



THE TIPPLER



Newsletter of the Gloucestershire Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale

Demand a Full Pint

Recent research has shown that 80% of pints sold in pubs are short measure and 1 in 4 are short by 5% or more. 5% short means you lose 1 pint for every 20 you buy! Would you expect to go to the "hole in the wall" to withdraw £20 and only be given £19? Of course not and there would be a right row if this were to happen. Yet, we happily accept short measure pints in pubs.

The present Government has pledged in a recent White Paper that by the end of this parliament there will be a clear legal requirement to serve a full pint. CAMRA is running a "Week of Action" in September to publicise this issue and this branch will be holding a promotion in selected pubs throughout the county - watch the local press for details.

For years CAMRA has campaigned to have oversized lined glasses introduced into all pubs. These have a capacity slightly larger than the usual pint glass found in most pubs and have a line denoting the full pint measure. This *guarantees* that you get what you pay for. Half pint glasses are similar.

It is your hard earned money that is being ripped off. We should demand 100% of what we pay for and the best way to achieve this is by the use of oversized glasses. In the meantime **if your pint looks to be short measure do not be afraid to ask for a top-up.**

News in Brief

Greene King to Axe Morland

Suffolk brewer Greene King has said it will close Morland's old Oxfordshire brewery which it bought in July along with 400 pubs. Once more the accountants rule the roost.



Fight to save Courage

The fight to stop S&N closing Bristol's historic Courage Brewery is becoming one of the hardest fought campaigns in CAMRA's history. The city council is now being urged to refuse change of use of the historic brewery site.

... and now Mansfield

If your name begins with M, watch out! We've seen Morrells, Mitchells and Morland bite the dust, Marstons came very close and now we hear that Mansfield is ripe for takeover and "death by accountancy" usually follows.

Pub News

Local Winchcombe brewer Goff's have opened a bar/restaurant on the Prom in Cheltenham near the Tourist Information Office - selling their own beers naturally.

Good news for residents of Arlingham - the Red Lion will open again soon and permission to turn the Old Passage Inn into a private house has been refused.

Opinion: Bland Leaders -- a guest editorial

The advent of micro-breweries over the last decade has introduced a new dimension into the taste of beer in this country. Yet far too few free houses and pubs able to serve guest beers are stocking these excellent ales. Are they right? Does the general public prefer blandness to fuller flavours? Last year at the Drilmans Arms in Stratton during their small beer festival, I overheard two middle aged regulars talking. "Have you ever tried one of them guest beers?" one asked his mate, returning from the bar with two pints of Boddington's Bitter. "No, never have done" replied his friend. Bearing in mind that the pub has served guest beers for over 12 years to my knowledge, this did seem extraordinary.

For many years brewers both big and small were content to produce the same beers year in, year out. During the seventies, the larger breweries introduced new beers to pander to the "real ale weirdos" mainly because they had unceremoniously dumped all their traditional ales or converted them to keg. These beers were rarely adventurous, and sometimes shortlived. Regional tastes were hard to satisfy with a national brand. But strangely, this worked - a beer version of tasteless, ready-sliced bread. They could spend a small fortune nationally advertising the brands, create a demand, and no one could say that they actually disliked what small flavour there was. The big brewers actually believed as proven fact that, after two pints, all beer tasted the same! (This stunning revelation was related to me recently by an ex-director of the infamous Host Group, pub and brewery violators for Grand Metropolitan in the eighties.)

The regional breweries were the only source of anything with a bit of flavour, and they proceeded to prosper and expand into the free trade until a big brewer thought they were doing a bit too well, snapped them up and either absorbed them or closed them down. Even some of regionals seem to have adapted their beers for a mass national market and flavours have diminished. Marstons is a prime example. Pedigree is a shadow of its former self, and Marstons Bitter

is bland beyond belief. Their most distinctive beer, Merrie Monk - an excellent strong mild, was axed. Beers also lost their balanced flavour. No longer did some "bitters" taste at all bitter. Sweetness became the order of the day, and beers such as Wadworths 6X achieved enormous success by providing a beer that did not put customers off with its bitterness.

The worst was yet to come. Marketing departments, desperate to find something new to promote, invented new buzz words - "creamy" (bland with a frothy top) and "smooth" (bland with a frothy top). They filled advertisements with them and convinced people that this was a positive attribute. Gradually the nation's palates dumbed down.

All was not lost, however. Micro breweries began to appear a little over 20 years ago, such as Ringwood in Hampshire and Archers in Swindon. Eventually they spread all over the country - over 300 at the last count. Some failed but most survived. As well as their standard beers they started doing seasonal beers using different hops or malts; these beers are usually well balanced with neither bitterness nor sweetness dominating, and with carefully selected ingredients providing a depth and complexity of flavours seldom encountered before. Although many of the beers are fairly strong, one of the great achievements of micro brewers is to produce full flavoured beers of low strength, a feat that seems to defeat all the big brewers. Gloucestershire is admirably served with excellent micro breweries. The pubs that are more adventurous with their guest beers are not restricted to local beers, and in just a handful of pubs, the discerning drinker can take a trip around the UK. This is even more apparent in beer festivals where the vast array of flavours really becomes evident.

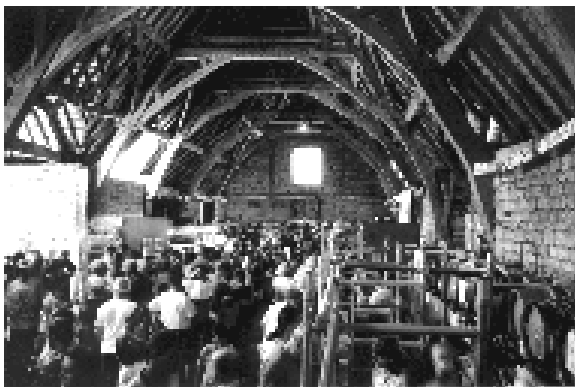
So next time that you're in a pub and beside the John Smiths or Tetleys is a beer that you've never heard of, give it a try. A bad beer from a micro brewery is as common as a good beer from a national brewery. There's a world of flavours out there waiting for you so give your tastebuds a treat.

Rob Tough

COTSWOLD BEER FESTIVAL



1999



A contented crowd under the cathedral roof of the Tithe Barn

For those lucky enough to go, here are some memories of another classic Cotswold Beer Festival - the 23rd run by this branch of CAMRA in the superb Tithe Barn at Postlip Hall near Winchcombe. The weather could not have been organised better - cool and even rainy during the week to keep the barn (and the beer) cool and then glorious sunshine for the event itself with long, light, warm evenings.

The year of the snake will go down as one of the most enjoyable and successful ever. 72 beers were on offer from 29 brewers spread far and wide across the country from Devon to Suffolk, from Hampshire to the Isle of Skye. Beer of the Festival was Jeffrey Hudson Bitter (known simply as JHB), a lovely straw coloured bitter from Oakham brewery in Rutland.

This is an important event for the Branch and the profits keep us going for the rest of the year with quite a bit left over to fund CAMRA national campaigns too. It takes a good deal of hard work from all our helpers - our thanks to everyone involved - but, relaxing in the warm sunshine on Saturday lunchtime, pint of JHB in hand and brass band playing in the barn, all of us know why we really keep coming back every year...

The 'CBF' is a unique event, even in CAMRA's varied calendar, and all the band of helpers give their time and effort very willingly - quite simply, it's fun!

***See you all in the
next millennium for
CBF 2000.***

◀ Families relax on the terrace
by the old Hall

An idyllic country scene ▶



(More) Sipping Round the Docks of the Bay

Continuing an article on real beer in San Francisco and the Bay area written by Neil Walker of our Dursley & District sub-branch. Part 1 appeared in our June edition.

Part 2: Tradition, Tourism and the Berkeley Babe



Veering sharply towards the commercial district and the tourist area of the waterfront from Market St you head towards Columbus Avenue and at No. 155 eventually arrive at the San Francisco Brewing Co. This atmospheric pub is considerably different to those previously mentioned, being dark panelled wood, peeling paint and having a strange pulley driven fan system. As with some of the other brewpubs not all the beers brewed are available at one time, but during my visit there were on tap Gripmans Porter, Shanghai PA, Pony Express Ale, Christmas Cheer, and 2 lagers. The Christmas beer was dark and full of flavour, but outstanding was the Porter, which resembled a strong UK bitter. The bar runs a happy hour and provides good food.

Reaching the Fishermans Wharf area, two bars are of particular note. The first is "The Steelhead at Fishermans Wharf", 353 Jefferson St. A big friendly establishment with a well thought out and, for the area, reasonably priced menu. 8 beers are brewed including a good Hefeweizen, a "session" beer McKenzie Gold and an excellent IPA Bombay Bomber. The one disappointing aspect of this bar was that on my last visit there was no attempt to control the unruly children running about, so I left and went to:

Jacks Cannery Bar. This extraordinary establishment claims to have 100 beers on tap and while I didn't count them I wouldn't dispute this figure. A big establishment with a main bar, a secondary bar and plenty of comfy chairs and secluded corners it provided an enjoyable way of spending an afternoon. The beers tried were Alaskan Amber, Devil Mountain, Full Sail Amber Ale, Mirror Pond, Anderson Valley Boont Amber, Speakeasy Gold and Anderson Valley Poleeko Gold. Of these the Full Sail and Boont were the best, being in the IPA style.

Crossing the Bay to Berkeley by BART [*Bay Area Rapid Transit, Ed.*] I visited 3 bars, although the guide books list several more that could be worthwhile. Unfortunately the amount of time spent in one left limited time for the others! Heading up from Rockridge Station towards Telegraph Avenue I found the "Bison Brewing Co" at 2598 Telegraph. A bright naturally lit bar serving excellent food and 5 draught beers. These were Gingerbread Ale, TPA, Chocolate Stout, Toasted Oat and Molasses Brown and Coriander Rye. All had exceptional flavours and character, the Toasted Oat and Molasses Brown being the best I tasted during any of my visits. The bar patrons were very friendly and happy to chat with a stranger, Misty behind the bar was efficient and cheerful, and the music selection was varied and eclectic. This brewery also produces several bottled beers which I did not manage to try.





Descending back down through scenic Berkeley towards Rockridge and Oakland, the next bar I went into was Barclays, 5940 College Avenue. This bar is tucked away down a flight of stairs but was well worth the visit. It served 28 beers, two of which were cask conditioned. The food and service were good, a massive Cobb Salad being served with which I enjoyed a Barclay Bitter and a Blue Heron Pale Ale. Both were noticeably hoppy but the Blue Heron had a slightly cleaner taste. More time should have been spent here! (Note: The beer mats advertised Banks's Beers).

Finally there was "Ben and Nick's", 5612 College (which is in the guidebooks as "Elines"). Old fashioned stained glass wooden doors opened into a high ceilinged room complete with a dartboard. The bar dispensed 20 beers and ciders with such names as Hibernator Dark, El Toro Brewing, Alaskan, Steelhead, Widmer Bros, Sierra Nevada and Speakeasy. The Hibernator, El Toro and Sierra Nevada beers were the ones I particularly noted with the Hibernator being a strong dark winter brew.



In summary I would recommend any of the bars covered in the two articles to people holidaying in the SF area but be warned, the beers are served somewhat cooler than in the UK and they tend to have a very strong hoppy flavour (they can also be deceptively strong). I would also suggest looking further afield as there are numerous other bars in SF and the Bay area which may well repay a visit. Further news on US brewing can be obtained from Celebrator Beer News at www.celebrator.com or the California Brewpage at www.beerpage.com.

A Colourful Festival

Here's the first of three competitions in which we will be offering tickets for CBF 2000. We noticed that a surprising number of beers at this year's Festival had names beginning with a colour. So we have taken eight of them - two each starting with four different colours. For each colour we have then clued the rest of the two beers' names together. Eg. if we had had Red Cap (Titanic) and Red Fox (Fullers) we might give the clue as simply, "Hat trick!" For those who didn't get to the Festival we list on p.7 the names of all the brewers whose beers were on offer - all eight represented in this puzzle are different (but two beers are not listed in this year's GBG).

Colour 1: Champion summer.

Colour 2: Two animals always fighting, but both gentle!

Colour 3: Heated card game calming down we hear.

Colour 4: Rusty weapon.

Send the four colours (in the right order!) on a postcard to the Tippler editor (address on back page) by Saturday 25 September. The first correct answer out of the hat will win two complimentary tickets to next year's Cotswold Beer Festival. The date has not yet been fixed but it is usually the last full weekend in July.



In previous issues of the Tippler we have published what the entries for both Cheltenham and Stroud might have looked like in a Good Beer Guide published around the beginning of the present century. These were taken from the work of local member Geoff Sandles and based largely on records made in 1891 and 1903. This month we offer extracts from Geoff's 1903 guide to **Gloucester**. Thanks to Geoff too for the photo of an advert for the old Burton on Trent brewers Salt & Co.

Admiral Benbow, 78 Westgate Street

Stroud Brewery

Stroud Brewery Mild, Entire (G)

Brick built building conspicuously jutting out of line with the other buildings in the street. The nearly completed electric tramway system will soon see the building vibrate with the passing of tramcars as they clatter only a yard or so away from the pub's front door. Walter Gardner, mine host, ensures that the quality of his Stroud Ales are always near perfection. Unfortunately the Admiral Benbow is likely to be demolished in the future when the road is widened. Enjoy whilst you can.

Black Dog Inn, 1 London Road

Thomas Organ Home Brewed Ales

Organs Mild Ale, XXX (H), Stroud Brewery Entire (H)

This thriving, bustling town pub attracts custom from the nearby cattle-market and travellers using the Great Western Railway station. The landlord, Thomas Organ, still brews beer for the Black Dog in the tiny brew house at the back. This is now one of the few remaining home-brew pubs in Gloucester - the others being the Old India House in Barton Street, New Inn in London Road and the Laburnham Hotel in the High Street, Tredworth. Note the large Black Dog sitting contentedly on the roof.

Bull Inn, Bull Lane, off Westgate Street - opposite Theatre Royal

Arnold Perrett & Co. Ltd, Wickwar



Twin gabled whitewashed pub in side street now in urgent need of redecoration. It has recently lost its hotel status. The Wickwar Ales sold here are still probably the best kept in Gloucester city - their beers can also be found in 33 other city pubs! There is a large range in the smoke room which can be used to cook your own meals. Ask the landlord first. Billiards played.

Duke of Gloucester, Quay Street

Nailsworth Brewery

Nailsworth Brewery Bitter, Stout (G). Local cider (G)

Very basic beerhouse, threatened with closure. The outside privy is worth a visit - a rare three holer facing a two-holer... It provides an unusual place for conversation. Try also the Elephant & Castle, Upper Quay Street (Smith & Sons Brimscombe Ales).

Horse & Groom, 12 London Road

Ind Coope, Burton on Trent

Ind Coope India Pale Ale (G)

Mrs Eliza Messenger serves quaffable pints of Ind Coope Burton Ale in this small beerhouse near the Great Western Railway station. The pub reverberates when the heavy coal trains from South Wales pass on the nearby bridge. This pub was once tied to A.V. Hatton & Co's Northgate Brewery in George Street - a few yards away. Gloucester beer drinkers will no doubt lament the passing of the local Hattons Brewery but at least the acquisition has seen the excellent Ind Coope Burton Ales introduced to the city.

Kingsholm Inn, Kingsholm Road

Godsell & Sons, Salmon Springs, Stroud

Godsells A.B. Pale Ale, XX Mild Ale (G)

The now closed Kingsholm Brewery was still mashing and sparging here ten years ago in 1893. This was also the year in which the Rugby union football ground was established across the road at Kingsholm. The pub is now a popular watering hole for thirsty rugby union players and their supporters. Try also the Fortune of War a few doors away in the city direction (Godsells)

Oxbody Inn, Oxbody Lane

Godsell & Sons, Salmon Springs, Stroud

Godsells A1 Strong Ale, XXX Stout (G)

Despite being only yards away from the prestigious Bon Marché department store in Northgate Street the Oxbody Inn retains a distinct old fashioned feel. The beerhouse is in a narrow back lane of small brick-built terraced houses which is badly lit at night. The austerity of the Oxbody Inn and its surroundings is more than compensated by the excellent Godsells ales and jovial company. Regular impromptu entertainment.

Pineapple Inn, Lower Westgate Street, near the Quay

Ashton Gate Brewery, Bristol

Ashton Gate Mild, Strong Mild, Bitter (G)
The Westgate Street area of Gloucester is renowned for its high concentration of licensed premises. The beers for sale at the Pineapple come from the Ashton Gate Brewery in Bristol and make a refreshing change from the familiar Godsell's and Wickwar Ales, etc. Ashton Gate beers can also be drunk at the Cross Keys Inn, Barnwood.

Plough Inn, Alfred Street/Windmill Parade **Smith & Sons, Brimscombe Brewery**

Brimscombe Brewery XXX Bitter, XXXX Mild (G)
Substantially built brick alehouse situated next to the Great Western Railway goods yard. Popular with railway workers. Large bar with skittle alley to the rear. One of the simple pleasures in life: sup pints of Brimscombe beer in the smoke room whilst observing the regular passing of G.W.R. steam trains outside.

Rising Sun, Eastgate Street

Salt & Co., Burton on Trent

Salts East India Pale Ale (G)
The Rising Sun was once tied to the erstwhile Gloucester City Brewery in Westgate Street but is now a welcome outlet for Salt & Co's excellent Burton Ales. Crystal clear amber coloured ale with the distinctive Burton water taste. Very drinkable but deceptively strong which also makes for a bad hangover. Try also the Eastgate Vaults opposite (Stroud Brewery)



Saracen's Head, Eastgate Street

Francis Wintles Mitcheldean Forest Brewery

Wintles Forest Mild, Bitter, Stout (H)
The Forest Brewery's most lavish hotel which has recently been completely rebuilt. This area of Eastgate Street has undergone an amazing transformation in recent years. A new Guildhall has been built on the site of the old Bluecoat hospital. The new Saracen's Head must now rank as one of the most important hotels in the city of Gloucester. Electric lighting throughout and free hot water in the clean toilets.

Star Inn, The Quay, by the corporation weighing machine

Cheltenham Original Brewery

Cheltenham Original Brewery I.P.A., XXXX
Strong Ale, Imperial Stout (G)

Overlooking Gloucester Quay. A basic pub with a bar and smoke room only. One of only two outlets for Cheltenham Ales in Gloucester - the other is the Red Rover in Barton Street. Containing a bar, smoke room and a kitchen which is used by customers when needed. Stabling for 16 horses. Try also the Mermaid (Forest Brewery) and Ship Inn (Arnolds of Wickwar)

Theatre Vaults, Westgate Street

Godsell & Sons, Salmon Springs, Stroud

Godsell's A1 Strong Ale, India Pale Ale, A.K.
Light Dinner Ale (H)
The luxurious three balconied Theatre Royal is adjacent. It has recently been acquired by Pooles (of Myriorama fame). The Theatre Vaults is justifiably popular with actors, music hall artistes and other notable celebrities from the entertainment business - the bar is full of mementoes.

Vauxhall Inn, Barton Street

Mitchell & Butler, Cape Hill Brewery, Birmingham

Mitchell & Butlers Mild, India Pale Ale, Strong Ale (H)
A new era of confidence in pub building is clearly evident in the magnificence of this new pub. The brewery has paid attention to every last detail; a stunning tiled exterior with an equally impressive interior. There is even a Bowling Green at the rear. Superb in every respect but will it poach trade from the neighbouring beerhouses?

Brewers at this year's Cotswold Beer festival

ABBEE ALES	HOP BACK
BATEMAN	ISLE OF SKYE
BATHAM	MAULDONS
BERKELEY	MOORHOUSE
CALEDONIAN	N. COTSWOLD
CANNON ROYALL	OAKHAM
COTTAGE	OTTER
DENT	RCH
DONNINGTON	RINGWOOD
ELGOOD	ROOSTERS
FREEMINER	STANWAY
GOFFS	TIMOTHY TAYLOR
HARVIESTOUN	WICKWAR
HOME COUNTY	WOODFORDE
HOOK NORTON	

Champion Beer of CBF '99: OAKHAM JHB

... and in August our branch chairman had a fine evening at the Brewery Tap in Peterborough presenting the certificate - but aren't you glad that Red Cuillin didn't win Tony?

Good Beer Guide 2000

The 2000 edition of the Good Beer Guide does more than mark the start of a new century and a new millennium. It is the most important edition of the Guide for many years. As well as 5,000 of the very best pubs serving the very best pints of cask beer, the Guide tackles the crisis in the brewing industry that has seen the closure of Mitchells, Morrells, Ruddles, Vaux and Ward, the impending closure of Morland and the merger between Wolverhampton & Dudley and Marston's.

This is the one edition of the GBG you cannot afford to miss. Attractively designed and packed with information, it should be bought by every member. And it is worth considering buying two editions of the Millennium Guide -- one to use and one to keep as a memento of an historic occasion.

The good news is that while the bookshop price rises by £1 this year to £11.99, the members' price has been pegged at £7.50. The 2000 Guide is amazing value for money.



LOCAL MEMBERS: Remember, you can obtain your copy of GBG 2000 at a reduced rate at any Gloucestershire CAMRA meeting or social event during October.

Events Diary

Glos Branch Meetings

Monday 4 October - Committee Meeting, Civil Service Sports Club, Uckington, 8.00pm

Thursday 21 October - AGM, Black Swan Inn, Southgate St, Gloucester. See calling notice on page 11 opposite.

Monday 1 November - Committee Meeting, Old Spot, Dursley, 8.00pm

Monday 6 December - Committee Meeting, Goff's, Promenade, Cheltenham, 8.00pm

Sub-branches

Cheltenham sub-branch meets on the 2nd Thursday of the month. **14 October** - Hewlett Arms, Harp Hill then Sudeley Arms, Prestbury Rd; **11 November** - National Hunt, Benhall. Also: **18 September** - Oxford Beer Festival, 0920 coach from Royal Well; **25 September** - Cirencester pub crawl, 1000 bus from Pittville St.; **16 October** - Bath Beer Festival, 1011 train from Chelt. station; **6 November** - minibus to Winter Ale Festival at Three Kings, Hanley Castle. Contact: Graham Green, 01242 510867.

Cirencester sub-branch have no regular meeting night. Contact Richard Poley, 01285 770273, for details.

Dursley sub-branch meet on the last Tuesday of each month. Contact: Chris Arrowsmith, 01453 548991.

Gloucester sub-branch meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. Contact: Duncan Murch, 01452 384960.

Forest of Dean sub-branch meets generally on Mondays at 8.00. **20 Sep** - Dog & Muffler, Joyford. Contact: Dave Watts, 01594 543396

Tewkesbury sub-branch meets on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. **21 Sep** - Brandy Cask, Pershore; **19 Oct** - King Charles, Tewkesbury; **26 Nov** - Berkeley Arms, Tewkesbury. Contact: Peter Martin, 01684 292598.

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For Life and Overseas contact CAMRA HQ (01727 867201)

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.....

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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

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