

HOP PRESS



FREE!



A Ship at anchor awaiting a fair tide?

WINTER 2008/2009 ISSUE 65

**SOUTHERN HAMPSHIRE BRANCH
OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE**





HOP PRESS



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In the last issue we linked the present pub scene in this country into the horrific financial breakdown that was starting its global rampage. Obviously, as all readers will know, things have deteriorated since and we are now certainly into a recession and possibly at the start of a true depression, something not experienced in most people's lives.

The huge, essentially bank-owned, amalgamations that are our modern 'pubcos' are very vulnerable to the forces that are pushing financial institutions to the wall around the world. Similarly, the few remaining brewers, now vast international corporations, were predicated on being able to grow constantly by bank-financed acquisition of further national breweries. None of this looks very wise now and the effect on our treasured, unique heritage, the British pub, will be little short of a catastrophe.

Punch Taverns, with nearly ten thousand houses, have shares that were trading recently at only 10% of their price in early 2007. Given that this price is governed by expected future income from pub rentals it does not seem investors see much good cheer at the pub! Punch seem to be cutting ad hoc deals to keep landlords from just walking away from leases they cannot service — locally we hear of a licensee being offered three months of a 'peppercorn' rent to turn a pub around and another negotiating away the (once rigid) tie to Punch's supplier list.

This turmoil has been reflected in the Punch boardroom: the head of the leased pub section (Deborah Kemp) has just quit and three months ago Andrew Knight who headed the managed pub arm also left. Within the year they have also lost several others including a finance director and Kemp's predecessor. At

least the board can empathise with the troubled landlords on the lines of 'we feel your pain...'

Enterprise Inns, next largest chain with just under eight thousand pubs, are meanwhile blaming their landlords for the troubles they are in. CEO Ted Tuppen was quoted recently as saying: *'These difficult times will have found out a number of lower quality lessees...'*

He admitted that over twelve hundred Enterprise pubs were boarded up or on special short-term contracts and as many more were receiving rental or beer supply concessions.

Illustrating the present situation, a north of England area manager said recently that as well as now being 'just a debt collector' he was also now coming under frequent threats of violence from desperate licensees and, increasingly, finding pubs abandoned with the keys in the door.

Although CAMRA might be excused some element of *schadenfreude* when contemplating the present state of the licensed trade — we predicted many dire results from the pubcos inception under Thatcher's regime — our overriding concern remains with the long-term effects that are going to permanently damage British pubs.

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, has warmly welcomed the publication of the long awaited report from the Community Pub Inquiry, following over two years of investigation by the All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group (APPBG).

The APPBG conclude that action can be taken on a number of fronts to stem the pres-

ent haemorrhage of pubs and recommends a number of simple steps that Government could and should take.

Mike Benner, CAMRA Chief Executive, said on October 22nd: *'Following an in-depth review of the issues and challenges facing Britain's valued community pubs, the APPBG delivers its recommendations to Government this morning. I am delighted that these focus on urging Government to provide better support for community pubs including an urgent review of price differentials between pubs and supermarkets and the role of excise duty, rewarding pubs for their community contribution through rate relief and closing the planning loopholes which lead to unnecessary pub closures. The report calls upon the Government to champion community pubs as small businesses and essential community amenities.'*

In its extensive evidence to the inquiry, CAMRA suggested the reduced rate of duty and/or VAT on draught beer as opposed to packaged products and we are delighted to see this recommended to the government by the APPBG.

Mr Benner continued: *'A cut in tax on draught beer would reduce the price gap between pubs and supermarkets leading to more people enjoying a drink in the regulated environment of the community pub and not at home or on the street.'*

The report urges the Government to add its weight to CAMRA's Public House Viability Test, endorsing it as good practice guidance for local authorities in examining applications for change of use of pubs. With 36 pubs closing every week (nearly 2000 in a year), CAMRA is keen to ensure viable pubs are not closed unnecessarily.

There are many other ideas, some call for simplification and streamlining of areas such as the licensing process and the rules on AWP machines ('fruit machines'), for better licensee training programs, for more and better guidance to local authorities on the pub's contribution to community life and it even calls upon Sky to revise their absurd charges into line with pubs' real profits.

Mr Benner concluded: *'The report is a big step forward and has many positive suggestions for Government. I hope it will be the catalyst for a change in approach, which struggling community pubs so desperately need.'*

Fans of our Southampton Guildhall Beer Festival (and there are more than three thousand of you out there) will have already marked the start of June in their 2009 diaries. If so, and if you're one, you'll have missed it!

The timing of next year's Festival has been advanced by a week, it is now scheduled for May 28, 29 and 30.

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Pub News by Rob Whatley

Opening Prayers

Given the current economic uncertainty and the consequential effect on the pub trade it would not be a surprise to find licensees turning to prayer in an attempt to improve matters. Some local pubs have found a more direct way of boosting trade in conjunction with the church. In the summer the church café that had been operating on Sunday mornings from the lounge bar of the **Lapstone** at Horton Heath became an officially recognised separate congregation under vicar Reverend David Snugs. Licensees Keith and Karen Gaskell are long standing members of St Thomas Church in Fair Oak and saw the holding of services in the pub as a way of attracting new people to the church.

In Eling, the **King Rufus** is hosting an introductory Christian course on Wednesday evenings on behalf of the local St Mary's Church. We mentioned in the last *Pub News* that the **Woolpack** at Sopley had been hit by a fire. As predicted the pub reopened at the end of April and it is now to host Sunday morning services while restoration work is carried out at the nearby St Michaels and All Angels.

Lymington

Two other New Forest pubs suffered small fires in June but thankfully both pubs were quickly back up and running and open to customers. The fire at the **East End Arms** started in a tumble dryer during the early hours of the morning but was extinguished when a water pipe burst as a result of the heat that had been generated (divine intervention?). Licensee Sarah-Jane Old had to be treated for smoke inhalation. A week later, just down the road in Walhampton, the **Waggon and Horses** suffered a blaze in store rooms which was thought to have started when a rubbish bin caught alight. The alarm was raised by a passing off-duty firefighter.

Eling

The **Village Bells** in Eling had a change of licensee early in the year, the new incumbents are Andy Biddlecombe and Fiona Haines. One notable beer that has been available recently was Theakston's Dark Mild.

Emery Down

The *Good Beer Guide* listed **New Forest Inn** changed licensees at the end of August, being taken over by Debbie and Sam, a mother and son combination. Happily they have no plans to change the successful format of this well-known Forest pub.

Fritham

The **Royal Oak** which sells only locally brewed ales, all on gravity dispense, has for years been a major outlet for Ringwood Best and Fortyniner. But in the last month, the landlord Neil has had to return many casks of the Best to Ringwood because they would not drop 'polished' to his and his customers' exacting standards. We hope Ringwood (Marstons) can soon find and fix the problem. Meanwhile congratulations should go to Neil and Pauline as our rival publication *The Good Pub Guide* has chosen the Royal Oak as their national 'Country Pub of the Year' in their newly published 2009 edition. Well deserved.

Milford-on-Sea

The **Smugglers** was renovated earlier in the year and reopened under new ownership but in September it closed again. As we go to press it is again undergoing refurbishment and advertising for staff. Also in Milford, Oggy and Pat, the licensees of the **White Horse** have taken out adverts in the *Lymington Times* in order to quash rumours that they were leaving!

Brockenhurst

The lease of the **Snakecatcher** in Brockenhurst

Continued overleaf >

is now held by local residents Martin Matysik and Calum Maclean. Brakspear PA, Wychwood Hobgoblin and Ringwood Best (all from the Marston stable) were on sale when we visited the pub, the main area of which has more of an emphasis on food.

Hordle

Work continues to prepare for the opening of the 20 hotel rooms at the **Silver Bells** at Hordle. Amendments to the licence to cover the change in the layout have been applied for, along with an extension to permitted hours for hotel residents. An application has also been submitted for numerous changes to the external signage.

North Baddesley

New signage was also required in North Baddesley as the **Knights' Cross** reopened after refurbishment under its former name of the **Baddesley Arms**.

Romsey

In the last *Pub News* we noted that the **White Horse** in the centre of Romsey was about to reopen. We are pleased to note that Bowman's Swift One and Hampshire's Pride of Romsey are on offer in the repositioned bar area.

Southampton

Another reopening requiring a new sign occurred in the old docks area of Southampton when the **Cork and Bottle** became the fourth Wetherspoon outlet in the city, under the title of **Admiral Sir Lucius Curtis**. £430,000 was spent refurbishing the pub, which is named after a former Admiral of the Fleet, who was also a grand master for the province of Hampshire and lived from 1786-1869. Nearby, on the other side of the road, building work has stopped on new flats, part of which cover the site of the former **Queens**

Hotel. It will be interesting to see if the downturn in the housing market will have any effect on the steady flow of former pubs that have been replaced by housing. One such site is that previously occupied by **Bar Coda**, in Canal Walk, which had previous existences as **The Strand** and before that as the somewhat notorious **Lord Roberts**. An application to amend previously granted permission to build 36 flats on the site of the former has been submitted.

One closed outlet that may not be lost is **Willows** in Oxford Street. An application has been submitted by The Faucet Inn Pub Co for a license for the premises which has been boarded up for some time. Another long closed venue that is reopening is the former **Latimers** on the Quay in Western Esplanade, which may still be more recognisable to readers in a previous incarnation as the **Royal Standard**. Its new name is **L'escalier**. It is a champagne bar and restaurant that is owned by Alex Aitken, who is known for running Le Poussin restaurants in the county. Also open again is the **Bridge Inn**, St Denys, which was closed for a short period during September. In Bitterne, the **Big Cheese** is having a facelift at the time of going to press.

There has been good news for real ale fans in Freemantle in recent weeks. The **Waterloo Arms** was closed for a while for some minor refurbishments but is now trading again under new licensees Alison and Gordon Allen. Close by, the **Wellington Arms** is now offering a greater selection of locally brewed beers after licensee Bob Beech managed to renegotiate the terms of his lease with owners Punch Taverns so that he is no longer restricted only to beers on the Punch list. Moving onto Shirley Road, the **Rover** is now offering a good selection of real ales, including a number from local brewers.

Owslebury

While Freemantle drinkers are spoilt for choice, the residents of Owslebury have been for months without any beer at all. The **Ship Inn** (cover picture) closed without warning on May 7th with numbers of the staff unpaid. Owners Greene King had leased the pub for some years to Quindell Leisure who sub-leased to a series of licensees, with the last going bankrupt. The pub's darts team had to play at the Brushmakers at Upham and the cricket team had to play all matches away. The Ship is the only pub in the village following the closure of the Shearers Arms in 2004 yet it has been impossible to get any sense from Greene King as to any reopening. In recent weeks there have been signs of occupation and an end of September opening was rumoured but this came and went. When last looked at (October 11th) there was a chalked sign asking for staff so hope still lingers...

Twyford

Paul, long-time landlord of the **Phoenix**, is subtly guiding the pub back to a more traditional, community pub image. A dartboard (and team) has been re-introduced and the pool table is due to make way for the much better game of bar billiards. The Phoenix is also one of, we believe, only four pubs in the county selling Greene King's fine XX Dark Mild. Try it.

Eastleigh

The **Arrow**, on the Boyatt Wood estate, has a new leaseholder, Maurice Toll, who trades as Gusto Inns (which includes the Highfield, the Station Hotel Bitterne and the Bede's Lea). Although the Arrow is still a Punch Tavern, Maurice has negotiated a three months trial deal for a peppercorn rent.

Crawley

Readers who regularly study 'official notices'

may have been alarmed at a bankruptcy reference to the Rack and Manger Ltd but this had no bearing on the **Rack and Manger** pub on the main road at Crawley Crossroads. 'The Rack' has been run since May by Andy and Sharon who have taken it back to a traditional two-bar pub.

Winchester

Pub based community spirit has been evident at the **County Arms** in Winchester which reached the final round of The Great British Pub Awards in the 'Best Community Pub' category. In this era of turmoil in the licensed trade it is also a pleasure to record that pub goers in Winchester and beyond have been well served by Lynne and Michael Sinker who in the summer celebrated 35 years running the **Bakers Arms**, which is located off the High Street. They currently also run the **March Hare** in Harestock, while their daughter Rachel runs the **Hiltingbury Farmhouse** in Chandler's Ford and, until recently, they also ran the **Snakecatcher** in Brockenhurst (see above).

The **Albion**, below the station, has had a forced change of management. The original licensee, Jan Wisniewski, had expanded his pub grouping to include interests in Southampton (the **Kolebka**), in Eastleigh (the **Arrow**, see above) and recently also the **White Swan** in Winchester. This expansion was perhaps over-ambitious and has resulted in financing problems. The **White Swan** we understand is now being run 'temporarily' by Clive Mansell from the Fulflood, Bell and Winchester Rugby Club grouping.

A few yards further down Hyde Street, the *Good Beer Guide* listed **Hyde Tavern** was closed for a modest refit that included putting some of the cask ales back onto direct gravity dispense — a return to the '60s when all the beer was brought directly from the cellar in

Continued overleaf >

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Pub News continued

jugs or glasses. In the last *Pub News* we noted that the **Mash Tun** was due to reopen. When it did it was in the guise of a tapas bar, **El Sabio**, which is being run by Hungarian Attila Vanko and his partner Richard Hoth. On the other hand the pub that was once the **Foresters**, in North Walls, later to be named the **North Walls**, has been closed for some time but according to widow signs is about to reopen as the **Parchment** (it's on the corner of Parchment Street). Any subsequent name change could need more thought having now used up both street names...

In Southgate Street the fate of the **Green Man** is unclear as it seems to be closed with no signs of activity.

On the outskirts of the city, a pub that we hope will continue to trade under its current

name is the **Stanmore Hotel**. Following rejection by the City Council of plans to build a 56 room nursing home the applicants, Colten, have lodged an appeal with the planning inspector. Hoping to see the pub through troubled times and into a prosperous future is new landlady Kate Potheccary, who previously ran the **Ship** in Wales Street for five years. The appeal inspector is currently considering all the representations, his decision is expected shortly. More information can be found at www.savethestanmore.com.

Compton

A care home that seems more likely to go ahead is that planned for the site of the closed **Captain Barnard** in Compton. A formal application has been submitted by Highwood Residential for a 57 bed care home and four residential homes.

A vibrant advertisement for Woodforde's Nelson's Revenge beer. The background is a fiery orange and red. On the left is a large, detailed beer tap handle featuring a portrait of a man in a military-style hat. The text 'WOODFORDE'S' is on a red banner across the handle, and 'NELSON'S Revenge' is written in large, stylized letters below. To the right of the handle, the headline reads 'A Norfolk Born Hero of Real Ale'. Below this, a paragraph describes the beer's flavor profile: 'This high ranking cask ale is all about flavour - comprising of rich, floral and fruit aromas, mixed with sweet malts and a burst of citrus hops to embody this international award-winning premium beer. You can enjoy Nelson's in your local by asking your landlord to get a cask, or you can order an 18 or 36 pint beerbox, and 500ml bottles by calling our own brewery shop on: 01603 722218 or online at woodfordes.co.uk'. At the bottom, the slogan 'Do your duty!' is written in a bold, white font. A small disclaimer at the very bottom reads 'Woodforde's Norfolk Ales, Woodbastwick, Norfolk NR13 6SW Please drink sensibly - drinkaware.co.uk'.

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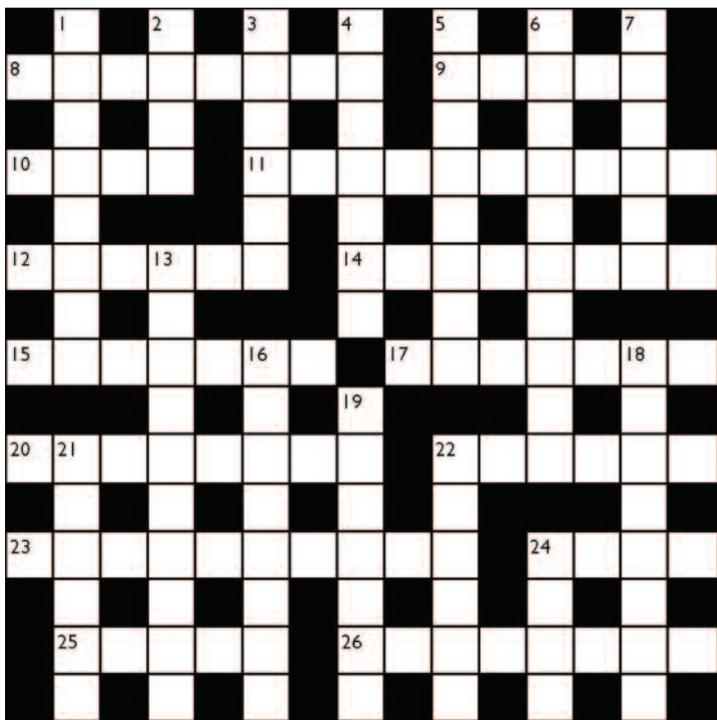
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Crossword Competition



QUETZALCOATL

All across entries are a set, so only partially clued. 20, defining the set, is not clued at all.

Across

- 8 A transatlantic convoy escort... (8)
- 9 ...arrives at Spanish resort (5)
- 10 A German gem reportedly (4)
- 11 He replaced a central piece of old bomber (10)
- 12 Positively particular! (6)
- 14 A red sort of '30s elopement aid? (8)
- 15 When in tune a lively, fast mover (7)
- 17 Is she French or a dodgy little Czech number? (7)
- 20 (5,3)
- 22 Flag officer? One or the other! (6)
- 23 Sort of lorry, close to the very best (5,5)
- 24 A motherless little one! (4)
- 25 Bulgars' capital rarity (5)
- 26 A street and a road are just the norm (8)

Down

- 1 Napoleon was bodily lacking energy (8)
- 2 Five lie badly, very badly (4)
- 3 Dictator, the best a lineage could provide! (6)
- 4 Landing on royal back door (7)
- 5 Routes favoured by alpinists (8)
- 6 Starting learning? Well I'll go to the foot of our stairs! (5,5)
- 7 Starting cell for outsider inside match (6)
- 13 Offer elite service as Eden's eternal restorative (4,2,4)
- 16 Eric Carr composed a complex fugue (8)
- 18 Fabled 'foot' on the line (8)
- 19 Dull and overcast as a poetical elegy (7)
- 21 Performer, half boiled — almost half cooked (6)
- 22 Internal ablutions seamen perform (6)
- 24 Produced a backup cheese! (4)

Prizes for the first two correct entries drawn.

Closing date:
1st February

To: The Editor, Hop Press, 1 Surbiton Rd, Eastleigh, Hants. SO50 4HY

Hop Press Issue 64 Solution



Only eleven entries this time but several included nice comments about the theming; much appreciated, thank you.

A couple of contestants have commented on the paper in our new look Hop Press being difficult to write on — no problem, photo copy entries are fine (and if the copier lets you enlarge so much the better).

Winners:

B E Judd, Shirley, Southampton
Harvey Saunders, King's Sombourne

Other correct entries:

Jocelyn Britcher
Chris Bussell
David Chessman
Rich Christie
Nigel Cook
Trevor Crowther
Nigel Parsons
Ron Poole
John True



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While sitting by the fire in one of my favourite pubs the other week, I looked around the nearly empty bar, with just one local talking to the barmaid plus a couple in the eating area, and thought: 'where are all the customers who were supposed to come flocking back to the pub when the smoking ban cleaned up the atmosphere?' When I left the pub to mount my steed for the cycle home I found the missing customers — a group of about twenty were sat outside in the dark and cold so they could smoke! At least we are making the nation's smokers into a hardy lot.

As I was finishing lunch in a country pub the other week a couple came in at ten past two and proceeded to look at the blackboard displaying the menu. When the barmaid saw this she informed them that as the kitchen closed at two all she could offer was a sandwich. After a couple of minutes discussion the prospective customers left.

It is nice to see that in these hard times for the pub trade some establishments can still afford to turn trade away for the sake of ten minutes.

The other week as I rode up to a pub on the edge of the New Forest I noticed the road surface was wet, a bit slippery and there was a strange, odd smelling white liquid mixed with the water. When I got into the pub the landlady related the story. She had changed the oil in the chip fryer the previous day and had left the plastic barrel of used oil on the patio behind the pub, ready for collection by the oil suppliers in a couple of days. But early that morning the post woman had rung the door bell to inform them that there was a split plastic drum in the road outside the pub and oil all over the road. The gate which is the only access to the rear of the pub and is six foot high was still securely locked, so the vandals had lifted the barrel over the gate before breaking it open on the road.

It was only later that I wondered if this was simply vandalism or, with the demand for used chip oil to power the local Land Rovers, was someone trying pinch this drum of oil but then dropped it on the way to their four by four get away vehicle?

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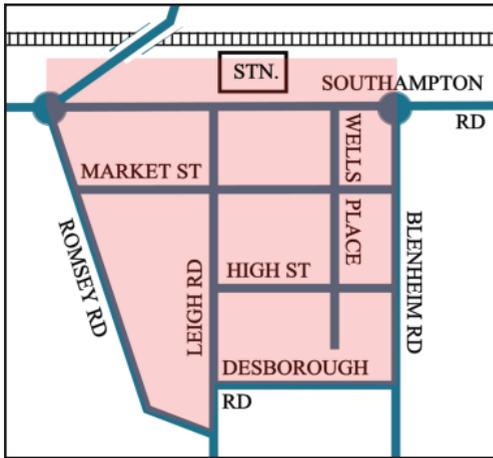
Contact Neil Richards MBE on

01536 358670 

Eastleigh To Act?

The Eastleigh Borough Council has announced its intention to bring in an *Alcohol Restriction Zone* in the town centre. Provision for such zones was made in legislation subsidiary to the 2005 Licensing Act.

The result of such an order is to make it illegal to drink alcohol anywhere in public within the designated area and gives both the police and 'other accredited persons' the power to confiscate any open containers of alcohol.



The map shows, in the shaded area, the proposed area to be included in the zone. In particular the order mentions that the zone specifically includes the car parks around the station and the Lidl store.

Clearly, the local council, after police representation, has been driven to this action by the reputation that Eastleigh is acquiring for unruly, alcohol fuelled behaviour by some sections of the public.

It's a sorry state of affairs for the once industrious, productive town to descend to a state where it cannot even be trusted to control its public behaviour. The decline in the central shopping facilities, with shops empty or

boarded up, converted to fast food takeaways or languishing as short rental charity outlets and the drastic replacement of both family houses and industry with a sea of buy-to-let property has left the town without a vestige of the one-time self-respect.

The order bringing in the zone was published on October 1st with a four week period following for objections and comments. How long after that until the order comes into force was not given in the council's announcement but one would imagine they would like it to be before Christmas brings its usual onset of mindless thuggery, otherwise known as the Season of Goodwill.

Further information about the order can be found on the council's website: www.eastleigh.gov.uk/dppo or from Dennis Chandler on: 023 8068 8216

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- To download the file visit: www.camra.org.uk/gbgpoi
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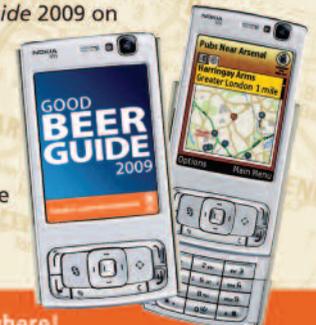
LAUNCHES ON 11 SEPTEMBER WITH GOOD BEER GUIDE 2009

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This new service will coincide with the launch of *Good Beer Guide 2009* on 11 September. To use it, simply text 'camra' to 88080 (your standard network charges apply). You will then receive a text message with a web link to download the application, which will automatically install on your phone. Screen prompts help you set up and use the application, there is a clear breakdown of charges, and full instructions are provided. Depending on the tariff, this indispensable service costs from as little as **5.5 pence per day!** (plus your standard network charges.)



Find Good Beer Guide pubs on the move – anytime, anywhere!

Some issues ago I described a walk along the water meadows south of Winchester. Today's walk has one pub in common with that walk, but otherwise is completely different. It is a short walk, starting from the railway station, which takes in some very pleasant quiet roads and paths in western Winchester as it heads south-east towards and past the Cathedral.

Start from Winchester Station: from either platform descend the steps and turn left into the subway, which leads you out onto a raised path between the car park and the road below (B3044). Continue down the path, which soon ends and you are forced to cross the road; turn left, with a long line of Victorian villas on your right and walk to a small roundabout some 200 yards ahead, here turn slightly left into Elm Road. That's the least interesting part of the walk over.

Elm Road is a pleasant broad suburban street that curves steadily right. At the T-junction turn right into Avenue Road, then left (into Western Road), and the bottle green tiles of **The Fulflood Arms** are just ahead on the left, this original Winchester Brewery frontage is worth admiring before entering.

The Fulflood, along with the Bell Inn in St Cross, both of which belong to Greene King, are a group run by Clive Mansell, a very well-known local landlord who was also one of the original founders of the Itchen Valley Brewery. The Fulflood's licensee is Andrew, Clive's son, who was only 18 when he took over the pub a year ago, possibly the youngest in the country. Clive has negotiated a special lease with Greene King allowing local small brewery beers into the pub which explains why Godfathers is a regular beer and there is also always a Triple fff beer. Open lunch and evening, and all day at weekends, the pub is

one of the most civilized street corner locals I know.

When you leave the Fulflood, turn left uphill up Cheriton Road. Ignore the first Greenhill Road/Avenue Road crossroads but immediately afterwards turn left into North View, a delightful footpath, with terrace houses on the right, and views over Fulflood on the left. Ignore Middle Road on the right and continue along North View, now a small road. The large green open space ahead is Oram's Arbour, turn right along Clifton Road, its uphill edge and after the end of the Arbour, take the second turn on the right, past Arbour Court, into Clifton Hill. Clifton Hill curves left and drops steeply down to Romsey Road. Here turn left, downhill still, and **St. James' Tavern** is just ahead on the other side of this busy road.

The St. James' features in the *Good Beer Guide*, a Wadworth pub unusually also serving Butcombe Bitter. Also unusual, this small friendly pub is triangular in plan. One feature I particularly like here is a board behind the bar giving the names of the staff on duty, that just encourages sociability.

Leaving the Tavern, continue a few yards downhill, over the railway bridge, then turn right through imposing gates into Queens Court, with the Green Jackets Museum on your right. This may not feel like a right of way, but be assured it is. Ahead you should see a Saladin armoured car parked incongruously at the end of a linear car park. Turn left at the Saladin, and walk the length of the car park, with the Ghurkha Museum on your left, and on the right a large square, complete with fountain, and surrounded by imposing apartment blocks. At the end of the car park continue ahead between two buildings to a view ahead over a large peaceful lawn below, and a broad footpath on the right going

downhill. Part way downhill, turn left down steps, past St. Thomas Church to emerge (from Archery Lane) onto Southgate Street.

Turn left along Southgate Street, with Winchester centre not far ahead, but turn right immediately into St. Thomas' Passage, giving a short glimpse of the Cathedral. Turn left (into St. Thomas' Street) and immediately right into another small road, this is Minster Lane, though it is only named at its further eastern end. Here go straight over the small cross roads into Great Minster Street to face the western end of Winchester Cathedral. The last two paragraphs may sound complicated, but it's really just a short walk downhill from the St. James that avoids the bustle of the High Street. Now perhaps you need a break, so conveniently here are a couple of pubs to consider.

On the left about 100 yards along Great Minster Street is the **Old Vine Inn**. Over the last few years this pub has seen significant improvement, and is now a very popular gastropub although non-eating drinkers are entirely welcome in the spacious bar, and there is also a comfortable semi-covered patio at the rear. The beer policy is sensibly modest: Ringwood Best and Timothy Taylor Landlord are the regulars, plus a local guest beer — I have had excellent Hole Hearted and Hampshire Rose there.

Just beyond the Old Vine, and visible from its windows, is the **Eclipse**, a new entry in the 2009 edition of the *Good Beer Guide*. This pub has probably more genuine history to it than any other in Winchester, although the genuine-looking front façade is a 20th century confection.

Back to the last short part of the walk, and back to the bend in Great Minster Street.

Enter the Cathedral grounds and walk towards the western doors, bend right as you approach, and walk around the south side of the Cathedral along a flagged path beneath the flying buttresses. Turn right around the green on a quiet internal road that then bends left through a gap between buildings. (If in doubt, follow signs for the College.) Turn right to walk towards a building with its half-timbered upper walls painted in yellow ochre. At the last moment turn right through a splendid gateway back into the real world. Almost immediately turn left through an archway with a building over, and the curved green doors of the **Wykeham Arms** are visible straight ahead.

The Wykeham needs no description, there can't be many *Hop Press* readers that haven't been to this classic town and gown pub. Bought many years ago by Gales from Eldridge Pope for a then astonishing £1m it is now a flagship for Fullers. When I first came to live in Hampshire, my visits to Winchester were often completed with a visit to the Wykeham. Somewhat surprisingly, my tipple then was more often than not a glass of wine. In those days their choice of wines by the glass was absolutely unbeatable. It has always been a very civilized pub.

I have purposely not provided a return route to the station. This walk will have given you some feel for the geography of Winchester; so just head back towards the centre where the station is well signed.

Maps: Even the OS 1:25,000 is not much use for this walk, here most of the navigation is by street names, and these fine maps don't show them. Even most town street maps don't show the small passageways and paths that are a feature of this walk.

Continued overleaf >

Walking and Drinking (7) continued

Seasons: Clearly a walk for any season, although in high summer when Winchester gets besieged by tourists some pubs may be overly busy. Consider doing this walk in the evening, especially in winter when street lights and lights from buildings provide sufficient illumination.

Times: The complete walk cannot be more than 1½ miles, which could take as little as 30 minutes, but that's just the bread — here it's the filling that makes the sandwich.

If anyone has any suggestions for good walks between good pubs in our branch area please let the author know:

Ray Massey at the e-mail address
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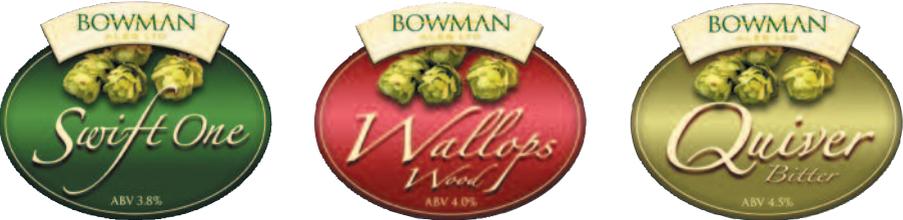


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As well as being a pub guide, the book contains details on all the country's breweries from the largest companies to the smallest microbreweries. It also includes tasting notes for the vast majority of beers brewed in the UK. *This guide is indispensable for beer lovers and includes a selection of features on beer, brewing and pubs.*

You can buy the *Good Beer Guide* from bookshops but CAMRA makes more money which we then plough back into campaigning if you buy directly from us.

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Find the best pubs on your mobile phone

CAMRA is launching a new mobile phone service to help you track down the best real ale pubs from the *Good Beer Guide*. This new service will coincide with the launch of the 2009 *Good Beer Guide* and will feature full contact details, pub descriptions and maps sent direct to your phone.

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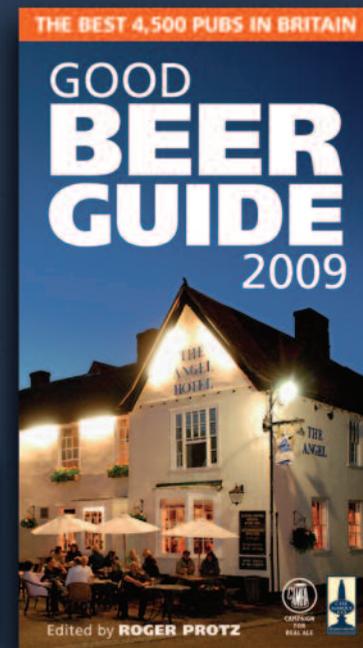
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The origin of the pub sign goes back to the late Middle Ages. At that time pubs, and for that matter all other retailers, had to be able to identify themselves to the largely illiterate population. Thus pubs started displaying some visual symbol on the outside of their premises. This could be a bush (giving rise to the common phrase: “a good wine needs no bush”) or some unusually shaped piece of metal or wood. Over time these objects became pictorial signs depicting for example coats of arms, implements of local trades, historical events, military successes or nearby natural landmarks.

In those far off days the beer sold would be brewed on the premises by the publican, usually a woman. In the seventeenth century larger scale breweries started to become more prominent in towns and many owners became rich and powerful as a result. The eighteenth century saw the continued rise of the large scale brewers and current brewers such as Shepherd Neame can trace their roots back to that time. These big brewers began to increase their power through the introduction of the tied house. Thus the names of these breweries began to appear on the exterior of pubs in addition the signs depicting the name of the pub. In some towns a single brewery would own the vast majority of pubs. The predominance of Strong’s pubs in Romsey was a local example.

The 1960’s saw the arrival of a new type of sign outside of pubs. Berni Inns may not have been the first, but it is certainly the name that best recalls these early theme pubs. They were soon followed by the likes of Beefeaters, Roast Inns and Harvesters. Although in the majority of cases the pubs that were converted into one of the links in these chains retained their previous names it was the branding that dominated the signage. It was common to hear people say that they are going to the Harvester rather than to the Cat and Fiddle or the Beefeater rather than the Hut Hotel.

When the Hogshead chain first appeared the name of the existing pub tended to be incorporated into the title of the revamped establishment

such as the Hogshead and Anchor in East Street, Southampton and the Hogshead and Eagle in Palmerston Road, Southampton. However, for those venues that did last over time the pub name gradually disappeared. A prime local example was to be found in Above Bar, Southampton. When it first opened it was the ‘Above Bar’, though references to the pub in local newspapers at the time equally used ‘Hogshead’ as the name. When it was revamped a few years ago however, the name on the outside became two words in lower case ‘hog’s head,’ thus removing any connection with original reason for the name (a cask containing 54 gallons of beer). It is now a Slug and Lettuce!

The Above Bar Hogshead was but one example of the growth of High Street drinking establishments that included the likes of Yates, Slug and Lettuce and O’Neills. While the brand was highly visible, often with the aid of back-lit shop type name boards, it was rare for these new establishments to have anything approaching the traditional pub sign. The Wetherspoon chain is different in that the pubs are all individually named and often have traditional pub signs. However, it is still common to hear groups arranging to meet at Wetherspoons, rather than specifying the name of the pub. Of course that could cause a few problems in the centre of Southampton with the new addition that has recently arrived. It will certainly mean that taxi drivers will have to establish exactly where they are supposed to be collecting their fare, especially as the night wears on and the customers become less and less clear over their precise location.

Since the publication in 1989 of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report into the supply of beer and the Government’s subsequent Beer Orders there has been a massive shift in the ownership of pubs in England. Before this date the majority of pubs were owned by the big six brewers such as Whitbread, Watneys and Bass, who supplied their own beer to their pub estates. Today the vast majority of pubs are owner by the big pub chains such as Admiral, Enterprise and Punch which arose so that the big brewers could continue

to dominate the supply chain. These large groups were of course largely contracted to take just the products of big national, and now multinational, brewers.

Thus the names of the old brewers such as Courage disappeared from the outside of pubs and the bottom of pub signs, to be replaced by those of the pub chains. These signs though were not as prominent as were those of the brewers before; one reason being that the constant exchange of pubs between these chains would incur a great deal of work for the sign makers. Also, the names of these chains are fairly irrelevant to the average pub goer and are unlikely to give any indication of the style of the pub or the beers that will be on offer. It is not uncommon to see a phrase such as ‘Enterprise Inns Free House’ on a pub sign. Unfortunately all this means is that someone at the company’s headquarters is free to decide what beers the publicans in the chain will be able to choose, not that the licensee will be able to choose himself beers from any local or regional brewer.

Over the last couple of years a much more worrying threat to the future of traditional pub signs has emerged. According to the seminal book:



A Dictionary of Pub Names by Leslie Dunkling and Gordon Wright, there was no pub in England called the Green King in 1987. Now however you may be forgiven for thinking that it is becoming as common as the Red Lion or Royal Oak.

Suffolk brewers Greene King have greatly increased the size of their tied estate over the past few years, by taking over regional breweries such as Hardys and Hansons of Nottingham, by buying pubs from pub chains and by purchasing free houses. As these pubs come within the Greene King empire, they are rebadged so that people are aware of the identity of the new owners. But what has been an extremely disappointing trend as part of this process is the disappearance of the individual pub sign, to be replaced by a boring sign depicting the Greene King logo, with a small bar at the bottom containing the name of the pub. This of course is a complete reversal of the traditional sign that we all recognise. Local examples have included the Dolphin in Botley, the Old Farmhouse in Totton and the Testwood (illustrated).

Though many Greene King pubs still have traditional signs, it is sad to see this new standardised, corporate sign appearing with the consequential disappearance of signs that depict the pubs’ names. One example that will be seen by more passers-by than most is outside of a pub in London’s West End, the Garrick Arms. Just think of the possibilities for an interesting pub sign, but all we get is the Greene King logo with the name underneath.

Perhaps this is a reflection of the vast amount the brewery spends on brand advertising. If so, it is not money well spent because it only serves to irritate and depress the dedicated pub user, hardly the outcome an advertising executive could wish for. Unfortunately there is nothing that can be done in law to stop this ruination of a British tradition. Perhaps a new campaign should be started to save the traditional pub sign before some more of our history becomes just that: history.

The Triple fff Brewery from Four Marks in Hampshire has been celebrating after picking up the prestigious 'Champion Beer of Britain' award at CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival at Earls Court this August. The beer that won the award was Alton's Pride, a 3.8% abv session bitter. Triple fff, which was founded by Graham Trott in 1997, had won class prizes in the past but this is the first time that they have won the overall top prize. Earlier this year an expansion of the brewery was completed which took them up to a 50 barrel brewing capacity, which will help them to meet the increased demand that will inevitably result from winning the award. When founded, the brewery's capacity was just 5 barrels; a ten-fold growth in only a little over ten years must be praised.

a new planning application for a cask conveyor. But, in the past few weeks there have been some reports of clarity problems with the Best Bitter so vigilance must be maintained!



In June Bowman Brewery won the 'Champion Beer of Hampshire' at the Southampton Beer Festival. Swift One came out on top after coming joint top with Oakleaf's Hole Hearted at the first attempt the previous year. Hole Hearted did have the consolation of picking up 'Beer of the Festival' as voted by the customers.

Winchester Brewery (sited, confusingly, in Southampton) has ceasing brewing after struggling to make an impact in the very competitive local market. The brewer went into liquidation in July and the brewing equipment was put up for sale.

Having taken over and closed Gales Brewery in Horndean, London brewers Fullers are to stop distribution from the London Road site and move to a purpose built distribution and administration centre on the outskirts of the town, close to the A3 junction. This will enable them to distribute the Gales badged beers that are now brewed in Chiswick and their own Fullers beers to their ever expanding Hampshire estate of pubs. In July Fuller's pubs in Hampshire were invited to take part in a competition to produce a dish using local ingredients. It was won by The Still and West in Old Portsmouth with the Pilgrim in Marchwood among the finalists. Presumably any recipes that involved the use of a beer would have to have found a local alternative to any named as either a Gales or a Fullers brew...



The only previous Hampshire winner of the Champion Beer of Britain was Ringwood Brewery, whose Old Thumper came out on top in 1988 at the Great British Beer Festival, held that year in Leeds. Fears over the future of Ringwood Brewery, after it was taken over by the major national brewing company, Marstons, last year, have abated in the short term at least as the new owners continue with investments in the brewery that were agreed before the take over and they have also submitted

An advertisement for Irving & Co. Brewers Ltd. It features two beer labels: "Invincible Premium Cask Ale" (4.6% ABV) and "Frigate Golden Bitter" (3.8% ABV). A large anchor logo is in the center. The text "IRVING & CO BREWERS LTD" is prominent. At the bottom, it says "Invincible Ales from Portsmouth" in a cursive font. Contact information is provided at the bottom: "Unit G1 Railway Triangle, Walton Rd, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO6 1TQ", "Tel: 02392 389988", "www.irvingbrewers.co.uk", and "email: irvingbrewers@btconnect.com".

An advertisement for Goddards Brewery. The main logo is "GODDARDS BREWERY" in a stylized, arched font. Below it is a banner that says "ISLE of WIGHT BORN and BREWED". To the right is an illustration of a man in a hat and coat holding a beer mug. At the bottom, the website "www.GoddardsBrewery.com" is written in a large, serif font.

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