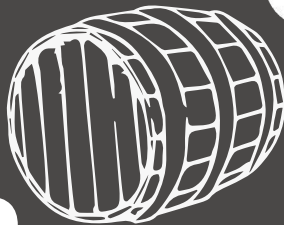


# Barrel Organ



CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE

*The magazine of the Salisbury & South Wiltshire  
branch of the Campaign for Real Ale*

Voted CAMRA's most improved

magazine of 2018

June 2023 - August 2023

## BACKING OUR LOCAL BREWERS

# RUDE GIANT BREW CO.

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### IN THIS ISSUE

RUDE GIANT STRIDES  
ONTO THE SCENE

MEET THE GOVERNORS:  
THE CUCKOO,  
HAMPTWORTH

BOOK YOUR BEEREX  
TICKETS

*Plus much more...*



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## FROM THE EDITORS

The roll call of small to medium size breweries which have folded during this seemingly never-ending economic crisis has made for depressing reading. But, as this issue of *Barrel Organ* proves, there is good news around. Our front cover picture by photographer Ed Schofield shows the founders of Rude Giant, south Wiltshire's newest brewery, posing with beer glasses in hand. Between them they have a promising mixture of brewing experience and entrepreneurial energy that will hopefully ensure the future of this new business.

Then there is Vibrant Forest on the eastern edge of the New Forest, which wowed drinkers at Salisbury's Winterfest with its Cambrian Root stout. A party from Salisbury and South Wilts CAMRA travelled to Hardley to present the brewery with its Beer of the Festival certificate. The group discovered a thriving brewery with a busy tap room that has cautiously expanded from a home brewing outfit to a successful, profitable small business that exports to continental Europe and Japan.

Finally we have a bumper edition of Brewery News in this issue. It includes Stone Daisy Brewery, which only started producing beer near Tisbury in January, Bat Country in West Wellow, which got up and running a year ago, and more familiar local favourites such as Hop Back, Downton Brewery and Sixpenny. Stonehenge Ales came back with medals from a Society of Independent Brewers competition, while Salisbury's Dark Revolution beers can be found aboard Cunard's cruise ships.

They have very different business models and produce a huge range of beers, not all of them real ales. That doesn't matter. We are lucky to have such an extraordinary variety based locally and they deserve our support. So please back our brewers – use them or lose them.

Kathy, Will & Neil  
*Editors, Barrel Organ magazine*

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Branch area: The Salisbury & South Wiltshire branch covers the whole of the south of the county having incorporated the area around Mere, Hindon, Zeals and Semley. While Salisbury is by far the largest population centre in the branch's territory, there are several smaller towns such as Amesbury and Wilton and large villages like Downton and Tisbury. The branch has nearly 140 open pubs selling real ale, about 70% of which are in rural areas.

*Barrel Organ* is distributed to these plus other distribution points such as Salisbury railway station.

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## MEET THE GOVERNORS

### The Cuckoo, Hamptworth



*Nik Amplianitis behind the bar of The Cuckoo*

The first hint that life for Nik Amplianitis and his family was about to change radically came when a friend gave him a cuckoo clock out of the blue. Nik, who was about to open a coffee bar in London, was baffled by the gift and the mystery deepened when his friend advised him not to go ahead with his plans. Instead a very different future beckoned.

The friend, who Nik prefers not to name, was in the process of buying the Hamptworth Estate, south of Salisbury on the fringes of the New Forest. This includes The Cuckoo Inn at Hamptworth, a much-loved thatched free house, which after 150 years as a pub was lying empty and in need of some tender loving care. Once the estate deal was sealed, the new owner asked Nik to make The Cuckoo sing once more.

Nik, originally from Patras in Greece but who has lived in Britain for 10 years, had never been to the area before. But a trip to the village, which is just inside Wiltshire, convinced him that this was a wonderful opportunity for him, his wife Sofia and two young daughters to change their lifestyles for the better. “London was too big for my girls,” he said. “I grew up in the country and living here is a good life balance. The air is better and you sleep better.”

Although Nik had not been a pub landlord before, he had plenty of experience in the hospitality industry having managed bars, restaurants and coffee shops. “This is my passion,” he said. “It is in my blood. Four generations of my family, including my father and grandfather, have run bars in Greece.” An intensive renovation project began in late 2021 and on 18 March 2022 more than 400 people attended a grand reopening filling The Cuckoo and its surrounding grounds. It established a momentum that Nik and Sofia have worked hard to maintain ever since. He has a few core principles for guiding the business through the choppy waters that all pubs in the United Kingdom are having to navigate at the moment.

One is to engage with the local community. “The people here are brilliant, I could do nothing without the community,” he said. Another is to avoid changing things too much as pub customers like familiarity. The piano, long a feature of life at



*The Cuckoo is CAMRA's local Cider Pub of the Year*



*A busy day at The Cuckoo*



*The interior of the pub has changed little*



*Nik outside The Cuckoo*

The Cuckoo and on which drinkers had played with varying degrees of skill down the years, has stayed in place.

Events are a big part of life at The Cuckoo, helped by the fact that it has lots of outside space. On the day that *Barrel Organ* visited, Nik was gearing up for a day celebrating one year since reopening. There are two beer and cider festivals a year – the next one on 8-10 September will have 40 real ales and 40 ciders for sale. The Pride and Joy days on 10 June, 8 July and 5 August this year will attract

classic car and motor cycle owners from all over the country. This fits in with another of Nik's passions as he owns four Harley-Davidsons.

Then there is of course beer and cider. Nik has between five and 10 real ales on sale depending on the season and up to 15 real ciders and perries. There are far too many for them to have individual handpumps in The Cuckoo's small bar area and instead they are served straight from nearby barrels. Not surprisingly The Cuckoo is in CAMRA's *Good Beer Guide* and has also just been voted the local Cider Pub of the Year by the Salisbury and South Wiltshire branch.

The regular house ales are from local breweries such as Hop Back in Downton while guest beers are from further afield. Nik tries to cater for all tastes with both beers and ciders, with younger drinkers favouring sweet ciders and perries. He has also built up an impressive range of spirits with 120 different whiskies, gins, vodkas and brandies lining the rear of the bar. The menu is traditional pub food – sausages, ploughman's, Sunday roasts. Nik said: "We are a drinker's pub rather than a restaurant or a gastro-pub."

The Cuckoo has many built-in advantages. It is just a short drive from the main A36 Salisbury to Southampton road and so is easily accessible by car. Being on the edge of the New Forest brings in business from tourists, campers, cyclists, walkers and runners as well as people taking their dogs out for some exercise – the pub is dog friendly. It has three outside bars and plenty of space for the festivals and big events. Throw in a local community delighted to have its pub back and real ale and cider lovers happy with the range on sale and it has a lot going for it.

Nik is content with his move to the country. "My girls love it down here, they have settled in well at local schools and Sofia works behind the bar", he said. He is also extremely conscious that he is the latest custodian of an important piece of local history, adding: "One of the first things I did was to check the history of The Cuckoo and I discovered that it has been a pub for 150 years. I want to add a new chapter to that history and I want everyone to feel welcome when they walk through the door."

**Will Bennett**

## BREWERY NEWS

### Dark Revolution

We start with a good news story from Dark Revolution Brewery taproom. Despite many other breweries closing, they have just celebrated one year since reopening for drink-in and continue to push forward with strong sales and weekly new beer releases.

The brewery has launched its experimental beer series called The Alchemy Project. These beers are complete one-off kegs, sold exclusively through their taproom allowing the brewing team to really push the boundaries in terms of flavour combinations. A beetroot and green tea stout along with a pomegranate, lemongrass and raspberry sour were the first two releases both receiving really positive feedback from the customers.

Dark Revolution's contract with Cunard Cruise Ships is back to full capacity. The beers are onboard all three of their ships, as well as an opportunity to feature onboard the brand new ship *Queen Anne*.

Dark Revolution has been accepted into the prestigious 'We Are Beer' craft beer festivals over the summer. These take place in Bristol, Manchester and London. They are by invitation only and feature the best breweries across the UK which is a testament to the quality of the beers the team are producing.

### Sixpenny Brewery

The brewery had a very successful Christmas and New Year regarding beer sales and visitor numbers to the Sixpenny Tap. However, spring beer sales have not been as good as expected so the brewery will only brew its regular beers (Best, Gold and IPA) in April and May. The planned Coronation Ale will not now be brewed, but it expects to brew the summer special, Rushmore Gold, in June/July.

However, events at the tap have been very successful especially at weekends. On Saturdays, an 'open mic' session, hosted by SamandSound, takes place in the courtyard from mid-afternoon into the evening. Also included is entertainment by local bands: Bere Essentials (American and Western Country Swing), Simon Scott, Sara Jones Band, Jam out, etc. The tap has a collection of percussion musical instruments which are available to visitors

for improvised use. There is also a piano in the tap (always in tune). Other entertainment is provided by the in-house magician, Jon Gadd, who delivers close-up magic on a regular basis. Jon is currently the President of the Wessex Magical Association. Adjacent to the brewery is the Orchard Bakery, run by Chris Wakely, which offers brunches and lunches (Monday to Friday) and pizzas on Friday evenings (5.30 – 7.30).

For several years the brewery raised funds for the Air Ambulance, but is now collecting donations to purchase a defibrillator (cost £800) which eventually will be located in the tap.

Finally, 'The Sixpenny Murders', which is being written by Michael Leese should be available online in early summer. The fictional story is based on local characters who work at or visit the brewery.

### Stonehenge Ales

The first year under new owners James and Nicola Robinson was rounded off nicely by Danish Dynamite and Great Bustard picking up bronze medals at the SIBA (Society of Independent Brewers)



James and Nicola Robinson  
at SIBA

south west brewing competition held at The Maltings in Newton Abbot, Devon, in late April.

June heralds the arrival of seasonal favourite Eye Opener, a light golden coloured premium bitter with an ABV of 4.5%, look out for it in local pubs or have it delivered to your door. Away from the brewing programme summer plans are in hand to produce some new marketing materials for the brewery and its beers. Look out in August for a brand new seasonal beer which will be rolled out for pub and home deliveries and keep an eye on the website for this and other updates from James and Nicola.

### Downton Brewery

Work on the standalone tap room and shop, located in an industrial unit opposite the brewery, is nearing completion and it is hoped to launch this during May. Opening hours will initially be on Fridays and Saturdays with occasional live music in

addition to the already established food stalls.

The monthly special for May will be Hopoholic, a 4% ABV pale ale, dry hopped with Australian hops. This will be followed by Stonefish in June, a 3% ABV pale ale with tropical fruit flavours, and a mouthfeel belying its low ABV. July's special will be Bogus Buffalo (4.4% ABV), a golden ale flavoured with American hops. Secret Sobriety is now available in cans at 0.5% ABV, offering an alternative to soft drinks for those who want a full flavoured beer but with close to zero alcohol content.

It is hoped to hold the first of the brewery's annual beer festivals at some point in June with a second following in the autumn.

## Stone Daisy Brewery

Stone Daisy Brewery is named after the medieval witch marks, finely carved into Fonthill's old stone buildings. The carvings are in the shape of a six-petalled daisy wheel, also known as a hexafoil. It was believed that witch marks would turn away evil spirits, providing protection to the building and those who lived or worked within it.

As part of The Wiltshire Distilling Company – located in Fonthill Bishop, just outside Tisbury – it is a new real ale brewery focused on the south west of England that started producing beer on 12 January 2023. It grows its own barley in the fields surrounding the brewery and this is done almost exclusively by hand and then malted at Britain's oldest working maltings located just down the road in Warminster.

Stone Daisy aims to keep its carbon footprint to a minimum and draws its water from the aquifers beneath the site. With a passion for all things south west, the brewery names its beers after locations within the local area such as: Cow Down - Social Pale Ale (3.8%), Snail Creep Hanging - Best Bitter (4.2%) and Park Bottom - IPA (4.5%). Recent announcements include special edition bottled beers stocked at Stonehenge Visitor Centre that continue the local theme: Solstice Stones (3.8%) and Neolithic Nectar (4.2%).

## Hop Back

We can look forward to drinking three summer specials over the coming months. Brewery director Jamie Fergusson used Sabro a New World hop to make Glasshopper (3.8%) which has a clean and

fruity tropical taste. The hop plan for July's special includes Citra and Sovereign which gives a minty hoppy flavour so I'll be making mine a Garden Party (4.3%). In August the special will be Hop Jam (4.1%) using Marris Otter and Amber Malt and plenty of English hops. There are plans to return bottle conditioning of Summer Lightning to the brewery in Downton and the first batches should be ready soon.

The brewery has recently welcomed Jess onto the team, who has taken up the role of sales and marketing representative.

## Bat Country

Located in an idyllic location on a farm in West Wellow, near Romsey, Bat Country Brewing Co started production on site in June 2022. Brothers Ned and Tom have brewed together for over 10 years. Before they found the farm they cuckoo-brewed at a number of breweries including Only With Love near Lewes (which they speak very highly of) where they made a West Coast IPA and a pale, which were packaged into cans.

Finding a suitable location post lockdown was far from easy because many businesses had found remote places to set up safely and moved online. They spent a very long time looking for a site to build their own brewery and eventually found Wellow which they call 'a happy accident'.

In addition to their regular brews in cask, barrel and bottle they enjoy doing some interesting things. With a seven barrel length, they are also happy to do some small batches to experiment. They are still developing their core range and are also trying to work on their bottle shop and takeaway draught shop which they hope to have going properly in June. They also hope at some point to do the occasional event at the brewery.

Beers produced include: Echo Base (5.2%) a dark amber with tropical fruit flavours, Mosquito Pimpstick (5.6%) a malty dark amber, and The Dirt (4.2%) a spicy pale. Bottled beers include: Monster of the Weak (3.5%) a coffee stout, Open Face (3.7%), a citrusy pale and Lionel's Lawnmower (5.8%) a New Zealand IPA.

*Contributors: Sarah Hughes, Derek Ellis, Gerald Gibson, Nigel Allison and John Hinton*

# RUDE GIANT STRIDES ONTO THE SCENE

## RUDE GIANT BREW CO.

A new brewery has been launched combining the talents and experience of some of the best-known names in the south Wiltshire food and drinks scene. Rude Giant is a collective of local businesses which, in its words, has come together “born out of a desire to make beers to unite all drinkers and, of course, a fair amount of passion for a truly decent pint”.

The founding partners include Dave Hancock, co-owner of the Immersive Group, which runs several businesses in Salisbury including Deacons pub and the new Hixon British Chophouse; Ethan Davids, founder of the Chickpea Group, whose pubs include the Dog and Gun in Netheravon, and the recently-acquired Queen’s Head in Broad Chalke; Joe Robinson, who ran his own brewery, Blonde Brothers; and Lyall Dew, who formerly oversaw operations at Sixpenny Brewery.

Dew, who built relationships with pubs throughout Wiltshire whilst at Sixpenny, is Head Brewer and Henry Prawlins, who has worked with him for years, is his assistant. The



*The team behind Rude Giant (photo: Ed Schofield)*



brewery is on the former Blonde Brothers site at Great Bathampton Farm in the Wylde Valley, west of Salisbury, and the barley comes from that farm and is malted at Warminster. It could hardly be more local.



Inside the Rude Giant brewery (photo: Ed Schofield)

There are plans to open a tap room and host a series of supper clubs in the space, showcasing the best of Rude Giant beer through food by renowned chefs. Unlike many new producers, Rude Giant is not specifically entering the craft beer arena but instead aims to make beers for all palates. It is launching with what the company calls “a curated list of quaffable drops” combining local produce, good brewing skills and creativity. The following range will become available in restaurants and pubs across the South West. Rude Giant describes them as:

### Rude Best (cask)

3.9% moreish, traditional bitter with a delicate balance of hoppy bitterness and malty backbone.

### Rude Pale Ale (cask)

3.6% golden ale. Full and rounded hop character with an ABV that suits summer, pub garden drinking.

### Session Pale Ale (keg)

4.3% session strength Pale Ale. Fruity and smooth with a crisp bite that will leave you wanting more.

### Rude Lager (keg)

4.5% Crisp, pilsner-inspired lager. Gentle and smooth malt lingers behind a clean and thirst-quenching finish.

Dew said: “Our brewhouse allows us to bring traditional and modern styles together to brew everything from malt-driven cask beers, to crisp lagers and more hoppy styles. Rude Giant is built on the belief that you don’t need to be a connoisseur or critic to love good, tasty beer.”

Alan Purchase and Will Bennett



## PUBS AND CLUB OF THE YEAR SHAKE-UP

The system of choosing Pubs of the Year in Salisbury and South Wiltshire was changed in 2023 with the top city and country pubs being judged by a panel of experts in a head-to-head to decide the ultimate winner and two categories – Cider Pub of the Year and Club of the Year – being re-introduced.

CAMRA branch members voted for the **Duke of York** in York Road, Salisbury as the **City Pub of the Year** and the **Fox and Goose** in Coombe Bissett as the **Rural Pub of the Year**. In the past, whichever won the most votes became overall **Pub of the Year**. But this time a panel of four judges headed by John Buckley from neighbouring North Hampshire branch, made the final decision.



Paul Cooper, Manager of the Duke of York, after receiving the local Pub of the Year award. Photo: Sue Turner

After visiting both pubs, John and his team chose the **Duke of York** but it was a close-run contest. “It came down to the minutiae of detail,” he said. So the Duke of York kept the Pub of the Year title that it won under the old system last year. Manager Paul Cooper and landlord Jonty Newbery were presented with the winner’s

certificate by Ian Turner, chairman of the Salisbury & South Wilts branch of CAMRA.

“The quality of the beer at the Duke of York is outstanding,” said Ian Turner. “My congratulations to Paul, Jonty and the rest of the Duke of York team who have made the pub a real ale destination and a wonderful community pub.”



Nik Amlianitis, landlord of *The Cuckoo*, receiving his Cider Pub of the Year award certificate from Jane Foster of Salisbury and South Wilts CAMRA.

Photo: Will Bennett

Keith and Sue Smith, who run the **Fox and Goose** will have been presented with the **Derek Blackshaw Trophy**, as Rural Pub of the Year by the time that this issue of *Barrel Organ* appears and a full report will appear in our September edition. This new trophy is named in honour of the late Derek Blackshaw, former chairman of the Salisbury and South Wiltshire branch, who died last year.

The title of **Cider Pub of the Year** was awarded for the first time for some years and went to **The Cuckoo Inn** in Hamptworth on the edge of the New Forest. The pub has 20 different ciders on sale and the range and quality of these and the skill that landlord Nik Amplanitis shows in ensuring that they are served in top condition won him the CAMRA award.

Greek-born Nik, who took over the pub near Salisbury a year ago was presented with the winner's certificate by Jane Foster, the CAMRA branch's Cider Champion. "Nik's passion for cider is fantastic," said Jane. "The range of ciders that he sells and the knowledge and enthusiasm that he shows is truly exceptional. They are in excellent condition, partly because he makes sure that they are kept at the right temperature."

The flags were out at the **Netheravon Working Men's Club** for the Bank Holiday, the Coronation and the presentation of Salisbury &

South Wilts CAMRA **Club of the Year** award which has also returned after an absence of some years. The Club was founded in 1920 and has occupied the same premises since 1925. It is now the only social club left in Netheravon.

Presenting the award, local CAMRA *Good Beer Guide* Co-ordinator Andrew Hesketh commented upon the lovely warm and welcoming atmosphere and its tremendous community spirit. It runs a large number of events to bring people together and support the village, including darts and skittle competitions, a warm space and charity run events. The club is well served for beers most of which come from the Stonehenge brewery, a mere hundred yards away. The club now moves forward to the regional phase when it will be visited by judges from other Wessex Branches.

Will Bennett and Andrew Hesketh

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## DOWNTON BREWERIES TOUR SATURDAY 14 OCTOBER 2023

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We are delighted to be organising a joint visit on Saturday 14 October by the Salisbury and South Wiltshire branch of CAMRA and the CAMRA Members Investment Club (CMIC) to the Hop Back Brewery (in which CMIC is a major investor) and the Downton Brewery, which are both located in Downton, near Salisbury. Attendees are looking forward to sampling award-winning beers from both breweries after the tours.

Places were limited due to space constraints in the breweries and we are fully booked with a waiting list. However, a report and photographs will appear in the Christmas issue of *Barrel*

*Organ* and we hope it will be possible to return in future years for further visits.

Brewery websites:

<https://www.hopback.co.uk/> and  
<https://www.downtonbrewery.com/>

Neil Beagrie



## PUB NEWS

### Here is a round-up of local pub news since the last issue of *Barrel Organ*.

Sadly I am opening this issue's round-up of local pub news with some closures. **The Boathouse** and **The Progress Bar** in Salisbury and **The Greater Good** at Fovant have all closed in the last couple of months. However, we have just had news that the Greater Good will be reopening soon. Freya and Sydney, together with pub dog Kimchi, are the new landlords who had a soft opening on 6 May to celebrate the Coronation and introduce themselves, with a full opening planned for 'early this summer'. They are also taking enquiries for short-term bookings of their self-contained flat.

**The Black Dog** at Chilmark has also closed again but, with the support of the Parish Council, the local residents have applied to Wiltshire Council for an Asset of Community Value order (ACV) with the hope of saving the pub for the village. An ACV application has also been made on behalf of **The Victoria and Albert** at Netherhampton with a local businessman hoping to take it over. **The Cross Keys** at Upper Chute is the subject of a planning application to replace it with a one-bedroomed detached dwelling. It is sad to hear, but the pub has been closed for a while now so it is not much of a surprise. Unfortunately, there is no update on **The Black Horse** at Great Durnford yet and the other **Black Horse** at Hurdcott is the subject of a change of use application. The estate manager had promised that the Great Durnford **Black Horse** would be open by mid-March but at the time of writing the pub is still closed.

Now for happier news - **The Rose and Crown** at Bulford has re-opened, Matt and Carly have sold **The Penruddocke Arms** at Dinton after 10 years so that they can retire and Andre and Dilip have taken over, and **The Bull Hotel** at Downton is under new management again. Marstons has put 61 of its pubs up for sale which has prompted

a change of management at **The Pelican**, Stapleford. Sally and Lionel have moved on to pastures new leaving the pub in the safe hands of Jenna Potter, looking after things while the pub remains for sale. Jenna worked at the pub a few years ago and is thrilled to be back, if only temporarily. **The Compasses** at Chicksgrove has opened following its refurbishment and **The King's Arms** at Amesbury has a new look, catering for the 'modern older age' with a 75 inch karaoke television, new flooring, exposed brickwork and a shorter bar. **The Queen's Head** at Broad Chalke has been taken over by the Chickpea Group which already owns a small number of local pubs, and has reopened following a full refurbishment of its guest rooms and bar. **The Royal Oak**, Great Wishford and **The Old Mill** in Harnham are both now fully open. **The George Inn** at Mere is under new management following Pat and Jan's retirement after 11 years and **The Woodfalls Inn** reopened in February following a full refurbishment (and lengthy closure). Not a pub, but in Salisbury the former **Wilding** restaurant has been taken over by the Immersive Group (owners of Tinga, Caboose and Deacons) and has opened as **Hixon**, a British Chophouse. And on the subject of **Deacons**, after working there for over a year Caz Owen is now the new manager. She has lots of plans including barbecues and karaoke.

*The Salisbury Journal* recently published an article naming six local pubs that it had discovered are currently for sale. The news was met with varying reactions but for clarification, the owners of the **Salisbury Arms** and **The Anchor and Hope** confirmed that their 10 year agreements on both pubs ends in May and for a number of reasons they will not be renewing them, a staff member at **The Pheasant** in Salisbury confirmed that the landlord will soon be on the move, **The Boathouse** closed in February and

The Old Railway Hotel in Porton is looking for a manager and other new staff but has no plans to close. **The Bell and Crown**, Salisbury was also mentioned but there has been no response from its management. Elsewhere in the *Journal* they continued their articles featuring Salisbury city pubs that are doing well with pieces on **The Old Ale and Coffee House**, **The Village Freehouse** and **The Halfway House**.

The real ale offering at **The Rose and Crown** at Harnham has recently improved with the serving of Crop Circle and Fugglestone. **Harlequins Social Club** on Bemerton Heath serves Downton New Forest Ale and is open to non-members on match days or an annual family membership costs £10. **The Wig and Quill** is offering a 10% discount for CAMRA members and **The White Hart Hotel** in Salisbury has Hop Back Spring Zing on draught.

Congratulations go to **The Winchester Gate**, Salisbury for being voted *Wiltshire Life* magazine's Pub of the Year and the newly refurbished **Compasses** at Chicks Grove has been listed 78th in the Estrella Damm Top 100 Best Gastro Pubs. The branch has completed the voting for the annual Salisbury CAMRA awards and the presentations will have taken place by the time you read this. **The Duke of York** has been awarded Pub of the Year, **The Fox and Goose** at Coombe Bissett is Rural Pub of the Year and this year we have chosen a Cider Pub of the Year which has been awarded to **The Cuckoo Inn** at Hamptworth and **Netheravon Working Men's Club** was chosen as Club of the Year.

And finally, **The Crown** at Cholderton is advertising its successful Crownfest on Saturday 29 July and we wish a Happy Birthday to **Sips**, Salisbury and **The Cuckoo** at Hamptworth which have celebrated their first year of success. Long may they continue!

**Sue Turner**  
Pubs Officer

## SALISBURY BEEREX 2023



**T**he 41st Beerex will be held in its usual home at the Salisbury Arts Centre on Friday 7 and Saturday 8 July. There are three sessions in all, which are 6:30-11pm on both Friday and Saturday evening and 11am – 3:30pm on Saturday. Tickets are £14 per session and can be booked online at [wiltshirecreative.co.uk](http://wiltshirecreative.co.uk) or by telephoning 01722 320333 between 10am and 5pm Monday to Friday and between 10am to 3pm on Saturdays. The city's summer beer festival is organised jointly by Wiltshire Creative, Salisbury & South Wilts CAMRA and Rotary COGS.

Sixty beers and 15 ciders & perries will be available sourced both locally and further afield. Since the weather last year was so hot a lot of our beers were very much on the warm side so we are introducing cooling jackets and chillers this year to ensure that your ale is a great deal cooler. As always there will be musical entertainment outside the centre and a range of food supplied by outside vendors.

**Andrew Hesketh**

## VIBRANT FOREST FESTIVAL AWARD WINNERS

**B**rewer Vibrant Forest's salted liquorice stout Cambrian Root proved a hit when beer-lovers attending Salisbury's Winterfest were asked to vote for their favourite ale. The 5.1% ABV stout, which is packed with flavour, won Beer of the Festival against competition from two dozen others at the festival organised by the Salisbury and South Wilts branch of CAMRA at Brown Street Entertainment.

This provided the CAMRA branch with the perfect excuse to make a visit to Vibrant Forest's brewery and tap room at Hardley on the eastern edge of the New Forest, to present this enterprising company with its Beer of

the Festival winner's certificate. Fortified by an excellent lunch on the way at The Parish Lantern pub in Whiteparish, the 14-strong minibus party arrived in Hardley to be greeted by tap room manager Ryan Dack.

Vibrant Forest was started by its owner Kev Robinson in his garage in 2011 and expanded from what was essentially a home brewing operation to a commercial company based first in Lymington and, since 2019, near Hythe. Mainly using American and New Zealand hops, it produced 52 beers last year, including some one-off and collaborative brews, all of them unfiltered.



*Andrew Hesketh (left) presents Ryan Dack of Vibrant Forest with the Beer of the Festival award certificate*

Helped by exports, particularly to Italy, Japan and Scandinavia, 2022 was Vibrant Forest's most profitable year so far. The tap room has proved a huge hit, providing one-third of the company's turnover and two-thirds of its profits. Despite being in the unpromising surroundings of an industrial estate, on the day that the Salisbury party visited it was bustling with families enjoying a day out and craft beer lovers working their way through Vibrant Forest's extensive sales list.



*Salisbury and South Wilts CAMRA members touring the brewery*



*A Plantation Rum barrel, one of those used to age beers*

However Vibrant Forest is expanding cautiously and has just six staff. "We are focusing on being lean and profitable rather than doing too much at a time," said Ryan. "We want to grow at a pace that we can control." Ryan showed the Salisbury group around the brewery, its canning room and

the upstairs barrel store. The latter contains an array of former rum, whisky and wine barrels that are used to age some beers for a minimum of six months with interesting results.



*Some of Vibrant Forest's colourful, stylish cans*

Ryan was presented with the Winterfest Beer of the Festival award by Andrew Hesketh, Salisbury and South Wiltshire CAMRA's festivals co-ordinator. Once the official business was completed, the party felt that it was its duty to help the tap room's profits by buying beers ranging from Pupa pale ale at 4.5% ABV to the rum barrel-aged Black Oktober Russian Imperial Stout - a formidable 9.0% ABV. Supplies of Vibrant Forest's colourfully stylish cans were purchased for future consumption. It was the perfect day out to hand over a well-deserved award.

Will Bennett



## SHORT STORY COMPETITION DEADLINE APPROACHES

In our March issue the *Barrel Organ* editorial team announced another short story competition, similar to the one we ran in 2019/2020. This time we are providing you with the title of your story, 'The Pub With No Name'. It is up to you to construct a story around this title and theme.

The deadline is approaching: 30 June 2023.

**Maximum length:** 1000 words. Single letter words and numbers count as a word.

**Title:** 'The Pub With No Name'.

**Format:** MS Word or compatible (doc, docx, odt, rtf, txt. NOT pdf or Apple Pages).

**Send to:** Send your entry, as an email attachment, to [willbennett1950@gmail.com](mailto:willbennett1950@gmail.com)

**Filename:** Please ensure your story's filename contains your name or initials.

### PRIZES:

Stonehenge Ales in Netheravon is offering a

brewery tour and tasting session for two people along with a gift pack of beers while The Rai d'Or pub/restaurant in Salisbury will donate a £25 voucher to be used towards food and drink. The winner chooses which of these they want, the runner-up gets the other prize.

Your story must not have been previously published. It remains the copyright of the author but must not appear in any other publication until the results are announced and published in *Barrel Organ*. Submitting authors do not need to be beer drinkers or CAMRA members.

The entries will be judged by local Wiltshire/Dorset author Michael Hambling, a CAMRA member. The decision of the judge is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

You can use your real name or a pen-name and only the editor will know who you are until the winners are announced.

## DIARY DATES *Salisbury & South Wiltshire*



### JUNE 2023

#### 7th Open Branch Meeting.

7.30pm Winchester Gate, Rampart Road, Salisbury.

#### 9th Minibus Trip

6.30pm Royal Oak, Great Wishford; Rainbow on the Lake, Steeple Langford; Carriers Arms, Stockton; and Prince Leopold Inn, Upton Lovell.

#### 19th Taste Panel visit to Gritchie.

#### 21st City Saunter

7.30pm New Inn, Wig & Quill, Bell & Crown and Rai d'Or.

### JULY 2023

#### 5th Open Branch Meeting.

7.30pm Ox Row Inn, Market Place, Salisbury.

#### 7th Beerex XLI

6.30pm to 11.00pm Session 1 at Salisbury Arts Centre.

#### 8th Beerex XLI

11.00am to 3.30pm Session 2 at Salisbury Arts Centre.

6.30pm to 11.00pm Session 3 at Salisbury Arts

Centre.

### 14th Minibus Trip

6.30pm Radnor Arms, Nunton; King's Head, Redlynch; King's Head, Whiteparish; Parish Lantern, Whiteparish; and Green Dragon, Alderbury.

### 19th City Saunter

7.30pm Wilton Wander featuring Pembroke Arms, Wheatsheaf and Bear Inn.

### AUGUST 2023

#### 5th Annual General Meeting.

12.30pm Salisbury Rugby Club.

#### 11th Minibus Trip

6.30pm Rising Sun, Donhead St Mary; Bennett Arms, Semley; Foresters, Donhead St Andrew; and Greater Good, Fovant.

#### 16th City Saunter

7.30pm Meet at The Old Mill Hotel, Harnham.

Attendees to decide whether they want to enjoy a summer evening there or go on elsewhere.



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