

CANNYBEVVY

June/July

Issue 202

I am free, please pick me up

Searching for Micro Brews in Sunny Florida

IDGE STREET

Short Stay Free

THE BARRELS ALEHOUSE

**GATESHEAD
UPDATE**

**SMOKING
BAN**

**ODDFELLOWS
FESTIVAL**



Newsletter of Tyneside & Northumberland Branch of the Campaign For Real Ale

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Editors Intro

Apologies for the delay of this Canny Bevvy as it was originally put back due to the Beer Festival and this has been compounded by me not having access to a PC and the interweb. An error (only one!) occurred last issue when I credited the York article to Duncan Couchman instead of Duncan Woodhead, however he now wishes to be known as 'Couchman' from now on, so all's well that ends well.

Following the last AGM we have a new Press and Publicity Officer, Neil Harvey who takes over from Martin Ellis whom we thank for all of his work on behalf of the branch over the years.

Another recent development in the branch is the re-introduction of the 'Pub of the Season' award which will hopefully highlight pubs in our branch area that may not get the publicity they deserve.

Due in the next Canny Bevvy is the list of pubs in Newcastle which serve real ale, a bit late again, but it is taking a bit of time to get together.

Finally, please support the campaign for a full pint which was promised by New Labour in their 1997 manifesto more details in this issue (Politicians forgetting promises, whatever next, they'll probably exempt themselves from The Freedom of Information Act !!!!!)

And finally a big round of applause and congratulations to all of those people who volunteered to make the recent Newcastle Beer Festival another huge success.

PS: Berwick Rangers are the Scottish third division champions if you didn't already know that!

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BRANCH CONTACTS

CANNY BEVVY

Branch Contacts
Chairman Gary Marshall
chairman@cannybevvy.co.uk

Secretary Anthony Robinson
secretary@cannybevvy.co.uk

Treasurer Gary Hinson
treasurer@cannybevvy.co.uk

Social Secretary Bill Case
socialsecretary@cannybevvy.co.uk

Membership Bill Case
membership@cannybevvy.co.uk

Beer Festival Organiser Bill Wilkinson
festivalorganiser@cannybevvy.co.uk

Canny Bevvy Editor Gary Marshall
bevvyeditor@cannybevvy.co.uk

Bevvy Distribution Jim Woodhouse
bevvydistribution@cannybevvy.co.uk

Press & Publicity Neil Harvey
press@cannybevvy.co.uk

Pubs Officer Gary Marshall
pubsofficer@cannybevvy.co.uk

Webmaster Jan Anderson
webmaster@cannybevvy.co.uk

Diary Dates JUNE
Monday 4th June, Branch meeting, Prince of Wales, North Shields 8 pm
Monday 2nd July, Branch meeting, Delaval Arms, Old Hartley 8 pm

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Programme Design & Layout by:

 Tel: 01733 751286
dan@tamoko-design.co.uk

Programme Advertisement Sales by:

 Tel: 01536 358670
N.Richards@btinternet.com

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Micro Brews in Florida

I recently went on holiday to visit friends who had emigrated from Gateshead to Kissimmee, Florida and to do the whole theme park thing with the family. I thought it might be informative to put fingers to keyboard and share my drinking experiences with Canny Bevy readers who might find themselves in a similar predicament of finding something decent to drink in the 'Land of the Fizzy'. If you are not a Coors, Miller or Budweiser fan you may be a bit apprehensive at visiting a country dominated by big brewers like Anheuser Busch who even own a couple of the theme parks. However, you should not despair as America actually brews some of the finest beer on the planet; you just haven't found it yet! All is not lost and after all, it was an American, John B Segal, a hop grower from Grandview, Washington who introduced the Cascade hop which is a mainstay of the U.S. micro brewing industry and an integral ingredient of many fine British beers today.

First stop was the hire car company at Sanford Airport to add another driver to the car insurance. After all, who was going to drive once I had discovered the source of all this fine beer? Next was the local supermarket to stock up on bottles, avoiding anything from the big boys. Supermarkets in the Florida usually sell their beer in 6 packs of 12 oz bottles at between \$6 – 8\$ which is £3.48 – £4.60 after you add on the 7% sale tax which they don't stick on until you get to the till. America excels in making heavily hopped, high gravity IPA (India Pale Ale) style beers. Just how high the gravity is you may never know as despite being warned of an early death by the Surgeon General you will not find the alcohol content anywhere on the label on the majority of bottles. Although I failed to find anything in the class of the stunning Goose Island IPA from Chicago or Alaskan Smoked Porter, there was a fine selection of micro brews. Here are some of the favourites I managed to try:

Sierra Nevada Pale Ale 5.6%, (a hoppy IPA), Wheat
 Samuel Adams Honey Porter (a sweet porter), Brown Ale, Black Lager, Cherry Wheat (cherry dominates, obviously), White Beer (a Belgium wheat style)
 Blue Moon Belgium White 5.4% (a Belgium wheat style with plenty of citrus, akin to Kronenbourg Blanc or a poor man's Hogaarden)
 Stone Pale Ale 5.4% (a highly hopped, fruity IPA)

A visit to Sea World filled me with expectation as I recalled on my first visit several years ago there was a small beer festival giving away free beer. It's funny how free beer sticks in the memory. This had actually turned out to be a plastic cup of free experimental beer which made me the unpaid guinea pig for a global brewer. Thank the lord they limited me to 3 small cups. This time around there was still free beer in bigger plastic cups (about a half pint), it wasn't experimental anymore and there seemed to be no limit to the amount of times you could go back. Sadly, it was all tasteless fizz, even the Winter Brew which claimed to have been aged in old bourbon casks had no discernable flavour even after letting it warm above the near 2 degrees that it was served at. After trying 4 different beers I found I had drunk less than a half pint and had binned the rest! Yes, I did say that it was free!

On a later visit to Sea World I did manage to find another free bar in the same building which was trying to promote different flavour syrups which were added to the beer. Ah ha! I thought, this was what I had been supposed to do with the previous beer in order to add some flavour. Genius I thought! This could revolutionise brewing by adding all the flavour afterwards and saving on all those expensive brewing ingredients. I was just about to purchase the entire UK franchise for this

wonder syrup when a slight flaw in my plan came to light. Although the beer undeniably now had taste it was so sickly sweet that it now tasted like an alcopop. Pass me the bin please. In fairness, I did manage to get two fairly decent beers at this bar without the addition of syrup. The Red Hook brewery ESB (a 5.9% full bodied fruity special bitter) & Heffeweis (a 6.5% German wheat style) but I needed to let them warm up before I could taste anything. I was about to settle down for a session when it was pointed out that heckling at the dolphin show wouldn't be appreciated and might upset the kids.

Florida has a lot of nice pubs typically in the bar – diner style. This means that the majority of space is taken up by dinning tables with the drinkers seated or standing around an island bar (think Cheers). The only trouble is that the place is so damn big and they are so far apart that someone always has to drive. Fortunately, on my visit to The Town Tavern in Celebration, 721 Front St #110, Kissimmee 34747 (Phone 407 566 2526) it wasn't me. Celebration incidentally is a model town built by the Disney corporation where the rich and even richer live in million dollar mansions behind white picket fences and perfectly manicured lawns. Florida in general is good value to eat out and The Tavern was no exception with the bill coming to around £60 for the 6 of us. On the beer front I was drinking the Sam Adams Winter Lager at 6% ABV for around \$4 a pint (about £2.25) on draught which was a very good spiced ale with hints of coriander. The Tavern also had an extensive range (99 of them) of bottled U.S. and international beers which is not untypical of that type of pub. I tried the local Shipyard brewery Pale Ale (5.8%) which was not as good as my expectations of it had been but still very drinkable.

I also visited a bar called Houlihan's in Kissimmee at 8520 West Irlo Bronson Memorial Highway, Kissimmee, 34747-1014 (Phone: 1 407 809 0900) at which I enjoyed the 4.8% Sam Adams Boston Lager and the 5.4% Blue Moon Belgium White on draught. I

also tried the Yeugling Lager which seems to be popular in this area but found it lacking any great taste. On this basis I did not try the Yeugling Black & Tan which can be found in bottles in the supermarkets. Another bar in the area to try that I did not get to was Harry Ramsbottom's at 5260 West Irlo Bronson Memorial Highway #112, Kissimmee, 34746-5349 (Phone: 1 407 396 4114) which is reputed to serve real ale. Both these pubs are just off U.S. Highway 192 which is the main East – West road through Kissimmee.

On my previous trip to Florida some ten years or more ago, I stayed on International Drive. There was a bar called Bennigan's adjacent to the Holiday Inn which is a chain of bars that had a large number of quality draught and bottled ales. Sadly, I did not get around to visiting it this time but the chain still thrives and could be worth visiting if you are in the area. Less than a mile south of there and not so thriving on International Drive is a Mediterranean style precinct called the Mercado and an English style pub called the Cricketers Arms at 8445 International Drive, Orlando, Florida, 32819-9351, (Phone: 1 407 354 0686). This was a vibrant area 10 years ago but now there is barely a shop or café left open as people have chosen to rent relatively cheap villas in Kissimmee rather than stay in the large I – Drive hotels. Apart from the pub the only thing of interest nowadays at the Mercado is the Titanic museum.

I used to love the Cricketers with it's olde worlde wooden beams on my first visit but sadly the pub and it's beer have also seen better days in my opinion. The beers on hand pump were Fuller's London Pride at 4.1%, & ESB at 5.5%, Shipyard Old Thumper at 5.9% with Fuller's India Pale Ale at 4.8% advertised on the wall outside so it may have been available at some time or other. The Old Thumper is actually Shipyard's version of the Ringwood beer using the same recipe. The pub also shows the Premiership & England football matches. I tried a pint of the ESB which I couldn't finish as it tasted strangely stale,

although not vinous. The wife tried the Budweiser Light which also tasted the same which is curious for a pasteurised beer. A bit like that glass of water that you left by your bed side and drank out of desperation two nights later. I can only hope this was a one off otherwise it's a case of Bud Light stopped play at the Cricketers and you can avoid the follow on for me!

My last night in Florida coincided with my birthday so I wasn't driving again. Result! To celebrate the occasion we headed for the Disney Boardwalk for a meal which is a resort hotel with a boardwalk and small beach around a lake with shops and restaurants. It is free to enter and is an ideal place to view the nightly firework display from the near by Epcot Centre. It is also home to the Big River Grille & Brewing Works which has it's own micro brewery on site. 2101 Epcot Resort Boulevard (Disney's Boardwalk), Lake Buena Vista, Florida, 32830-8407, (Phone: 1 407 560 0253) I didn't think the food was fantastic although others in our party enjoyed it, but hell buddy, I wasn't there for the food was I!



This is the second brewery under the Big River name, with the original being situated in Chattanooga, Tennessee. On my visit there was no sign of the Choo Choo but there were 7 pumps on the bar dispensing 6 different beers: Southern Flyer Light Lager 3.6% (Liberty hops),

Gadzooks Pilsner 5.0% (German Hersbrucker hops), Steamboat Pale Ale 5.5% (Perle hops), Rocket Red Ale 5.3% (Crystal malt & Cascade hops), Sweet Magnolia Brown Ale 5.2% (the winter seasonal using Mt Hood hops & Crystal

& Chocolate malts from the U.K.) and a Special pump dispensing IPA at 6.5% on this occasion. Other beers in the portfolio but not available on my visit included Wowzer's Wheat at 4.3% (a summer seasonal using Bavarian yeast) and Iron Horse Stout at 5.6%. The stout, brown and red ale have won medals at the Great American Beer Festival in Denver on more than one occasion. Many of the hops, yeast & malts used were sourced from the U.K. and Germany to give an authentic flavour to the different styles. I didn't get time to try the pilsner but all the others were excellent with the Red and the Special IPA being personal favourites.

One final thing to note, if you travel by Virgin Atlantic you will fly into Orlando International airport as opposed to Sanford if you are in the cheap seats. This affords you the opportunity to visit the Shipyard brewery on your way in and out which is America's only airport situated micro brewery. That should cure your fear of flying!

Cheers,
John Whitfield

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Gateshead Update Tyneside and Northumberland

Following last month's list of pubs/clubs in Gateshead that sell real ale there are a couple of additions to the list;



The John Bull Inn

Gateshead Fell Cricket Club, Eastwood Gardens, Gateshead. tel. 0191 4600190 (Probably best to ring as they are a private club but have put on music nights open to the public).

Olde Cross, Barmoor Lane, Old Ryton Village, NE40 3QP tel. 0191 4134689 Recently reopened, have been told that the beer is as good as ever. And finally a new one to add, thanks to Tony Turner for the info:

The Sun, Market Lane, Swalwell, tel. 0191 4887783 beats Dunston by having 2 real ales on sale starting in May, regular ale is Jennings Cocker Hoop at 4.6%, the first guest was/is Hopback Crop Circle at 4.2%. The guest will be rotated regularly, so call in and give it a try.

CAMRA Pubs of the Year

We have been presenting the certificates for the pubs of the year as voted by the members of the branch. Thanks to Neil, Gus, Norman, Margo and all of their staff for making us welcome. As a reminder the pubs are

North Northumberland

The John Bull Inn, 12 Howick Street, Alnwick NE66 1UY tel. 01665602055

South West Northumberland



The Boathouse, Station Road, Wylam NE41 8HR tel. 01661 602233

South East Northumberland



Tap and Spile, 23 Manchester Street, Morpeth NE61 1BH tel. 01670 513894

Tyneside

Newcastle Arms, 57 St. Andrews Street, Newcastle NE1 5SE tel. 0191 2602490

We then sent our squad of specially trained drinkers around the pubs to choose one to go forward into the NE regional vote which after a close vote was the **Newcastle Arms**.

North East Regional Pub of the Year

The following have been selected by each of the branches in the North East for the regional pub of the year.

Newcastle Arms, 57 St. Andrews Street, Newcastle NE1 5SE

Number Twenty-Two, 22 Coniscliffe Road, Darlington DL3 7RG
Victoria, 86 Hallgarth Street, Durham DH1 3AS
King's Arms, Beech Street, Sunderland SR4 6BU
Ship Inn, Low Road, Middlestone Village DL14 8AB

Any branch members able to visit all of these and would like to vote email me with the results of your vote, and it will be counted towards the branch decision.

Tynedale Beer Festival 2007

This year's festival will be held at the usual venue of Tynedale Rugby club in Corbridge from the 14th to the 16th of June. More information can be found at:

www.tynedalebeerfestival.org.uk.

The branch is hoping to have a stall there.

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Real Ale

Quiz Night
Wednesday

The Smoking Ban and the Future

One of the headlines in the last Canny Bevvv shouted loud and proud that 'Millions will return to the pub after smoking ban'. I very much hope that this is right but would suggest that this optimistic appraisal of how the trade will fare in the immediate aftermath of the ban is to say the least based on flawed research. Using previous bans as a marker in places such as New York, Ireland and Scotland a pattern seems to be evident. Although those that can survive the initial two to three years will eventually see business recover, that same period of time will see many go to the wall whilst bars and other licensed premises struggle to reorganise themselves in to a new order. A typical figure would see a drop in sales of around 10%. Bizarrely figures in Scotland and Ireland also show tobacco sales during this time to have gone up!

With the most at risk pubs being traditional wet led establishments CAMRAs almost blasé approach would seem to me to be a surprising one. Of course this stance was based on research into what people say they plan to do after the ban but although 840,000 people, who currently do not use their pub at all, say that they will in the future I would say that to base our hopes on this relatively small section of society, who have never visited pubs in the past and, despite good intentions, probably won't in the near future, is ludicrous. The article went on to tell us about community pub week, the very same community pubs that will be most under threat over the next few months and years.

The effects of the ban will be far reaching. Of course many pubs will be cleaner and more healthy places to spend time but in five years time will CAMRA have any community pubs left to support? The gastro pub and style bar will no doubt survive but the swathe of customers that traditional wet led pubs are about to lose may be too many for some to bear. Real ale is of course a quality indicator and a

unique selling point so those that sell it may be slightly protected from general trends and those that have prepared any outside space will also fare a little better. Café culture is, however, a long way off in Northern England.

My biggest fear is that in five or ten years time people will wake up one day and suddenly say "where have all our pubs gone?" Sure the licensed trade will still exist but will traditional pubs be part of it. Over hundreds of years England's pubs have developed a style and feel that is not only unique but also famous the world over. Make no mistake, this ban threatens that! In recent years the resurgence of cask beer via micro breweries has been one of the trades few success stories but if this is to continue the very pubs that they sell to must find a way to simply stay in business!

Although the future for many pubs may be uncertain CAMRA actually have a fantastic opportunity to spread the real ale word. Whilst landlords struggle to find a way forward CAMRA can help them. As previously mentioned cask beer can, and is, often a unique selling point especially when compared to the bland and unimaginative Barras type pubs that proliferate in our towns and cities so those that are not made to see its value will be in greater danger. Another selling point for pubs is beer quality and real ale is usually a fair indicator for quality and standards in other areas. Finally the pub is the only place you can buy cask conditioned ale and in these days of supermarkets using beer as a loss leader this may be a salvation to many. CAMRA must seize this opportunity and aggressively promote their real ale cause to not only to the public but also within the trade. If new licensees can be persuaded then the future may not be quite so bleak and whilst promoting real ale CAMRA may just be able to save the traditional pub while they are at it!

Graeme Oswald
Oddfellows, North Shields

The Cooperage

The infamous *Cooperage* was one of the best loved Real Ale pubs in the city, and won the coveted accolade of the Best Real Ale Pub of the Year on a couple of occasions. However, over the past few years, it sadly lost its way...UNTIL NOW!

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Cheers from *Leon Gingell* and all my fantastic staff

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Take it to the Top



A QUARTER OF PINTS IN THE UK ARE SERVED LESS THAN 95% FULL. CAMRA CALLS FOR CONSUMERS TO "TAKE IT TO THE TOP"

A new survey by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) has today revealed that one in four pints in the UK are served less than 95% full and this is costing beer drinkers a staggering £481 million every year! CAMRA has today launched a nationwide petition calling for the Government to end short measures as they promised a decade ago.

For the first time in its 35 year history, CAMRA has taken out advertisements in national media* in order to let consumers know how to make a stand against this unfair practice. The CAMRA survey of local authorities' trading standards departments has revealed:

- A shocking 26.6% of all pints served are over 5% short measure
- The worst example found was 13% short of a full pint
- 76% of pubs goers want the Government to stick to its promise to ensure drinkers get a full pint

Beer drinkers lose £1.3 million every day by paying for a full pint but receiving less than 100% liquid in the glass. Labour had made an election promise to legislate against short measures in 1997.

This promise has not been fulfilled and has cost the consumer £4.5 billion over the last decade.

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	5%	10%	15%	20%	5%	10%	15%	20%	5%	10%	15%	20%	5%	10%
9p	10p	11p	12p	13p	14p	16p	18p	20p	22p	24p	26p	28p	30p	32p
27p	30p	33p	36p	39p	42p	45p	36p	40p	44p	48p	52p	56p	60p	

Due to varied glass designs these figures cannot be guaranteed and are to be used only as a guide.

CAMRA Chief Executive Mike Benner said: "It is a disgrace that up to a quarter of all pints served in the UK are less than 95% liquid

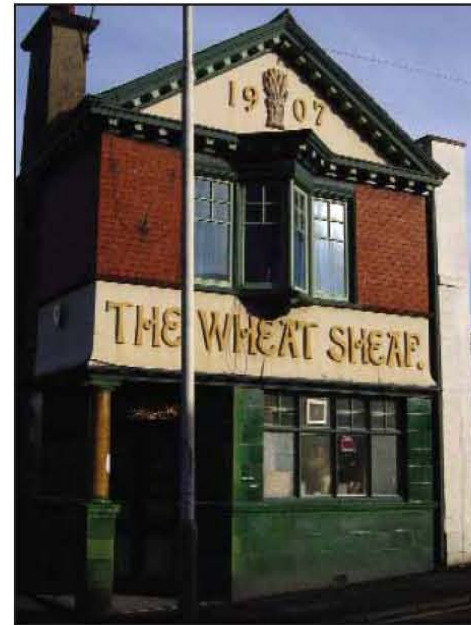
when the consumer is paying for a full pint every time. Labour had promised to introduce legislation to end this unfair practice ten years ago and the continuing cost to beer drinkers from the Government's inaction has now run into billions of pounds."

CAMRA has set up a petition for consumers calling for the government to introduce legislation that a pint will not be less than 100% liquid. As well as being online at: www.takeittothetop.co.uk, copies of the petition will be at CAMRA beer festivals across the UK. Petition postcards will be sent out to CAMRA's 85,000 strong membership nationwide to sign.

Mike Benner added: "This is not just a problem that affects real ale drinkers. Lager drinkers and cider drinkers are being short changed too.

"It is time the Government met its promise and made sure pub goers get the full pint that they pay for every time. I would urge all beer drinkers that are fed up with being ripped off at the bar to sign CAMRA's 'Take it to the top' petition and help us make a difference."

The Wheatsheaf



26 Carlisle Street, Felling, NE10 0HQ
Tel: 0191 4200659

The Wheatsheaf is the Big Lamp Brewery's other pub, situated close to Felling Metro station. The Wheatsheaf is a basic, no frills pub that could be said to be a bit rough around the edges or alternatively to have 'a bit of character'. The pub consists of two areas, the main bar, which in the past was partitioned into a bar, sitting room and bottle and jug, which has a real coal fire.

There is also a back room through which you pass to go to the gents which is still the original situated in the back yard. The beer as mentioned is by Big Lamp, available on a recent visit were Prince Bishop, Sunny Daze, Bitter and Old Genie. Prices are very reasonable at usually under £2 a pint. In 2007 the Wheatsheaf is celebrating its 100th birthday as the current tiled pub replaced the original

plain pub in 1907. The Big Lamp Brewery is also celebrating 25 years of brewing this year and events are planned to mark the occasion, more info when we get it.



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Oddfellows Arms

The Oddfellows Arms likes to describe itself as "North Shields' best kept secret". Well, thanks to a very successful second Annual Beer Festival, that is no longer the case. The pub can now justly describe itself as North Shields' best known real ale pub.

The Oddfellows Arms has been owned and managed by husband and wife Graeme and Jane Oswald since March 2003, and boasts amongst its regular customers CAMRA members Alan and Linda Stobbs. Alan, of course, is well known as the Beer Orderer for Newcastle Beer Festival, and is a veteran of many other Beer Festivals, both CAMRA and pub-based, so it was only natural that when Graeme decided he would like the Oddfellows to host a Beer Festival in May 2006, he turned to Alan for advice.

In fact, Graeme went further than just asking for advice. He asked Alan to order the beers, set up the Festival Bar in the pub's Beer Garden, and then to run the Bar. Alan selected an outstanding range of 16 real ales, many from breweries not often, if ever, seen in the North East. Being a friend of Alan's, I decided to attend the Festival as a customer on the Friday night, but after noticing how Alan was being run off his feet, I volunteered to help behind the bar. Thus started my association with the Oddfellows Beer Festival, and I proceeded to work all day Saturday and Sunday! Alan's part in the festival should not be understated. He takes a week of his Annual Leave to make the festival a success, starting with the construction of the bar at the beginning of the week, taking delivery of the beer, racking and tapping the beer, and connecting all the hand-pumps up. He then works behind the bar for most of the time that the festival is open.

The bar for the first year was a bit of a hashed job, with part of it borrowed from Mordue Brewery, and the rest of it consisting of a cou-

ple of tables! Showing his commitment to future festivals, however, this year's bar turned out to be much more professional, a custom-built bar in fact, built by Dick Attlee of Real Ale Technical Services. Graeme has also invested in six hand-pumps, and hopefully will be persuaded to purchase more for next year's festival.

I would say that for a first try, last year's festival was a success, but due to the wet weather, which saw an invasion of snails down the back wall of the beer garden, it wasn't as much of a success as we had hoped.

Despite this, Graeme decided to press ahead with a second festival, and this year I believe it was a resounding success. This I would put down to it being better weather, more people knew about the festival, and the beer list again being very innovative. It was also decided to put a real cider on the Festival bar, to see if it held any interest for the festival goers. After helping out last year, Alan had asked me if I would help out again, and so at 5pm on Friday evening I found myself behind the bar ready for the fray. Alan had told me that Thursday night had been reasonably busy, and that Friday day had been steady, but I was confident of being able to cope on my own, and seeing how tired Alan looked, I told him and Linda to get off early and get a good night's rest, as Saturday would probably be busy.

Big mistake! The place got absolutely packed and I was rushed off my feet. Customers were three deep all along the bar, but luckily help was at hand in the form of CAMRA member Stuart Scott, who helped out when it became impossible to serve quickly enough on my own. It was made even worse by one real ale, Crazy Chick from Boggart Hole Clough brewery, having a tap which insisted on dispensing just a trickle, and took nearly two minutes to fill a half-pint glass. Closing time saw an extremely tired person making his way home.

I was however, back at 10:30 on the Saturday ready for opening time. The day turned out to again be very busy, but with both Alan and

myself behind the bar, it was much more comfortable. We were both pleasantly surprised with how far some people had travelled to attend the festival, with four CAMRA members from Mansfield branch turning up! Unfortunately, Saturday also saw the start of the downside of a Beer Festival, namely when the beers start to run out. Economics dictate that a successful Beer Festival is determined by how many beers are left at the end, and our beers started running out on Saturday. The first casualty was the real cider, Bushels from Biddenden in Kent, which had proved extremely popular, especially amongst the female clientele. Luckily, we managed to procure another cider from Jarrow Brewery, and this also proved a good seller, running out on the Sunday night. By the end of Saturday night, 8 of the 16 beers had been drunk dry.

Sunday proved to be reasonably quiet, but I think this is only to be expected for a pub Festival. We still had a fair few people in, though, and by Sunday night only 4 beers remained. Graeme declared himself overall extremely happy with the way it had gone, not only had the festival been successful, but takings in the pub were also higher than usual. So now planning starts for a third festival. I have declared myself available to help behind the bar again, and all Alan and I have to do now is to persuade Graeme to increase the number of beers! We hope to have another four handpumps so that we can have 10 beers on handpump, and 10 on gravity. This means that when a beer on handpump runs out, we can switch one of the gravity beers onto the empty handpump, thus keeping a full range on the bar. Hopefully the number of real ciders will increase, as they did prove incredibly popular.

So, if you were there, thank you very much for attending, and if you weren't there, why weren't you there? Either way see you next year at North Shields best Beer Festival.

The festival started on Thursday May 3rd, and ran over the Bank Holiday weekend until Monday 7th May.

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