouring branches, pubs and breweries.

You can keep in touch with what's happening through Facebook, Twitter, the website and google calendar. Details of Twitter and Facebook can be found on page ??

The purpose of this article is to explain how you can access our Google Calendar. We have two google calendars set up; 'Upcoming CAMRA events' and 'Non CAMRA events'. These can be accessed by anyone using any of the following methods:

1) Website: Both Calendars are on the home page of <http://www.liverpoolcamra.org.uk/>

2) Google: If you have a google account you can add both calendars to your own google calendar. Firstly you need the ICAL address. This can be found on our website under 'Get Involved', 'Google calendar'

Secondly go to your own Google calendar. On the left is a list of calendars you have.



Choose 'Add by URL'. Copy and paste the ICAL address. Select 'add calendar'. Repeat for the each calendar. Both should now appear in your calendar, but please allow time for them to synchronise. This might take up to an hour.

3) Calendar Apps: Most calendar apps will allow you to add additional calendars provided you know the ICAL address. This is very useful if you have a smart phone. Please check your app help section.

**Hope to see you at an event soon.
Website liverpoolcamra.org.uk**

Mel James Henry



liverpoolcamra.org.uk



Liverpool CAMRA



MerseyAle





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Local Beer Festivals

CAMRA Liverpool Beer Festival 2015 Advance

Notice. Dates are Thursday 19th to Saturday 21st February 2015 in the Catholic Cathedral Crypt. See next MerseyAle and www.liverpoolcamra.org.uk for details of tickets and sessions.

Beers From Another Crypt - the St Anthony's Church Crypt Beer Festival Scotland Road **Thursday 16th to Saturday 18th October 2014.** Around 60 Beers plus Real Ciders. Run by Church volunteers to raise money for church funds. Tickets on sale £5 plus booking fee on Eventbrite

Southport CAMRA the 15th Sandgrounder Beer Festival

Thursday 9th to Saturday 11th October at St John Ambulance Hall, Wright Street, Southport, about three minutes' walk from Southport station via the station side entrance.

Sessions Thurs 6 to 11; Fri noon to 11; Sat noon to 11 More than 50 beers, plus ciders, perries and fruit wines. Food: available at all sessions. Pub and licensee awards: Thursday 9 October at 7.30pm. Entertainment session: Saturday evening: Ormskirk Ukulele Band. Admission on the door: £3 per day, but FREE for CAMRA members - bring your membership card.

Ship and Mitre Wirral Beer Festival, Hulme Hall, Port Sunlight, five minutes walk from Port Sunlight Merseyrail station. **Thursday 13th to Sunday 16th November 2014** Run by Ship and Mitre pub- see advert page 38 - is offering a CAMRA Members Discount of £1 off ticket prices (excludes the Friday and Saturday evening sessions). Book on line on Eventbrite and enter code CAMRA2014 for discount or buy tickets from Ship and Mitre pub and show your membership card.

The West Kirby Oktoberfest Beer Festival Friday 17th to Sunday 19th October.

Westbourne Hall, Westbourne Road, West Kirby, five minute walk from West Kirby Merseyrail station. See MerseyAle Summer 2014 for West Kirby Pubs Round feature and map. 36 Real Ales and 6 real ciders, wine and food available all sessions. Run by volunteers of the Hall Community Trust to raise funds for saving this historic 1923 hall for community use. Sessions Fri and Sat 4 - 10.30; Sun 12 - 6. Live entertainment. Tickets £6 from White Lion pub Grange Road West Kirby, Lattitude Dee Lane or on line with small booking fee from www.westkirbyoktoberfest.eventbrite.co.uk

For St George's Hall and Waterloo Beer Festivals see page 4

Liverpool Civic Day

CAMRA Campaigning

We were initially somewhat surprised but, subsequently, very pleased to be asked to take part in this special day to celebrate 'State of the City' of Liverpool. It was organised by the Merseyside Civic Society and this is the second year it has taken place. The theme this year was the architecture, environment and sustainability associated with terraced housing. Participants included architects, planners, civic activists and a wide range of local organisations with an interest in the future of the city. So - where did we fit in?

The organizers said they were thinking of CAMRA's work on trying to keep pubs open, understanding the historic value of pubs and the 'importance of a good local boozer to the community', plus many community groups now getting together to save their local pub by getting it on a 'local heritage list' or identified as an 'asset of community value.' They also said that, as pubs, brewing and beer are so central to the character of Liverpool, they hoped we'd be interested in taking part by having a stall for the day.

Well, we couldn't really say no then, could we? So we said yes, we'd be involved.

The event was held at the Bluecoat in the City Centre on Saturday June 21st. It comprised workshops and presentations within the main building which obviously most people had planned to attend, but our role was to run a stall in the garden area, promoting CAMRA and its aims, with particular regard to pub preservation. This proved to be an ideal location for



attracting 'through traffic' on a weekend afternoon. We were alongside other stalls representing organizations such as Friends of the Earth and Merseyside Environmental Trust, and it was interesting to exchange information, and find some



common ground. Our main role, however, was obviously to talk to members of the public.

Six members of the Branch committee took it in turn, mainly in twos and threes, to be behind the stall and interest people in our 'wares'. The most prominent of these was a large 'pull up' poster which Carol Cherpeau had obtained from CAMRA HQ that highlighted the process of securing a pub as an Asset of

Community Value (ACV). Various leaflets also represented advice and guidance for local people about saving pubs. In addition, we had copies of MerseyAle and the last of the current edition of our Pub Maps - all of which went - and, of course, CAMRA membership forms.

A number of passers-by engaged in conversations with us and many took away leaflets, so we hope that we raised awareness and interest, and even 'converted' some people! The organisers seemed impressed by our colourful displays and the enthusiasm demonstrated by so many of us turning out to take part, and we hope we made a useful contribution to their day.

It has to be said it was a very pleasant way to spend a warm, sunny Saturday, being in the lovely environment of the Bluecoat garden, with music gently playing in the background - in particular Stan Ambrose and his harp. But we were thirsty by the end of the day and, needless to say, adjourned to the pub when it was over to rectify that situation with a few pints in the Hub and Bridewell pubs nearby!

Jean Pownceby

Liverpool One Bridewell



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We carry a great selection of cask, always well-conditioned, and at a very competitive price of just **£2.40 a pint**

"The Governor" (3.8%) by Marco Pierre White, courtesy of JW Lees, is a firm favourite with our customers (and staff!). So much so, it's a permanent feature at Liverpool One Bridewell.

We also have three other hand pulls with a regularly changing selection of well-kept real ales from various North West brewers such as Liverpool Organic, Melwood Brewery and Lancaster Brewery. Great brews, at a great price. As well as great cask ales we have a broad range of specialist spirits and a fantastic wine list.



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Events email:
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MerseyAlePubnews

CAMRA Discount. The Bear and Staff Gateacre Village is offering a 10% CAMRA discount on real ale for card showing CAMRA members.

Return of Real Ale - A new licensee at the **Liver** at the top end of South Road in Waterloo has introduced real ale again. Up to three beers, usually including one from Liverpool Organic, are available. Waterloo is well worth visiting with its cluster of real ale pubs close to the station.

Ma Boyles has been without real ale for some months. Iain Hoskins



licensee of **Ma Egerton's**, Pudsey Street, off Lord Nelson Street alongside Lime Street, is negotiating to also take on Ma Boyles with the intention of re-introducing real ale and restoring the style of this famous pub as he has done so successfully with Ma Egerton's.

The Pig & Whistle at the corner of Covent Gardens and Chapel Street is serving real ale again after a short gap. The regular Tim Taylors Landlord was being served along with Jennings Cumberland on my last visit.

The James Monro on Tithebarn Street reopened on 21st August with new proprietors, including Keith Tomlinson who revived the Higsons name and beers a few years ago. **Six real ales** are now offered with two beers tied to Marstons but others are free of tie. Early offerings included beers

from **Liverpool Craft, Peerless, Blakemere and Timothy Taylors**. This is now again a pub rather than a restaurant. Pub food such as cheese and meat platters and "Lord of the Pie" dishes is available. One



wonders whether the pub will revert to the name it had when it was a Burtonwood pub, the Brunswick.

Paddy Byrne, the owner of the original Everyman Bistro, is planning to open a new bar in his building the Annexe next door to the theatre, and should be opening during October. This will major on real ales, quality wines and drinks, alongside home cooked food featuring a daily changing menu.

The Exchange Bar on Old Hall Street is now serving three real ales, often from Thwaites.

Ye Hole in ye Wall on Hackins Hey advertises 20 different beers are sold each week. The variety included beers from **Arkells, Felinfoel, Big Lamp and Navigation breweries** were available on my last visit.

Dr Duncans has reopened after being closed for a short time for refurbishment. More seats have been fitted in the bar area.

The old White House pub at the top of Duke Street by the Chinese Arch that had been derelict for years and was famous for the large Banksy mural of a rat painted on the wall in 2004, has finally been refurbished. It is now an American

style diner called the Yard Bird. No real ale, unfortunately, but bottled craft beer is available. Ascot property removed the mural, renovated it and offered it for sale but it failed to meet its reserve price



of £225,000. The mural may now return to Liverpool for display in a public space.

The Baltic Social on Parliament Street held a promotion for Melwood beer (see MerseyAle Summer 2014) during July. The bar has had a hand pump installed by



Thwaites, (see Brewery News page 43), with Lancaster Bomber initially on offer. Mad Hatter bottled beers are also on sale.

Further to the last edition, the **Masonic in Garston**, winner of the Liverpool CAMRA Most Improved Beer Range Award (see page 9), has had three more hand pumps fitted. **Coach House** beers have been the favourite here recently, but other beers that I had not supped before do appear.

Ye Cracke

RICE STREET LIVERPOOL

Wonderful early 19th Century Public House with **6 Handpumps** Serving a varying range of Real Ales Plus a Real Cider **REGULAR ALE THWAITES**

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2010 2011 Daily Telegraph

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Have a drink in John Lennon's Old Watering Hole



Masonic

These included **Brass Balance Rear Gunner and Holborn Tower & Steeple.**

The 23 Club is now selling three 1/3's of their changing 3 cask beers for £3.00.

The White Star, Rainford Gardens, has now got an impressive range of **five changing guest cask beers** plus also its



regular **Draught Bass**. Liverpool Shanty Crew, have a afternoon music session every Wednesday.

The Elephant in Woolton Village has recently reopened after a major refurbishment. It is now owned by celebrity chef Simon Rimmer. The pub has increased its selection to real ales to five which were all in good condition when visited. For details see <http://theelephantwoolton.co.uk/>

The Cobden in Woolton has recently been selling Peerless Pale Ale for £2.20.

The Crosby Bottled Beer Shop, 59 College Road, Crosby has opened in the shop that was formerly Legendary Lancashire Heroes and is being run by John Bardsley, who opened the first LLH in Southport and then the LLH

Crosby branch. Good range of beers from British micro breweries from around the country plus Belgian and German beers. Closed Monday and Tuesday. Open 1-7 Wed-Fri and 10-7 Sat. They are considering offering a CAMRA discount.

@186 Smithdown Road near Kelly's Dispensary, has had a second hand pump installed which is free of Thwaites tie. He is keen on LocAles. One to watch.

The Endbutt in Crosby, one bus stop along Endbutt Lane from the **Liverpool Pigeon**. like many Greene King pubs the licensee has freedom to obtain LocAles. **Liverpool Organic beers** are available. The house beer is supplied by **Greene King**. Hopefully demand will allow the selection of ales to increase, as has happened at the company's premier house in the region, **the Freshfield**.

Another Greene King pub, the **Pump House** at the Albert Dock,



also has a house beer and the freedom to stock **Liverpool Organic beers**.

The Milo Lounge on Lark Lane has replaced its house cask beer from the Bristol Beer Factory, so

real ale is no longer available. I presume the same is the case for other Loungers Group outlets.

The Augustus John Liverpool University will be open at the weekends from September. Footfall in the area will increase with the opening of new university accommodation and the refurbished Student Guild building. It is hoped that the Guild will soon be serving real ale.

Anderson's Bar Closes Suddenly and Mysteriously.

Anderson's, in Exchange Street East, has a "notice of surrender"



attached to the front of the entrance. The notice states that "the locks to the premises have been changed" and "any attempt to enter the premises is prohibited." It is not known what caused the former licensee to surrender the property and hand back the keys to the landlords, Manchester-based JW Lees & Co (Brewers). A spokesperson for JW Lees said they aimed "to reopen the bar at the earliest opportunity with an interim manager while we look for a new tenant." The landlords have offered a £1,000 cash reward to anyone who could introduce a new licensee not previously known to them. The money would be paid out once the licensee had successfully completed their first six months in the pub. Anderson's did sell Lees real ale for some years so there is a possibility of a real ale gain.

Pub News by Tony Williams, Neil Lloyd Jean Pownceby and John Armstrong

The AUGUSTUS JOHN

Known locally as the AJ, the Augustus John is a CAMRA Good Beer Guide listed pub set in the heart of campus, behind Blackwell's bookshop on Brownlow Hill. A warm welcome is offered to students; university staff and anybody else lucky enough to stumble upon us. As many will testify, a night in the AJ is an education in itself!

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- Liverpool and District Branch CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year 2012/2013
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Wirral Beer Desert Article

Readers' Comments

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'.

It can be read on line at www.liverpoolcamra.org.uk
http://www.liverpoolcamra.org.uk/images/Attachments/MerseyAle/MerseyAle_March_2014_web.pdf

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 from 1974 and organiser of the New Brighton Pubs Festival of the 2000s. 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. I have included comments from a brewer, a licensee and a CAMRA member. The authors of the article then give their response. Read on.

MerseyAle Editor, John Armstrong

A Brewers' Comments - What Is the Point of Wirral CAMRA?

Steve Briscoe of Peerless Brewing Company addressed the key points of the article in turn.



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

Peerless Response: The issue of pubs being tied is relevant to all regions nationally not just Wirral. However, most pubcos over the last couple of years have upped their game and now allow purchase of a range of beers. To say that the national brands are not to consumers' tastes is incorrect. What you mean is that you don't like them! These brands are the mainstay of the pub trade and whilst most CAMRA members would certainly choose a well brewed real ale from a microbrewer, many drinkers delight in going to a local pub and knowing they can have a pint of Black Sheep, Directors or Bombardier.

Other great Wirral pubs such as **The Irby Mill, The Telegraph, The Magazine, Gallaghers, The White Lion**, all have ever changing guest ales.

I agree that freehouses are a rarity but this is the same in all regions. Locally the **Fox & Hounds and the Wheatsheaf at Raby** are fine examples of freehouses which support locals with a fine choice of ales.

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

Peerless Response: This is true but again not just specific to Wirral. I have in recent weeks had dodgy pints in Liverpool, Chester, Sheffield and Wirral.

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

Peerless Response: I can tell you that price is a consideration for all pubs. Beers that are popular nationally such as Thornbridge Jaipur can come with a hefty price tag and mean that landlords have to charge a premium. Instead of whingeing, talk to the publican and ask to see his forthcoming choices for guest ales. Many pubs would be only too happy to receive feedback.

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

Peerless Response: This is a massive generalisation. Are you really saying that Wirral is more expensive pub for pub than those in Liverpool or Chester? Beer prices vary enormously due to the type of pub and the range available. I just do not accept that Chester has cheaper beer than Wirral

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

Peerless Response: Again, this is a universal problem not a strictly a Wirral issue. Running a pub is a tricky business and getting it right is difficult.

The CAM in CAMRA is for Campaign. Wirral CAMRA has done precious little in recent years. Liverpool branch by contrast works tirelessly on a variety of industry campaigns.

I believe the purpose of a local branch is to support local pubs and

I say that Wirral CAMRA is pointless.

Steve Briscoe

breweries, hold an annual beer festival and occasionally produce a magazine with news and updates. Wirral CAMRA has not managed any of these activities in recent years. I say that Wirral CAMRA is pointless.

Steve Briscoe

Peerless Brewing Company,
Birkenhead, Wirral
Ex CAMRA Member

A Licensee's Comments

I recently received a copy of Spring MerseyAle from one of my regular customers, a long standing CAMRA member, who was

concerned about the article 'The Wirral Beer Desert'. Upon reading the article, I understood his disbelief!

The article has been written as if all Wirral pubs are bad, yet nineteen of them are in the 2014 CAMRA Good Beer Guide.

Their reasons for what the authors see as a problem are flimsy to say the least. I myself am a tied house, but strive to give as much variety as I can, within my confines. FIVE guest beers, forever changing, from a monthly list of 14 - 20 guest options plus a few standards on request of customers.

I do not purchase my beer solely on cost to myself and charge a very reasonable price for them, sometimes at well below what would be seen as a fair profit margin, unlike some of the freehouses in the area that charge 20p plus more than the majority of tied houses in the area.

Solving the problem? I have harassed my pubco for the last five years for them to allow me to stock a local ale, to no effect. Their reasoning, fair or not, is that Heineken is a brewery, not just a middle man. Most good tenants / lessees know that Real Ale is the predominant growth area of the



brewing and pub industry, but articles like this does nothing for The Great British Pub in general.

The quality and condition of my ales is second to none as I myself am a Cask Ale drinker and will not sell what I wouldn't drink myself. Funnily enough, one of the article

writers is always complimenting me on my selection and quality! Apologies for maybe ranting but when you give your all, this type of article is extremely upsetting.

Avril Roberts, Licensee Stanleys Cask, (GBG 2014) Wallasey.
Awarded **CAMRA PUB OF THE SEASON 2013** Spring.

A CAMRA Member's Comments -

'Wirral Wandering Minds'

As a former Chairman of CAMRA Wirral and ex-Wirral Committee member, the 'The Wirral Beer Desert' article should perhaps have been presented under a 'Wirral Wandering Minds' column. From my own thoughts and feedback received from well outside the Wirral it has given totally the wrong impression of the Wirral pub scene.

If this piece had been aimed at Pub Cos I could agree with perhaps half of its content, however, it seems mainly to be aimed at licensees, who for the best part work long unsocial hours and strive to make a living in a competitive sector under difficult conditions.

Firstly, the article states that Wirral is a beer desert. I would dispute this statement I have 5 good pubs

It has given totally the wrong impression of the Wirral pub scene

Allan Machin

within close proximity of Pensby. If I cared to visit Hoylake or West Kirby I could drop in to several more and if I ventured to New Brighton / Wallasey at least 4 more good pubs are located. That leaves the Birkenhead / Bebington / Oxtton districts where at a rough count around 8 good pubs can be found. If you then count the local countryside, there some gems which would easily take a 'good' pub count beyond 25 hardly a beer desert.

The article states that quality is frequently a problem. If the writers were more specific about numbers of pubs where this applies the comment would make more sense. I would refute that many pubs simply buy beer based on cheaper prices. Where is the evidence that many pubs follow this practice? It states that some pubs are supposedly not offering reasonable and competitive prices. With regards to competitiveness on price I would argue that Wirral is on a par with Liverpool and Chester.

Some pubs do carry too many hand-pumps but have CAMRA actually given their opinion to these particular pubs?

I was disappointed in both the tone and the generalisation within the article and feel it did nothing to serve the interests of real ale on the Wirral where good pubs can be found..

I note that Wirral CAMRA do not fill their Good Beer Guide allocation and am aware that this is mainly due to Wirral CAMRA members' apathy in not submitting pub scores to the Branch. The Branch therefore has limited information in respect of many pubs on which to base its submission to the guide. It's about time local members made more effort, perhaps by going on line and entering scores using the national system, or by emailing the local contact using the Wirral system or actually turning out at meetings once a month.

Allan Machin - Former Wirral CAMRA Chairman & Beer Festival Organiser

Editor – We received many comments of similar ilk to those above. Apologies to those people not quoted. The comments printed are representative of the many received.

Response to the Comments By the Authors of The Wirral Beer Desert Article

Response from Wirral CAMRA Branch Chair Dave Goodwin



The original Wirral Beer Desert article was written in a sense of frustration and a wake up call to the local pub industry, particularly the pub companies (PubCos). I agree there are many good pubs in Wirral and the original letter made it clear there were exceptions to the general criticisms being made. The article also made some constructive suggestions about how to reduce some of the problems. The comments from the licensee of Stanley's Cask illustrate the problems she and many others face in trying to provide customers with a choice of interesting beers, particularly those brewed locally; many other licensees are less committed than she is and as a result don't offer the choice. I know of pub company area managers telling licensees they should remove that "local rubbish" and instead take national brands which are supported by heavy advertising and promotions, so there are clearly pressures from the pub companies to restrict choice.

Dominance of the PubCos on Wirral

The comments from Peerless in general agree with the comments made in the article but suggest the Wirral is no worse than anywhere

else. The fact is that just 60% of Wirral's pubs serve any real ale, one of the lowest percentages in the country compared with a national average of 80%. Because of a local history of brewery takeovers, a massive 85% of Wirral's pubs are owned by pub companies or the large brewers and this severely restricts the choice of beers available, more so than elsewhere in the country. There are perhaps only 6 true free houses with 8 further pubs belonging to small pub companies which are effectively free of tie; this is a far smaller proportions than the national average. These factors affect the choice of beer available across the Wirral and particularly restrict the availability of local beers. It is not that we don't like the beers but rather that many of us don't want the same beers all the time.

Inconsistent Beer Quality

On quality of beer served, this is not a criticism of big brand beers, most of which when kept well are very enjoyable. The problem is with inconsistency in quality in many pubs and this is the main factor which stops any pub being selected for the Good Beer Guide. Yes of course we want more contributions to our beer scoring system either using the CAMRA Wirral website or by using the National Beer Scoring Scheme accessible through WhatPub (and contrary to some comments, we do take these scores into account).

The criticism of prices was perhaps harsh. The letter was not suggesting that prices were higher than Liverpool or Chester but those are city centres where you might expect prices to be higher than Wirral; and Wirral does have a few pubs which charge London prices!

What Wirral CAMRA is doing

Finally, turning to the criticism of CAMRA Wirral for not running a beer festival or producing a

newsletter, we are a very small group of active volunteer members who all have other things going on in their lives – including two of the current committee who are involved in CAMRA nationally. Because of the apathy of many local members we do not have sufficient active members to write articles, edit, obtain advertising or distribute a magazine on a regular basis. Instead we include local news on our website. As for beer festivals, finding a suitable venue at a reasonable price and then

We are a very small group of active volunteer members who all have other things going on in their lives
Dave Goodwin CAMRA Wirral

jumping through all the increasingly complex legal, health and safety, insurance and administrative hoops is difficult for such a small group. We do what we think is possible but it is better not to carry out these activities unless we can be sure of doing them well. What we have achieved in the last 12 months is to improve our website and survey every pub and many clubs and bars in Wirral for the online comprehensive pub guide, WhatPub, achieving 100% coverage of our real ale pubs before any other branch in the region.

Perhaps the apathy we see from CAMRA Wirral members and the

declining pub trade in Wirral is an indication that many drinkers have already voted with their feet and already do a substantial part of their pub going elsewhere – a trend we would like to reverse by improving quality and choice in Wirral pubs.

Dave Goodwin
Wirral CAMRA Branch Chair

Response to Comments from Bob Lockhart



Our Wirral Beer Desert article has certainly created some reaction! With the exception of having obviously upset Avril, licensee of Stanley's Cask, I would say, 'job done', as the whole idea was to raise debate on a subject close to real ale drinkers hearts and which also causes the three signatories to the article immense frustration. It was never intended to upset those licensees, many of whom do a good job day after day, serving excellent real ale at the lowest price

they can achieve. I am happy to state that Avril has always done that and Stanley's Cask certainly deserves its place in the Good Beer Guide and any further accolades that come its way.

Avril herself confirms the problem she has in obtaining the beers she wants from her PubCo that she and many of her customers want. That was a central point of the article. The Wirral suffers more than most areas of the country in having so many pubs tied to PubCos. The PubCo model is a disease to real ale drinkers like myself who look for variety as well as quality in what we drink.

The PubCo model is unacceptable. There has never been in modern times so many breweries in the U.K. offering drinkers such a great range of products - but how many of these beers are to be found on the Wirral? Precious few!

Keep the debate going via MerseyAle and over the bar counter. Your local licensee needs badgering for the beers you would like to drink, (there is a comprehensive list in each edition of the Good Beer Guide). Support those licensees, like Avril, who do their best to keep their customers happy! Don't accept second best, as many drinkers seem prepared to do.

Bob Lockhart
Founder Member of Merseyside CAMRA in 1974 and Organiser of the New Brighton Pubs Festivals 2000 to 2004

The Good Beer Guide

is fully revised and updated each year and features pubs across the United Kingdom that serve the best real ale. Now in its 42nd edition, this pub guide is completely independent with listings based entirely on nomination and evaluation by CAMRA members. This means you can be sure that every one of the 4,500 pubs deserves their place, plus they all came recommended by people who know a thing or two about good beer.

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Two Big Boosts for IOM CAMRA

Boost 1 – 2015 CAMRA IOM Beer Festival Moves to Villa Marina Thursday 9th to Saturday 11th April 2015

..... and will run throughout the day!
The CAMRA IOM Beer Festival has been so successful that it has outgrown its home for the last four years, the Masonic Hall Douglas, and for 2015 is moving to the prestigious venue of the Villa Marina on Douglas promenade. The Villa was the venue for the 2012 CAMRA National Members Weekend which helped put the IOM on the CAMRA map. The Villa offers more space, a much higher capacity which will overcome the need to queue and easy public transport access for festival goers. It is also likely to attract more visitors to the Island from Across, keen to stay several days and sample the best the Island has to offer in beers, pubs and breweries. More details in the next MerseyAle.

Boost 2 - CAMRA National Executive Meet on IOM

In late June The Isle of Man branch of CAMRA hosted a visit by the CAMRA National Executive and the Regional Directors, (collectively



CAMRA National Chair Colin Valentine with Rob owner of Hooded Ram

known by the unfortunate acronym of NERDS), to hold a weekend meeting to plan national CAMRA business.

The National Executive is the body responsible for overseeing CAMRA and its members are elected by the membership. The NE members are volunteers and are also legally Directors of the organisation. CAMRA is organised into over 200



NERDS

Branches, the Isle of Man being one, which are then grouped into sixteen regions. Each of the regions has a Regional Director elected by the Branches in their region. The RD links the branches with CAMRA nationally. The Isle of Man is part of the West Pennines Region containing Branches in Cumbria and Lancashire. Liverpool is in the Merseyside and Cheshire Region.

The CAMRA organisation has over 165,000 members and is still growing. The CAMRA Members Weekend and AGM set the policy for CAMRA and this is then developed by the National Executive and implemented by the paid staff based at the CAMRA HQ in St Albans, led by a Chief Executive.

The National Executive members are located throughout the British Isles. The majority have day jobs aside from their voluntary NE role. They typically have four weekend business meeting gatherings through the year, as well as meeting up at core events such as the Great British Beer Festival and National Members and AGM Conference weekend each April. The N.E.R.D. meetings are held in different locations throughout the British Isles, both to promote CAMRA campaigning and real ale across the countries & counties, and also to split the travel burden for the volunteers who often live hundreds of miles apart. Some time ago it was decided that The Isle of Man was to be the June 2014 venue for such a meeting.

The Isle of Man N.E.R.D. Meeting

The majority of the group were booked into the Wellbeck Hotel in Douglas, which is a welcome new

addition to the real ale scene on the Isle of Man, usually featuring two beers from Okells over the summer months. The Regional Directors held their meeting at the Heron & Brearley Woodbourne

Hotel, in Douglas, one of the islands premier cask ale outlets. This coincided after the meeting with a presentation of a CAMRA award to licensee Andy Harris, in recognition of the pub once again being runner up in the 2014 CAMRA Isle of Man Pub of the Year awards. As previously detailed in Mersey Ale, the forte of the Woodbourne is the superb condition in which the beers are consistently kept, along with Andy's excellent selection of guest ales to complement the Okells range. It must be remembered here that as a managed house, the landlord has a smaller list of guest beers from which to order from than would be the case in a free house. However, the balance in strength and range of styles selected is both imaginative and second to none on Island, over the course of a year. There was excellent support from several of the H&B team who visited the presentation and meeting for the event, and particular thanks go to them for taking the time out to support the weekend, all of which helps greatly in our lobbying for the industry from an IOM point of view.

The National Executive headed for an early evening social at the new Hooded Ram brewery at Hills Meadow (Douglas), where they had their first opportunity to sample Hooded Ram beers, and meet local CAMRA members outside the formal meetings for informal exchange of ideas and campaigning relating to matters on the island and beyond. This was followed by an extra meeting to normal, held in the tiny back room of The Rovers Return,



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where the National Executive discussed the recruitment of a successor to Mike Benner, the long serving CAMRA Chief Executive who had recently stood down. On Saturday, two venues on Douglas quay were used for business meetings. The Regional Directors used the facilities of Da Vinci's for their meeting, whilst the National Executive hired the British Embassy room for the day, a superbly refurbished upstairs room in The British Hotel on Douglas North Quay.

The afternoon was a joint meeting of the NE and the Regional Directors held in The British Embassy. It is traditional for partners and those not required at meetings to have an



organised trip, and on this occasion on the Saturday afternoon a small number visited Bushys Brewery for a guided tour by owner Martyn Brunnschweiler of the Island's second largest brewery situated a



few miles south of Douglas. They were joined by a small group from Cumbrian CAMRA branches, who have for some years been visiting the Island in the summer months and enjoying the Island's hostelries and unique transport systems. Both UK groups subsequently dispersed for the evening, with some heading to Castletown. Many stayed on Island for another day or two, but with work pressing, some had to return to U.K. on the next morning's Heysham boat.

All in all, the weekend proved a very positive one, both for exchange of ideas, and campaigning, for which the Isle of Man branch is keen to highlight to government the complexities of operating in the brewing and pub trade from an island location. For a fresh product



like cask ale, the seventy mile stretch of water can impede growth opportunities, both in terms of logistics of crossing the water, but more importantly costs of transport. Additionally, local members can frequently be isolated from the UK CAMRA, and so such a visit by the NERDS proved very useful. What was hugely pleasing was the



very positive response from Heron & Brearley, Bushys and Hooded Ram in presenting the islands industry favourably to the national group on this rare visit, and assisting CAMRA



IOM in that process, as well as seeing first-hand the workings of the CAMRA national leadership group. Perhaps most refreshing of all from an ordinary members point of view,

was to see the work put in by the National Executive and Regional Directors. Additionally I can report that on several occasions during the planning of this event the finance Director had intervened strenuously to keep a tight control on costs during the weekend, which is something an ordinary member would not normally become aware of, but no doubt be appreciative of.

IOM CAMRA Pub of the Year 2014 Results

Once again the **Whitehouse** in Peel has won the **Isle of Man CAMRA Pub of the Year award**, with the aforementioned Woodbourne Hotel



(Douglas) and Sidings (Castletown) being runners up. Some of the National Executive managed to attend the Award presentation at the Whitehouse, held on the Sunday of the N.E.R.D weekend. Congratulations to licensee Neil Keig and family once again, the Whitehouse having previously achieved a hat trick of IOM Pub of the Year Winner Awards. The voting was the tightest for some years, with all three pubs being within a whisker of the top spot.

The Whitehouse now goes forward to the next round of CAMRA's National Pub of the Year competition, which is the judging for the West Pennines Regional Pub of the Year Award. The other finalists are both brew pubs, the **Prince of Wales** at Foxfield, Cumbria, a station on the Cumbrian Coast railway line, and Lancashire's **Ye Horns Inn** at Goosnargh. Ye Horns is an 16th century CAMRA National Inventory pub, with a highly unusual seating area located behind the bar, and The Prince of Wales like the Whitehouse, is a long established bastion of real ale.



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Hooded Ram Brewery to Triple Production with New Brewing Plant

The recently established Hooded Ram brewery in Douglas has been so successful it is to install a new larger



brew plant which will enable it to increase production three fold. This is the third upgrade implemented by owner/brewer Rob Storey. His first plant was five barrel capacity which he soon replaced with the current ten barrel plant. The new forty barrel plant is being built and installed by Oban Ales and should be operational



by the end of September. With the existing plant at capacity the new equipment is urgently needed to meet the growing demand. It can also do half brews which will aid production of experimental beers. Beer Range. Rob describes himself as a Hop Man and he uses seventeen different hop varieties across his different beer recipes. Currently his beer range consists of ten beers; his personal favourites, **Amber Ram 4.3%** and **Amarillo Ram 3.6%**, then **Rams Head Bitter 3.7%**, **Hop Around the Flock 4.1%**, **Sovereign Ram Pale Ale**, the IOM CAMRA Beer of the Festival 2014 **Little King Louis IPA 6%**, **Fat Ram 4.5%** described as 'a Colonial Not So Pale Ale', **Jack the Ram Stout 4.7%**, and **Six Horny Ram 6%** which is made with six malts and six hops from six counties. Additionally he brewed **Full Throttle 4.3%** as a TT special for the Creg ny Baa pub which was so popular it will be brewed again for the MGP (now

called the International Festival of Motorcycling). He usually has a core range of three beers, Amber, the Bitter and IPA plus a floating fourth. Rob has bought four wooden whisky barrels, two bourbon and two malt, with the aim of brewing beers for maturing in wood. He is considering a 14% rich hoppy beer for bottling. Rob has started bottling his beers as bottled conditioned and has just signed a contract for these to be sold in Oddbins shops Across, including the Allerton Road Liverpool branch. The IPA will be the first to be on sale. Hooded Ram has made rapid progress as Rob produced the first brew with the help of ten friends as recently as 17th September 2013. Rob himself has made rapid progress having completed the BrewLab brewing course in February 2013 and leased the brewery premises in the Summer of 2013.

Success for Hooded Ram Friday Night Tastings

Shortly after opening Rob introduced Friday Night Tasting Sessions at the



brewery. These have become very popular with up to ninety people attending. A bar with ten hand pumps dispenses a large part of the Hooded Ram range with spirits, wine and soft drinks also available.

Betty the Food Van

An added attraction at the Brewery Nights is Betty the Food Van, a 50s vintage caravan selling pies and mash, including a steak and ale pie made with Hooded Ram Bitter and a creamy chicken pie. The venture is



the brainchild of Vicky Quirk who has returned to the Island from time in Bristol working in financial services, feeling that life had more to offer than pushing money around. Vicky commented;

"We want to produce good quality food for events and festivals, using quality ingredients, Manx wherever possible. We use Manx meat and Manx flour for the pies. We wanted to do something better and more interesting than the average burger which is the usual festival fare. Pie and Mash freshly made from scratch using quality ingredients seemed the answer and it has been very popular at the Brewery Tasting Nights."

Read more of the Quirk family business ventures in the Cider News page 21, as Vicky's husband Benn Quirk is founder of the Manx Cider Company.



Ram Roams the Rails on the Dining Car Train

Hooded Ram beers are now available on hand pump on board the recently introduced Dining Car train on the Isle of Man Steam Railway. The carriages were built in 1905 and refurbished in 2013 by the Railway and the Dining Car is billed as, 'one



of only a handful of narrow gauge dining cars in the world.' There are a range of dining services from the Manxman Dinner Service to Sunday Lunch, Pie and Mash train and Afternoon Teas. See the Steam Railway website leaflet and timetable for details. The bar car now features the Hooded Ram hand pump which

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serves the beer poured bright in the cask just before departure, plus the bottled conditioned beers may also be on offer.

Doghouse Brewery Uncertainty

At the time of going to print, there was some uncertainty on Island in relation to Doghouse brewery activity. A party of over thirty from the U.K. had arranged to visit the brewery in late July for a tour, but were unable to contact the brewer Paul Mercer, and were not able to access the brewery upon visiting. Doghouse brews were available in several outlets towards the end of July, but became increasingly rare towards the end of the month. In early August all looked as normal on the Doghouse website, and a number of Doghouse stalwart outlets, such as The Waterfall at Glen Maye, were still displaying the now familiar Doghouse large banners. A further update will appear in next issue of MerseyAle.

IOM Pub News

New Douglas Central Promenade Real Ale Cluster

Elsewhere there has been again more positive news in terms of real ale and its reach. As well as Hooded Ram now having introduced real ale to the Dining Car of the steam train, and the aforementioned Welbeck Hotel now stocking two ales in the busier

summer months, the nearby Ascot Hotel in Douglas has also introduced a hand pump serving Okells MPA at the times of visits. Along with the HQ bar, there is now a cluster of real



bars within a few yards of each other. Much of the work and equipment for these new outlets has once again been driven by Heron & Brearley, who have in the last two years led very much from the front in



reintroducing cask ale to many smaller outlets across the island, proving once again it can be done. With the exception of only two locations, cask has been able to be sustained in all the new outlets to date, so the demand for real ale is there.

Farmers Arms Flattened

Sadly as long expected the Farmers Arms in St Johns has vanished. Mothballed for many years, the building was reported to be in poor structural condition, and it was always thought to be unlikely to return. It has been demolished with the site being completely levelled off. Initially called The Central Hotel, it had been built when the now defunct Steam Railway line from Douglas to St Johns had been constructed, but being near the cattle market, had always been known as the Farmers Arms.

The Trafalgar in Ramsey for Sale

For many years a stalwart real ale pub and a winner of the CAMRA IOM Pub of the Year Award, it is up for sale at a price of £670,000.

Will the Viking Castletown Make Island 100 Per Cent Cask Ale?

There is in addition some hope that The Viking in Castletown, the only traditional pub on island left not to stock cask ale, may yet do so in the near future. Talks are underway with Hooded Ram for changes to the cellar to enable their cask beers to be offered. With the conversion of the Baltic Foxdale to cask ale, the Viking would make it 100 per cent real ale in Island pubs.

*David Halliwell MerseyAle IOM Correspondent
Hooded Ram reporting by John Armstrong*

Raise a Glass Where Ringo First Played with the Beatles –

Hulme Hall Port Sunlight

Having held our own beer festivals within the Ship and Mitre for many years, and been regular attendees of Liverpool Food and Drink festivals, our aim has always been to 'go it alone' and host our own beer festival.

November 2014 sees us sailing across the Mersey to Wirral's Hulme Hall, setting down anchor for the first ever **Ship & Mitre Wirral Beer Festival**. With a focus on local breweries we are planning on having 100 real ales (details of which will be released over the next few months), in addition to a selection of Continental bottled beers and a cider bar. Everything you would expect from the Ship & Mitre in the attractive surroundings of Hulme Hall, Port Sunlight.

Historic Location

Used as a venue for large social events, Hulme Hall is an ideal venue for a beer festival, set in an historic location. Built 1901-1902, Hulme Hall was originally a

girl's dining room when Port Sunlight was a village for Lord Lever's soap factory workers, and named after Lever's wife, Elizabeth Ellen Hulme.

Port Sunlight has an international reputation as an early and classic example of English philanthropy. Built between 1899 and 1914, William Lever personally supervised the planning of Port Sunlight Model Village to house his employees. Enlisting the work of nearly thirty different architects, each block of houses was designed by a different architect, and each of the 800 houses is unique. Until the 1980s, all residents were employees of Unilever and their families.

During the First World War, Hulme Hall was used as a military hospital and a hostel for Belgian refugees. Ringo Starr's first appearance with the Beatles was at a performance here on 18th August 1962.

Today, Hulme Hall is the Wirral's largest conference, banqueting and wedding centre – and now home of the first **Ship & Mitre Wirral Beer Festival!** See ad **page 38 opposite.**

Ben Garner at the Ship and Mitre

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Brewery news

Connoisseur Brewery St Helens

The brewery is the latest venture of Mark, Kevin and Gillian Yates, who readers will recall from their time at the Baltic Fleet and at the Albion Warrington. Mark commenced brewing Connoisseur beers whilst at the Baltic Fleet in Liverpool. The Albion was intended to be a brew pub with the equipment from the closed Fenland Brewery, Kent, located in the coach house at the rear. Planning and listed building constraints lasting several years meant that the brewery did not reach production, and Mark, Kevin and Gillian have relocated to a unit in Wolverhampton House 121-125 Church Street behind the Rendezvous pub in St Helens.

Kevin Yates reports;

"The ex Fenland five barrel brew plant is now installed in St Helens, the license is approved and the plan is to launch the Connoisseur beers in early September 2014 with a novel Connoisseur Beer Crawl on Friday 12th September. We will be launching by way of a pub crawl of the Rendezvous, Counting House, Phoenix, Cricketers and finally The Turks Head. There will be a different Connoisseur beer at each pub and up to 4 at the Turks Head, where most of the evening will be spent. All are welcome and we will be meeting at the Rendezvous at 6:30 and aiming to arrive at the Turks at 8:30 for a



Mark Yates

meet the brewer session. There will be approx 50 mins of walking time, so some may decide only to meet at the Turks."

It is hoped the Prince Alfred and the Rendezvous will introduce real ale including Connoisseur beers (see MerseyRALE St Helens City Line article pages 44-47).



A clever idea to encourage new outlets to try the beers, is for the brewery to invest in a number of small pin size barrels. These enable a pub to keep a smaller volume of real ale in good condition whilst trade builds up to justify a full size nine. This could be a significant means of further increasing the number of pubs in St Helens that offer real ale. The beers planned include the most popular from the earlier Connoisseur range,

Aurora, Mark's Bloody Mild, Ruby, Stout and Porter. Mark also owns the Fenland beer recipes and is likely to brew their **Smokestack Lightning, Sparkling Wit and Suffolk Punch.** Together a range of around seven beers is envisaged.

The five barrel plant can brew three times a week and it is intended to set up a Tasting Room and shop at the brewery with an open day once a month on a Saturday. Longer term ambitions are to establish a micro pub showcasing the Connoisseur beers. A website is planned but for now there is a facebook page – [facebook.com / connoisseur.brewing](http://facebook.com/connoisseur.brewing)

New Brewery for Wigan

A new brewery has started test brewing in Wigan. Martland Hill brewery is a six-barrel plant set up by Paul Wood – a keen home brewer, who has turned his passion into a business after training with other breweries. Paul also used his building and joinery skills to construct the brewery from the ground up. After it has begun distribution, Martland Hill will be open for brewery trips.

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Brewerynews contd



Thwaites Brewery to Move to New Blackburn Site

Lancashire brewer Daniel Thwaites has announced it has found a site in Blackburn for its new brewery and head office.

Thwaites CEO Richard Bailey said; "We have been looking for a new site for more than two years, and Sykes Holt, Mellor Brook fits perfectly". "It has always been hugely important to us that we stay close to Blackburn, which has been our home for more than 200 years, and we have been very aware we would like

There are no immediate plans or the existing Thwaites site, as the intended Sainsbury's supermarket development is not going ahead.

The Things They Say – Cains Liverpool

'Cains' Chief Executive Sudharghara Dusanj said that the company would look to get that new



craft brewery up and running earlier than originally planned – and in time for next year's IFB showcase in Liverpool, which runs from June to July 2014.

He said: "We're working hard and really starting to move on our craft brewery on site. The IFB is a good time to showcase a local business. We're planning to have the brewery up and brewing beer by next year's International Festival of Business 2014.



to safeguard jobs in the area, so I am very pleased we have been able to find a site that is only a few miles away, where we will continue to employ over 200 people in our head office across our brewery, pubs, inns and hotels.

Our distribution team of 120 people will be staying where they are at our depot in Blackburn for the foreseeable future."

Completion of the purchase is expected within six months allowing the current owner time to vacate the site. In that time, the brewer will be seeking planning consent for the new brewery, head office and visitor centre for early 2015.

Administrator Begbies Traynor has reported that it believes there will be some sort of payment to creditors but "the timing and quantum" are unknown at this stage. The administration itself cost £102,858 in the first year. The administrator reported that £603,702 of book debts owed to Cains has been recovered.

The administrator stated: "On appointment the company was holding significant stocks of lager and beer, both own-branded (mainly Cains) and supermarket-branded for particular supermarkets. We made approaches to all the supermarkets but none were able to commit to purchase the remaining stocks either because the quantities were too low to make it worthwhile or because the sell-by dates were relatively short. Additionally, the stock was all duty-suspended

the company owed unsecured creditors an estimated £44,628,841

meaning that if the liquidators were to sell any stock we would have to account for the duty element to HMRC which, because the duty element was significant, means that the margins to be made were slim. We were able to negotiate sales of some of the non-supermarket stock to four unconnected parties for the combined sum of £43,440 plus VAT (before duty). Some of the Cains stock was sold to Freshfields, a connected party for £9,500. We worked closely with HMRC who allowed the liquidators additional time to sell as much of the stock as possible but once we exhausted all possible avenues the remaining stock was seized by HMRC under their statutory powers."

"That's the goal – I'd like to have the brewery on our site by this time next year (August 2014)".

Liverpool Post interview August 2013

September 2014 – Anyone seen a Cains craft brewery?

Cains Administrator's Report August 2014 - Robert Cain Brewery owed unsecured creditors £44.6m:

A long-awaited report by administrators of Liverpool-based Robert Cain Brewery, operated by Sudharghara and Ajmail Dusanj, shows the company owed unsecured creditors an estimated £44,628,841 when it went into administration in June 2013 – although there were no secured creditors.

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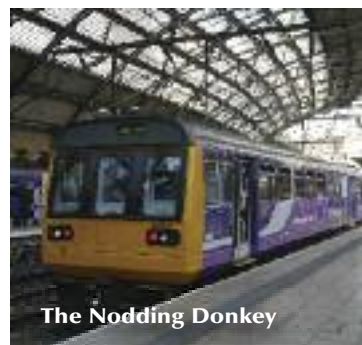
MerseyRAle - The St Helens Pubs Round on the City Line



St Helens Central

Our occasional MerseyRAle column is designed to encourage you to use the rail network to let the train take the strain when exploring the region's pubs.

The Summer 2014 MerseyRAle article took you on the Wirral Line to explore the West Kirby Pubs Round. This edition we head to another town where real ale pubs are on the up – St Helens on the City Line from Lime Street, twenty minutes journey time by semi fast train, twenty nine minutes by all stations train. This line will be electrified by December 2014 with a new timetable. However the wonders of the privatised railway means that by December only two of the twenty three year old unrefurbished electric trains will have been transferred from London Thameslink to operate



The Nodding Donkey

the City Line service. A full electric service will not be in operation until December 2015, so for now you can continue to 'enjoy' the 'delights' of the Nodding Donkey Pacer trains, regarded as probably the worst train ever built. Alternatively if time is not important you can use the frequent but slow 10 bus service from Liverpool Queens Square to St Helens which stops on Westfield Street and Bridge Street. The free Merseytravel St Helens Public Transport map has a useful St Helens street map.

St Helens has seen a real ale revival in recent years, as has the St Helens CAMRA Branch under Chair Alan Healey – see their on line newsletter on www.sthelenscamra.org.uk and the work they are doing to promote real ale in St Helens.

MerseyRAle takes you on a tour of 16 real ale pubs and bars plus a beer shop in St Helens town centre plus a new brewery and an legendary pie shop to show you there is more to St Helens than you might imagine.

Explore the St Helens Round

Immediately in front of the modernistic railway station is a pub to watch, the **Royal Alfred – Pub 1.**

This large corner former Boddingtons pub has not sold real ale for some time, but it has five hand pumps which may shortly be offering beers from St Helens' **new brewery, Connoisseur**, (see below). Turn left along Shaw Street and on the corner with Church Street you come to another pub to watch, the **Rendezvous – Pub 2**, a freehouse which again does not currently sell real ale, but is considering introducing Connoisseur beers.

The connection is that the Connoisseur brewery is located in Wolverhampton House, Church Street, behind the Rendezvous. Connoisseur has a Liverpool connection, being the latest venture by **Mark, Kevin and Gillian Yates**, formerly of the Baltic Fleet and the **Albion**, Warrington, see separate Connoisseur feature page 41.

3. The Glasshouse JD Wetherspoon

5 Market Street, off Church Street, main shopping street. Not the army cooler lock up but rather an homage to the town's most



renowned industry. This large, busy pub offers **ten real ales and five ciders** and is a winner of the **St Helens CAMRA 2014 Cider Pub of the Year Award**. Continue along Ormskirk Street to see the Sefton ahead on the corner.



Burchalls Pies

28 Westfield Street, which leads off from the Sefton. If glass is St Helens' main industry, then pies are equally renowned and Burchalls is a St Helens legend for the quality of its pork pies, so much so that you need to be at the shop before the afternoon to have a chance of buying them, such is the demand. Ask for a warm one to enjoy the liquor at its best. The 10A/10 bus stops on Westfield Street.

4. The Sefton Arms

1 Baldwin Street. Prominent corner pub run by ICGF Acquisitions, with a large open split level interior divided into distinct seating area



with comfortable seating. Photos of St Helens and Saints players around the walls. Live music features. **Four hand pumps** serving mix of national beers and local ales such as **George Wright**. **CAMRA discount available.**

Turn left alongside the Sefton on Baldwin Street, cross the large roundabout turning left onto Duke Street to find two pubs and two bars close together.

5. Duke of Cambridge

Duke Street. St Helens CAMRA 2012 Pub of the Year, this corner pub has an opened out interior.



Two hand pumps serve a Moorhouses beer and often a local beer. Live music features. Opens 11am, 12 noon Sundays.

6. The News Room

Duke Street. Shop front modern styled bar with one hand pump at



far end of the bar serving changing beers on a cask of the week basis. Furnished with high tables and stools, the bar is a striking white. Opens 3pm Wednesday to Friday, 2pm Saturday and Sunday.

7. The Sportsmans Inn

Duke Street. Large former Boddington's pub which retains the brewery signs and has a bar and lounge. The bar is unspoilt with a tiled floor, darts and pool. The lounge has comfortable seating and interesting window lights with a sporting theme. Live music features. **Three hand pumps are free of tie** and offer a weekly changing guest, alongside a **George Wright** beer such as **Drunken Duck or Cheeky**



Pheasant, plus a changing national beer such as **Doom Bar**. Live music features. Opens 1pm.

From here you can either return back into town or cross the road to Crab Street and take the small fire path opposite the Lowe House Health Centre up to Cooper Street for the Turks Head.

8. Turks Head

Morley Street/Cooper Street corner. The only pub in Merseyside which has been in the final four finalists of the CAMRA National Pub of the Year, this multi award winner and its licensee Darryl need no introduction. The



amazing array of **15 hand pumps** feature changing guest beers plus **real ciders and perries**, making this a not to be missed pub. A traditional bar with stained glass screen and a comfortable multi level lounge plus a beer garden create a classic pub ambience. Serves food Wednesday to Sunday. Opens 2pm Monday and Tuesday; Wednesday to Sunday 12 noon.

9. Olde England

113 Corporation Street. For Liverpool pub goers this is where Peter Kavanagh's meets St Helens,



with an eclectic and eccentric collection of artefacts in the cosy wood panelled lounge. This prominent corner pub also brews its own beers which appear amongst a **remarkable 8 hand pumps serving changing guests and four real ciders.**

10. Counting House

Hardshaw Street. A former bank with lofty vaulted roof, the massive open plan space has separate seating areas with booths around the walls, three pool tables and an array of flat screen TVs plus a massive drop down screen for showing sport. Run by Pub Call Ltd



there are **8 hand pumps serving beers from Old School Brewery, Copper Dragon and Moorhouses plus further guests. Real Cider also features.** The pub opens 10am and 11am on Sundays.

11. Brasserie Chalon (The Angel)

Barrow Street. Open again and with 2 shiny new hand pumps on the bar. Now selling real ale from the Enterprise List. **Greene King**



IPA Jennings Cumberland and Black Sheep. Welcome back to the real ale world.

12. Market Tavern

Bridge Street. Formerly a multi room Greenall's pub, it was reworked in the 80s being opened



out into one space with a large open paved patio at the rear. It does not serve food. Run by Amber Taverns it has **five hand pumps serving a mix of national and local beers.** A real cider is also available.

Across the road is the former Nelson Hotel which was a classic Edwardian pub interior until being gutted to become the now closed Fluid night spot. Now buddleia



sprouts from the brickwork. Rumours abound that plans are afoot to reopen this once iconic St Helens pub.

13. Running Horses JD Wetherspoon

Water Street/Chalon Way.



Formerly a Lloyd's Bar, as can be guessed from the night club style decor with massive red light fitting, it has an open kitchen which is unusual for Wetherspoon. **Five real ales plus a real cider.**

The Phoenix and Cricketers are on the other side of the busy Linkway West/Kirkland Street dual carriageway

14. The Phoenix Hotel

34 Canal Street. **St Helens Pub of the Year 2011**, this community pub offers up to six beers with an emphasis on local beers and microbreweries. CAMRA discount for card showing CAMRA members. There is a traditional bar popular for darts and dominoes



plus a large comfortable lounge. Live music features. Note the exterior tiling with the pub name. Opens 2pm, except 12 noon Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

15. The Cricketers

Peter Street. A new arrival to the real ale scene in 2013. It was previously a slowly dying keg only outlet but was brought back to vibrant life to be a classic community pub, to such effect that it won the **St Helens 2014 Pub of the Year Award.** CAMRA discount

for card showing CAMRA members. A traditional bar and



comfortable lounge provide a cosy atmosphere. Outside patio area at side. There are **seven hand pumps serving changing guest beers plus a real cider.**

Also new to the real ale scene

Emporium Of Beers - a Beer Shop run by George Wright Brewery

54 Cambridge Road, St Helens, Merseyside WA10 4HF. Shop Direct Line: 01744 737578

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"**The Beer Filling Station**" is also available allowing customers to obtain cask beer for take away on tap.

One to try out of town, the Wheatsheaf Mill Lane. The pub is a British heritage building, as its historic interior has remained intact for many years.

We hope this MerseyRALE trip will lead you to agree that St Helens is a town on a real ale up

Dennis Jones and John Armstrong with input from Alan Healey



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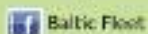


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The Baltic Fleet



Scotch Piper

Lydiate in New Hands

Local CAMRA Members Take Over!

Since the end of March, this beautiful thatched pub – a Grade 11 listed building, dating back to 1320, a regarded as the oldest pub in Lancashire – has been run by Phil Moran and Julie Pringle, previous regulars of the pub and friends of the family that had run it for the last 50-60 years. Their love of the pub is evident in all the little touches they have added to make it more comfortable, without in any way, changing its character – the last thing they would want to do!

What is more, Phil has been a member of CAMRA for several years and serving a good choice of quality beers is his priority, and he and Julie were delighted to be awarded Cask Marque approval at the beginning of August.

The bar now sports three handpumps with Piper 1320, a special beer brewed for the pub by Marstons a regular feature, and one pump always reserved for a local beer - to date beers have been from Liverpool Organic, George Wright and Burscough breweries, Phil and Julie are looking forward to hosting monthly Meet the Brewer events. The August one was with brewers from Frodsham brewery.

The pub may be located in a rural setting, but it is also the hub of the surrounding communities. Music events and barbecues are held in the lovely garden, there is a regular folk music



session on Thursdays and often impromptu sessions at other times, and Wednesday night is the extremely popular Bikers' Night when motorcyclists come from far and wide to admire the vast number of bikes. A feature of the night is that the local Scout troop led by CAMRA member Doug, in agreement with the pub, run a burger and soft drinks stall to serve the bikers and to raise funds for the Scouts. Community in action!

If you are visiting during the day for a quieter drink, the hourly 300 Liverpool-Southport bus is extremely handy, stopping more or less right outside. But beware, the last one to Southport is just after 8pm, and to Liverpool just after 6.30pm.

September CAMRA Get Together to be held at Scotch Piper

The lack of an evening bus service is why when Liverpool Branch hold their Get Together there on **Tuesday September 16th** we will be running a coach to get people there and ensure they can make the most of the evening. Coach departs from opposite the Ship and Mitre at 7pm. See Diary on page 55 and www.liverpoolcamra.org.uk for further details.

Phil will be doing a talk about the history of the pub and there will be opportunity to socialise and enjoy the pub and, weather permitting, the garden - as well, of course, as the beers.

Jean Pownceby

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PubCo Crunch

Statutory Code Bill – The Battle Continues



The battle for PubCos reform is still not won. Despite the inclusion of a statutory code for PubCos in the Queen's Speech listing legislation to be put before the current Parliament, many politicians and organisations are pressing for the legislation to be amended to include further powers to protect PubCo licensees, crucially the right to stock a guest beer, the right to apply for free of tie and the use of market rents only. CAMRA is continuing to push hard for changes to legislation that introduces a pubs adjudicator to protect pubs from big PubCos. The Campaign is urging government to go further than the measures it has already announced and introduce

guest beer and market rent-only options for tied publicans. The next key step for the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill 2014 is its Commons committee stage in the autumn, where changes can be made and CAMRA will be calling on MPs to include guest beer and market rent-only options in the Bill. CAMRA interim head of communications Tom Stainer said: "We are disappointed the legislation does not include market rent-only and guest beer options we are confident these can still be achieved. Ultimately, requiring the large pub companies to provide tied publicans with these options is going to be the simplest means of ensuring fair play."

Need for Legislation in Scotland and Wales

CAMRA is calling on Scottish lawmakers to introduce a pubs adjudicator. CAMRA's national chairman Colin Valentine wants to see the Scottish government introduce legislation similar to that

already announced for England and Wales, as part of the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill.

Colin says a pubs adjudicator would give some protection to those publicans who have the misfortune to be tenants of the large, pub-owning companies. In England and Wales, he says, the government has finally grasped the nettle and struck a blow for tied publicans

"However, as with most things political, there is a sting in the tail – the proposed legislation does not apply to Scotland, only England and Wales," said Colin. CAMRA is calling on the Scottish government's minister for energy, enterprise and tourism Fergus Ewing, to introduce a Legislative Consent Motion when the legislation has worked its way through Westminster.

"This will ensure that entrepreneurial Scottish publicans can benefit from any act that is passed," said Colin.



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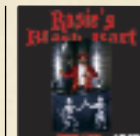
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Opinions expressed in MerseyAle are not necessarily those of the Editor Liverpool Branch or CAMRA

Liverpool Branch Diary September to November 2014

14th September Sunday - Pubs walk from Seacombe to New Brighton. 12 o'clock ferry from Pier Head (must obtain boarding pass from ticket office, even if you have All Zone Saveaway or travel pass). Return by train or bus.

16th September Tuesday - Branch Get Together (note the different day - Tuesday) - 7.45 pm Scotch Piper Lydiat. Coach from opposite Ship and Mitre Dale Street leaves 7pm; also picks up in Crosby Islington (near Stamps) 7.20 approx (book place, see below)

20th September Saturday - Guided pub tour of St Helens with their Branch Chair, Alan Healey. 12.28 train from Lime Street to St Helens Central or meet Counting House 1pm.

22nd September Monday - First planning meeting for 2015 Beer Festival - 7pm Crown, Lime Street (upstairs room).

Saturday 11th October Coach trip to the City of Derby depart 10am from opposite Ship and Mitre Dale Street

Wednesday 15th October Branch Get Together - 8pm at the Vernon Arms Dale Street

Sunday 19th October Pubs Walk from Waterloo to Crosby meet at Queens Picturehouse (Wetherspoons) in South Road Waterloo opposite Waterloo Station at 12 noon (11am for breakfast). Pubs visited will include the Liverpool Pub of the Year 2014 the Liverpool Pigeon.

Saturday 15th November Coach trip to the Potteries depart 10am from opposite Ship and Mitre Dale Street

Wednesday 19th November Branch Get Together - Lady of Mann Dale Street behind Rigbys - an evening of Traditional Pub Games.

Coach trips contact social@liverpoolcamra.org.uk or Ian Macadam on 07521 741 586.

Branch contact: Jean Pownceby, contact@liverpoolcamra.org.uk.
Check on Website - www.liverpoolcamra.org.uk

Coach trips are £12 for members or £15 for non-members
It pays to join! See page 53.



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