

Early Summer 2007

Edition No. 29

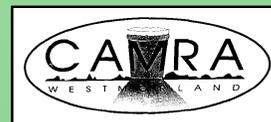
Lakes & Ale



Branch Pub of the Year: the Eagle & Child, Staveley



FREE Newsletter of the
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the Campaign for Real Ale



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EDITORIAL

Welcome to edition 29 of Lakes and Ale. In the previous (Spring) edition I mentioned I would make the next Lakes & Ale a “No Smoking Special”, but I have to confess that I rather forgot that it would actually be coming out before the complete ban comes into operation in July. Therefore, I can say with some assurance now that the next (late Summer) edition will be largely dedicated to various aspects of the smoking ban and how it impacts on Westmorland.

At the CAMRA Annual Meeting and members weekend in Wolverhampton recently, the Westmorland Branch was awarded “Most Improved Website” and veteran branch member Alan Risdon was on hand to take the award on our behalf. Well done to all involved, particularly our chairman, David Currington and his son, the webmaster. You can keep in touch with all our branch news by going to www.camrawestmorland.org.

One further matter I am rather concerned about locally, however, is the disturbing number of pubs (mainly Punch Taverns) that are advertising tenancies for lease. I have seen five recently advertising on boards outside Kendal hosteleries. It seems so sad that, after our first Community Pubs Month in February, we are now in a position of potentially losing several more town centre pubs. CAMRA aims to encourage people to use their local and make the pub the hub of the community, but are circumstances contriving to make this an increasingly dwindling possibility? We have to ask ourselves just how enticing are the current contracts that are being negotiated with large pubcos. It looks to me as if there is little incentive for those interested in the licensed trade to take on such a commitment. If it isn't made a more appealing prospect to hold a straightforward pub license, then we will be mainly left with restaurants masquerading as inns and the distinct possibility of more landlords with scant interest in traditional beer and being part of the community around them. If food is where the profit is, naturally those licensees who love their pubs will be tempted to go down that route, but newcomers will be left with few options at their disposal.

However, since starting to write this editorial I have learned that Admiral Taverns are in the process of making an offer on 869 (mainly landlocked) Punch Taverns and are particularly interested in maintaining urban community pubs throughout the country. Let's hope that this is good news. We will keep you informed.



I hope you enjoy this edition of Lakes & Ale, and make sure you continue to enjoy Real Ale in Westmorland!

Marilyn Molloy

Campaign Slot

Increase in Duty on Beer

CAMRA has slammed the Chancellor's decision to yet again increase excise duty on beer in the March budget by 1p a pint as a mistake that will hit Britain's pubs hard.

Our 84,000 member strong consumer organisation had called on the Government to freeze excise duty as the decision to increase tax is likely to result in higher prices, fewer customers in pubs, and a drop in revenue for the treasury.

CAMRA Chief Executive Mike Benner said: "This is a false economy for the Government as we may now see an exodus from pubs after beer prices rise.

"This is bad news for the millions of people who enjoy British pubs but will now face a higher cost to visit them. Therefore trips to the pub will become less frequent and the revenue the Government makes from VAT will suffer."

Supermarkets

CAMRA is also supporting an Early Day motion in House of Commons calling for supermarkets and off-licenses to curb their irresponsible promotions and to cease using alcohol as a loss leader.

Smoking Ban

Coming into effect on 1st July 2007, smoking will be banned in all enclosed public spaces including pubs and private members' clubs. Smoking will only be allowed in sheltered areas provided that wall openings (excluding doors and windows) are more than half the total wall area. A CAMRA commissioned research project has found that:

- 6.2 million customers who visit pubs regularly (17% of the adult population in England and Wales) will be more likely visit pubs more often after the ban is in place. Of that group 97% were non-smokers
- 840,000 people who currently never visit a pub said that they would after the smoking ban.
- 93% of real ale drinkers said that they would be likely to visit pubs more often or that their visiting habits would not be changed
- 68% of smokers will not change their visiting habits
- 695 of all adults said it would not affect their visiting habits after the ban is in force; 3% said they would stop visiting pubs after the ban.



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(Continued from page 4)

Whatever the outcome it is important that all pubs consider their options for dealing with smokers after the ban comes into effect and should already have plans in place for legal sheltered areas if possible. In the Lakes we realise that Pubs in the National Park may face particular problems with obtaining any necessary planning permissions from the Park Authority.

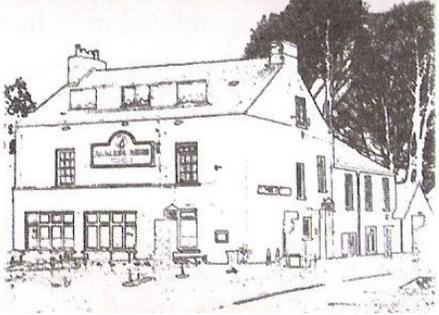
Full Pints

A new full pints campaign was launched on 16th April. This is an important campaign. Particularly

here in the North where we like our beer to have a healthy head to it, we should allow the pint to 'settle' if necessary, and not be afraid of asking for a top up. I am sure that all our Westmorland real ale pubs will gladly give top-ups on request. If you come across any problem pubs in Westmorland then do let us know, or contact a local trading standards office.

Contact/feedback details are on our website: www.camrawestmorland.org

*David Currington
Branch Chairman*



Anglers Arms

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The Importance of Beer Tasting in CAMRA



A beginners' group of tasters undergoing training

On a brilliantly sunny day in April, twenty members from the four Cumbrian branches of CAMRA met at Yates' Brewery in West Newton for the serious business of Beer Tasting. Beer *Tasting*, you must understand, has only very loose connections with beer drinking! CAMRA has operated a Tasting Programme since 1989 with the aim of providing consumer information on the character, flavour and quality of beer.

The information gained from these tasting meetings provides descriptions of beers for the brewery section of **The Good Beer Guide** and

makes the major contribution to the process of nominating beers for the **Champion Beer** and **Champion Winter Beer of Britain** awards. The **Champion Beer of Britain** competitions are one of CAMRA's main campaigning tools in promoting high quality real ale.

All over Britain CAMRA members meet to taste, discuss and record the characteristics of beers produced by their local breweries. It's tough work but somebody's got to do it!

(Continued on page 9)

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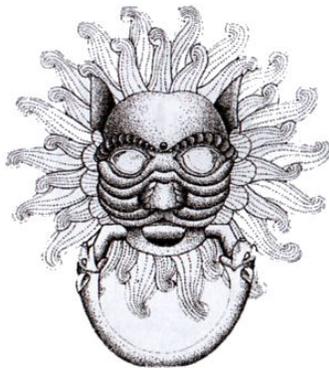
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(Continued from page 7)

Real Ale is a living and complex thing. The tasters have to learn to recognise the aromas and flavours of the various individual ingredients and to recognise the many and various changes they undergo during the brewing process resulting in new flavours. They learn how describe these and the aftertaste of the beer. They need to learn the terminology used for beer description so that descriptions are standardised throughout the country. They consider the texture and clarity of the beer, its carbonation and recommend whether it improves or not by being drawn through a tight sparkler.

They also need to understand the working of the olfactory system and the tongue since different taste buds

taste different flavours. In this way they can judge the bitterness, sweetness, astringency and other aspects of the flavour.

Tasters don't have any strong-tasting foods before a session, don't smoke, wear perfume or aftershave and work in an area with plenty of fresh air. It is also advisable not to wear lipstick because it can affect the head of the beer.

Tasting is limited to ½ pint and is served in a large glass to conserve the aroma. The results are collated by the Tasting Panel Chairman and tasting of these beers continues throughout the year at different venues with members sending the chairman their findings in order that the results can be modified.

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The History of Kendal's Public Houses: Highgate

As stated previously, Kendal was once separated from its present southern part, Kirkland, the dividing line being Blind Beck, a stream running from the high ground in the west of the town down to the river Kent.

The southern end of Kendal's main thoroughfare, Highgate, terminated at Blind Beck and proceeded north to the top of Finkle Street, where the highway became Stricklandgate. To complicate matters further, properties were numbered north to south on Highgate and south to north on Stricklandgate! In the past, the White Hart, still thriving at 2 Highgate, was adjacent to the Crown Hotel at 2 Stricklandgate.

As space is of the essence, this part will only cover Highgate's inns north to Kendal Town Hall, with the remaining section to Finkle Street featuring in a later edition.

Moulders Arms, *Yard 65*
Bear and Ragged Staff, *130 Highgate*
Bird in Hand Inn, *53 Highgate*
Black Bull, *(at the junction with Lowther St.)*
Kendal Bowman (Bishop Blaize)
Dyers Arms
Nelson Tavern
New Inn
Queen Catherine Inn, *48 Highgate*
Royal Oak, *127 Highgate*
Seven Stars, *177 Highgate*
Shakespeare, *78 Highgate*
Star, *151 Highgate*
Sun Inn, *173 Highgate*

Tanners Arms *(possibly on the site now occupied by Iceland)*

Unicorn,
Vintners Arms, *116 Highgate*

Travelling north from Kirkland, on the west side of Highgate, stands a small chemist's shop. This site was once occupied by the Bear and Ragged Staff, the ancient crest of the Earls of Warwick since 1268. Further up the hill stood the Vintners Arms. One report gives a date of 1677 for its existence. At the top of Highgate once stood the Dyers Arms which occupied the upper floor of a property, while the ground floor was a periwig maker's shop!

The New Inn still successfully plies its trade, and 'inn sign' fans may enjoy its signboard, which depicts the pub itself. This inn began life as a private residence, and was the birthplace of Judge Sir Alan Chambre in 1739. Sir Alan purchased and moved to Abbott Hall in 1766, his previous family home being depicted as a public house by the time of Todd's 1787 map of Kendal.

In 1829, a new theatre was built at the top of what is now known as Shakespeare Yard. The following year, the Shakespeare Inn opened, not only to accommodate theatregoers, but to offset the efforts of The Temperance Society to reduce the number of outlets selling alcohol. Refreshment clearly won the day over culture, for the theatre had closed by 1834, while

the inn continues to flourish. Architecturally, the rear of the inn is quite interesting, as additional bedrooms, erected in 1936, had access to the communal bedroom by means of a connecting bridge!

Towards Allhallows Lane, where the buildings are set further back, the Queen Catherine Inn stood for many years. Listed in 1829, it was re-named the Queen Victoria in 1844. It suffered an ignominious end when the last owner, William Mackreth, turned it into a grocer's shop. However, he kept the license, and opened up the Roebuck at 50 Highgate, up the yard, immediately to the south of where Curry's stood for many years.

At this point, one would need to cross to the eastern side of Highgate, and the top of Lowther St. The Black Bull, which stood at the head of this narrow road, was knocked down in 1782, to allow another access down to the river. Some people preferred the name of New St., but eventually Lowther St. prevailed. The choice of name depended on one's political allegiance.

Down yard 65, close by the river, once stood an inn in the late 1700's called the Moulders Arms. The inn, which began life as the Jolly Anglers, displayed a distinctive triangular signboard, depicting a follower of Isaak Walton plying the gentle art of angling.

Back on Highgate, at its brow, stands the Oddfellows Hall. During the latter part of the 18th century, John Jennings, in addition to being the mail carrier between Kendal and Lancaster, was

the licensee of the Unicorn Tavern. Between 1823 and 1834, the site had been demolished and re-built to accommodate the Nelson Tavern, which became a popular venue not only for various societies, but dancing classes utilising its ballroom.

100 metres to the south stands a forlorn looking building, the Kendal Bowman, which began its existence as The Bishop Blaize. Originally located on the west side of Highgate, the Bishop Blaize was another example of the town's affinity with the wool trade, as the bishop was the patron saint of Woolcombers, and the inn was slaking thirsts in the late 1700's. By 1829, the license had lapsed, until taken up c.1830 in premises that now occupy the northern part of the present building. In 1958, plans were approved allowing the Bishop's owners, Whitwell, Mark & Co. to purchase the Temperance Hotel, immediately to the south, allowing it to extend to its present size. Whilst the decline of the property from grace to iniquity will have caused much head shaking among the Temperance Society, CAMRA readers may appreciate the change. The inn became the Kendal Bowman in the 1960's, although the original survives in the appropriately named Bishop's Yard to the north.

This was a somewhat 'heavenly' area, as the Star was next door to the north, and the Sun, and the Seven Stars were nearby to the south. Indeed, the Sun's signboard boasted that, 'Inside can be tasted the best beer under the Sun'!

Brendan Jameson

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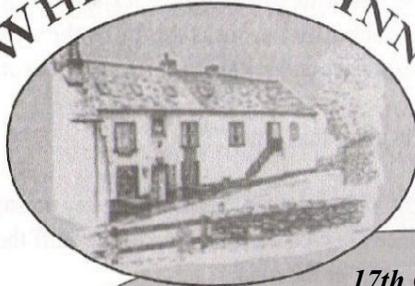
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Zythos Belgian Beer Festival

The Belgian national beer festival is held on the first weekend in March, and this year I travelled out from Kendal on the previous Thursday so I could also enjoy some of my favourite bars in Antwerp. Despite the train derailment at Lambrigg I made good

time to London, and even managed to pop into the Hole in the Wall for a pint. The Hole in the Wall is a pub in the railway arches underneath the rail line into Charing Cross as it passes the entrance to Waterloo and a very acceptable pint of Twickenham Original was proffered. It was then onto the Eurostar, followed by the 45 minutes train ride from Brussels to Antwerp.

I have been going to Antwerp off and on for about 14 years, and one of the main reasons I go back is the Kulminator bar at 32 Vleminckveld. It is run by Dirk and Leen van Dijk who take great pride in their bar and its beer. One of its main strengths is the large number of aged bottles that are stocked, though this has been reduced somewhat over the years as the British and American beer enthusiasts drink them quicker than they can be restocked! The bar itself is similar to a British one, with about 8 beers on tap (*van 't vat*). I went for three of the tap beers: Brigand Xmas, Bons Voeux and Chouffe N'Ice, and then retired to bed to recover from



the journey.

On Friday, when it was time for lunch I popped into my second bar called Paters Vaetje (Priests' Casket), which is right by the entrance to the Cathedral. This is a small café which an even smaller mezzanine floor, but it stocks about 100 good Belgian beers, and does good omelettes. After having one of these accompanied by a Hommelbier and a Bieken, it was off to do some more sightseeing before going to the Oud Arsenaal. This is a traditional Antwerp boozier that is a single small room with a large number of Belgian posters and memorabilia on the walls. It is also the main meeting point for various British beer fans that come over for the festival, including some I have come to know in the years I have been coming over, and some I hadn't met before. The Oud Arsenaal is also one of the best places to sample the local Antwerp beer De Konnick, which has appeared on occasion in Wetherspoons pubs. I did this, and then followed it with a Troubadour Blond and a De Konnick Excelsior, before heading off the final bar of the day to have some food.

The Waagstuk is a bar in a small square that was bombed by a German Zeppelin, which is what they call their house beer. It does reasonable food, but has a better beer selection

including the rare Westvleteren trappist beer. This was sampled along with the house beer before heading back to the hotel.

Saturday dawned, and it was off to the Festival. It is organised by the Belgian equivalent of CAMRA who are called Zythos, and is actually held in a town called Sint Niklaas (aka Santa Claus!) which is on the railway line between Antwerp and Ghent.

The festival is held very close to the station, in the town's stadsfeestsaal, which looks like a large industrial unit. It used to be held in Antwerp in scenic, but smaller, venues before the move to Sint Niklaas. The festival is arranged with 56 stalls which are each assigned to a brewery. The stalls are normally manned by the brewer themselves (or their family, the Belgians apparently have different rules on the under aged!) so the beer is normally of good quality and most have beer until the end of the festival. The brewers range from larger micro brewers such as Chouffe to smaller operations that seem to brew in the garden shed!. There were also a number of beer firms, which don't own a brewery themselves, but instead use someone else's for a day in the hope of being successful enough to actually get one themselves someday.

The festival itself runs from noon to midnight on the Saturday, and then from 11 to 9 on the Sunday. The glasses are 15 cl which is about half the normal size, and each beer is a 1 euro token. You hire the glasses, and it is not uncommon to hand over the glass at a stall and be given the beer

back in a different one, each glass being cleaned before being filled with beer. One change this year was that all EBCU members, which includes CAMRA, were able to claim two free beer tokens, another good reason to join!

Of course, being Belgium there are a large number of styles present, with Krieks, Geuze, Lambic, trappist, dubbels, triples, blondes and some very strange fruit beers. There are large numbers of Dutch, British, American and Danish visitors to the festival, and to help some of these Zythos produce a copy of the Beer tasting notes in English. Some of these notes are not exactly complementary, the one this year quoting a "pukking sweet taste" was probably the most off putting!

One thing I enjoy about the festival is that it is a very mellow affair, as I can sit back and just sip my beer as I soak up the atmosphere. Memorable beers included the 4000th Chouffe brew, De Ranke Kriek and Boon Oude Kriek, the beers from the small Millevertus brewery and old favourites from the Ecaussines, Achilles Alvinne and Boelen breweries that are hard to find elsewhere. After spending nearly 10 hours sampling just 16 beers it was back on the train to Antwerp to the hotel.

If you are interested in learning more about the Zythos Belgian beer festival it has a website at www.zbf.be, and a good place to find out the dates of other European beer events is at www.pint.nl/agenda and click on the EBCU link on the left.

Tweedies bar & restaurant

Relax by our traditional log fire or in our extensive lawned grounds. Tweedies is an excellent place in which to wind down after a hard day on the fells or simply soak up the Summer sun. Whatever the weather our five ever-changing guest ales can be sampled along with traditional Scrumpy cider. There is also a wide range of bottled beers from around the world and a great selection of excellent wines for the connoisseur.

Lots of choice for the discerning drinker but we also offer top quality gastro pub food from light meals to a hearty lunch, freshly-made pizzas and a full evening dinner menu. All can be taken either in the well-appointed bar area, in our separate non-smoking dining room or the Lodge restaurant.

Tweedies has a traditional pub atmosphere with a modern twist and is an experience to be enjoyed time and again. Please also feel free to pick up a leaflet about our splendid accommodation.

Currently Westmorland branch Pub of the Season



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Pub of the Year 2007: *The Eagle & Child, Staveley*



Westmorland Branch has voted for the Eagle & Child at Staveley to be our Pub of the Year 2007. To win this award a pub must satisfy a set of criteria which are:

Quality of Beer

This is the most important single factor.

The Eagle has five regular beers on offer using either local or independent breweries; the variety is endless and one never knows what to expect. All the beers are constantly served in excellent condition thanks to the efforts of Dave and Tom behind the bar.

Atmosphere / Style / Décor

This about the “feel” of the interior — is it a nice place to be? Has the most has been made of the actual

building? Is the décor appropriate to the type of pub it is? Does the style show respect for the building?

After a typically early-70’s makeover with plenty of Formica in evidence, in 2001 current owners Richard & Denise Coleman completed a major refurbishment of the pub to give it the layout which we recognise today. The Eagle is full of memorabilia of all sorts; a visit is the only way to truly look at the many themes in evidence. The furniture is what we like to see in a typical local village pub; all different types of tables, chairs, benches, window seats and stools to suit a variety of needs from a comfy chair, to a table for meeting around in a group.

Service and Welcome

Pretty self-evident this one. Is the service prompt, efficient and friendly? Do you get full measure or at least a top up without having to ask? Does the person serving you seem to regard you as a human being rather than just a source of revenue?

No problems at the Eagle; the service is as fast and good as the sometimes-busy pub can possibly allow. Top-ups are not a problem; help is readily given.

Clientele Mix

A good pub is one where anyone can go in and feel comfortable, whoever

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they are. There should be nothing about the pub which might cause discomfort (physical or otherwise) to certain groups.

The pub is a true mixture of local people from the area around Staveley as well as catering for many visitors to the Lakes. It's a good place to visit after a local walk or cycling trip, or for a good evening out, perhaps with the family for a meal. There is no background music or any noisy slot machine to spoil the pleasure.

Sympathy With CAMRA Aims

Does the pub espouse and promote CAMRA's values? Is cask beer given a positive push here? Is information offered about the ales sold?

Richard and Denise have always been great supporters of CAMRA and its aims. The ales speak for themselves and what you don't know Dave and Tom will do their best to keep you informed of. Their regular festivals in the riverside beer garden are a good way of introducing locals and visitors alike to the delights of drinking good well-presented real ale.

Good Value

This is about value for money, but in the widest sense of the term — i.e. not just "how cheap the ale is". The questions to ask revolve around: having made the effort to come here, having devoted some of my valuable time to the journey, having spent my hard-earned cash, how good a pub experience have I had?



Branch chairman David Currington presents Richard Coleman with the POTY 2007 certificate

Richard, Denise and their beer staff Dave and Tom, together with Lorna and Kerry in the kitchen, have certainly worked hard in recent years to achieve a very high standard in all these categories, so as to give good value, as a visit will prove.

Making use of mainly local or independent breweries and with five real ale hand pumps, a visit to the Eagle is to be recommended. With its fine ales, very reasonably-priced good food, real fire and two beer gardens (one on the banks of the river), it is good to go both summer and winter and with the 555 bus stopping right outside it is easy to visit without driving.

Outside there are two gardens. One (to the rear) is accessed directly from the function room balcony or via steps from the back entrance. The gem is the front garden across the road which abuts the fledgling River Kent directly at its confluence with the tributary River Gowan.

CONISTON BREWING CO.



EST. 1995

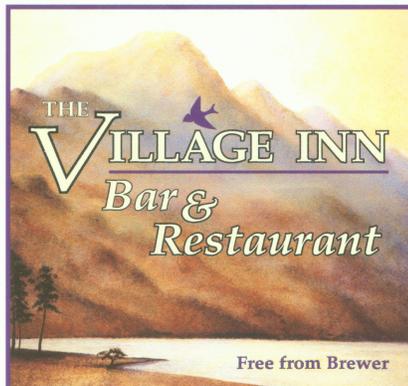
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Plentiful seating allows one to watch the river in all its various states depending on recent rainfall. Herons can sometimes be seen patiently fishing plus dippers bobbing around on the stones. The clear water also allows sight of the trout/salmon in the river. As mentioned already, Richard regularly holds beer festivals in the riverside garden from a small marquee, where in addition to great real ales he also dispenses Denise's famous Hog Roasts. See the Beer Festival page on our branch website (www.camrawestmorland.org) and the events section of these publications for future such events.

The pub can be accessed by bus (the 555/556 route stops both ways right

outside), by rail (Staveley station is a few minutes' walk away), on foot (a gentle walk up the River Kent from the Kendal area) or of course by car if you have a driver. If you want to be really near then the Eagle has accommodation for a stopover. At the very least you can combine a drink with a selection from the excellent menu on offer. Lunchtime meals for a fiver are on offer.

Westmorland CAMRA members would like to heartily congratulate Richard, Denise and all involved on gaining this Award and wish them well as they now go forward to represent Westmorland in the all-Cumbria final to find Cumbria's Pub of the Year for 2007.



Members and staff after the presentation: (left to right) Ken Bates, Marilyn Molloy, Richard Coleman (owner), Dave & Tom (at the bar), Jenny Turner, David Currington, Alan 'No Sox' Risdon and David Butler

Breweries Update

Dent

Set up by Martin Stafford in a converted barn next to his house in Dentdale by Martin Stafford in 1988 (the second Cumbrian micro after Yates). Purchase of the Sun Inn at Dent ensured a regular output for the beers but it was not long before other outlets were demanding supplies. Many awards later Martin decided on a career change. Paul and Judith Beeley made a seamless change of ownership (Paul Goodyear continuing as Head Brewer) and purchased the George and Dragon in Dent as their brewery 'tap'. The full range of regular beers continues and monthly seasonals have been added.

Tirril

Set up in 1999 by Chris Tomlinson in the former rear toilet block of the Queens Head Inn at the eponymous village. Demand for the beers caused a move with new plant to the former (1832) brewing rooms at Brougham Hall. A further move, with larger capacity, to Long Marton should be complete by the time you read this. Most of the output is delivered locally. Always available at the Queens Head (though currently for sale) and at the New Inn, Brampton.

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Manager Kerry Parsons and assistant manager Dan Schreiber welcome you to this newly-refurbished Cumbrian pub, with open log fires, reclaimed wooden and flag floors and an all-round cosy atmosphere. We pride ourselves on providing excellent-quality pub food and beverages, with service to match.

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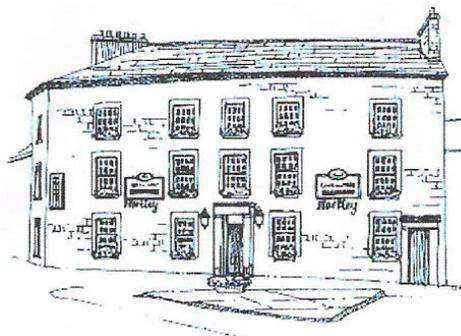
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The Clash of the Tight 'Uns

From the 'Early Stiltford Chronicles' by 'Barfly'
Part Two

Fr. Colum Hinch was heading past the retiring priest of Sacred Heart, as if intent on making straight for the bar, when Fr. Malachy McGonigles' arm shot out to halt him in his tracks. "Ah, Colum, me boy, are you here to do a write up on my long and eventful career then?" he asked breezily. The rotund bulk of Fr. Hinch turned to face the owner of the restraining arm, and with an almost dismissive gesture replied: "Actually no, Malachy, because most of what I need I've already got on file." Still in dismissive mode, he continued: "I only popped in to ask the Minister of Friday Street Methodists about an ecumenical meeting at his place next Tuesday."

Momentarily, Fr. Mac. appeared deflated by the response, but it took only seconds for his normal buoyancy to bounce back, as he told the new arrival: "Well, you wouldn't get the abstentious Reverend Gordon Gallup in a place like this normally but, to his eternal credit, the young fellow did stand me a pint", hoping to prick the new arrival's conscience, and adding: "you'll find him over there nursing a blackcurrant and lemonade cocktail."

Fr. Colum Hinch made as if to move away, but the restraining arm reached out once more, and the voice of Fr. Mac. had an almost pleading tone to it as he asked: "If you're having your usual Barley Mild and Stout top up mine's a pint of 'Headstone', Colum."

The latter cast a somewhat distracted glance into the gathering throng, before saying: "Ah, I'm off the jar myself these days, Malachy, but I'll see what I can do for you," and shot off in the direction of the Rev. Gallup. At his side, Fr. Timothy Trotter drawled: "Keep your eye open for flying pigs, Malachy." The soon-to-retire priest shook his head but made no comment.

As the departing Fr. Hinch reached his intended target and ordered the same drink as the Friday Street Minister, Fr. Mac. said: "The pair of them look as if they'd rather be at the South Pole than in here, don't they?" The tall, gaunt outback bred priest who was set to replace him pulled another of his lopsided grins and replied: "You're not wrong there, Malachy. They're like a pair of goldfish that've been tipped into a jerry full of matured overnight, recycled ale." Coming to a snap decision, Fr. Mac. turned to his colleague and told him: "I've got to kick start this bunch into something half resembling life, Timothy, so I think I'll go and jolly up old Rummage at the bar...be back in a jiffy." As the big Irishman made for the bar, he heard the familiar Aussie drawl saying: "I'm not holding my breath, sport." Approaching the Rev. Rummage's side, Fr. Mac. called out: "You're like a penguin warming an egg with that wee bit thing, so you are, Rummage," and reaching the

(Continued on page 29)

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(Continued from page 27)

vicar of All Saints Parish church's side added: "let me buy you one that's cooler than room temperature, for pity's sake man." The Reverend Rummage's fragile shoulders shook as the big priest clapped an arm round them. "Well, if you insist," came the reply. From a distance the tall Aussie grinned and glanced skywards.

Suddenly a youthful voice chirped up beside them, saying: "It's okay, Father, I owe him for the last one so I'll get that." Momentarily startled, Fr. Mac. replied: "That's fine by me...order away," assuming that the offer was inclusive. This happy illusion was soon shattered by the ordering of two halves of Knight's Barley Mild, which were then blithely and innocently sipped before the astonished priest's eyes. "I've just taken over at the new church on St. Elmo's Lane," announced the eager and youthful voice of the Rev. Luke Sharp, blissfully unaware of any possible offence. "You mean that glass and aluminium cornflake box, with the detached spire that looks like a concrete nutcracker? Very handy locality, that," the big Irishman observed, with characteristic bluntness.

"D'you mean with it being close to all the re-located emergency services, Father?" enthused the young reverend, the sting of Fr. Mac's comment failing to penetrate his aura of enthusiasm. "I was thinking more of that other cereal box, the 'British Flag', over the road, actually," came the robust response, followed up with

a cheeky grin.

Breaking into the chat, the thin, somewhat high pitched voice of the Rev. Rummage asked: "Who's providing the entertainment tonight, Malachy?" Before he could answer, landlady Viola Felix, leaned over the bar to reply: "We've got Vic Earle and Ray Gray playing tonight." Then another of the regulars, old Algie Green, the street corner newspaper vendor, who'd just arrived at the bar, chipped in to say: "You'll know them, Father, they're the local song and comedy lads who do the Thursday night spot at the 'Bluebottle' on Bermuda Avenue." Fr. Mac's face lit up as he grinned and told him: "Indeed I do know the pair of 'em. Go by the name of 'Tee Junction', so they do, and a rare bunch of scallies they are too," before going on to add, mischievously: "Sure it'd be a revelation to be on the other side of the grille if ever either of those two came into my box, and that's the truth."

To one side of Fr. Mac., the Reverend Rummage commented: "I rather fancy the only god they worship is Bacchus, in the tap room of the 'White Hart', Malachy." The big priest roared out his approval of the remark, saying: "Well said, wee man, well said yourself." From a little way along the bar, old Liam, the undertaker, coughed and managed to comment: "I wouldn't count on either of them buying you a gargle, Malachy," almost achieving a wry smile before returning to coughing mode.

(Continued on page 31)

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Winners of
'Multiple Beer Retailer of the Year 2007'
awarded in February 2007

BOOTHS

(Continued from page 29)

Liam Flatt was one of the few of his parishioners who always addressed the priest by his name, and though many regarded it as disrespectful it neither offended Fr. Mac. nor caused the dour, sardonic natured undertaker the least bit of concern. "Oh, and why might that be so, can I ask, Liam?" queried the priest, with a knowing smile and a wink at the eavesdropping young bargirl, Nancy.

"As if you didn't already know the ways of the pair of them, Malachy," the taciturn old timer said, almost managing a smile between coughs, before going on to say: "you'll mind that they won 250 grand between them awhile back, and they're still living like a couple of sparrows in their rented council flats." Coughing, he added: 'sure you'd be lying cold on the slab in my parlour before you ever had the hint of a jar out o' the pair of 'em, Malachy?"

By then the tall, gaunt faced figure of Fr. Timothy Trotter had joined the little group at the bar, and felt urged to add a comment of his own, saying: "They sound tight enough to share a wooden leg, if you ask me, Liam." Laughter broke out amongst those nearby, some of it boisterous and some a mite self conscious, bearing in mind the broad scope of the remark when applied to the assembled circle of clerics and their associates.

That was when the gangling Aussie one winked at bargirl, Nancy, and furtively passed something over the bar to her, before addressing his

retiring colleague. "I'll order you and the rest of this miserable herd a decent round of drinks in, Malachy", he shouted, before turning to the bar and saying to Nancy: "Get this pack o' dingoes what they want and I'll put up the tin." Visible sighs of relief wafted out from those still warming the dregs of the last singular act of generosity.

When the round was in, Fr. Timothy patted his pockets in mock alarm and declared: "Strewth, mates, some blighter's had me wallet!"

All about him faces fell like bricks before a wrecking ball.

Then, on cue, Nancy held up and waved the wallet, shouting: "Is this what you're after, Father?"

The sense of relief was palpable. "Amazing how a drop of rain brings them all to the billabong", came the droll aside from Fr. T., and Fr. Mac. nudged him in the ribs as he replied: "So it does, Timothy, so it does."

Casting a glance about him, Fr. Timothy chuckled as he then said: 'You know the saying: 'what goes round comes round', Malachy?' 'Indeed I do,' came the response, and the big priest grinned in anticipation of another of Fr. Timothy's observations.

'Well, waiting on the generosity of this bunch of tight wads is like cooling your heels while watching out for Pluto to return to square one.'

The pair laughter uproariously, although the seed corn of the remark fell on the very stony ground of a social landscape that had more in common with Mars.

Branch Diary 2007

June

- 9th Alan 'Nosox' Risdon's septuagenarian bash at Watermill, Ings – Noon start; all welcome to drop in and wish the 'old fella' well. Some drinking may well be involved!
- 11th Summer Social evening. Pub crawl down Patterdale starting at Kirkstone and going as far as Peter's bus will coast down hill. Hopefully we will make Brotherswater Inn at Hartsop, and thence to Glenridding and even the Brackenrigg at Watermillock – don't tell Solway...
- 16th A once in a lifetime special event – an away day pub crawl to Edinburgh to celebrate, again, Alan's 70th birthday – see website for train times – not to be missed. You will definitely be part of a 'select band'

July

- 12th Branch Meeting, Royal Oak, Appleby. Please note that this is a Thursday meeting to give those who can't make Mondays a chance to meet us all. They had better be there!
- 20-22nd Beer Festival at White Horse, Kings Meaburn – now becoming an annual event for us; a great day out in the deepest Westmorland countryside. See website for travelling times.

August

- 13th Social Evening – Brewery visit – location still being negotiated – watch website for full details as they become known.

September

- 10th Branch Meeting – venue TBA.

October

- 10-13th 14th Westmorland Beer festival at Town Hall Kendal; see our website for full details nearer the event.

*Pick up points (unless stated otherwise): Kendal Leisure Centre & Ambleside Market Cross
For further details contact Jenny Turner, tel. 01539 731800, email jenuj@tiscali.co.uk
For transport arrangements/bookings, contact Peter Handley on 01539 824248
Branch website: www.camrawestmorland.org*

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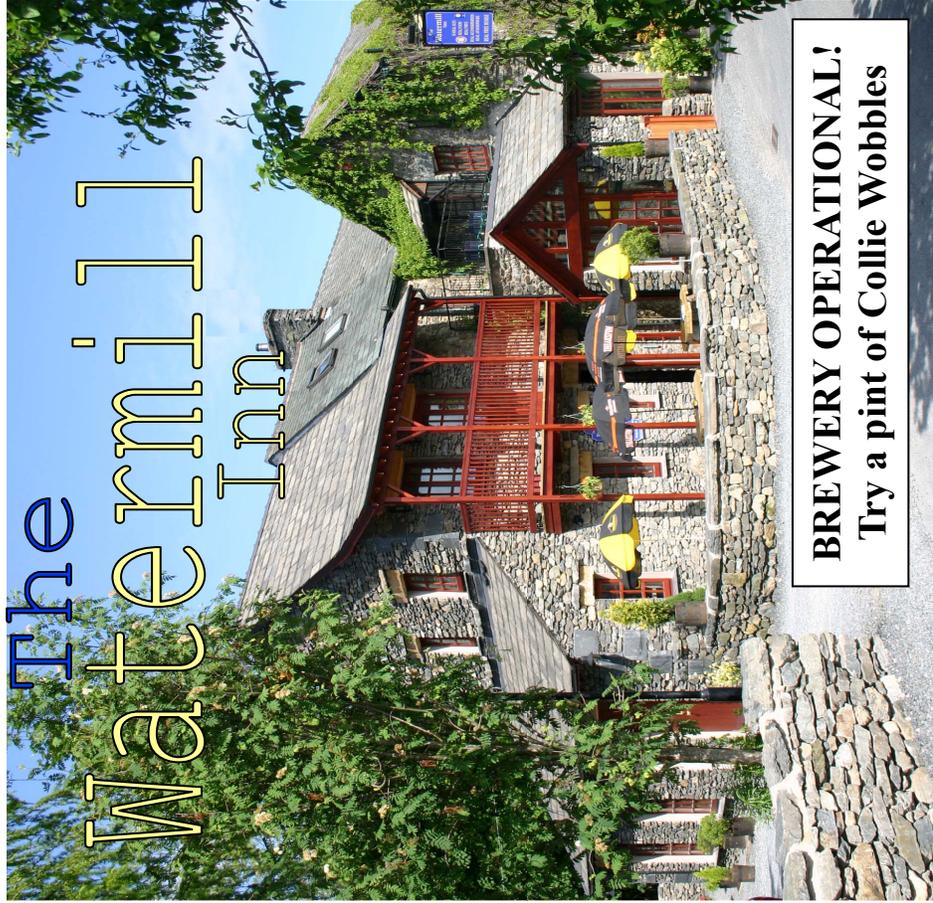
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