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IN THIS ISSUE

26th YEAR FOR FOX &
GOOSE LANDLORDS

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TELEGRAPH TOP TIPS

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FROM THE EDITORS

Brewing works best from the grass roots upwards. After all, CAMRA was founded in 1971 to fight the homogenisation of British beer by vast corporations – anyone remember Watney's Red Barrel? In recent months the skill of the small brewers who have been at the forefront of the counter-attack against the giants has been amply demonstrated in South Wiltshire and so too has the sheer variety of the real ales that they produce.

Let's start with Stonehenge Ales in Netheravon. James and Nicola Robinson took over the brewery in 2022 from Stig Anker and Anna Marie Andersen, who had run it for the previous 29 years. The Robinsons have kept up the tremendous reputation established by their Danish predecessors and this year Danish Dynamite took the Silver award in the Premium Pale, Blonde and Golden Ales category at CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain competition against rival brews from all over Britain. Stonehenge also won two other silver awards at the Society of Independent Brewers and Associates' festival in Devon.

Then there is Dead Duck, founded in a garage on the outskirts of the New Forest by teacher Paul Bartlett. Last year its Knightwood Oak, a chocolate porter, was voted Beer of the Festival by attendees at Salisbury's Summerfest beer and cider festival. Paul repeated his triumph with IPA Sunny Haze at this year's Summerfest – one attendee's fine T-shirt is pictured on our front cover.

Just a few miles down the road from Paul are Downton Brewery and Hop Back while Dark Revolution is at Old Sarum and about to re-open The Dust Hole/Railway Inn in Salisbury. These and others across Wiltshire and adjoining counties are producing a wonderful range of ales. Watneys Red has become a distant bad dream.

Will, Sue & 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.

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MEET THE GOVERNORS

The Fox & Goose, Coombe Bissett



The Fox & Goose in Coombe Bissett

During his 18 years working as an aircraft engineer in South Africa, Keith Smith said that if he ever returned to his native England he would run a pub. Often such pipe dreams come to nothing but Keith and his wife Sue are now in their 26th year at The Fox & Goose in Coombe Bissett, near Salisbury, placing them among South Wiltshire's longest-serving landlords.



Keith and Sue Smith behind the bar of The Fox & Goose

After a spell managing a pub near Ringwood, the couple arrived at The Fox & Goose, which is on the main Salisbury to Blandford road through the village, as temporary relief landlords in 1999. "A couple of months later Hall & Woodhouse asked us to take over the pub," said Keith. "We liked the

pub and we liked the area so when they asked us if we would like to take over more permanently we said 'yes'."



Keith outside the pub where he is in his 26th year as landlord

Today they are the leaseholders, owning the business but not the bricks and mortar, which belong to the Wellington Pub Company, based in London, which offers its pubs to landlords free of tie. So The Fox & Goose can source its beer from wherever it likes, which has not always been the case since the old inn was replaced with the present building in about 1820.

Keith always has three cask ales on tap, with Sharp's Doom Bar, a 4.0% ABV amber ale, an ever-

present supplemented by two changing guest ales. On the day that *Barrel Organ* went to the pub, Snail Creep Hanging, a 4.2% ABV bitter from Stone Daisy Brewery at Berwick St Leonard in South Wiltshire, and Palmers Copper, a 3.7% ABV pale ale from Bridport in Dorset, were available. Keith likes to support breweries from the region with the local Downton Brewery, Flack's from Romsey and Otter from Devon among his regular suppliers.

Having well-kept real ales on is important at The Fox & Goose and was a factor in it being chosen



*Cask ales are important
at The Fox & Goose*

as the local Rural Pub of the Year by the Salisbury & South Wiltshire branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) in 2023. It is a source of pride to Keith and Sue that they became the first-ever recipient of the Derek Blackshaw Trophy, founded in memory of the branch's late chairman who had died the previous year. Derek was a great champion of rural pubs and used to eat at The Fox & Goose regularly.

But however important good beer may be, it is food – which is Sue's department – that drives revenue. Keith says that 65% of the pub's takings come from food and 80% of the one-third that comes from drinks is spent by people who have gone to The Fox and Goose to eat. The days when a rural inn could survive as a wet pub are over but Keith insisted: "My mantra is that we are a pub with good food – but still a pub."

Some of this is down to greater public awareness of the perils of and penalties for drink driving. Whereas 40 or 50 years ago, people would think nothing of sinking several pints and then getting behind the wheel of their car, today far fewer are prepared to take that risk. The Covid pandemic also changed drinking habits and patterns with people consuming less alcohol earlier in the evening. The late night drinker, once to be found in most pubs, is becoming an endangered species. Today's youngsters drink less than their predecessors and are more likely to socialise via their phones than in their local.

All this has made low alcohol and zero alcohol drinks far more important and the breweries have been working hard to keep pace with this trend. They are infinitely more palatable than they were a decade ago and Keith stocks a good selection of them, including Thatcher's cider, Old Speckled Hen pale ale and Guinness 0%, when the latter is available.



The bar of The Fox & Goose

Despite this huge change in demand, there is still plenty about The Fox & Goose that would be familiar to the Keith who dreamed of an English pub in those far-off days in Johannesburg. It is an important part of the village community supporting the local school and providing a venue for the annual cricket club dinner. There is plenty of support for the pub from the village, which has a population of about 700.

The pub's location just three miles south of Salisbury right by the A354, which is a principal holiday route to the Dorset coast is also a major plus. A big car park and a spacious garden also help persuade people to pull over while on their way through Coombe Bissett while three car clubs use it as a venue to meet up.

Keith and Sue will retire in 2028 when their present lease from Wellington expires. They have not yet decided whether to remain in the Coombe



*The Fox & Goose's garden
attracts customers*

Bissett area but the likelihood is that they will. For a couple who had no connections with South Wiltshire before their return from abroad, they have become part of village history.

They are the longest serving licensees at The Fox & Goose since it became a beer house two centuries ago. That is something that is difficult to walk away from altogether.

Will Bennett

BREWERY NEWS

Downton Brewery



The monthly specials for September, October and November are German Pale Ale (4.2% ABV German hopped), Oatmeal Stout, (4.2% ABV dark roasted, complex breakfast stout), and Cerebus (4.2% ABV chestnut brown, malty bitter), respectively. Keg versions of Moby Dick (4.7% ABV), Secret Sobriety (0.5% ABV) and Cave Lager (4.6% ABV) are now available in the Taproom. Thirsty Thursdays, held in the Taproom on the evening of the last Thursday of the month, are proving popular, especially as the first pint of the evening is free. The mobile brewery van will be at Romsey Show on 13 September and a further beer festival will be held at the brewery on 26/27 September.



Downton Brewery Taproom is proving increasingly popular with customers

Dark Revolution



Over the past couple of months Dark Revolution has welcomed another two full time members of staff to the team - a brewery and warehouse assistant as well as another member of the Taproom team who will be taking charge of their new pub The Dust Hole/Railway Inn

in Salisbury which is set to re-open in the first week of September. The Dust Hole will offer 14 keg lines as well as two cask lines. There will be rotating guest beers on tap and cask as well as a large selection of Dark Revolution beers. The existing Dark Revolution Brewery Taproom is going from strength to strength.

In July Dark Revolution worked in conjunction with Wiltshire Creative as main sponsor for Salisbury Craft Beer Festival, taking place at The Arts Centre in Salisbury. The festival was a huge success with 50 plus beers pouring and attracting an audience of not just locals but also people from out of the country. They are hoping that 2026 will be even bigger!

Hop Back



In addition to Hop Back's comprehensive range of regular and seasonal real ales in cask, bottle and polykeg format, the brewery also produces a number of craft keg beers. One of these is Sirocco (4.6% ABV), a craft lager modelled on a pilsner utilizing classic noble hops such as Saaz and Tettnang. Sales of this lager are increasing as it gains popularity.

The brewery shop stocks a range of T-shirts and other products and opens from 0900 – 1600 Monday to Friday. You can also ring 01725 510986 to ask what is available or order your beer 48 hours in advance.

The monthly specials will include: September – Hops Away (4.0% ABV), brewed to commemorate the 85th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. Jamie Ferguson, the head brewer, uses a smooth malt base and Harlequin hops to create an amber/brown ale with fruity notes. October – Green Hopped (4.3% ABV) a golden ale using fresh green hops collected directly from the grower. November – Once again we

can look forward to enjoying a pint of Ginger Stout (4.5% ABV) or Winter Lightning (5.5% ABV) to welcome the longer cooler autumnal evenings.

Dead Duck



Double congratulations to Paul Bartlett, the head and indeed only brewer, for achieving Beer of the Festival for the second year running, this time for his Sunny Haze (4.5% ABV), at

our Summerfest held in June but also for winning bronze for his bitter – The Commoner (4.0% ABV) at the SIBA (Society of Independent Brewers and Associates) South East finals. This is an interesting and balanced session bitter with a malty backbone, a mild floral aroma and a fresh peppery lasting bitterness.

The brewery has a Premises Licence and it is selling its beers online. New merchandising is also available and includes items such as gift boxes, glasses, stubby holders, tote bags and T-shirts.

Paul is also developing a new pale ale to add to his portfolio. We were able to sample an early batch during a recent CAMRA visit and look forward to enjoying more once it is in full production. Dead Duck beers can be found at a growing number of pubs in the Salisbury and New Forest area and also at groceries and wine merchants in Fordingbridge, Ringwood and further afield.

Stonehenge Ales



For the latest additions to the impressive collection of award certificates being amassed by Stonehenge Ales of Netheravon, see elsewhere in this issue of *Barrel Organ*.

Contributors in order: Nigel Allison, Sarah Hughes, John Hinton, and Steve Stringer

THE CUCKOO INN



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NOMINATIONS OPENING SOON FOR CBOB 2026

Nominations will be opening on Thursday 12 September for CAMRA members to vote in the Champion Beer of Britain (CBOB) 2026 award. CAMRA members are being invited to have their say on which beers are their champions or the 'cream of the crop'. Once nominations close in November, regional heats will take place across the country before the final judging and announcement in 2026. All beer judging adheres to a vigilant blind tasting process.

CAMRA members will be able to vote using the voting portal across a range of different categories. If you are not a member, why not join the Campaign today to nominate your favourite beer and enjoy all the benefits of a CAMRA membership too? Winning the prestigious title is the ultimate honour for UK breweries and has helped many brewers gain both national and international acclaim.

Beer lovers will have until midnight on 4 November to make their submission on CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain platform and can choose up to five beers across each of the categories.

This initial vote is exclusive to CAMRA members. As well as getting to vote for their favourite beers, CAMRA membership also provides a host of benefits, from enjoying social events organised by a local CAMRA branch and volunteering at beer festivals, to taking part in grassroots campaigning efforts.

CAMRA's tasting panels also provide nominations after rigorous assessments of beers. Sign up to become a taste panellist. CAMRA members are also invited to train up as beer

judges to take part in regional heats and national finals, giving them the unique opportunity to sample some of the best beers from across the UK.

The beer style categories for Champion Beer of Britain are:

- **Milds:** up to and including 4% ABV
- **Session Bitters:** up to and including 4.3% ABV.
- **Premium Bitters:** 4.4% – 6.4% ABV.
- **Session Pale, Blond and Golden Ales:** up to and including 4.3% ABV.
- **Premium Pale, Blond and Golden Ales:** 4.4% – 6.4% ABV.
- **British & New World IPAs:** 5.5% and above.
- **Brown and Red Ales, Old Ales and Strong Milds:** Up to 6.4%.
- **Session Stouts and Porters:** up to and including 4.9% ABV.
- **Strong Stouts and Porters including Imperial Stouts and Baltic Porters:** 5.0% ABV and above.
- **Barley Wines and Strong Ales:** 6.5% and above.
- **Speciality Beers** – differently produced.
- **Speciality Beers** – flavoured.



DANISH DYNAMITE BLOWS AWAY THE JUDGES



Gerald Gibson (left), the outgoing CAMRA Brewery Liaison Officer, with Nicola and James Robinson and their CBOB certificate.

Stonehenge Ales from Netheravon has done it again, with yet another award, this time in the prestigious Champion Beer of Britain competition organised by CAMRA. Cambridge Beer Festival was the venue for the winners to be announced, and Stonehenge took Silver for Danish Dynamite in the Premium Pale, Blond and Golden category. Dynamite is extremely popular in this locality and is firmly established in the brewbook.

Owner/Head Brewer James Robinson is delighted to have this recognition of their endeavours, and the opportunity to spread the brewery's reputation. Nicola Robinson, joint owner and the powerhouse behind James's

ambition, said: 'We started the year with a baby, Millie, which has been the highlight, and now the plaudits for the beers are coming one after another. It definitely has been our year so far, it is so exciting.'

The history of Dynamite is a tale of success breeding success. The former owners of Stonehenge Ales, Dane Stig Anker Andersen and his wife Anna Marie, bought the brewery in 1993, just after the Danish team won the Euros football competition. When the Euros subsequently came to Britain in 1996, Stig felt a compulsion to brew something special in honour of his native team. The team nickname was 'the Danish Dynamites', so it naturally followed that Stig's new brew was called Danish Dynamite. The rest, as they say, is history.

James and Nicola took over the brewery in 2022 and have worked hard to continue the fortunes of their predecessor, whilst stamping their own mark with the introduction of new brews such as 40 Summers and Pillars of Pale. James started out as a homebrewer, prior to acquiring Stonehenge Ales. In just three years his ambition has borne fruit, shown by the many accolades being awarded. 'I am truly blown away by the continued and increasing demand for this beer,' said James. 'Three years in, and we are achieving recognition that we did not expect at this point in our journey, it is very rewarding.'

James and Nicola have recognised, and are grateful for, the support of Salisbury & South Wilts CAMRA and especially Gerald Gibson, the outgoing Brewery Liaison Officer. This has been fundamental in gaining the attention of the local, and now the national drinking public.



*The Silver award won
by Stonehenge Ales at
CBOB 2025.*

SIBA's (Society of Independent Brewers & Associates) award of Silver for both Old Smokey and Great Bustard at Maltingsfest in Newton Abbott, Devon, recently was another feather in the caps of James and Nicola. Competing against 250 other cask beers, this was quite an achievement.

Summerfest at the Guildhall resulted in a third place in the poll of festival-goers for 40 Summers, a summer brew first seen in 2024.

Initially James designed the recipe as a one-off to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the brewery but success and demand has encouraged him to add it to the seasonal brew list.

National distribution of Stonehenge Ales beer was achieved recently, which kept the fermenters turning! Danish Dynamite has been pencilled in for a countrywide campaign in October.

The recent Salisbury and South Wilts CAMRA

Steve Stringer

CAMRA'S GOOD BEER GUIDE 2026 OUT SOON

The 53rd edition of the Campaign For Real Ale's *Good Beer Guide* will be published on 25 September. This is the UK's definitive guidebook to good pubs that serve real ale across the country. Refreshed and updated for its 2026 edition, it features recommended pubs across the United Kingdom that serve the best real ale as well as a comprehensive listing of UK breweries.

This is the complete book for beer lovers and for anyone wanting to experience the UK's finest pubs. The *Good Beer Guide* is completely independent, with listings based entirely on evaluation by CAMRA members. It will include 19 pubs from South Wiltshire, six of which are in the city of Salisbury and 13 from surrounding rural areas.

The foreword for this year's guide has been penned by Ed Byrne, comedian and beer lover. Famous for his #preshowpints on social media, he has posted about the various bars and breweries he has sampled around the UK prior to his shows.



The recommended retail price of the Guide is £16.99, but there is a special pre-order offer of £14.99 up to 24 September. CAMRA members can buy it for £12.99 on pre-order. Postage and packing are added to the prices.

Order from <https://shop1.camra.org.uk/product/good-beer-guide-2026/>

ON THE BUSES

In April a very successful trip to Amesbury featured a welcome visit from John Buckley who braved the long journey down via Andover. We visited the Antrobus Arms, (Greene King – Hopping Special Amber Ale), The New Inn (Greene King Ales) and The Bell (Wetherspoons), where the guest beer was Elgoods Patron Saint. Unfortunately The George Hotel was awaiting a part for its broken cooling system so no ales were available.

In May we successfully met the challenge of decoding the bus timetables - five different route numbers and two different operators, with timetables varying according to whether it is a school day or holiday - and made a journey to both The Malet Arms in Newton Tony, and The Earl of Normanton in Idmiston. The Malet Arms has new people who aim to carry four ales, which is also how many we found at the Earl - as well as an excellent lunch. Both are highly recommended. Our celebrations regarding this success were short-lived, however, when we realised that in the space of a week Stagecoach issued not one but two new timetables for this route, throwing everything up in the air again and causing much despair. But a future trip is possible and will take place once we have figured it out, and lunch at the Malet seems a possibility now. Our intended trip extension to The Crown at Cholderton did not take place, partly because it now closes in the afternoon, and partly because the beer choice is believed to be very limited.

In June, a good-sized group of us made our way by train to the St Denys area of Southampton and some of us went to the The South Western Arms, The Bookshop Alehouse and The Guide Dog, all excellent pubs with The South Western Arms having a particularly large range of interesting and unusual beers in a wide variety of styles. It is right next to the station and well

worth a return visit - you might want to phone to check if they will be doing pizzas. A few of us diverted to The Junction Inn where there was great food; and at The Guide Dog, you are welcome to bring in a takeaway.

Also two exploratory journeys were undertaken to breweries to check that the routes are viable by public transport; The Three Daggers at Edington and The Twisted Brewing Co at Westbury. The Three Daggers comprises a pub, restaurant, farm shop, cafe and brewery, is a great place to visit, has good views and a nice outdoor area - and a return trip is planned for September. **If interested please let us know as the brewer is willing to meet us, so numbers are required. Email us on ptc@salisburycamra.org.uk.**

In July, a train trip to both The Mill Arms at Mottisfont and The Steel Tank at Chandlers Ford was a great success with The Steel Tank, as ever, having a wide range of differing beer styles, including a stout.

And finally, another foray on the number 29 - there are 12 pubs in total on this most charming rural bus route, and you can be sure we will be back - headed straight for Shaftesbury where we visited The Grosvenor, The Two Brewers, and finally enjoyed the lovely views from the terraced garden of The Mitre.

Although these trips are well supported overall attendance has been very patchy - Pete was on his own to the Witches Brew in Southampton and a Romsey trip, both on Saturdays.

Andrew Ward and Pete Matthews

PUB NEWS

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

I'm happy to start with some encouraging openings this issue. Following a 'refresh', **The Hook and Glove** at Farley re-opened at the end of May under new management originally serving bar snacks but now has a full menu. Opening times are Tuesday to Saturday 2-10pm and Sunday 12-6pm. New management also took over **The King's Arms**, Amesbury at the end of July. Fresh tenants hope to open **The New Inn**, Amesbury at the end of September. **The King's Head** at Chitterne had a soft opening on 18 June but is now fully open, including food, and is proving to be very popular. Long may it continue!

I am pleased to report that **The Plume of Feathers** at Shrewton has also re-opened following its very brief closure and, in the city, **Sips** is open again. Jacob hosted a 'Grand Re-opening' event on 7 June which was also a celebration of the bar's third birthday and his own birthday on the 4th! The event was very well received and he has now added Mondays 4pm - 9pm to his opening hours. **The Barford Inn** at Barford St Martin announced a change of management at the end of May and, following some repairs, has re-opened, to the delight of the village.

Last April Tony and Carol closed **The Dust Hole/Railway Inn** on Tollgate Road, Salisbury. After 20 years they are looking forward to retiring from the only pub in the UK with two registered names. New owners Dark Revolution Brewery hope to open soon, bringing their Taproom vibe from Old Sarum featuring 14 of their own and guest beers, quiz nights, food and more.

The Swan at Enford unexpectedly closed on 22 June. Citing the common pressures of rising costs and falling trade, landlady Hannah took the decision reluctantly and is devastated to

have to leave. We wish them well in their next venture. Fortunately, the village has taken over the running of the community-owned pub for drinks only, hoping to at least get through the summer.

The village of Winterbourne Stoke is getting together to look at taking over **The Bell Inn**. I think it will be a long road but they have some keen people in the community, including a former Wiltshire councillor whose experience may be useful. An application for an Asset of Community Value order has been requested so they are on the way.

There has been a bit of confusion over the closure of **The Pheasant**, Salisbury, but the owners, Stonegate, have advertised the tenancy so the mystery is solved. If anyone is wondering, there is still no news of replacement tenants at **The White Horse**, Quidhampton and at the moment the Kershaws are staying until new tenants can be found.

Denise Barnes and Deborah Levinson have taken over **The Benett Arms** at Semley. Hailing all the way from Los Angeles, they are excited for the pub to become a hub of the community with cream teas, book clubs and local history talks. **Wilton Social Club** has decided to open at 12pm daily until 30 September (11am Saturdays) and **Hettie Bells**, Salisbury has closed its breakfast bar.

Happily I can end with some good news! **The Horseshoe**, Ebbesbourne Wake has won CAMRA's Wiltshire County Pub of the Year and **The Cuckoo**, Hamptworth won County Cider Pub of the Year. Congratulations to both!

Sue Turner
Pubs Officer

SOUTH WILTSHIRE PUBS IN DAILY TELEGRAPH 500

A mammoth survey by *The Daily Telegraph* to find the best 500 pubs in England has included eight from Wiltshire, two of which are from Salisbury and the south of the county. According to the *Telegraph*, its expert Will Hawkes, who has been writing about pubs for decades, chose them for “their charming character, welcoming staff, rich history and – of course – award-winning beer” adding that “they represent the very best the country has to offer”. It urges its readers to “visit as many of these pubs as you can”. CAMRA strongly backs that call to support them.

Our local pubs in the Hawkes list are:

The Haunch of Venison, Salisbury which, the *Telegraph* says, “dates all the way back to at least c1320” and is “truly a Ye Old Pub”. Churchill and Eisenhower’s alleged secret meeting at the Haunch in the run-up to D-Day gets a mention.



The Haunch of Venison, ‘a Ye Olde Pub’

The Horseshoe, Ebbesbourne Wake. The *Telegraph* says: “Winner of CAMRA Pub of the Year 2025, Salisbury and South Wiltshire, The Horseshoe has been run by the same family for

over 50 years. The local ales are poured straight from the casks behind the bar, the food is home-made”. Good to have the judgement of Salisbury & South Wiltshire CAMRA vindicated.



Landlord Tony Bath at The Horseshoe

The other Wiltshire pubs listed in the *Telegraph* 500 are: **The Glue Pot**, Swindon; **The Bruce Arms**, Easton Royal; **The British Lion**, Devizes; **The Bell Inn**, Lacock; **The Three Crowns**, Chippenham; and **The Five Bells**, Royal Wootton Bassett.

Barrel
Organ

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available online



SUMMERFEST VENTURES UP NORTH - WITHOUT LEAVING SALISBURY GUILDHALL!

Summerfest travelled further north than usual in June when it offered no less than 17 real ales from the Midlands and northern England – some two-thirds of those available. None of this involved switching on satnavs, dusting off long unused road atlases or even checking passports as all were for sale in Salisbury Guildhall at the city's summer beer and cider festival.



Education is important

But despite sampling the joys of Bohemian Dark Porter from the Leatherbritches Brewery in



Design by Fred Fieber

Ashby-de-la-Zouche, Leicestershire, and Fifty Winks from the Wakey Wakey Brew Company in Rochdale, Lancashire, when it came to voting for their favourites, people favoured local brews. Elsewhere in this issue of *Barrel Organ* you can read about the remarkable second victory running for the tiny Dead Duck brewery from Hale, near Downton, with third place going to Stonehenge Ales, from Netheravon, who may soon have to build a new wing to house all their award certificates. Still the northerners did sneak into second place,



The Guildhall's elegance



Decisions, decisions...

taken by the Collyfobble Brewery, from Barlow, Derbyshire.



Real ales from all over the country

As for the event itself, you know that when you see a young lady wearing a traffic cone on her head (note to Wiltshire Police, this was not a real cone) then the spirit of beer festivals is alive and well. The wonderful Eve N Song serenaded attendees on the Friday night – we now regard her as part of the CAMRA team as she and her partner have since been on one of our minibus tours. There was much earnest consultation of the Summerfest programme as people worked their way through the beer list.



Drinking is a serious business

Feedback was generally positive, although many would have liked a continuous Saturday session rather than two shifts from 11.00am to 3.00pm and 5.00pm to 9.00pm, half a dozen thought the venue was too hot, and five people wanted us to sell bar snacks, soft drinks and zero alcohol beers. The programme did not have the words 'beer festival' on the cover, although it did inside. Most people associate 'Summerfest' with a beer festival but at



A delegation from Hampshire

least a couple did not. Perhaps, in future we should identify it as "Summerfest: a summer beer festival". Dates for the diary: Winterfest, Summerfest's winter sister beer and cider festival, has provisionally been booked at The Guildhall on Friday 23 January and Saturday 24 January 2026.

Will Bennett

Pubs, Pints, People.



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TINY LOCAL BREWERY WINS SALISBURY BEER FESTIVAL AWARD FOR SECOND TIME RUNNING



Paul Bartlett (left) of Dead Duck Brewery receives his winner's certificate from Andrew Hesketh of Salisbury & South Wilts CAMRA. Sunny, the dog that partially inspired the name of the winning beer, is in the foreground.

A tiny brewery run from a converted garage on the edge of the New Forest has beaten off competitors from all over Britain to be voted the Beer of the Festival for the second year running at Salisbury's summer beer and cider festival. Attendees at Summerfest, which is run by the Salisbury & South Wiltshire branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), voted for Sunny Haze, from the Dead Duck brewery in Hale, near Downton, as the best of two dozen beers available at the festival in Salisbury Guildhall.

Sunny Haze, a 4.5% ABV IPA, gets its name partly because its colour resembles the dappled sunshine of New Forest sunsets, and also from Sunny, the friendly cockapoo dog owned by brewer Paul Bartlett and his wife Louise. Quite reasonably Sunny insisted that she be in the photograph when a group of CAMRA members went to Hale to present Paul with his Beer of the Festival certificate.

A year ago Dead Duck, a one-man operation run by Paul, won the Beer of the Festival award at Summerfest 2024 with Knightwood Oak, a 5% ABV chocolate porter, named after the largest, and probably the oldest, tree in the New Forest. "I am honoured and surprised, in fact chuffed, to have won this award two years in a row," said Paul.

Andrew Hesketh, Salisbury & South Wiltshire CAMRA's festivals co-ordinator, who presented Paul with his certificate, said: "South Wiltshire

and surrounding areas are lucky to have a number of excellent, small breweries, and Paul is a fast-emerging talent among them. Local beer lovers have a fantastic choice of real ales."

Paul, who teaches creative arts at the New Forest Academy in Hythe, began brewing 11 years ago when he lived in a London flat and was given a home brew kit as a Christmas present. He was determined to make each successive brew better until it became, as his wife Louise put it, "a hobby that got out of control". When they moved to Hale to be nearer their respective families, the garage seemed the perfect building to convert into a small brewery.

"I thought that the brewery would never succeed so I gave it the name 'Dead Duck' as a joke," said Paul. "I am being proved wrong." He now brews a total of four beers with a fifth – a pale ale – at the testing stage. These are available at a number of pubs in the area, including The Horse and Groom in Woodgreen, the Radnor Arms at Nunton and the Royal Oak at Fritham.

"What has changed in the past year is that we are reaching out to different pubs," said Paul. "We have also bought a gazebo and had our first outings. Selling to pubs and shops is great but you don't meet the punters. We have been to the Downton Cuckoo Fair, Frogham Fair and the New Forest Beer Festival."

"I am still teaching full-time. I could eventually go down from teaching five days a week to four but not yet. We have got to pay the mortgage. But brewing is now a hobby that pays for itself, which is a nice place to be."

Second place in the Beer of the Festival voting went to Barlow Sesh, a session IPA from Collyfobble Brewery, Barlow, Derbyshire, while another local brewery, Stonechange Ales from Netheravon, came third with 40 Summers, a traditionally brewed golden-coloured ale.

Will Bennett

DIARY DATES *Salisbury & South Wiltshire*

SEPTEMBER

3rd Open Branch Meeting.

7.30pm The Winchester Gate, Rampart Road, Salisbury.

6th Train Social

To Three Daggers, Edington. Depart 10.42am train Salisbury to Westbury, arrive 11.11am. 11.37am 87 bus leaves for Edington, arrives 11.50am (Old School stop). Possible brewery tour so if going email ptc@salisburycamra.org.uk and then we can arrange. Return 87 bus leaves 1.52pm, arrives Westbury 2.05pm. Train leaves 2.32pm, arrives Salisbury 3.02pm. Please check all train times before going.

12th Minibus Trip

7.00pm pickup at Salisbury Coach Park. Talbot Inn, Berwick St John (new tenants); King John, Tollard Royal; Royal Oak, Swallowcliffe; and The Compasses, Chicksgrove.

17th Amesbury Amble

7.05pm X4 bus from Blue Boar Row, Salisbury or Activ8 at 7.10pm. Visit The Antrobus Arms, The George Hotel, The New Inn and The Bell.

24th Bus Social

To Dancing Man Brewery and Duke of Wellington, Southampton. Depart 10.40 bus X7 from Endless Street Stop D to Southampton. Upon arrival at West Quay either walk straight to the Dancing Man Brewery (10 mins) or follow the historic trail along the medieval city wall. After lunch, walk back towards West Quay, stopping at the Duke of Wellington, before returning to Salisbury from Stop BS on the X7 at 4.10pm (trains are also available).

OCTOBER

1st Open Branch Meeting

7.30pm The Coach & Horses, Winchester Street, Salisbury.

4th Train Social

To Digby Tap, Sherborne. Depart 10.47am train from Salisbury, arrives Sherborne 11.32am. Food served 12.00 noon to 2.00pm. Pre-booking required <https://www.digbytap.co.uk> 01935 813148. Return: leave Sherborne 1.35pm or 2.35pm, arrive Salisbury 2.17pm or 3.19pm. Check train times nearer the date.

10th Minibus Trip

7.00pm pick-up Salisbury Coach Park. The Kings Head and The Parish Lantern, both Whiteparish; The Lamb, Nomansland; The Cuckoo, Hamptworth.

15th City Saunter

7.30pm. Devizes Road area: The Royal Oak, The Devizes Inn, The Village Freehouse and The Duke of York.

23rd Bus Social

To The Horseshoe Inn and The Queens Head, Chalke Valley. 29 bus from Blue Boar Row Stop M at 11:50am, arrive The Horseshoe Inn 12.42. Depart at 1.56 pm on 29 for Broad Chalke, arrive 2.12pm at the Queens Head. Depart 3.51pm on 29, arrive Salisbury 4.18pm.

NOVEMBER

5th Open Branch Meeting

7.30pm The Wyndham Arms, Estcourt Road, Salisbury.

8th Bus Social

To Devizes. Leave on bus 2, New Canal Stop R 10:50am, arrive Devizes 12.05pm. Return 2.05pm, arrive Salisbury 3:25pm.

14th Minibus Trip

7.00pm pickup Salisbury coach park. The Butt of Sherry, The George and The Walnut Tree, all Mere; and The Beckford Arms, Fonthill Gifford.

19th City Saunter

7.30pm Castle Street and beyond. The George & Dragon, The Avon Brewery Inn, Qudos and The Ox Row Inn.

26th Bus Social

To Ringwood. Depart Salisbury on the X3 at Blue Boar Row Stop M 11.25am, arrive Ringwood Meeting House Lane at 12.07pm. Visit the Inn on the Furlong for lunch followed by the Star Inn. Optional 10 minute walk to Railway Inn (opens 3.00pm). Departures from Ringwood at approx 01 and 31 minutes past the hour.

To contact our bus and train socials team email ptc@salisburycamra.org.uk

Please check all bus and train times due to changing timetables. For buses see Salisbury Reds website www.salisburyreds.co.uk

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