

# Editorial

Although we've only just completed an issue of *Hop Press* at the end of March, this special edition has been slipped in to go out with publicity for our annual big bash, the **Southampton Guildhall Beer Festival**. Some features, such as the crossword, have been omitted from this issue, it will return in the next regular edition (Summer/Autumn).

Details of the Festival are shown opposite, and just in case you miss them there, or are reading this from the back, they're repeated on the other end-paper!

We would urge visitors to the Festival to get their tickets well in advance. We are obliged by both the obvious fire regulations and by our contractual relations with the hall to keep a count of attendees. Last year at several sessions we reached our limits with pre-sold tickets and had to suspend on the door sales — disappointing people who had, in some cases, traveled long distances. We do our level best and can sometimes let an early leaver be replaced by a new entrant, but please do take this advice and **buy in advance**.

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Editor: Pat O'Neill  
1 Surbiton Road  
Eastleigh  
Hants, SO50 4HY  
023 8064 2246

hop-press@shantscamra.org.uk

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Global brewing giant S & N (Scottish & Newcastle) seem more than a little perplexed about their corporate identity. As we detailed in the last issue, they recently announced the closure of their Scottish brewery in Edinburg and we speculated that Newcastle might be next. It hasn't taken long for us to be proved right — the impending closure has just been announced. The almost obligatory PR statement, only a few weeks ago, that "we have no plans ..." is still ringing in our ears.

As well as closing the famous Newcastle Blue Star Brewery they also intend to take-over the Federation Brewery on the other side of the Tyne at Gateshead. This will end another piece of our brewing history, Federation was the last of a number of breweries cooperatively owned by working men's clubs. The 300 owning 'Fed' are unlikely to demur, each will each get over £70,000

This move will present S (not) & N (not) with a delicate embarrassment. Just a few years ago, after a lengthy campaign and extensive lobbying in Brussels, they were granted a PGI for Newcastle Brown Ale. PGIs are Protected Geographical Indicators, awarded by the EU very sparingly for certain named products to prevent any similarly named product being made anywhere else. As part of their case they stressed the uniqueness of the Tyne Brewery water and its yeast strains etc.; now to move Brown Ale to the Gateshead brewery they must return to Brussels and ask for a 'derogation' of the so recently awarded PGI! CAMRA feels that it is only its public duty to vigorously oppose the application — not because we've any time for Newkie Browns but to combat corporate greed and cynicism.

# Choosing the Beers

Pat O'Neill

This is an extra edition of Hop Press slotted into our normal bi-annual or tri-annual schedule in order to put out a little publicity for the forthcoming Southampton Beer Festival.

Our annual festival in Southampton's prestigious Guildhall will be in its eighth year when it opens on the evening of Thursday, June 3rd, with ever more beer on offer. Almost fourteen thousand pints will be waiting to slake even the most prodigious thirst! For variety these will come from about forty-five breweries and comprise over eighty individual brews.

All styles of draught British ale will be in evidence — dark milds, light milds, session bitters, best bitters, premium strong bitters, stouts, porters, 'golden' ales, wheat beers, spiced ales and even the odd cask-conditioned lager. There will be about fifteen ciders and perries and a plethora of foreign bottled beers.

No particular geographical or stylistic themes are used in the selection of beers but over the years, as the chooser of the beers, I have adopted some general principles for selection. These are:

1. Other than local breweries and a handful of 'expected favourites,' avoid breweries that were selected for last year's festival.

2. After deciding on the intended average abv for the whole event (4.5% is the figure we usually work from) try to get a good spread around this figure.

3. Make sure that all beer styles are represented by at least two or three examples.

4. Consider any unusual or 'one-off' brews being made by the selected breweries at festival time.

5. If at all possible try to have at least one or two unique brews that would not normally be found anywhere in the general pub trade (not always as easy as it may seem, can involve some telephonic wheedling with busy brewers!).

6. After establishing the list of beers from far and near, those from our Hampshire breweries are then added in — including those beers that are short-listed for our annual Hampshire Beer of the Year competition, which is judged at the festival.

After this, all that remains is to ensure that the quantities ordered add up to the size of the festival and hope that we can get them all to arrive within a few hours on the right day — Wednesday, the day before opening.

The policy of the festival's organising committee is to keep the actual beers chosen confidential until opening time but a few things can be said. We should have a cask version of a bottled beer brewed only to be sold at a famous national institution; there will be a stout brewed within fifty miles to an Irish recipe that has only ever been brewed before in the USA (!) and at least one authentically organic beer.

Sadly, one of our favourites of recent years, the lovely beers from Dwan Brewery in Tipperary will not feature — since their sole English distributor went into receivership at the end of last year the brewery itself seems to have folded as a result. Perhaps a lesson not to sign-up to exclusive dealerships.

# What's in a name?

Rob Whatley

In almost every edition of Hop Press we bring readers news of local pubs that have had their names changed. When the name of a pub is changed it often means the loss of a link to the history of the surrounding area, as well as causing problems for those trying to direct strangers around town.

The origin of the pub sign goes back to the late Middle Ages. At that time pubs, and for that matter all other retailers, had to identify themselves to the largely illiterate population. Thus pubs started displaying some visual symbol outside of their premises.

Pub names have a multitude of origins. Some may simply have the same name as the area in which they are located, such as the Freemantle Hotel and the Highfield in Southampton. Some may reflect local trades, such as the Brushmakers in Upham or the Bricklayers Arms in Wimpson. Pubs are also named after pastimes, animals, forms of transport, military victories or sporting events. Current trends suggest that pubs are given any name that it is thought might bring in extra punters. Many pubs are named after people, be they fictional or factual, famous or infamous. It is this category that we concentrate on in this article.

Kings and queens are the most likely faces to appear. Many pubs do not refer to a particular monarch but usually the pub sign will depict an identifiable ruler from history. The sign may not depict the whole of the body as in Lymington and Hursley, where we find the King's Head. Fortunately the King's Arms is usually a coat of arms rather than dismembered regal limbs. Perhaps the earliest featured specific king featured is the King Rufus at Eling is named after the third

son of William the Conqueror, and at Catterton the man who fired the arrow that killed him, Sir Walter Tyrrell, is remembered. The King Rufus in Chandler's Ford only took the name in 1997 but it does have a connection as the body of the king, killed while hunting in the New Forest, was reputed to have traveled through Chandler's Ford on its way to Winchester Cathedral. This pub has another royal connection as the King and Queen of Siam popped into the then Mount Hotel in 1934 while en route from London to Bournemouth. The name of King Alfred has recently appeared in Northam, but the long-standing Winchester example is more appropriately located.

The king who is responsible for the most common pub name in Hampshire is Richard II. The pubs do not though bear his name but that of his heraldic symbol, the White Hart. When he came to the throne in 1377 the king ensured that all members of his household wore the symbol, making it an early form of corporate identity. The name was so popular it became almost a generic name for a tavern. Ringwood has two examples, one distinguished as the 'Original.'

King Charles I is remembered at King's Worthy (though in recent years the "First" seems to have been dropped), while in Romsey we have the more unusual William IV. The King George in Millbrook gained its licence in 1933 and is probably named after George V, who died in 1936. The Old George in Fair Oak is of an earlier vintage, dating from the mid-1700's, it is likely to have been named after George I, who died in 1727 or his son, George II. Other Georges in the area can be found at Ringwood, Fordingbridge and until recently

New Milton. Some of the Georges depict our patron saint rather than a King.

In Hamble we have a King and Queen, which brings us to female monarchs. When the producers of *Eastenders* were looking for a name for a typical city pub they chose the Queen Vic. In Tony Gallagher's book, "*Southampton's Inns and Taverns*," Victoria is in the title of eight pubs and an hotel. Sadly only one of those is still open today, in Woolston. Until recently there was another example in Allbrook. Victoria's husband is also commemorated in the form of the Prince Consort, handily placed next to the Queen Victoria Country Park, Netley, and formerly in the now closed Royal Albert, which stood in the shadow of the Itchen Bridge. One of the couple's daughters-in-law is commemorated in another city tavern, the Alexandra in Bellevue Road is named after Edward VII's queen.

John of Gaunt, with a pub named after him at Horsebridge, was the son of Edward III and father of Henry IV but missed out on the big prize himself. Gaunt is a derivation of his birthplace, Ghent. Just to the south, at Michelmersh is another reminder of past royalty in the form of the Bear and Ragged Staff. The badge of the earls of Warwick it is usually a reference to Richard Nevil, who was know as Warwick the King-Maker.

Moving down the pecking order, the Prince of Wales is popular throughout the land and local examples can be found in Northam, Bishopstoke, and until recently in Winchester. Southampton had a Prince Regent in Portswood between 1983 and 1986 but it reverted to its former Newlands name before closing in 1991. Lords are also popular, especially those that were in command of land and sea victories. In Freemantle we find the Wellington Arms, which contains

many artifacts depicting the Iron Duke, and also the Duchess of Wellington. The latter was once known as the Duke of Wellington and probably changed to its current name in the late 1890's. The nearby Waterloo Arms, in Waterloo Road, records the location of his most famous victory. The Duke of Wellington in Bugle Street has been a hostelry since the 15th century and had previously been known as the Brewe House and the Shipwright's Arms before changing to its current name after 1815.

The efforts of Lord Nelson against the earlier naval threat at Trafalgar are commemorated by a pub bearing his name in Hythe, while his last ship is remembered in Hamble and opposite Southampton Central Station. A maritime lord of more recent vintage has also been commemorated in local pubs. The Mountbatten, in Lordshill, opened in 1980, with the opening ceremony being performed by Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Varyl Begg. The former inhabitant of Broadlands himself opened the Lord Louis, opposite the civic centre, in 1960. It was demolished in 1987, along with the adjacent bus station, to be replaced by the Marlands shopping centre. In Winchester, the India Arms (recently renamed the Old Coach House Inn) for many years depicted the Mountbatten coat of arms, recognising of his post as the last viceroy of India. There was another Indian connection in Southampton in the form of the Lord Roberts, one-time commander-in-chief of the British army in India. The name though was short lived for the pub that is now the Strand, in Canal Walk. Not far away, in Palmerston Road, what is now Bar 150, was for many years known as the Palmerston. It had previously been called the Star and Garter at a time when the road it stood in was known as West Front. In 1983 it was renamed Copperfields, for no obvious reason.

# Unitary authority

Ash Mather

If, like me, you feel bombarded with information about the maximum number of units of alcohol you should drink in a given period, you may also, like me, feel somewhat bemused, frustrated, irritated, resentful, wrathful and homicidal at the failure of those who preach these limits to give anything but scant, misleading and inaccurate information about what actually is a unit of alcohol and how many of these mysterious entities reside in the pint in your hand.

There have been efforts on the part of a few brewers to provide such information on their bottles, but this practice has not been widely adopted, and not all of those who have adopted it have presented the information accurately (a certain Scottish brewer please note). I have yet to see reference to units of alcohol on any pump clip.

And so, into the breach steps the Southern Hampshire Branch of CAMRA with more information than you probably want.

## What is a Unit of Alcohol?

Alcoholic strength is quoted as the 'percentage abv'. (alcohol by volume). If a beer is 5.0% abv, then 5.0% of your pint (exactly one fluid ounce) is pure alcohol.

One centilitre (1cl - one hundredth of a litre) of alcohol constitutes one unit of alcohol. Therefore a litre of a 1% abv. drink contains one unit of alcohol. So the simple formula is:

$$\text{(volume in litres)} \times \text{(abv in \%)} = \text{units}$$

### Example 1

A 500ml ( $\frac{1}{2}$  litre) bottle of 5% abv. beer contains:

$$0.5 \times 5 = 2.5 \text{ units of alcohol.}$$

### Example 2

A 37.5cl bottle of 6.5% abv. beer contains:

$$(37.5 \div 100) \times 6.5 = 2.4 \text{ units of alcohol}$$

(Well, 2.4375 actually, but let's keep it just to one decimal place).

## Imperial Measure

Our attachment to the pint measure adds a slight complication. A pint is 0.5683 litre, which is approximately  $\frac{4}{7}$  of a litre but not quite. Thus the formula for discovering how many units of alcohol are in a pint is:

$$\text{(abv in \%)} \times 0.5683 = \text{units}$$

### Example 1

A pint of 5% abv. beer contains:

$$5.0 \times 0.5683 = 2.8 \text{ units}$$

### Example 2

Two pints of 4.2% abv. beer contains:

$$4.2 \times (0.5683 \times 2) = 4.8 \text{ units}$$

## A Ready Reckoner

"That's all very well," you say, "but after 6 or 7 units my mental arithmetic becomes a little unstable ..."

Have no fear, we have the answer. The table overleaf lists, in intervals of 0.1%, every abv. between 3.0% and 6.0%, and the associated number of units of alcohol per pint. The minimum of numerical manipulation will provide a unit count for every abv. and any imperial quantity of alcoholic beverage you may consider it wise to consume. We had considered a short test at this point to see who is still following but there is no more space on the page ...

Calculate your pint(s):

## Smoke Signal

% abv	units per pint	% abv	units per pint
3.0	1.7	4.6	2.6
3.1	1.8	4.7	2.7
3.2	1.8	4.8	2.7
3.3	1.9	4.9	2.8
3.4	1.9	5.0	2.8
3.5	2.0	5.1	2.9
3.6	2.0	5.2	3.0
3.7	2.1	5.3	3.0
3.8	2.2	5.4	3.1
3.9	2.2	5.5	3.1
4.0	2.3	5.6	3.2
4.1	2.3	5.7	3.2
4.2	2.4	5.8	3.3
4.3	2.4	5.9	3.4
4.4	2.5	6.0	3.4
4.5	2.6		

### In conclusion, a warning

You are now armed not only with a device for calculating the number of units of alcohol you have drunk in the period of your choice, but also with a new means of irritating your drinking associates and boring the entire bar. Use your knowledge wisely.

Smoking in pubs has been under debate. Much of the debate here stems from the ban introduced in the Ireland. A recent visitor to Dublin told *Hop Press* that in the pubs that he visited the ban was being strictly enforced. Doubtless, our government is watching developments very closely.

Currently both the licensed trade and the general public appear to be against an outright ban. There is an industry-led *Charter for Smoking in Public Places*, to which CAMRA has signed up. Charter-compliant pubs **tell** customers about their smoking policy **before** they enter. This may state that smoking is allowed in all parts or that certain areas are set aside for non-smokers. However, recently a crack has appeared in the trade's united front as Wetherspoon's founder Tim Martin came out in favour of national legislation. Wetherspoons are already among the leaders, having non-smoking areas in most, if not all, pubs and better ventilation equipment than the average pub.

We have recently seen the the first totally smoke free pub in our area, the Travelers Rest at Hythe.. The pub's owners, Andrea and Morrison, also run the Coach and Horses at Cadnam, which is non-smoking in over 70% of its floor area. As a result it qualifies for three star grading in the 'Breathe Inn' scheme, run by New Forest District Council and New Forest Primary Care Trust. 23 pubs are currently in this scheme. Of course many who do smoke in pubs would like to give up. This has been recognised by NHS smoking cessation advisors who have run quit groups in a number of local pubs including the Dog and Crook at Brambridge, Eastleigh's Litten Tree and Romsey's Luzborough House.

# 2 Guineas a Pint!

Rob Whatley

Each year CAMRA conducts a national survey of beer prices in pubs. The Southern Hampshire branch always contributes to what is now recognised as the most comprehensive annual survey of pub pricing.

Reviewing the changes in beer prices over the last ten years also gives us an insight into how pubs have changed during that time. In our local survey we try to survey the same pubs each year so that we can gain an accurate reflection of price trends. When the survey started in 1987 a sample of pubs was chosen to reflect the mix of pubs in the area. Factors considered included owning brewery, whether it was managed, tenanted or a free house and location — between town centre, suburban and rural outlets. A more comprehensive price survey a few years ago indicated that the sample of pubs used did give a true reflection of local prices.

The past ten years have seen a massive upheaval in both the ownership and the nature of pubs. In 1994 the survey included the Spa, demolished as part of the West Quay development, and the Brook which, although still selling beer, is now a pay-to-enter music venue. (As the line ups for each month often reflect those of the mid-seventies, in the form of either tribute bands or the surviving members of the original band, it would be nice if the beer prices were also at seventies' prices, about 30p a pint!) One of the replacements in the survey was part of the Wetherspoon chain, in order to reflect the growth of the city centre circuit pub.

It is not only the pubs that have changed but also the breweries. In 1994 we still had Eldridge Pope pubs selling beer brewed in Dorchester and Marston's pubs offering the

products of the country's brewing capital, and Whitbread was still supplying its own beers to its vast estate. The main consistency is found within the pubs owned by the smaller breweries, both the more established such as Wadworth and Hall and Woodhouse and the new wave such as Ringwood and Hop Back. Of the real ales brewed by the major breweries it is only Flowers Original, Courage Best and Directors have consistently appeared in the same pubs over the past ten years. But although the names are the same, the breweries at which they are produced have changed.

One of the few things that has remained stable over the past ten years is the position of Guinness in the keg stout market. Although the alternatives such as Murphys are still around, Guinness remains dominant, albeit now in varieties of regular and extra cold. In 1994 the average price of Guinness was £1.82, in this year's survey it was £2.52, an increase of 38%. In 1994 the lowest price we found was £1.66 and the most expensive was £1.95. Ten years later the most expensive was £2.70 and the lowest was £1.89. This low price was at a Wetherspoon outlet, which is something of an 'outlier,' as the next lowest was £2.35 and using this price the differential between top and bottom is similar to that of ten year's ago.

These were the prices when the survey was conducted, during February. During the course of February many breweries decided to increase the price of what they charge pubs for their beers. This led to price increases in many pubs of up to 10p a pint. This is not the only factor that influences the price of your local pint. In the budget



Gordon Brown increased duty on beer by 1p a pint for standard bitter. This 'headline figure' is, of course, just obfuscation since after mark-up it becomes at least 3p or 4p at the bar. Other contributory factors include the overheads of running the pub, including business rates, staff costs and the maintenance of the building.

In 1994 around a third of the pubs in our survey were part of the Whitbread empire, reflecting their local market share. Today just two of those pubs remain as part of the Laurel group, inheritors of most of the former Whitbread managed houses. The others have been hived off to different groups including, Punch, Greene King, Enterprize, Carlsberg and a few (sadly only a few) are now free houses.

Looking now at the price of real ale, we start with the price of standard bitter, which we define here as being at or below 4% abv. In 1994 the average price was £1.51. In February this year the price average was £2.07, an increase of 56p or 37%. Although this is an increase above the rate of inflation it is interesting to note that the rise between 1987 (the first survey for which we have comparable data) and 1994 was 63p, up from 88p a pint. This represented an increase of 72% in just in just seven years, almost twice the rate over the past ten.

In the former Whitbread pubs the average price of Boddington's Bitter in 1994 was £1.57. The average price of standard bitter in the same group of pubs in 2004 was £2.14, which represented an increase of 36%, similar to the overall rate of increase. Meanwhile the rate of increase in the former Marston's estate, which is now largely in the hands of Greene King, was 43%. When the survey first started, Marston's pubs used to have some of the cheapest prices around.

But the higher rate of increase is not all down to Greene King, as the prices had started to rise sharply in the last few years under Marston's control.

Not surprisingly, the cheapest pint of bitter was again found in a Wetherspoon's outlet. In fact it was so much cheaper than most other outlets that it had the effect of reducing the average by several pence. One pub surveyed has been very kind to the real ale drinker with an increase in ten years of just 5p (3%) for standard bitter. The prices of lager and Guinness in this pub have however risen at rates close to the average. The rate of increase for the other pubs ranged from 18% to 64%, with a fairly even spread throughout that range.

The increases for stronger bitters and premium lagers such as Stella Artois or Kronenborg 1664 are at a similar rate to those for standard bitter. The average price for strong bitter has risen from £1.63 to £2.22 (36%) between 1994 and 2004, while the price of premium lager has risen from £1.84 to £2.52 (37%) during the same period. The price of keg cider (Strongbow or Dry Blackthorn) has risen at a slightly faster rate, from £1.70 to £2.39 (41%).

During the last ten years, prices in general, the RPI, have risen by around 29% whilst as we have shown the price of a pint has risen by around 37%. In many of these years there has been a penny a pint added to the excise duty on beer. Unfortunately, such increases are of little interest to many drinkers — those who buy all their alcohol on trips across the Channel. Until tax differentials between the UK and the rest of the continent are reduced this trade will continue, with the resulting loss of trade for our publicans and brewers, exacerbating their overheads, thus costing us more at the bar .



# Pub News

Rob Whatley

## The Crusader, an apology

In the last edition of *Hop Press* we suggested that the **Crusader** in Bernard Street, Southampton might be closing. In fact, the planning application to which we referred only affects the accommodation above the pub and the Crusader will remain open as a pub. We apologise for the error and wish the Crusader a long and successful future.

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Also in the last edition of *Pub News* we mentioned that the **Rising Sun** in Shirley was to reopen as the **Brass Monkey**. After passing by the bouncers, who were on the door at 7.30 on a Tuesday evening, we entered the newly refurbished pub to be greeted with a line of four handpumps, none of which were producing any beer. The adverts have said that the pub is “audio visual to the extreme”, so we suppose customers have just got to visualise the real ales, rather than drink them... Another Shirley pub that has changed its name is the **Henry Paget**, which is now called the **Moose**. Does this renaming, along with the Brass Monkey, mean that we are in for a cold spell in Shirley? The Park Hotel could become the Parky Hotel and Tramways could change to the Ski-run. Of course, the Ice House was ahead of the game. Following a refit and extension at another Shirley pub, the **Winston**, the landlord Steve Evers asked customers to suggest a new name for the pub as part of a fund raising raffle. Given its location, and continuing with the icy theme, perhaps the Downhill Lane Inn would be appropriate.

A renaming of a city centre pub could start a whole new trend. When Whitbread

opened one of its Hogshead chain in Above Bar in 1997 it was given the name the Above Bar in most of the advertising. Gradually references to this name disappeared and it became known as just the Hogshead. The Above Bar name has now been revived by the bar next to Goblets. We refer to the bar in this way as it has changed its name so many times in recent years it's difficult to keep track. For most of the last century it was known as the Park Inn, but in 1985 that changed to Bogarts. Six years later its roots were revived when it became the West Park Tavern. In recent years it became Voltz and then Burbreez.

Unfortunately we've not been able to have a recent edition of *Pub News* without a mention of Eldridge Pope's efforts to reduce the pub stock in southern Hampshire. The **Anchor and Hope** in Threefield Lane has been boarded up for many months and now an application to erect a four story block comprising 25 units of student accommodation on the site has been passed. While the loss of the Anchor and Hope was not met with too many protests, the same cannot be said of the threat of closure of another Eldridge Pope's venue, **Talking Heads** in Portswood.

There has also been a strong campaign by locals against the closure of the **Elephant and Castle** in Bursledon Road. Drinkers look like having to wait until September to hear whether the pub will be knocked down to make way for housing. The potential developer, David Wilson Homes, has appealed against the city council's rejection of his original submission and has also submitted a second application to the council. However, there is some hope on the horizon

for Southampton pub-goers as there are plans for a new outlet in the Portswood Centre in Portswood Road. Units 5 and 6 are due to open as a venue called **Smith and Jones**. The pub will be part of the Barracuda group who have some 20 similarly named outlets around the country, in addition to running the Varsity pub chain.

It is pleasing to note that some more traditional pubs are still thriving amongst the influx of theme bars. Glenda Buck and Ron Allin, who run the **Pensioners Arms**, off Bedford Place, have been named the regional winners of Greene King's new 'Licensee of the Year' award. A more modern feel was given to another Greene King outlet, the **Foresters** in Winchester. As a result, income quadrupled and licensee Martin Meijer won the best newcomer award. The pub, which was in need of change after years of neglect, also reached the final of the best pub design award. Although it will not be to everyone's taste it is good to see some imagination used in designing a modern interior that will attract younger drinkers to a pub that serves real ale. Before taking over the pub, Mr Meijer had previous experience of pub design, although designing the first Irish pub in Beijing is not a claim that all would see in a positive light!

Nearby there is an example of what poor company management can do in the form of the **Prince of Wales** in Hyde Street. An application has at last been submitted to convert this former, long closed, Eldridge Pope outlet into four flats and three terraced houses (although how, in a pub that is not much bigger than one house itself, is a Tardis-like mystery). With all these closures and other disposals it is easy to forget that Eldridge Pope does still run some pubs. The **Stanmore**, also in Winchester, has re-

cently been refurbished and has a new sports bar. The new managers are Janet Shepherd and Jane Pedgrift, who previously ran the Plough on the Green in Newbury.

Moving slightly north, the **Running Horse** at Littleton has also undergone substantial refurbishment and a change of image. The bar is said to have been imported from Italy. The emphasis is very much on the food trade and it is worth noting that it is not open on Mondays except Bank Holidays. We reported in the last *Hop Press* that the owner of another pub on the outskirts of Winchester, the **Shearers** at Owslebury, had been successful in appealing his application to close and sell of the property as housing. The pages of the Hampshire Chronicle property section recently featured the former pub, with a guide price of £700,000. Given that Mr Sutherden, the owner, informed the planners that he just wanted to retire quietly in the pub he had owned for years, it seems that attractions of retirement rapidly faded — or would the increase in value from little more than £¼M as a business to nearly £¾M as a house have been a consideration? Nice one Mr S!

Being a former pub is seen as something of a selling point by estate agents as a recent feature on the sale of a property in Newtown, just north-west of Romsey, highlights the fact that it was once the Bush Inn, until 1995. Fortunately there are still some pubs in the area that are looking to expand their trade rather than close. The owners of the *Good Beer Guide* featured **John o' Gaunt** at Horsebridge have applied to increase the kitchen and toilet facilities and add rented accommodation.

Another rural pub looking to add to its accommodation, as well as a function room, is the recently saved **Sir Walter Tyrrell** at

Canterton. Staying in the Forest, the **Alice Lisle** at Linwood has won the award for the best family pub in the Morning Advertiser's Best Pub Awards. The pub's owners, Gales, themselves have also won a recent award, that of Pub Company of the Year.

Travelers to Netley Marsh will see that the exterior of the **White Horse** has undergone some changes. The inside of the pub has also changed, with a new large screen and darts area, a no-smoking area and a comfortable lounge. There is still a good range of real ales on offer. The same is true of another **White Horse**, the one located in Otterbourne. It has also undergone refurbishment recently and is now run by Colin and Karen Brooks.

Also open again following extensive and well reported refurbishment is the **Jolly Sailor** in Bursledon. Readers will remember that the proposed changes were not popular with many locals and CAMRA helped them to run an extensive petition and opposition campaign. Although we never stopped the redevelopments, we did provoke some beneficial changes to the original plans. Now is the chance to visit and to make up your own mind before the summer crowds descend.

Readers will also remember the campaign against the closure of another pub popular with sailors, the **Bugle**, a couple of miles down river, in Hamble. Although the fight was lost there was still the chance that part of the building would reopen as a bar or restaurant. Recently an intriguing planning application was submitted for the property. It sought to amend the previous planning permission that had been granted, "*to provide A3 (food and drink) use at first floor level*" — instead of residential use. We await developments with interest.

## Hampshire Beer of the Year

Every year the combined branches of CAMRA throughout Hampshire organise a poll amongst their members to vote on the 'Beer of the Year' from a Hampshire brewer.

There are four branches involved: Northern Hampshire, covering most of the county north of the A30 road; Portsmouth and East Hampshire, covering Portsmouth itself and areas such as Droxford, Horndean and Waterloo; Surrey-Hants Borders, a small branch centred on Aldershot, Farnborough and Guildford and finally ourselves, Southern Hampshire, representing Southampton, Winchester, Romsey and the New Forest.

The poll results in two short lists of three beers each, one for beers up to 4.0% abv and one for those above 4.0% abv. These six beers are then made part of the order for our Southampton Guildhall Beer Festival. On the opening session — the Thursday evening — a panel of invited guests do a blind tasting selecting the overall Hampshire Beer of the Year. The result is announced during the Thursday session.

Both last year and in 2002 the best beer was Hole Hearted a 4.7% premium bitter brewed by Oakleaf at Gosport. In 2001 it was the Cheriton Brewhouse's Village Elder, a light 3.8% bitter.

There is an entirely separate competition just for customers at the festival, Beer of the Festival is selected by drinkers filling in voting slips in their programmes. These are analysed after the festival closes. Last year the powerful 7.0% Cuillin Beast from the Isle of Skye was the winner.