

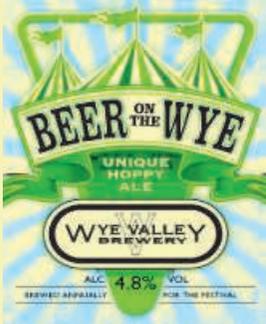
Hereford HOPVINE

The Newsletter of the Herefordshire Branch of CAMRA

Issue No 59

Autumn 2015

Free



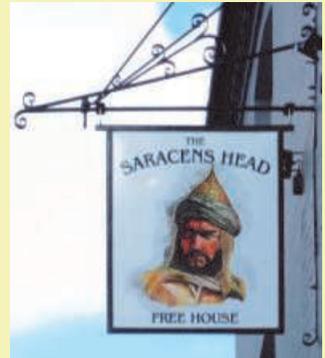
CAMRA BREWS ITS OWN BEER!



AWARD AND A MINI-TORNADO
AT THE RED LION



WE'RE ON TV!
THE BBC VISIT BEER ON THE WYE



LANDMARK HEREFORD
PUB REOPENS



10-12 OCTOBER
MUCH MARCLE

CIDER & PERRY CAMPAIGN LIFTS OFF
PUB CAMPAIGN UPDATES
BEER ON THE WYE XI ROUND-UP
GOOD BEER GUIDE 2016 LAUNCH
WYE VALLEY AT 30
A TALE OF TWO (WELSH) BREWERIES
A WALK TO STOKE PRIOR
LATEST BEER, CIDER & PUB NEWS



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20,257 REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL

Beer on the Wye hits the target again



Sunday Family Fun Day gets into full swing

The 10th to 12th July saw the eleventh Beer on the Wye back at its popular riverside location in Hereford breaking records again. Record attendances were achieved on both the Saturday and Sunday: the site being declared 'full' for a couple of hours for the first time ever on the Saturday evening, and more than double the number of people attended the Sunday Family Fun session compared to 2014. It was quite some do!

With 142 different cask beers and 135 different draught ciders and perries on the bars, added to the World Beers and bottled ciders, in total 20,257 pints of beer, cider and perry were consumed over the three-day weekend - no doubt helped by some reasonable dry weather.

Sexy Cider makes TV

One of the big improvements to the festival this year was a sexy new cider bar – a 64-foot monster which accommodated 135 tubs of different ciders and perries – over 100 of them from Herefordshire alone. In fact, one in three pints sold at the festival was cider or perry, an interesting fact for a festival that doesn't even have the words 'cider' or 'perry' in its title!

The Cider Bar even featured on BBC *Midlands Today*, when their reporter, Louisa Currie, went live on air from the festival marquee on the Friday evening. There to cover our cider and perry duty campaign, the BBC report highlighted the threat posed to many of our local small producers by an EU Tax Directive that

may ultimately cost them thousands of Pounds each year. Over 400 names were added to a petition that will be presented at 10 Downing Street sometime in September. (see page 18 for full story)

Sunday success

Another big improvement was the festival's

The Tram Inn, Eardisley



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BEER ON THE WYE SUCCESS

What you said about Beer on the Wye XI

"Fabulous Friday at Beer on the Wye - great music, great ales and great fish and chips - what could be better."

"We came from Manchester especially for Beer on the Wye and we had a lovely time, the staff and volunteers were fantastic and the selection of cider was brilliant! Thanks a lot to everyone involved".

"What a gem of a find, the little festy right on my doorstep. Can't believe this was the 11th year- have been to the last 4 and will continue to do so. As a cider drinker it was great to see the cider bar with a facelift and always a helpful and smiley team of people serving, even during the busier times! Thanks for all the hard work, fab weekend!"

"Great day yesterday at the 'Beer On The Wye Festival'. We spotted the face paints and it had to be done!!"

"Everyone appreciated it. Easily the most enjoyable beer festival around. Thank you to all who organised and volunteered. Roll on next year".

"A beautiful setting, fantastic choice of beers and ciders but what else would you expect from the world's premier hop and cider producing county :-)"

The much-improved Family Sunday Fun Day **gets the seal of approval from you too...**

"Surprised you have any beer or cider left at all given how busy you were last night. Great festival".

"Really enjoying Beer on the Wye. I don't have kids but I think what you're doing for families today is excellent."

"Haven't got kids of my own but have to say, Beer on the Wye has some amazing entertainment for the little ones."

IF YOU WANT TO SEE OR READ MORE ABOUT **THIS YEAR'S BEER ON THE WYE, THEN GO TO:**
www.facebook.com/beeronthewye

Family Fun Day on the Sunday. This year we really pushed the boat out to give the little people something to amuse themselves. A mechanical horse; bikes; fun pillow bash; giant slide; face-painting; stocks; Kids Crazy Korner – all topped off with a very animated children's entertainer - certainly hit the button, and all for an entrance fee of £1 with accompanied children free! Meanwhile, parents and the child-free were still able to soak up the atmosphere unhindered, complete with live music and over 100 beers, cider and perries still on the bars – and all at 60p off a pint. Not bad, considering the beers were priced from only £2.80 a pint in the first place. It is perhaps not a surprise that the attendance was more than double last year.

Beer on the Wye is now established as one of the largest and most successful events in the county, but with this increase in size, be assured it has definitely not lost its soul. It still has a wonderful chilled atmosphere as people sit outside together - enjoying the beer, cider, food and live music – whilst watching the silent waters of the River Wye

BEER ON THE WYE WINNERS

Champion Beer of the Festival

The Bends, a light and very hoppy 5.2% ABV strength brew from Shrewsbury-based Salopian Brewery took the top award, with Arbor Brewery from Bristol for their Oyster Stout, and Lacons Brewery from Great Yarmouth respectively judged Silver and Bronze winners.

Mo' Citra from Odyssey Brew Co - based out on the Brockhampton Estate near Whitbourne - took the accolade of *Herefordshire Beer of the Festival*.

West Midlands Perry of the Year

The judges struggled to separate the top two perries, but in the end it was **Oliver's** Thorn that took Gold, ahead of Silver winner **Gregg's Pitt** with their Blakeney Butt Oldfield blend. Orgasmic Par-ton was judged Bronze winner.

Marches Sweet Fanny Adams and Ross-on-Wye Alpaca took fourth and fifth places, and a tie for sixth place between perries from Malvern Magic and Cleeve Orchard means that the West Midlands will be sending seven entries forward for judging in the national round of this competition.

slip past. It's little wonder that as well as locals, people come from all over the UK and, for that matter from abroad to enjoy this annual event.

On behalf of the Beer on the Wye XI organising committee, Simon Crowther said about this year's festival:

“One of the pleasures of running Beer on the Wye when you see how much people enjoy it. And it was great to see such a good mix of people – of all ages, backgrounds and of both sexes, all enjoying themselves with smiles on their faces.”

Simon added: “I also need to thank our many volunteer helpers – all 130 of them – who, along with our generous friends and sponsors, make this festival the fantastic success it is today”.

ONE FOR YOUR DIARY: Beer on the Wye XII returns to the riverside over the weekend of the 8th to 10th July 2016.

DRINKING BY NUMBERS:

- Total attendance = 5,872
- Volunteer staff working at the festival= 130
- Different cask beers = 142
- Different Herefordshire beers = 28
- Different draught Ciders & Perries = 135
- Total World Beers = 40
- Total Pints consumed = 20,257
- Beer consumed = 13,098 pints
- Cider & Perry consumed = 7,159 pints
- Number of live bands = 8
- Number of hours festival open = 26
- Space under canvas = 6,000 square feet
- Number of toilet rolls used = 273
- Amount raised by our festival charity = £3,547



FESTIVAL GIVES HOPE!

The Beer on the Wye festival charity this year was once again Hope Support Services. Sammy-Jay Powell is seen in the picture receiving a cheque from Paul Grenfell of organisers, Herefordshire CAMRA, for £3,547. This sum includes £1303.86 (plus one Euro) raised from tokens and cash kindly donated by Beer on the Wye-ers as they left the festival marquee. Also in the picture, taken at the Hostelrie at Goodrich, are festival volunteers from both CAMRA and Hope.



Hope are a Ross-based charity, who cover large areas of Herefordshire providing support for children whose parents have been diagnosed with a life-threatening illness. Paul said about Hope: "It is great to be able to support such a thoroughly deserving cause, especially as their team actually get stuck in and help out at Beer on the Wye. They worked hard to raise the money, and we know it is going to be put to good use helping local kids get through what must be a very traumatic time for them."

For more information on Hope's work go to www.hopesupportservices.org.uk or contact them on (01989) 566317

LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

GOLDEN VALLEY

Brewing has resumed after a short break during the summer. The bulk of sales are outside of Herefordshire, through county shows.

HEREFORD

A new brew for September is in production using Herefordshire hops, called Hop Harvester at 4.2% ABV. All Hereford Brewery beers can now be ordered via social media. Hereford Brewery beers can now be found again at Yew Tree Preston on Wye. The brewery's tap, the Victory in Hereford is still hosting regular folk nights, with Beer & Books evenings every other Monday. Plans are at an early stage of development for a winter ales festival jointly with Kelpaul on the weekend of December 5th.

KELPAUL

New Brewery - see page 8

LEDBURY

A new 4.5% ABV seasonal beer launched in July is called 48th Parallel Pale Ale because it uses mainly hops grown on the 48th Parallel - Cluster and Wil-lamette from the USA combined with some very local Bramling X.

The brewery has continued to invest and has recently taken delivery of additional casks from Hereford Casks and has had installed a further 10KVA of solar panels.

95% of the hops used by the brewery so far in 2015 were grown locally in Herefordshire.

JONES THE BREWER

A little over two years ago a new brewer arrived in the county, and his first brew caused great excitement at Beer on the Wye, when it was judged *Herefordshire Beer of the Festival* - requiring an immediate reorder for two more casks. Damian Jones went on to brew an eclectic range of beers, clearly demonstrating both talent and imagination. However, sadly this did not translate into sustainable sales and a thriving business. In August Damian decided to cease brewing and mothballed the brewery.

ODYSSEY BREW CO

The Saturday of August bank holiday saw the official launch of the Odyssey Brew Company at the Beer in Hand in Hereford. The brewery is based in premises out on the Brockhampton National Trust Estate, near Whitbourne, and is owned by Mitchell and Alison Evans who also own and run the Beer in Hand – thus the reason Odyssey beers are sold there. To celebrate the evening, Herefordshire CAMRA members and pub regulars Neil & June Aitken, presented Mitchell and Alison with a cake in the shape of a mash tun (pictured opposite). Once cut and slices handed round, the cake didn't quite match the popularity of the twelve Odyssey beers on sale, including a killer 7.8% ABV brew called Peer Pressure Porter and a deliciously dark and smooth Latte Stout at 4.5% ABV, which was a collaboration with King Street Kitchen, an independent café in Hereford.

SHOES

The trial brew of Peploes Tipple at 5.0% ABV ran into yeast problems, so it is reverting to 6.0%

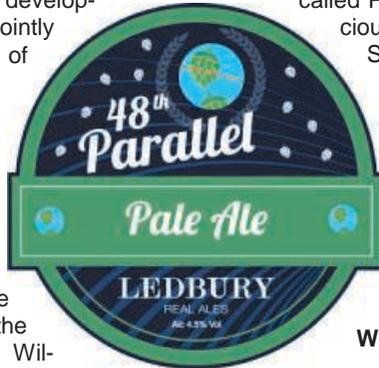
WOBBLY

New beers now being brewed include: American Amber a 4.5% US-style ale with American dry hops, currently available at Merton Hotel in Hereford; and Wobbly Crow a 4.5% ABV stout.

Sales of Wobbly bottled beers are going well; currently available at several outlets including the Hop Pocket. Planning application for on-site off-licence is reaching final stage of approval.

WYE VALLEY

Dorothy Goodbody's Country Ale has once again been recognised as an exceptional beer, winning Gold in the ale category of the *International Beer Challenge*, Europe's premier packaged beer competition. More than 630 beers from 30 countries including Cambodia, Brazil, South Africa and Japan, as well as beers from renowned beer-making nations, were judged by UK and European beer experts. Dorothy Goodbody's Pedal Pusher and Wholesome Stout,



both achieved Bronze medals.

Chairman of the judges, Jeff Evans, said: "Not only have the number of beers entered rocketed, so has the standard of the entries."

HOBSONS

Hobsons Brewery has added to its tally of endorsements with Manor Ale receiving *Great Taste Awards* accreditation awarded by trade association, the *Guild of Fine Food*. Its star adds to those already awarded to Old Prickly, Town Crier and Old Henry.

Hobsons sister company, Oldfields Orchard, also based in Cleobury Mortimer, gained a greater honour as the Medium Sweet Cider was awarded a coveted three star award. There were 10,000 *Great Taste* entries this year and of those, just 130 have been awarded top marks, putting the locally made cider in the top 1% of food and drinks entered.

LUDLOW

The mash tuns are always busy in late summer as the Ludlow Food Festival (11-13th Septem-

ber) brings many visitors to this historic town, just 25 minutes away by train from Hereford. The brewery has a stall at the Festival site in the Castle Grounds and is involved in the Festival Ale trail in addition to tours at the brewery tap itself.

However, Head Brewer Gary Walters keeps a keen eye on local markets and is pleased to report that sales of Ludlow beers in Herefordshire is on the up with regular orders for pubs in Ewyas Harold and Pembridge, the Grapes and White Lion in Leominster, for example, and also several roadside inns such as the Mortimers Cross and Portway Inn Hotel. Comments Gary:

"I was brought up in North Herefordshire and have an affinity with the county, so I always want Herefordshire pubs to flourish. Local beers, ciders and perries should be cherished for these are an essential part of our culture in the Marches. We are pleased that pubs stock local beers including ours, as *Locale* it is good for the local economy."



Having your birthday cake and drinking it at the launch of Odyssey Brew Co (see opposite)

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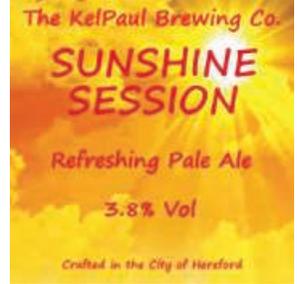
A CUCKOO IN THE HEREFORD NEST

Another new name has appeared on the brewing scene in Hereford. Not a new brewery in the sense of a building or piece of kit, but what is referred to as a 'cuckoo brewery', or 'pop-up brewery'.

Kelvin Skyrme, who has previously worked at Bulmers and brewed for Saxon City, Wobbly and Odyssey, has teamed up with Paul Stevens whose background has included lab work, retail and property maintenance to take advantage of spare capacity on Hereford Brewery's plant, trading as *KelPaul Brewing Company*. Paul explained "We asked Jim [Kenyon] if we could use his spare capacity at Hereford brewery 10-barrel plant. He was happy to allow us to play with his 'train set'."

The first brew of Sunshine Session Pale Ale 3.8% ABV - which appeared at Beer on the Wye - has now sold out and a repeat brew completed. The ale was taken by Beer in Hand, Cross Keys, Golden Cross, Majors Arms, Farmers Arms, Potting Shed and rebadged for Left Bank as Old Wye Bridge Pale Ale.

Bonneville '69 Bitter at 4.4% ABV is now available for sale and a pin has been shipped to the Golden Cross. It will also be rebadged for left bank probably under the name Kingfisher in honour of the fine bird who lives on the bank close by. An Autumn Ale and a Kolch style ale are planned.



'LUCKY 7' PUTS HAY ON THE BEER MAP

On Saturday 29th August, *Beer Revolution*, the up-and-coming über-beer shop based in Hay Castle hosted a successful 'Meet the Brewer' event for the new locally-based Lucky 7 Brewery.

This is probably the first brewery based in Hay-on-Wye in living memory. Started by ambitious and likeable home-brewer, Luke Manifold, in October last year, it is a really a 'pop-up' operation based in the kitchen of his home in



Hay. With a brewing capacity of only one brewers' barrel, it's more a case of a new nano-brewery rather than a new micro-brewery. And, no - none of the beers have names such as *Moulinex* or *Russell Hobbs* - well, not yet anyway!

A cask of Lucky 7's Pale Ale was available on the day, so that meant a pint of the 4.9% ABV brew was first up for scrutiny. All of the Lucky 7 beers are unfiltered and unfiltered (i.e. they're cloudy), a US innovation that is increasingly popular with a number of the newer brewers in the UK at the moment. With American hops also in abundance, it passed muster both in terms of taste and quality first time - as did the 4.3% ABV Pale Ale, a bottle-conditioned number, that on a blind tasting would defy any seasoned beer-drinker to identify it as a bottled beer.

Luke has plans to expand the number of beers he brews, with styles including Amber Ales, Stouts, Dark IPAs and Saisons already on the agenda. The only disappointment is that with the brewery being so small it means the beers are limited to a handful of outlets in Hay, and have yet to make it into Herefordshire on a permanent basis. The beers are available regularly in bottles from Beer Revolution.

Outside *Beer Revolution* with brewer, Luke Manifold (centre, facing camera)

LOCAL PUB NEWS

The future of a Herefordshire country pub could be decided for good before the end of October, if a Government planning inspector upholds an appeal by the owner of the **Fountain Inn** at Or-cop. The closed and run-down village inn was the subject of a planning appeal hearing held at Hereford Town Hall on the 11th August. The pub's owner was appealing an earlier refusal of planning permission by Herefordshire planners for change of use to a residential dwelling. This was the second such planning application to convert the pub in the past three years - the first one was turned down back in September 2012.

CAMRA supported locals in objecting to the original 2012 proposal as on that occasion the owners had made no effort to sell the premises as a pub before seeking to convert it to alternative use. Subsequently, the pub was placed on the licensed property market at a sensible price, but regrettably a couple of potential sales fell through and it remained unsold ahead of the appeal hearing.

Barry Shaw, one of the locals and an objector

who attended the one-day hearing, commented to *Hopvine* that it was too difficult to call how it might go – his feeling is that it's 50:50. But he did say that a strong case had been made by locals as to the unsatisfactory way the pub was run and the conduct of the sale of the premises.

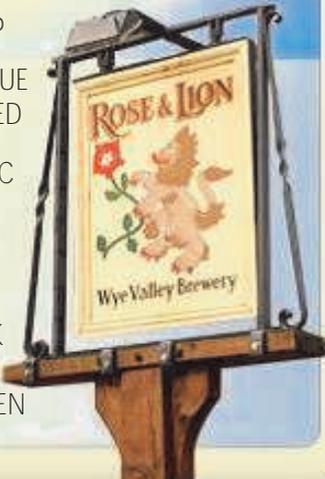
Unfortunately, Herefordshire CAMRA was unable to attend the appeal hearing, but was happy to brief the council on a number of material matters ahead of the hearing. It now remains to be seen what decision the planning inspector arrives at.

There are rumblings in the hills in the far west of the county. Locals have started to express concern about the future of the iconic **Bull's Head** at Craswall. Owned by the same people who own the Swan Hotel in Hay-on-Wye, alarm bells first started to ring when the former Herefordshire *Pub of the Year* failed to open for the busy Hay Festival week.

It was due to open for the summer season (albeit on its usual limited days and hours) with the owners' son and daughter newly placed in charge of the business. Unfortunately, family illness intervened and that didn't happen. It was then reported on the pub's own website that the Bull's Head was expected to re-open in mid-July, yet as at the beginning of September it remains closed – for reasons that are currently unknown. There is no further update on the pub's website.

On the 21st August BBC *Hereford & Worcester* invited CAMRA to contribute to a feature they recorded about the pub's future – where local people expressed their concerns on air. Mark Haslam, on behalf of Herefordshire CAMRA, echoed the general sentiment that it was hoped it would re-open soon, and he added CAMRA would resist vigorously any attempt to convert the pub into a dwelling. It didn't go without comment that the owners of the Bull's Head had previously converted the Ancient Camp Inn at Ruckhall from a pub into a dwelling whilst in their ownership some years ago. Hopefully there'll be some brighter news in the next *Hopvine*.

A farewell party, with live music in the garden, was held at the **Olde Tavern** at Kington on 29th August to say goodbye to landlady Debbie Bedford after her successful six-and-a-half year stint at the helm. The pub then closed for a week to enable Dave James and Sarah Ferreira, the new licensees to move in. Their plans include the re-introduction of food in the near future.



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We are family and dog-friendly and you will always receive a warm friendly welcome from us and our staff.

Telephone for Christmas Menu

When food was last available at the Tavern, it was in the shape of Jake's Bistro, operated by then licensees Steve and Gaye Dunn. The most recent incarnation of this operation was at the **Royal Oak** in Kington, but now it's on the move again. Steve and Gaye are taking over the licence of the recently-closed **Radnor Arms** in New Radnor - now the only remaining pub in a village that was once the county town of Radnorshire.

That left the Royal Oak in Kington to find a new chef, which they reportedly achieved without any break in service.

The first weekend in September saw Herefordshire's first and only community-owned pub, the **Crown Inn** at Dilwyn hold a successful, but low-key beer festival. This came only a month after the Parish Council appointed new tenants to run the Crown. Lesley & Douglas McKenzie have come from running the popular *Good Beer Guide* -listed Old Sun Inn in Harlington in Bedfordshire. They aim to build-up the pub's food business without losing the reputation the place already has with locals for its quality of beer. Initial reports are very promising. Regular beers are from Hobsons and Wye Valley breweries, with a rotating guest beer. The Crown is expected to appear on a BBC *Midlands Today* mini-documentary about village life in late September.

Work is underway in nearby Monkland at the long-closed **Monkland Arms**, which has been bought from its PubCo owners by a private couple. It is anticipated the roadside pub will be open by Christmas and may be renamed 'The Monk'.

Following an incident at the cellar bar of the **Royal Oak** in Leominster, where a DJ sustained serious injuries, the hotel's licence was temporarily suspended by Herefordshire Council's Regulatory Committee in August. The following day this decision was reviewed and, in the light of ongoing issues of drunk or violent behaviour, the licence was revoked. The bar is therefore closed although the hotel continues to operate.

Another successful beer festival at the **Stockton Cross Inn** at Kimbolton was also the occasion to launch a new house beer. Amongst fifteen other beers, plus twelve ciders and perries was Tidy Job, a 4.2% ABV straw-coloured beer with a long, dry finish. It is now destined to become a permanent feature on the bar, alongside two Wye Valley beers; a rotating guest ale, and two Westons' Ciders. Brewed by Hereford's Wobbly

Brewery, the landlord, George Bedford, was actually hands-on during the first brew of Tidy Job. He explained to *Hopvine*: "I want to change the recipe slightly to make it a touch sweeter and a bit darker." Which might help explain why the golden beer is described so differently on the pump clip. It has been promised that there'll be no gravy-browning involved in the darkening process!

As this *Hopvine* went to press the **Kings Head** at Docklow was closing its doors. It remains to be seen if a planning application comes forward shortly to convert the 17th Century roadside pub on the Leominster-Bromyard road into a residential dwelling. It has been on the licensed property market now for over a year, but it is not known if there has been any serious interest or offers from potential operators.

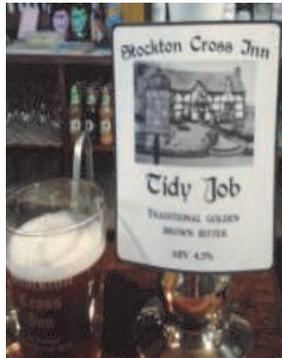
The annual Green Hop Beer Festival at the **Talbot Hotel**, Knightwick, will take place on Friday 9th and Saturday 10th October. See page 36.

Late reports indicate that both the **Wheatsheaf** at Whitbourne (on the A44) and the **Baiting House** at Upper Sapey are currently closed and their futures uncertain.

Congratulations are in order again for Herefordshire's *Cider Pub of the Year*. Sunday 16th August was the day Adam Durrant and Zoe Dickinson of the **Green Dragon Inn** at Bishop's Frome sealed the knot. Herefordshire CAMRA was honoured to have been invited to organise the itinerary for Adam's Stag coach tour - which took in a handful of unspoiled pubs across the west of the county back on the 1st August.

Still in Bishops Frome, it looks like it might be all change for the better at the **Chase Inn**. A large pub facing the village green, it is now a free-house - following its purchase from Marstons Brewery by new licensees Dan Clarke and Jill Gordon. The pub has been covered in scaffolding for some time now, but this is due to come down before the end of September once exterior renovations are complete.

Already the pub's interior has been substantially improved via a major quality refurbishment: luxuriant sofas, bare brickwork, new plasterwork and stylishly subtle lighting create a much more intimate and welcoming atmosphere in the lounge bar and restaurant area, whilst the separate public bar is now entirely dedicated to pool, darts and TV. Five letting rooms upstairs have also been re-fitted and a refettle of the pub's garden is currently work in progress. The menu features a good range of sensibly-priced pub classics, snacks and desserts, whilst the beer offer is two permanents from Wye Valley (Bitter and HPA) and a regularly changing guest beer from both local and regional brewers - such as Ludlow Best, on sale at a very reasonable £2.90 a pint. Judging by the number of drinkers in for early on a Friday evening when the *Hopvine* called in, it looks like the Chase might finally be emerging into the daylight after years of anonymity.



It's now a Tidy Job at the Stockton Cross Inn

Back in July, Herefordshire planners granted consent to an application to convert the **Fir Tree Inn** at Much Cowarne into residential dwellings. The pub on the A4103 Hereford-Worcester road (next door to the Hereford Land Rover dealership), had been closed continuously since 2012. The pub's closure followed a serious spat the owner had with planners regarding a marquee that had to come down that he considered was vital to the pub's commercial viability.

Herefordshire CAMRA did not object to this proposal. Whilst misgivings were expressed in a letter to planners about the absence of any effort to market the premises, it didn't go unnoticed that the Fir Tree no longer enjoyed any community or local following. Isolated and set on a main road, with no houses nearby, there was not one objection to the planning application. Ultimately, if a community doesn't want a pub, then it is difficult for CAMRA to make a sustainable case for its retention.

The **New Inn** at Storridge re-opened with new licensees just in time for the August bank holiday weekend. Straddling the Herefordshire-Worcestershire border on the main A4103, the roadside pub had been closed for some months whilst PubCo-owners *Admiral Taverns* looked

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for new tenants. It can be happily reported that it has been refurbished to a high standard and is looking to rebuild its passing food trade - with a Sunday carvery being a major selling point. On opening night two beers were on offer: Banks's Bitter and Sharp's Doombar.

After ten successful years, it is all change just over the border in West Malvern at the **Brewers Arms**. Landlady, Sue Adamson, marked her retirement on the 5th September with a big party for all her customers at this popular and thriving community venue. With her late partner, Trevor Marston, the pub was transformed by championing local beers and ran numerous beer festivals. It is reported that the new tenants will be keeping the six handpumps on the bar, and little is expected to alter with the beers offered.

The *Numberworks Company*, have relinquished their lease of the **Full Pitcher** on the outskirts of Ledbury. *Enterprise Inns* have engaged a new tenant, and the handover was in progress as the *Hopvine* went to press, without the pub closing. More in the next edition of *Hopvine*.

The value of getting your local pub registered as an *Asset of Community Value* (ACV) was spelled out clearly recently with the case of the **Slip Tavern** at Much Marcle. There were credible rumours circulating locally that prospective buyers for the closed pub were interested in converting it into an Indian restaurant, and that their offer had been accepted. The Parish Council quickly nominated the Slip Tavern as an ACV with Herefordshire Council, and this at a stroke removed the Permitted Development Rights that would have allowed the new owners to convert it into a restaurant without the need for planning permission. The sale fell through within days, and it is our understanding that a local person is now buying the premises with the intention of running it as a conventional village pub.

Gentle change continues at the **Alma Inn** at Linton. Since new owners Dan & Gemma Evans took over in March this year, the multi-award-winning village inn seems to have gone from strength to strength. With a little help in the background from ex-licensees Graham and Linda Webb, the annual three-day *Linton Music Festival* was another resounding sell-out success back in June: an astonishing 115 barrels of beer (mostly from local breweries) was sold over

the three-day weekend. Who says that country pubs can only survive by selling food?

That said, at the end of September, the Alma's new kitchen is due to go on-line and the pub will start selling meals - the offer described by Matt and Gemma as good quality classic British pub food. At the same time the pub is to start opening lunchtimes Tuesday to Saturday for beer and food (12-3pm), with food also served Tuesday to Saturday evenings (6pm to 9pm). However, rest assured there is little evidence of the eye being taken off the beer ball at the Alma - as a fifth handpump has now been appended to the bar, with an ever-changing guest beer now augmenting the four regulars from Malvern Hills, Oakham, Ludlow and Butcombe breweries.

Two neighbouring pubs under the same ownership reopened during August. At the **Cross Keys** in Goodrich, which was extensively refurbished a few years ago, Joshua Kelley is now in charge, and is opening from noon to 11pm throughout the week. Food is available lunchtimes and evenings during the week, all day Saturday and through the afternoon on Sundays. Beers are Bitter, HPA and Butty Bach from Wye Valley, plus Butcombe Adam Henson's Rare Breed.

This was followed closely by the **Crown Hotel** at Whitchurch with licensees Tom Jones and Nicola Chamberlain. After a six-week refurbishment it has opened with two bars, restaurant, coffee shop and delicatessen. Refurbishment of the letting rooms has commenced, with six expected to be available by November. The coffee shop opens from 8am, and the bar from 11am daily, with food available until 9pm. Wye Valley Butty Bach looks like becoming established, accompanied by a guest beer.

PubCo *Punch Taverns* have recently sold-off of 158 of their 'non-core pubs' (that's corporate-speak for valued community pubs) to *NewRiver Retail* - the very same people who are tirelessly trying against the wishes of the local community to convert the Broadleys in Hereford into a Co-op convenience store.

It appears the first pub to get a dose of this bright new retail world is the **Horse & Jockey** in Ross-on-Wye. Locals at this community pub first learned it was one of the 158 sold to *NewRiver Retail* when at the beginning of September the popular licensees were given a whole week's

notice to quit. Charming! However, the locals are already fighting back. An application to register the New Street pub as an *Asset of Community Value* (ACV) has been lodged with Herefordshire Council. The ACV nomination removes the Permitted Development Rights that would allow for its conversion to alternative use or demolition without first getting planning permission. The locals have vowed to contest any planning proposal that might later come forward.

Beers from Wobbly Brewery are no longer on sale at the **Crown & Sceptre** in Ross's Market Place. However, Wobbly Wabbit is now on sale at the Harewood End Inn, on the Ross-Hereford road.

On the same Ross road, visits to the **Yew Tree Inn** at Peterstow have revealed a succession of beers from northern breweries, most recently Neepsend NPA from Sheffield and Lancaster Blonde. Such interesting beers appear due to reciprocal arrangements between the pub's operators, the Ross-on-Wye Cider Company and their customers.

The **Treacle Mine** in Hereford closed at the end of August and the freehold is on the market. Licensees Jen and Cliff McMahon, who have run the pub for five and a half years, are "going to have some time out" This now means there are currently only three pubs in the city on the south side of the River Wye, and one of those is the Broadleys.

August Bank Holiday weekend was party time again at the **Barrels** in Hereford, when their 28th annual Beer Festival took place. Amongst the 38 different beers on handpump were two successive *Champion Beers of Britain*: Cwtch, this year's winner from Newport-based Tiny Rebel Brewery and last year's champion beer, Boltmaker from Yorkshire's Timothy Taylor Brewery. Alongside the beers were twenty ciders and five perries (the majority from Herefordshire). Seventeen local charities will be benefitting from the event, and this year the total raised in aggregate over the 28 festivals is expected to exceed £500,000 - an astonishing achievement everyone involved at the Barrels can be rightly proud of.

Plans have gone in for a micro-pub-cum-bottle shop in Hereford. To be called **Hereford Beer House**, the new enterprise is to be based in an old bookshop on the city's West Street. It is understood that whilst its main purpose will be to

sell bottled beers, it will also sell local cask beers and there is even aspirations to commence brewing. With very limited seating it is expected to belong to the genre of micro-pubs.

On the same night that **Beer in Hand** owners Mitchell and Alison Evans held the launch party for the Odyssey Brew Company (see Brewery news; page 6), the opportunity was taken to present the current Herefordshire CAMRA *Pub of the Year* with a certificate for being named runner-up in the Marches Pub of the Year competition. It is a relatively rare feat for a Herefordshire pub to succeed in the next level up in this CAMRA competition, so a definite 'well done' is in order.

When *Punch Taverns* recently closed the **Plough Inn** on Hereford's Whitcross Road back in August, rumours started circulating of its imminent conversion to a pizza outlet. Herefordshire CAMRA lost no time in getting the pub listed as an *Asset of Community Value* (ACV). It subsequently transpired that the lease of the pub was due to be taken over on 8th September by Donna Brown, the daughter of a previous licensee.

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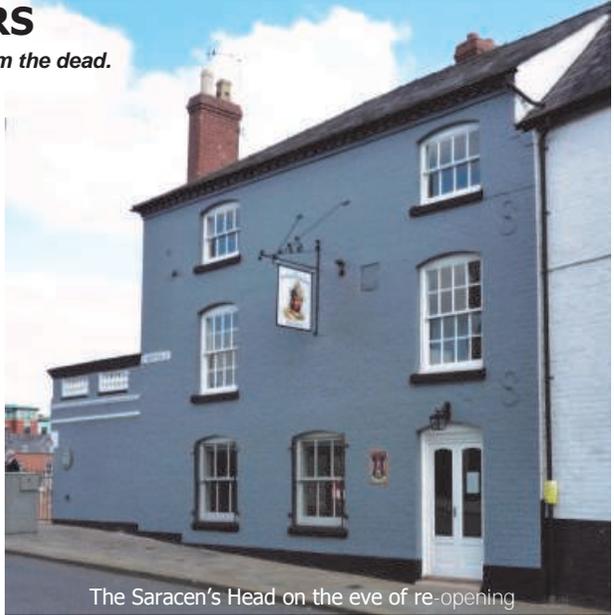
HEADS WE'RE WINNERS

A Hereford riverside landmark returns from the dead.

It is unclear precisely when the Saracen's Head - perched on the river's edge by the city's ancient Wye bridge - actually closed: at least three years ago, probably longer. However, what can't be disputed is that the place had been allowed to get into a terrible state of disrepair, having been neglected over many years. When it was put on the property market a couple of years ago, there were very few who fancied it would ever re-open as a pub - what with the amount of work that needed doing to the building's fabric. Even optimists accepted it would take a miracle to see it re-open. Well, it appears miracles aren't the sole preserve of the New Testament after all - as it can be reported that opening day has arrived!

Finishing touches were still being put in place as this edition of the *Hopvine* went to press ahead of a projected late September opening date. This will see the culmination of a lot of hard work and investment undertaken during 2015 to create what is going to be a fantastic riverside venue for Hereford. It would appear (on initial inspection at least) that little expense has been spared with the quality of the build, fittings and furnishings. From timber floors, to an oak bar-counter and fully-equipped cellar - it seems to have the lot.

The new owners of the Saracen's are keen to develop the business as a real ale venue. To



The Saracen's Head on the eve of re-opening

ensure this happens they have eschewed potential licensees who were only interested in the pub as a food-led operation. An experienced licensee has now been appointed that buys into their wonderful ale-coloured vision.

The new licensee is Louise Ella, who also operates the much-improved Merton Hotel in the city. Opening hours will be 11 to 11 daily, possibly later at weekends. As to the beer, for the benefit of the pub's previous regulars, Marston's Pedigree will be on offer, together with Hobson's Mild and a beer each from Wobbly and Ludlow breweries. Whilst the pub will focus on beer, it will also sell quality and substantial snacks.

The Saracen's Head is the only riverside pub in the city of Hereford. So, it's great to be able to welcome back an old friend. As a city landmark, it will have featured on tens of thousands of postcards sent by tourists and day-trippers from the city over generations - long may that continue.

For information on the actual opening date and for final opening hours keep an eye on www.facebook.com/BeerontheWye

Saracen's Head Inn, 1 St Martin's Street, Hereford, HR2 7RD



The quality of finish and furnishings is to be admired

RED LION HAS ALL THE CREDENTIALS

Roadside hostelry voted Autumn Pub of the Season

The Red Lion Inn at Stiffords Bridge near Cradley has had an unfortunate recent past. Many will remember the terrible floods that afflicted the pub when, in July 2007, the normally docile neighbouring Cradley Brook turned into a raging torrent - and there were further setbacks that seemed to make running the pub more than a challenge.

Since Kim and Andy Lannie moved from a successful stint at the Chase Inn at Upper Colwall to take on the tenancy at the Red Lion just over three years ago, things have very much been on an upward trajectory – hopefully, putting pay once and for all to any talk of there being a jinx on the property.

The Red Lion has always been a food venue first and foremost – being especially popular with pub-diners venturing out from Malvern. Often you would see the car park full on a Sunday lunchtime. The good news is that those times have returned to the Red Lion, but definitely not at the expense of the beer or, for that matter, the beer-drinker. Calling in for a casual pint, as either a local or passing visitor, is positively encouraged and is very much on Andy and Kim's agenda.

Recently, the beer offer at the pub has stepped up a level. No longer do local beers from the likes of Wye Valley and Malvern Hills breweries have to jostle for attention on the bar with less-exciting national staples from Greene King. It is the local brews that are now king at the Red Lion. Joining the regular house beer brewed by Malvern Hills (appropriately called Lannie's Quaffing Ale) have been the likes of Hafren from the new Worcester Brewery. And if this wasn't enough, some of the beers are now sold direct from the barrel – with two casks to be regularly found perched on the bar. How often do you see that these days?

The Red Lion's beer credentials now appear to be complete. The beer offer is as genuinely good as the food and well. And this is no accident – it is down to the vision and hard work of Andy, Kim and their family team.

Therefore, it was only appropriate that the Friday evening of the Red Lion's recent beer festival hosted the award of the certificate as our Autumn Pub of the Season. It's a good job it was on the Friday, as come around 6.30pm on the Saturday, a mini-tornado swept through the pub garden. Uprooted trees, trashed gazeboes, floodwater in the pub and no power brought an abrupt end to the merry proceedings. Perhaps that jinx is still there after all?

However, customers didn't desert the sinking ship, as Andy explains: "It was great that people stayed with us and helped clear the mess, including sweeping out the floodwater and chopping up fallen trees. We really appreciate that the local community rallied round."

And despite this, Andy still considers the festival to have been a success! With an attitude like that the future bodes well for the Red Lion.

Red Lion, Inn Stiffords Bridge, Malvern, WR13 5NN. Telephone (01886) 880318. Opening Times: 12-3, 5.30-11; 12-11 Sat; 12-10.30 Sun. Meals: 12-2, 6.30-9; 12-2.30, 6.30-9 Sat; 12-3, 6-8 Sun
www.theredlioninnstiffordsbridge.co.uk



Mark Haslam (left) presents (l to r) to Andy, Sam, Kim and Harry Lannie plus Joe Watts on the occasion of their recent beer festival

CIDER EVENTS IN AND AROUND HEREFORDSHIRE

Get yourselves out to find some real cider!
Here's where:

Sat/Sun 19th/20th September: Abergavenny Food Festival Wales biggest food festival, attracting over 30,000 visitors. Wristband allows access to five venues in town centre housing over 200 exhibitors, including at least 20 artisan brewers. www.abergavennyfoodfestival.com

Sat 3rd October: Applefest 2015, The Burgage Tenbury Wells. Apple Identification (Marcher Apple Network); apple/pear display, trees for sale and info on husbandry (Frank P Matthews Ltd); juicing service - bring apples and a clean container (Appleteme); classic cars; blacksmith; willow craft; Leominster Morris; Teme Valley Band; food, drink, licensed bar. www.tenburyapplefest.co.uk

Sat/Sun 3rd/4th October: National Trust Apple Weekend, Berrington Hall, Nr Leominster. Apple display; cider making demonstrations; orchard pruning; local craft and produce, including cider and perry; live folk music. 01568 615721. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/berrington-hall

Sat/Sun 10th/11th October: Apple Pressing Weekend, Brockhampton Estate. Tastings; cider apple pressing from NT's own orchards or bring apples (and containers) for juicing [£40 per press of 50 kg apples, produces 25 litres]. Refreshments in tea-room. 01885 482077 www.nationaltrust.org.uk/brockhampton

Sat 10th October. Apple Pressing Day, Carding Mill Valley. Another National Trust venue offering to press your own apples into juice Also buy apple juice to take home or sample the apple cake in the tea-room. 01694 725000 www.nationaltrust.org.uk/carding-mill-valley-and-shropshire-hills

Sat/Sun 10th/11th October: Ralph's Cider & Perry Festival, Badland Farm, New Radnor. Cider-making demonstrations using Victorian presses and scratters. Vintage equipment, tractor & stationary engine display. Saturday (from 12pm): hosting a hill-climb stage of VSCC Welsh trial with over 100 vintage cars. Sunday: tractor run in aid of Air Ambulance. Cider & perry bar. Hot/cold food 01544 350304 www.ralphsciderfestival.co.uk

Sat/Sun 10th/ 11th October: The Big Apple
See opposite.

Sun 11th October: Ridge and Woodland Walk with readings from 'Ripest Apples', the anthology of verse, prose and song compiled for the Big Apple by Roy Palmer. A circular walk from Westons via Ridge Hill, Holling Hill and Sollars Hope to see perrymaking at Avenue Cottage.

Sun 11th October: Big Apple Bike Ride. Ledbury Market House. Visit Big Apple via quiet country lanes. BYO picnic. Bike hire available. 01531 635432, www.comecyclingledbury.com

Sat 17th October: Leominster Apple Fair, Priory Church, Leominster. Sponsored by Herefordshire Green Party. Apple pressing demonstration; advice on apples; local produce; *Fair Trade* products; crafts; children's attractions; refreshments. Felicity Norman 01568 780886.

Sat 17th October: Colwall Apple Day. Seasonal orchards events celebrated by the Colwall Orchard Group. www.colwallorchardgroup.org

Sat/Sun 17th/18th October: Cidermaking Festival, Cider Museum, Ryelands Street, Hereford. Demonstrations of traditional cidermaking; coopering; blacksmithing, green woodturning and beekeeping. Free samples of cider; tutored tastings; Morris dancing; country crafts, family activities. 01432 354207 www.cidermuseum.co.uk

Sat 17th October Kemerton Orchard Workers' Annual Apple Day, Victoria Hall Kemerton, nr Tewkesbury Apple pressing (bring your own); orchard-related produce; tea; coffee; cake and stands; information on local orchards and their wildlife importance. www.kemerton.org

Fri 23rd & 30th October. Harvest Celebration Supper and Tour. Westons Cider Mill. Celebrate the end of harvest with a two course harvest supper preceded by a tour of the Cider Mill. Places limited. 01531 660108

Sat 24th October. Community Apple Pressing Day Drill Hall, Chepstow Bring your own apples (and container) for pressing juice and start a traditional cider. Contact below

Sun 24th October. Chepstow Apple Day, Drill Hall, Chepstow. Apple display (Marches Apple Network), apple juice, cider and perry tasting. Children's zone with crafts and activities; family competitions. www.transitionchepstow.org.uk/events/chepstow-apple-day

THE BIG APPLE - HARVESTIME 2015

Come and experience a feast of apples on **Saturday and Sunday the 10th and 11th October**. The Big Apple is a globally unique celebration of apples, cider and perry - right here in our glorious Herefordshire countryside.

Set in various venues in and around the village of **Much Marcle**, you are invited to travel from one to the other between 11am and 5pm on



James Marsden at Gregg's Pit Cider

both the Saturday and Sunday.

A number of local cidemakers will throw open their doors, and invite you to try their wares. At **Woodredding Farm** you can have a go on their 17th Century press, and try their ciders and perries - including their award-winning Yarlington Mill cider. At **Avenue Cottage**, see how Blakeney Red perry is made in the traditional, hands-on manner. There'll be plenty to see and

HEREFORDSHIRE'S CIDER PUBS

Pubs selling four or more ciders on handpull or by gravity:

- Beer in Hand, Eign Street, Hereford
- Bridge Inn, Michaelchurch Escley
- Green Dragon, Bishops Frome
- Kings Fee, Commercial Road, Hereford
- Victory, St Owen Street, Hereford
- Wellington, Widemarsh Street, Hereford.

Pubs that make and sell their own cider:

- Bell, Tillington (Eight Mates Cider Co.)
- Crown, Woolhope (Kings Cider Co.)
- Yew Tree, Peterstow (Ross Cider & Perry Co.)

Is there a cider event you'd like us to publicise? Or have we missed a pub? Contact us at

hopvine@herefordcamra.org.uk

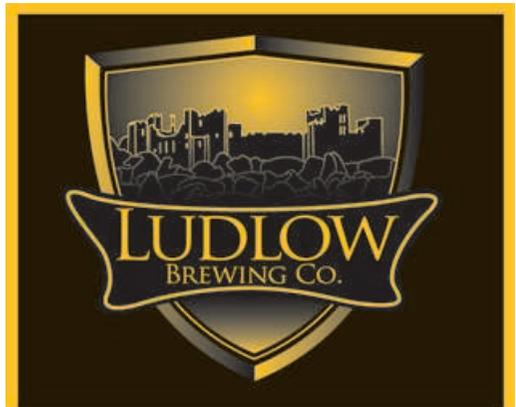
do at **Westons Cider**, where things are done on a much larger scale. And over at **Gregg's Pit** you can enjoy pure-juice ciders and perries in an idyllic setting in their wonderful old orchard.



Do you have a few trees, but are unsure what varieties they are? Then you need to head over to **Hellen's House**, where there are displays of apples, cider fruit and perry pears, with stalls manned by identification experts ready to help. And on your way in, don't forget to admire the avenue of perry pear trees, planted for Queen Anne's coronation in 1710. Perry made from those trees is a taste of history indeed.

You can catch **Leominster Morris** on the Saturday at Westons (11.30am), Gregg's Pit (12.30pm), and Hellens (3.00pm).

If you plan to visit all the venues, get the **Big Apple Trail** card, which when completed gives entry into a prize draw to spend a day with one of the cider-makers. www.bigapple.org.uk



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SAVE OUR CIDER-MAKERS!

Campaign steps up a gear after Beer on the Wye success

Our campaign to save our small cider and perry producers was given a major fillip at July's *Beer on the Wye* festival, when BBC *Midlands Today* turned up to film on the subject. Their news item, transmitted from the festival site on the Friday, highlighted the threat posed by proposed changes to EU tax legislation, whereby many producers would lose the Duty Exemption they enjoy.

Herefordshire CAMRA's Public Affairs officer, Mark Haslam, was interviewed live. He pointed out that the threat to our cider makers was very real, and that the

loss of this small but important tax concession would result in many producers quitting for good. This would not only signal the end for many of our local ciders and perries, but would see the demise of centuries-old orchards; the loss of rare fruit varieties, and a consequential impact on local jobs, the economy and tourism. Mark concluded by saying that whilst a little bit of rural England would die, a lot much larger part of Herefordshire landscape and heritage would be lost forever.

On the eve of the *Beer on the Wye* festival, the Chancellor, George Osborne confirmed in his July Budget statement that the HM Government is supporting our small cider-makers and would resist any change in the current Duty arrangements. However, caution needs to be exercised here before anyone gets carried away. It is great news that the Government supports the status quo, but will it ultimately be within their power to resist this change if directed by EU law? Should eventually the Duty exemption be lost, then CAMRA are asking the Government to put in place equivalent measures that will compensate for the loss.

So, the campaign pushes on. Nearly 500 festival-goers at *Beer on the Wye* supported our campaign by signing our 'Save Our Cider-makers' petition, which was organised from the Cider Bar. With names added that were previously collected at this summer's Bartestree Cider & Beer Festival, these names will now be added to over 26,000 signatures collected nationally by CAMRA.

Herefordshire CAMRA will be joined by Lewis Scott, a local cider-maker, when we go down to present the petition to the Government at 10 Downing Street on the 15th September.



Festival-goer, Anne-Marie Spiller from Bargoed in South Wales, signs the petition at Beer on the Wye

photo: Hereford Times

CASE STUDY: CLEEVE ORCHARD

Lewis Scott of Cleeve Orchard Cider & Perry, who had his wares on the Cider Bar at Beer on the Wye was also interviewed by the BBC. He stands to lose quite a lot if this isn't properly resolved. He set up Cleeve Orchard in Ross-on-Wye five years ago, and production has now reached 7,000 litres per year - the level at which excise duty becomes payable. Until now, as with other small producers, Cleeve Orchard has benefited from the duty exemption. That exemption is now under threat along with the future of his business.

Initially Lewis' motivation was in re-establishing a neglected six-acre orchard, and today much of his profit still goes back into managing it. As a cider-maker he has certainly been successful, winning awards at every major competition he has entered. Lewis says: "Winning three awards in my

Rhys Jones

Rhys Jones, Chairman of Bae Ceredigion CAMRA, passed away on 28 July after a short illness.

When the words “Rhys Jones, Bae Ce-re-di-gi-on” rang out across the hall (no microphone needed), CAMRA members attending the annual Members Weekend knew to expect three minutes of sparkling wit coupled with incisive argument. For Rhys, who attended the National AGM in 1975, and every one since, has been unrivalled the most entertaining speaker from the floor, whatever the subject of the motion.

Rhys was born 64 years ago in Hereford. Although English by birth, he was steeped in the culture of Wales and fluent in the language.

CAMRA was Rhys’s primary interest and many members throughout the country will have been touched by his knowledge, enthusiasm and good humour. He was active in various CAMRA branches in the Midlands and the North, notably Stockport & South Manchester Branch where he helped found the cider bar at Stockport Beer and Cider Festival in 1986. So successful was this that it became the somewhat improbable host of CAMRA’s National Cider and Perry Awards. He always took a special interest in the cider at Beer on the Wye.

Moving back to Wales in 1998, he found, as in Herefordshire a few years earlier, that there wasn’t a viable local CAMRA branch and so he worked with a small nucleus of local volunteers on pub surveying - which led in due course to setting up a properly constituted branch. At the national level Rhys’s passion for cider and perry came to the fore, and he was also very active as a member of APPLE, the cider and perry committee. With the passing of Rhys Jones, CAMRA has lost one of its great characters, cider and perry have lost a great advocate, and many of us have lost a good friend.



first year motivated me to become commercial, but making a 100% juice cider is tough. Seeing a 500ml bottle of cider for sale for £1 in a supermarket (which is cheaper than my costs), I wonder how small producers can compete.”

As secretary of the *Three Counties Cider & Perry Association*, Lewis is in contact with over a hundred members and is in no doubt as to the negative effect the duty will have. He adds: “With the increase in costs and a raft of new paperwork, cider-makers will go out of business; traditional orchards will be left to rot, and rare fruit varieties will disappear.”

The impact of the duty will increase Cleeve Orchard’s costs by 20%, which Lewis will have to try to pass on to his customers. However, many other businesses will just wither and die along with the orchards.



You know local is best.....



Mellow sounds on Sunday - one of eight live bands



A new record attendance on the Saturday



Cheers!



Cider Bar nervously awaits its fist customer

RON
WYE
15



All painted up



Beer Bar at full speed



Relaxing with a drink on the riverside



EXTRA TIME BLOWN FOR NEWTOWN INN

More than three years after the Newtown Inn was converted into a house without planning permission there is now some hope for a just outcome.

It's time for our annual update on what is (or to be more accurate, what isn't) happening at the Newtown Inn at Newtown Crossroads, Lower Eggleton. It's been said by some that it's Herefordshire's longest running pantomime.

It was over three years ago that the current owners bought and converted the failed PubCo pub into a house without planning permission; more than two and a half years since retrospective planning permission was refused by Herefordshire planners, and nearly two years since the Secretary of State upheld that refusal decision by dismissing the owners' appeal. Yet, as at September 2015, the locals who rely on the pub are still wondering how it is that there is a fully-furnished house where the pub should be.

The good news is that (at last) we might just be arriving at zero hour. Back in 2014 the owners were given twelve months (on top of the two years they had already had) to rectify their planning non-compliance. Herefordshire Council planners served a planning enforcement notice on them, instructing them to cease using the Newtown Inn as a private dwelling. That twelve month period has now elapsed with the passing of a July 2015 deadline.

Inn-correct name

The fact that the owners happily persist in calling the pub 'Newtown House' in correspondence demonstrates their open contempt for the two planning decisions made against them, thus it doesn't come as a surprise to learn that they appear to have done absolutely nothing to rectify their non-compliance with the planning laws, either by offering to sell the premises as a business or reverting it back to a pub. The main bar area today still looks like a living room scene straight out the 1970s TV sitcom *Terry & June*.

The hope is that Herefordshire Council planners will now act decisively to end this absurd three-year pantomime. It is not acceptable that these people sit in a pub cocking a snook at the local community, who want and need their only social facility back. There are already enough pubs closing elsewhere without free-

lance property speculators unnecessarily robbing communities of a vital social amenity, and with it valuable business and job opportunities. This situation is all the more frustrating as there are others still interested in taking it on as a pub business today.

Too Good to be True

The owners bought the Newtown Inn in 2012 for £135,000 under the nose of others who wanted to run the premises as a pub business. Do they honestly expect people to believe that they thought they could buy a detached four-bedroom property with significant land and out-buildings for just £135,000? They might do well to ask themselves if such a price was simply too good to be true, before moaning about the locals wanting their pub back. They've taken a punt and lost. It's now long overdue for the council to remove the owners' heads from the sand and rectify this outrageous injustice once and for all.

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NEW INN, NEW HOPE?

Bartestree pub placed on the market as the local community successfully register it as an Asset of Community Value.

Things might just be starting to turn the corner at the New Inn at Bartestree. In the last *Hopvine* it was reported that the owners were seeking to convert the closed Grade II-listed Victorian pile into residential units, but their plans received a set-back. The fact they had made no effort to market the premises as a pub before considering conversion to an alternative use was their undoing, thus they were forced to withdraw their application.

The good news is that the New Inn is now on the licensed property market. Local agents, *Sidney Phillips* have it on their books for £375,000 freehold. It is now hoped that a buyer can be found who is interested in taking on what is a very interesting and historic pub – one with much potential in this growing village. Both Herefordshire CAMRA and locals believe it can be made commercially viable again under new ownership.

Another development since the last *Hopvine* is that the local community have been successful in getting the premises listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) with Herefordshire Council. This means that in the instance of a sale, the community have the right to make a bid for the pub themselves. This they have decided not to do, so they are pinning all their hopes on a private buyer coming forward - and there is interest. In August alone CAMRA were contacted by two potential buyers.

However, getting the ACV listing is by no means a waste of effort. Being listed removes all permitted development rights that normally apply to pubs, therefore a full planning application would now be required for any use of the premises for anything other than for a pub – even for conversion to a restaurant. It is this extra planning protection that makes ACV-listing so worthwhile.

In the meantime, it is now a waiting game. It is hoped the marketing of the New Inn is a genuine effort on the part of the owners, but judging from the state of the property (when viewed from the roadside back in July) it is self-evident no effort has been made to spruce up the building up or to cut back the rampant vegetation to aid a sale. Any party wishing to view the property would do well to take along their own machete. And those net curtains would benefit from a rinse in a bowl of Omo too.

We watch and await events.



The New Inn at Bartestree: not quite immaculately presented for a quick sale

THE BARRELS



HEREFORD'S LOCAL

69 ST. OWEN STREET

01432 274968

FULL RANGE OF WYE VALLEY BREWERY BEERS

LUNATICS TAKE OVER THE BREWERY – FOR A DAY AT LEAST!

It was a case of beer-drinkers turned beer-makers, when Wye Valley Brewery invited Herefordshire CAMRA to brew their own special festival brew for Beer on the Wye.

It's always good when a local brewer brews a special beer for our *Beer on the Wye* festival – we like that sort of thing; it gives everyone a new beer to try and adds a little more sparkle to the event. But this year, when the *Beer on the Wye* organisers were contacted by Wye Valley Brewery's Managing Director, Vernon Amor, the brew house boot was to be firmly on the other foot - he was expecting us to brew it ourselves! Was CAMRA's beer bluff about to be called?

Turning up bright and early on a June morning at Wye Valley Brewery, the stakes were high. Herefordshire CAMRA were going to be asked to put their brewers' barley and hops where their mouths were. However, nerves were calmed somewhat when we were greeted by our mentor for the day in the shape of Wye Valley's Head Brewer, Gareth Bateman.

Once kitted out with the usual style-free safety gear, we quickly moved into the brewery and soon gleaned that Gareth comes with an impressive brewing pedigree - even before he worked for Wye Valley. Perhaps it's politick to skim over his early days at the Magor Pop Factory in South Wales, but otherwise stints at

Brains, Youngs and latterly Wells & Youngs breweries more than qualified him to keep a beady eye on us meddling amateurs.

Imaginative brew, not sure about the name

Wye Valley Brewery has recently installed a five -barrel capacity micro-brewery within its main brewery complex at Stoke Lacy. Called the pilot plant, its main purpose is to be used for various experimental brews - some of which may later go into commercial production. It was on this kit we were about to embark on our festival brew, which was to be called simply "Beer on the Wye". [*I bet it took ages to come up with such an imaginative name.* Ed]

Beer is a recipe requiring water, malted barley, hops and yeast – in that order by quantity. So, with the water as a given, first up was to choose a variety of malted barley for the brew. It was decided the beer was to have a colour similar to Wye Valley's Butty Bach, thus Maris Otter was selected, but with the addition of some wheat and crystal malt (malted barley roasted to give a darker colour) to give it more body. Job done.

Hopping mad arguments

But agreeing on the hops proved to be a little more problematic. Not just because there are so many varieties to choose from - all with their own distinctive flavour and aroma characteristics - but the point at which they are added into the brewing process also affects the flavour of a beer. Eventually peace broke out and three American hop varieties were chosen: Cascade, Nugget and Summit, along with some Bramling Cross, sourced from a hop farm in Munderfield.

We were now ready to go. The malted barley was mashed with hot water (known by brewers as liquor), which produces *wort* (basically a sweet non-alcoholic solution) and this is run-off into the copper (another vessel). The hops are then pitched-in and this concoction is boiled for an hour and a quarter. Four hours later there was only the yeast to add before the (still non-alcoholic) 'brew' was despatched to another vessel in the fermenting room. It was decided to



CAMRA witchcraft in action

aim for an alcoholic strength of 5%, although it finally landed at 4.8% ABV.

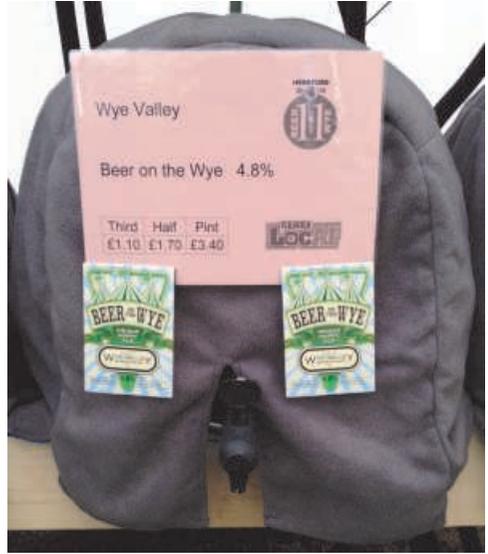
Now all that remained to be done was the unpleasant task of digging-out the used malt grain from the brewing vessel. Rather conveniently, at this juncture our party collectively remembered that they had to dash home to wash their hair.

Alchemy gets festival thumbs up

Throughout the process, Gareth scrutinised the amateur proceedings like a Hereford traffic warden might eye an errantly-parked motorist. There to make sure the brewers' alchemy was still observed, as much as the health and safety regulations were, his light touch might have ultimately won the day. Once on the stillage at Beer on the Wye, the brew didn't last long and another eighteen-gallon barrel was soon winging its way to the festival marquee. Clearly, it got the thumbs up from festival-goers.

The good news is that there'll be more brewing madness ahead of next year's Beer on the Wye, but the beer will be to a totally different recipe - yet to be agreed. More arguments to be had then!

Thanks go to Vernon Amor, Gareth Bateman and the brewery team at Wye Valley Brewery for making this whole project possible.



Beer on the Wye ready to go!



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WYE VALLEY AT 30 AND NO MID-LIFE CRISIS

It was appropriate that Wye Valley Brewery, the longest established and biggest ibrewer in the county, should chose Independence Day, the 4th July, to celebrate 30 years' of brewing.

Wye Valley's 30th birthday celebration came in the shape of a well-organised public 'Open Day' at their Stoke Lacy brewery. Casting an eye around the substantial and impressive facilities on that occasion, it is hard to imagine how far and how quickly the brewery has progressed from humble beginnings to a major undertaking in just 30 years.

Peter Amor first started Wye Valley Brewery in premises to the rear of the Nag's Head in Canon Pyon back in 1985. He wasn't there for very long when, in 1986, the opportunity arose to take on the lease of the under-performing and rather lacklustre Lamb Hotel in Hereford. The pub was seriously tidied up; the brewery re-installed into outbuildings to the rear, and the place was re-named The Barrels. You've probably heard of it.

Upstart brewery

It might come as a surprise, but it wasn't all plain sailing at first. It wasn't going to be a quick push-over to persuade the drinkers of Hereford of the merits of this new upstart brewery, but gradually the word went round about the quality of the beers, and both the brewery and the pub grew quickly. All helped by the highly successful annual Barrels Beer & Music Festival - which in its 28 years has raised nearly £500,000 for local charities.

By the time Peter's son, Vernon, became



Wye Valley open day at a sunny Stoke Lacy

involved (first as Head Brewer and later as MD), trade was such they were outgrowing the site at The Barrels, so in 2001 they moved lock, stock and beer barrel to the redundant Symond's Cider works in Stoke Lacy – a massive site, and where they still are today.

Since then investment has continued apace: a new bottling line; new cask storage facilities, and in 2012 a state-of-the-art brewhouse was built. And along the way they have also built up a successful cadre of pubs in places such as Hereford, Malvern, Gloucester and, most recently, the Black Star in Stourport. Undoubtedly there are more pubs in the pipeline.

Eight million and still counting

Today Wye Valley can no longer be considered a micro-brewery - it firmly belongs amongst the established family-owned regional brewers. In 2015 Wye Valley Brewery produces 28,000 brewer's barrels (that's over eight million pints) of beer annually, and directly employs 45 people. Yet, somehow, the same ethos of brewing decent traditional beers using local ingredients seems to be as steadfast today as it was thirty years ago. The county of Herefordshire is so much richer from their efforts and achievements. Therefore, we should all raise a glass and wish 'happy birthday' to WVB!

ALL CHANGE ON THE BUSES

With First Midland Red pulling out of Hereford in September, Yeomans Canyon Travel have taken over as the lead operator in the city and running many of the rural routes. DRM take over the Bromyard and Worcester route and Sergeants/ Stagecoach still operate their existing runs.

The 39A Hay Ho! Bus, which Herefordshire CAMRA has done much to support, also runs for another year thanks to a great wave of support from the public. It has a slightly revised timetable which can be found at

www.hayhobus.org.uk

50TH BIRTHDAY PARTY IN HONOUR OF A GRAIN

Maris Otter Sows Seeds of Celebration with Brewers

MPs have joined in the 50th birthday celebrations for one of the country's most famed barley varieties - Maris Otter.

Although less than 6% of British beer is produced with Maris Otter malt, nine of the most recent fourteen Champion Beers of Britain are made with it. Its longevity is unprecedented as most varieties are dropped after five or six years, for higher-yielding or cheaper varieties.

At an event in parliament organised by CAMRA for the *All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group*, MP's were able to sample seven beers made with the Maris Otter.

A festival of Maris Otter beers from around the world is being held in Norwich on 17-19 September. Details www.h-banham.co.uk.



CIDER WINNERS

The annual cider competition at the *Royal Three Counties Show* at Malvern proved most propitious for Herefordshire producer Tom Oliver - Oliver's Cider and Perry, Ocle Pychard - who won three class prizes; the best in Herefordshire and the overall best in show with a bottle-conditioned perry.

Thorn Perry, produced in Abbey Dore by Gwatkin Cider, was been judged 'Best Perry' at the *Monmouthshire Agricultural Show*

Insert Wildlife....pdf

GREAT WELSH BEER AND CIDER FESTIVAL BOUNCES BACK

Following the disappointment of being unable to hold the Great Welsh Beer Festival in the Millennium Stadium, a new venue has been found at the Depot, a converted warehouse in Dumballs Road, Cardiff. Recently used for the Cardiff Brewfest, this is within walking distance of the south exit of Central station.

The dates - 5th to 7th November put it back to the traditional time of year of the old Cardiff festival. Over 120 beers and 60 ciders and perries are planned.



5th, 6th & 7th Nov. Thurs 12-11, Fri & Sat 11-11

**£5 entry includes free souvenir glass and beer list.
CAMRA members get a free half.**

The Depot, 22 Dumballs Road, Cardiff. CF10 5FE.

CWTCH US IF YOU CAN

Welsh Beer Named *Champion Of Britain*



Newport-based Tiny Rebel Brewery have had their beer Cwtch named *Supreme Champion Beer of Britain* at CAMRA's *Great British Beer Festival*, held at London's Olympia in August. Pronounced 'Cutch' the term Cwtch means cuddle in Welsh. The 4.6% ABV darkish brew is described by Gareth Williams and Bradley Cummings, who have run Tiny Rebel Brewery for the past three years, as a traditional red Welsh ale brewed with a modern twist, that twist being the inclusion of American hops. Cwtch was also winner of the *Best Bitter* category.

Nik Antona, Champion Beer of Britain director, said "The Champion Beer of Britain title is the most coveted titles in British beer, for over 30 years brewers have put forward their real ale in the hope it will win and this year Tiny Rebel's Cwtch is a very worthy winner of this prestigious award."

This year's Silver went to Jaguar, a 4.5% ABV *Golden Ale* brewed by Kelburn (Renfrewshire), whilst the Bronze was awarded to the Dancing Duck brewery (Derby), for their Dark Drake, a 4.5% ABV oatmeal stout, which had won the *Stout* category in the *Winter Ales Competition*.

Other category winners were *Mild*: Williams Brothers - Black; *Speciality*: Titantic - Plum Porter; *Bitter*: Pheasantry - Best Bitter; *Strong Bitter*: Dark Star - Revelation; *Bottle-Conditioned* Harveys - Imperial Extra Double Stout

KINGTON WALKING FESTIVAL

8 PUBS CHALLENGE WALK

A new 26-mile circular walk around Kington takes in seven village pubs and one of the pubs in Kington. Though, while the Royal George in Lyonshall is closed for refurbishment, a second pub in Kington will need to be visited to make up the eight. Pubs include two in Wales, the Harp at Old Radnor and the Royal Oak in Gladestry. Herefordshire pubs include the unspoilt Swan Inn at Huntington; the New Strand and Tram Inn at Eardisley, and the Bells Inn at Almeley.

The terrain is varied with the biggest climb being over Hergest Ridge. There are some great views, and the walk includes Herefordshire Wildlife Trust's Holywell Dingle - a former tramway a well as some remote borderland countryside. A leaflet, which includes an Ordnance Survey map, outlining the route, is available at any of the pubs or from *Kington Tourist Information Office* at 5 Church Street. Each pub will stamp or sign the leaflet when you purchase a drink.

Instigator of the Walk is Kington CAMRA local rep, Geoff Cooper, pictured (right) at the Olde Tavern Kington with then soon-to-retire licensee, Debbie Bedford. He completed the challenge over two days at the end of July, and so is well-qualified to be leading three legs of the walk for the *Kington Walking Festival*, which runs between 17th-20th September. To book on a walk go to www.kingtonwalks.org where the leaflet can also be downloaded. For more information (or to hire a personal walking guide) contact Geoff Cooper on (01544) 231706 or via e-mail at: southbourne@kayoss.co.uk



Photo: Andy Compton

A WELCOME IN THE HILLSIDE

An evening visit to a new brewery

Looking for a brewery to the south of Herefordshire to visit during our Volunteers' Reunion event (Spring 2015 *Hopvine*), we had a difficult choice between two breweries. On that January day we went to Bespoke at Mitcheldean - a fortuitous choice, as it enabled us to enjoy the idyllic surroundings of Hillside Brewery on a sunny early-summer evening.

Proceedings commenced with a formal tasting session on the patio, where we sampled some of the ales in bottled-conditioned versions, whilst enjoying sweeping views across the fields and villages of Gloucestershire, and beginning to learn more about our hosts and their new venture.

The brewery is located at Hollybush Farm, just off the A44, near Longhope in the Forest of Dean; about three miles over the Herefordshire boundary. Its story goes back to 2011, when a brewery was set up in redundant dairy buildings on the Farm. Then trading as May Hill, it was named after the distinctive, tree-topped hill that is visible from much of Herefordshire. This operation only ran for a couple of years, finally closing in 2014.

The farm and brewery were acquired by father-and-son team, Peter and Paul Williamson, who set about smartening it up and upgrading the equipment. In fact, little of the old brewery survived, and in its place is state-of-the-art kit that would be at home in a much larger brewery. This includes solar panels that make the brewery a net exporter of energy and the water for brewing comes from their own borehole, deep under the farm.

Paul Williamson left a comfortable "corporate" job to pursue his brewing vision, but is bringing much from his former life into the business, notably diversification on the farm. This involves an activity centre which trades as *Battlesports Gloucestershire*, and specialises in laser-based battle simulations. Offering a realistic experience without the risk and mess associated with paintballing, the games are suitable for children and adults, for both recreation and corporate team building.

The brewery itself is housed in the dairy buildings, which have been thoroughly cleaned up to

render them suitable for a modern, hygienic brewery.

Adjacent to the brewhouse is a huge barn that has become a venue for a whole range of events including beer festivals, beer and food matching events, open-mic nights and even a christening.

The core beer range consists of:

Legend of Hillside 4.7% *English IPA*

Over the Hill 3.5% *Malty dark mild*.

Legless Cow 4.2% *Best bitter*

Pinnacle 3.8% *Session pale ale*

Seasonal beers so far have included:

Severn Surge 5.4% *Modern-style porter*

Summit 4.9% *Ruby ale*

HCL 4.3% *Lager, aka Hillside Craft Lager*

Much of the brewery's output is bottled, but the ales are found on draught in local pubs, notably the Farmers Arms in Wellington Heath. Over the Hill and HCL went down well at this year's *Beer on the Wye*.

As the daylight faded, and the air chilled, we moved into the barn, and also viewed the brewery itself. A most enjoyable visit, which concluded with a brief call at the Red Hart at nearby Blaisdon.



After the tasting session on the patio with Peter and Paul Williamson standing at the head of the tables.

A TALE OF TWO BREWERIES

A chance to compare Brecon's current brewery with its predecessor, followed by a tour of some unfamiliar territory.

On a stifflingly hot evening in June 2006, the cold room of the Breconshire Brewery provided sanctuary for a dozen Hereford CAMRA members, whilst sampling the three or four beers on offer. Nine years on, it was time to head west again to see how brewing has evolved in this Welsh market town and how this reflects on the current real ale market.

Breconshire was an offshoot of a soft drinks company C H Marlow Ltd. launched in 2002. With head brewer Buster Grant at the helm it produced a range of six beers plus a few seasonals. By 2011 Breconshire was not flourishing and Buster Grant had left to set up Brecon Brewing in a nearby modern industrial unit. Breconshire struggled on for a couple of years, finally calling time at the end of 2013. Owner, Howard Marlow, cited the 'competitive and fragile'

market, noting that the number of breweries in South Wales had risen from ten to sixty since Breconshire started.

Brecon Brewing's Business Manager Duncan Ward was waiting to meet us on a fresh, bright morning. Duncan explained that he is not an expert on brewing, although he has a pedigree in the pub trade, having run Reading's premier alehouse, the Hobgoblin (since renamed "The Alehouse").

Nonetheless Duncan (pictured on the right of the group photo below) was able to give a thorough account of the brewery operation as well as the business environment. As Brecon beers are frequently on sale in

Herefordshire's Wetherspoon pubs, we wondered about that company's reputation of 'squeezing' their suppliers. "They're not the most difficult" replied Duncan.



The future's orange at Brecon Brewing

Having safely negotiated some of the vertical stairs to view the fermentation vessels, we were treated to samples of Three Beacons, from the core beer range, and Blonde Beacons, one of the seasonal beers. The former, which won CAMRA Champion Bitter of Wales in 2014, demonstrated how brewers can achieve good levels of flavour in low-gravity beers. The latter was a particularly refreshing lager-style beer.

Whilst the seasonal beers are brewed from time to time, Buster Grant is also able to indulge himself in producing large numbers of

THE CORE BEER RANGE

Three Beacons 3.0% *Pale golden APA*
 Welsh Beacons 3.7% *Golden traditional Welsh Ale*
 Dark Beacons 3.8% *Traditional Welsh Dark*
 Copper Beacons 4.1% *Malty copper Ale*
 Gold Beacons 4.2% *Deep golden ale*
 Red Beacons 5.0% *A red-hued IPA*

beers with a bewildering array of malts, hops and sundry flavours. Many of these are given pseudo-biblical names such as Genesis 4-ii Gin & Tonic Beer. Most will never see the light of day again. The enthusiasm to exploit the changing tastes in the beer market probably explains the difference between the buoyant state of Brecon Brewing and the declining fortunes of its predecessor, Breconshire.

Into the Hills

Having expressed our gratitude to Duncan Ward, we set off for the very short hop into Brecon, before the planned tour of Breconshire and Radnorshire. Situated at the lower eastern end of the main street the **Clarence** is a bustling commercial hotel. It has a large welcoming bar and extensive eating/seating area to the rear, adorned with overhead vent ducts that don't contribute quite so positively to the appearance as they do in some modern pubs. It also has the benefit of an extensive beer garden.

A good and varied menu of reasonably priced and flavoursome food, was well served by friendly staff. Brecon Rescue Beacons 4.0% ABV was available to accompany our lunch, together with Wye Valley Bitter and Butty Bach.



Time for lunch - the Clarence

In spite of our route taking us up the A470, Wales's main north-south road, our next stop was a small village inn, the **Wheelwright** at Erwood. With one main flagstoned bar it serves just one, normally Welsh, real ale, which on the day was Evan Evans Warrior. At 4.6%, this is a classic, darkish, premium ale.

The pub seems to be in a bit of a time warp. It was quite obvious that the locals have their favourite cosy corner, but we were made most welcome, with a large model of the long-closed ex-Cambrian Railway village station providing the basis for a friendly chat.



A quiet moment on the A470 outside the Wheelwright

We were not optimistic about the pubs and beer choice in Builth Wells, but to our rescue came the very recently refurbished and re-opened **Barley Mow**. Set off from the main shopping area this pub presents a long frontage to the road, with a central lobby leading to a bar and restaurant on opposite sides. It lacked a little atmosphere during our mid-afternoon visit, but it is decorated to a high standard and well furnished and the welcome was most friendly.



New kid on the block - the Barley Mow

this micropub has dramatically enhanced the drinking opportunities in this old spa town. Tastefully decorated in blue emulsion with plenty of bric à brac, it offers five cask ales and four ciders plus spir-its, bottled beers but no lager. The beer tally so far is over 200.

We only normally expect to see Pardoes Dark Mild and Entire on our annual Black Country trip, but they were on the bar together with Blackjack Double Bluff; First Chop DOC; Llanidloes Roasted Red Ale; Olivers Dry Medium Ciders; Welsh Mountain Dry Cider and Skyborry Perry. The Llanidloes ale represents a move into brewing by the Arvon, being brewed at Waen Brewery of Newtown, under the name Spraio Brewing.

Surprisingly, the name 'Arvon' isn't Welsh, but comes from Old English and translates to 'Friend of the People', which seems most appropriate, as the absence of any extraneous activities such as plasma TV, gaming machines and canned music ensures good old-fashioned conversation rules.

Railway Anachronism

Out in the Radnorshire Hills, the village of Llangunllo is one of the anachronisms of Britain's railway system. Unlike some towns with up to a thousand times its population, the village has a railway station, albeit located a few miles away.

However, the five trains per day that amble through the station do nothing to shatter the rural idyll. The hub of the village is the Greyhound, a quaint single-bar pub with a very friendly welcome. The toilets could also be described as a bit rural. but they were well maintained, clean, and added to the overall atmosphere. The pub was very quiet during our visit but there were signs of impending musical activity, with a drum kit set up in the bar. Notices on the wall announced a beer festival a week or so ahead.

On the bar was Lobster Pot, a 4.4% ABV golden summer beer branded as from Porter Street Brewery. It turns out that this is another Evan Evans beer, brewed for its subsidiary, the Porter Street Brewing Company. The ambitious Evan Evans Group is vying for a slice of the burgeoning London craft beer market, and plans to brew Porter Street beers in Essex in due course.

Friend of the People

We continued to Llandrindod Wells where, amongst the somewhat faded grandeur of its many large hotels, sits the tiny Arvon Ale House. Opened in November 2014,



Small is beautiful: Llandrindod's micro-pub



The tiny, but characterful Greyhound

very welcoming, but thoughts of eating here were quickly dispelled when we were told the probable waiting time. So, it was a swift half all round, and with Castle Rock Hemlock Bitter accompanied by the ubiquitous Sharp's Doom Bar, the choice wasn't too difficult.

It was a short hop to the Harp Inn at Old Radnor. Dating from the fifteenth Century, this delightful stone-built Welsh longhouse, commands fine views from its hill-top position. It is also a well-established dining pub and inevitably very busy on a Saturday evening, so still no meal. We sampled the Three Tuns Rantipole and Brains Rev James Gold out in the car park whilst enjoying the far-reaching views in the gathering dusk. This pub clearly merits another visit, at a quieter time.

Goodbye Debbie

The final pub was, as they say, a no-brainer. With its licensee of six-and-a-half years only a few weeks from retirement, it was our last chance, as a group, to pay our respects at the Old Tavern in Kington. And Debbie Bedford happily agreed to us stopping by the local fish-and-chip shop and taking our long-awaited washed down by Hobson's Mild, Thornbridge Jaipur IPA or one



Daylight was beginning to fade at the Fforest

Three handpumps were dispensing Six Bells Owdol, Wrekin Pale Ale and Henry Westons Family Reserve cider. The Wrekin beer recalls Wrekin Ales of Wellington, Shropshire, that traded successfully until 1969 before falling to the destructive Greenall Whitley. The name has now been adopted by the erstwhile Ironbridge Brewery, which relocated in 2014 to the same street in Wellington that was once home to the most successful brewery in east Shropshire.

Saturday Night Fever

The next pub was in complete contrast. Situated at a major junction on the A44 trunk road, the Fforest at Llanfihangel Nant Melan is a busy dining pub. Nonetheless, with its stone flooring, large open fireplace and many other original features, it was full of atmosphere and



Our carriage awaits at the Greyhound

supper into the back room to be one of the other three ales. In fact we seemed to tickle the taste buds of the customers in the main bar, triggering a mass foray to the chippy.

Debbie is to be congratulated for promptly propelling this iconic pub back into the *Good Beer Guide* when she took over, and keeping it there throughout her tenure. *There's more on the handover of the Olde Tavern to the new tenants in Pub News on page 9 and a photograph on page 28.*

STOKE PRIOR

By our Transport Correspondent

The railway from Leominster to Worcester opened in 1897, some thirty six years after gaining Parliamentary assent. But the villagers of Stoke Prior were less than pleased. The Great Western Railway didn't see the need for a station here and villagers were expected to walk or ride down to Ford Bridge, some two miles away. It took another thirty four years of petitioning before a halt was eventually built at Stoke Prior in 1931. Unfortunately, this arrangement did not last as the line was closed in 1952. Since that time the village has experienced rural decline with the closure of its shops and hostelry. To top it all, last year, buses to Hereford and Leominster were severely reduced.



But all has not been lost for in late 2014 something quite remarkable happened; the village pub re-opened. Herefordshire CAMRA is not only passionate about real beer and cider/perry, but also about saving Herefordshire's rich rural pub heritage and heralded its re-opening in *Hopvine* Issue 57. It is a classic village pub, one which can make all the difference to a rural settlement where almost all other facilities have long since gone. The pub is open plan with flag floors, exposed timber frames, low ceilings and wood burners too; there is a homely feeling about the place. The large garden is ideal for children. It offers Wye Valley HPA and Butty Bach and occasionally stocks a guest beer from the Ludlow Brewery; the beer was on excellent form when we called in. Food is also available - check What Pub for details.

I was first introduced to this walk by local author Pete Blench at a Leominster Walking Festival; I owe him a pint! It's a steady 4.5 mile ramble from Leominster following a lane and path to Stoke Prior returning along the banks of the River Lugg. There are a few stiles, and only one climb, otherwise it is easy walking. Allow about two and a half hours, and drinking/eating time at the pub.

Transport heritage

The walk starts at Leominster Railway Station, in its heyday a major junction for trains to Bromyard and Kington. Walk down the station drive to turn right into Worcester Road. At the corner, go right to pass to the right of the White Lion, over a railway footbridge and a bridge across the River Lugg. Turn right just after, down steps, across a pasture, under the bypass road to enter the Millennium Wood (Woodland Trust). You can see how the mix of native trees have grown well in the past 15 years. Keep to the right, walking parallel with the river and over a footbridge/ two stiles. Continue ahead on a corralled path until you see a stile ahead by Eaton bridge. To the right is the site of a transhipment wharf used when goods were brought up the Wye and Lugg to Leominster in previous centuries. Don't cross the stile, go left to walk up to another stile to the A44.



Kites and Green Woodpeckers

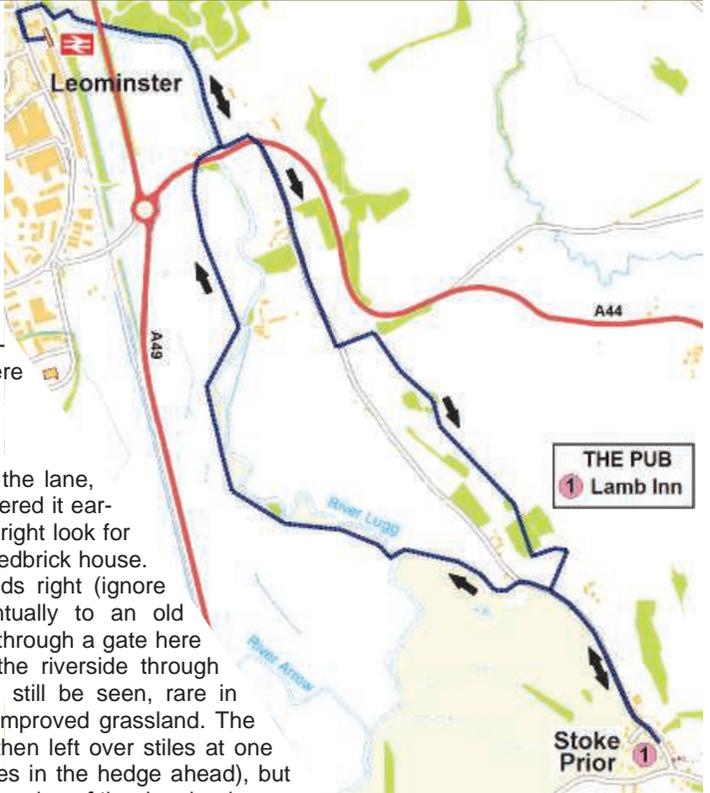
Cross the main road with care to walk along the lane signposted to Stoke Prior. Pass by several dwellings on the right, Green Fingers nursery, and an entrance to Eaton Hall. Soon after, cross over before a bend and pass the entrance to Eaton House. Just beyond is a bridle gate on the left. Go through it and walk up to another gate. Once through, go right to follow the hedge up the hillside, passing to the right of an old quarry working then through a barred gate. Go ahead through a gap in the next field hedge and then slightly right to pass through a barred gate (not the bridle gate to the right). If you are in luck you'll see or hear the cackle of the green woodpecker hereabouts. You'll also probably catch sight of buzzards and kites circling above.

Continue through a recently planted woodland which can be a little overgrown, but nevertheless the path is clear and leads to a more mature wood where you descend down to a field. Proceed ahead to the hedge corner where you cut right to cross a stile into an orchard. Walk onwards to go over a stile by a barred gate and finally through a gate onto a lane. Turn left to walk the quarter of a mile into Stoke Prior where the Lamb is on the right.

Black Poplars

Retrace your steps back along the lane, passing the point where you entered it earlier and then as the road bends right look for a track peeling off left before a redbrick house. Walk down the track as it bends right (ignore barred gate ahead) and eventually to an old bridge over the River Lugg. Go through a gate here and right over a stile. Follow the riverside through fields where black poplars can still be seen, rare in England now; they love wet unimproved grassland. The path veers off to the right and then left over stiles at one point (before seeing double gates in the hedge ahead), but be careful here as there's been erosion of the river banks.

You then come alongside a bridge over the Lugg to Eaton Hall, a farmhouse of medieval origin, but with major changes dating from the 19th century. There has been at least one mill on the river at this location in past times, possibly used for irrigating nearby fields. The path continues ahead to a stile on left by a gate. Cross it and follow the hedge to cross a second stile by a gate. Continue to a bridle gate by a large set of gates. Go through (or over if locked) to the A44 road. Cross with care and turn right to walk on a pavement to Eaton Bridge and then a stile on left. Cross this and retrace your steps back into Leominster.



Factfile

Map: Explorer 202 Leominster and Bromyard

Travel to Leominster

There are regular trains, every day, from Hereford to Leominster.

There are hourly Lugg Valley buses, 492, from Hereford Railway Station on Mondays-Saturdays and some buses on Sundays too.

For more information see website

www.traveline.info.

Traveline: 'Phone 0871 200 22 33 for up to the minute bus times.

The Pubs

The Lamb at Stoke Prior is open from 5pm Monday-Friday; 12-3pm Tuesday-Friday, all day Saturday and Sunday. Food is available Wed-Sat 12-2.30, 5-9 and 12-3.30 Sun. Mid-week lunchtime opening may not continue into the winter - ring to check

Check www.whatpub.com for further details.

If you are thirsty on returning to Leominster, you'll pass by the White Lion (nearest to the station) but my favourite is the Chequers, a few minutes' walk up Etnam Street - open all day.

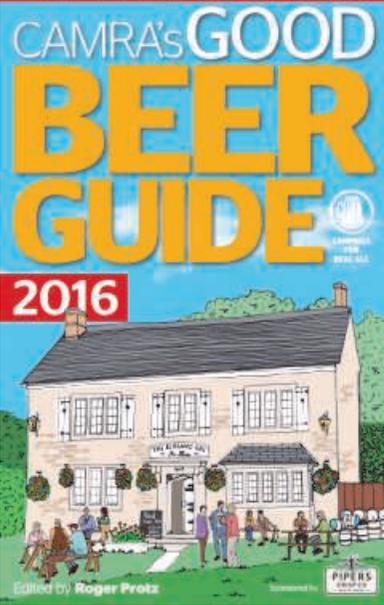
AN INDISPENSABLE GUIDE

4,500 pubs feature in the 2016 Good Beer Guide

CAMRA's latest *Good Beer Guide* hit the nation's bookshelves on the 10th September. It might be called the *Good Beer Guide*, but aside from comprehensively listing all UK breweries (and their beers), it really is the nation's definitive pub guide. Now in its 43rd year, the best-selling guide is considered to be the pub-goers' bible, with listings for over 4,500 of Britain's very best pubs - whether they are in the city, suburbs or country. If you're looking for a reliable and independent guide to take you to a great pub then this guide is a no-brainer.....every time.

It's great for a Christmas gift for the pub-lover in your life, but beware of pale imitations when browsing the bookshelves. There are other so-called pub guides where it is (at best) unclear how they survey and judge their pubs, and in the case of the *Good Pub Guide*, pubs are actually charged money for their entries. Surely that's advertising copy disguised as a guide? You can be assured that pubs in the *Good Beer Guide* get in on merit alone – no money ever changes hands.

Fiercely independent and true, the *Good Beer Guide* ensures every pub is properly checked-out, a task undertaken year-round by a volunteer army of over 174,000 CAMRA members



- the very people who know and enjoy their pubs. No other guide can achieve that thoroughness of coverage.

Besides listing all UK breweries, real beers and the best 4,500 pubs, the *Good Beer Guide* has a number of lively and informative colour features. These include articles on the micro-pub revolution, brewing and beer. It also lists pubs that sell cider and perry. Every pub listing highlights the beer and cider sold, along with facilities such as accommodation, food, opening hours, beer gardens and even free wi-fi. It also points out pubs ideal for families, pets and those premises with full disabled access. This is a guide for everyone.

ISBN: 978-1-85249-327-1; 230 x 140mm; paperback; 1016 pages; Cover Price £15.99; Online at <https://shop.camra.org.uk>: Members £10.00 + p&p; Non-members £13.00 + p&p

Gloucester CAMRA City Pub of the Year 2014

The Pelican Inn

4 St Mary's Street, Gloucester, GL1 2QR

Telephone
01452 387877



The Pelican Inn serves Wye Valley's full range of ales in a delightful position between Gloucester Cathedral and Kingsholm Rugby Stadium. Open all day between 11 and midnight, you will find draught cider and perry as well as five Wye Valley ales - plus a guest ale - served through a real ale python system and water-jacketed beer engines.

Herefordshire CAMRA

What's on

Branch Meetings.

Wednesday 30th September: 8.00pm at the Bell Inn, Tillington. Includes selection of short-list for Herefordshire *Pub of the Year*.

Wednesday 28th October: 8.00pm at the Alma Inn, Linton

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 25th November, 8.00pm at the Barrels, Hereford. Come along **and find out what's been happening**. This is a great opportunity for members to have a say regarding branch affairs. Includes the announcement of the new Herefordshire *Pub of the Year*.

Beer Festival Meeting

Mondays 19th October: 8.00pm at the Barrels (skittle alley), St Owen Street, Hereford. Come along and join the team as we set sail on plans for Beer on the Wye XII in July 2016. No experience necessary!

Social Events

Saturday 10th October - minibus trip to Odyssey Brewery at Brockhampton, to present them with their *Beer of the Festival* award from Beer on the Wye XI, followed by a relaxing stint at the Green Hop Beer Festival at the Talbot at Knightwick. Plus maybe one or two pubs in the area.

Sunday 18th October - CAMRA Hay Ho walk: catch Yeomans 39A at 10.15am from Hereford Railway station (slightly later from the Country Bus Station or Broad St.). Concessionary passes book to Peterchurch; others buy a Day Rover for £7.50. 5-6 mile walk, finishing at a local hostelry arriving back at Hereford at 16.00. Further information: Andrew Pearson 01981 251167

Saturday 7th November - trip by train and bus to Salopian Brewery to present their *Beer on the Wye* Champion Beer of the Festival award, followed by a **stroll round some of Shrewsbury's finer pubs**.

Saturday 12th December - Annual Black Country pub tour. Approx ten pubs always, including a few must-do favourites and a few completely new ones. This trip is always very popular, so booking early is essential.

Contact Mark Haslam for details unless otherwise stated. See "Public affairs and campaigns" on page 39 www.herefordcamra.org.uk/diary.

If you know of any event that might be of interest please contact the editorial team (details on page 39). Deadline for next issue November 13th 2015

CAMRA BEER FESTIVALS



Thursday 24th to Saturday 26th September. Morris Hall, Bellstone, SY1 1JB. Shrewsbury Beer Festival. 80 beers plus ciders and perries.



Thursday 5th to Saturday 7th November. The Depot, 22 Dumballs Road, Cardiff, CF10 5FE. Great Welsh Beer & Cider Festival. 120 beers, 60 ciders and perries.

LOCAL BEER FESTIVALS

Friday 9th to Sunday 11th October. Talbot Hotel, Knightwick: Annual Green Hop Beer Festival. Fri/Sat 11am-11pm with live music in evening; Sun 11-6.

Friday 16th October to Sunday 1st November. Kings Fee Hereford; Mail Rooms, Ross-on-Wye; Dukes Head, Leominster. Wetherspoon Beer Festivals. Up to 40 real ales, spread over 17 days.

Local beer festivals frequently come to our notice too late for inclusion in the *Hopvine*. Wherever possible we put these on our Beer on the Wye Facebook page www.facebook.com/BeerOnTheWye

A Campaign of Two Halves

Fair deal on beer tax

Save Britain's Pubs!



Join CAMRA Today

Complete the Direct Debit form and you will receive 15 months membership for the price of 12 and a fantastic discount on your membership subscription.

Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit www.camra.org.uk/joinus or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to the: Membership Department, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

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Forename(s) _____

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Address _____

Postcode _____

Email address _____

Tel No(s) _____

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title _____ Surname _____

Forename(s) _____

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

Email address (if different from main member) _____

Direct Debit Non DD

Single Membership £24 £26
 (UK & EU)

Joint Membership £29.50 £31.50
 (Partner at the same address)

For Young Member and other concessionary rates please visit www.camra.org.uk or call 01727 867201.

I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association

I enclose a cheque for _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Applications will be processed within 21 days

01/15

Campaigning for Pub Goers & Beer Drinkers

Enjoying Real Ale & Pubs

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September 2015

Landlords! Talk directly to your target market. Herefordshire pub-goers and real ale drinkers. **Advertise in the Hopvine**

The *Hopvine* is produced four times per year and, of the 4,000 copies of each issue, most are distributed to around 160 pubs in the county, where they may be read many times over by different customers. Others go to real ale pubs further afield, plus beer festivals etc.

Attractive discounts are available for entries in consecutive issues, and even bigger discounts for four issues paid in advance.

Completed ads can be accepted in .pdf .doc, .pub, and .jpg format, or just send us your information, and perhaps a logo, and we can compose the ad for you.

Current advertising rates (from)

Full page	£110
Half Page	£66
One third page	£44
Quarter page	£36

Do you miss issues of the *Hopvine* or live away from Herefordshire? You can get copies by post from David Powell, 18 Chatsworth Road, Hereford, HR4 9HZ. Send any number of stamped, self-addressed envelopes for A5 up to 100g OR 6 x 2nd class postage stamps for 4 copies (11 for 8 copies) OR cheque payable to Herefordshire CAMRA - £2.50 for 4 copies (£4.50 for 8 copies)

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