



THE BI-MONTHLY REGIONAL  
MAGAZINE FROM LST CAMRA

*Free*

This is the bi-monthly newsletter of the Lichfield, Sutton and Tamworth branch of CAMRA.

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# L.A.S.T. Orders Edition 36 June/July 2011



***This issue ...***



***Ludlow High***



***Following The Dog***



***Derbyshire Wayfarer***

The CAMRA newsletter for  
Lichfield, Atherstone, Sutton & Tamworth,  
*including*  
Chasetown, Shenstone, Rugeley, Whittington, Curdworth,  
Coleshill, Kingsbury and Polesworth

CAMRA membership in May: 123,537

## Ludlow High

Ludlow Spring Food Festival doesn't mess about with its advertising. "Beer, bangers and bread" said the catchline to the third annual event, held within the grounds of Ludlow (not as good as Tamworth's) Castle over the second weekend of May.

The bangers and bread were, indeed, excellent but we were obviously here for the beer – to be exact, the SIBA Wales & West regional competition to decide which beers went through to the SIBA National Beer Competition for 2012.

Over 140 beers were on show from breweries across Wales and the West, from well-known brewers such as Hereford, Wye Valley, Salopian, Hobsons and Woods, to the likes of Evan-Evans, Purple Moose, Mayfields and Waen, which are rarely seen in the West Midlands.

Like many spring and summer events in England, this one suffered from the vagaries of the weather; after six weeks during which rain was all but non-existent, a massive thunderstorm over the Friday evening left the ground sodden by the time the gates opened on Saturday; ground conditions in the beer marquee quickly descended into the kind of quagmire I haven't seen since last September's Sheffield Beer Festival.

Still, a hardy drinker is never put off by a few inches of mud and so we were quickly in to an outstanding half of 4.0% Wye Valley *HPA*, followed by an excellent Cotswold Brewery *Old English Rose* at 3.8%. The latter was described in the programme as carrying "initial dryness on the *pallet*", conjuring up the kind of image usually only seen after several pints of the product!

The 4.2 per cent Ludlow *Gold* from the Ludlow Brewing Company, based just outside Ludlow railway station, was a fine brew, as was the Salopian Brewery *Golden Thread* which won the Beer of the Festival award.

In the end, Powys-based Monty's Brewery took the SIBA honours, claiming a total of five prizes across all classes.

In the manner of a responsible drinker, I should mention the food. The grounds around Ludlow Castle were packed with stalls displaying what you might call 'real food' from producers around Shropshire and the Marches, ranging



## Ludlow cont.

from cheeses to all manner of sausages, bread, bacon, cooked meats, jams and marmalades, while the real ciders and perries on display were a real match for anything in the beer tent – if a little cloudier and considerably more potent!

Getting to Ludlow from our patch by public transport isn't easy. We took the train from Tamworth via New Street and Hereford on the way there and via Shrewsbury and New Street on the way back, comfortably a two-and-a-half hour trip, but it was well worth it and I definitely wouldn't recommend driving down some of the country roads in Shropshire after a visit to this beer festival.

We'll be back next year, hopefully when the weather will be a little better. I should also point out that Ludlow's main food/beer festival is held at the same venue in September – unfortunately, it is over the same weekend as the Tamworth CAMRA beer fest!

All in all, then, an excellent day – but I have to give a black mark to the organisers for not offering refunds on what was a distinctly ordinary souvenir glass. Almost every festival I know gives glass refunds these days and not to do so smacked a little of money-grabbing. The reaction of the steward when I even suggested the idea made me think that it hadn't even crossed their minds. I'd like to know how many, otherwise satisfied, visitors were left with a slightly sour taste in their mouths as they left.

Martin Warrillow

*[While most commercial festivals don't offer glass refunds, it's CAMRA policy to always do so at CAMRA festivals! - Ed]*

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## The Bells of Binche

Depending on your viewpoint, Morris Dancers are either a unique English tradition to be treasured, or a bunch of nutty lords-a-leaping who might benefit from a programme of therapy.

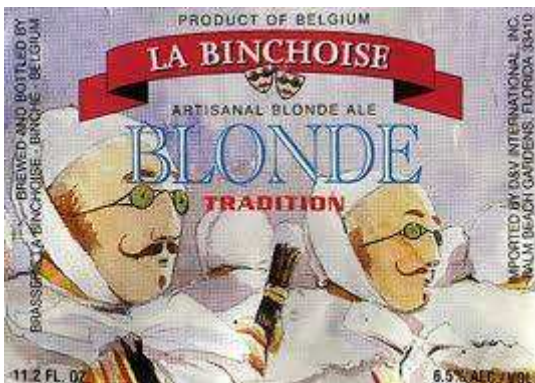
To see that Belgians can be equally eccentric, one of the many places you can go to is Binche, for the *Soumonce* in February. This can only be described as a massive clog-stomp fest. Participants form a thronging mass and clomp along the cobbled streets at a snail's pace. Thumping drums, rattling clogs and jangling bells assault the senses.

The get-up of participants involves clogs, a bunch of twigs to flourish, and a fuzzy belt of red-and-yellow wool, hung with jangling bells, pictured right. When the clonking parade pauses to dive into the closest bar – a frequent occurrence for some reason – then the tinkle of bells is enough to drown out conversation.



In any case, *Soumonce* is merely a prelude to the major madness of Binche, the carnival which follows six weeks later. The main characters are the *Gilles*, the scary-funny clown-like figures who feature on the bottle labels of the town's brewery, La Binchoise, below. The *Gilles* also wield a bunch of twigs, allegedly to ward off evil spirits.

Tiring of the chaos and bustle of *Soumonce* on a February visit to Binche, I headed off from the market square to the Binchoise brewery tap. Just outside the historic town ramparts, a visit here is well worthwhile. The main bar is in a cosy brick-lined cellar, awash with enamelled beer signs. Not surprisingly, it's an ideal place to try the beers. Four are on draught – *au fût* – and there is a wide range of bottled beers. These included their new



range of organic beers – *Brune*, *Tripel* and *Miel* in champagne corked bottles – and a very posh 75cl bottle of *XO*, a beer aged with vintage brandy and coming in at 15€ a bottle.

The place was so quiet due to *Soumonce* that the friendly barman gave me a quick tour of the brewery above, including the sight of an array of wooden casks conditioning with the addition of an un-named whisky.

Maybe a return visit is required!

## ELFORD HALL WALLED GARDEN REAL ALE DAY AND FOLK MUSIC SATURDAY 16TH JULY 1PM - 11.30PM



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Admission by tickets from Roger Thompson 01827 383592  
or Dick Cowley 07986 804289

ELFORD HALL GARDENS

[www.elfordhallgarden.org.uk](http://www.elfordhallgarden.org.uk)

## The BrewDog's B\*\*\*\*\*s

Various trade bodies lined up to lambast the Chancellor for his escalation of beer taxes in the budget. George "I'm putting up beer tax but it's Labour's fault" Osborne drew criticism from virtually everyone except BrewDog. True to form, the BrewDog boys had to buck the trend.

"At BrewDog we wholeheartedly back the rise in the duty on beer," said co-founder James Watt, right. "The faceless, monolithic corporations who cowardly discount their supposedly 'premium' industrially brewed lagers are slowly suffocating the UK beer industry and have already mangled people's perception of beer – this could help turn that around."

The slightly perverse reasoning was that the tax rises will make it less profitable for the fizz producers, and so dent their profits. But it will surely dent the profits of all in the industry, particularly publicans afraid of putting up prices, and the small brewers who have to sell into the tight market which results.

The BrewDog boys argue that "with beer being slightly more expensive, people will see the true value of craft beer – beer brewed with passion, integrity and using the best ingredients. Our craft beers are loaded with flavour, mouth feel, aroma and we are on a mission to show the UK that beer does not have to be mainstream, generic, industrial and tasteless."

We can see their drift, and arguably we should be prepared to pay more for a high quality craft product. This said, the BrewDog attitude is starting to get just a little bit tiresome. They make marvellous beers, and are really on a roll, growing in leaps and bounds. They can produce limited-edition beers which sell for a fortune to beer geeks who are caught in the dazzle of their headlights. Their current business position is so strong that they can just shrug off tax rises, and pretend not to understand why other quality-minded brewers may struggle. They are starting to sound like the self-satisfied rich bloke at the bar who cannot grasp why other people are not as well-off as him. I'm a success – why aren't you?



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## Shining Shoes

The eagerly awaited Tunnel Brewery pub in Nuneaton opened in April, and already it has made a superb and much-needed addition to the Nuneaton pub scene. The **Horse-shoes** is the revamped Lancet, and the Tunnel boys have made a lovely job of the refurbishment. It feels like a classily traditional pub – lots of dark wood, old furniture and old pictures. It's not a big pub but feels spacious, with a variety of seating areas, and a marvellous little snug.



The pub sign is a splendid collage of old horseshoes, and characterises the care and thought which has been put into the re-invention of this pub. And it's very much an alehouse, with ten hand pulls featuring half Tunnel ales and half guests, such as Thornbridge and Vale ales. The Tunnel kegged *Munich Lager* is also going down a storm – lager drinkers are veering away from the tasteless mainstream stuff!

Keith and Jakki welcome you to  
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 Atherstone  
 Warwickshire  
 CV9 2HL

01827 715236



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## Tipple Tattle

### NORTH WARWICKSHIRE

At the beginning of May, we bid a fond farewell to George & Julie of the **Horse & Jockey** at Bentley. After five years at the helm of this popular old-fashioned boozery, they've opted for a change of scene by moving up to George's hometown of Ballater near Aberdeen. They went out in style with a semi-impromptu beer festival!

Stepping up to the breach at the Jockey are new licensees Keith and Jakki, so a big welcome to them. It's their first pub, but they are committed to maintaining the appeal and ambience of this classic pub. They've apparently spent 18 months looking for a pub, and apart from the lack of a riverside setting, the Jockey ticked all of their boxes! They're keen to promote local produce on the menu. On the ale front, *Draught Bass* will definitely stay – they'd be lynched if it was taken off – and upward of two guest ales will feature depending on demand. They certainly started out with a cracker, the Wentworth *Off The Floor* at 4.6% was a chuffingly hoppy brew, very moreish.

In Atherstone, the **Dolphin** continues to serve up interesting guests in very good nick, with some very nice Salopian beers of late. The only bad news from there is that popular barman Sam is leaving, emigrating to Montreal in Canada. We wish him all the very best in the New World, and hope that he can find some good ales over there amidst the wastelands of Molsons and Labatts!

The refurbished **Market Tavern** in Atherstone has been offering a couple of micro guest beers recently in addition to the Warwickshire range. Beers from Oxfordshire Ales have been reported to be popular, plus a Nethergate honey beer.

We've been seeing a few Prescott Brewery ales in the county recently, and they've been top tier. *Hill Climb* featured at the Horse & Jockey in Bentley before George and Julie left, and most recently the **Hat & Beaver** in Atherstone was offering the *Grand Prix*, a lovely dark chocolaty affair.

The **Plough** at Mancetter has had a rather striking external paint job; it won't please traditionalists as the former white-and-black has been replaced by two-tone grey. Sadly they also dumped the very nice artwork on the previous sign and replaced it with a bland text sign. But, with all drinks including cask ale at £2.50 a throw, it's worth a look in.

The end of June will see the **Griffin** at Shustoke's ludicrously successful annual beer festival (see fest listings). Around 100 beers will feature, and in usual jammy style the event will no doubt be blessed with brilliant weather!

If the Royal Wedding left you cold, then a trip to the **Crown** in Nuneaton should have cheered you up. Throughout April they were offering all cask ales at a bargain £1.95 a pint. Even rabid anti-monarchists found cause for celebration!

The **Merchants Inn** in Rugby is well outside our branch area, but always worth a look in. Their April beer festival featured 100 beers over the course of a week. They usually have an offbeat fest theme, and this time it was tagged as "On The Farm", with a host of



## Tipple Tattle cont.

animal ale names. To add that extra bizarre twist, the main bar floor was turfed over – real grass under your feet!

Stoke Golding drinkers who are waiting for the opening of Church End's new pub, the **George & Dragon**, will soon have their chance! The refurbishment has been a bit delayed, but the expectation now is that it will open in the first half of June.

### STAFFORDSHIRE

Phil Bennett of **Beowulf Brewing** has been at it again – winning prizes that is! At the National Winter Ales Festival, he picked up category awards for both *Finns Hall Porter* (Silver in Porter) and *Dark Raven* (Bronze in Old Ales & Strong Milds). Phil is pictured right, receiving the award from national CAMRA chairman Colin Valentine.



Phil's latest offerings are back to a summertime theme, with *Wergild* at 4.3%, *Wuffa* at 4.5% and *Gold Work* at 5.1%

Reader Steve Morgan reports that the **Ring O' Bells** near Burntwood (Chorley Road, WS7 2NX) has recently re-opened with an enthusiastic landlord. It's a Marston's pub, and the changing guest ales look to come mostly from the Marston's portfolio. Recent offerings have include ales from Caledonian, Wadworths, Brains, Jennings and Wychwood. More reports please!

It is great news to announce that the **Duke of Wellington** in Lichfield re-opened on Friday 15th April. Licensees Karen and Dave are keen for the pub to continue as before as a well-run, community local serving a range of top quality real ales. The range of ales include Timothy Taylor *Landlord*, Holdens *Golden Glow*, Marstons *Pedigree*, Fullers *London Pride*, Adnams *Bitter* or Black Sheep *Bitter*, plus a guest ale. The guest Copper Dragon *Best Bitter* was in top form on a recent visit. The range of bar snacks has been increased to include filled rolls along with Packington sausage rolls and the ever popular pork pies. Current opening hours are 4-12 Mon-Thu, 3-12 Fri and 12-12 Sat and Sun. With April's heat wave, the large garden was already proving popular with customers old and new. We urge all readers to pay this excellent pub a visit and to show your support for Karen and Dave.

In Lichfield's **Horse & Jockey**, a new games/drinking room has been created from an old store. It is accessed through a door at the back of the bar and also has a door to the outdoor drinking area. The new room has two dart boards providing ideal facilities for official matches. It will be most welcome as an overspill area (especially Fri and Sat nights) in this highly popular pub.

The **Duke of York** in Lichfield held its 2nd annual beer festival at the end of April. Paul

## Tipple Tattle cont.

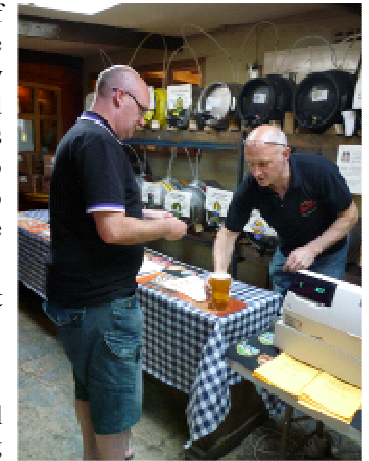
and Wendy provided an excellent and varied choice of 28 micro ales, all temperature controlled, from a stillage in the separate back room. This was complemented by the usual range of four ales (including Joules) on hand pull in the bar and lounge. Licensee, Paul Weston is pictured right taking a break from 'quality control' to serve a pint from the range of cask ales. Many thanks to Paul, Wendy, and staff for organising and running the festival. We hope that there will be many more to come!

Fest aside, the Duke has the new Joules brew, *Blonde* at 3.8%, a nice summer tippie.

### WEST MIDLANDS

Curdworth's **White Horse** will be having a beer festival in July (see fest listings page). There will also be a hog roast plus music by the Travelling Pilburys.

The **Halfway House** is to be refurbished and opened as a gastropub called the **Greenhouse**. The **Three Tuns** guest beer is usually a golden bitter. The **Bottle of Sack** is looking to offer local beers. There is a pub in Sutton called the **Hairy Lemon**.





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## Beer Snippets

Yorkshire brewers **Samuel Smith** have long been known for their eccentricity, and in particular their extreme aversion to publicity, even to the extent of removing the brewery badging from the pubs that they own – “Eee, before tha’ knows it, every bugger’l know this is one of our pubs.” So it’s a particular delight to discover that two of the most high profile pubs stories in recent months have been Sams pubs. The “gay snog” at the **John Snow** in London was one, the other being the **Cardinal** which Sams want to re-badge as the **Windsor Castle**, much to the disgust of Anne Widdleycome and other god-squad luminaries. Even more delightful is that the Cardinal protestors said that “We have written to Samuel Smith brewers who own the pub, but they refuse to speak to us.” Well, given that Sams won’t even speak to their own customers, it’s unlikely that they’ll want to speak to a group of non-pub-users who object to a pub name change on theological grounds. Meanwhile, the gay campaigners in the John Snow case were equally outraged by the lack of response from Sams. Let’s not even consider how boss Humphrey Smith would view the John Snow protestors.

**It’s official – drinkers are doomed.** A recent major study found that alcohol was a contributory factor in 10% of men’s cancers and 3% of women’s cancers. The dismal recommendations of the study were that men should drink no more than two units a day, and women just one. Dedicated boozers will no doubt treat this as one of those reducing-quality-of-life measures – is a longer, more miserable life better than a shorter, more pleasurable one? Of course, you could always turn it on its head, and say that if 10% is caused by booze, then 90% must be caused by something else. But don’t worry, they’ll find out what it is and stop you enjoying that too!

**Brains of Cardiff** is the latest large brewer to foist a faux ‘IPA’ onto the public. True India Pale Ales were reasonably strong, and heavily hopped to preserve the beer for its long sea journey to the Raj. This 3.4% offering from Brains is vaguely pleasant, but has hardly survived its trip across the Bristol Channel. IPA it ain’t!

**But, mainstream ale does** not have to be boring. A good example is the excellent *Lovey Warne* from the Marston’s owned Ringwood Brewery. This 4.2% spring special was everything that the Brains ‘IPA’ was not – juicy, citrusy hoppiness matched by a lovely maltiness and mouthfeel. First spotted at the **Gate** at Nether Whitacre.

**Wye Valley Brewery** has launched a premium amber ale to support Noah’s Ark Trust – a very worthy charity that provides a grief support service for children, young people and their families after the death of mum, dad or someone else close. Bottle-conditioned *Ark Ale* will be on sale for 2011 from Wye Valley Brewery shop and other selected stockists, with the brewery donating 5p for every bottle sold.

**To prove that Heineken** does indeed refresh the parts that other keg-fizz cannot, the company was found guilty of sending over 100,000 pints of cider and lager to a sewerage plant near its Tadcaster fizz factory. The bungle attracted a £10,000 fine from the Environment Agency. Surely Heineken should have been congratulated on knowing the best place for their products?

**We hear a lot** about ‘unfair’ rents charged by some of the big pub companies, but how fair or unfair are the rents in reality? Perhaps an illustration comes from a recent arbitra-

## Beer Snippets cont.

tion case involving the Enterprise Inns pub company. An unnamed pub tenant won his case and had the yearly rent reduced from £78,000 to £45,500 – a massive drop of £32,500. Enterprise had offered to reduce it to £70,000!

**Meanwhile, Parliament has started** to make it clear that time is running out for the pub companies to mend their ways. The pubcos had promised to self-regulate, particularly in the area of rebalancing the unfair pubco-tenant relationship. After three select committee reports over six years, the pubcos have yet to act. Whether Government really has the guts to address the issue remains to be seen – don’t hold your breath.

**It’s long been joked** that the Japanese make some of the best Scotch whisky in the world. But on a more serious note, the Scotch Whisky Association have recently won a court case which could have come straight from the annals of Del Boy or Arthur Daley. A Glasgow-based company was found guilty of selling 14 different brands labelled as “Scottish Spirits”, which were in fact made in Panama – not currently considered as part of Scotland – of un-aged neutral alcohol and flavourings.

**CAMRA members always appreciate** discounts on real ale, so non-members can take heart from the approach of the **Royal Oak** in Rusper, West Sussex. The landlord has decided that CAMRA members “should be on a different tariff to us mere mortals [given] their desire to save the great British pub.” The upshot is that mere mortals get their beer for £3.20 a pint, whereas it’s £4.00 to CAMRA members – though you will have to show your membership card for this special deal.



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## Derbyshire Wayfarer

This is an on-your-bike version of a Derbyshire Wayfarer and not the travel ticket one, where legs rather than the bus or train take the strain. The first leg of this cycling trip took me to the **Waterfront** at the marina complex at Barton under Needwood, pictured right. The imposing building with its traditional interior had five interesting guest ales to choose from including one, *Davy's Lamp* from Merry Miner, our branch area's newest brewery. I tried the *Barton Pale Ale* and *Marina Bitter*, both brewed by Blythe. Sadly these and other recent samples of their beers did not have the distinctive hoppiness that I remember. They were still enjoyable though with the *Marina Bitter* having pleasant grain flavours to balance the gentle hoppiness evident in both beers.



After this interlude I continued my journey to Ashbourne where I was staying for two nights at the **Green Man & Black's Head Royal Hotel**, which has an interesting overhead signage gantry which spans the main road. I settled in for the evening in one of the comfy leather sofas in the wood-panelled lounge bar and tried three of the four guest ales. *Black Hole Titan* was moderately malty and bitter, *Leatherbritches Scoundrel* was a ruby coloured beer with coffee and roast grain flavours. I had inadvertently saved the best until last as the *Limestone Stone The Crows* had intense burnt fruit and bitter coffee flavours and made an excellent nightcap.



After a hearty breakfast the following morning and the prospect of a fine day, one man went to mow. The **Barley Mow** at Kirk Ireton, pictured left, has an impressive Jacobean frontage and an old fashioned traditional time-warp interior. The Northumberland *Highway Robbery* was hardly that at £2.55 a pint and was most enjoyable with its mix of malt and grain flavours and subtle bitterness.

Cycling on to Wirksworth and the **Hope & Anchor** in the quaint market place, I tried the *Anchor Bitter* brewed by the Wirksworth brewery. This pale ale had pleasant citrus and hop notes. At this point I will mention the boys from the black stuff. The first is a feature of the gantry signage of the **Green Man & Black's Head Hotel** in Ashbourne and the second is the pub sign of the **Blacks Head** in Wirksworth (pictured right and following page). These obviously date back to a more relaxed era when it was acceptable to do such things, and would no doubt be frowned on nowadays.



## Derbyshire Wayfarer cont.



I returned to Ashbourne which has a manic Shrove Tuesday free-for-all ball game as does my hometown of Atherstone, but seemingly more civilised. Several photos from past games are displayed on the walls of the lounge bar of the **Green Man & Black's Head**. The food and service at this establishment were excellent; it was also the Derbyshire CAMRA pub of the year 2010. Sadly the business is for sale and rumoured to become a Wetherspoons; if so hopefully they will enhance and retain its unique character. The *Leatherbritches* brewery which is situated at the rear of the premises is moving to a new venue on an industrial estate. To accompany an evening meal I chose *Nemesis* from Peakstone Rock Brewery which was uninspiring before opting for a dark and delicious *Stone The Crows* from Limestone.

After another stomach stretching breakfast the following morning I began the cycle ride home, calling at the **Old Talbot** in Hilton en route and enjoyed a thirst quenching, citrusy, Liberty hopped *Amber Ales Amber Blonde* before getting on my bike again for the last leg of my journey.

Eric Randall

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## Images of Temperance

The ravishing Carry Amelia Nation, battleaxe babe of the temperance movement. Known for using a hatchet in saloon wrecking, because "you can only use a stone once"



One of Carry Nation's biggest fans. Al Capone might have ended his days in Alcatraz, but benefitted from the law of unintended consequences, growing rich in the bootleg bonanza of prohibition



In these cash-strapped times, we can maybe learn something from this Prohibition era sign. There again, who needs shoes?



If a mad-looking nutter with mental eyes and wielding a bloody great knife asks you this question then we suggest that you go along with anything he says



## GBBF - 25 pairs of tickets to be won!

This year's Great British Beer Festival takes place from 2nd to 6th of August, at Earls Court in London. In 2010, over 66,000 people attended the 5-day extravaganza, with over 1,000 CAMRA volunteers giving up their time to make the Festival the biggest to date. This year, you have the chance to get in for free, as CAMRA is looking to give away 25 pairs of tickets to GBBF to beer drinkers old and new.



To be in with a shout of winning a pair of tickets, please answer the competition question below and submit your answer, name and address to [jon.howard@camra.org.uk](mailto:jon.howard@camra.org.uk) by Friday July 8th 2011. Entries can also be posted to Jon Howard, GBBF Comp,

CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 4LW.

Winners of the tickets will be notified by Friday July 15th 2011.

For further information on the Festival, visit [www.gbbf.org.uk](http://www.gbbf.org.uk). Discounted tickets are also available at [www.seetickets.com/gbbf](http://www.seetickets.com/gbbf)

### Competition question

This year, CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale is celebrating its...

- 10th birthday?
- 40th birthday?
- 70th birthday?



Tim and Sue welcome you to



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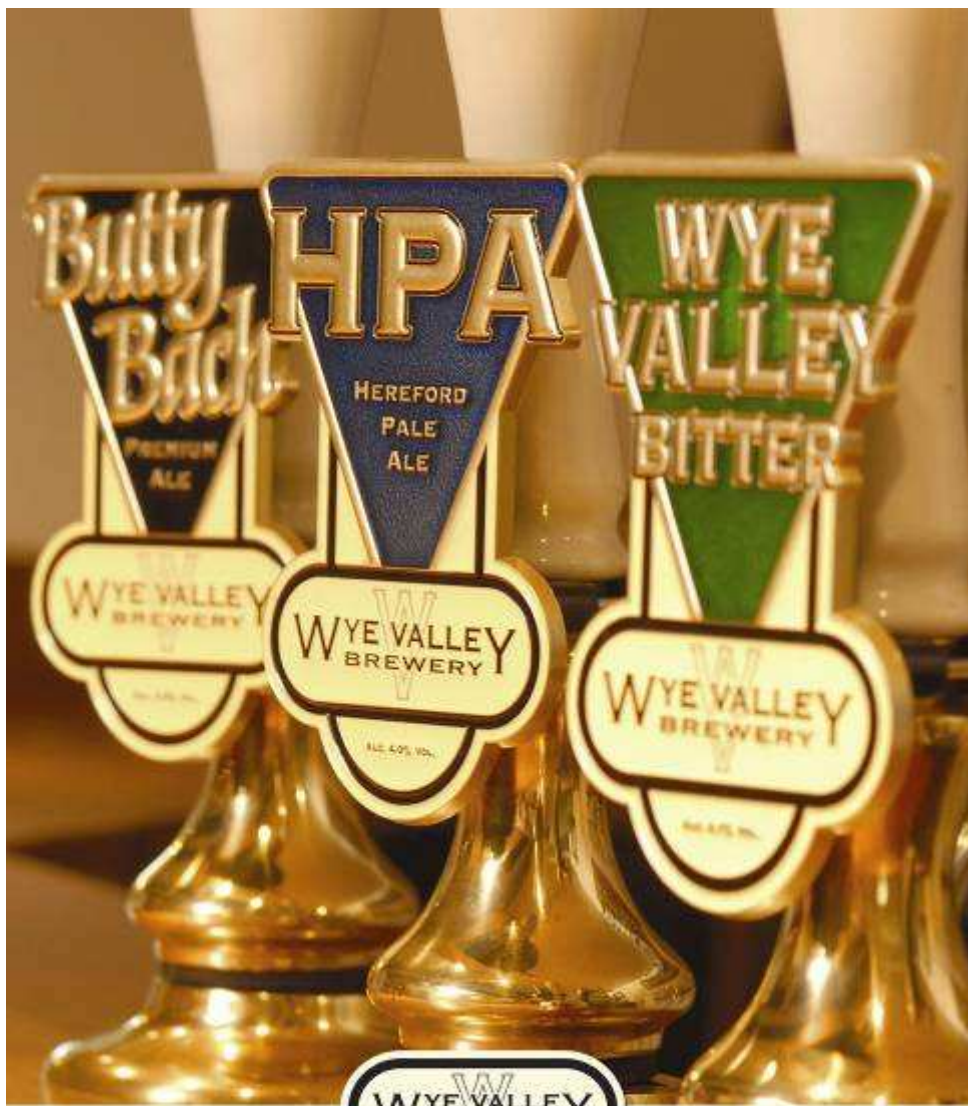
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## Following the Dog to Edinburgh

A trip to Edinburgh never disappoints – fabulous pubs of course, but loads of other things to keep you sober for a bit. Lovely architecture in both Old and New Towns, the breathless climb to the top of Arthur's Seat or the more modest but equally impressive Calton Hill, visiting the Castle, Scottish Parliament or Scottish National Gallery. It's true that walking up the Royal Mile will impress you with its buildings and facades, though the upmarket shops will also leave you with the impression that Scots wear nothing but kilts and cashmere.

So, plenty of reasons to visit, and an extra one with the arrival of the new BrewDog bar!

**BrewDog Edinburgh** on Cowgate opened in March. It's the second of a number of proposed BrewDog pubs, and I've figured out that visiting every BrewDog will be a far easier and more enjoyable prospect than visiting every JDW! However, unlike JDWs, I get the feeling that this Dogging exercise won't be too interesting in terms of pub interiors. The Edinburgh venue, pictured right, feels extremely similar to their Aberdeen joint – bare brickwork, steel panels, exposed air-conditioning ducts. Some of the seating has clearly been rescued from a school chemistry lab, and is uncomfortable enough to remind you of why you stayed awake in science lessons.



But let's not be churlish – it's lovely, lovely BrewDog beer. Mimicking the best US craft brewers, they never stint on ingredients, and if the propaganda is to be believed they use 35 times the amount of hops as industrial brewers. Actually, on reflection it's maybe not that hard to believe – I'm sure I've had beers with one-thirty-fifth of the required hops!

What's on offer? During my visit the new-recipe *Punk IPA* (5.4%) was unavoidable. This lusciously and gorgeously hoppy brew will reduce hopheads to tears. *Hardcore IPA* (9.2%) is the sledgehammer version, so puckeringly hoppy that those tears of joy will get sucked back in by reverse osmosis. New kids on the block included the *Imperial Wheat* (10.3%), absolutely bursting with German wheat beer character – cloves and banana squared. Also up was *Bitch Please* (11.5%).



Hiding behind this stupidly provocative name is a splendid classic. Inadequately described as a strong barley wine, it's clearly got some Scotch whisky content, and a smoky charcoal edge which can only have come from maturation in a charred wooden barrel.

As well as a number of other BrewDogs, the bar features eclectic foreign imports on tap, all US on my visit: Stone, Flying Dog and Three

## Following the Dog cont.

Floyds. Note that none of the beers are real, so if impressively high quality keg doesn't do it for you, stay away!

Edinburgh has an excellent bus service, with Lothian Buses offering a splendid value day ticket at £3.20. I used this to make my first-ever visit to an out-of-town classic, the **Prestoungrange Gothenburg**, about 45 minutes out of town at Prestonpans, pictured at bottom of previous page. Strangely enough, this marvellous boozer was originally launched as a semi temperance venture. The pub was built in 1908 to follow the 'Gothenburg system' operating in Sweden from 1865 as a means of encouraging temperance. One of the key principles was that alcohol was readily available, but managers gained no benefit from alcohol sales, only from food and non-alcoholic drinks. Temperance without the hectoring and moralising! Profits above 5% were donated to community projects, and this is still the case at Prestoungrange, with excess profits going to the local Arts Festival and other projects.



The Goth – as the locals call it – is a truly multi-room pub, with eating and drinking areas both upstairs and downstairs. The spacious main bar, part-pictured left, is superb, from the splendidly painted ceilings to the elegantly tiled walls and wooden bar and flooring. The other rooms are equally elegant, the result of a refurbishment which saw the pub re-opening in 2003. Little wonder that the Goth won the CAMRA/English Heritage Conservation

Award in 2005 – a year with “the strongest entries in 20 years.”

The off-sales room is particularly unusual, a wooden booth which protrudes into the main room; it resembles a confessional, allowing home-drinkers of old to indulge their sins without being seen. To cap it all, there is even a small in-house microbrewery, visible from the bar. Sadly, the brewery was out of use for a period after the death of the previous brewer, but it is now operating again. The *Gothenburg Porter* is the choice drink – black, silky and not too rich to be quaffable. The Goth is also excellent for food, so do make the bus trip if you visit Edinburgh!



Any other highlights in Edinburgh? Well yes, far too many to cover sensibly! On the way back from the Goth (make use of that day bus ticket!), the **Volunteer Arms** at Musselburgh is a splendid wood-and-mirror bar with excellent ale. Back in Edinburgh, the fabulous **Café Royal** manages to make Birmingham's brilliant Bartons Arms look a bit dull, while the neighbouring **Guildford Arms** comes a close second. A little south of the city centre, **Leslies Bar** is a superb Victorian classic. Many other cracking bars abound – get thee up to Edinburgh!

**BAR:**  
Mon-Sat 12-11  
Sun 12-10.30

# The Gate Inn

Good Beer Guide listed!

**FOOD:**  
Sat 12-9, Sun 12-7  
Mon-Fri 12-2.30, 5-9

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Dogs are welcome in the bar

## Sutton - An Alternative View

Reader **Steve Rapson** took exception to some of our Sutton Coldfield coverage! Here are his thoughts.

Whilst being the first to admit that Sutton is no real ale paradise, I really must take exception with the latest attacks in Last Orders (issues 32 and 35). Both reports made a beer drinking weekend in Iran sound more appealing.

As a CAMRA member living in Sutton, it is a little disappointing that there is very little coverage of the area apart from the occasional hatchet job and avoid at all cost mentality.

A biased view of the area from someone who would prefer to drink elsewhere is fine but both reports omitted the GBG entries in the town. The April edition focussed on **Four Oaks** and the GBG entry **Butlers Arms** did not feature (also omitted from the October edition). Any reason for this? Surely, it may not appear as bad as the reviewer would like perhaps. The **Speckled Hen** was reviewed with "a glance through the window", whilst as its name suggest it is a Greene King outlet and *Speckled Hen* is one of the beers on offer, there is a regular change of guest and well kept.

Another real ale omission from both reviews was the **Four Oaks** that whilst being a food based restaurant, there are three real ales also on offer.

The area undoubtedly suffers from the Mitchells and Butlers legacy and the various brand pubcos that operate within that chain. Ember Inns all stock real ales that change on a regular basis, the beers are usually in good fettle, and the managers know their beer.

The **Gate** in any other town would be branded as an excellent town centre pub maintaining its charm with a choice of changing real ales (*Butty Bach* when I was last there for example).

Just because a pub is tied and stocks one brewery's ales (Thwaites being the example here) does not automatically put it in the avoid category. There is still a choice although somewhat limited within their range and again as long as it is kept well, their pubs are worth a visit. The **Three Tuns** being the oldest pub in Sutton maintaining lots of features that have been there for centuries.

One crawl that I have completed that is not that taxing, would be to start at the **Bishop Vesey**, the other GBG entry that was omitted to be mentioned. It is a JDW outlet but the beer has never disappointed. Walk into Boldmere Gate and visit the **Miller and Carter** pub (used to be La Reserve), three real ales. A pleasant walk through the park brings you out at the Town Gate, where the previously mentioned **Gate** can be found. The **Station** and **Three Tuns** are close by, but you may have guessed by now I don't agree with John W's reviews and the beer in both these establishments is more than acceptable. A short train ride to Butlers Lane then puts you in touch with **Butlers Arms**, **White Lion** and **Speckled Hen**.

It is apparent that the reviewer(s) doesn't like teenagers and packed pubs. All town and city centre pubs can be busy at weekend nights. I thought our campaign was to promote pubs serving good real ale, we don't have to do all our drinking on weekend nights do we?

# A Campaign of Two Halves

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 Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit [www.camra.org.uk/joinus](http://www.camra.org.uk/joinus) or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to Membership Department, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

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12/10

**Campaigning for Pub Goers & Beer Drinkers**

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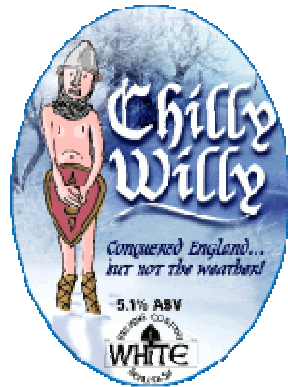
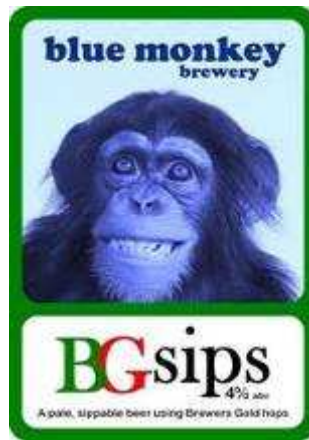
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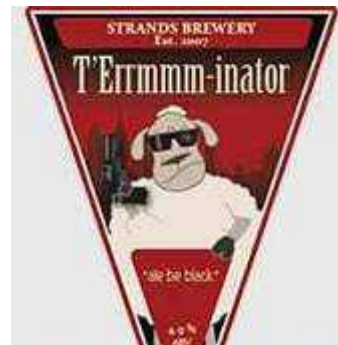
## More Beer Names Banter

Following on from a previous article on this subject, here is some further banter using beer names taken from the 2011 Good Beer Guide. Beer names are in bold print.

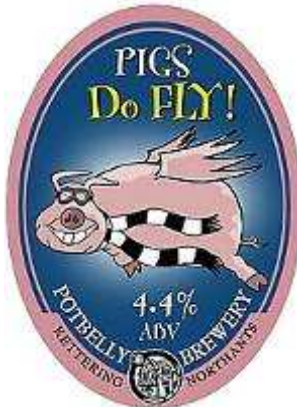
If at **1'st Lite** on a **Fine Soft Day** instead of a cup of **Espresso** or **BG Sips** to start your day, you have a craving for a **Pint** of ale, then **Why Knot** indulge yourself. If you are a **Grumpy Bastard** first thing in the morning then an **Ace Ale** to start the day should make you more **Mel'n Col-lie**. If you intend having a **Session** be aware that you will need to be a frequent **Bog Trotter** to have a **Jimmy Riddle**, don't linger too long though if the toilets are outside as you could end up with a **Chilly Willy**.



In your **Quest** to enjoy **Summa That** lubricating **Neck Oil** don't drink too much **Broadgauge Bitter** and go **Off the Rails**, or drink yourself to **Oblivion**. If you do and **Blackout** after too much go to **Jail Ale** then end up a passenger in a **Black Mari'a**, it might give her indoors **Grounds For Divorce**. If however you fancy having a quiet night in and flexing your **Love Muscle** does not allow you to enjoy your **Nup-tu'ale s**, then watching **Pump Fiction** or **T'Errmm-inator** on the TV might be your alternative idea of the **Bees Knees**.



Following the recent Budget it was no **Surprise** given the **Track Record** of successive Governments who are **Bad to the Bone** towards beer drinkers, that beer prices in the pub are not being kept on an **Even Keel** with prices at other outlets. You don't need to be **Ein Stein** to see that it's another **Coffin Nail** towards the **Armageddon** of the beer industry.



It is taking a **Liberty** and you will soon need a **Banker\$ Draft** to afford a pint of beer in your local pub. The days of an ale for **30 Shillings** are long gone, though we can live in hope as maybe they will return if **Pigs Do Fly**. I hope you found this **Banter** amusing and did not think it was a load of **Rollocks**.

Eric Randall

## Remember Fudge For St Giles

We've never asked you for money before, but there's a first time for everything! We hope that many of our readers will remember branch beer fest supremo Chris Fudge, who died of a brain tumour a year ago on June 22nd 2010. His widow Claire is keen to raise money for St Giles Hospice, in recognition of all the valuable support that the charity gave to both Chris and her. To find out more, please visit:

[www.justgiving.com/Claire-Fudge](http://www.justgiving.com/Claire-Fudge)

St Giles  
hospice

## Newsletter Information

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### Newsletter distribution:

Our newsletter is produced every two months by the LST CAMRA Branch. 2,500 copies are currently distributed.

### Want to contribute?

Contributions of any length are welcomed, pub news particularly. Please submit text and pictures to the editor.

### Advertising rates:

£40 per issue for a half page (approx. 12.8 x 9.5 cm) advert, £70 per full page. If you would like to advertise, you can provide your own copy, or we can provide a free design service! Contact the editor.

### Next issue:

Issue 37 is due to be published on 1st August 2011. The copy deadline for inclusion is 15th July 2011.

**Disclaimer:** This newsletter, Lichfield, Sutton & Tamworth CAMRA and CAMRA Ltd accept no responsibility for errors or omissions that may occur within this publication. The views expressed are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the editor, Lichfield, Sutton & Tamworth Branch or CAMRA Ltd.

### Acknowledgements:

We wish to thank all contributors and sponsors for their support.

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## A Drinker's Dilemma

Monday night and the CAMRA meeting had finished and I was thirsty! I had driven ten miles and drank little to remain below the limit – responsible drinking. Naturally when I got home I had a raging thirst and went straight to the cellar to see what was on offer. Such disappointment when I realised my stocks were down and all I could see were the remnants from youthful imbibers. One can of Boddingtons *Draught Bitter* and one can of Carlsberg *Lager*. But wait, hidden behind these two upstarts lounged sophistication cloaked in a bottle decorated in the uniform of a Brewdog Bashah.

Save the best 'til last, so open the Boddingtons first. Poured silently until the widge fell back to the bottom of the tin, nice colour, good head, no aroma and surprise, surprise, no taste. Inbev's pride of Luton! On the can it said "This can contains a pressurised widge. Do not tamper even when empty." Perhaps it should have said "This can contains pasteurised water. Do not be tempted even when empty." Taste 0, sink 1.

Carlsberg second and another silent pour and again a nice colour and abundant head but a hoppy and malty aroma and taste. A well balanced combination and lots of bubbles racing to the froth, tasty but not as Carlsberg as the draught version. Better than Mr Creamy so not for the sink but the sinking feeling was setting in.

Down to *Bashah* business. The bottle tingled in anticipation of its release as the cap was levered off and a wisp of gas left an un-believe-able fragrance under my nose of dark chocolate, rose petals, scones and angelica, a chef's delight. Hints of new shoes and shrimps, smoke and tobacco; a barrage of sniffed memories. Tasting was anticlimactic, much ado about nothing I thought until I closed my eyes almost involuntary as the taste welled and took charge. Mouth-watering and with tongue awash I swallowed and waited. Caramac aroma once remembered, nettle patch taste sharp and stinging, nail varnish burp. All these flavours in a bottle, how?

I read the bottle and smiled. 11.2 fluid ounces and 8.6% alcohol. The government warning blurb says "Please drink responsibly" The warning should say "You may love this beer. Pregnant women may give birth to babies. You may want to drive or operate machinery after drinking this. It may make you happy and contented which the government is unable to do. Vote for Brewdog, conserve your labour and liberty"

This beer is among the classics like White Shield *P2 Imperial Stout* 8%, Dogfish Head *Worldwide Stout* 20% (£12.50 a bottle), Falstaff *Supernova* 13.1%, Thornbridge *Jaipur* 5.9%, Dark Star *Hophead Citra* 3.8% to name but a few across the range. To stumble across any of these is to be reincarnated with new tastebuds. I wonder if there is an app to locate these treasures?

Geoff Cross



## Local Festival Diary

Festivals with a **bold heading** are CAMRA festivals, where entrance is either free or discounted to CAMRA members. Why not join? See page 23.

3-5th June, Crown Summer 2011 Beer Festival  
The Crown Inn, 10 Bond Street, Nuneaton, CV11 4BX

10-12th June, 9th Welland Valley Beer Festival  
Featuring around 160 ales between 10 pubs, free vintage bus service on the Sat.  
See [www.wellandvalleybeerfestival.co.uk](http://www.wellandvalleybeerfestival.co.uk) for details of pubs

**17-18th June. 28th Rugby Beer Festival**  
Thornfield Bowling Club, Hillmorton Road, CV22 5LJ  
50+ ales, plus ciders and perries. Fri 3-11, Sat 11-11

23-26th June, Lichfield Real Ale, Jazz and Blues Festival  
Lichfield Rugby Club, Tamworth Road, WS14 9JE  
35 ales. Bar 12-11 daily. Book tickets at [www.lichfieldarts.org.uk](http://www.lichfieldarts.org.uk) or 01543 262223

24-26th June, Fourth Griffin Inn Beer Festival  
The Griffin Inn, Church Road, Shustoke, B46 2LB.  
100 ales including Griffin specials. Open 12-11 each day.

**24-25th June, 5th Stratford-upon-Avon Beer Festival**  
Stratford Racecourse, Luddington Road, CV37 9SE  
50 ales and ciders. Fri 2-11, Sat 11-11.

**30th June-2nd July, 9th Bromsgrove Beer & Cider Festival**  
Bromsgrove Rugby Football Club, Finstall Park, B60 3DH  
100+ ales plus ciders/perries. Thu 7-11; Fri 5-11; Sat 11-9

15-17th July, White Horse Cask Ale Festival  
White Horse, Kingsbury Road, Curdworth, B76 9DS, 20 ales

16th July, Nuneaton Round Table Beer & Music Fest  
Nuneaton Rugby Club, Liberty Way, CV11 6RR  
Around 12 locales, live music & food, 12-12. All proceeds to Mary Ann Hospice & Barnardos

16-17th July, Market Bosworth Rail Ale  
Market Bosworth Rail Station. 15 real ales. Sat 11-11, Sun 11-6

27-31st July, Newton Solney 6th Annual Summer Beer Festival  
Unicorn Inn, Newton Solney, DE15 0SG. [www.unicorn-inn.co.uk](http://www.unicorn-inn.co.uk)  
50-60 beers. Wed 6-12, Thu 5-12, Fri 5-1am, Sat 12-1am, Sun 12-12

**28-30th July, Fourth Stafford Beer Festival**  
Blessed William Howard School, Rowley Ave, ST17 9AB  
70+ ales, ciders and perries. Thu 6-11, Fri 12-4, 6-11, Sat 11.30-5.30, 6-11

Holding a beer festival? Let us know and we will advertise the event here free of charge. Details to [LST.Camra@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:LST.Camra@yahoo.co.uk)



## PUB OF THE SEASON



The **George & Dragon** on Beacon Street is a fine example of a small two-roomed traditional local which for many years has and continues to be one of the best run real ale pubs in Lichfield. Ross and Kiera who have been running the pub for a few years continue to put in an endless amount of time and hard work in maintaining the high standards. This has not gone unnoticed as in recent times the G&D has gained several awards and recognition for good cellarmanship. Apart from being a Good Beer Guide regular it has recently been awarded the Marstons National Cask Pub of the Year award, in addition it regularly attains top scores from Cask Marque for all 6 ales. As the current CAMRA branch chairman, even I am amazed by the

consistent, exceptional quality of the ales served! I have to admit that this pub is more than a credit to Marstons.

Apart from the beers, the warm welcome and friendly atmosphere, the exceptionally cosy lounge, and the large beer garden with excellent views of the Cathedral all contribute to make the G&D a well deserving candidate for our current Pub of the Season.

Dave Backhouse

<p><b>THE BULL INN</b>  <b>Watling Street</b>  <b>Witherley, Atherstone</b>  <b>Warwickshire CV9 1RD</b>  <b>01827 712323</b>  <a href="http://www.thebullinnwitherley.co.uk">www.thebullinnwitherley.co.uk</a></p>		<p><b>Pedigree and two guest ales always available</b></p> <p>Recently featured beers include Fullers, Timothy Taylors, Wye Valley Bitter, Hooky. Selected beers from Tunnel, Church End and many more</p>
<p><b><i>A la carte Dining Room Menu</i></b>    <b><i>Bar Menu - Special offer menu</i></b></p> <p><b>Booking recommended Thu to Sun</b>    <b>Mon to Fri 5pm-7pm, £5.27</b></p>		
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>Bed &amp; Breakfast available in refurbished en-suite rooms</b></p> </div>		
<p><b><i>Live Music - Join our group on Facebook to be kept informed</i></b></p>		
<p><b>Sunday Lunch served from noon to 8:30pm</b>  <b>Choice of 5 starters, 5 mains and 5 desserts</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>One, two or three courses</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Childs Roast £4.50</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Younger children's Menu</b></p>	<p><b>ALL Events Catered for -</b>  <b>Weddings, Christenings,</b>  <b>Funerals, Parties,</b>  <b>Function Room,</b>  <b>Marquees, Private</b>  <b>Meetings, Antique Fairs,</b>  <b>Club Meetings etc</b></p>	