

Beer Gutter Press

FOR DISCERNING BEER DRINKERS IN AND AROUND NEWARK · ISSUE 17 · SEPT 2003

 Newark branch of CAMRA the Campaign for Real Ale – www.newarkcamra.org.uk

Beer tax

is crippling small pubs and encouraging smuggling says CAMRA

A campaign is underway to get the government to reduce the tax we pay for our pint of beer.

The exorbitant amount of money which the Treasury pockets is not only crippling brewers and their customers, but encouraging wide-spread smuggling from the continent.

Although larger pubs often make more profit from the sale of food, smaller community pubs rely on beer sales which make up around 60% of their turnover and many are threatened with closure.

Here are a few facts.

- The UK Treasury make more from the sale of a pint of beer than the pub and brewer put together.
- We pay over six times more beer tax than French drinkers.
- Over 1.5 million pints a day are brought across the Channel from Calais – the equivalent of the weekly sales of 1,000 community pubs.
- Customs and Excise estimate that 70% of this beer is illegally smuggled.

CAMRA want the government to reduce beer tax to take the profit out of smuggling, starting with a 5p cut.

This should be coupled with the introduction of a temporary lower limit on the amount of alcohol that individuals can bring into the country. This would have an immediate positive effect on British pubs.

Write to your local MP and pledge support.

Meanwhile...

Medium size brewers could be in for a windfall if the review of Progressive Beer Duty announced by the Government leads to a change in the current law.

The system was changed last year to allow brewers of up to 3,000 barrels a year to get a cut of 50% in the duty they pay. Produce from 3 to 18,000 barrels and you get a reduction of up to £130,000. Over that, and you pay the top rate.

Breweries nudging the limit claim that it is a very powerful deterrent to expansion.

Talking about his planned £1 million expansion, the boss of Butcombe Brewery Guy Newell said, "The PBD limit has been the one negative as far as we're concerned. If we step over it we will have to sell thousands more barrels to get back what we earn in the duty saving. It's a huge disincentive to growth."

Treasury Minister John Healy has announced a review that could see the limit for duty relief being raised to the 122,000 barrel maximum permitted by EEC rules.



The Spring House re-opens

The Spring House pub in Newark, which dates back to 1832, has re-opened after a £170,000 refurbishment by its new owners The Heritage Pub Company.

After years of neglect and a two year closure, the interior of the pub has been re-modelled by combining two rooms to make one large lounge and bar area. The exterior has received a face lift and a new beer garden has been added.

New landlord Mike Wells will be assisted by a twenty-strong staff, and will provide home-cooked food along with a selection of guest real ales.

Heritage own three other

pubs in Newark. The White Hind on Carter Gate, The Pack Horse on Albert Street and The Broadway on Bowbridge Road. The latter is planned to be refurbished shortly.

Best Beer Award

Bitter & Twisted brewed in Scotland by Harviestoun of Dollar has won the 'Best Beer in Britain' award. The beer was selected by a panel of brewers, beer writers and journalists from over fifty finalists.

CAMRA's Head of Campaigns Mike Benner said, "It's great news for Harviestoun and for Scotland. Bitter & Twisted has long been a favourite of beer

drinkers and I'm very pleased to see them win the most prestigious beer competition."

This is the second year of success for a Scottish brewery, with Caledonian's Deuchars IPA winning the award in 2002.

The Silver award went to Crouch Vale's Gold from Essex, and the bronze to Lidstone's Rowley Mild from Suffolk.

You what?

This has nothing what so ever to do with beer, but here's a football score sent in to Radio 5 Live by a listener:

Barcelona - 2,
Surreal Madrid - Goldfish.



From biscuits to brewing.

Success for Maypole's new brewer.

When long time friend and fellow CAMRA member Rob Neil phoned to tell me that he was the new brewer at the nearby Maypole Brewery, I must admit I was quite surprised. For despite his passion for real ale, apart from the odd experiment with a Munton's home brew kit in his younger years, he had had no brewing experience at all.

Despite this, the ex-biscuit salesman who lives in North Muskham, rose to the challenge and carried on producing the high quality Maypole brews such as Celebration and Mayfair, also introducing a handful of new brews (more on those later).

The story started late 2001, when local publican Kenny Munro, currently the landlord of the Good Beer Guide listed Square & Compass at Normanton on Trent, acquired the brewery from its founder, Danny Losinski and employed Rob as the new brewer. Rob started work in December of that year, with his entire training consisting of one months in-house brewing with Danny.

Eight brews later, and Rob was on his own.

The only changes Rob made to Danny's beers was renaming Mae West to Wellow Gold. Mayfair, Celebration and Loxley Ale remained untouched.

The first few months were spent building the brand and

increasing the brewery's customer base.

Newly designed pump clips were introduced and Maypole beers can now be found in many local outlets. Actually, Rob is the first to admit that he can't brew the stuff quick enough to keep up with demand.

Whilst I've seen more bijou breweries than Maypole, it is still on the small side, and with it's 2-barrel output a week, Rob is finding it difficult to meet demand.

"Expansion is planned sometime" he admits, but whether it will be in the existing outbuildings on North Laithes Farm, Eakring or somewhere else (the Square and Compass?) is not so certain. "We have the room to install a 7-barrel or even 10-barrel plant here", he says "but whether we do it here or not needs thinking about".

Never the less, he is coping admirably with the equip-

ment available and as he approaches his 150th brew, he has made some excellent additions to the Maypole range. Lion's Pride (3.6%) was introduced, then Brew Britannia (4.5%) and Normanton IPA (3.6%), followed by Mad Mild (4.9%), brewed for this year's CAMRA Mild in May campaign.

His most recent addition, Mach 2 (5.2%) was brewed specially as a one-off for this year's Newark Beer festival, and won the Beer of the Festival award. It's since proved so popular that Rob's decided to make it a semi-regular. Indeed, the latest guyle has sold out even before it's been racked off into casks!

Maypole also won the beer of the festival at last year's Event in the Tent with Lion's Pride.

So the last eighteen months has seen Maypole produce half-a-dozen new beers, two consecutive Newark Beer of the Festival awards, and their demand outstripping supply.

Not bad for a biscuit salesman!

Maypole Brewery 01623 871690
www.squareandcompass.co.uk

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FROM THE HEART OF ENGLAND

Drowning Poole

After several weeks of unseasonable warmth, it was finally time for our long weekend trip south to Poole. No surprise, then that the weather broke the day I drove down to Wiltshire, with non stop torrential rain for almost two days. Never mind, most of my holiday was spent in pubs, so it didn't really matter!

To break the journey I chose a pub from the 2003 Good Beer Guide, the Earl of Normanton in Idmiston, Wiltshire, situated about three miles from Stonehenge.

This was a marvellous country pub with a raised-terrace drinking area at the rear of the pub with excellent panoramic views of the surrounding (very wet) Wiltshire countryside. We chose the large horseshoe-shaped bar inside to sample the beers.

Although a free house, the pub had a tie-in with Cheriton brewery and beers on offer were Cheriton Pots Ale, Village Elder and Best Bitter plus Hopback Summer Lightning – all in excellent condition. Village Elder stood head and shoulders above the rest and I settled on that for the rest of the evening.

After six pints and a very good home-cooked supper, we retired to our B&B which was a recently converted barn across the courtyard from the pub.

Friday morning we continued on to our B&B near the centre of Poole. Some more sightseeing took up the afternoon, and then on with the

all-important bit – exploring the pubs. The 2003 GBG lists eight, plus an Inn Brief, and I intended to do them all.

Friday evening we walked down to the quayside and found a charming little boozier, the Poole Arms. Cosy and one-roomed, its narrow frontage is completely covered in green tiles. Although not GBG listed, I couldn't pass it by, and was rewarded with an excellent pint of Ringwood's Best, which was enjoyed sitting outside on the quayside, people-watching.

Apparently, the pub is up for sale. Lets hope it doesn't fall into the hands of someone with no sympathy for pub tradition. It is easy to see how this could happen along this trendy stretch of the waterfront.

The next three pubs were all in the GBG. First the Blue Boar. This pub is split into two levels – the Lounge Bar and

the Cellar Bar. We chose the latter. The cellar bar was very reminiscent of the (now sadly closed) Cornhill Vaults in Lincoln. The walls were covered with nautical items and relics from the now demolished Poole Power Station. Here, I chose a pint of Cottage Southern Bitter, again very good condition.

One thing that I had never seen before was that the necks of the beer engines were extended above the bar, allowing the glass to sit on the bar under the nozzle and beer dispensed into the unheld glass. This was of course possible because the beers were not served with a sparkler and therefore didn't have the unnecessary 1% of unwanted froth on the top.

It is also worth pointing out that beers served in this way (usually) don't need topping up.



Lined glasses? Not around here. Nor are they needed!

Next up, the Royal Oak and Gas Tavern. Situated on a back street, just three or four minutes from the Boar, this was my favourite pub of the whole weekend. No frills, no gimmicks, just a great, unspoilt, welcoming local serving a great pint of Ringwood's Best.

Final call of the evening was back around the corner, on to the Old High Street, and into the Brewhouse. Until recently this was the site of the Poole Brewery. Another no-frills pub, probably catering for the younger drinker, with TV, two pool tables and loud music. Strangely, in comparison to the Gas Tavern which was heaving with customers, the Brewhouse was pretty quiet. A good selection of beers, though, from which I chose Mermaid. Great stuff. Then it was back to base via the Tandoori Nights curry house.

Saturday morning – no let-up in the rain, and another five GBG pubs to fit in. After a good full English, we took the long walk to the Branskome Railway Hotel arriving at noon.

The frontage of the Branskome is magnificent and inviting, with its strong Victorian architecture adorned by blossoming hanging-baskets. Alas, step inside and you stand in a dingy, smoky, run-down, establishment with sticky-topped, rickety old tables, ripped upholstery, and tobacco-stained walls.

Add to this a very dodgy pint of Hampshire Brewery's Strongs Bitter, and I can't think of one reason to return there. Shame, because this has

the potential to be a great pub.

Next to the Hogshead. Nothing exciting here. The usual Hogshead layout, décor and beer range. I settled for an OK pint of Boddington's.

Back out into the rain, back the way we came and we find three GBG pubs, quite literally within (if you are very good at it) spitting distance of each other. The Bermuda Triangle is situated perhaps a hundred yards from the main road, but could have been in the middle of a village. A pub of real



character with little snugs and annexes. The walls and ceiling are decorated with maps, news cuttings and memorabilia of the Bermuda Triangle. Four constantly-changing beers are available here. I had a Wye Valley Dorothy Goodbody Summertime Ale. This is a serious drinker's pub, and I would like to go back when it's busier.

A strange thing – as I left the Bermuda, I turned to take a snap of it. When looking at the photo later on my PC, a ghostly grey shape could be made out in the left upstairs' window. Spooky, eh?

Directly opposite is the

Bricklayers Arms. An unspoilt, basic pub, lacking any real character, but serving a fine pint of Ringwood's Best. Ringwood's seem to have a good foothold in this area, being situated just over the border in Hampshire.

Out of the Bricklayers, turn left, back past the Bermuda, and on to the Central. This is Hall & Woodhouse owned, large traditional boozier. A fine interior with large potted plants, spectacular marble fireplace, brass fittings, etched windows and grand curtains. My pint of Badger was OK, but not as good as the surroundings.

And that was it! I'd cracked my list of GBG pubs, and it was only about five o'clock. But this little chappie wasn't ready to retire yet. Oh, no! We took in four more pubs – the Britannia: a plastic pub serving an average pint of Ringwood Best; In and out of the Conjurer's Half Crown (no real ale); A good pint of Tetley's in the Shah of Persia and finishing up at the George. A large, bustling town centre pub serving a good drop of Hampshire Romsey Bitter.

All-in-all a good day out. I suspect there were more hidden gems to be found, had we had the time. Another curry supper and an early(ish) night to sleep off the drink before the long journey home.

Poole, especially the old town, has some great pubs and is well worth a visit. In fact, considering the proximity of Bournemouth, it might be worth taking in both towns next time.

BoldBelvoir

Plans to tackle Scotland's 'binge drinking'

In an attempt to end binge-drinking, Scotland have announced plans to radically overhaul their licensing laws.

Changes include no restriction on opening times, no 'happy hours' and children to be allowed into pubs.

Scottish Justice Minister Cathy Jamieson said the document, which will go out for consultation offered the best solution to tackle heavy drinking among some Scots. She said, "While many aspects of our social drinking patterns have changed beyond recognition in the last 30 years, one unchanging feature of the Scottish drink culture is its link with violence. Changing

the licensing laws by itself will not break the link between drinking and crime, but what changes to the law can do is encourage greater responsibility for license holders. It's time to call time on this binge drinking culture and the links between drunkenness and violent disorder."

CAMRA's Scotland Regional Director Ken Davey said, "We want to see a modern approach to licensing that accepts that the vast majority of people are sensible but takes on board that some are not."

Ironically, Ireland who tried a similar route, discovered that the new laws led to an increase in alcohol related crime and disorder. They have just introduced stricter licensing laws in an attempt to redress the balance.

Any complaints?

For complaints concerning adulteration, substitution and short measures contact:

**The Trading Standards Dept.
2 Middlegate, Newark NG24 1AG**

For complaints about deceptive advertising write to:

**Advertising Standards Authority,
Brook House, 2-16 Torrington
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To complain about proposed pub alterations or to view the plans of future developments, contact:

**The Planning Department,
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Newark NG23 5QX**

CAMRA HQ can be found at:
**CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road,
St. Albans AL1 4LW**
Web: www.camra.org.uk/

Six real ales, three real fires and a dozen pub games, What more do you need?

Only a fifteen-minute bus ride from Newark is the Old Coach House Inn, located on the corner of Easthorpe in Southwell, just down the road from the Minster. Voted Newark CAMRA's Summer 2000 Pub of the Season, it is a great pub that seems to embrace all of those things that CAMRA is about.

Formerly the White Lion, it was bought by Steve and Sandra Hussey, and the Old Coach House Inn opened its doors to the public in October 1999.

Steve & Sandra have been married for fourteen years, Steve previously being a driving instructor. But Sandra had been in the licensed trade herself for 12 years before. In her total of 26 years in the trade she has had six pubs, the most two recent being the Bromley Arms at Fiskerton, and the Lord Nelson at Sneinton which was a Nottingham Pub of the Month winner in '87 and '91.

They had always been passionate about the quality of their beers, but weren't able to offer the range they wanted because they had always been in tenanted houses. All that changed when they bought the Coach House freehold. They now support a wide range of National, Regional and Micro-brewers, many of the micros locally sourced. Indeed, when walking through the doors of the pub, one never knows what beers to expect and the turnover is sometimes so

quick that your second choice of beer is no longer available upon returning to the bar after finishing your first!

There are always six hand-pulled beers available: Draught Bass, a mild (usually from Hardys & Hansons) and four others. The quality is no less than excellent. "I can't take any credit for that" says Sandra. "Steve does all the ordering and cellar work".

Customers favourites seem to be from Glentworths, Maypole, Newby Wyke and Oldershaw. "I think the standard of beers from the micro's is first class" said Sandra. "We very rarely have a problem. When we do, it's usually sorted out straight away".

It is obvious that their decision not to serve food (a rarity nowadays) has allowed them to focus their attention on the quality of the beer. However, this decision was taken during Sandra's fight against cancer. "I'd done all the cooking at my previous pubs, but I was so poorly, I just couldn't manage it any more", she told me.

Happily she is better now, and business certainly hasn't suffered.

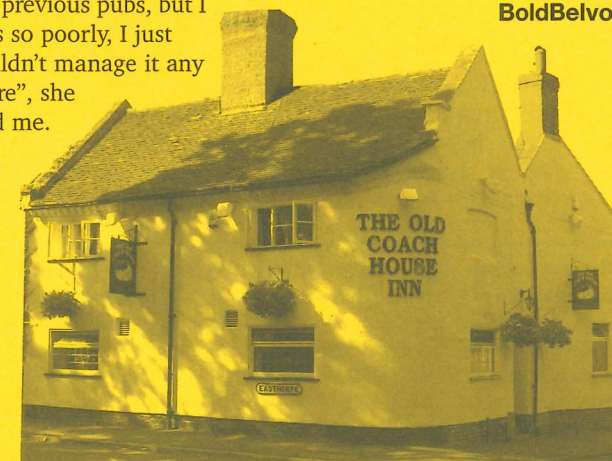
Aside from the beer, the pub itself is about as traditional as they come, with three distinctly separate drinking areas and no less than three real coal (or log) fires which, when lit during the winter months, makes for a really cosy atmosphere.

Conversely, the paved and planted patio area at the back makes a pleasant sun-trap in which to enjoy an outdoor pint during the summer months.

The staff and customers give a warm and genuinely friendly welcome, but if conversation is not your thing, as well as the usual darts and dominoes, there is shove ha'penny, cribbage, Jenga and a large selection of board games available with which to while away the oncoming dark nights.

**The Old Coach House Inn
01636 813289**

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Old Coach House Inn

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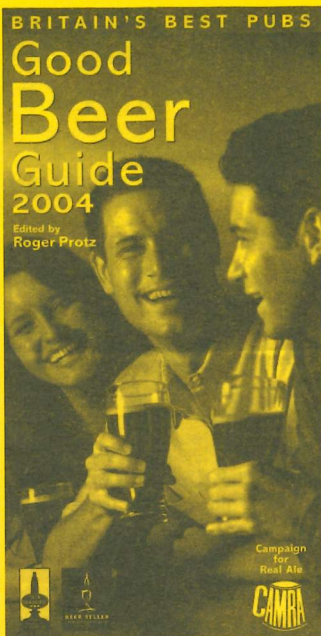
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New edition of bible published

The 2004 Good Beer Guide has arrived.

The 31st edition of Britain's longest running and best selling guide lists not only the country's finest real ale pubs, but contains comprehensive listings and information on all the beers and breweries throughout the land.

Being compiled by independent beer lovers, the assessments are informative unbiased and honest. A must for anyone who likes a pint.

£12.99 at bookshops or £9.00 to CAMRA members.

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Cider month

Cider lovers will be in seventh heaven during October when CAMRA launches its inaugural Cider and Perry Month.

Starting at the Eastbourne Beer Festival (3 to 5 October)

events will continue nationwide.

October also sees Apple Day on the 21st. Events planned include finding the person who can cut the longest peel from one piece of fruit. The record stands at 947cm.



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