

# Camra Calling

Winter 2007 – Spring 2008

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Members Newsletter for the North Devon Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale

## Happy New Year to you all

The branch wishes everyone a Happy New Year and hope that you all had a good Festive Season. I cannot believe it is a year since I started the newsletter. I hope you have found it helpful and informative.

## Witterings of the Wizard

Once again a few pints have flowed since the last wittering, some new, some old favourites; also some new pubs have been visited (and some old favourites!)

One of the highlights of the autumn was the National Cider Tour in October. As it was in Devon we decided to attend and represent the Branch. I am not a cider drinker and nothing I tried during that day convinced me otherwise; but Fiona likes cider so I said that I would be chauffeur (unusual for me I know!). We visited Ye Olde Cider Bar in Newton Abbott – one of only 3 remaining in the country I believe. I caused some considerable mirth and received even more verbal abuse, particularly from the Regional Director, because I was drinking Coke! An interesting day was had by all who attended. I finished the day off (when I had finished driving) with a few pints of proper ale!



(Me with my glass of coke!!!!!!)

The time of year is fast approaching when we have to decide which pubs are to go in the GBG. So is your favourite pub included? Why not come to a Branch meeting and recommend it!

I had reason to travel to Chittlehampton recently to go to a folk concert and had a couple of pints in The Bell – our POTY. It was very pleasing to see that Mark was so proud of his award that he has had the two large windows etched with the Camra logo and Pub of the Year 2007. It looked really smart – well done Mark.

To finish off this wittering a brief report on our Christmas social gathering with our neighbours Exeter and East Devon Branch at the good old Tom Cobley. It was nice to see so many of our Branch there this year; about 18 members, I think. The highlight was when the quiz team I was in, which comprised 5 of our members and 5 from Exeter, came second by half a point. I don't think there was any cheating this year!!!

I look forward to see many of you at the next Branch meeting, which is in the North of our Branch and at the Exeter Festival of Winter Ales and Ciders.

**Morris Elsworth, Chairman.**

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## Community Pubs Week

This will take place from 16<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2008. A pub crawl in Barnstaple with Exeter & East Devon Branch has been suggested. We will update you by e-mail as soon as we know the details; or if you are interested and are not on line, then please ring us on the above phone number. Promotional packs for your local pubs are available at: [www.pubsweek.org](http://www.pubsweek.org)

## Website

The website is up and running again after a few technical problems recently. The address is shown at the top of this page. Please visit it as any late additions or alterations to the date, time or location of the next meeting will be on there. Also available are the minutes of the last Branch meeting and all the newsletters.

## S.W. Regional Meeting

The North Devon Branch is hosting the Regional Meeting on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup>

February 12.30pm at the Fox and Hounds Country Hotel, Eggesford. All are welcome to come. There will be a buffet lunch supplied for £5 a head. We are hoping that there will be 2 beers available on gravity in the room at a very reasonable cost. If you do intend to come, please let me know so that I can order enough food.

### **Good Beer Guide 2009**

No, your eyes do not deceive you I did say 2009. At our Branch meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2008 1pm at the Red Barn, Woolacombe, we will be discussing and handing out survey forms for the nominated entries for the 2009 GBG. From the completed survey forms, our quota for the Guide will be drawn up at our next Branch meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February 1pm at the Golden Lion, High Bickington. If you would like to be part of this process you are more than welcome at these meetings. Remember if your favourite pub is not nominated and surveyed it will not be considered for the 2009 Guide. If you are unable to make the January meeting please forward your nomination to any Branch official before 11<sup>th</sup> January.

### **Branch Polo Shirts**

The branch has a supply of polo shirts that you can buy for £13.00 each. The shirt is maroon with our embroidered logo in gold and in sizes of medium, large, XL and XXL. If you would like one (or more) please contact Trish.

### **A History of Beer (2)**

'Ale' was drunk by all classes and all age groups by the 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Water was so insanitary that 'small' or weak beer was brewed for everyday consumption. It was not uncommon for people to drink a gallon of ale a day! That was the ration for the monks who contributed so much to the large monastic brewing industry at the time. It is reported that one brewery at Fountains Abbey, North Yorkshire produced 60 barrels of strong ale every ten days.

A fundamental change in brewing came about in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries through the use of hops. This inoffensive plant caused a major split in British brewing and the merits of hopped and unhopped beer raged for hundreds of

years. Hops had been used in Europe since Charlemagne's time to give beer more bitterness and better preserving qualities in hot weather. Hops were brought to south-east England by the Dutch and hop growing soon started in Kent.

Although the names 'beer' and 'ale' are now synonymous, from 1400 until the late 16<sup>th</sup> century they were the watchwords of the fiercely antagonistic supporters of two quite distinctive drinks: the sweeter, stronger 'ale' and the lower-gravity, bitter 'beer', a name derived from the old German word *bior*. Some brewers were forbidden to use hops and even Henry VIII instructed his personal brewers to produce only unhopped 'ale'. But the sentimental attachment to English 'ale' waned. As the size and scale of brewing developed, more and more brewers used hops to stop their beer going sour and the public taste for the lighter, bitter 'beer' grew. *To be continued.* © CAMRA 1980.

### **Meetings & Socials**

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2008, Branch meeting 1pm** – Red Barn, Woolacombe.

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> February, Branch meeting 1pm** – Golden Lion, High Bickington.

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> February, South West Regional Meeting 12.30pm - Fox & Hounds Hotel, Eggesford, Chulmleigh, EX18 7JZ.**

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2008, AGM 1pm** – **The Plymouth Inn, Okehampton** - entry for card carrying members only.

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April Branch Meeting 1pm** – The Laurels, Petrockstowe.

### **Beer Festivals**

**11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> January** – Exeter and East Devon, Winter Ales Festival, Lower Exhibition Room, University of Exeter. For details see "What's Brewing"

### **Any Future Events**

If you know of any event or Beer Festivals taking place between April and June please inform Trish by phone or e-mail by 1st March and it will be included in the next branch newsletter.

If you know of any **pubs closing** in your area, please tell Terry as he has to inform CAMRA HQ at the end of each year.