

The Four Journals of the Sunday Afternoon Drinking Club At The Saxon S.A.D.C.A.T.S.



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VOLUME 9

Friday 4 March 2011

Yesterday was my Birthday and Kathie has got a surprise planned for me which starts today!

All I know is that I have to be ready to go at 1 o'clock and geared for an over night stay somewhere. I am also told to charge camera batteries. Kath's daughter Margaret, who lives in Liverpool, has her Birthday on the 6th. So, are we going there? Kath hasn't done much long distance driving, but recently went as far as Swindon on her own, and has the Sat Nav all set up! Still, 1pm on Friday afternoon isn't a good time to set off for Liverpool. What can it be? Steam trains perhaps?

We head north up the A350 and I wonder if this is a good time to say "I wouldn't have gone that way..." On the approach to Westbury there is a Guitar shop that I always want to stop at, but I'm told not to! 1st surprise... we pull into the shop car park. Kath gets her fags out and tells me to have a look round and see if I want anything!!!!!! If there had been an Epiphone Les Paul in sunburst finish I would probably have looked to get a deal. Oh well.

Soon we are nearing Trowbridge and I am convinced this is a rare weekend when Honorary SADCAT Clive is not in France and so we are probably going for a mega nosh at a pub nearby. But NO. We are still going north. As Jane, our Satellite Navigator, tells us to take the Chippenham by-pass, Kath takes the other road into town. "Hope you're not planning a surprise visit to Roger & Gwyneth because they are off somewhere tomorrow" I say. Kath convinces me there is time to stop for a cuppa. Having enjoyed our tea and chat with Gwyn we get up to go and Gwyn says, "Don't want to come down The 3 Crowns tonight then?" The subterfuge is finished, the girls are laughing and now I know what the surprise is, or at least I think I do.

However I do remember saying that if I could go to any pub for a special occasion it would be The Tan Hill Inn..... that's a very early start then!!!

1 The Three Crowns, Chippenham



A motley crew enjoying a pint of Breconshire Golden Valley 4.2%. L-R: Bob, Kath, Gwyn, Trevor, Roger and Landlord Steve Jenner.

Brewery	ABV	Beer
Purple Moose	3.6%	Snowdonia
Breconshire	4.2%	Golden Valley
West Berks	3.8%	Maggs Mild
West Berks	4.1%	Dr Hexters Wedding Ale
Otley, Pontypridd	4.1%	Dark - O
Wickwar	5.0%	Penny Black

The 3 Crowns has 6 hand pulls in the main bar where 6 beers are on most of the time. During regular festivals the extra 3 pumps in the back bar are brought into use, giving 9 real ales! The above were tonight's selection with a few Welsh beers left over from the St David's Day celebrations. We really liked the Golden Valley, but beer of the night went to OTLEY. This pub is destined for GBG listing from next year I would think!

Before we get too stuck in, I'm told not to get too pissed as we have to be up early tomorrow for the next part of the surprise! So an early-ish finish around 11pm (Not 3am Gwyneth!) and home for a plateful of home made *Kentucky style chicken*.

Thanks Gwyn!!

I haven't got the 2011 GBG yet, so my notes for Bath refer to the 2010 edition.

Saturday 5 March 2011

2011 Bath Half Pint Marathon

After Gwyn's hearty fry-up we head to the railway station where we find Shaun & Co gathering for a coffee. I'm excited to find we are going on a CAMRA pub crawl of Bath but disappointment creeps in when I see all the others putting on their 'Tour Shirts'. Gwyn lets me wallow for a minute or so before collecting the shirts she has ordered for the four of us!!

Group Saver day returns cost £2-40 each, bargain!



11:10 to Bath, a good old HST

1 The Hobgoblin, 11:31am



Despite Shaun's extensive planning and checking opening times on websites, this place can't manage to open on time and from its general appearance could well be closed down! Time to bring on the sub:

1 The Market, 11:37am



We are just being told by someone that they are not open yet when the canny Manageress spots 20 people wanting a pint and takes charge of the situation. So, in we go!!!!



Although not a GBG entry, one of our crew points out the German style real lagers brewed by Scottish brewery WEST, which are in the GBG! So we check them out!



2 The Griffin



Historic Grade II Listed Inn completely refurbished in 2009 to its Georgian glory. Currently a non-GBG pub where we found 5 hand pulls offering:

Butcombe, Bitter 4.0%

Bristol Beer Factory, Acer 3.8%

Kingstone, Gold 4.0%

Cheddar Ales, Totty Pot 4.5%



A nice little pub to add to the Bath List. Saw a good plateful of Chilli & Rice being served with lumps of bread for £6-00.



Part of our Group in The Griffin waiting to meet Dave!



SADCATS at The Griffin.

3 Garrick's Head

Once the home of Beau Nash, Bath's 18th Century Master of Ceremonies, this palatial building next door to the Theatre Royal has been a Pub for over 200 years and is GBG listed.



Three hand pulls provide us with:

Otter, Otter 3.6%

Milk St, Funky Monkey 4.0%

DBC, Durdle Door 5.0%

It think it could be said that this is really a 'Theatre Goers' type pub! And the food is priced to match with Fish & Chips at £10-95.



Roger at the main bar in The Garrick

4 The Raven



This GBG pub has been expanding in recent years with an additional bar upstairs, which we didn't visit. Downstairs there are 6 hand pulls giving a cider, 2 House Beers brewed by Blindman's and a couple of guests which all appeared in perfect order and the place was packed!!



Today the Beers are:

- Blindmans, Raven Gold 4.0%*
- Blindmans, Raven Ale 4.7%*
- Cotleigh, Long Eared Owl 4.9%*
- Stroud, Teasel 4.2%*
- Slaters, Queen of Hearts 4.2%*
- Glastonbury, Lady of the Lake 4.2%*

Pie-Minster pies may be good but with chips & gravy I think £8-80 is a bit over the top!

5 The Salamander



Non-GBG pub, historically a 'steak and chop house', premises now comprise a simple modern looking bar on the ground floor and an impressive dining room with galley kitchen upstairs. Cottage Pie £8-50. Their website says Bath Ales & beyond, but today we're limited to the tie. 7 hand pulls:-

- Bath, Gem 4.1%*
- Bath, SPA 3.7%*
- Bath, Barnstormer 4.5%*
- Bath, Golden Hare 4.4%*

Always busy and last time we didn't bother waiting, but the toilets are superb - *DunnyMarque - 10*



6 The Hall & Woodhouse



The Blandford-based brewery have given an astonishing facelift to one of the Heritage City's historic buildings (formerly a branch of Bonhams Auctioneers). This vast, split-level bar/restaurant with a uniquely lovely rooftop restaurant opened in 2010. The 1st floor & roof are for Diners Only. Walls of street level bar are laden with British grocery shop classics. Not my kind of pub, but Definitely a FlagShip. Kath & I fancy eating in the roof garden come summer! Toilets are superb - DunnyMarque - 10

Non GBG pub with several rakes of hand pulls where only 3 House Beers are offered:-

Hall & Woodhouse, First Gold (Best) 4.1%
Hall & Woodhouse, Tanglefoot 4.9%
H&W, Hopping Hare 4.5% (Seasonal)



7 The Assembly Inn



Non GBG pub re-opened Nov2010 after a major refurbishment by Abbey Ales in partnership with Punch Taverns. Manageress Frances Hayley moved here from The Pig & Fiddle. Has a public bar for Darts & Pool while Large TV's adorn the whole pub. Although I like rugby, the whole pub watching Bath play had an adverse impact on our visit. Real Bangers & Mash seemed good at £7 although prices out of date on the web site. There is also a separate Cellar Bar. 3 Pumps in Public bar, 4 hand pulls in 'Lounge' offered

Abbey Ales, Bellringer 4.2%
Abbey Ales, Sin Bin 5.1%
Sharpe's, Doom Bar 4.0%

8 The Star



The Star is a wonderful multi-roomed pub still selling Bass from the jug served from casks on the stillage, behind the bar. One of the cities oldest Hostelrys being first licensed as a public house in 1760 when the entrance was in Guinea Lane. A fine example of 19th century (1850's) fitting out by Gaskell and Chambers who, in the 1904 Licensed Victuallers Annual described themselves as 'pewterers, bar fitters and sole makers of the waste not beer engines'. Wood panelling, benches around the walls and roaring fires.



The building itself is far older than its rather grander neighbours. It was one of two or three buildings on the Vineyards when work began on the Paragon. The entrance was moved to the front of the building to allow the work force building the Paragon to collect their pay from the paymaster in The Star. The pub retains many of it's original features including the 19th Century bar fittings and the numbered rooms, compulsory when Licensing Laws required all rooms to be numbered and listed for their purpose.



In addition to 2 x 18's of Bass, the 5 hand pulls normally offer 2 Abbey Ales, the Abbey Cider and 2 guests but today they were having a festival to honour the Cornish patron saint – St Piran.

Tintagel, Castle Gold 4.2%
Coastal, Erosion 7.6%
Blue Anchor, Spingo Middle 5.0%
Abbey Ales, Bellringer 4.2%
Abbey, Helles Belles Cider

They even had some genuine Cornish Pasties today. Rolls were a tad expensive. Cosy pub full of original features but lacking in that welcoming feeling.



Time for a Pasty?



9 The Bell



Generally looks like it has seen better days, inside and out. A students pub with large roaring log fire. 3 seating areas plus a beer garden. Seems to be dominated by live music, and the Bar Billiard table has been replaced by a DJ. Expensive sandwiches aimed at the twee are out of place! Saving grace - 8 hand pulls giving:



Butcombe, Bitter 4.0%
Otter, Otter Ale 4.5%
Stonehenge, Sign of Spring 4.6%
Hopback, Summer Lightning 5.0%
Abbey Ales, Bellringer 4.2%
Cotswold Spring, Winter Royal 5.8%
RCH, Pitchfork 4.3%
Moor Beer Co, Old Freddy Walker 7.3%



The Sign of Spring Toast



Group in The Bell

10 The Pig & Fiddle

This large and busy town pub prides itself on not needing regular door security. Converted from a shop about 20 years ago it's generated a proper pub atmosphere by welcoming Young & Old alike with a large & loyal local following. Smokers area cum 'Beer Garden' with 20 tables and patio heaters at rear. Inside, sporting memorabilia adorns the walls; team shirts, competition skis, and even an oar from our Olympic rowing eight can be seen alongside the murals, flags, comic book tables and comfy leather sofas. The Pig isn't a quiet pub by any means. At weekends it's a bit of a squeeze, famous for Tuesday night live music sessions, and live rugby on the big screen which doesn't monopolise the whole pub!



Six hand pulls offer a cider, plus local real ales - Butcombe, and guests. One day I must try the other 2 pubs in their ownership for comparison: The Frog & Fiddle at Cheltenham, and The Mill at Rode.



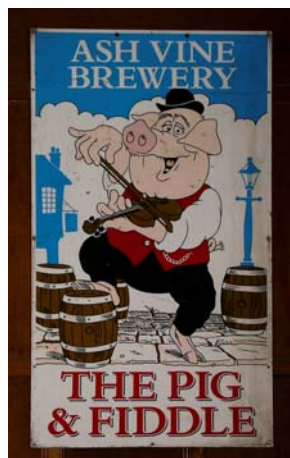
Pumps at The Pig



The Old Green Tree



Our favourite table



Pub signs New & Old

11 The Old Green Tree

An un-spoilt cosy pub in a 300 year old building where the oak paneling in the bar and 2 small rooms dates back to 1928. 6 hand pulls provide a House Beer from Blindman's at 3.9%, RCH Pitchfork 4.3%, a Stout (currently from Arbor) and varying Guest Beers. Foreign barmaid and un-talkative Landlord do little to add to the atmosphere in here!



1 2 The Couer-de-Lion

The *Coeur-de-Lion* is well known as Bath's smallest pub. Tucked away off the High Street it is notoriously difficult to find (but well worth the effort!) The Coeur (as it is known to the locals) started out on the other side of Northumberland Place as a fairly disreputable beerhouse around 1866. It moved to its present location around 1890 and is the only pub in the country with this name. Decorative stained glass windows proclaim that this once belonged to the now defunct Devenish Brewery of Weymouth who actually tried to close the pub and turn it into a shop! Bastards!



SADCATS: Bob, Kath, Gwyn & Roger

Now in the hands of Bath's Abbey Ales the 4 hand pulls dispense 3 of their beers and one guest. Small cosy bar, but same as last time ~ no interaction with the barmaid. More room to eat upstairs and all meals are a reasonable £7-95.



Abbey Ales, Bellringer 4.2%
Abbey Ales, Bath Star 4.5%
Abbey Ales, Cardinal Sin 6.0%
Liverpool Organic, Rakau 5.0%



Dave & Shaun arrive at The Couer-de-Lion

1 3 The West Gate



The Westgate pub itself has a long recorded history dating back to 1611, when it was one of the original coaching inns of Bath. Now a modern Non-GBG Freehouse with 3 hand pulls which today were:

Bath Ales, GEM 4.1%
Greene King, IPA 3.6%
Loddon, Bamboozle 4.8%

Can't think why a freehouse wants to sell GK IPA??

①④ The Hobgoblin (See ①)

This really wasn't worth bothering to go back to. A bit sleazy to say the least, but probably in keeping with their 'Corporate Image'. 5 Hand pulls:

- Bath Ales, GEM 4.1%
- Wadworth, 6X 4.3%
- Dawkins, Brassknocker 3.8%
- Otter, Otter Head 5.8%
- Wychwood, Hobgoblin 4.5%



'The Volly' opened for business in 1858, when the council voted to knock a passageway through a block of buildings. It may only be the second smallest pub in Bath, but it has the longest name in Somerset. Known to the regulars as the 'Volly', presumably because after a couple of beers, 'Volunteer Rifleman's Arms' becomes something of a challenge. Can't see why it's no longer in GBG?



4 hand pulls usually give 3 guest beers and a house beer provided by Exmoor at 4.0% which isn't on today. On our last visit we were made welcome as soon as we walked in, although there were plenty of locals at the bar. Had a great rapport, enjoyed the music put on specially for us, and we were given tips, suggestions and directions to complete our crawl. So this top notch pub went in The SADCATS Pub Directory [216]

①⑤ The Volunteer Rifleman's Arms



Today was no different and Jacques Desmier the Bar Manager (also a fellow RAT) was on good form! Easily Pub of The Day! Thanks Jacques!



Shaun, Dave & Co (The Famous Four) arranged a similar tour last year. So this time they drew pub names out of a hat until they had the 13 needed for a Half Marathon! That's why The Volley wasn't on the original itinerary. But as it was my Birthday, they thought a visit was appropriate! Thanks guys!



Glad someone thought to wear a 2010 shirt!!



Nine hours later (20:30) we are back at the station waiting for the next train back to Chippenham. What a great day out this has been! One of my bestest ever birthday presents or parties!

Thanks to Dave & Shaun for organising the Crawl and shirts, Gwyneth for booking us on it and Kath for taking me and keeping it a surprise! Magic! Looking forward to joining Dave & Shaun on another adventure!



Bob the Bank (aka Saxon-Scooper)
Editor



NB I had no idea there was an actual running type Half Marathon taking place the next day! Ours was much better!!!

(Picture taken outside Bell)

APPENDICIES

In accordance with our normal practice on these trips here are the black & white statistics and our nominations for those who deserve special mention.

The Bath Statistics:

Non-GBG Pubs visited –	8
GBG Pubs visited –	7
Total Pubs visited –	<u>15</u>

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

Best Bath Pub:

The Volunteer Rifleman's Arms

Best Beer:

Kingstone, Gold 4.0% (@Griffin)

Barperson of the Weekend:

Bar Manageress at The Market
&
Jacques at The Volly

And finally - Awards for Crapiness

Watney's Red Barrel Award



The Hobgoblin



The WHITBREAD Tour of Destruction Award

Devenish for trying to shut The Couer

Beers Sampled over Weekend

Pub	Brewery	ABV	Beer
3 Crowns	Purple Moose	3.6%	Snowdonia
3 Crowns	Breconshire	4.2%	Golden Valley
3 Crowns	Otley, Pontypridd	4.1%	Dark - O
3 Crowns	Wickwar	5.0%	Penny Black
The Market	WEST	5.0%	Weihnachts Bier
The Market	WEST	5.2%	Hefeweizen
The Griffin	Kingstone	4.0%	Kingstone Gold
The Griffin	Bristol Beer Factory	3.8%	Acer
The Griffin	Cheddar Ales	4.5%	Totty Pot
Garrick's Head	Milk St	4.0%	Funky Monkey
The Raven	Cotleigh	4.9%	Long Eared Owl
The Raven	Stroud	4.2%	Teasel
Salamander	Bath Ales	4.4%	Golden Hare
The Hall & Woodhouse	Hall & Woodhouse	4.5%	Hopping Hare
The Assembly Inn	Abbey Ales	5.1%	Sin Bin
Star	Tintagel	4.2%	Castle Gold
Star	Coastal	7.6%	Erosion
Bell	Hop Back	5.0%	Summer Lightning
Bell	Cotswold Spring	5.8%	Winter Royal
Pig & Fiddle	Yeovil	4.0%	Star Gazer
Old Green Tree	Arbor	4.6%	Oyster Stout
Couer-de-Lion	Liverpool Organic	5.0%	Rakau
The West Gate	Loddon	4.8%	Bamboozle
Hobgoblin	Dawkins (Matthews)	3.8%	Brassknocker
The Volly	Stonehenge	4.6%	Sign of Spring
The Volly	Exmoor	4.5%	Exmoor Gold