

HOP PRESS



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**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

EDITORIAL

Since our last edition, in the Autumn, the Hampshire beer scene has seen plenty of bad news, with precious little good.

The start of 2006 began with the big story of the Gales take-over, and almost instant closure, by Fullers of Chiswick but this week has brought a further shock which is made no less distressing by the relative smallness of the players involved. The Cheriton Brewhouse, famed for *Pots Ale*, *Diggers Gold* and *Village Elder*, has suddenly ceased production.

Although the brewery is in an outbuilding adjoining the Flower Pots pub at Cheriton it has been run as an entirely separate legal entity; as a three man partnership between Paul Tickner the Flower Pots landlord and the brewers Martin Roberts and Ray Page. For a considerable time, extending to years, there has been friction within the partnership and this came to a head in April with the termination of the partnership agreement.

The building and substantially all of the brewing plant, casks etc. belong to the Flower Pots but ownership of the brewing recipes and beer names is not so certain and probably resides with the brewers, although it is hard to imagine that a 'Pots Ale' could be brewed anywhere other than at the Cheriton site. It is, though, easy to imagine that the recipes, particularly for unique beers like the elder flower flavoured *Village Elder*, could be reproduced at any other small brewery.

The changes are happening with great speed, when asked this week Paul thought that the beers in the Flower Pots would be all gone before the end of April. Initially they will be substituted by other beers from small local brewers Oakleaf (Gosport) and Hopback (Downton) are two possible suppliers. The long term future remains an enigma but re-establishing brewing on the site is not top of the priority list of Paul's plans "watch this space" was the firmest quote available.

It will be very sad if brewing does not restart sometime at Cheriton. The Flower Pots will still be a lovely pub with any good small, local brewery beers drawn straight from the casks but an intangible something will be missing. Many patrons will have a sense of loss and we are sure that the cachet of having the beers brewed on the site and just wheeled over to the pub bar for sale is a very valuable trading asset.

So to Gales. The whole brewing operation at Horndean ended on March 31st (some might see significance in Fullers having a celebratory race day marquee the day after, April 1st), by anybody's standards an indecently quick decision. When the take-over was announced, Fullers pledged to do a thorough economic analysis of the Horndean operations, some analysis!

We would suggest that the 'thorough economic analysis' consisted of getting a copy of the weekly free property paper for the area and looking at the prices of the town houses and apartment blocks rising throughout Southern Hampshire — job done.

Now that the ‘Gales’ beers are all coming from west London, what hope do we have for their future? Not much, has to be the realistic appraisal. Many of these brews compete directly with established beers from the Fuller’s stable. Chiswick Bitter (3.5%) is likely to replace the direct challenge of Butser (3.4%), the widely promoted national brand London Pride (4.1%) will annihilate Best Bitter (3.9%) and even HSB (4.8%), although a completely different style, will be pressed by ESB (5.5%). Then there is the fine, award-winning Festival Mild (4.8%), a beer only matched by a few others in the land — this would make an excellent addition to Fuller’s portfolio but will they have the acumen to continue it? History does not suggest so, the Chiswick brewery last brewed a mild, Hock, over two decades ago and they have shown no interest since. In the last weeks statements have been issued that the Festival Mild will be produced “*in May as a guest for selected outlets*” what this really means we will await with interest.

A final concern is the unique 9% Prize Old Ale, still in corked bottles and used in draught form as an ingredient for the blended Winter Brew. All that has been said is that this year’s supplies (which age for a year or so in casks) are in store, but will a new brew ever be commissioned?

All-in-all a dismal scene.

After some pretty silly twists and turns Parliament finally made up its mind on the smoking issue in a quite robust and determined manner. This should ensure that the Bill, when it emerges, will go through Committee and Upper House stages with-

out too much fuss (backsliders and multiple quitters out there, there is only about 18 months left to finally crack it!).

The total ban option finally agreed has to be the right choice. The original Government ‘not with a sandwich but maybe with a packet of crisps’ was patently ludicrous and the heavily lobbied option of exempting clubs would have been damagingly divisive.

We predict that the whole change will go off with much less excitement than many commentators predict, a seven day wonder that will just seem natural in a few years time. Those of us with a few years under the belt can remember times when cinema projectors could barely get the image to the screen through the fog, when there was more danger in hospital of setting the sheets on fire than MRSA and every restaurant table had a generous sized ashtray.

All these things were considered immutable aspects of normal life, then.

Finally, after our earlier lamentations about two local breweries, it is good to report good news from two others.

In mid-May Itchen Valley will be moving into considerably larger premises with much better access just behind their present site, anyone who has had to visit the present cramped site, will rejoice. Then, in the summer, Triple fff will abandon their old railway buildings at Four Marks station and move about five miles East to larger premises at the pretty village of Selborne. Here they will be able to brew up to fifty barrels per week.

I'M LOOKING FOR THE PUB WITH...

Rob Whatley

CAMRA's Southern Hampshire Branch web site, www.shantscamra.org.uk, often gets requests for information on pubs with certain specific facilities.

Below are lists of pubs with attributes that are not run of the mill. These lists are probably not exhaustive so if you know of other pubs in the area that should be added, or other lists that could be featured in future editions, please contact us at *Hop Press* or e-mail us at:

contact@shantscamra.org.uk

Non-smoking throughout:

These pubs are getting ahead of the game before the smoking laws come into place everywhere next autumn. Expect more to join them soon.

Bunch of Grapes, Bishop's Waltham
Dog and Crook, Brambridge, Eastleigh
Gateway, Leigh Road, Eastleigh
Green Man, Southgate Street, Winchester
King Rufus, Winchester Road, Chandler's
Ford
Old Vine, Great Minster Street,
Winchester
Star, East Tytherley
Traveller's Rest, Hythe

Real mild regularly available:

Sadly, a very small list.

Freemantle Arms, Freemantle, Southamp-
ton (Greene King XX)
Rack and Manger, Crawley Crossroads,
Winchester (Greene King XX)

A skittle alley for hire:

Exercise whilst beer drinking? Now that sounds well worth looking into!

Green Man, Southgate Street, Winchester
Milbury's, Beauworth
Mill Arms, Dunbridge
Mortimer's Tavern, Ower
Phoenix, Twyford
Ship Inn, Redbridge, Southampton

A Grade II* listing:

Not as many as we might wish.

Red Lion, High Street, Southampton
Old Farmhouse, Mount Pleasant,
Southampton

Beers served directly from casks in the bar:

For some scientifically inexplicable reason many real ales seem to have a different (and some say, better) flavour when drawn straight from the cask, judge for yourselves at these establishments.

Bunch of Grapes, Bishop's Waltham
Flower Pots, Cheriton
Hampshire Bowman, Dundry
Royal Oak, Fritham
Tichborne Arms, Tichborne
Vine, Bursledon
Wheatsheaf, Shedfield

SLOW NEWS DAY FOR RED TOPS?

Pat O'Neill

Well, the sky hasn't fallen, the four horsemen don't stalk the streets and the world continues to spin on its axis. November 24th passed and the Licensing Act 2003 has finally come.

To believe the wild claims of the tabloid press throughout 2005, the Government was insane to try to liberalise our antique licensing regime, given their view (or, given their desire to sell sensation, hope?) that no Englishman (and perhaps particularly, *woman*) could be trusted with a glass of beer after the hours of darkness.

So what front page articles have these self-proclaimed guardians of the nation come up with *since* November? Have they splashed the news that virtually every police force in the country has reported a significant drop in alcohol-related crimes since November? Did they send their finest hacks out into the public bars of Britain to report the non-war from the front line? They did not.

There has been virtually no reporting of the great success that the new legislation is so far proving to be.

Not that everything has gone totally smoothly but the problem areas have all been with the details of the implementation not the principles. Such nitty-gritty items do not make the tabloid's newsroom. Locally, by far the most obvious problem has been the huge delay in processing and issuing the certificates; as of mid-April, Southampton Licensing Department had still not sent out all of those that should (under the terms of the Act) have been issued and on display prior to the November 24th start day. Equally, Winchester was also still sending out certificates in April, claiming to have been 'taken by surprise by the amount of work involved.' An extraordinary comment given that they knew in advance exactly how many applications there would be.

Another, one-time effect, of course was on brewery, pub chain and licensee's finances. For example Wadworths put down a profit drop in the 2005/6 financial year to its expenditure of £200,000 on the required applications whilst nearby Arkells of Swindon spent £150,000 on its 105 houses. Overall some £100million extra was been taken out of the licensed trade in 2005 in what can be likened to a property tax.

There have been other teething troubles and differences of interpretation around the country but that is to be expected with such a major piece of legislation, overturning several centuries of a patchwork of old Acts. Undoubtedly these will take some years to sort out, many as test cases in the Crown Courts. Paterson's commentary on the old 1964 Act, swept away by the 2003 one, listed hundreds of defining judgements, many dating from the Victorian era.

IT'S TIME TO BE FESTIVE!

Pat O'Neill

Our big annual Beer Festival is almost upon us again — to those of us involved in organising it ‘almost upon us’ implies something more like a sword of Damocles hanging on a very thin hair.

June 1st, 2nd and 3rd will see us again at Southampton’s splendid Guildhall for our tenth annual event there. Although it is the tenth there, it is now *thirty* years since we ran our very first festival in the city, at the Blightmont Territorial Army centre in Millbrook.. In those intervening thirty years we have had nearly seventy festivals in Southern Hampshire and sold half a million pints of cask beer!

Little did we know what we were getting into in 1976. The concept of a beer festival was totally alien to British culture, they were odd Teutonic affairs that went with a lot of thigh slapping in short leather trousers (no S and M or bondage associations then, they were more innocent times...). Then (as now, I find myself realising with astonishment) I was ordering the beers, but what extraordinary differences there were.

The Licensed Trade then was almost like an extended Masonic lodge (literally so in many respects but that is scope for a different article). Simply contacting a brewery then was often a struggle — if you were not

one of ‘their’ licensees, no one would respond to an inquiry; many did not have any sales departments in the modern sense. When you did actually manage to speak to someone in authority the suggestion that you might want to buy a cask of beer was then met with incredulity, frequently with a flat refusal (‘we don’t sell beer to the public’) and often with a referral to a local publican.

It took over six months to organise supply of about 25 firkins (nine gallon casks) of beer for that first festival.

And what beers they were, all from old family brewers, quietly trading for centuries and probably assuming they would stay so for centuries more; the word globalisation was yet to surface. The beers were chosen to be **all** the real ales available anywhere in Hampshire, easier in some ways than may be thought since many were only stocked at a single pub and pubs’ beers never changed — the expression ‘guest ale’ would have been meaningless to licensee and customer alike.

The cask beer situation was so parlous then that every cask was surmounted with a map of the county showing all the pubs where it could be found (as mentioned, often just a lonely, single dot).

That the world was about to change for good was perhaps presaged soon after this first time festival when we lost the TA centre venue to rising fears of bomb threats from the onset of IRA mainland attacks. Now, in a new century, although still beset with other fanatics’ security threats, running a beer festival is incomparably different.

Firstly, although the ranks of those old family breweries have been drastically cut down, a vast army of mini and micro brewers has appeared in their place. Although only amounting to a tiny percentage of national beer production, this host provides scope for a much, much wider choice of beer styles and flavours.

Secondly, the beer list ordering has been hugely simplified by the appearance of a completely new profession (one that I believe would not have arisen at all without CAMRA's existence), the beer agency. These firms make their living as wholesalers of cask ales from all parts of the realm — a vast logistic help that means geography need no longer be a consideration for a festival organiser.

Perhaps the most important change though is in our attending customers. Very much more informed on the beer and pub scene, much more aware of what differing beer styles are available and more willing to try a new 'taste experience.'

This year's festival will have just over eighty draught beers from over forty breweries, totalling over 13,000 pints. In addition there will be fifteen or sixteen real ciders and perries and at least twenty five classic bottled ales from around the world.

There is no over-arching theme but I have given something of a conscious boost to beers from the North, both East and West: Lancashire, Cumbria, Yorkshire and Northumberland. As far as styles go, as every year, I've tried to represent as many as possible — there will be the usual complement of dark milds, stouts and porters, a few wheat beers (although harder to find

than last year) , a couple of cask-conditioned lagers and one or two ales which defy categorisation.

Obviously there will be some sad gaps in the line-up — no Cheriton beers, so often prize winners and nothing from Gales for example.

There is more on the Festival throughout this issue of *Hop Press*, we hope to see you there. But, a cautionary word to the wise, we have had sessions in previous years that have sold up to the hall limits, forcing us to stop door sales. So we do seriously urge you to get your tickets in advance. The tickets are available from:

South Western Arms, Adelaide Road, Southampton. 023 8032 4542

Waterloo Arms, Waterloo Road, Freemantle. 023 8022 0022

Bitter Virtue Beer Shop, Cambridge Road, Southampton. 023 8055 4881

Southampton Guildhall Box Office (Library Entrance) 023 8063 2601

By post, with cheque payment:

Send a cheque (payable to: Hampshire Beer Festival - Southampton) with SAE to:

Beer Festival Tickets
11 Newlands Avenue, Shirley,
Southampton SO15 5EP

For credit/debit card sales use the Box Office outlet.

For up to date ticket information and much more on the festival, visit our branch web site:

www.shantscamra.org.uk/sbf/2006

STUMPY'S HIDEAWAY

Rob Whitley

Stumpy's Brewery was founded in 2004 after a long gestation period from when the idea first came into Brian Lewis' head. After working for Schweppes for 12 years, Brian moved to another soft drinks manufacturer, Hartridges. Owner Geoff Hartridge then decided he wanted to split from the soft drink side of things and start a brewery.

One was found on the Isle of Wight and he called it Burts after the Ventnor brewery that had recently closed. When the plant was being installed, obviously there was a lot of electrical work needed and that is how electrician Brian met Dave Yates. Dave was the brewer for Burts at that time, and Brian, being a nosey sort, used to watch him in his brewing capacity and picked up quite a few tips. After a few years Geoff Hartridge sold the brewery on to Ushers and they closed it down. Dave was still interested in continuing his career as a brewer, so he started up his own brewery at St Lawrence appropriately named Yates Brewery.

Meanwhile Brian continued to work for himself, installing conservatories along with some electrical work but he was starting to dream again about running his own brewery. As a member of CAMRA he had been on several trips to different types of brewery plant. In 2000 he managed to build

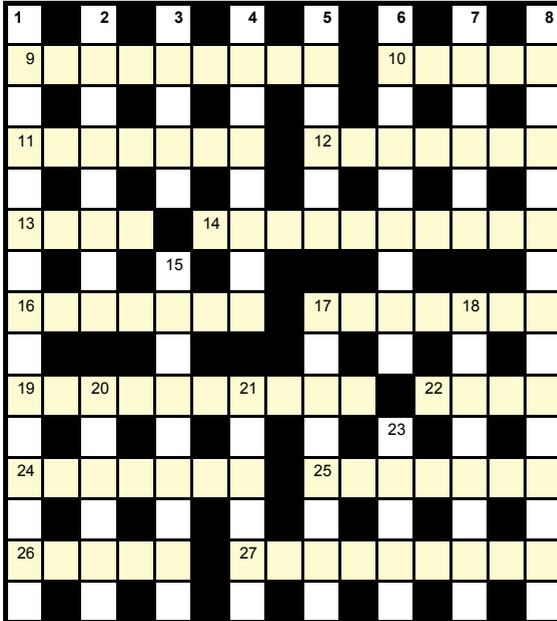
a 10 gallon plant in his garage and proceeded to experiment and bottle several brews. His CAMRA friends got to hear of this hobby and arranged a visit to sample some of these brews. The first one impressed them so much that they awarded Brian a plaque for excellence and there was a write up in the Portsmouth and South East Hants CAMRA newsletter, *Ale Mail*. There were two more summer visits to the home brewery, which suggests that they all must have enjoyed it. Brian even had a visit from a journalist which resulted in a full-page article in CAMRA's national magazine, *What's Brewing*.

Brian got to know Gill and Graham Stone of Portchester Brewery (now sadly closed) who let him use their tiny brewery to market some test brews, as Dave Yates also continued doing. This, though, was not an ideal situation as both Portchester and Yates were busy using their plants themselves. Then, in November 2003, Brian's partner Wendy was left some money in a will and this was used to start up Stumpy's.

At this point readers are probably asking themselves, 'Why Stumpy's?' The answer is that Brian, unlike Dudley Moore in the famous 'Pete and Dud' sketch, is perfectly qualified for the role, being deficient in the lower leg department to the tune of one. The problems first started in the 1970's after Brian was involved in an accident while on his scooter, which resulted in his left leg being broken in many places. After recovering he returned to his career then as a fire fighter but subsequently looked for a new job. He missed the active life in the brigade and so took up parachuting but an accident weakened his already dodgy leg.

(continued on page 9)

COMPETITION CROSSWORD



Prizes to the first two correct entries drawn.

Closing date: Aug 8th

To: The Editor
Hop Press
1 Surbiton Road
Eastleigh
Hants SO50 4HY

QUETZALCOATL

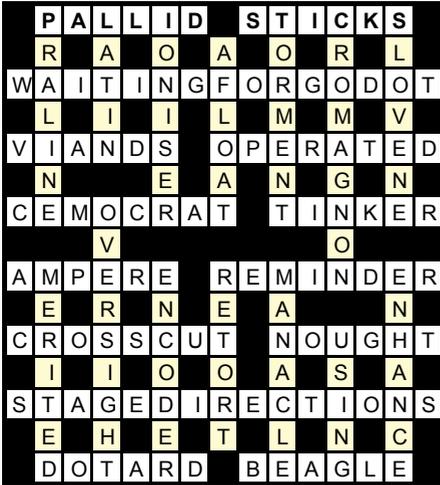
Across

9. Slip for a flying boat? (9)
10. Aware of a right to drink (5)
11. Network of parasites engulfs a race (7)
12. Pub's profits contract (7)
13. A measure of old port (4)
14. Extending Poe's Celtic fantasy (10)
16. Infinite death is no big thing (7)
17. Fish I caught, then I left, will change (7)
19. Urban railway crosses river bound away (10)
22. In favour of a small craft (4)
24. Reformer spoke — directed about a hundred (7)
25. Body of engineers attach power supply (7)
26. Bewilder bewilderer (5)
27. Lambswool ranks a hat as well made (9)

Down

1. Roundhead forces are in part animal (15)
2. Said *sotto voce* yet a thousand spoke (8)
3. She always starts off foolishly (5)
4. Confine members below the tables (8)
5. A rock of soft-centred mixed peel (7)
6. Fish from a western isle ate a copper penny (9)
7. Play it again as a variation (6)
8. National ablutions clean nice things terribly! (6,9)
15. Appreciated fringe group keeping quiet in the grass (9)
17. Solid setting against Greek isle (8)
18. Grain I see he takes on the high road (8)
20. Mountain man from antipodean-extremes (6)
21. She's a pin-up at 51! (6)
23. Calumny gives me a ruined heart (5)

November Solution & Winners



Another good entry, twenty correct replies and just one with a single slip of the pen. Entries again came from far outside of our branch area — Berkshire, Dorset, Hertfordshire, Surrey and Sussex as well as all parts of Hampshire.

Winners:

**Trevor Crowther, Winchester (second time in a row!)
Alan Judd, Southampton**

Other correct solutions were from:

F. A. Blanchard	Jocelyn Britcher
Nigel Cook	Robin Cork
K. W. Crawford	Roy Garaway
J. E. Green	Tony Hafliker
Stephen Harvey	Bob Howes
Keith Jones	B. E. Judd
Ash Mather	Nigel Parsons
Harvey Saunders	Dave Sibert
David Wallis	Ian Woodward

ADVERTISING IN HOP PRESS

It is the advertising within Hop Press that enables us to print and distribute it free to some 250-300 local pubs and clubs in the Southern Hampshire area.

The print run is 3000 and these are entirely distributed to establishments in the licensed trade. Taking your message to a very selective audience of pub users.

Edition frequency is two to three per year although we would like to make this strictly quarterly if we could overcome the Editor's lethargy and the contributors' indolence.

Rates are:

Full page: £80 Half page: £50

Rear cover: outside £100, inside £80

Front cover: inside £90

£10 (£5 half page) early payment discount is available.

Sizes (H x W maxima) are:

182mm x 126mm and 90mm x 126mm

In most cases we can generate artwork to suit requirements although a 'camera-ready' electronic file is always preferable. From experience, faxes *never* produce worthwhile artworks, colour photographs can be difficult and half-tone pictures will usually cause 'aliasing' problems. When preparing artwork it is essential to use a high definition — 300dpi or better. Input in a TIFF or a PDF format is usually good.

Email: **hop-press@shantscamra.org.uk**
or ring the Editor on: **023 8064 2246**

(continued from page 6)

After years on painkillers and a number of attempts to correct the damage his lower leg was removed and replaced with a prosthesis. Hence the nickname that gave the name to the brewery and provided the inspiration for the motif of its quirky peg-legged dog logo..

In March 2004 suitable premises for the brewery were found on a chicken farm. The address is Lycroft Farm, Park Lane, Upper Swanwick but you will probably need either the postcode, SO32 2QQ, or the OS map reference, SU588185, to locate it.

After a lot of hard work cleaning up the building it was ready to receive the brewing plant, which was sourced from the Porter Brewing Company Ltd. in Lancashire. The main vessels were installed at the beginning of May and the first brew was begun on 11th May 2004, Old Stumpy, of course. This original 4.5% brew was launched at our 2004 Southampton Guildhall beer festival, two weeks later. This initial brew was received with acclaim and it took the runners up slot in the 'Beer of the Festival' competition.

Old Stumpy was quickly followed by Dog Daze (3.8%), Hop a Doodle Doo (4%) and Haven (5%) and others have followed since. Recently a new beer IKB was brewed to celebrate the birth of Isambard Kingdom Brunel in Portsmouth, 200 years ago this year. The beer came in at a suitably sturdy 7.2%, you should be able to sample this definitely broad gauge brew at this year's Southampton Festival. We shall also have a new 3.9% session bitter Summer Vat.

Stumpy's draught beers are normally delivered in brightly coloured nine gallon plastic casks. These are used as they are lighter, and so easier lift, and much cheaper than conventional stainless steel casks (a small brewery needs about eight casks in circulation for every one brewed per week and as a stainless cask costs much more than the beer it holds, the stock of casks frequently uses more capital than the brewery plant itself).

There have been a number of teething problems during the early days of the plastic cask and the design has been modified several times so that it is now a thoroughly practical container. Hopefully this will avoid a repeat of the episode in which Brian was hit in the back of the head with 72 pints of Dog Daze after the shive came out of a cask that was being delivered!

The lack of true free houses in the area meant a slow start for the new venture but things are now looking brighter with regular off-licence outlets and a listing with the Small Independent Brewers Association for the Direct Delivery System for the Enterprise Inns pub chain. A lot of the output is bottled and these can be found at Farmer's Markets in Chichester, Fareham and occasionally Shoreham by Sea. Brewery visits in the evenings or afternoons with home cooked food included are proving popular and can be arranged by ringing 01329 664902 or by an e-mail to: **lewisw556@aol.com**.

Acknowledgement:

Much of the material in this article was taken from the brewery's own publication *The Story of Stumpy's*.

PUB NEWS

Rob Whatley

The pub in our area that has been in the news the most in recent weeks is the **Saints** in Millbrook. In March owners Enterprise Inns submitted plans for the redevelopment of the site which, following the demolition of the pub, would boast a block of 34 flats. The area already has few pubs. In recent years both the Swan and the Royal Oak, which were both located off the Millbrook Roundabout, have been closed. The customers of the Saints have launched a campaign against the move and have gained a great deal of publicity. A petition against the closure, containing 575 names, has been presented to Enterprise Inns by the campaigners. One local even held a rooftop protest at the pub, which opened for business only a few decades ago, on 8 October 1962.

The protesters have scored a rare success, the application was thrown out by the Southampton planners at the end of April but it may well still go appeal.

Three pubs in the city have been demolished since the last *Pub News*. The **Target** in Sholing will be replaced by flats, while the long closed **Swallow** in Thornhill will be the site of a community centre. The **Mayflower** in Castle Way has also been flattened as part of a major redevelopment of the area. Another pub which may suffer a similar fate is the **Sun Inn** at Weston. An application has been submitted to build a medical centre on the site. In Freemantle,

the **Star and Garter** has been closed for a number of weeks with the windows boarded up, the intentions are not certain but undoubtedly not beneficial to beer drinkers.

It's been all change in Vincent's Walk, just off Above Bar. The former **Chicago Rock Cafe**, which had been trading under the name **Shout** recently, has now become, following a £750,000 refit, **Ocean and Collins**. The name, which sounds more like a firm of solicitors, is also to be found at a similar venue in Oxford. The nearby pub that was called **Strikers** in its most recent guise is now called **Firehouse**. Other pubs in the city that have changed names are the **Oddfellows** in St Mary Street, which is now the **Zeb Bar** and the **Golden Lion** in Northlands Road, which had a change of style to become the **Blue Keys** hotel, bar and restaurant.

A popular city pub that is expanding is the **Platform Tavern**. The pub will be taking over the space currently occupied by the Solent Diner next door. The new area will be open through the morning for breakfast and from when the pub opens it will become a smoke-free dining room for the Platform Tavern.

Moving back to the demolition theme, train travellers who look out of the window while passing Allbrook will notice that the **Victoria Inn** has at last been demolished, some five years after it closed. Twelve new homes are rapidly rising on the site. The future of Allbrook Farmhouse, the oldest building in the area, which stands on the other side of the road, is still uncertain. At one time, when both it and the Victoria

belonged to a functioning Eldridge Pope brewing company, there were detailed plans drawn up to transfer the Victoria's licence across the road and open the farmhouse as a much bigger pub/restaurant. Now presumably it will be left to rot until it can be declared unsafe, demolished and replaced with yet more tacky minute apartments.

In Weeke, Winchester the site of the former **Chimneys** pub still remains vacant after it was demolished following its indecently swift closure in February 2004. Planning wrangles mean that the building of the proposed Aldi supermarket on the site has still not commenced. In the two cases mentioned above it seems madness that local drinkers have been deprived of their pubs and the sites have remained unused for years. While it would seem logical for the pubs to remain open while planning permission is confirmed, the developers know that it is much more difficult for locals to fight to save a pub if it is already closed.

Fortunately there are many pubs in the area that trade well and in some cases are looking to expand. One such is the **Black Boy** in Winchester. An application was submitted to erect a detached four room building for bed and breakfast use. There will still be an outside drinking area however. The nearby **Kings Arms** also made an application for changes to create bed and breakfast accommodation at the pub. A well known city pub that reopened around the turn of the year after a £200,000 refurbishment is the **Mash Tun**. The **Old Vine** has also undergone a substantial refurbishment, resulting in a large restaurant area to one side and a separate bar area. The banning of

smoking in both areas means that the spectacular views of the cathedral are now even clearer.

The old Winchester brewery tap, the **White Swan** at the top of Hyde Street, closed at the end of April for refurbishments and when it reopens shortly will be under new licensees, Gina and Richard Chandler from the **Royal Oak** in the High Street. Some years before Gina ran **Stones** in Eastleigh.

Moving east to Alresford, a new look for the **Swan Hotel** has not pleased Winchester planners. The exterior of the grade II listed building was painted a shade of blue that did not meet with the approval of those who look after the conservation area. The order to repaint the building has not gone down well with many locals, including some members of the town council. Alresford currently has many buildings that are painted pastel shades of green, pink, terracotta, yellow and blue. Initially the city council came up with a list of acceptable colours for the Swan: — buff, cream, white and grey. It now, though, seems that other colours may also be acceptable.

Olive is the new colour in Romsey, not as the colour of a pub but as a new name for **Judges** in Latimer Street, which has been renamed the **Olive Tree**. Although the emphasis is on the food trade the 'bar and kitchen' premises does offer a selection of real ales. Staying in Romsey with the colour theme, there were red faces at the **White Horse** after police closed the hotel bar in the town centre for a month from New Year's Eve. The ban has now been lifted by the licensing sub committee after

the owners agreed to implement changes to the way the bar is staffed.

There have been a number of changes of personnel in pubs surrounding Romsey. Alan and Lesley Newitt took over the **Star Inn** at East Tytherley just before Christmas. Mrs Newitt previously ran a hotel and the couple's son Justin, who looks after the food side, has previously worked in a number of pubs. Following the well publicised death of the previous manager, the **Dukes Head** at Greatbridge is now being run by Suzie Russell, Andy Cottingham and Pip Steven. The latter name will be familiar to many readers as a previous licensee of the **Hobler** near Lymington. Among the previous achievements of Suzie Russell was starting the Opta Index company which produces statistics for football matches, so the team should have no problems keeping track of the customers in the pub.

Also likely to change hands is the **Mill Arms** at Dunbridge, though at the time of writing the identity of the new managers has not been confirmed. Not changing hands but closing, could be the possible fate of the **Rockingham Arms** in West Wellow. The owners, Paul and Wendy Broomfield, claim that the well known pub is now unviable and have applied to turn the pub into two dwellings. However, the pub has not been put onto the market so it is hard to see how the 'unviable' tag can be justified. Wellow parish council is firmly against the plan.

Although the future of the Rockingham Arms will be decided by Test Valley councillors, had the application been made a few months later it would have come under the jurisdiction of the New Forest National Park Authority, who took over responsibil-

ity for planning in the new National Park from 1 April. One application in the Forest that is set to go ahead is the replacement of a skittle alley at the **Sir Walter Tyrrell** near Minstead, following an appeal to planning inspectors.

In the North of the Forest, the **Horse and Groom** at Woodgreen is now under the management of Mop Draper and her daughter Sophie, who also run the **Compass** at Winsor.

Meanwhile at Hythe in the South, the former **Boat House** in the marina is now known as **Salt Bar and Kitchen** and is being run by Tim Steadman, who previously ran a restaurant in Chelsea. Good news for Hythe beer lovers is that the **Seagull** is to become a Hop Back pub. On the outskirts of the town the future of the site of the former **Waterside Inn** is still uncertain as local planners have rejected a revised application to build 34 flats on the site. Also unresolved is the application to build five houses and a flat in part of the car park of the **Carpenters Arms** in Bransgore. The applicants have decided not to accept the rejection and will appeal against it.

While we have covered many permanent pub closures in this issue we hope to see news of a welcome reopening in the summer months. In late January fire destroyed much of the 18th century **White Swan** at Swan Green, near Lyndhurst. While the front of the pub looks much the same, most of the rear section, including the toilets and the kitchen was destroyed in the blaze. It is now hoped that rebuilding will be finished so as to reopen the pub in time to catch the height of the summer season.

HAS CAMRA GHETTOISED REAL ALE?

Pat O'Neill

Last month CAMRA achieved a milestone with the membership reaching an all-time high by passing the eighty thousand mark. A membership of over one hundred thousand does not seem out of reach.. To give this perspective, we now have more members than the Liberal Democrats although we are barely a few percent of the RSPB!

Yet, despite this very real ongoing growth in our support and despite the quelling of the fall in real ale sales of recent years, I sense a worrying influence at work. A malign influence that has troubled this country for centuries — the corrupting British class system.

There is an immanent danger that drinking cask-conditioned beer — real ale — is coming to be seen by much of the public as an activity reserved solely for the ‘middle classes.’ Why this should be is a complete mystery. It is not that manual workers have a propensity for lager rather than ale, for many drink ale but, in my observation, very often a mass-marketed, smooth, nitro-keg rather than the real thing. Nor is it age related; the long-retired bricklayer will opt for a pint of John Smith smooth whilst the equally antique architect will be having a pint of Ringwood (‘...in a jug, with a han-

dle...’). At the other end of life, the new graduate may (if not drinking something non-alcoholic, a subject for more musing on a different track) have a 6X but the newly employed office junior will be content with Caffreys..

This will seem a bigoted, very politically incorrect analysis, but I am gradually coming round to the conclusion that CAMRA, with the unwanted help of the international brewers marketing men, might be to blame. We have unquestionably been very, very successful in preaching the virtues of the unique style of beer that is ‘real ale’ but in doing so we have given it an unintended aura of mystique, of a need to be initiated into a secret body of knowledge and ritual before being allowed to buy a pint.

The highly-paid marketeers have subliminally reinforced this by portraying real ale as the drink of eccentrics, and so to be avoided by the man-in-the-street, lest he be branded an eccentric too. Unfortunately CAMRA has unwittingly bought into this scenario by our own enthusiasm.

This might be dismissed as just a quaint observation on the British way of life, akin to the inexplicable attachment in some parts of society to Morris Dancing; but I feel it is both more important and more sinister (even than Morris...!). Beer is our *national* beverage and no one should feel that it is denied them either for fear of being regarded as *unusual* (the very worst social stigma in this country) or some subconscious concern of committing an unspecified, illusory *faux pas*.

There is scope here for several social sciences PhDs, but first can we just all drink the stuff with simple enthusiasm.

THE SLIDING TAX SCALE

PRESS RELEASE FROM CAMRA'S CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR

APRIL 25TH

CAMRA has today revealed that there are now 570 small and regional brewers in the UK compared to only 440 in 2002 when Small Breweries' Relief was introduced. There is now greater choice than at any time since CAMRA was founded in 1971.

Small Breweries' Relief means small brewers pay reduced tax on the beer that they produce. Under the current system all brewers producing less than 60,000 hectolitres a year benefit.

Liberal Democrat MP Greg Mulholland (Leeds North West) has tabled a parliamentary motion backing Small Breweries' Relief, and is calling for the threshold to be extended up to 200,000 hectolitres so that even more brewers can benefit.

CAMRA Chief Executive Mike Benner said:

“Small Breweries' Relief has helped create renewed interest in real ale, and this can only be good news for all those who care about real ale. Over 130 more small real ale brewers is fantastic news to our 80,000 members and all fans of real ale.”

“It is a sad fact that over 80% of the beer drunk in the UK is produced by four global

brewers. Small Breweries' Relief is crucial in helping Britain's small and regional brewers compete against the huge economic muscle of the global brewers. Small Breweries' Relief should be extended to the 200,000 hectolitres to help support more of Britain's independent brewers.”

“Thirteen EU countries provide tax relief for small breweries producing up to 200,000 hectolitres annually and CAMRA is urging Britain to follow the lead of other beer loving nations such as Germany.”

On the date of release (April 25th) 37 MP's from all parties have so far signed Early Day Motion 1955 calling for Small Breweries' Relief to be extended.

Greg Mulholland MP said:

“The relief for small breweries is of course welcome. It has helped micro-breweries produce many excellent brews including some local to me.”

“However there are small independent breweries that do not currently qualify for such relief. It is time they were given the same support levels to allow all small breweries to flourish.”

“There is currently a perverse disincentive to be successful. We should not be holding these independent brewers back in this way.”

That the sliding scale (Progressive Beer Duty, to give it its proper title) is really working is evidenced by the vitriolic attacks on it in the last couple of weeks by the Chairmen of both Adnams and Wolverhampton and Dudley regional breweries.

BRANCH DIARY

Branch events are a bit curtailed in the coming month as we are up to our elbows in getting the Southampton Beer Festival on the road, so:

June 1st, 2nd, 3rd, Beer Festival at the Southampton Guildhall. See the article on Page 7 and the advertisement inside the rear cover of this edition for more details or, as always, consult the Branch web site, see the link below.

Friday, May 19th at 7.30, 'Beer Bus' from Southampton station down side. Route to be decided.

Saturday, May 20th, at 10.00am a coach trip to visit the Swanage Real Ale Festival (held in conjunction with the Swanage Steam Railway). Visits to the Square and Compasses and the Bankes Arms pub/brewery during the day. Contact Chris Brown on 023 8055 4881 for details.

Other events in June are yet to be finalised, but should include:

A Branch visit to **Oakleaf Brewery** in Gosport and a presentation night at the **South Western Arms** in St. Denys, to recognise their being voted **Branch Pub of the Year**.

As more dates are firmed up, they will appear on our web site:

www.shantscamra.org.uk

WE'RE ON THE MOVE!

The annual **Great British Beer Festival**, which for many years has been held at London's Olympia every August, is moving this year to an even more prestigious venue — **Earl's Court**.

The festival, from 1st to 5th of August, will be bigger and better than ever, with over 450 real ales to sample plus all the usual other bottled and foreign beers, ciders etc. For all details go to the web site: **www.camra.org.uk/page.aspx?o=gbbf1**