

77TH EDITION

AUTUMN 2023



FESTIVALS ARE BACK!



South Devon CAMRA

Supporting Real Ale in the South West



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

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Dartmoor Brewery is the second largest Brewery in Devon, officially the highest brewery in England at 1,465ft above sea level. The Brewery is still located in Princetown, just a few steps away from the Prince of Wales pub where it all began in 1994.



www.dartmoorbrewery.co.uk

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WELCOME



77TH EDITION AUTUMN 2023



CAMRA Regional Director Peter Bridle presents the award to Alan Cooke for CAMRA branches website of the year.

Also in this edition:

- **What's On in the South Devon area and beyond** (page 5)
- **Pub and brewery news** (page 8-10)
- **The London trip** (page 14 & 15)
- **South Devon CAMRA Sunshine Beer Festival 2023** (page 16 & 17)
- **News from CAMRA** (page 20-22)
- **A day out in Torquay and Babbacombe** (page 24 & 25)
- **Playing away in Exmouth** (page 26 & 27)
- **A pitchfork up your nose with Grumpy** (page 28 & 29)



Cheers,
Andrew Thomson
Editor

Please enter your monthly What Pub scores by the **6th** of the following month for them to be included on that month's database. For a 'how to' description of scoring see southdevon.camra.org.uk



THE BLUE ANCHOR

-TEIGNMOUTH-

We offer a constantly changing choice of 6 Real Ales on the bar and over 160 spirits.

A variety of events are held throughout the year with highlights during bank holidays and Christmas time.



BEER & CIDER FESTIVALS



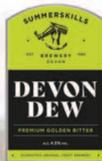
Easter Weekend

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WHAT'S ON

BRANCH MEETINGS AND SOCIAL EVENTS

Date/Time	Purpose	Location
12 September, 1930h	Branch meeting	Taphouse, Newton Abbot
20 September, 1200h	Midweek to Brixham	The Vigilance
30 September, Midday	Combined branches social	Blue Anchor, Teignmouth
10 October, 1930h	Branch meeting	Preston Conservative Club
25 October, 1135h	Midweek to Two Mile Oak etc	No 7 bus at 1135h Newton Abbot bus station
14 November, 1930h	Branch meeting	Blue Anchor, Teignmouth
22 November, 1125h	Kingskerswell crawl	Start at Newton Abbot bus station

BEER FESTIVALS

Date	Event	Location
1 – 3 September	Beer festival	Durant Arms, Ashprington
14 – 17 September	Abbfest	Fermoys Garden Centre
21 Sept – 1 Oct	Cask ale week	At a pub near you
6 – 7 October	Weymouth Oktoberfest	Weymouth Pavilion
14 October	Yeo Cider	Yeoford Community Hall
19 – 21 October	Swindon CAMRA Beer Festival	Steam Museum
27 - 29 October	Halloween Beer Festival	The Albert Inn, Totnes
1 – 3 December	Charity Beer Festival supporting Shoalstone Pool	Queens Arms, Brixham
18 – 21 January 2024	Exeter FoB	Corn Exchange, Exeter

Please check individual events prior to attending

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REAL PUB

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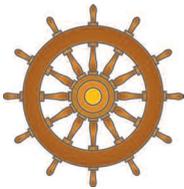


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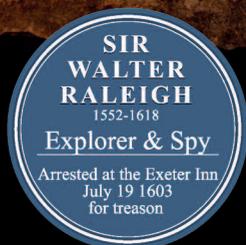
*Good Beer Guide for 22 years.
Local, Regional & National Real Ales on Gravity Pour. Large section of Real Cider & Perry.
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"The Holy Grail of all pubs" - Mick, CAMRA Member, Plymouth

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PUB NEWS

Despite the soggy summer, the **Palk Arms** in **Hennock** has continued to trade steadily with hopes that a warm finish to the summer will boost trade further. More improvements have been made to the beer garden, the kitchen renovations have been all but completed and plans are afoot to raise the pub's toilets to ground floor level - which will in turn free up space to accommodate the brewery mine host Mike has bought (see Brewery News).

A new team member at **The Lord Nelson** in **Kingskerswell**. Lucylou joins the staff after the sad passing of Otto.

The Taphouse in **Newton Abbot** is offering 10% discount on beers for card carrying CAMRA members. The past South Devon CAMRA Pub of the Year winner has ambitious plans for the future. Manager Chris Cutts took us through planned development of hitherto unused parts of their section of the previous Tuckers Maltings building and outside areas – watch this space!

Karen Barlow has taken on management of **The Wolborough Inn** in **Newton Abbot**. On a recent visit, our reporter noted 2 beers on the bar (favourites of the regulars) and busy meal times for Saturday breakfasts and Sunday lunches.



Lucylou

The Albert Inn in **Totnes** has confirmed that their summer Beer Festival was another great success. The next festival at the Albert (which has also recent had a fresh internal lick of paint in the bar) will be the Halloween Beer Festival on 27/28/29th October. It will feature a fancy-dress competition, a special brew from Bridgetown head brewer George "The Mad Professor" "Ed" Langabeer as well as the Bridgetown Brewery regulars plus guest beers and ciders. Popular local beat combo "Bens Band" will be the Saturday night musical entertainment. Also announced is the date for the annual Bridgetown Conker Championships which will take place at the Albert from 7pm on Thursday October 13th.

BREWERY NEWS

Bays Brewery has teamed up with its friends at Torbay Coast & Countryside Trust (TCCT) to pay homage to Torbay's most designated heritage site with its charity brew called 'Beery Head'. Available in bottles, cask and beer boxes, this gorgeous golden ale is made using a blend of modern British-grown Oilcan® hops, with 5% of all proceeds going to the conservation charity.

The special-edition ale is inspired by the stunning coastal headland of Berry Head – a National Nature Reserve that's home to an abundance of rare wildlife as well as being steeped in history. Forming the southern boundary of Tor Bay, its lighthouse and Napoleonic Fort is surrounded by water on three sides, making it a haven for 200 varieties of birds and the endangered Greater Horseshoe bat. Providing a true taste of the British coast with hops sourced sustainably from UK shores, Beery Head is one of four new ales being served up by the big-hearted team at Bays Brewery in 2023. »

BREWERY NEWS ... CONTINUED

» Director of Bays Brewery, Peter Salmon, said: "Being a local, family-run brewery, we're always looking at how we can give something back to our community and Beery Head is a great way to say 'cheers' to a local landmark we love. We're thrilled to be working with Torbay Coast & Countryside Trust – a local conservation charity that looks after some of the beautiful spaces we are fortunate enough to call 'home', with Beery Head available for sale on our online shop, as well as pubs, restaurants and shops across Devon." Beer lovers can quench their thirst at a Beery Head tasting event that will be held at Occombe Farm Deli shop this Summer, with the charity brew also on shop shelves from July until the end of October.

Richard Stones, Trust Principal Director for Torbay Coast & Countryside Trust, said: "We're absolutely thrilled to be selected by Bays Brewery as recipients of this brilliant local initiative. We get to have a beer named after one of the most amazing places we manage, whilst raising funds towards its care at the same time.

"We'll be stocking it in our own Occombe Farm Deli shop and cafes. Be sure to stop by and pick up a bottle or two and enjoy a delicious beer whilst contributing towards this nationally important Nature Reserve.

"We're an independent conservation charity. We rely on many forms of funding, grants and legacies to support our care of Torbay's most beautiful green spaces. Places that we all love to walk, picnic and play on, but that are also home to many rare and precious species and wildlife habitats too. So, drink up!"

It follows hot on the heels of Wild 100, a special-edition charity ale launched in partnership with Paignton Zoo to mark its centenary year, raising much-needed funds for wildlife conservation.

Completing the charity line-up will be Bays festive favourite, Jingle Ale, with 5% of proceeds from the Christmas-time tipple supporting family-focused charity Torbay Holiday Helpers Network.

Bridgetown Brewery continues to go from strength to strength. The Imperial from Ivybridge has requested more beer and the beer brewed for one of Grizzly's festivals (Kozbest - a fruity 5%+ ABV bitter) was also a great success. The brewery's beers also went down well at the Ramsfest, Sunshine and Ipple Tipple beer festivals and will be represented at Abbfest in September.

Dartmoor Brewery has entered the low and no alcohol market with Dartmoor Zero. It's a fresh, thirst quenching and hoppy beer that packs the punch of a modern IPA but without the alcohol. The award winning and much-loved cask IPA is now available in kegged form.

Dartmoor Brewery enjoyed success at the Taste of the West awards winning Gold for their flagship beer Jail followed by further Golds for Legend and Dragon's Breath and a Silver for the IPA.

Meanwhile South Devon Branch is about to gain another brewery. **Palk Arms** maestro Mike Rowland has purchased a one-barrel plant with the aim of setting it up in the space under the Palk that will be available when the pub toilets are rebuilt upstairs. This brewery will then supply the pub with its own beer, one of Mike's long-held ambitions. Mike has plenty of brewing experience having previously set up and operated the Platform 5 Brewery in Newton Abbot before he departed for the Palk Arms in Hennock. Watch this space.... »

BREWERY NEWS ... CONTINUED

» Beer Festivals have kept **Riviera Brewing** ale flowing over the summer months supplying to six local events. Riviera Pale Ale (RPA) has also made a welcome return, brewed at 4.4% it's light and hoppy packed with Hops from USA. Riviera Brewing also supplies direct to the public with free delivery in the Newton Abbot and Torbay areas. Ale is available using a 21-pint cask system plus new stainless-steel Growler 9-pint cask and bottles. This Christmas Riviera will again have special Ales available in small cask and bottles, please order early! Christmas Gold 4%, hoppy, Santa Express 5.1% a spiced special amber ale, Donner & Blitzed 4.1% session Amber plus the popular dark Ale Drunken Porter 4.3%.

Salcombe Brewery Co. has secured an agreement with Sainsbury's to sell two of its much-loved beers, Seahorse and Shingle Bay, in twenty stores across the South West.

Jordan Mace, Salcombe Brewery Co.'s Managing Director, said: "We are thrilled that Sainsbury's stores across the South West are now stocking Shingle Bay and Seahorse. We have a huge fan base across the area and this will make it even easier for them to stock up on their favourite pint. It is also a great opportunity to introduce our beers to an even wider audience."

Jordan explained: "Shingle Bay is our best-selling bottled beer and one that holds a special place in all our hearts. It is because John Tiner, the founder of Salcombe Brewery, loved Shingle Bay so much that he bought the brewery in the first place. Seahorse is also very important to us at Salcombe Brewery Co. because the Salcombe estuary is a haven for both British species of seahorse and, as part of our commitment to our local environment, we are trying to help conserve these amazing animals by donating 5p a bottle towards The Seahorse Trust."

Shingle Bay (ABV 4.2%), is a very easy-drinking golden ale, with a crisp bite. It has a fruity aroma of blackberry and spiced fruit.

Seahorse (ABV 4.4%) is a sweet and smooth amber ale with a gentle spicy hop character, hints of burnt caramel and a smoked malty finish.

Salcombe Brewery Co., founded in 2015, is based at its innovative Estuary View brewery which nestles in the Devon countryside above the world famous Salcombe Estuary.

Award-winning, SALSA accredited Salcombe Brewery Co. produces a range of premium cask ale and keg products. Their vision is to be recognised as a leader in producing high quality products crafted using sustainable methods that look after people and the planet. They have just started their journey to becoming a B-Corp accredited company.

Summerskills Brewery is 40 years old this year so it seems like a good time to resurrect Bravo Zulu, first brewed in 2008 to mark their 25th anniversary. Brewed to an ABV of 5% this amber coloured ale uses a blend of English hops and as always, the finest floor malted barley from Warminster. It will be available in cask from mid-September and in bottles from early October. Sadly, they don't have a record of Adam Summerskill's first brew but feel it safe to say that Summerskills Brewery and the Beer Engine (also started in 1983) are the oldest working microbreweries in Devon.



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The Albert Inn

Home of Bridgetown Brewery

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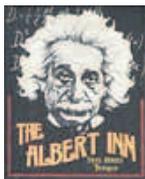


Bridgetown Brewery brews Albert Ale 3.8% abv; Bridgetown Bitter 4.2% abv; Shark Island Stout 4.5% abv and recently introduced Totnes Hemp Beer, Green Leaf 4% abv. There is also a selection of craft ales from around the world.

Yes, it is a pub with a darts team, a weekly quiz, people resolving their crosswords, people talking, joking, arguing and putting the world to rights. Our own ales brewed on the premises, traditional home made pies, curries, Sunday roasts etc.

However, it also provides a sheltered beer garden overlooking the Dart. Free WiFi. Regular live music, an open mic night for the adventurous or enthusiasts.

Would you expect culinary theme nights, an elaborate lunch menu; a wine list that will surprise you by variety and price? A large range of malt whisky; calvados and brandy to please the connoisseur? Give us a try you will be surprised.



CASK BOOK AND THE GOOD BEER GUIDE 2024

Cask

Cask beer has played a crucial role in the rise of beer appreciation and remains a unique format delivering a drinking experience that can't be achieved any other way.

Many drinkers and brewers still recognise its importance, and there continues to be a growing interest in cask outside of the UK.

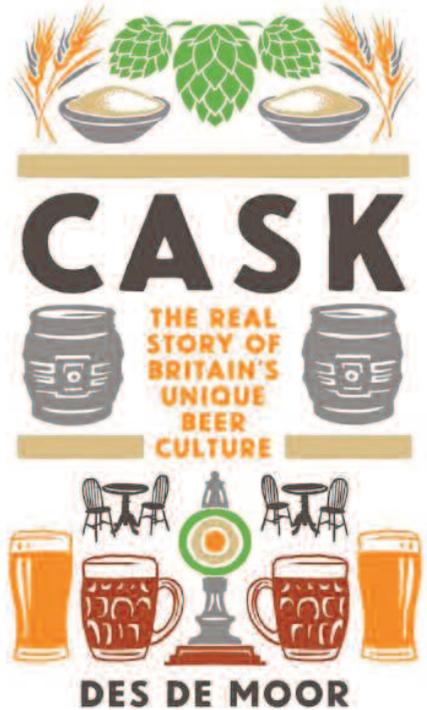
This book explores and defines cask beer for the modern drinker.

The Good Beer Guide 2024

Finding a great pub to enjoy a good pint isn't easy.

Trust the Campaign for Real Ale – 'CAMRA' – to ensure that those little gems are there.

The Good Beer Guide has used the same tried-and-tested formula proven for 50 years.



We know what we're talking about! Our roots go back to 1971 and what started out as an organisation designed to highlight and campaign for real ale has grown into something much bigger today. The Good Beer Guide includes some 4500 pubs listed all across the UK.

In The Good Beer Guide, you'll find over 4500 listings across the UK's best pubs, bars and breweries, chosen by local CAMRA volunteers as having the best cask beers available – or you can check out the special brewery section to discover new breweries setting the scene alight with interesting, exciting new brews.

With reviews on all of these establishments, The Good Beer Guide is your passport to discovering where and what you should be drinking right now.

LONDON 2023

Wimbledon time again hooray. After a bit of careful wrangling, I managed to arrange a couple of days in London. This is not easy now that my son has moved out to Hertfordshire but this year it all came together. We arrived on Wednesday and after booking into the hotel wandered off to get something to eat. I had located the Hansom Cab (national inventory) not far away. We strolled and found it quite easily. They did food and real ale, only one on, London Pride. It was not very good but the pizzas were ok and the pub itself was a great example of a London pub with a dark mahogany bar and bar back in the front bar and a smart rear section for diners and comfort.



We didn't stay long and walked back to the Earls Court Tavern, a pub I had spotted on the way. This was not listed but was quite similar to the previous pub in style and decor, mahogany bar and furniture with windows so we could watch the world go by, a busy world in the big city. The beers were much better, Greene King Abbot Ale but over £6 a pint. >>



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LONDON ... CONTINUED

» Day 2 was a change in my usual plan. Mary was off to the tennis and I was all alone. My old drinking friend Colin has moved to Bedfordshire and despite trying to find a convenient midway venue we hadn't met up for ages. This time I took a train from Euston to Biggleswade where Colin arranged transport to the Cock at Broom. A fantastic GBG and N I pub in a small village, difficult to get to but worth the effort. One of the few pubs left in the country with no bar, just a table at the



cellar doorway for service. One beer was actually brought to us from another cellar - all fascinating. There were several small cosy rooms furnished with wooden tables and chairs. The decor was smart and clean. The outside area was a large covered yard where we sat and ate our lunch. There was an outside event so the menu was limited but still very good.

The beers were served by gravity we drank Adnams Southwold, Black Sheep Best Bitter and Greene King Abbot Ale and all in excellent form. There was a small crowd of locals putting the world to rights and so did we.



I had to return to London and had time to search out more pubs. The Rocket (NI) near Euston was my first, a lovely mahogany bar front and back with lots of mirrors, an ornate ceiling and a good pint of London Pride.



Next a short tube ride to Gloucester Road and the Stanhope Arms (also NI) more mahogany and mirrors. Tall tables and stools, a fine pint of Greene King Coronation Ale and some chatty customers for good measure.

But tomorrow is back to Hertfordshire so that was it for London 2023, only five pubs!

Roger Adams

SUNSHINE BEER FESTIVAL 2023

This was to be a festival fraught with problems from day one. Firstly, the railways went on strike on the Saturday, then we were told that due to issues with the licence we would be unable to open on the Thursday and finally we found that we were unable to get insurance for our advertised shuttle bus to and from the station.

However, despite all that, Friday dawned clear and sunny and visitors began to arrive, the festival had been opened by Cllr. Joan Atkins, Mayor of Teignmouth, and by lunchtime a good crowd were enjoying the beers and ciders. There were several popular 'Meet the Brewer' sessions held in the bar followed, outside, by the Newton Bushell Morris Dancers and at 8pm Rockafella 4 took to the stage outside.



So, on Friday the weather had played along and lived up to the Festival's name. However, when it came to Saturday we were 'blessed' with 'liquid sunshine' and a gusting wind. This obviously reduced the number of visitors, but those who made the effort seemed to enjoy themselves with most of the beers still being available. Everything now had to be inside, the day was started by the Teignmouth Town Crier, and there was a visit from

Stormy Stan from the RNLI. Ady Byng's Pig Racing was next up followed by the RNLI Auction. The FOS Brothers were due to play outside on the stage but due to the inclement weather this was replaced by a well-received solo gig by Sam McCrory from FOS. Perhaps as well it was inside, by this time the gazebo over the stage had given up and was reduced to a tangles mass. »



SUNSHINE BEER FESTIVAL 2023 ... CONTINUED

» At 9pm the final act of the day was a closing speech from Cllr. Joan Atkins, Mayor of Teignmouth.

The first cask to sell out was Milk Stout from Bristol Beer Factory, soon followed by Teignmouth's Sunshine IPA our festival special.

£356 was raised for the RNLI from the pig racing and the auction.

Clearwater's Honey Beer won the North Devon Beer of the Festival award.



Judging for the CAMRA South West Champion Beer of Britain took place on Friday morning. It was won by St Austell's Proper Job. This will now go forward to the next round with the opportunity to be judged the Champion Beer of Britain.

The event was generally judged to have been a great success, thanks, of course, to all the unpaid volunteers who gave generously of their time, over the last six months, to make this event happen. We must also thank TS Partners who were the main sponsors and all

the other pubs, breweries, companies and individuals who also sponsored in some way.

South Devon CAMRA hope everyone who attended enjoyed both the event and the beers and ciders. We look forward to meeting you all again in 2024.

Alan Cooke





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Join us, and together we can protect the traditions of great British pubs and everything that goes with them.

Become part of the CAMRA community today – enjoy discounted entry to beer festivals and exclusive member offers. Learn about brewing and beer and join like-minded people supporting our campaigns to save pubs, clubs, your pint and more.

Join the campaign today at
camra.org.uk/joinup

*Price for paying by Direct Debit and correct at 1 July 2021. Concessionary rates available. Please visit camra.org.uk/membership-rates
†Joint members receive £40 worth of vouchers.



Campaign
for
Real Ale

Elland's 1872 Porter crowned the Champion Beer of Britain

Elland Brewery's 1872 Porter (6.5% ABV) has struck gold and has been crowned the best in Britain after winning the Campaign for Real Ale's (CAMRA) prestigious Champion Beer of Britain competition.

The 1872 Porter was crowned the official winner at this year's Great British Beer Festival (GBBF), following a rigorous and hard-fought competition. The beer has been awarded Champion Winter Beer of Britain four times previously, the most recent being this year.

Champion Beer of Britain co-ordinator Christine Cryne said it was a deserving champion, despite incredibly strong competition. She described the beer as a ruby black porter, with chocolate and caramelised fruit flavours with a hint of black toffee on the nose. The judges enjoyed its smooth mouthfeel with a finish that is roasty and dry. A satisfying and remarkably easy drinking porter.

The award – one of the most coveted real ale competitions in the world – puts the winner firmly in both the national and international spotlight. It was exclusively revealed at the GBBF trade session.

Festival visitors enjoyed sampling this year's newly crowned champion, along with the well-deserved silver and bronze winners' beer, on sale at the festival, marked by rosettes and special pump clips.

Runners up were Silver prize winner Abbot (5%) from Greene King Brewery, described as a classic premium bitter with typical fruit hops and malty throughout; and Bronze winner Darwin's Origin (4.3%) from Salopian Brewery, which impressed judges with citrus, earthy hops and a flavour that starts fruity and fades into a pleasant bittersweet finish.

Brewer Rob Thomas said: "It is absolutely unbelievable to win this accolade, we really didn't expect it. For a team of three people to win the supreme award is fantastic. There is a real passion for more traditional styles – and for a very good reason, they taste fantastic!

"The beer is steeped in history with the recipe dating back more than 150 years. We thrive on these sorts of styles and this is testament to what people enjoy drinking: steeped in history, tradition while embracing innovation.

He added: "Since lockdown, we have faced many challenges and difficult times and this is testament to our small team and our unwavering loyalty to succeed. We passionately believe in our products and people do get excited to try everything we make; we are incredibly proud to take home the crown."

Laura Emson, CAMRA's National Director responsible for the competition, says: "Congratulations to Elland Brewery for winning this year's Champion Beer of Britain Award. As ever, it was a highly competitive final, with the judges having a difficult decision to make. Congratulations to all the finalists – it really shows the wide range and amazing cask beers which are available for all to enjoy.

"Huge thanks to all the competitors for taking part and to the judges who had a tough decision to make! It is a real honour to be part of this competition and to see how much hard work, professionalism and dedication goes into producing the best of the best." »

CAMRA NEWS... CONTINUED

» Judging takes place over almost a year from individual nominations at the outset, to local and regional competitions taking place, ahead of a day of rigorous and intensive judging at GBBF.

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) today called on the Prime Minister to protect our pubs and clubs and secure their long-term future.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak visited the Great British Beer Festival, CAMRA's flagship event, to meet key figures from the Campaign, and talk with brewers, publicans and people from the wider industry.

With around 30 pubs closing every week, CAMRA says now is the time to act to support licensees, consumers and brewers.

The visit coincided with the introduction of a groundbreaking change in the way beer and cider are taxed, which CAMRA successfully campaigned for alongside leading voices from the pub and beer industry. The new system came into effect on August 1st and sees a lower rate of tax paid on beer and cider sold on draught. This recognises both the social and community benefits of venues such as pubs and clubs and is set to benefit small producers, pubs and ultimately consumers.

Yet a key element has been overlooked. A technicality means the majority of publicans will no longer be able to sell takeaway pints, even when this would prevent waste or let designated drivers safely support their local brewer by taking a pint home from the pub.

CAMRA called on the Prime Minister to take a common-sense approach and ensure that this practice can continue to form a unique feature of the UK on-trade.

CAMRA Chairman Nik Antona said: "I was pleased to host the Prime Minister at this year's Great British Beer Festival. He saw first-hand the vibrant atmosphere and the clear passion people have for producing and supporting live beer, real cider and real perry.

"Today's new alcohol tax system recognises for the first time that drinking great beer and cider in your local is the best way to enjoy a pint, along with all the social benefits that go hand-in-hand with a visit.

"However, costs for businesses and the price of a pint at the bar are still rising. Today I urged the Prime Minister to expand the difference between the lower and general rate of duty charged on pints to keep pub-going affordable.

"We need the government to do more to protect our pubs; not only are they a vital part of the UK's long-held traditions and rich heritage, but they also provide an important social hub in our communities, which help reduce isolation and loneliness."

CAMRA will be calling on the Chancellor to use the Autumn Statement to amend the legislation that currently prevents takeaway draught beer and cider sales, address the unfair burden placed on pubs by the business rates system, and ensure that UK brewers and cider makers aren't frozen out the market by global producers. »

CAMRA NEWS... CONTINUED

» CAMRA calls for action on business rates and energy bills to alleviate pressure on pubs

Research commissioned by consumer organisation CAMRA (the Campaign for Real Ale) shows that only a small minority of Brits (10%) feel that a pint is affordable.

Despite some variation, the figures paint a grim picture across the whole of Britain. Drinkers in Scotland felt the most out of pocket at the bar, with just 6% saying a pint was affordable. Despite having some of the steepest prices in the UK, a high of 15% of Londoners said they found a pint affordable.

CAMRA has long called on government to level the playing field between regulated, community venues like pubs and social clubs, and off-license venues like supermarkets, which face far lower levels of regulation and tax. Additionally, the beer tie and other exclusive purchasing agreements mean many publicans are locked into contracts that mean they must buy beer and cider at higher than market prices, further increasing prices at the bar.

The Campaign celebrated lobbying success with the introduction of a new draught duty rate on 1 August. Under this new system, beer and cider sold on draught pays a lower rate of tax, which recognises the social and community value of the on-trade in the alcohol duty system for the first time.

Despite this, the price of a pint has continued to rise as the cost-of-business crisis has hit pubs and brewers, forcing them to increase prices. At the same time, the cost-of-living crisis has meant that many consumers can't afford to spend as much supporting local pubs, clubs, brewers and cider makers.

Commenting, CAMRA National Chairman Nik Antona said: "This data shows how vital it is that government takes action this autumn and use their planned fiscal event to reassess the huge financial burden they place on the trade.

"A pint down the pub with friends is one of life's simple pleasures, as well as being a unique part of our cultural heritage. It's devastating that so few of us feel that this is affordable.

"Our campaigning priorities over the next few months will be calling for a shakeup of the punishing Business Rates systems, action to address energy costs, seeing the draught duty rate refined to work better for pubs, and working to secure increased access to market for small UK brewers."

Commenting on the Government's decision to extend COVID rules for takeaway pints, CAMRA Chief Executive Tom Stainer said:

"It's a good sign that the Government has listened and decided to backtrack on their plans to end the automatic permission for pubs to make off-sales. We hope that they have also been listening very carefully to the trade and consumers, who are also calling for a relaxation of the new tax rules around draught takeaway sales, which restrict many publicans from selling takeaway beer and cider regardless of whether their license allows them to do so. This is because the new rules force them to buy separate containers of draught beers and ciders, with a higher rate of duty paid on them if they want to sell them for takeaway. We are hopeful that the Government will remove these unnecessary restrictions soon."

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TORQUAY AND BABBACOMBE

The official meeting time was midday but some of us met up earlier for an excellent breakfast at Yates. The rest of the crew wandered in around midday and enjoyed sampling beers from the available range: Salcombe Shingle Bay, Abbot Ale and Doom Bar. A few diverted to The Green Ginger, a Wetherspoon's outlet, this being the first day of their Spring Festival. There were 7 beers available however none of them were from the festival list as far as I could see.



We soon moved on to The Hole In The Wall, a few minutes walk away. This turned out to be a gem of a pub with Dartmoor IPA, Jail Ale and Exeter Ferryman available and in fine form.

The next pub, the Devon Arms was next door, so we all found it OK. There was just one ale available Bays Topsail.

The next pub involved catching a bus up to Babbacombe and the Buccaneer Inn, overlooking the sea. Tribute and Proper Job were on offer here. >>



TORQUAY AND BABBACOMBE ... CONTINUED

» The next pub was Molloy's but it was now 3pm and faced with what turned out to be a 2-hour bus journey I decided to head for home, arriving in Kingswear in plenty of time to sample the newly reopened Steam Packet and Ship Inn. An ideal end to an interesting day in an area I'm not particularly familiar with.

Alan Cooke



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SOUTH DEVON CAMRA 'PLAYS AWAY'

It's our usual midweek jaunt and this time we're off to see our Exeter and East Devon CAMRA neighbours. With pass-outs from Sunshine Beer and Cider festival set-up or some just AWOL, we've taken to the trains on one of the non-strike days.

First up is Topsham and The Bridge Inn where we're joined by 2 intrepid cyclists from Exmouth. 7 ales straight from the cask were enjoyed as we lounged by the river soaking up the sun's rays.



Onto buses and into the GWRSA Railway Club. CAMRA members are always welcome and we enjoyed the extensive beer choice on the bar: Exmoor Gold, Exmoor Beast, Greene King St Edmund Golden Ale, Exeter County Best and Abbot Ale.

The Powder Monkey was next stop on the trip and the group enjoyed the likes of Tod's Blonde, Titanic Plum Porter and Lancaster Black. >>

SOUTH DEVON CAMRA 'PLAYS AWAY' ...CONTINUED

» Bypassing the closed Grapevine (middle of summer?), home to Crossed Anchor Brewery and on to The First and Last Inn, and the Checkstone Brewery, the one-barrel micro located at the back of this freehold pub. On the bar were Otter Ale, Jail, Teignmouth Neap Tide and Checkstone beers. Catching up with future plans with the brewer, we noticed the pub dog had his own way to ensure we stayed for another!



We then 'took over' the Good Beer Guide listed Bicton Inn, joining those who had opted to avoid the earlier trek, to choose from the 8 ales on the bar.

The Merchant offered 6 varied handpumps for us to enjoy, while benefitting from our CAMRA member's discount.



And so, after a great day, back to the station for the return trip to South Devon.

Thanks to Social Secretary Lawrence for an interesting excursion with some great pubs and clubs.

FANCY A PITCHFORK UP YOUR NOSTRILS?

Let's start with a history lesson. Once upon a time when steam locomotives ruled the railways and William Ewart Gladstone was prime minister, the pub was a relatively simple operation, generally, with a mild and a bitter with some seasonal additions and served from handpump or via gravity. At least there were no 'tickers' or 'bottlers' given the limited range of beers! Breweries were usually local and controlled by paternalistic patriarchs without any sign of the corporate image that was to follow. This cosy existence continued to the 1960/70s with the arrival of the dreaded and dreadful KEG BEER. Some people would regard this as the halcyon, but was that true? Some 'old timers' were immensely critical of these local breweries and especially the lack of quality and consistency compounded by post war shortages of materials. Landlords also share some responsibility. They were over represented by ex-footballers who were considerably better at drinking their products rather than keeping them in good condition. Then there were the reared military who treated the pub as their personal fiefdom and look out if your hair was too long, your jeans too tight or the failure to wear a tie in the saloon bar with protecting their values the imperative and not the quality of the beer, together with retired policemen representing authority figures keeping the drinking classes in their place, with the quality of the beer being a secondary consideration.

Returning to the dreadful KEG BEER and what was wrong with it. It was expensive, cold and gassy, but above all it was the ultimate in blandness and totally lacking any flavour. An advert from the time claimed that you could taste the hops in Ben Truman. A popular riposte was that there were more hops in a dead frog than in a pint of Ben Truman! Marketing men spewed out their rubbish which said nothing about the qualities of the beers and everything about style and image. Watney's had a cavorting Chairman Mao praising the virtues of Red Barrel and the Red Revolution. Other campaigns told us that it was what your right arm was for and that this pint was really a quart. Most famously Double Diamond worked wonders although what these were was never specified. I am reminded of 19th century adverts for pills that cured everything from chilblains, blindness to sexually transmitted diseases! At the same time the brewers were on the rampage buying up others and creating regional monopolies. Single bars disappeared and monstrous changes were undertaken. Behind one Watney's exterior consisting of alternating black and red horizontal stripes was an alpine vista including a waterfall and any moment you expected the Sound of Music to burst out. Not surprisingly consumers revolted and CAMRA was born and the beer festival created.

Over the years beer festivals have introduced many people to the wonderful range of British ales, but I have noticed some backsliding from the original principles. 1) The return of keg and key keg. The keg beer is considerably better than in the old days and I admire their skill, inventiveness and creativity. Not so happy with the term 'craft beer' which rather implies that national brewers somehow are not crafting good beer. However, keg is keg and I am not able to drink such cold beer and have great difficulty in even holding the glass. Neither am I keen to pay such exorbitant prices. 2) The appearance of keg lagers, although they are local rather than the national brands. 3) The proliferation of fruit ciders. Finally, it was the turn of cider to experience the marketing nonsense. Cider is made from apples and no other fruits, but that did not stop them wanting to add other ridiculous flavours such as mango, passion fruit and strawberry which made them incredibly sweet and so much so that they really need a health warning. >>

FANCY A PITCHFORK UP YOUR NOSTRILS? .. CONTINUED

» They are modern day alcopops and squarely aimed at young people. It's not as if any strawberry was actually being involved as industrial syrups are the norm. Unfortunately, there are people who believe fruit cider to be real cider. Whilst others believe that fruit cider could be counted as part of the 5 a day fruit/veg.

My problems with 1) to 3) above are twofold. Cask sales are falling and we hardly need to give succour to competition. Normally, those not in the know can be offered some tastings and they will generally find something they like and they have successfully left their comfort zone. If they see something they recognise then it is an easy choice to go for the familiar.

Now let me introduce you to Colonel Charles de-Laet Waldo-Sibthorp who was probably the model for John Bull. He was an Ultra-Tory reactionary MP who opposed any form of modernity that threatened his lifestyle. The arrival of the railway incensed him so much that he sent his agricultural labour force with spades and pitchforks to do battle with the builders resulting in a battle that lasted three days. I imagine his explosive reaction if a marketing man was to tell him that some exciting changes were to be made to his beer and cider and that this might mean altering the structure of the pub! The dogs would be released on the poor man! We need more Waldos to reverse the backsliding and general apostasy in moving further away from your original principles. After all there is nothing like a pitchfork up your nostrils to reappraise your values.

Bola Southwell Aka the Grumpy Old Man

CAMRA MEMBER PUB DISCOUNTS

The following pubs give discounts to card carrying CAMRA members

Pub	Location	Scheme
Golden Lion	Brixham	10% off cask beers
The Cherub Inn	Dartmouth	10% off a pint
The Palk Arms	Hennock	15% off a pint Monday-Friday
The Sloop	Kingskerswell	10% off cask beers
Dartmouth Inn	Newton Abbot	10% off cask beers
Maltings Taphouse	Newton Abbot	10% off cask & keg
The Railway	Newton Abbot	10% off bar bill
Torbay Inn	Paignton	10% off a pint
Waterside Inn	Paignton	10% off a pint
The Green Dragon	Stoke Fleming	10% off a pint
The Castle Inn	Stoke Gabriel	40p off a pint
The Kents	Torquay	50p off a pint Monday-Friday
The Old Engine House	Torquay	10% off cask beers
Yates	Torquay	10% off a pint
Totnes Brewing Co	Totnes	10% off TBC brews

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