

From the Newark & Grantham branches of Campaign for Real Ale

newarkcamra.org.uk & granthamcamra.org.uk



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

BEER GUTTER PRESS

FOR DISCERNING BEER DRINKERS

ISSUE 58 Jan-Mar 2015



Real Ale in Southwell

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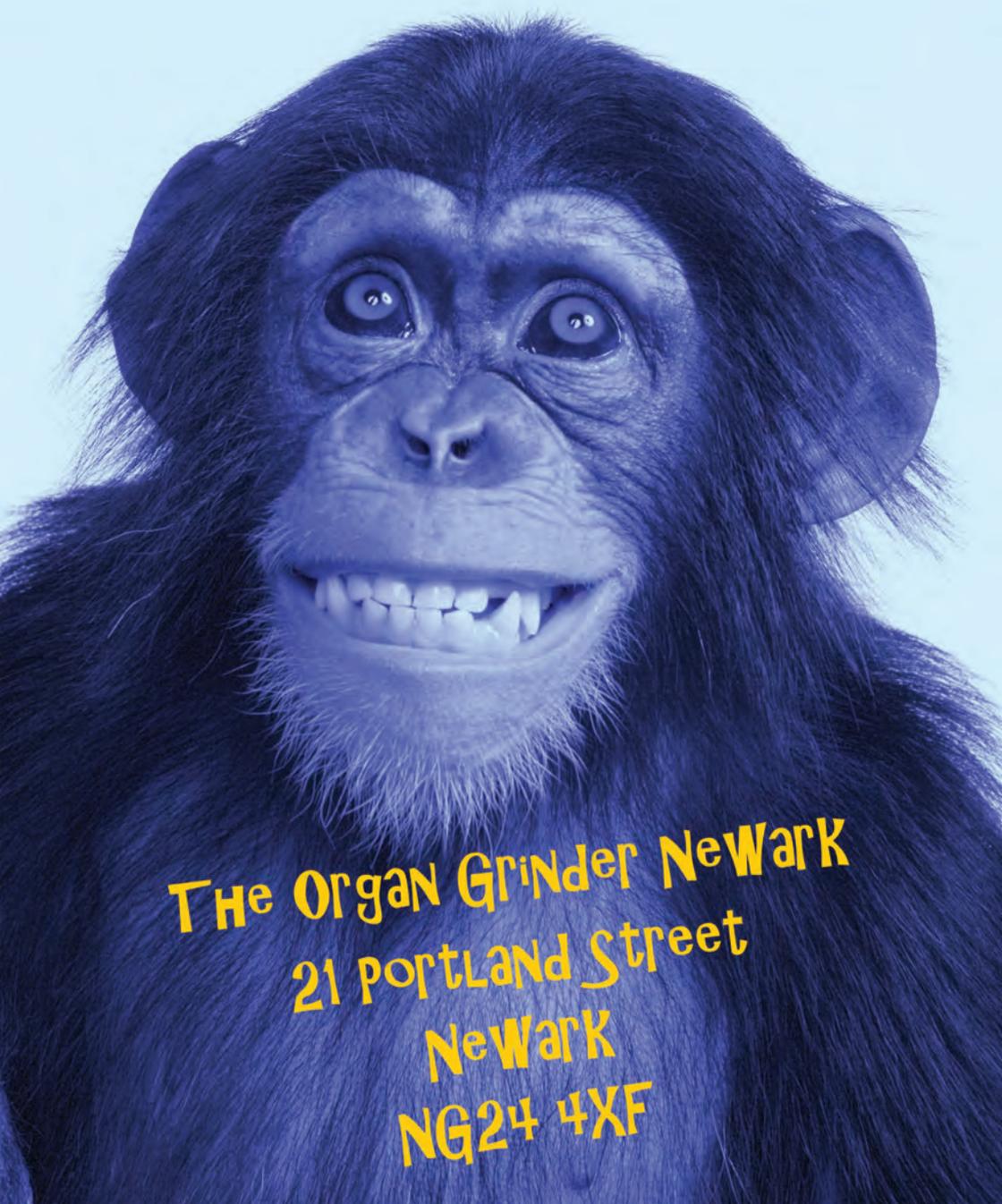
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blue monkey brewery



The Organ Grinder NewArK
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SOUTHWELL PUB TOUR

Saturday 4th October 2014

What better way to send a friend on his way to a new life in Portugal, than to tour the pubs in Southwell to remind him of the beer he will be missing while sunning himself on the beaches of Lisbon?

At 12 o'clock we began our journey in **The Fox** at Kelham. Having never stepped foot into this pub, despite driving past it hundreds of times, I was disappointed to find it screamed of pubco. Three beers were available on the bar; Fullers London Pride, Morland Old Speckled Hen and Sharps Doom Bar. We settled for three pints of London Pride, the round costing £10.20. The beer was decidedly average, however, and with a bus to catch, it was quickly gone. One thing to note though, the food was reasonably priced and did look good as it was carried past where we sat.

The 12.57 bus from Kelham to Upton took us to our next stop, **The Cross Keys**. Who knew that buses had become so expensive? £2.30 per single for such a small journey. On entry, the pub was very busy and we found Mallard Quackpot, Mallard Duckling and Titanic Iceberg on the bar.



Two Quackpots and a Duckling (not descriptions of ourselves!) found the way to our table alongside three sandwiches and some chips. The chef was off for the week so a limited menu of sandwiches, soup and chips was being run. At £8.75 a head for food and beer, I thought this was well priced, the beer being in excellent condition. With a friendly goodbye from the barmaid, it was back to the bus stop for the 14.02 bus into Southwell, which also turned out to be £2.30 per single. Bus travel, it turns out, is not cheap these days!

The **Old Coach House** was next. Having been a feature in *The Good Beer Guide* for several years we were expecting good beer - and it did not disappoint. Nottingham Brewery Rock Bitter, Oakham Ales Inferno, Full Mash Apparition, Castle Rock Elsie Mo, Sharps Doom Bar and Brains The Rev James all took pride of place on the bar. Two pints of Elsie Mo and

BGP is published by the Newark-on-Trent & Grantham branches of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).

The Newark & Grantham Branches of CAMRA strive to increase consumer choice of real ale by objecting to pub closures and championing high standards of customer service in the area's public houses. We support our local breweries by promoting the diversity they bring to the bar.

Newark and Grantham CAMRA also bring national issues such as tax and opening hours to local attention. Importantly, we are a social group of likeminded drinkers of all ages and walks of life. Anyone is welcome to attend our meetings, details of which can be found elsewhere in this issue.

BGP welcomes local-interest beer related articles and letters for publication. All material should be sent to newsletter@newarkcamra.org.uk or 18 Harewood Avenue, Newark-on-Trent, NG24 4BE.

To reach a high proportion of discerning imbibers across East Nottinghamshire and West Lincolnshire, contact our advertising team at Capital Media on 01636 302 302.

An electronic version of this publication is available for download from the Newark CAMRA web site, where you will also find more information on local real ale topics and unabridged versions of pieces that have appeared on these pages. Point your web browser to: www.newarkcamra.org.uk

Opinions expressed within BGP are not necessarily those of the editorial staff or CAMRA at a local or national level.

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For Grantham, tel: 01476 406080
email: customerservices@southkesteven.gov.uk

an Apparition were purchased for £9.60 - inclusive of a CAMRA 15p discount per pint. The beer was well kept and very drinkable. The gracious barmaid kindly let one of the party sample all of the beers so he could "make up his mind" - a rouse that fooled no one!

Within a minutes' walk, **The Hearty Goodfellow** became our fourth pub of the day. Recently ranked on the TripAdvisor website as the best pub food in Newark and Southwell, it stocked a fine range of beer and cider. Mallard Union Quack, Welbeck Abbey Cavendish, Welbeck Abbey The Hearty Blonde, Everards Tiger, Oakham Ales Citra, MillWhites Cider Strawberry and MillWhites Apples & Pears all featured, plus Milton Justinian which was turned round. Pints of Cavendish, Union Quack and Strawberry were ordered for £10.20. The beer again was in excellent condition and the staff very friendly. With a seat at the bar, we looked on as our Portugal bound party member struggled through his surprisingly strong 7% cider, as thoughts already turned to the next pub.

How lucky the residents of Eastgate are to have three excellent pubs in such a small area, as **The Bramley Apple** became our fifth pub. The beer range was largely dominated by Springhead brews, as you'd expect, with Robin Hood, Maid Marion, Outlawed and The Leveller all being sold, plus Pedigree New World and Great Western Brewery Moose River APA. A new barrel of Roaring Meg was also being pulled through. A Robin Hood, The Leveller and Moose River were ordered for £9.30. Again the bar staff were pleasant, even after I returned my pint of Robin Hood as it was off to be replaced with Outlawed. We

sat outside in the sunshine to avoid the christening party taking place which seemed to have spread to most of the pub. It also happened to be

half time in the Saturday football so 3G was needed!

Our longest walk of the day followed as we headed to **The Reindeer**. We again found a good selection of beer with Wells Bombardier, Courage Directors, Mallard Specduckular, John Smiths Cask and Bottle Kicking Cider Company House Cider all on the bar. Three pints of Specduckular were ordered for £9.50, inclusive of a 10p CAMRA discount per pint, as we headed for the darts board. The pub was quiet, save for one regular, but at 4.30pm this was to be expected. The bar staff were again welcoming and the chef must have been preparing for the meals that night as a very strong aroma of curry filled the pub.

Heading back into town, we next stopped at **The Crown Hotel** to find Marstons The Crown Jewels as the only hand pump on offer. Marstons EPA was also on, but turned round. Three pints of The Crown Jewels were purchased for £10.20 and a few games of pool followed in what was the dullerest pub of the night with the only people at the bar being guests in the hotel. Suffice to say there was no atmosphere at all. The beer was tasteless and not well kept. No pint was finished before the pool cues were returned and we left.

The Saracens Head over the road was the eighth pub of the day. Here we found Morland Old Speckled Hen, Green King IPA and Green King Abbott Ale on the bar. Three pints of Abbott Ale were bought in the most expensive round of the day at £10.50 and it was hard to see why. For such a building steeped in local history, the range of beer could be much more exciting with a bit of thought, but again the echo of pubco swamped the place and left me with nothing more than a thought of what could be. Here, three became two as one member left for childcare reasons, and it was now just myself and our Portuguese bound traveller.

After a much needed food stop at the local pizza parlour, we ventured towards **The Admiral Rodney**. Now mixing with the Saturday crowd and a large majority of students from nearby Brackenhurst, we found Blue Monkey BG Sips, Masham Black Sheep, Sharps Doom Bar and Timothy Taylor Landlord all on sale, with Marstons EPA, for the second time, turned around. Two pints of BG Sips for £6.90 were bought and a place in front of the quiz machine was procured so we could waste money trying to guess who charted at number two in the Christmas 1977 chart with 'The Floral Dance'. Answers on a postcard please!

Into double figures and **The Wheatsheaf** became pub number 10. Marstons Pedigree, John Smiths Cask, Shepherd Neame Spitfire and Woodford's Wherry were the four choices.



Welbeck Abbey Portland Black, Welbeck Abbey Henrietta, Oakham Ales Citra, William Bass Original and Bradfield Cherry Wheat Beer gave us the most comprehensive choice of the day, in our most dubious state! Pints of Propaganda and Henrietta costing £6.30 inclusive of CAMRA discount were consumed in a quiet corner away from the busy atmosphere of the bar as the tiredness and alcohol took hold.

My wife very kindly collected us from our tour of Southwell and by 11pm we were all safely home to the familiar surroundings of Newark.

I would certainly recommend the tour of Southwell, as it very comprehensively takes account of pubs at opposite ends of the real ale spectrum. The choice of beer on offer, from national beers to LocAle is refreshing to see in such a small town. I hope nine pubs can continue to be supported, whatever the standard of beer, but quality will always prevail.

And what of our migrant to Portugal? Well, as he reads this in an air mailed copy of BGP, I shall be enjoying a lovely pint of porter by the open fire. What could be better in these winter months.

*Cheers,
Ben Powell*



Two pints of Pedigree costing £5.90 were carried to a table in a pub that looks to have been rather forgotten, save for the local sports teams that use it. It did however provide me with a first while out drinking, in that the barmaid recommended we did not order the Wherry as it was "the worst pint you could have and a horrible beer". Praise indeed for the Woodford's brewer!

Starting to feel the strain the last pub of the day came into view. **The Final Whistle** promised much and did not disappoint. Brown Ales Full Metal Jacket, Brown Ales Hustler, Everards Tiger, Dr Mortons Propaganda, Darkstar American Pale,

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REPORTS FROM THE CHAIRMEN

NEWARK BRANCH

The thanks of the branch need to go to the committee members who have just stood down at the AGM in November. We sometimes forget that all of us are volunteers and if it were not for people giving freely of their time, CAMRA would not exist. David Moore needs a special mention as he stepped in as chair and kept us afloat for the past 18 months. However, BeerHeadZ has taken his time and effort and he has had to move on. Sarah Smith has steered our beer festival for many years and made it one of the most successful outside London. She will be sadly missed by all those involved in the May event.

As the new chair I find I need to write a little for the BGP. So, here goes. My thoughts on my ideal pub.

About six ever changing real ales. Brewed on the premises to keep the cost down. Always changing and served in Nonic oversize and lined glasses. Served by bar staff whose knowledge of beer goes further than confusing real ale with lager. I am not really interested in keg beer, lager, shorts, cider, wine, coffee or other soft drinks but the nominated driver ought to have free soft drinks all night. Beer temperature is crucial and in order to enjoy the most aroma and flavour for blonde beers about 10 and darker beers a bit higher, say 13. Always top condition with enough carbon dioxide to last the twenty minutes it takes to drink. Good chat comes next and our dog JD is always a good catalyst to initiate talking. It is always nice to walk into the pub and be part of the community that it serves. Serious discussion or just the pleasantries that cement society are exchanged with all. Winter time needs an open fire to be toasted on one side. Summertime needs a beer garden. No music, TVs nor jukeboxes as they stop conversation. Of course, traditional pub games. Food. Always a difficult one this. How often have I had a good beer spoilt by the smell of cooking. Indeed I have stopped going to some pubs because of the constant smell of diners fish and chips. So, food is OK if it is cold and I am unable to smell it from my seat. I need to be able to walk home to avoid the

expense of taxis and as buses do not exist less than two miles from home.

Does my ideal pub exist? Please get in touch with me if you have a contender that fits all of the above. It may not exist, yet.

Perhaps it may become a tradition with Newark chairmen to open their own pubs? Many have done!

The true joy of Christmas celebrations for me was to spend time with friends and family drinking the real ale we all enjoy.

A Happy New Year to you all.

Andrew Birkhead - Chairman Newark CAMRA

GRANTHAM BRANCH - No report this time.

NEWARK DIARY : 2014-2015

Sat 27th December:	CAMRAmble, the annual post-Xmas walk - location TBC
Jan 8th:	Branch Meeting - 8pm Castle and Falcon
Feb 5th:	Branch Meeting - 8pm Old Coach House, Southwell
Sat 28th February:	Bradford Beer Festival - names to Tracey please so that tickets can be purchased (they sell out fast!)
Mar 5th:	Branch Meeting - 8pm The Vaults cider and ale house, Newark
Apr 2nd:	Branch Meeting - 8pm The Muskham Ferry

For up-to-date details of all meetings and socials check our website: www.newarkcamra.org.uk/diary or email: socials@newarkcamra.org.uk

GRANTHAM DIARY : 2014-2015

Weds 14th Jan:	Annual General Meeting - 8pm Grantham Railway Club
Weds 4th Feb:	Branch Meeting - 8pm TBC please see website
Weds 4th Mar:	Branch Meeting - 8pm Briory, Dysart Rd., Grantham
Weds 1st Apr:	Branch Meeting - 8pm TBC please see website

Check out our website for up-to-date details: www.granthamcamra.org.uk/calendar-2

CAMRA'S NATIONAL WINTER ALES FESTIVAL 2015

*The Roundhouse, Derby, DE24 8JE
Weds 11th - Sat 14th February*



In 2015 CAMRA's flagship National Winter Ales Festival will return to Derby for the second year running. With over 400 beers available the Festival will showcase some of the very best ales, ciders, perries, bottled world beers and mead in 3 separate areas.

Located beside the Pride Park exit of Derby Railway Station, Derby's historic Roundhouse could not be in a more convenient location.

Four Brewery Bars have been agreed: multi award winning Blue Monkey from Nottingham; innovative North Star from Derbyshire both in the Main Hall, Derby's very own Brunswick Brewing Company in the Music Marquee and Yorkshire's shining gem Brass Castle in the Carriage Room.

The National Winter Ales Festival is home to CAMRA's prestigious Champion Winter Beer of Britain Competition which sees the 4 winter styles of beer (porters, stouts, old ales/strong milds and barley wine/strong old ales) being gathered from



across the UK to be judged and a winner declared, though the festival itself has lots of pale beers and golden ales to choose from too.

The website www.nwaf.org.uk will be updated regularly with details of admission prices, live entertainment, tutored tastings and special hotel rates thanks to our partners at www.visitderby.co.uk. There are no advance tickets as this is a pay on the door event. Well behaved and supervised under 18s are welcomed until 19:00 each evening, after which they must leave due to a licensing requirement.

The feedback from 2014 revealed that our customers loved the building, the beer quality and selection as well as the hot and cold food which was available. So why not join them and come and see Derby at its beery best! Cheers!

Gillian Hough

Organiser National Winter Ales Festival

LOCAL CAMRA DISCOUNTS

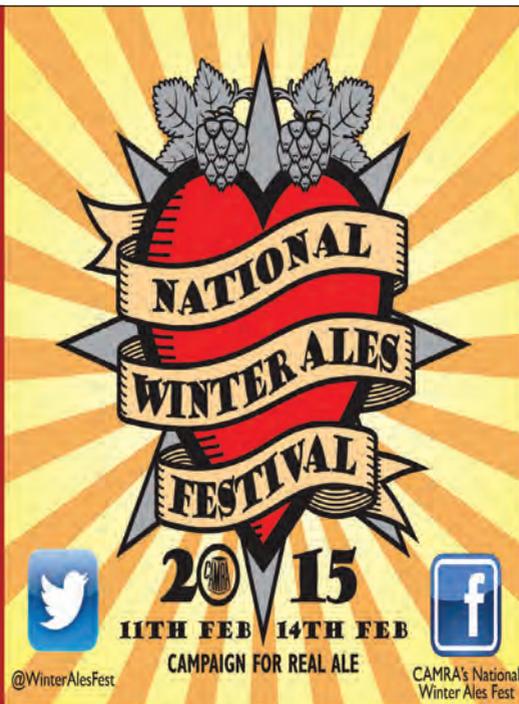
The following local outlets provide discounts to CAMRA members on production of a valid membership card. Please note that these offers can be changed or withdrawn at any time. If you know of any changes or new discounts, please email newsletter@newarkcamra.org.uk

- The Castle, Newark - £3 a pint & £1.55 a half for all real ales
- Castle Barge, Newark - 30p off a pint
- Just Beer, Newark - 10p off a pint & 5p off a half
- Browns Bistro & Bar, Fernwood - 20p off a pint
- G H Porter Provisions, Newark - 10% off
- The Vaults, Newark - 20p off a pint, 10p off a half
- White Hart, Newark - £3 per pint
- Grey Horse, Collingham - 10p off a pint, 5p off a half
- Bramley Apple, Southwell - 15p off a pint
- Old Coach House, Southwell - 15p off a pint
- Reindeer, Southwell - 10p off a pint & 5p off a half
- Five Bells, Claypole - 20p off a pint & 10p off a half
- The Goose, Grantham - 10% Discount
- Lord Harrowby, Grantham - 10p off a pint
- Muddle go Nowhere, Grantham - 20p off a pint
- Fox & Hounds, Somerby - 20p off a pint
- Castle Inn, Castle Bytham - 20p off a pint
- Ancaster Sports & Social Club, Ancaster - 30p off a pint

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BREWERY NEWS

BREWSTERS

During September, The Observer wrote an article about several brewery gadgets tried out at Brewsters. The resulting article can be seen on Brewsters Brewery Facebook page.

Charnsters brews were a collaboration between Brewsters' Sara and Andrea Reed of Charnwood Brewery. Beers brewed were Gold 3.8%, Copper 4% and Winter Warmer 5% which were available from the end of October and into December

To promote British malt a collaboration with Jane Peyton (School of Booze) Susanna Forbes (Drink Britain) produced a malty beer Seven Heaven, at 4.8%. Festive ales were Wenceslas 4%, Ho Ho Ho 4.8% and Aromatic Porter 4.5%.

FUNFAIR

After the excitement of the Freak Show themed Halloween Party at the brewery tap, which started the head brewer participating in a fire eating act, it was business as usual with the focus on brewing. Two ales were brewed for the festive season. Matterhorn (4.6% ABV) is a new pale ale. The other was the seasonal Christmas Cakewalk (6.5% ABV). Demand for the latter was very high resulting in most of the brew sold in advance.

HANDLEYS

Brett recently brewed his first charity beer (Raising the Roof) in aid of Barnby Church selling for £3 a pint with £1 going to the fund. The brewery was included in a "Real Ale Tour" from Hampshire - a commercially run trip for real ale lovers. Newark and Funfair breweries were also visited.

MALLARD

Steve produced a new beer called Firequacker 3.9% in the autumn. It is an amber beer and uses Citra Hops. This was followed by his seasonal beer Christmas Quacker.

MAYPOLE

Very busy in the run up to Christmas with festive ales and bag in a box sales.

NEWARK

It's been a busy quarter for Newark Brewery, new Sales Director Gareth Bartsch joined the team at the

beginning of October with the remit of expanding the sales beyond the core business in Newark.

Gareth has joined from 'the other side of the bar' having previously been General Manager of The Manners Arms at Knipton near Grantham.

Five of the beers are now Cyclops Beer Accredited, October saw the launch of Pure Gold, making its first public appearance at The Prince Rupert, Newark - It sold out within 4 hours - The new beer is 4.5% abv and a deep golden colour with the sweetness from the hops balanced by a malt biscuit finish. Turning back the clocks also saw a return of Winter Gold for the colder months, a 4.5% abv rich golden ale, using real lemons in the brew process for a balanced citrus nose and a fruit driven malty finish.

The further growth of 'the craft beer' market has highlighted resurgence in darker beers, particularly porters & stouts. This got the team thinking and they are currently exploring different options along smokehouse porters, oyster stouts and the classic mild recipes

NEWBY WYKE

Following on from Rob's second trip in August to the Pegas Brewery in Brno, Jiri Cejka the brewer visited the Grantham brewery for a few days in October as he wished to brew an IPA for his customers. Together Rob and Jiri brewed the Newby Wyke Distant Grounds 5.2%abv it was an eye opening experience for Jiri, brewing for the first time with whole leaf hops.

Rob has this week been invited to fly over to Brno to jointly brew the Distant Grounds at the Pegas Brewery, the visit being planned for early next year.

Festive Delight 5% abv, 2014's Christmas Beer was brewed using natural plum juice and raisins and is a rich ruby red colour.

Captain Pugwash 5.5% will be the next beer in the 'NEW-K-HAM' series, the joint venture with Oakham Ales, it will be a Honey Beer brewed using local honey.

Due to the continued success of Orsino 4%abv, which is sold as quickly as it hits the cellar floor, Graf Spee, a dark German style Dunkell has been put temporarily on hold.

OLDERSHAW

Following the success of their 2013 Christmas Open Day and valuable feedback from their visitors, Oldershaw's introduced Mini-Kegs in December just time for the festive season. Each Mini-Keg (9 pints) featured Oldershaw's Christmas Seasonal beers Hollydaze 4.1% and Yuletide 4.7% alongside their other best sellers such as Heavenly Blonde 3.8%,

Newton's Drop 4.1% and Old Boy 4.8%.

On Saturday 13th December they opened their doors again to the public for their annual Christmas open day running brewery tours and tastings with the shop offering festive gift ideas such as bottle gift packs and branded brewery merchandise.

Heading into 2015, the brewery has launched "Resolution" 4.4% available in cask from the first week of January. The golden ale is packed with pleasant citrus fruit flavours and fragrant apricot aromas, with a full body mouth-feel and a soft bitter finish.

Finally, 2015 sees the 800th anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta with various activities planned around Lincolnshire and the UK to celebrate and Oldershaw's will be taking part in the event by producing a one-off beer called "Great Charter".



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LocAle UPDATE

LocAle accreditation is awarded to pubs which pledge to always offer at least one locally brewed real ale on their bar.

(The Grantham Branch defines a brewery as local if it's within a radius of 25 miles from the pub's door, however the Newark Branch uses a radius of 20 miles)

Pubs wishing to apply for accreditation should contact their local branch. More information at:

www.newarkcamra.org.uk/locale and www.granthamcamra.org.uk/locale

The following pubs in our area are currently in the scheme:

NEWARK:

- Boot and Shoe, Flintham
- Bramley Apple, Southwell
- Castle, Newark
- Crown, Normanton on Trent
- Ferry Inn, North Muskham
- Fox and Crown, Newark
- Full Moon, Morton
- Hearty Goodfellow, Southwell
- Just Beer, Newark
- Newark Rugby Club
- Old Coach House, Southwell
- Prince Rupert, Newark
- Sir John Arderne, Newark
- Spread Eagle, Hockerton
- The Chequers, Elston
- The Final Whistle, Southwell
- The Flying Circus, Newark
- The Real Ale Store, Newark
- The Reindeer, Southwell
- The Roaring Meg, Newark

- The Vaults, Newark
- Staunton Arms, Staunton
- Willow Tree, Barnby in the Willows

The Robin Hood Theatre, Averham serve LocAles on performance days

GRANTHAM:

- Chameleon, Grantham
- Nobody Inn, Grantham
- Lord Harrowby, Grantham
- Tollemache Arms, Grantham
- Railway Club, Grantham
- Conservative Club, Grantham
- Angel & Royal, Grantham
- The Beehive, Grantham
- Five Bells, Claypole
- Castle Inn, Castle Bytham
- Blue Cow, South Witham
- Whittakers, Long Bennington

Look out for the LocAle window stickers and font crowns on hand pumps!



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NEW PUBS IN NEWARK

Back in April 2014, we published an article entitled "Is Newark becoming a real ale hub?" This celebrated the fact that two of our local pubs, which had become run down and seldom visited, had been given a new lease of life, a new name, and both featured quality real ales and were likely to become attractions for CAMRA members. They would therefore complement Just Beer, The Prince Rupert, the much-improved Castle Barge and the Fox and Crown (apologies to any real ale outlets not included in this list – I have unashamedly mentioned my favourites). The article also looked forward to the Olde Market Hotel site, closed for some years and in a sorry state, being returned to its former glory, and former name, as The Ram.

The new pubs, which opened within a week of each other were The Organ Grinder, owned by Blue Monkey, (formerly The Horse and Gears) and The Flying Circus (formerly The Crown and Mitre).

Both are still going strong and the other aforementioned establishments, all Good Beer Guide entries, are still with us. However we now have three new outlets joining the circuit and potentially raising the bar:

OSCAR'S INN

Owned by local business people David and Jackie Jackson (and named after their dog), this is the former Horse and Jockey, which had, I am told, been in decline for some time



The Vaults

before its closure. David and Jackie did not rush into re-opening, keen on creating a lasting and successful business. They also took their time in finding the right couple to manage the pub and their patience seems to have worked. Managers Adam Shields and partner Evie Schofield have a good pedigree. Adam told me:-

"Previously Evie and I worked in the Old Firehouse, Exeter. Owned by Colin Spry and David Gray, the Firehouse was a perennial Good Beer Guide venue as well as a candidate for Pub of the Year for the duration of our stay there (2008-2011). David's concept was fantastic value food and fantastic beer (lots of both!) in a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere. Exeter does benefit from certain perks that Newark does not however, as the university during term time contributed to our trade whilst tourism contributed heavily to the south west's popularity outside of term time, making our job that much easier. That said, Evie has tried, and in this instance I think excelled, in making Oscar's an atmospheric pub through the interior decor and lighting, attracting families, couples and even singles to sit, relax, read, and enjoy their surroundings. If anything sets us apart from the other pubs in Newark, it is the soothing atmosphere that enables our guests to feel welcome and very much at home."

The two bars have very different personalities, while keeping to the "Oscar's" theme. The Wilde bar is a relaxing, very comfortable, airy and eclectic bar with minimal, but good jazz, playing most of



Interior of Oscar's Inn

the time and a range of furniture to suit diners or those wanting to relax on sofas. The large space is broken up into two areas by an impressive, rustic bookcase/ divider. This bar has the most handpulls, though the full range of beers is shown on boards in both bars.

The Peterson Bar has an air of a gentleman's club about it, with sumptuous red walls, brown leather Chesterfields and comfortable bench seating. This is the live music venue and there are bands playing several times a week, mainly jazz but other styles are catered for too.

Food is served, including huge square sharing pizzas, which are already becoming a "signature dish", and there are plans to expand the food menu. "We have a few little changes to make in the New Year" Adam says, "as we plan on expanding our food offering. Fajitas will be joining the pizzas as a sharing item, and the 'ladies who lunch' will be happy to hear that we will be exploring the healthy options in creating a new lunch menu, with quiches, salads, wraps and soups. We are also looking at our outside area, as this was not a priority leading into opening in the autumn, but with Christmas out of the way, we will be hoping to attract people to have a beer outside in what we hope will be a nice summer."

Oh, and the beer? Adam explains his ethos:

"We have 6 ales available, as well as 3 traditional ciders (2 Sandford Orchards and 1 Weston's). Although we do not do 'set' ales, nor 'guest' ales for that matter, we do frequently have ales from some of our favoured breweries; these include Thornbridge (Jaipur is a once a week beer), Purple Moose, Oldershaw, Oakham, Dark Star, Abbeydale, Joules, Saltaire, Mordue, Salopian, St Austell, Otter and Clearwater.

While we do enjoy the local stuff, it is true that our time in Devon has meant that we do hold a certain fondness for Devon and Cornwall cider and ales. Moreover, as we are a freehouse, it means if it is good, we can have it...just a shame that there are so many good beers out there! Lastly, we are installing a notice board so that anybody who should like a specific ale, or anybody who can suggest a good beer, please make a note on our board, as we would love to hear about it."

Situated on Balderton Gate, the pub is close enough to the Town Centre to be "on the circuit" while retaining its character as a quality community pub for local residents.

THE VAULTS ALE & CIDER HOUSE

The Vaults in Castle Gate, Newark opened on the 1st of November 2014 and is owned by David and Toni Birch. David and Toni have run a variety

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New Pubs in Newark Continued

of licensed establishments and for the last 10 years have concentrated on running their mobile bar company providing bar services in various locations throughout the UK. In recent years the focus of the bar company has been on outdoor events particularly large country shows and game fairs and this gave David the opportunity to explore his love of real ales. Never one to pass up the opportunity to taste a good ale, the recent explosion of microbreweries around the country tied in nicely with the need to source local suppliers on the shows and fairs on which he was supplying the bars. The result has been a network of tried and tested suppliers producing quality ales that have been much appreciated by the show attending public. In recent times the emergence of cider has led to branching out to supplying quality craft ciders, the popularity of which is now matching the ales.

David told me "The opportunity to open a Cider and Ale House came when the perfect venue became available in the autumn of 2014 and I believe it's Newark's first venue to focus equally on quality craft Ciders and Real Ales with a focus on using local suppliers as much as is possible and not just for the beers. The nuts are from a smokery in Bolsover, Death onions come from Grantham and the best pork scratchings from Lincoln, even the wood for the roaring log fire is from Retford!"

CAMRA's LocAle scheme is much in evidence and loyalty cards are available. CAMRA members also get a discount of 20p per pint on production of their membership card and every 6 weeks can also enjoy £1 off each pint. Although the emphasis is on LocAle there is always something from further afield and as the show season starts in 2015 David is hoping to use his contacts made on the circuit to source a variety of quality ales from other areas.

The small but well stocked bar serves all types of drinkers and though the emphasis is on real ale and cider, there is also a good range of wines and spirits.

The Vaults has quickly established itself as a music venue with the vaulted ceilings making it perfect for acoustic music. There are already open mic and jamming nights and acoustic sets on a Thursday and Saturday with a comedy night and other events planned but the layout of the premises means that if you just want a quiet pint you can have one. The next



Interior of The Vaults



big launch for 2015 is food, as with everything else the emphasis will be on

local produce and a high quality menu based around gourmet sausages sourced from an award winning butcher from Nottingham who will produce an exclusive sausage made with one of the ciders available from The Vaults. To complement the sausages will be a variety of local quality cheeses, homemade soup with hunks of bread, desserts and doorstep sandwiches. The bar snacks menu will also increase with offerings such as cheese boards, scotch eggs and sausage rolls available at any time of day.

David has high ambitions for The Vaults and is aiming to make it Newark CAMRA Pub of the Year. "It's encouraging that The Vaults has been well received and supported by other publicans along with CAMRA members in the town" David told me. "Another quality venue can only add to the popularity of the Ale Trail for which Newark is becoming increasingly well noted".

THE RAM

The Ram on Castle Gate has been standing empty for nearly ten years now. The earliest reference to The Ram in this location is in 1775, and the building dates from the late 18th century. It was one of eleven coaching inns in Newark. Once a thriving hotel and restaurant it had been renamed Ye Olde Market Hotel and had a reputation as a late night venue before closing down.

Fortunately local businessman (and owner of Newark Brewery), Dan Derry decided to step in over a year ago with an ambitious project to totally renovate the property and open a bar & brasserie. The project is now nearing completion.

The interior space has been transformed. There is an air of elegance, while many original features have been retained. There are areas for casual or more formal dining and the "snug", with its original stone flags, will appeal to those dropping in for just a pint or two.

The intention is to have a selection of up to eight real ales, with two permanent Newark Brewery beers and selection of guests, a choice of real ciders from Millwhites and quality craft lager, wine, Champagne, cocktails & spirits. General Manager/Chef Nathan Jackson is in the process of writing the menu which is brasserie style, offering a choice for all diners on any occasion, from tapas & pizza to classic a la carte dishes.

THE FUTURE

Three more outlets in town – different sizes, styles, and potentially different target audiences but selling quality ale. Can't be bad, can it? But what is the effect on the town and other pubs?

The expansion of real ale in the town has to be a positive in terms of visiting trade. Newark has proved itself a popular venue for real ale lovers as is demonstrated by the highly successful Beermuda Triangle festival and the number of other CAMRA branches organising trips here. The wider choice of pubs should make the town an even more attractive proposition for a visit.

There will be those that argue that real ale is becoming overpriced in town. This is not a factor of new outlets opening but the way the market seems to be heading. The link between ABV and price is fast disappearing as brewers charge for the complexity of their beers rather than the strength. If price were a key factor we'd all be drinking in Wetherspoons – and we're not. I believe we need to be thinking in terms for value for money. Quality, surroundings and service are all key elements – not price alone.

But we have seen pubs fail or deteriorate before, as new and better ones open, and it imperative that all pubs look to how they can improve to maintain their share of the market. The emergence of new pubs mean others need to look to their laurels to maintain their reputation – no bad thing for the real ale drinker.

Finally, let's all welcome our new pubs, visit them, and give them feedback, which I'm sure will be welcomed.

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Newark Branch

▶▶▶

Newark CAMRA held its Annual General Meeting on 13th November 2014 at the Flying Circus, Newark. Over 30 members were in attendance. Our thanks go to Flying Circus licensees Heidi, Tony and Andy for the use of their function room and for the excellent refreshments provided.

This was to be the last AGM for outgoing Chairman, David Moore, who stood down now that his business interests have expanded to include pub ownership. David explained how it had been a steep learning curve since jumping straight into the Committee some 18 months ago as Chairman. David thanked the branch members and the Committee for all their support during his tenure of office and said what a pleasurable experience it had been. He also mentioned the "baptism of fire" around last year's Beer festival in which he'd had heavy involvement, and the strength of the branch with well over 650 members.

Finally David made specific mention of long time Committee Treasurer Bob Smith, who, as well as keeping the branch's accounts has been a pivotal

figure for many years in the organisation of the Beer Festival. Bob then received a long overdue Award of Merit from the Branch. Bob indicated his willingness to stay on as Treasurer, if elected, but hopes to reduce his input to the Beer Festival.

Our Secretary, Steve Darke, then led a vote of thanks to David for all his efforts as Chairman.

Last year's nominated charities were the Lincs and Notts Air Ambulance, who collected at the Beer Festival, and Newark Women's refuge, for whom funds were raised at other events. Amounts raised were not available at the meeting.

For the coming year, Duncan Neil proposed the Newark Crusader barge which is in need of funds to cope with running costs etc. It has wheelchair access and it offers leisure cruises for physical/learning disabled passengers. Steve Darke proposed Reach Newark (on behalf of Bobby Dobbins) who support people with learning disabilities

Both charities were thought to be equally worthy so it was agreed to split all raised funds equally.

It then came to election of officers. Firstly, Andrew Birkhead, currently Pub of the Year and Good Beer Guide Coordinator, was elected Chairman. Paul Colin was then duly elected to Andrew's old position. Sarah Smith was standing down as Beer Festival Coordinator and Mitch Forster was elected to the position. Outgoing committee members were thanked for all their efforts.

Finally, it was decided that we should be promoting CAMRA and Real Ale in general to a younger audience so it was agreed we should have a Young Members Coordinator. Jake Dobbins was duly elected to this role.

THE TRIANGLE WIDENS

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The 4th Beermuda Triangle Beer Festival is taking place between 22nd and 25th January 2015. Over the past three years the festival has established itself as a major event in the discerning beer drinker's diary. This year there are six participating pubs and over 70 beers are expected. New to the Triangle this year are The Flying Circus and The Organ Grinder. Beers are coming from across the country and include some one-offs and new breweries.

Look out for the 2015 BeerMuda Triangle

Beer festival flyers and posters for full information, available from participating pubs and selected other outlets.

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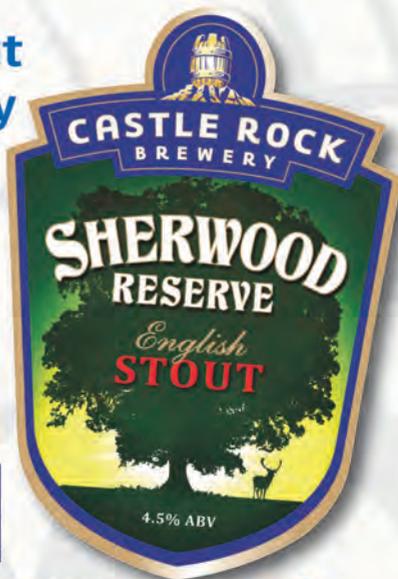
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WEST BERKSHIRE BREWERY

I recently attended the inaugural AGM of the West Berkshire Brewery. This was such an enjoyable day that I thought I would share it.

The story starts back in 1978 as it was in this year that David Bruce – who I am sure many of you will be familiar with – opened his first brew pub, the Goose and Firkin. After two years of very hard work, this south London boozier was joined by a second Firkin pub, and this was followed by several more. David has always liked to launch his new enterprises with a bit of a party, and to ensure that there were a few seasoned drinkers to get things off with a swing, it soon became his policy to invite the NEC of the Society for the Preservation of Beers from the Wood (SPBW) along to all his pub openings. As I was a member of the NEC during this period, these became occasions I would never miss. The format for the opening was always the same. The invitation contained a rhyme relevant to the pub – for example that for the Fox and Firkin was “for fox sake give me a firkin drink” and I am sure you can guess the one for the Pheasant and Firkin – for the duration of the opening party, every time you went up to the bar and successfully recited the rhyme, you would get a free drink. Towards the end of that evening, most of us had become pleasant firkers! (Well, that is the family friendly version anyway). In 1988 Midsummer Inns made David an offer he couldn't refuse so he reluctantly sold his successful chain. This pub brand was subsequently seriously mishandled and run into the ground within three years. David then went on to co-found the successful Capital Pub Co, Convivial Pubs and the City Pub Companies, amongst others.

Interesting as all this is, what has this got to do with the West Berkshire Brewery I hear you ask. It is remarkable after so many years of listening to very loud music how good my hearing remains. I shall therefore move to 1995 when Dave and Helen Maggs established a local Berkshire brewery with the mission statement to brew beers and ales of the highest quality using ingredients as local as feasible. Due to the popularity of their beers, the original site was soon too small, so they decided to incorporate the Company in 1998, bringing on board their good friends Helen and Andrew Baum,



who injected further finance into the Company, enabling their first move to larger premises. Further growth necessitated another move in 2012 to their current very attractive premises at the Flour Barn, Frilsham Home Farm in Yattendon – a few miles outside Reading. Since 2001, the Company has an average annual growth rate of 20%, which is pretty phenomenal.

This constant growth means that the current premises are already becoming a bit cramped and the founding shareholders are soon to be approaching retirement age. They had no intention of selling off and severing their ties with “their baby” so it was time for a strategic review to explore their options. As a result of this review, they decided to sell off part of the Company to family and friends and beer drinkers, licensed retailers and residents of Berkshire and neighbouring Counties such as Middlesex – which is where I come in. They also wanted an experienced Chairman who would help drive their plans for further development. They found someone who has been brewing and selling beer for his entire 47 year career – David Bruce. So now this article is beginning to make a little sense.

One of David's first jobs was to set up the offer for sale for part of the Company. This attracted 278 new shareholders, the vast majority of whom attended the inaugural AGM. This was an interesting and very friendly affair – made all the more pleasurable by the bar being open before I arrived at 10.30 and was still open after the lift to Pangbourne Station that I had just blagged myself was due to depart at around 2.45. David was on excellent form, greeting me enthusiastically by (nick) name on arrival then going on to give full and frank answers to all the questions raised during the meeting and quite a detailed description of the Company's exciting expansion

plans. He will be bringing to bear his experience of raising over £66 million of investments in his various companies over the years by setting up a further share issue. It is the intention to structure this to qualify for Enterprise Investment Support, which – as any Fat Cat will tell you, means that the investment will attract Income Tax relief and be free of Capital Gains and Inheritance Taxes so start saving up your pennies and watch this space. If – like me – you are a member of the CAMRA Members Investment Club, you will already have an interest in this brewery as the Club are amongst the new shareholders. In fact they have a proposal before the board to participate in the new share issue as soon as it is available. I can't see the Board missing out on this opportunity even though their structure unfortunately precludes them from benefiting from the E.I.S.

After the AGM had been concluded, the shareholders were taken on a tour of the brewery in several groups. I was lucky enough to be on the group taken around by Dave Maggs – the founder, Life President and original brewer. As you can imagine, over the years I have been on quite a few brewery tours, but the knowledge, experience and enthusiasm of Dave made this tour special. He was also keen to drop into my local (the Queens Head, Uxbridge – West Middlesex CAMRA's Pub of the Year) for a meet the brewer session sometime next year.

What are the plans for the Company? Well, they currently run one tied house in a little village. Despite all efforts, it has just not proved possible to successfully run this as a tied house, so they plan to divest themselves of this and take on a town pub. If this proves successful and David Bruce has plenty of past successes in this area, then other town pubs will also be acquired. The Company have obtained all the necessary approvals (and this wasn't easy) to set up a subsidiary called Royal Berkshire Brewery Beers to oversee and drive their increasing presence in the export market. Following their next share issue, they will move to a bigger site and increase capacity further, and also install a bottling plant as they currently have to ship around the country at significant expense to get their beer bottled. This does not mean the draft side will be overlooked however so you can all look forward to enjoying a pint of Good Old Boys at a pub near you soon!

After I wrote the above article, I attended the West Berkshire Brewery General Meeting that was necessary to deal with the formalities before the next share issue can be made. This was at the Company's financial advisors in Moorgate. There were resolutions to convert the Company into a Limited Company, to adopt new articles of



association, authorise the directors to issue the new shares etc, etc. David was, as ever, on good form, dealing with the business efficiently, but in an enjoyable manner, but he was disappointed that their financial advisors' building was a dry building so they were unable to give the shareholders who turned up a beer or two. He did ensure that the names of all the shareholders present was recorded and said he would try to sort something out. He was certainly true to his word as around a week after the meeting, I was delighted to take delivery of a case of assorted WBB beers. I shall certainly look forward to working my way through them. I am sure that if the CMIC Board has any doubts about whether to participate in the new shareholding, the case of beer sent to their representative - without affecting their objectivity in any way – must help in their considerations!

Catweazle

(Catweazle is the nickname of Derek Legg who held various positions within the SPBW over the years. He is also a long time member of CAMRA but has never held any official posts. His only current role is that of Organiser for the "London Thatch" (Capital Beards) of the British Beards Club – an organisation with significant overlap with CAMRA.)

This article was first published in SPBW's publication Pint in Hand and is reproduced with the kind permission of its Editor, Roger Jacobson.



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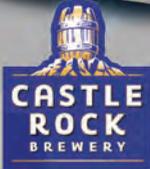
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To mark our 25th year, we have two big announcements to make (and more to follow!) Firstly, from January, our brand new celebration beer will be available, and it looks like this one's going to be more than a bit special! Introducing...

ARGENTA, 4.2% abv. An extravagant magenta pale ale, with the big berry flavour of American Hops and English Blackberries. Brewed with champagne yeast to celebrate our 25th anniversary.

And secondly... CAMRA and real ale enthusiasts are important to us, and we know that their support has been fundamental to our growth over the years! With that in mind, on our silver anniversary, we'd like to give a little something back, so...

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