

Ullage

ONLINE ONLY EDITION

THE MAGAZINE OF WEST BERKSHIRE CAMRA

SPRING 2022

www.westberkscamra.org.uk



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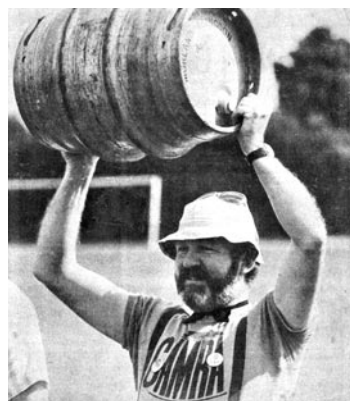


@WBCAMRA



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

CAMRA Golden award for Roy Bailey



Andy Pinkard & Roy Bailey

Photo: Richard Lock

Roy Bailey was presented with a CAMRA 50th anniversary Golden Award (People) by Andy Pinkard, Chair of West Berkshire CAMRA, at a lively event hosted by the Catherine Wheel in Newbury on 23 February.

Andy outlined Roy's publishing and campaigning roles since 1974 with the local CAMRA branch before presenting him with 'something for the mantelpiece'. Accepting the framed award and after a toast from all assembled, Roy responded to calls of 'Speech' by saying that he was very flattered and honoured by the award which came as a complete surprise.

Roy explained that he was just one of a very good team and went on to name other deserving individuals including David Arnold, James Lynch, Jennie Bray and Paul Frances. Roy said that campaigning with the team was thoroughly enjoyable and that the original Newbury branch was the best social club in the area.

Roy went on to mention other first-class campaigners in the subsequent West Berkshire CAMRA branch including Dan Allen, Jeff Evans, Alick Nutton & Liz Bell, Caroline Hickman and Mike & Carmel Smith.

'The branch was never just a bunch of bearded, beer-bellied males' said Roy, adding 'we were inspired by our female colleagues'.

Finally, Roy thanked his two cider making friends - Rick Wyatt and Tim Wale (both present, photos on page 5) and 'last but not least, my dear wife Annabel' to a round of applause from all those gathered, including many volunteers who had campaigned with Roy for CAMRA.

See page 6 for Chris Marriage's article 'Roy Bailey - a CAMRA paragon' which mentions his skills and achievements, including campaigns against closing or renaming local pubs.



Catherine Wheel, Newbury

LOVE PUBS
JOIN CAMRA

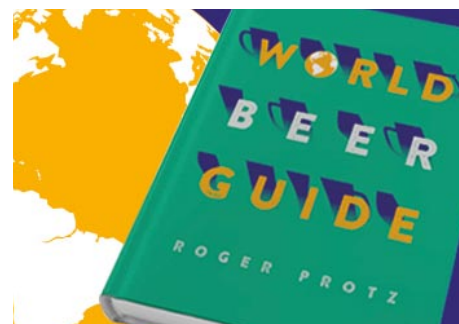
Find our national campaigns here

Find West Berkshire CAMRA

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Campaigning for Pubs, Pints & People since 1971

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS
CAMRA
1971-2021



Not my usual

"I like a beer that's a bit different... found so many great ones in this book!"

Amy from Ware

CAMRA books:
shop1.camra.org.uk

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67 Kapitali, Malta

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the eighth online only issue of *Ullage*. We are planning to return as a printed magazine with the Summer 2022 issue.

Please contact me if you would be interesting in taking over as editor of *Ullage*. This fulfilling role is available (no experience required) with full support offered to anyone whose interests may include beer, cider and pubs.

Roy Bailey, a former editor of *Ullage* (which he chose the name for), is the subject of an article by Chris Marriage, in recognition of Roy's CAMRA Golden Award (page 6).

West Berkshire Brewery started up in 1995, a year after Butts Brewery. West Berkshire CAMRA wishes WBB a successful future following its acquisition by the Yattendon Group on 23 December 2021. See page 6 for a WBB Timeline showing the four brewing locations, the key people involved since its founding by Dave & Helen Maggs and notable events like CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain (Bronze) award for Dr Hexter's Healer in 2009. The Timeline includes weblinks for anyone interested in further historic records.

With foreign travel restrictions easing we have included an extract from Quinten Taylor's guide to **Malta** based on a recent visit. You can also find a report on how to find **New Zealand** beers in the UK on page 7.

Our regular columnists reminisce about traditional bitters and pub experiences. You can also find details of **One to Try**, CAMRA's replacement for *Real Ale in a Bottle*, on page 9.

To provide easy navigation to online information, blue text is used throughout to indicate weblinks.

Enjoy reading *Ullage* and please encourage friends and colleagues to do the same. Cheers!

Tim Thomas editor@westberks.camra.org.uk

■ The **Cow & Cask** Christmas raffle raised £300 for the Myeloma UK charity. Ian Batho, the landlord of the Newbury micropub, thanked all the suppliers who donated prizes and the customers who purchased tickets.

■ Newbury's **The Globe** has hosted two quiz nights in aid of Newbury Soup Kitchen. FINK Street Food has a residency at the Globe on Saturdays and also provided catering for the February quiz.



■ The **Woodpecker**, Wash Water, raised £1710 for the Dingley's Promise charity over Christmas. Emma, Rob and the team thanked everyone involved with the market, quiz night, race night, raffle and collection tins.

■ The newburypubwalks.org.uk website has details of over 30 circular walks from pubs near Newbury including linear walks from pubs on the Kennet and Avon canal.

■ Yattendon Brewing Company Ltd (part of the Yattendon Group) purchased the brands and assets of **West Berkshire Brewery PLC** (WBB) after it went into administration on 23 December 2021. The company will remain trading as West Berkshire Brewery and all staff were kept on.



The WBB Kitchen and Taproom has remained open and on site brewing has commenced operating under a new licence.

The announcement of a new permanent CEO, with brewing industry experience, is expected in early April.

Head Brewer, Will Twomey, said 'We'll be brewing lots on the pilot kit ... It'll be a mix of cask and keg. The plan is to have 3-4 taproom only specials on at any given time.'

The monthly quiz night with Ed Dyer on the last Wednesday of the month is popular and online booking via wbbrew.com is recommended.



■ **Mary Candles** is the latest beer from Thatcham's **Delphic Brewing Company**. The 6.1% ABV IPA pours a hazy orange and is hopped with Strata bringing tropical fruit and citrus notes.

■ **The Hare and Hounds**, Speen, reopened on 21 January after a major renovation by Grosvenor Pubs. Three cask ales are available, initially including beers from Tilford and White Horse breweries.



■ Steve Harris and Ray Herbert of the **Bucklebury Brewery** have posted a link to a minute-long [video](#) on their Facebook page. It shows stockists and answers the challenge 'Describe Bucklebury beer in four words' (Beer we would drink).



■ **The Pheasant**, Shefford Woodlands, has been acquired by Young's. The inn is open daily from 7.30am with Stephane as General Manager.

■ The **Barrels and Bottles** exhibition, focusing on local brewing history is open upstairs at West Berkshire Museum from Wednesday to Sunday (10am - 4pm). Admission is free.

■ With the lease expiring, the **Butt Inn**, Aldermaston Wharf, is holding a farewell party on Saturday 19 March. A refurbishment is planned by the Punch pub company.



■ There's a new mobile-friendly **Wild Weather website** with a webshop and a blog section. In blog posts about two new flagship beers, Head Brewer Jamie 'JD' Duffield writes '...'

Radar, a tropically inclined hazy IPA with no particular allegiance to New England or West Coast stylisation. Sure, it's hazy, hoppy and tastes like pineapple, orange and lemon, but it has a touch of sensible bitterness, making it more rounded than some of our previous offerings.' The 5.6% ABV Radar is hopped with US Ekuanot, Amarillo and Ahtanum.

Satellite, a 4% ABV Cherry Sour is based on eight years of brewing accessible, lower ABV fruited sours but differs in being lactose free. JD writes 'Deep red, and drawing a natural tartness from a huge amount of sour cherry purée, Satellite conjures the sensation of cherry bakewell in a glass, with background notes of vanilla and almond.' Inspired by Belgian Kriek, 'Our version is a single tank, unblended take on this style with a clean, subtly tart and complex profile. ... we've added small quantities of Madagascan vanilla bean and nut-free almond ...'

■ The **Weather Station**, 19 Eldon Terrace, Reading is Wild Weather's Taproom and has been included on the 2022 [Reading Ale Trail](#) of 24 pubs and taprooms. The trail is still going ahead despite the cancellation of this year's Reading Beer & Cider Festival due to infrastructure issues.

■ Also on the Ale Trail are the **Loddon Brewery Taproom** at Dunsden Green and Siren Craft Brew's recently acquired pub – the **George & Dragon**, Swallowfield.



■ West Berkshire Council has granted planning permission [21/03190/FUL](#) for change of use to open a microbrewery in an old agricultural building behind the Bell Inn, Aldworth.

■ On 2 February, the recently refurbished **Queens Arms**, East Garston, was featured in an episode of [Four in a Bed](#) on Channel 4. Freddie Tulloch and his cousin Ben Nelson, hosted three competing couples overnight. They also took them for a visit to the nearby yard and stables of Sam Stronge, in the Valley of the Racehorse.

■ Details of events, guest beers, meals and opening times, for the **Hungerford Club**, featured in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2022, can be found from the contributions by the Steward, Debbie Hutchins, to the monthly newsletter on the Club's [website](#).



■ In December, the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) revealed **Best Bottled and Canned Beers** awards for the South West and South East regions. Awards for beers brewed in Berkshire and nearby included:

Andwell Brewing Company: *King John* (SE, Bronze, Premium Bitters (PB))



Arkell's Brewery: *Kingsdown* (SW, Gold, PB)

Disruption is Brewing: *People of the Hop* - Vol 2 (SE, Gold, Imperial IPA) & *The Devil Wears Lager* (Premium Lager (PL))

Double-Barrelled Brewery: *Parka* (SE, Silver, Premium PAs) & *Ding* (Bronze, PL)

Elusive Brewing: *Level Up* (Level 25 - SE, Gold, PB) & *Ravenwood* (Silver, Strong Beers)

Ramsbury Brewery: *Red Ram* (SW, Silver, PL)

■ Peter Lumber, landlord of **The Newbury**, is considering options as the ten year lease with Greene King is due to expire on 6 June 2022.

As a result of dwindling footfall following the pandemic, the gastropub's kitchen is currently only open for Sunday roasts. The Open Mic night for live music, hosted there on Thursdays by Sion Whiley, remains popular.

■ Warwick Heskins has organised a mini beer festival at the **Catherine Wheel** for the Easter weekend (14-18 April). Some festival sessions may include live music.



■ The **Spare Wheel**, in Newbury's Market Place, hosted a Double-Barrelled Brewery tap takeover (18 keg lines) in late February, following June's Wild Weather takeover. A third event is planned, possibly with Elusive Brewing. The recently introduced quiz nights at the bar have proved popular. The weekly general knowledge quiz is on Tuesdays at 8pm with a monthly music quiz on a Wednesday. Table bookings can be made via thesparewheel.com



■ Other pubs with **quiz** nights include:

Yattendon: West Berkshire Brewery Taproom

Hampstead Norreys: White Hart

Upper Bucklebury: Cottage Inn

Hermitage: White Horse

Cold Ash: Castle Inn; Spotted Dog

Newbury: Dolphin; Globe;

King Charles Tavern; Lion;

Two Watermills; Woodpecker

Chaddleworth: Ibex Inn

Wickham: Five Bells

Hamstead Marshall: White Hart

Hungerford: Plume

Hungerford Newtown: Tally Ho

■ CAMRA celebrates May as **Mild month** to highlight the beer style which, until a recent revival, was under threat of extinction.

Local breweries with Milds in their range



include Indigenous (Baldrick), Butts (Wild Mild) and West Berkshire (Maggs Mild).

Pubs where Mild can usually be found include the Nags Head (Reading) and the Bell Inn (Aldworth). The Lion (Newbury) sometimes

stocks Yorkshire-brewed Rudgate Ruby Mild - CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain in 2009 and a frequent award winner at festivals. CAMRA encourages publicans to stock a Mild in May and drinkers to look out for it and give it a try.



Georgiana Caras, Joshua Khan and Sam Cary of the Great Shefford

Photo: Richard Lock

■ Working with Head Chef Sam Cary, Daf Evans was promoted to Sous Chef at the **Great Shefford**, in February. The pub which overlooks the River Lambourn is featured in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2022 and is open seven days a week.

Owner Joshua Khan was pictured on the front cover of **Pub & Bar** magazine (December 2021) and featured in a story about his unusual background, subsequent career and views on the hospitality industry.



■ Joshua Khan took on his first pub in the area, the **King Charles Tavern**, Newbury, in 2014. The KC reopened after a major refurbishment on 24 November 2021. There is new furniture and lighting and the floorboards have been sanded and varnished. The quiz night, hosted by Paddy, is on the last Wednesday of each month.

Light nibbles are served during the week with a roast on Sunday. Eight cask ales are served from the central bar of the pub which is featured in the 2022 Good Beer Guide.



LocAle

Many LocAle pubs in our branch area serve beer brewed within 25 miles.

Pubs shown in bold serve beer brewed onsite or within one mile.

pubsofficer@westberkscamra.org.uk

See also the LocAle Pubs page at westberkscamra.org.uk/locale

LocAle Pubs - EAST of A34

The Bell Inn	Aldworth
The Bladebone Inn	Chapel Row
The Bull Inn	Stanford Dingley
The Castle Inn	Cold Ash
The Castle	Donnington
The Catherine Wheel	Newbury
The Coopers Arms	Newbury
The Cow & Cask	Newbury
The Cottage Inn	Upper Bucklebury
The Fox & Hounds	Donnington
The Fox Inn	Hermitage
The Hatchet Inn	Newbury
The King Charles Tavern	Newbury
The Old Boot Inn	Stanford Dingley
The Pot Kiln	Frilsham
The Rowbarge	Woolhampton
The Royal Oak	Yattendon
The Six Bells	Beenham
West Berkshire Brewery Taproom	Yattendon
The Wheatsheaf Inn	Thatcham
The Woodpecker	Wash Water

Locally Brewed Real Ale



■ CAMRA celebrated female brewers in the run-up to International Women's Day (8 March) with a special edition beer box and brewer-led virtual tasting, hosted by Laura Hadland, on 3 March.

Additionally, CAMRA is promoting the female authors and experts who regularly contribute to its Learn & Discover education platform including Alison Taffs, Rachel Hendry and Hollie Stephens.

Visit the Learn & Discover section of camra.org.uk where much of the material is available to non-members while some in-depth content is reserved for members.

Here you can listen to a 30 minute introduction to beer by Emma Inch, watch Jane Peyton's 'Introduction to Tasting Beer' video, read a feature by Cath Potter about 'Cider Women' or articles by Katie Mather including 'Pub of the future'. These highlights represent only a small part of the expanding resources that are available.



■ The January 2022 **Berkshire Beer Box** included Chinwag (Indigenous), Star Gazing Porter (Hermitage) and King Street Pale (Wild Weather). Jymi Plumer delivers a mixed box to Berkshire subscribers every month.

■ The **Document House**, Newbury, closed at the end of November 2021.

Under new ownership, it will become a cocktail bar that is open until late at weekends, featuring live music and sport on TV.

■ Issue 55 of *Mine's A Pint* the Reading & Mid-Berks CAMRA magazine edited by Zoë Andrews, is available in print and [online](#). Contents include her interview with Peter Rhodes, who opened the Outhouse Brewery in Wokingham in July 2021.



The cover photo features Evelyn Williams, David Cliffe and John Dearing, the joint authors of *Abbot Cook to Zero Degrees, an A to Z of Reading's Pubs and Breweries*, published in September 2021. Zoë's illustrated report 'Book Launch at Zero Degrees' includes her question about how people can best support pubs. All three authors agreed on the answer - 'Use it or lose it'.

The magazine also includes Phil Gill's 'Ale Trail 2022' article. Phil describes this year's trail of 24 pubs as a tribute to the late Dave McKerchar who was instrumental in setting up the first trail in 2002. Trail booklets are available from Reading's Alehouse, Nag's Head and Retreat pubs (£2, 5 March to 15 May, while stocks last).

■ Anyone who enjoys a pub quiz should know that a Tegestologist is a beer mat collector. The origin of the term, the international history of beer mats and storage tips are included in Paul Dobrowski's Beer Mat Collecting articles for *Mine's A Pint* (MAP 53 & 54) that can also be viewed online. NB MAP 55 (page 5 'Correction') explains the duplication of part 1 and misplacement of images in MAP 54.



■ Visits to Henley-on-Thames that include support for pubs serving Brakspear cask ales (Gravity or Oxford Gold) can earn a 2022 Henley Ale Trail T-shirt. Download and print the map from henleyaletrail.co.uk and after a pint at each pub get it stamped. The tenth visit should be to the Saracen's Head or the **Bull on Bell Street** (NB Closed for refurbishment: 1 March - mid-April) to claim the T-shirt.



■ Windsor & Eton Brewery 'Castle Hill' is initially available in 500ml bottles (5% ABV) and later in 440ml cans. The cask version of the pale ale brewed to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee is 4.5% ABV.

Co-Founder Will Calvert said 'The Queen is a great supporter of the Commonwealth, so the recipe includes barley grown at the Royal Farm in Windsor and a selection of world hops including Pacific Jade from New Zealand. As a finishing touch we are using champagne yeast to create a beer that's platinum pale in colour and refreshing in taste.'

As well as being brewed in the town, the new beer has Windsor links with local artist **Basia Dobrzalska** commissioned to create the design. She adds a modern twist to her Windsor and Eton art prints which are influenced by vintage travel posters.

Windsor & Eton Brewery was established in 2010 and was awarded the Royal Warrant in 2018. Supported by a successful crowdfunding in 2021, the brewery has recently opened Unit 4 taproom next to the brewhouse and operates four other bars in Windsor, Eton, Clewer and Virginia Water.

■ North Hampshire CAMRA have updated details for **Aldermaston Recreational Society** on WhatPub. Three cask ales are available at the club which is open to card carrying CAMRA members. Entrance to the 'Rec Soc' is via the West Gate for AWE.

■ Brewed near Wokingham, **Bond Brews'** seasonal beer, **Scrum Five** (4.0% ABV) makes a good accompaniment for the Six Nations Rugby. It's an English-style Best Bitter, brewed using five types of malted barley and wheat with five hop varieties binding to provide the bitterness and aroma.



■ Ken Amor is planning a real ale festival at the **Old London Apprentice**, Newbury, during the Spring Bank Holiday weekend (3-4 June) with beers supplied by Indigenous Brewery.

■ CAMRA members, who were able to attend, enjoyed the first Thursday lunchtime social in February at the Lion, Newbury. Organised for the second Thursday of the month, the next meetings are at the Catherine Wheel (10 March) and the Cow & Cask (14 April) in Newbury.

■ Andy Parker's *State of the Elusive Nation* post on the [Elusive Brewing](#) blog describes objectives for 2022 and achievements 'since our business was turned upside down back in March 2020' with photos of brewer Ricky Moysey and Ruth Mitchell (Head of Sales, Events & Marketing).



In *Lend Me Your Ears...* Andy writes that 'plans to grow our little team' developed after a chat with Mike and Luci Clayton-Jones of Tilehurst's Double-Barrelled Brewery (D-B). A cuckoo brewing plan was hatched as an interim solution for Elusive Brewing to utilise spare capacity at D-B and brew more beer.

The plan came to fruition on 11 February when Elusive brewed 15 BBL (2400L) cuckoo batch of West Coast Pale called Sing You a Song at D-B. There are no plans to move any of Elusive's core beers that include Level Up and Oregon Trail.

Paul Newton sampled Double-Barrelled Tischtennis, Parka and Everything But The Bulbs and chatted with Luci about the history of the brewery since 2017 for a **Beer Prime** podcast.



Double-Barrelled Brewery recently collaborated with New Zealand Beer Collective to brew

The (Antipodean) Animal Update, a 5.4% ABV NZ Pale Ale.

Double-Barrelled Brewery visits Newbury in March for a tasting event at **Inn at Home** (25/3). This follows an Elusive Brewing event there on Friday 11 March. Tickets can be obtained from 150-151 Bartholomew Street or innathome.co.uk/events



■ The latest seasonal beers from **Arkell's Brewery** are Big Hit (4.2% ABV) a well hopped IPA brewed with chocolate malt and wheat giving it a dark amber colour. This is followed by Spring Hopper (4% ABV) a hop forward, pale ale with fruity, tropical flavours.



■ Sadly, **Itchen Valley Brewery** in Alresford, Hampshire, formed in 1997, closed in December 2021 due to the effects of Covid-19 on trade. More details about this and the pubs and beers of Test Valley and North West Hampshire can be found online at [The Happy Pint](#).

LIVE MUSIC



Follow @SoundNewbury on Twitter & Facebook for weekly updates

ACE Space, St. Nicolas Road, Newbury
www.acespace.org.uk
Unplugged Open Mic on 1st Friday of month



Arlington Arts, Mary Hare School, Snelsmore
www.arlington-arts.com



The Angel, Woolhampton
www.jazzangel.co.uk



NEWBURY area

Bacon Arms Catherine Wheel
The Club The Globe
The Lion
Lock Stock & Barrel

The Monument - Saturdays
Open Mic night on Thursdays
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The Newbury
Open Mic night on Thursdays

Old London Apprentice
Plough on the Green
Starting Gate
Waggon & Horses and Canal Bar

THATCHAM area

Kings Head Swan
White Hart Mill
Cold Ash: **Castle Inn**; **Spotted Dog**

HUNGERFORD area

Borough Arms Plume
Railway Tavern
Hungerford Newtown: **Tally Ho**

OTHER areas

Crown & Horns, East Ilsley
Fox Inn, Hermitage
Ibex Inn, Chaddleworth
Old Boot Inn, Stanford Dingley
Six Bells, Beenham

Please send details of gigs for the June - August issue, by 12/5/2022, to: editor@westberkscamra.org.uk



Social Media



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West Berkshire Campaign for Real Ale:
@WBCAMRA
(National) CAMRA:
@campaignforrealale

Real Cider & Perry

■ Rick Wyatt and Gary Wickens have effectively closed Pang Valley Cider and left the premises.



Hearing about the CAMRA Golden Award for Roy Bailey, Rick said 'That'll be a nice award for Roy'. He added 'Funnily enough all I pressed this year was apples from Roy Bailey's orchard he planted years ago at Shefford Woodlands.'



■ Nick Edwards from **Ciderniks** has decided to sell his cider business which he started in Kintbury in 2003. The range of ciders includes Kingston Black, awarded 1st place in the 2015 CAMRA South of England Cider Competition.

He is keen to sell as a 'business in a box' so that the purchaser can get up and running straight away and benefit from the scope to expand the business in a new location. Nick is also happy to help with a smooth handover. Anyone interested in discussing further, can contact Nick by email initially at nick@ciderniks.com or via the Ciderniks website.



■ Looking to the future, in February, Tim Wale planted apple trees for **Tutts Clump Cider**. Varieties included Katy, Kingston Black and Yarlington Mill.



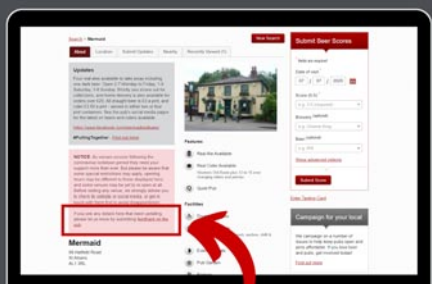
Tim Wale on 'Quality Control' duty at the Old Boot Inn, Stanford Dingley

Tutts Clump Cider supply several Berkshire pubs including: the Old Boot Inn, Stanford Dingley; Aldworth's Bell Inn; The Catherine Wheel and the Cow & Cask in Newbury and Hungerford's John O'Gaunt.

First bottled in January, Ridgeway is the recently introduced 4% ABV medium sweet Tutts Clump cider.



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www.whatpub.com

Find the most comprehensive list of real cider and perry in the UK

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Visit camra.org.uk/cider





Roy Bailey - a CAMRA paragon by Chris Marriage

As CAMRA celebrated its 50th anniversary (2021) it recognised our local CAMRA stalwart, Roy Bailey, with a Golden Award.

Although Roy is now a well established octogenarian, his mind, wit, eloquence and bonhomie is as sharp as someone half his age. No one in the history of the local Branch has had a greater influence on promoting the best aspects of beer, cider and pubs. He has been the very backbone of CAMRA's local and national achievements over the last fifty years, often accompanied by his ever supportive wife, Annabel.

Roy played a significant part in making CAMRA an acronym that is today almost

universally recognized. He got involved in the 'old' Newbury Branch of CAMRA soon after it formed in June 1974, becoming Vice-Chairman and Press & Publicity Officer at the 1976 AGM.

Roy gave the Branch's newsletter the memorable name of *Ullage* when he took over as editor in November 1976. By 1978 Roy had been elected Chairman with the late, but lovingly remembered, Jennie Bray as Vice-Chair.

Newbury's CAMRA Branch gained national recognition for success under Roy's leadership.

However, Roy had a career and a job to hold onto and the activities of the branch went into abeyance for most of the 1980's. The Branch revived as West Berkshire CAMRA in 1986 and publication of *Ullage* restarted in April 1990.

During the 1980's and 90's Roy was also much involved with CAMRA nationally, serving for some time on its Publications Committee.

He wrote regular articles for *What's Brewing* and its supplement *Cider Press* covering not only breweries and cider makers but also home brewing. On several occasions Roy was a judge at the Champion Beer of Britain Competition held annually at the Great British Beer Festival. He also judged at cider competitions across the country.

Roy campaigned vigorously against pub closures, notably The Swan, Inkpen and The Lion in West Street, Newbury. He also led resistance against ill-advised changes to pub names. In 1993 The Castle in Donnington was renamed as 'The Pig in Hiding' but, as local Branch Chairman, Roy led a successful campaign to overturn this.

In 1994, through an approach to CAMRA by the BBC, who had not realised that he had been a finalist in the Mastermind competition six years earlier, Roy was invited to set questions on 'Beer and brewing in Great Britain since 1974' as another Mastermind applicant's specialist subject.

In June 1995, to commemorate the 21st anniversary of CAMRA in West Berkshire, Roy brewed a special Porter which proved popular. Roy regularly attended the annual CAMRA conferences, often speaking on cider and pub name issues. He had his own cider business - the Lambourn Valley Cider Company - from 1995 until he finally ceased production in 2015 with a cider appropriately named 'Swansong'.

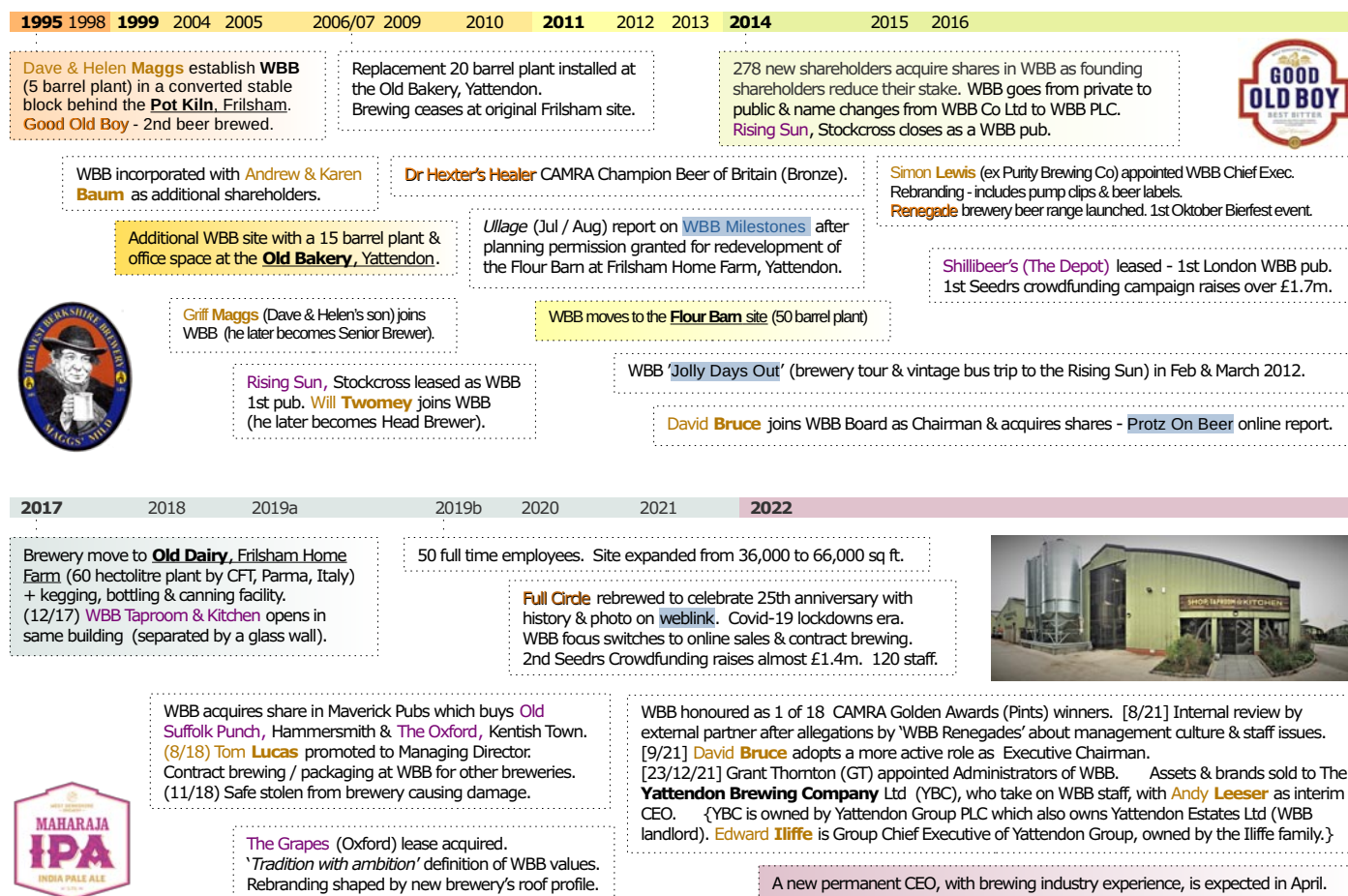


An expanded and fully illustrated version of this article, including links to three related *Ullage* articles about the history of CAMRA in West Berkshire, is online at: [Roy Bailey - A CAMRA paragon](#)

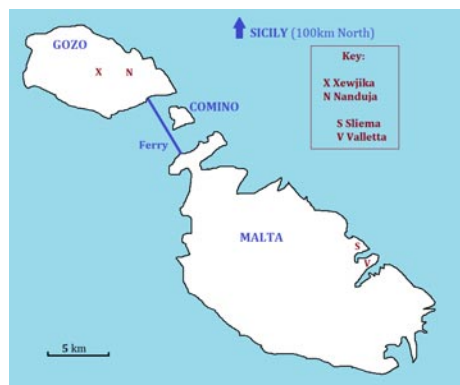


Roy Bailey & Chris Marriage on a visit to Palmer's Brewery, Bridport

West Berkshire Brewery (WBB) - a timeline



Beer in Malta & Gozo with Quinno



Malta is an archipelago consisting of three separate inhabited islands: Malta, Gozo and Comino. Malta is the largest and most densely populated of the trio. Gozo is a smaller, quieter and more agrarian island whilst Comino is a small outcrop between the two with a population of about five people (all based in the hotel!).

Whilst English is spoken by almost all islanders, the official language is Maltese (an offshoot of Sicilian Arabic).

Beer and brewing in Malta is dominated by Simonds Farsons Cisk plc whose beer permeates almost all bars and supermarkets. Cisk lager is the predominant brew, with other brands such as Farsons (Red, Blue and Green labels) and Hopleaf complementing their portfolio. There are a couple of small independents – the established names of Stretta and Lord Chambray and the new upstart, Huskie. There's also The Brew (brewpub in Sliema) and a cider producer, Tuff.

Now I'll state upfront that **Gozo** was my favourite part of Malta. Beautiful place, with the highlight being the Gozo Salt Pans which produces salt directly from the Mediterranean Sea. A great place for walking as well. There are plenty of bars, but for the beer hunter there were only two that came up on the radar which were open.

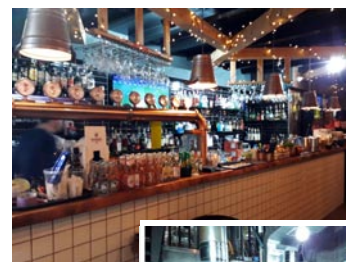
The **Lord Chambray Brewery Tap** is tucked away in a small semi-industrial estate in Xewjika. A compact two-level brewery with a tap room at the front and most of their portfolio was on draught when we visited - 12 in all. They do a diverse range across various styles brewed for the islander's palate.

The friendly barmaid took us through the options and we decided to flight our way through them all. My fave was their bergamot flavoured White IPA, with a beer of real interest being Wild Fennel flavoured with local fennel! My wife loved that one, even if I didn't.



The main venue on the island for beer choice is **Gebuba**, a little away from the action, in the quiet town of Nadur. It's a small bottle bar and one to hunt down local beers as they seemed to have a bottled version of almost everything produced by anyone, so useful for bagging the lesser-spotted Farsons/Cisk range and Lord Chambray beers not on tap at their place (including their amazing winter ale - made from carob honey and galanga root!).

Malta is undoubtedly where most of the action is. However the best bars are concentrated in two places – downtown Sliema and the capital of Valletta. The density means that these places aren't distinct individual areas, they are part of the same urban sprawl along the coast. Beware that you'll have to get transport between most of them though.



The Brew is a brewpub slap-bang on the Sliema party strip so don't expect much in the way of beer aficionados here.

In Valletta proper, **67 Kapitali** came with a lot of online praise and it didn't disappoint. From a Maltese point of view it's Chambray-heavy though it also stocks Huskie beers with the black IPA Tuta being the stand-out. There's also the full range of Tuff ciders.

The Pub is very small and tucked out of the way at 136 Archbishop Street. Gets a lot of rave reviews but I didn't really see too much as an English tourist to get excited about, bar the Oliver Reed connection (he died here but luckily they've kept it tasteful and don't make a huge thing of it. There's fewer than 20 massive photos).

*This article is an edited version of a guest post by Quinten Taylor (Reading & Mid Berks CAMRA) for the [Beer Europe](#) blog. Click on the preceding link to view the full post which includes more photos and sections on Comino and the following Malta bars: **Hole in the Wall; Salisbury Arms; Jack of All Trades; Wild Honey; Café Society**. [Photos also by Quinno]*

New Zealand Beer

February is New Zealand beer month. Newbury's Inn at Home hosted Todd Nicholson from **NZ Beer Collective** (NZBC) on 17th February to supply the latest news and brews from his homeland.



A virtual flavour of this event can be sampled by reading the latest posts in the **Beer New Zealand** blog, edited by Tim Thomas, featuring Todd's notable visits for talks and tastings in 2016 and November 2021 (photo above). However, for a genuine flavour, visit Newbury's Inn at Home, which offers a wide range of New Zealand beer.

NZBC has a taproom, 'The Bach', in Dundee and has collaborated with Fierce Beer to brew NZ style beers in Aberdeen as well as importing beers from NZ breweries assessed by Todd for quality. He cites the three I's - Ingredients, Ingenuity and Isolation - to explain why New Zealand beer has developed into something special.

Look at the blog, choose some Kiwi beers, imagine a trip to New Zealand, Kia Ora!

Pub Companies

Part 2 – The current scene

A pub company is simply a company that owns pubs and there are literally hundreds of them, many with only a handful or even just one pub. We'll concentrate here, though, on the bigger companies who, between them, own over half the country's pubs.

Stonegate - Founded in 2010 with the purchase of 333 pubs from Mitchells & Butlers, Stonegate grew quite slowly over the next ten years, making a series of acquisitions including brands like Slug & Lettuce, Walkabout and Be At One, until its pub numbers totalled 765. All the pubs were managed houses. A seismic change came in 2020 when Ei Group was bought for £1.27bn, making Stonegate the largest pub company in the UK with 1,270 managed pubs and, as a result of the Ei purchase, 3,200 leased and tenanted businesses.

Ei itself had been founded, as Enterprise Inns, in 1991, initially with 333 pubs from Bass.

continued on next page

Pub Companies (continued)

The company built up its estate, gaining 2,200 pubs in batches by buying them from other companies or taking them over. In 2002, 1,864 pubs were bought from Whitbread and in 2004, 4,054 from Unique. By this time, it owned nearly 10,000 pubs and was in the FTSE 100 list of top companies. However, it was loaded with debt and the 2008 financial crash required a good deal of retrenchment. Ei also started building up its managed estate, including pubs on retail agreements under the Craft Union brand (we'll look at this operating model in the next article). By the time of the sale, it was down to fewer than 4,000 pubs.

Punch Taverns - The first article included a brief history of Punch to illustrate the volatility around pubco development. In summary, it grew quickly to around 8,000 pubs, suffered under the crash, sold a lot of pubs including its managed division and was taken over in 2016. 1,900 pubs went to Heineken and 1,300 to Patron Capital, who retain the Punch brand. At takeover time, all pubs were leased or tenanted but it's also now pushing retail agreements (which it calls Management Partnerships). Some pubs were sold but in June 2021 it announced the purchase of Youngs' tenanted division, bringing the current total to 1,282.

Admiral Taverns - Admiral was founded in 2003 by two families and grew quickly to 2,300 pubs by 2007. Many of these were 'bottom end' houses disposed of by other pub companies. The financial crash had the usual consequences for over-extended businesses and numbers were down to 1,700 by 2011 and continued to fall. By 2017 it was in the hands of Cerberus Capital Management who sold up to a joint venture by Magners cider-makers C&C Group and estate investor Proprium Capital Partners, by which time there were 845 pubs. The acquisition trail was hit in 2019 with 137 pubs coming from Marstons and 150 from Heineken. The big one arrived in July 2021 when Admiral bought 674 Hawthorn pubs from property firm New River taking the estate to over 1,500.

Admiral's pubs are all tenanted or leased and tend to be wet-led community operations. It has a relatively good reputation in the trade though there's certainly no aversion to flogging off pubs as 'development opportunities'.

Star Pubs & Bars - In 1995, Scottish & Newcastle, one of the original 'Big Six' breweries, bought another of them, Courage, making the combined group Britain's biggest brewer. By 2011, the pub arm, then known as S&N Pub Co, had 1,500 tenanted pubs and 600 in management. Come 2008, Scottish Courage was gobbled up by international brewer Heineken and the pub business rebranded as Star Pubs & Bars. Many pubs were sold but then, in 2017, as previously mentioned, 1,900 were snapped up from Punch. Again there were disposals and the estate currently stands at 2,500.

Star vigorously promote their retail agreement scheme, Just Add Talent. In 2020, it was fined £2m for breaches of the Pubs Code (which we'll cover in a later article)

Greene King - In 1995, Greene King was a long-established family brewer with 900 pubs,

nearly all in East Anglia and the South-East. It then embarked on a ferocious acquisition trail, swallowing up many breweries (the likes of Morlands, Belhaven, Morrells and Hardy & Hanson) and other pub companies. GK itself is now owned by a billionaire Hong Kong property developer. It has some 3,100 pubs, restaurants and hotels, of which 1,200 are tenanted or leased. Its strategy seems to be to move in the managed direction and the 'Pub Ready' retail agreements are pushed hard. GK was once renowned for not letting other people's beers in its pubs but now have a more enlightened attitude.

Marston's - The company was known as Wolverhampton & Dudley until 2007 when it rebranded as Marston's, one of the many breweries it had taken over in recent years. At that time, 2,500 pubs were owned but the total is now down to 1,400. The tenanted estate, in particular, has been reduced through sales such as 200 to New River in 2013 and 137 to Admiral in 2019. In late 2020, the company took on the running of 156 Brains pubs in Wales. Also that year,

Marston's merged its brewing operations with Carlsberg but this does not directly affect the pub business.

Mitchells and Butlers - Formed originally out of the old Bass estate, M&B have 1,650 pubs and restaurants. The multitudinous brands include Ember Inns, Toby Carveries, Nicholsons and All Bar One - as can be seen, the emphasis is on food. Pubs are mostly managed though around 50 are on a lease arrangement.

J D Wetherspoon - Since opening its first pub in 1979, 'Spoons' has expanded to 925 pubs and 50 hotels, all managed. Plans for 18 new pubs are in the pipeline.

Wellington - Owned by the billionaire Reuben Brothers, the company leases all its 850 pubs on a free of tie basis.

This is the second article produced by the CAMRA Pub and Club Campaigns Committee.

See *Ullage* (Autumn 2021) for Part 1.



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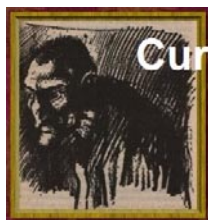
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Campaign for Real Ale



Curmudgeon

If you don't get bitter, you'll just get Boddies

In the US market, several beers that would be called Bitter in the UK are referred to as 'Pub Ales' as in Boddingtons Pub Ale. This has prompted another round of discussion on social media about how brewers, in the UK too, are increasingly reluctant to actually use the term 'Bitter' to describe their products.

This was sparked off by Gary Gillman in [Pub ale or pub Bitter](#), to which Boak and Bailey responded with [Call it anything but bitter](#). It is a subject that I addressed back in May 2019 (The Beer That Dare Not Speak its Name - featured in Ullage Winter 2019). The main reason for this in North America is that they have no history of beers actually being called 'bitter', and the flavour connotations of the term are thought to be offputting.

However, in this country, as Boak and Bailey point out, it is more a case of Bitter being seen as something old-fashioned that your dad drank, which is the same problem that Mild experienced a generation before. But, as I argued, it is denying your product's heritage, and there is no consensus as to what should replace it. "Nobody ever, when asked the question 'what type of beer do you enjoy drinking?' replies 'Oh, I like amber ale'."

Gary is very knowledgeable about the world of beer, and especially its history, but he is writing from a North American perspective, and I think he rather misses the mark in complaining that many bitters 'show excessive caution in their hopping level'. That may be a matter of personal preference, but it does not mean that such beers are not true to style.

The origins of the term are obscure, but it seems to have developed in the mid-19th century as a way of distinguishing the new pale ales from the older mild beers. Yes, it was more heavily

hopped than milds, but that didn't mean it was particularly bitter.

We don't know now whether bitters from before the First World War were more bitter than they are today (although they certainly were markedly stronger), but that is beyond the memory of any drinkers alive today. And, since the Second World War, it has always been the case that many bitters were fairly sweet, and few could be said to be particularly bitter. The term had become a generic description of a particular class of beer, not a descriptor of flavour.

In the late 1970s I went to university in Birmingham, where the main (indeed almost the only) bitters available were Ansells and M&B Brew XI, both of which are described as 'sweet' in the 1977 Good Beer Guide. The brewery section contains a number of similar references, alongside such terms as 'light' and 'subtle' which indicate a similar lack of heavy hopping.

There were some notably bitter beers around at the time, such as Boddingtons, Holt's, Yates & Jackson and Young's Ordinary, but they were very much in the minority. There is probably some truth in the belief that the bitterness of some beers has been reduced in the intervening forty-odd years to make them palatable to a wider market, but within the memory of people drinking today there never was a golden age when Bitter really was bitter.

Today, if asked to give an example of an archetypal British Bitter, most people would suggest a 'balanced' brew such as Harvey's Sussex Best or Timothy Taylor's Boltmaker rather than one noted for being assertively hoppy. And the current best-seller, Sharp's Doom Bar, certainly isn't.

The Pub Curmudgeon blog posts can be read on pubcurmudgeon.blogspot.com



CAMRA campaigns for live beer because we know it's something special.

Replacing 'real ale in a bottle' (RAIB), One to Try is CAMRA's new accreditation scheme, designed to promote and support the breweries who can and bottle live beers.

Any accredited beer will be 'conditioned'. This means that the brewing process doesn't end at the brewery, instead your beer is a fresh, living product. Unlike filtered, pasteurised beers which get their fizz artificially, One to Try beers will have a smooth texture and a light sparkle from natural fermentation.

Live beer is best stored upright, out of direct sunlight, away from fluctuating temperatures and it's happier in the cupboard than the fridge. For most live beer, any sediment is not part of the flavour profile, so pour carefully leaving the very bottom behind.

Find more information and links on CAMRA's website at [One to Try](#).

Boak & Bailey

Special grade mediocre everyday



We've been struck down by nostalgia lately and find ourselves yearning for a particular experience of the pub.

Maybe it's birthdays. Maybe it's the emotional impact of the two weirdest years we've ever lived through.

Or perhaps it was just that excellent pint of Young's Special at The Railway in Fishponds in Bristol.

Whatever the reason, here's where we want to be: in a slightly crappy Young's pub in central London c.2008, after work, with rain turning to sleet outside.

We used to end up somewhere like this quite often back then.

If the Tube was knackered, or the overground trains, or both, we'd hang about until after rush hour. That often meant finding a pub.

There was socialising, too – with colleagues or friends from university, before everyone got kids, mortgages and hair trigger hangovers.

You rarely ended up in really good pubs. They were too small, too busy or too end-of-the-line.

No, it was usually a Young's pub with shiny tables and bad lighting. There were usually lots of suits, a few cabbies, and maybe someone selling plastic-wrapped roses.

Being interested in beer, we'd make the best of it, working our way through every cask ale on the bar – Ordinary, Special, maybe Winter Warmer.

Then we'd turn to the bottles. Ram and Spesh, Chocolate Stout, Special London – the original hazy IPA?

Once or twice, to our glee, we even found the Oatmeal Stout brewed for the US market, marked up in pints and ounces.

It doesn't have to be Young's. Fuller's or Sam Smith's would do.

But it does have to be a bit damp, a bit warm, a bit weary. Our friends need to be there. And we need to be in our twenties again.

Is that too much to ask?

We're Boak and Bailey

We write under the names Jessica Boak and Ray Bailey, and live in Bristol. We've been blogging about beer since 2007, covering real ale, craft beer, pubs and British beer history.

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