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SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER

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SEPTEMBER
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Hello everyone and welcome to the 78th edition of Ale and Hearty. I am Pam your editor (that’s me on the right just in case you wondered what I look like) and I am looking forward to receiving original articles and photographs from you for future editions, please don’t send copied articles as this infringes the copyright.

We are well and truly into summer now you can tell when you can’t decide what to wear to go out in. The other day I went out in my t-shirt and it poured with rain so I got soaked, I am sure you can see where I am coming from.

CAMRA’s latest campaign which is running from 24 May to 26 August is the Summer of love oops sorry I meant pub. They have been trying to get people to socialize down the pub this summer. You can take a selfie of yourself with the hashtag #SummerofPub and post on Twitter, Instagram or Facebook. Publicans have been asked to host events which could be publicised on a calendar on the National Web Site, there is plenty of publicity material, beer mats, posters etc. The nearest pub on the map to us at the time of writing is Glass House St Helens. There are plans to hold events in London to coincide with the GBBF.

Have you noticed our new branch logo on the front page? This is the result of a lot of blood sweat, nail biting and beer drinking discussions over what we should have. In the end we settled for the carousel that is always connected with Southport being a seaside resort and Pleasureland. A Carousel is now a feature on the promenade outside the pier entrance and is named Galloper. It is an 18 ton ride, 42ft in diameter with 33 horses and 3 cockerels and was built at the turn of the century. The other picture is one of West Lancs. Ormskirk’s famous church of St Peter and St Paul, one of only three churches in England to have both a western tower and a central spire and the only church to have them both at the same end.

One of our eagle eyed members spotted this fantastic deal in Wetherspoons. I would like to think it was promoting our summer of Pub........or not ??? No prizes for guessing the deliberate mistake.

Finally can I thank Zetland, Hop Vine, Grasshopper, Heatons Bridge & Guest House for allowing us to have our meetings there

Cheers

Pam

Chairmans Bit

Welcome to this our summer edition of Ale & Hearty after what at the time of writing in July has been a good summer for visiting all those country pubs in West Lancashire especially along the Leeds Liverpool canal with even good public transport connections at many points allowing a pleasant canal side walk and a drink in a couple of pubs.

The branch has probably just had its best campaigning event in a long time with the Mild Crawl in May with nearly 60 cards being returned and a total of 27 prizes being given out from Brewery Tours to books. The full list of prize winners can be found on the branch website www.southport.camra.org.uk

Also CAMRA nationally has just introduced a new voucher scheme for members of which more information can be found on page 19.
Ale & Hearty is the CAMRA Southport & West Lancs Branch’s magazine, published three times a year and distributed free to pubs, clubs, beer festivals, tourist offices and other outlets in Southport, Formby, West Lancashire and beyond. We produce 4,500 copies, and each one is read by several people. Ale & Hearty is funded entirely by our advertisers, whom we gratefully thank.

CONTACTS
Editor
Pam Hadfield ☏ 07515 824539 E-mail: pamhad60@sky.com

Chairman
Doug Macadam ☏ 07714 265096 E-mail: macadamdoug@gmail.com

Branch Contact
Mike Perkins E-mail: mikepcamra@gmail.com

Items for inclusion to Editor, please email: pamhad60@sky.com. Cut off for editorials for the next Ale and Hearty is 31st October.
Name and contact details required: anonymous correspondence will not be considered, although your name can be left out of the magazine with the editor’s agreement.

BRANCH WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK
For more local news about CAMRA, pubs, beer and breweries go to: www.southport.camra.org.uk. You can also follow ‘Southport and West Lancs CAMRA’ on Facebook. ‘Like’ us for updates. Our Twitter address is @SPortWLancsCAMRA

USEFUL CONTACTS
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  230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW. ☏ 01727 867201. Website: www.camra.org.uk

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The opinions expressed in Ale & Hearty are not necessarily those of the Editor, the CAMRA Southport & West Lancs Branch or CAMRA Ltd.
SOUTHPORT BREWERY
No News this time.

Doug Macadam BLO

PARKER BREWERY
The Parker Brewery produced the Mauraders Mild for the month of ‘Mild’ May and was involved in the Southport Mild Trail, to a huge success. The brewery will be producing the mild again later in the year.

The brewery held its 3rd Drink, Food and Music Festival on the 22nd June with record numbers, with the 4th one already pencilled in for 20th June 2020!

Brewery tours continue every month, you get a tour of the brewery, lunch and unlimited ale in the brewery bar, all for £15.00 per person. To find out brewery tour dates, email: theparkerbrewery@gmail.com

The brewer’s micro pub, The Beer Den always has 2 Parker Brewery cask ales on along with 2 rotating guest ales. The Beer Den, 65 Duke St, Southport, Tuesday – Sunday opening.

Colin Hadfield BLO

HOPVINE BREWERY

The brewery now has a new brewer called Robin Austin.

They have a new beer called Dark Collider which is a dark IPA at 5.2% which is Liquorice flavoured with a hint of coffee and is rich and sweet in flavour.

They are also working on a New York style IPA which should be available in the near future.

Doug Macadam BLO

RED STAR BREWERY

The brewery recently brewed a one off brew for Liverpool Football Club being in the European champions league final. The beer was surprisingly called “Champions League” and featured locally in a couple of the Formby pubs including the Freshfield.

Pam Hadfield BLO

Brewery tours are available on Saturdays, booking is essential in advance in order that the staff can gauge numbers. Glen and Dave take visitors through the brewing process, how the beers are made with an over view of the malt and hops and the stages that make up the brewing process. As part of the visit customers can partake in draught samples of the beer range and collect a souvenir glass.

Julie Squires BLO 11-7-2019

TYTON BREWERY

I made Western Screech, my American Oatmeal Pale (4.7%) all of which has sold out, and I am currently brewing Eastern Screech, a lemongrass Coconut & Chilli Pale (4.3%) which all things being well will be available for Southport Beer Street at Tap & Bottles. It’ll be available in cask as well as keg. I’ll be brewing Morepork, my NZ pale again in a few weeks time too.

Pam Hadfield BLO
As many readers will know, for many years CAMRA nationally has run a campaign to support the style of beer known as ‘Mild Ale’ in May, with slogans such as ‘Make May a Mild Month’. Southport and District CAMRA has long supported this initiative, usually by visiting those pubs in the area known regularly to serve Mild beer in good condition.

But what exactly is Mild ale, you may ask? Well, according to CAMRA’s own website:
Mild is a beer style which developed in the late 18th and 19th centuries as drinkers started to demand a slightly sweeter and less aggressively hopped beer than Porter. Early Milds were much stronger than modern versions, which tend to fall into the 3% to 3.5% category, though a number of brewers are bringing strength back into style.

Mild is usually dark brown in colour, due to the use of well-roasted malts or roasted barley. Look for a rich malty aroma and flavour, with hints of dark fruit, chocolate, coffee and caramel, with a gentle underpinning of hop bitterness.

But this can be a shade misleading, as not all mild beers are dark in colour – or chocolate, coffee or caramel flavoured for that matter - and by no means could all dark beers be classified as Milds. The term’s use has changed over the years, and to a degree is still changing with fashion. Let’s just agree that Mild beers are generally less heavily hopped, and therefore tend to be sweeter and less bitter than ‘Pale Ales’, Bitters and Stouts. However, they are presently unfashionable, and although they have their devotees, Mild beers form only a small proportion of many brewers’ output, and many publicans struggle to sell beers overtly described as Mild. Which brings us back to square one, and the need for CAMRA’s support for this important, but scarce, beer style.

Earlier this year, Southport and District CAMRA decided to try to be a little more ambitious in its support for Mild Month. A number of pubs in and around the Town Centre, known to have a Mild Ale available much or all of the time, were approached and asked whether they would like to take part in the branch’s inaugural Mild Trail. Pubs were asked to pledge to have at least one Mild ale on throughout the month of May, and to make a small contribution towards the costs of necessary materials (cards, stamps and so on), in return for publicity in ‘Ale and Hearty’ and elsewhere, and the hope of additional trade during the promotion. Participants who completed the trail – i.e. who purchased a minimum of a half a pint of Mild Ale in each of the eight participating pubs during the month of May and had their Trail Cards stamped in each venue to that effect – were entered into a draw for some excellent beer-related prizes.

In the end, eight venues were chosen, all relatively easily accessible by public transport – another important aspect when encouraging CAMRA members and other members of the public to visit a number of venues, many of which will not be their personal ‘local’.

Southport and District CAMRA ran a couple of Socials (open to all, including non-members), to promote the trail. The first of these, on Saturday 4 May, started in the north of the town at The Bold Arms in Churchtown, and the latter one, on the evening of Friday 17 May, started at The Grasshopper (near Hillside Station) – each working towards the centre of town. I attended both these events, and was very satisfied with the condition of all the Milds served on both days. Personally, I would have liked to have seen a little more variety in the beers available, but I do appreciate that unless running a true Free House, publicans are generally restricted in their choice of beers (another campaigning issue!), and the number of available Milds is relatively low. Full marks, then, to The Bold Arms in Churchtown for sourcing Greene King XX Mild – a beer I have not seen in Southport for many years. Maybe the fact that I had the first pint pulled from a fresh barrel helped, but I found this one of the best Milds of the trail.

On the second Bank Holiday Monday, I separately completed the trail with a friend from the Wirral, who came over to Southport specifically for the Trail. Although the event was drawing to a close, all the venues still had at least one Mild ale available, in line with their initial pledge, although in one or two cases, the quality was maybe not quite so high. Perhaps this is a matter that the Branch could look into for next year? A month is a long time for a pub
not used to selling vast quantities of Mild ale to
guarantee to be able to serve it in the condition
it left the brewery?

My friend very much enjoyed the trail (although
not a CAMRA member, he prefers Mild and
dark beers over the present fashion for pale,
hopy and often citrus-flavoured beers that
predominate in some areas), although he was
disappointed that one of the venues was not
open, and another did not open until 5pm. In
fairness, the opening times of both venues is
clear on the ‘What Pub’ website, but we both
thought that this could have been made clearer
in publicity – or even an extension to the regular
hours could have been arranged for the Bank
Holiday dates.

I understand that the number of completed Trail
cards was pretty much in line with expectations,
and hope that everyone who took part, whether
in full or only in part, enjoyed some Mild beers, in
some venues that you perhaps do not regularly
frequent. If so, please continue to support
this endangered beer style, and maybe even
courage your own local to try stocking a Mild,
and to participate in any future similar events.
To misquote a well-known slogan, “A Mild is for
always, not just for May”!

Overall, I thought this to be a very good
inaugural event, and understand that some
very positive feedback has been received,
ranging from people who were unaware that
one venue (The Corridor) sold real ale of any
sort (despite the blackboard outside making
this perfectly clear in my eyes!), to others who
were pleasantly surprised that Southport and
Birkdale Cricket Club’s bar welcomes visitors,
and is a stronghold for Mild Ale, usually in the
form of Timothy Taylor’s ‘Golden Best’.

I hope that the local branch can run something
similar, and perhaps bigger and better next year.
Good Luck in the draw to everyone who handed
in completed cards – if you win and meet me in
your local pub – Mine’s a pint of Mild!

Noah Vale

All the opinions expressed above are mine,
and other than where specifically quoted and
acknowledged, are not necessarily fully aligned
to those of the Campaign for Real Ale nationally
or locally.

We would like to thank the following breweries
for supplying the prizes for the Mild Crawl 2019:
Bowland Brewery, Bushy’s Brewery, Lancaster
Brewery, Liverpool Brewing Co, Moorhouse’s
Brewery, Parker Brewery, Red Star Brewery,
Rock the Boat Brewery, Southport Brewery
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For Christmas 2018 I decided to do something I had never done at this time of year before – I went away on my own and stayed in an old pub in North Yorkshire. En route I stopped at the Brunning & Price owned Bull in Broughton on the A59 Skipton Road, which was very busy with diners, and had a good selection of beers – Dark Horse Hetton, which I tried, quite nice and others: Brunning & Price Original Bitter, Taylor Landlord, Naylor’s Yorkshire Ale and Moorhouse Black Cat.

My base was the GBG 2019 listed Lister Arms in Malham, which dates from the eighteenth century and is a very large stone built pub with flagged stone floors and several rooms. It also does accommodation, with some very nice guest rooms. I arrived two days before Christmas and on the first night I got involved with a carol singing local group.

Malham is on the Pennine Way and close to Malham Cove, Tarn and Goredale Scar. The Lister Arms pub is a Thwaites House and beers on offer were Thwaites Original, Nutty Black, Nutcracker and Wainwright, with guest ales Dark Horse Hetton Pale Ae, Settle Main Line and Lancaster Bomber. Ciders were Weston’s Engine Warmer (mulled) and Flat Tyre (with rhubarb!). I tried all the beers on my 4 night stay, and with my huge (and expensive) Christmas dinner I tried the rhubarb cider and it went down very well (at £4.60 per pint!). The beers here were always in very good nick and I enjoyed them.

On Christmas Eve lunchtime I went to meet a friend I had not seen for years and we met at the Victoria by the picturesque riverside in Kirkby Malham, a few miles away from my base pub. The Victoria had just re-opened after a refurbishment and was very smart – but very quiet - there were three beers from Hetton, a small brewer near Grassington, and these were Pale Ale, Craven and Night Jar. I tried the Night Jar and also the remaining beer Naylor’s Three Spirits – both very good. I then struck out alone and headed for nearby Gargrave, and the Masons Arms (GBG) near the rail station. Beers here were Tim Taylor’s Boltmaker (named after the looms industry once based in Keighley), which I tried, in very good condition; other beers on tap were Wainwright, Black Sheep Special Ale and Tetley’s Cask Conditioned – have they renamed Tetley’s Bitter? This pub was bustling with many locals enjoying Christmas fayre.

My next stop along the A65 to Hellifield and the Black Horse (GBG) on this main road. The pub is quite a large building, but was surprisingly quiet on Christmas Eve afternoon – an unpredictable trading day. I tried a seasonal half of beer here, Hardy & Hanson Rocking Rudolph and also White Horse Black Beauty. Others were Greene King Fireside Ale and Bowland Boxer Blonde. Then back to the Lister Arms where I enjoyed a great Christmas Eve in the pub, packed with locals, visitors and their dogs.

Christmas Day, and after a light bacon sandwich breakfast I relaxed for a while then made my way over the river to the Buck Inn, Malham’s other local pub – though a new beer selling bistro & deli establishment had been set up near the river, the Beck Hall, but with difficult
access for me over an ancient clapper bridge. The Buck had Dark Horse Pale Ale and Craven on, also Landlord and Old Peculier, but I tried the other two: Taylor Golden Best and Ossett Nervous Turkey (£4.20), both good. Back to the Lister Arms then for an absolutely fabulous Christmas Dinner with the rhubarb cider. A relaxing afternoon watching seasonal TV, then the rest of the evening in the Lister Arms – a great day without leaving town!

On Boxing Day I decided to visit some other Dales area pubs and headed firstly for Grassington, with its cobbled roads and pavements. In the town centre I visited first the Devonshire, very busy with lunchtime diners, a Tim Taylor’s pub with Landlord, Golden Best, Boltmaker, Ram Tam and Poulter’s Porter. I sampled the latter two, both in fine fettle. A short distance away is the Forester’s Arms (GBG) and this was also very busy. Here I tried Tetley’s No.3 Pale Ale (is this brewed by Leeds Brewery?) and Wharfedale Blonde. Other beers were Tetley’s Bitter (the old name?), Landlord, Black Sheep Best Bitter and Riggwelter.

Next over to Appletreewick to visit the two rurally located pubs outside the village, the Craven Arms and the New Inn. The Craven Arms (GBG) – this very well-known pub dates from 1548 and has multi rooms with stone floors and old memorabilia –well worth a visit but off the beaten track. The pub was packed and I tried a great Settle Blackthorn Sloe Porter from a list also including Dark Horse Pale, Craven & Night Jar, Morland Old Speckled Ferret, Ossett Yorkshire Blonde, Wharfedale Blonde and Theakston Best Bitter and Old Peculier. Well worth a visit! A few hundred yards down the road (perhaps a bit too close!) is the very pleasant New Inn and this was almost deserted. The beers were good and I tried Goose Eye Chinook others being Black Sheep Best Bitter and Blitzen. Then back to the Lister Arms for a final evening sampling their beers.

Next day I was homeward bound and decided to call into the market town of Skipton and capital of the Craven Area on my way home. This was very busy with shoppers and traffic and I headed for the canal basin area of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal. Within easy walking distance are three mini-pubs all in the Good Beer Guide and my first call was the Beer Engine, which had a few locals in and a friendly licensee. He had three Oakham beers on 315, Below Zero (a winter pale ale) and Scarlet Macaw and I tried the latter. Other beers were Beer Bros True Brit, Rooster Assassin and Mad Squirrel De La Crème Milk Stout. Next though an alley to the canalside with boats making trips and the Boat House pub where I drank a Wishbone Tiller Pin (brewed specially for the pub). Others were Wishbone New England (6.7%), Goose Eye Oyster Stout, Pennine Heartland Dark Amber and Copper Dragon Golden Pippin. Back though more alleys and to the Narrowboat, a smart pub with a good food menu. I tried the Half Moon Blitzen - very good – others were First Chop Jam, Mango Pale, Mallinson Danger-Hops! and Kirkstall Back Band Porter.

I then drove back home to Southport with no more stops. I enjoyed some really good beers on my trip – I never got a bad one. If you are looking for something different to do at Christmas I recommend it. No cooking and cleaning, or fussing around with family visits and no worries about how to get to the pub on Christmas Day!

Mike Perkins
Homebrewers help to spur Britain’s exploding brewing scene

CAMRA’s Essential Homebrewing, the indispensable pocket guide for novice homebrewers and old hands alike, applauds the number of homebrewers who have turned professional, helping to fuel Britain’s beer growth.

The guide identifies a dozen former homebrewers who have taken the leap to brew professionally, praising the role they’ve played in boosting the number of commercial breweries registered with HMRC to 2,000.

These brewers include the likes of Kew Brewery, Wishbone, Pressure Drop, Torrside, Vibrant Forest, Affinity, Partizan, Thirst Class Ale, Weird Beard, Little Beer Corporation and Boundary – alongside many more.

One of CAMRA’s publications allows readers the chance to expand their brewing repertoire with over 30 recipes from leading British and international craft brewers. Written by Andy Parker, brewer and owner of Elusive Brewing and Graham Wheeler, internationally-renowned authority on home brewing, it contains easy-to-follow instructions and a variety of beer styles and recipes to suit everyone’s taste.

Co-author Andy Parker said: “The number of small breweries in the UK has grown dramatically since 2010 and beer drinkers have never faced as much choice as they do today. Many of the new breweries are very small – from hobbyists who’ve registered their home brewing kit so they can sell tiny quantities to local bottle shops, through to those producing a few hundred litres per week to sell to local pubs and bars.”

Neville Grundy
At a time when the Southport and West Lancs CAMRA branch decided not to have their annual beer festival in 2019 it fell to the Tap & Bottles micropub in Cambridge Walk to stage Beer Street for the fourth consecutive year. 28 cask ales were scheduled to appear and typically only one did not do so appropriately from Elusive Brewery in Berkshire. Local breweries represented included Ad Hop, Blackedge, Gibberish, Handyman and Neptune. A number of beers came from breweries further afield such as Anspach & Hobday (London), Arbor (Bristol), Atom (Hull), Brew by Numbers (London), Errant (Newcastle upon Tyne), New Bristol (Bristol) and Wiper and True (Bristol). Beer were available in 1/3 ½ and 2/3 measures. The two strongest beers were kept back one on Friday and one on Saturday until 4.00pm and only pins of these were available.

Arrangements were made with neighbouring businesses to have extra seating space in the arcades and food could be ordered and delivered from Cranberries at the end of Cambridge Arcade.

It was encouraging to see the healthy attendances at all sessions. On Saturday evening the average age was lower than normal and I think that the 40+ keg beers took a heavy hit then. By Sunday lunchtime at least half of the cask beers were finished so it is clear that there was little or no beer left over. Although simultaneous beer festivals at the Continental in Preston and a sour beer festival at Wigan Central, support was forthcoming not only from the local CAMRA branch but also those in Central Lancashire and Merseyside. The festival glasses were admired as they had a distinct shape and from what I gather quite a few were not returned for a refund of the £2.00 deposit.

The Tap & Bottles delivered a splendid festival, well presented, well-staffed and with good quality unusual beer.

I understand that there should be another festival to celebrate their anniversary. This is likely to be in September even though the actual anniversary is in August. Shades of Munich’s Oktoberfest which starts in September!

Dave Wright
UP STEPS
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TAPANDBOTTLES.COM
The Blundell Arms Pub in Birkdale closed around 3 years ago and the property has been little used, except for a Pigeon Club adjacent to the pub building. A local community group has for the last few months shown an interest in having the pub re-opened, but the land is now owned by a developer, that wishes to build new houses on the site.

The local community organisation was formed by the Dell Preservation Group and is officially known as The Blundell Arms Community Pub, which is a Community Benefit Society registered with the Financial Conduct Authority, that is allowed to sell Community Shares. As a result of this the Dell group have suggested that shares could be offered at £250 each, the limit on shares is 10% of the £150,000 that it is intended to raise from the community finance. The remainder will come from loan and grant funding, but only one vote per shareholder (no commercial group controlling situation).

The site was listed as an ACV (Asset of Community Value) which did protect the pub for 6 months, now expired. However, pubs cannot
now be demolished by an owner, without first submitting and receiving approval for a different use of the site (eg: housing).

The campaign group started with a fairly derelict large building, with a past mixed view on how the pub used to be run. But their intention is not just to provide a pub serving real ale and other drinks, but to provide a community asset with facilities for social and sports groups, dementia help, children’s activities, possibly library and postal facilities and other activities. They have established contact with legal, financial and community representatives and set up a pricing structure.

There are obstacles to overcome, but grant and loan finance has been made available via a setup known as the Plunkett Foundation. This is because money from a Lottery Grant was made available to community activities and Plunkett can use this to promote community pub exercises. Sadly, a while ago there was a roof fire at the building, which will increase costs, but the group are still interested and the site developer may be willing to accept a purchaser of the pub building if they can still build some housing on the land, and the Pigeon Club’s needs would be met. So activity regarding purchase and re-opening of the pub is still under way, and if successful it would be the first such community example anywhere within a large area of Southport and Sefton.

Some of our Branch Committee have attended meetings and provided input to the Dell Group, and it should NOT be forgotten that the aim of CAMRA is to wholeheartedly support any campaign that results in a closed pub re-opening, irrespective of its past activities, as far too many of our suburban and rural pubs have been closing over the last few years.

MORE THAN A PUB RELAUNCH
As a result of the above a select few of the Blundell Arms Preservation Group were invited to an afternoon presentation on 19th June at a typical community owned pub, the Dog Inn, Belthorn, near Darwen in Lancashire including myself. This was hosted by the Plunkett Foundation and was entitled “More Than a Pub Relaunch”, and an Inspire and Engage Workshop was given by Dave Hollings, the manager of the Dog Inn who stated that his attractive village used to have 5 pubs, all closed except the Dog Inn, as a result of great community support. His pub was now running very well with food and community activities and I sampled real ale on offer from Moorhouse’s and Prospect breweries.

Iain Chambers, manager of the Bevy in Brighton also covered details of a southern community owned pub. Points to consider with any new venture were:-What sort of pub would it be – wet led, food led, mixed, music, other? How to consult the community to find out what they want from their pub? Talking to other people who have done it. Building a big enough team to do all the work. More than a Pub – what other services would be in the pub? Directly managed or tenanted? A financial plan to show the pub is viable and can fund withdrawals of shares after a few years. A funding package to buy, refurbish and stock the pub – where would the money come from? A plan to market any share offer document. A plan to continue to engage the community and members once you are trading. This all illustrates that taking over a pub by the community is not so simple with a lot of factors to consider, and the current situation was:- 28 Open and Trading Community Pubs; 44 pubs in community ownership, and 450 enquiries from possible community pub groups. If any reader wants to receive full details of the Plunkett presentation by email, please let me know mikepcamra@gmail.com and I will send them to you.

Mike Perkins
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1985 AND ALL THAT

I recently came across an old copy of CAMRA’s ‘Merseyside Guide To Real Ale’ from 1985, a booklet I’d completely forgotten about. I was interested to see how much the local pub and beer scene had altered in the last 33 years. At that time beer choices rarely changed in pubs, so I’m confident the local real ale situation was accurately described. Looking at Southport, there were 25 pubs, bars, clubs and hotels listed as serving real ale; there were many more non-real ale pubs, of course. In contrast today, I have listed from memory alone well over 40 outlets that serve real ale in the same geographical area.

Nearly all the beers sold in pubs were from the breweries that owned them and as a result most had very limited choices. Specifically, seven pubs had one real ale, ten had two, five had three, three had four, and none had more than four. In contrast, serving four or more real ales is quite commonplace in Southport nowadays, with a few outlets hitting the eight to eleven range. Guest beers were uncommon at the time, but those available were from: McEwans, Youngers, Boddingtons, Marstons, Ruddles and Wilsons, not a particularly varied selection. All the rest were standard house beers from the big breweries. Compared to the choice of real ales that we have today, this was all very restricted and - dare I say it? - quite boring.

There have been many changes in the local pub scene too. The following pubs and hotels have been either demolished or converted to entirely different uses: the Portland, the Royal Mews, the Sandpiper, the Two Brewers, The Queens Hotel and the Blowick, although the last pub has been replaced by the Thatch and Thistle. The Rabbit and the Old Ship are closed, and six venues still exist but longer sell real ale. This means that, in real ale terms, we have lost more than half of the outlets listed in this local guide.

It is rather strange that, in looking back 33 years, we have such a mixture of good news and bad news. While there are many more real ale outlets today, we have lost a significant number of former ones, including several traditional pubs that cannot and won’t ever be replaced. On the other hand, today’s beer choices are much greater, largely due to the numbers of small new breweries and the rise of micropubs and other bars serving real ale.

I really don’t like it when we lose our traditional pubs, but in terms of beer choice, if I could hop into the TARDIS, I would much prefer to go out for a pint in Southport today than in 1985.

Neville Grundy
On the 1st July CAMRA nationally have introduced a new voucher scheme to replace the current JD Weatherspoon vouchers scheme. The scheme works so that every member will get £30 worth of vouchers with their next membership renewal or when they join CAMRA after 1st July 2019. These are 60 X 50p vouchers which will now be available to use at all Brains pubs, all Stonegate pubs, all Castle Rock pubs and certain smaller independent pubs. Any local pubs interested in joining the scheme should speak to CAMRA HQ in St Albans. There are plans to add extra pub groups to the scheme over the next year or so.

These new vouchers are not dated like the old ones so once you receive them you can spend them as quickly as you want in the 12 months from when you receive them. You will also need to show your membership card when using them in your chosen pub. All the pubs they are valid in will have a small logo of the voucher scheme on their page in the What Pub website.

The pubs in our branch area they are valid in are:

**Independent pubs:** - Grasshopper Hillside

**J D Wetherspoon pubs:** - Court Leet Ormskirk, Lighthouse Formby, Sir Henry Segrave Southport and the Willowgrove Southport.

**Stonegate pubs:** - Grapes Formby and Pinewoods Formby

The present J D Wetherspoon vouchers will still be valid until their present expiry dates on the vouchers and this will be at the latest 30th June 2020 but most vouchers will have expired before that date.
One of my latest expeditions with our Chairman Doug Macadam was our trip to the CAMRA Members’ Weekend in Dundee in April. Doug always offers to drive, so all I had to do was pack a bag and make sure I took my Good Beer Guide. He is usually only on time when we are getting up at the crack of dawn, but on this occasion he said he would pick me up at 6.00 and he was late. But after a quick phone call to make sure he and his brother Ian were up he duly got there at 6.15 and we were off.

It was a five hour drive to Dundee with just one brief stop for a bite to eat, and we arrived at the Glentay Hotel on Broughty Ferry Road just after 11 o’clock. We wanted to get there early so that we could make the best use of the day and start exploring the local area. After sorting out the accommodation in the annexe with the luxury of having three separate bedrooms, we were off.

**DAY 1**
**THURSDAY 4TH APRIL 2019**

We walked into Dundee, a walk of some fifteen minutes, and duly bought a ticket for the day to get to Fife, the only Kingdom in Great Britain. Doug is something of an expert on public transport, so whatever ticket he buys we get the same. However, on this occasion he had sussed out by looking on the Fife transport web site that we could get a group ticket for all three of us to use. So we got the bus to St. Andrews, the home of British golf, and duly arrived at St. Andrews bus station where we changed over to get a bus to a lovely little coastal village called Anstruther. First port of call of the trip was the Ship Inn, and I got the first round. This was typical in my experience of Scottish pubs in that there was Hobson’s choice – just one real ale. I ordered three pints, but in hindsight it was not a wise decision, because the beer was stale and not the best. It was local, which was a good thing as the Eden Reaper was brewed just along the coast in St. Andrews, but it tasted as though nobody else was drinking the stuff.

Anyway, I always look on the bright side of life and I thought things could only get better. Although there was another pub to visit in Anstruther, it was not open yet, so we got the bus to Crail. You will no doubt have to get your Atlas of Britain out for this article, because I had embarked on a pub crawl in a part of Great Britain I had not visited before. I did actually go to one pub in the Kingdom of Fife in 1996, but that was 23 years ago!

We got off the bus close to the Golf Hotel, which I reckon could be the only pub in Britain whose name consists of two words in the phonetic alphabet! The beer here was infinitely better, and there was more choice, so I plumped for the Harviestoun Bitter and Twisted, which I think is the favourite beer of my mate Ian Garner, a member of CAMRA’s National Executive who also happens to support Everton! An excellent pint, but the cost to Ian of £4.05 a pint was possibly I sign a what was to come.

After a quick pint, we timed the buses so that we did not have to wait long to get the bus back to Anstruther for a visit to the Boathouse. I don’t recall there being any Scottish beers in here, so I opted for a pint of Adnams Ghost
Ship. Doug came up smelling of roses with his round, because the beer was only £3.40 a pint, almost £2.00 cheaper for a round than the last pub. Perhaps somebody could explain how it works that you pay £4.05 for a beer which is brewed down the road and then get one 65p cheaper which had been transported all the way from Suffolk! Of course, I still remember my Economics teacher Mr. Rafter teaching me all about supply and demand before I passed my “O” level in Economics and Public Affairs in 1973. Still bonkers though.

By this time I seem to recall it was teatime, so we decided to get something to eat. On the promenade in Anstruther was the Anstruther Fish Bar, and the fish and chips in here were superb. My fish tasted like it had only been caught that day. Delicious.

We then caught another bus, and this took us along the A917, the road along the southern coast of Fife to the delightful little village of Lower Largo, which sounded like somewhere in the Wild West! The pub was called the Railway Inn, but as you might guess there was no railway, which I think was long gone. However, the pub was lovely, the staff very friendly, and the prices were getting even better. My Inveralmond Lia Fail was excellent and only £3.20, and even better news was that the landlady told us the pub had recently been awarded the Fife Pub of the Year award. To be honest, we did not do this pub justice, only having a quick half, but the bus was due and we had a lot more pubs to visit.

So we left to catch the bus to Kirkcaldy, the home of Raith Rovers Football Club (all quizzers take note), and duly arrived at the bus station. A fairly long walk of fifteen to twenty minutes took us to the Harbour Bar, but it was well worth it. First of all this was the best pub of the day, and my beer Oakham Bird Brain was superb, a 4.5 on the Richter Scale (alias CAMRA’s National Beer Scoring System). The pub itself has been in the Good Beer Guide for 25 successive years, and features in Scotland’s True Heritage Pubs guide, a grade C listed pub.

On the way back to the bus station was another GBG pub, Betty Nicol’s, where the beer was also superb. One of my Scottish favourites was available here, the superb Jarl from Fyne Ales, and although we were back up to £3.60 a pint it was worth every penny.

From Kirkcaldy we took a bus inland to a place called Leslie. This was our quickest stop so far. I was in two minds whether we had time to do this pub, but we ended up getting off the bus, jogging to the Burns Tavern, downing a half of Timothy Taylor Landlord in about five minutes, and going straight back to the bus stop where we just made the next bus to Freuchie, where we had a bit more time to play with. The bus service in Fife was excellent I must say, but obviously the buses are not every five minutes, so we would often only have a quick beer rather than wait an hour for another bus.
The Albert Tavern in Freuchie was a five minute walk from the main road, but a lovely homely pub with some excellent beers. We had the rare opportunity to try a couple of beers in here, my choices being Inveralmond Ossian followed by an Orkney Dark Island, both of them in excellent condition.

That was it for the first day. We then caught a bus back to St. Andrews, changed to get a bus back to Dundee, and walked back to our hotel where I slept soundly on the first night.

**DAY 2**

**FRIDAY 5TH APRIL**

This was my son Mark’s birthday. So after wishing him a happy birthday via Facebook, we were off for a full day this time, getting out of the hotel nice and early to get a bus into town and start with breakfast at the Counting House, the local J D Wetherspoon pub. It was drizzling with rain, but it didn’t dampen our enthusiasm. Today we were staying on Tayside, so, after walking from Wetherspoons to the bus station, we caught a bus to a little place called Mickleour, just north-west of Dundee. Again, we had to plan by checking pub opening hours, so we aimed to arrive at the Mickleour Arms Hotel soon after it opened at 11.00. It was Ian’s round, and there was only one real ale as far as I can remember, so we had thee halves of the Strathbraan “The Lune” which set a new record for beer prices at £4.20 a pint We asked the experienced bartender to top up the glasses, and if looks could kill we would have met an instant death, so we did not stay for long. Poor Ian. He had drawn the short straw again.

It was then north to Blairgowrie on another bus. On some days the rover tickets were £32.00 for three of us, a little on the expensive side, but boy were we going to get our money’s worth. We arrived at the little bus station at Blairgowrie and worked out where we were going. A local man at the bus station seemed to know where the pubs where, so, as the Ericht Alehouse was not open until 13.30, we headed for the J D Wetherspoon Fair O’Blair. There was not a great choice in here, so I played safe and went for a pint of Caledonian Deuchars IPA, which was the bargain of the week. Just £1.79 (I think it was my round) I also got 50p. off with my Wetherspoons voucher which came to £1.29, my cheapest pint in a long time. And to be fair it was a beer in excellent condition and deserved its entry in the Good Beer Guide.

We then walked the short distance to the Ericht Alehouse. It sounded like a German bierkeller, but in fact Blairgowrie stands on the River Erich, so there you go. Here I tried a pint of 71 Brewing Breakfast Toast, very tasty for a 3.5% beer.

Back to the bus station, we caught a bus to Dunkeld, a few miles to the west. Dunkeld was a lively little village with a few licensed premises, but we concentrated on finding the Perth Arms on the High Street. This was a friendly and busy little pub, and the staff and locals were fascinated to know we had made an effort to travel so far afield, so we stayed for a couple. I started with a pint of the Strathbraan Due South, which was very good albeit £3.90 a pint. So I tried an extra half of Strathbraan Head East whilst Doug and Ian were drinking slowly. It must have been the thirst I was building up whilst practising my darts while Doug worked out the itinerary for the rest of the week.

We then got the bus towards Perth, but, as it went through Bankfoot, we alighted there in order to try a quick half at the Bankfoot Inn. It had looked closed when we got off the bus, with signs in the window, but we were in luck because it was in fact open. Just as well too, because the Inveralmond Daracha was absolutely superb, the joint best beer of the week for me to date.

So back to the bus stop. I cannot remember, but I am assuming the buses were every half hour in this area, otherwise we would have stayed longer, as this was another pub to which we didn’t do justice, but time goes quickly when you are trying to cover so much ground, so we
continued onto Perth on the next bus, where we ended the evening.

Our first port of call in Perth was the Capital Asset, a Wetherspoons pub not listed in the GBG, but where I wanted to get something to eat. So it was fish and chips and a pint of Black Sheep Chocolate Orange stout for me. It sounds fantastic, but it was OK, and one of those occasions when I could understand why a JDW pub had not been submitted as an entry into the GBG.

So we moved on to the Greyfriars Inn, a pub I had been to before but not since 1996 when I stayed in Perth with my wife Yvonne on business. The one-room basic boozer had not changed one bit in 23 years, and the beer was still excellent. My choice was the Redcastle Tower IPA at £3.60 a pint.

At this point we decided to visit the Cherrybank Inn, which was a mile or two out of town. So we caught a local bus, getting more use out of our bus tickets, and alighted near the pub which was on the main Glasgow Road. Now I wanted to stay a while here for two reasons. First of all the beer was very good, and so was the atmosphere, as there was a football match of the TV. No, not Celtic or Rangers, not even the local team St. Johnstone (quizzers take note again) but the Southampton v. Liverpool match. Our little room had a number of fans wearing Liverpool shirts, including one young lady from Canada, so I settled down with a pint of Harviestoun Bitter & Twisted. Now my mate Ian would definitely have been bitter and twisted that night, because Liverpool came from 1-0 down to win 3-1, so I celebrated with a malt whisky called Laganvuelin, which was recommended to me by the manager (although I have probably misspelled it!).

A great way to finish off the evening, but it was getting late and we had to get back to Dundee. So we caught another bus back into Perth city centre, where we had a bit of a wait for the last bus to Dundee, which was a long bus ride. So we took a walk to try our last unvisited Perth GBG pub, the Green Room. I was expecting great things from this pub because it had won the local branch Pub of the Year (POTY) award for 2018, but what a disappointment. Listed in the guide as selling six changing beers from six handpumps, sadly five of them were redundant and the only real beer was the Strathbraan Eighty Bob which was OK but nothing to write home about. How this had won a local POTY award was beyond me, and the owners had missed a trick here because they must not have been aware that there was a national CAMRA Members’ Weekend in nearby Dundee, otherwise surely they would have made more of an effort to put on more cask beers instead of the keg beers they were trying to get us to try. So a disappointing end to the evening before we caught the last bus to Dundee. In hindsight we should have stayed in the Cherrybank Inn to see the end of the Liverpool game.

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J D Wetherspoon pubs: - Court Leet Ormskirk, Lighthouse Formby, Sir Henry Segrave Southport and the Willowgrove Southport.
Stonegate pubs: - Grapes Formby and Pinewoods Formby

I am sure this list is not exhausted and if I have missed anyone out of Southport and West Lancs area or you decide to start offering discount please let me know at pamhad60@sky.com

This list will be a permanent feature of Ale and Hearty hoping to try and encourage pubs to be included.

**Pubs giving CAMRA discount to card carrying CAMRA members**

- **TAP & BOTTLES**
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- **BOLD ARMS, CHURCHTOWN**
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- **FRESHFIELD**
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- **RAILWAY, FORMBY**
  20p a pint Real Ale

- **PHOENIX**
  10% off Real Ale

- **PARK, BIRKDALE**
  10% off pints and halves

- **CROSS HOUSE, FORMBY**
  10% off pints

- **CRICKETERS ORMSKIRK, ORMSKIRK**
  CAMRA members have a choice of 10% discount or a stamp on a loyalty card buy 10 pints get one free

- **CHESHIRE LINES**
  20% discount

- **TAP ROOM, 12 ORMSKIRK**
  CAMRA members have a choice of 10% discount or a stamp on a loyalty card buy 10 pints get one free

- **RAILWAY, ORMSKIRK**
  loyalty card also 20p CAMRA discount and Monday less 50p on cask ales

- **WATERFRONT, PROMENADE**
  10% off real ales

*Get the real taste of Ramsbottom*
When the Vicar of Christ Church, and Southport Infirmary, each received a bequest of twenty-five pounds in 1921, the gifts were no doubt decent sums of money at the time. The recipients were probably less impressed with their share to learn that the benefactor had died leaving nearly £100,000 gross. Cornelius Dewhurst by name, his fortune had been amassed during a long working life as butcher, farmer and director of the Southport Brewery Company.

To begin this history let us go back to 1875 when Henry Quayle’s leasehold brewery stood on Scarisbrick New Road, next to the Shakespeare Hotel. In that year, Cornelius Dewhurst (butcher) and the Quayles (Henry and William Quayle, sawmill proprietors) formed the Southport Brewery Company with the aid of nine other subscribers. Mostly, they were hotel owners, with the useful addition of an analytical chemist and the long-established wine and spirit merchant Robert Vicars Mather.

The following Southport premises can be associated with these gentlemen.

Frederick F. Baker, Victoria Hotel, Promenade
Jean Paul Deussen (a naturalised German born in Mönchengladbach), Queen’s Hotel, Promenade.
Henry Jolly, Zetland Hotel, Zetland Street.
Robert Watson (later a Borough Magistrate), Scarisbrick Hotel, Lord Street.

In May 1884, Alexander Heron joined as a traveller and collector of rents. Breweries needed to keep an eye on such employees because of the temptation to pocket some of the cash. This indeed did happen when Mr Heron failed to pass on payments he received from Mary Green of the Eagle & Child, Newburgh, and William Nixon of the Shakespeare Hotel, Southport. His punishment, three months prison with hard labour.

Towards the end of 1900, doctors started to notice a sudden increase in patients with liver problems and some puzzling symptoms. Investigations found that a company producing brewing sugar in Liverpool had used sulphuric acid containing arsenic. Breweries using the sugar were poisoning their customers. At particular risk were brewery employees who consumed large volumes on a daily basis. At a large Manchester brewery it was reported: “In one case the sufferer turned the colour of a mulatto, whilst his skin is scaling off.”

At the annual general meeting of the Southport Brewery in 1901 the directors were able to assure shareholders that no “deleterious matter” had been used in the brewing process and despite the arsenic scare, sales were increasing. The
upward trend in sales continued for some time. Chairman of the board Robert Mather, speaking in 1902, claimed a favourable comparison of Southport Brewery beer with those from Burton-on-Trent, due in part to Southport’s “naturally well filtered water.” Although the company directors spoke of producing only “pure and unadulterated” beer, this is unlikely to mean that all-malt recipes were in use; most breweries added sugar and other malt adjuncts.

Cornelius Dewhurst displayed considerable satisfaction in 1905 when he reported on the purchase of the Becconsall Hotel, Hesketh Bank. The hotel had originally been built for Sir Thomas George Fermor-Hesketh, baronet. It needed rebuilding after a serious fire in 1931, by which time the property belonged to Walker’s brewery of Warrington. It has historical connections to the football teams Bolton Wanderers and Blackburn Rovers, who used the premises as a base for their training centres. The pub closed in 2009 and despite much local opposition the bulldozers moved in three years later.

Nuttall & Co Ltd of the Lion Brewery, Blackburn (later to be the home of Matthew Brown) performed exceptionally well at the Brewers’ Exhibition of 1911. Out of nine different classes, they won prizes in four and secured the champion gold medal for best beer of an original gravity over 19 pounds. Southport Brewery managed a second place for the best light bitter of an original gravity under 18 pounds. These figures require some explanation. Under a system that dates back to John Richardson (1743-1815) and his work on the saccharometer (a hydrometer by another name), the pounds quoted referred to the brewers’ pound – the increase in weight of a 36-gallon barrel of unfermented beer (wort) as compared to a barrel of water. In terms of a more familiar unit, 18 brewers’ pounds equates to an original gravity of 1050 which would easily ferment to a strength of 5% abv.

Some nine months after the start of World War One, a deputation of shipbuilders converged on London to argue for total prohibition for as long as the conflict lasted. Chancellor of the Exchequer and teetotaller David Lloyd George famously stated: “We are fighting Germany, Austria and drink, and as far as I can see, the greatest of these three deadly foes is drink.” King George V supported the idea but prohibition never had a real chance of introduction. Indeed, industrial unrest in 1917 has been attributed to the shortage of beer. The problem was not just the need to keep workers in the vital industries sober, but also to conserve foodstuffs. Various measures were taken to limit beer output and reduce the alcoholic strength.
CAMRA’s Beer Scoring System

CAMRA members please don’t forget to put your beer scores in for the pubs you visit, it’s really easy. On your phone go to What Pub – Search the pub you are in – in the Submit Beer Scores tab click on members login – you will need your members number and password – put your score in 0-5.

0. No cask ale available

1. Poor - Beer that is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment

2. Average - Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn’t inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.

3. Good - Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again.

4. Very Good - Excellent beer in excellent condition.

5. Perfect - Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.

Then Brewery and which beer you are scoring.

It’s that easy and you are helping to decide on the pubs that go into the Good Beer Guide.

Acknowledgements
Thanks to Alan Walker for extracts from the Brewers’ Journal and for illustrations.
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