

Dates for your Diary

18th –20th September **Cowes Beer Festival** - Sugar Store, Shepards Marina, Cowes
24th September **Good Beer Guide Celebration** - Goddards - 6.30 for 7pm
2nd - 4th October **Autumn Festival** - Waverley Park - East Cowes
10th - 11th October **WightRider** - Ryde Bus and Coach Museum
7th - 18th October **Autumn Beer Festival** - Wetherspoons
10th - 11th October **Beer and Steam** - IW Steam Railway, Havenstreet
17th October **Folktoberfest** - Goddards Bar and Kitchen, Hale Common
30th October **Halloween Ale and Cider Festival**, Castle Inn, Sandown

Although we make every effort to make sure these dates and events are correct, there may be last minute changes and cancellations so please check first.

Please let me know if you would like to publicise an event in the magazine and/or the website. Just send an email to: editor@wightwash.org.uk **It's FREE!!**

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Wightwash can be contacted by phone **721557** or email editor@wightwash.org.uk
Wightwash Website www.wightwash.org.uk

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Wightwash

Volume 2, Number 106

Magazine of the Isle of Wight branch of CAMRA

AUTUMN ISSUE 2026



In this **FREE** Issue...

BEER IN THE UK—A REPORT
The Smugglers C.A.T.
Lilly Deacon
Brewery News
Defibrillators
KeyKegs
Prize Quiz



and much, much more

The Campaign for Real Ale exists to preserve and promote good beer and pubs.



Wightwash
website

Do good pubs and beer matter to you?

In CAMRA, there's something for everyone—whether you're campaigning for the future of pubs or simply enjoy meeting friends in a proper local with character.

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Win a £20 Meal Voucher for the Wight Mouse Inn or a case of Yates' Ales

Just answer these easy questions. The first two correct answers out of the hat on 15th November win the prizes.

Send answers to - The Editor, Wightwash, Oakdene, Rookley, Ventnor, PO38 3NH or email - editor@wightwash.org.uk

- 1/ Which country has the longest coastline in the world?
- 2/ Who wrote the music for West Side Story?
- 3/ In which novel does the character Atticus Finch appear?
- 4/ Which football club is nicknamed The Seagulls?
- 5/ Which brewery originally created Old Speckled Hen?
- 6/ What was an Old Speckled Hen?
- 7/ Who was the longest-reigning king in British history?
- 8/ Which car was James Bond's main vehicle in Goldfinger?
- 9/ and 10/ Name the Caribbean islands represented by these flags.



Answers to the Summer Quiz

- 1/ 11
- 2/ Guys and Dolls
- 3/ France
- 4/ Sebastian Sawa (1:59:30)
- 5/ Hops
- 6/ Mark Twain
- 7/ Shanklin Brewery
- 8/ Spiro Agnew
- 9/ Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
- 10/ Leonard Bernstein

Bob Blezzard wins a meal voucher and Gary Langridge wins a case of Yates' beer.

Thank you to all the others who took part - better luck next time

Wight Mouse Inn
thewightmouseinn

The Wight Mouse Inn is a friendly, fun, family run pub in Chale on the south coast of the island with amazing views across to the Needles and Tennyson Down. We are well known for value for money, honest pub food and can cater for party's large and small; choose any occasion from popping in for a quick bite to family celebrations. We are open for breakfast (open to non-residents) then full menu from midday and always have a daily specials board to complement our extensive menu.

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COWES BEER FESTIVAL

2026

Friday 18th to Sunday 20th September
at The Sugar Store, Shepards Wharf, Cowes

- ♦ 24 Cask Ales
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- ♦ Live music every day
- ♦ Beautiful waterside setting

Please see wightwash.org.uk/events
for more details as they become available.

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Please note the deadline for the
Winter Issue will be
11th November 2026

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HAUNTED HIGHLANDER RUBY RYE ALE
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KING OF THE CASTLE PALE ALE
4.3% ABV
AVAILABLE SEPT & OCT

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To the best of our knowledge, these pubs either offer discount to card holding CAMRA members or accept CAMRA vouchers

Any more information is very welcome. editor@wightwash.org.uk

The Vine	St. Helens	The Folly Inn	Whippingham
The Duke of York	Cowes	The Volunteer	Ventnor
The Star Ale House	Ryde	The Crab	Shanklin
The High Park Tavern	Ryde	Merrie Gardens	Lake
S. Fowler & Co.	Ryde	The Anchor	Cowes
Man in the Moon	Newport	The Fountain	Cowes
Hotel Ryde Castle	Ryde	Harry's Bar	Ryde
The Solent Inn	Ryde		

Goddards & Powder Monkey

It has been a busy summer at Goddards Brewery, driven largely by demand for the revived Brickwoods ales. Since June, more than 50,000 bottles have been distributed to supermarkets nationwide. Additional support

from Touchard's of Torquay has helped maintain delivery capacity during the peak period.

South Island Pale Ale has also seen strong sales in both cask and keg formats. Its performance suggests it is likely to become part of the brewery's regular range.

Pompey Royal continues to sell well across Portsmouth and the



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Martin Milne, 39 Sandown Road, Lake, Isle of Wight.

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JULIE and LES welcome you to
THE RAILWAY INN
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Mild, Strong Country Bitter and
Pompey Royal
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Martin Milne, 39 Sandown Road, Lake, Isle of Wight.

The
Freemason's Tavern
Newport, Isle of Wight

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BOB and LINDA welcome you to
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Martin Milne, 39 Sandown Road, Lake, Isle of Wight.

Wightrider

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taking you on historic routes around the Island

10-11 October
2026

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THE CULVER HAVEN INN

Located at one of its highest points, The Culver Haven Inn boasts some of the best views on the Isle of Wight

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Isle of Wight Beermats: 1 The Island's CAMRA branch

This is a very brief introduction to an occasional series looking at beermats relating to the Island.

Over time we will look at mats produced by the breweries, pubs and other organisations, but to start we will have a look at a series produced by the Island's CAMRA branch.

These featured an image of the outline of the Island with a psychedelic rendition of 'Campaign For Real Ale' superimposed on one side, whilst the other side featured a series of different pubs. The image has been seen in red, green and blue. Some of the pub's include the names of the hosts and these appear to relate to the 1980s. The illustration shows the names Frank Basford, who has illustrated many IW books and articles on archaeology, and P Atkinson.

Mats I have, or am aware of, are as follows. I would welcome details and an image of any others – did they all actually appear in all three colours?



Jeff Sechiari



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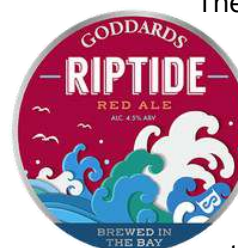


Isle of Wight and is expected to be available in bottled form shortly. The Brickwoods connection has broadened

its appeal while retaining its established customer base.

Goddards' brewing schedule remains comprehensive with the following beers in regular or seasonal production:

GSB, Fuggle Dee-Dum, Ale of Wight, Duck's Folly, Planet Lager, Botanical (three varieties), South Island, Rip Tide, Quarr Abbey Ale, Quarr Abbey Honey Ale, Pompey Royal (now replacing Wight Squirrel as a core Goddards ale)



The seasonal **Rip Tide** (4.5%) combines elements of an Irish Red Ale and an American IPA, offering a hybrid style that has attracted interest from

drinkers looking for something different.

A notable milestone for the brewery this year has been the inclusion of Ale of Wight in the House of Commons Strangers' Bar



Bob and West Wight MP Richard Quigley in the Strangers' Bar, House of Commons

Powder Monkey's new acquisitions, Castle Eden and Maxim continue to expand their portfolio with Castle Eden – Red, Black, Ale and Blonde and Castle Eden – Maximus, Samson, Maxim and Swedish Blonde.



Look out for **Bubblehead** (5%) A champagne inspired IPA. "Bubblehead" is a traditional nickname for Royal Navy clearance divers. Powder Monkey created the beer to support the Vernon Mine Warfare and Diving Monument, which commemorates naval divers and mine-warfare personnel.



Goddards Bar & Kitchen have two events coming up. During the Isle of Wight Bus Museum's Wightrider weekend, the brewery will be on the 1C and 16C bus routes. One-hour tours run at 12–1pm and 2–3pm, costing £10, and must be booked in advance. **Ale of Wight** will be renamed **Ale of Wightrider** for the weekend, priced at £4.50 per pint, and anyone with the official programme can receive 10% off food and drink. Opening hours are

11am Saturday (food 11–8.30pm) and 11.30am

Sunday (food 12–5pm), with Sunday expected to be busy.

The second event is **Folktoberfest**, a free autumn gathering based on the Island's traditional Harvest Home. The day includes Morris dancing and performances from Brighstone Barnacles, Berlingo Flick and Folklore Trio. A **Harvest Home Ale** will be available at £5 per pint while supplies last. Entry is free and open to all.

Tim Marshall

Goddards Brewery BLO



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Lind Street. Soon after, objects fell from walls, a festival poster repeatedly dropped, and a clothes brush mysteriously dropped in a sealed glass cabinet.

A bricked-up smuggling tunnel still sits in the cellar, ensuring Lilly Deacon's legend remains very much alive.

left in the cellar were routinely moved. The Partlands Hotel was demolished in 2006, replaced by Swanmore Court – where odd disturbances have continued.

The story resurfaced recently when the original pub sign was rediscovered and hung in The Smugglers CAT, the cellar bar at The Colonnade on



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One of Ryde's most enduring ghost stories centres on Lilly Deacon, said to have been a 19th-century barmaid or landlady at the old Partlands Hotel. Local folklore claims she met a violent end in the cellar in 1896, possibly at the hands of a jealous husband; another version insists she was bricked up within the cellar walls. No historical record confirms her existence, yet her name and the date were reportedly found scrawled across the cellar, and the pub was eventually renamed **The Lilly Deacon** in her honour.



Over the years, the building gained a reputation for unexplained happenings. Dogs refused to enter the cellar: one landlord's two collies would not go down the steps, and another's boxer fled in terror after a single visit. Darts players complained of a mysterious hand interrupting their throws. Customers reported hearing a whispered "Lilly Deacon". Gas taps supplying beer to the bar were found inexplicably turned off, and tools

live beer list!

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GOOD BEER GUIDE 2025 WE'RE IN IT

THE ALE HOUSE

The Ale House, High Street Cowes. Find us on Facebook or scan the QR code for up to date beer list

GODDARDS BREWERY



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01983 611011 - goddardsbrewery.com -

Part of the Powder Monkey Group



Island Brewery

Well, what a thirsty summer that was! That heat was something else, too much for many to stand, but there was plenty of beer about, except for Real Ale on The Parade over Cowes Week. There was Tennyson on keg in a small stall. In fact the big bar was much reduced and family groups were more catered for. If you wanted a decent Real Ale there were plenty of pubs through the town. No Marina bar, etc, either. Long gone are the heady days when the likes of Murphy's would sponsor Cowes Week.

'We now have our focus on Autumn', Steve says, on a rare visit to the brewery. Ashley nods and reveals that he has bought a whole load of rye. "We thought we would try something quite different." Steve continues. "Rye beers. Different styles of beer brewed with Rye – a Rye Stout, a Rye Best Bitter." "Ushers!" I interjected. "**Autumn Frenzy.** I really liked that!" I exclaimed. "Whatever happened to Ushers?" I asked, not really expecting any answer.

Anyway, on top of Island's small batch specials that they brew, mainly for Rod at Newport Ale



Telephone: 01983 821 731
Email: info@islandales.co.uk |
www.islandbrewery.co.uk

On the day of my visit, the shelves boasted:

- 23 Isle of Wight beers
- 5 Island ciders
- 9 Island gins
- 2 Island liqueurs
- 2 Island wines
- Island teas and coffees

And, of course, Woodfords famous sausage rolls

It's a treasure trove for anyone who loves Island history, Island beer, or simply discovering something new. There's even a dedicated section on Lilly Deacon (see page 30).



I wholeheartedly encourage you to visit, explore the hoard of treasure, and enjoy some Isle of Wight delicacies

Tim Marshall



Serving Wines, Spirits and a selection of Real Ales from the home of brewing, Burton Upon Trent

Harry's Bar, The Royal Esplanade Hotel, Ryde, PO33 2ED

in Ryde. Then came Covid. What should have been a straightforward restoration turned into five years of construction delays, bureaucracy, and sheer persistence. But on 16th May 2026, timed to coincide with the Bus Museum's **Rydabus** event, the doors finally opened on a new venture:

The Smugglers C.A.T. (Coffee, Ale & Treasure)



The name is no exaggeration. The bar is packed with Island memorabilia, especially brewing artefacts, alongside a remarkable range of local produce.

The Highdown Inn

Scenic, Country, Family Pub with Bed & Breakfast, specialising in local seafood

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susan@highdowninn.com

House, Quay Arts and Reg & Steph at The Ale House, Cowes, Island Ales will be brewing a range of Rye beers, exact styles yet to be determined. If they are popular, there is a chance they could become seasonal.

Reg, at The Ale House, Cowes, has specifically asked me to give mention to their **Cowes Beer Festival** this autumn, at the Sugar Store in Shephards Warf down Medina Road, where the Harbour Master is. Cowes Harbour Commission are, traditionally, big supporters of events and Real Ale in Cowes, and did so over our Beer & Buses. Now Reg & Steph are sparking some life into the town again and starting off what we all hope will grow into a Cowes Festival every autumn. It is enterprising initiatives like this that put them so far in the lead in their first year's entry as a new pub in CAMRA Pub of the Year competition. Reg & Steph say that they have commissioned some special brews from Island.

Cowes is an interesting place to visit nowadays, with a variety of business, shops, places to eat and drink, and, of course, steeped in



unique history (see our Historic Pub Walks <https://www.wightwash.org.uk/walks.php>) and one of the best bus services on the Island. The Town Council is also encouraging town centre venues to help make it a Cowes Festival.

John Nicholson

BLO Island Brewery
& IW Branch Chairman

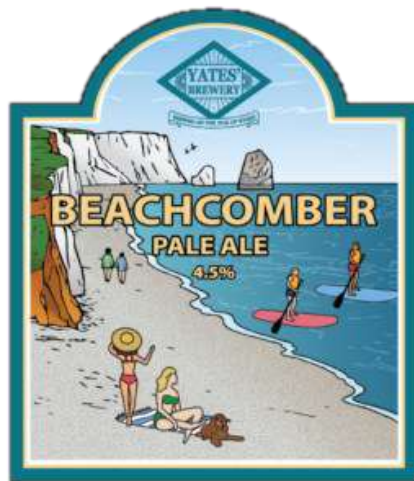


So what did happen to Ushers? Ushers began in 1824 and grew into a major West Country brewer, but a series of takeovers steadily pulled it away from its roots. Watney Mann acquired it in 1960, then Grand Metropolitan in the 1970s. A brief revival followed a 1991 management buyout, but after Alchemy Partners took control in 1998, brewing was sidelined. The Trowbridge brewery closed in 2000 and was demolished in 2004, leaving only contract-brewed brands behind.

Yates' Brewery

October 18th will be the first anniversary of the passing of Yatsey, David Yates Snr, and the plan is to commemorate him with a beer festival at his local, No 7 in Niton on the 16-18th October.

Josh has experimented with a small batch of keg **Beachcomber** and it has proved hugely popular in this summer's heatwave. As a result they are looking into setting up facilities to process this in house so that they can respond to demand quickly, and possibly add other beers to the keg range available.



As you read this, we are heading towards the autumn and the arrival of **Dark Side of the Wight** - one



Before settling permanently on the Isle of Wight, Tony Jones was already one of its most enthusiastic admirers. In the days when ferry fares didn't require a second mortgage, he visited the Island regularly sometimes clocking up more than 50 days a year. Although Tony was a great admirer of the Island's pubs, he often felt disappointed by the limited support for local produce especially local beer and began to wonder whether he could help change that. Alongside his love of good ale, Tony has always had a deep fascination with Isle of Wight



history and heritage. About six years ago, those two passions finally came together when he took on the Cellar Bar – formerly the Isle of Wight Rock Bar – tucked beneath the building on the corner of St Thomas Street and Lind Street





more time on the Island enjoying long walks, often from Ventnor to the Crown at Shorwell and sometimes on to Hulverstone or Freshwater. Fit, active and full of energy, his sudden passing was a great shock to all who knew him.

David could be outspoken, argumentative and delightfully querulous — but beneath the prickles was a kind, thoughtful and engaging man, quick with a cheeky smile and always ready for a pint.

His humour, companionship and deep knowledge of beer will be greatly missed by his family, his many friends, and all who shared a beer with him.

Rest well, David. You were one of life's true characters, and none of us will forget you.

Brian Jacobs and Jeff Sechiari



of my favourites.

The other seasonal offerings will depend on the weather.

The drive to localism has continued

and all of their base malts are now from Isle of Wight grain. They are also speaking to Warminster Malt, one of the country's last traditional floor maltings, about the possibility of producing wheat and torried wheat from Isle of Wight grain. This would only leave a very small level of non-IW speciality grains in the malt bill for some beers. Warminster recently visited the barley fields with Isle of Wight Grain.

They have now introduced new branded glasses for Beachcomber and their Lager, completing the set. For collectors they have now completed replacing their beer labels to reflect Josh being the head brewer. There is also a new label for the Garlic Beer, produced with black garlic for the Garlic Farm. They are collaborating with Mountbatten Hospice to produce a beer for September's Randonnée cycling event.

The new website has now been rolled out, allowing pubs to place orders online. There is also a section on the brewery and this will be populated with news and information going forward.



Jeff Sechiari

Yates' Brewery BLO

Yatesy

Yates' Brewery are putting together a special event this October to celebrate the life of Yatesy — a man who meant a great deal to the Island's brewing community. The date and venue are still being finalised, but plans are well underway. We'll share full details on wightwash.org.uk as soon as they're confirmed.

ESTD 1984 THE WATERFRONT

The Waterfront Bar and Restaurant finds itself tucked in the bay of Totland beach, sat upon the seawall, offering undisturbed, panoramic views of the Western Solent where it meets the Dorset Jurassic Coastline, as well as stunning sunsets all year round!

Staff offer a friendly and warm welcome, whilst the Kitchen use a wide variety of locally sourced produce to deliver the best seasonal dishes, the island has to offer. If you aren't sat in our Table Serviced Restaurant, you could be enjoying the fresh sea air in the Beer Garden and watch the skies turn from blue to sunset pink!

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www.eatbythesea.com



Wight Knuckle Brewery

As the summer holidays draw to a close, we at Wight Knuckle are taking time to gather ourselves and reflect on what the year has brought us so far.

The big hit of the season has ended up being our 3.2% **Table Beer**. With its huge punch of grapefruit and juicy, hoppy aromas coupled with the low percentage, this has been the session

choice of a selection

of locations across the Island and a firm

favourite at The Point in Bembridge.

There seems to

be a big push for lower ABV these days and we're very proud to be able to deliver such big flavour in such a small beer. It's been so popular that we're now completely sold out but it will return next year with maybe a few tweaks if we feel the need.

The aim of the game now is looking forwards in to the autumn and planning what to brew with the changing of the seasons. There's lots of ideas flying around and we'd love to divulge but nothing is set in stone yet. Something darker no doubt and with an emphasis on a bit of comfort to soothe people through the longer nights. There's a few cool techniques we'd like to try out too as the little lull before the half term is a great time to have some fun.





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ISLE OF WIGHT

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A vivid memory of a Mew Langton enamel sign sparked a lifelong passion for breweriana. David became an expert on Hertfordshire's Benskins Brewery and on Island brewing history, especially Sprakes of Chale. He had an uncanny knack for finding unusual artefacts and contributed numerous articles to the Brewery History Society, the Labologists, and Wightwash. He was also a lively presence on the "Lost and Surviving Pubs and Breweries of the Isle of Wight" Facebook page.

David's love of the Island's pub and brewery culture ran so deep that he even considered buying a pub —

provided it had space for a small brewery. He looked seriously at both the Yarbridge and the Sportsman's Rest but neither quite fitted the bill.

Professionally, David began life as an art teacher before trying various paths and eventually becoming a specialist interior decorator, known for his retro style. His artistic streak never left him. Nor did his love of beer and cider: he brewed both at home, producing a magnificent premium bitter matured in wood and a splendid cider.

In later years, as he eased into partial retirement, David spent

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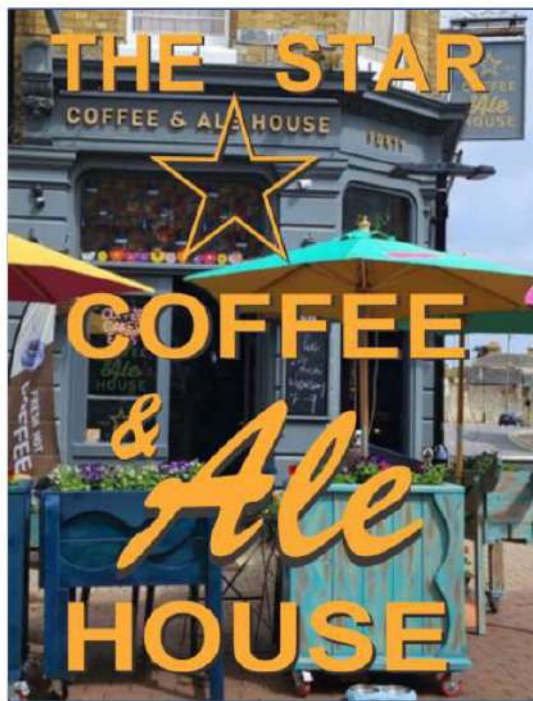
David Dines**A Fond Remembrance**

The Isle of Wight beer community was deeply saddened by the sudden death of David Dines on 4th August, shortly after his 68th birthday. A long-standing CAMRA member and an enthusiastic part of the Crafty Crew and the Society for the Preservation of Beers from the Wood (SPBW) IW Branch, David was a familiar and much-loved figure across the Island's pubs.

Although he lived on the mainland, David's connection to the Island began in childhood with holidays in Brighstone. That affection never left him. In 2002, while on a



Brewery History Society tour of Burts Brewery and other Island sites, he fell in love with Ventnor and soon bought a house there. From then on, the Island became his second home.



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We're also readying another batch of our canned **Mycro-Pale** (0.5%) non-alcoholic, functional mushroom infused hazy pale. It's been a resounding success with loads of lovely comments including a personal favourite of "That actually tastes like a beer!". Yet again, it needs a few

alterations (We just can't help ourselves, ok?!) but considering we trialed it out to get us through the last Dry January, its proved itself to be worthy of the core range.

Besides this, we're going to take a bit of time to have a rest as, now being a team of just three, it's been very full on. We're so grateful for all the love and support and for all the pubs, bars, venues and people who order from us and enjoy our beer and we look forward to brewing for you for years to come so we need to take a bit of time to chill and fend off the ever looming Menty Bee that comes with running a craft microbrewery in 2026.

Keep well all and we look forward to brewing for you soon.

Cheers,
Team Wight Knuckle

Team Wight Knuckle

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Wightwash

Defibrillators

Page Twenty Three

customers who donated to this important cause. Their combined efforts mean that Shanklin now has another safeguard for the community—one that could make all the difference in an emergency.

For more details about IOW Defibrillators visit:

www.iowdefibrillators.base44.app/

UPDATE:

The Chine will host another training afternoon between 3pm - 4pm on Monday 5th October 2026, light refreshments will be available. Attendees will need to register to confirm their attendance please email

manager@thechineinn.co.uk



Martine, Steve and Jonathon

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A Lifesaver on the Clifftop

The Chine Inn's New Defibrillator

The Chine Inn in Shanklin has added a vital new feature to its clifftop location: a public-access defibrillator, installed thanks to local generosity.

What began as a simple fundraising idea among customers quickly turned into a full-blown success story. Within just one week, the target was reached and the defibrillator fitted—an astonishing turnaround made possible by the kindness of many, and the remarkable generosity of one.

Regular customer **Jonathon Diffey of ASL Group** stepped forward the moment he heard that a final amount was still needed. His immediate offer to donate the outstanding balance ensured the defibrillator could be installed without delay.

The project was completed with the help of **Steve Reid of IOW Defibrillators**, the Island charity responsible for installing and maintaining public defibrillators. The new unit now sits in a prime position on the exterior wall of the Chine Inn—perfectly placed for anyone walking between the beach and the cliff path.

Steve's involvement carries particular meaning. He is living proof of the importance of early CPR and defibrillation, having survived a cardiac arrest thanks to the very equipment he now works tirelessly to provide for others. His experience led to the founding of IOW Defibrillators, and his commitment continues to save lives across the Island.

The Chine Inn team extend their heartfelt thanks to Jonathon Diffey, Steve Reid, and the many

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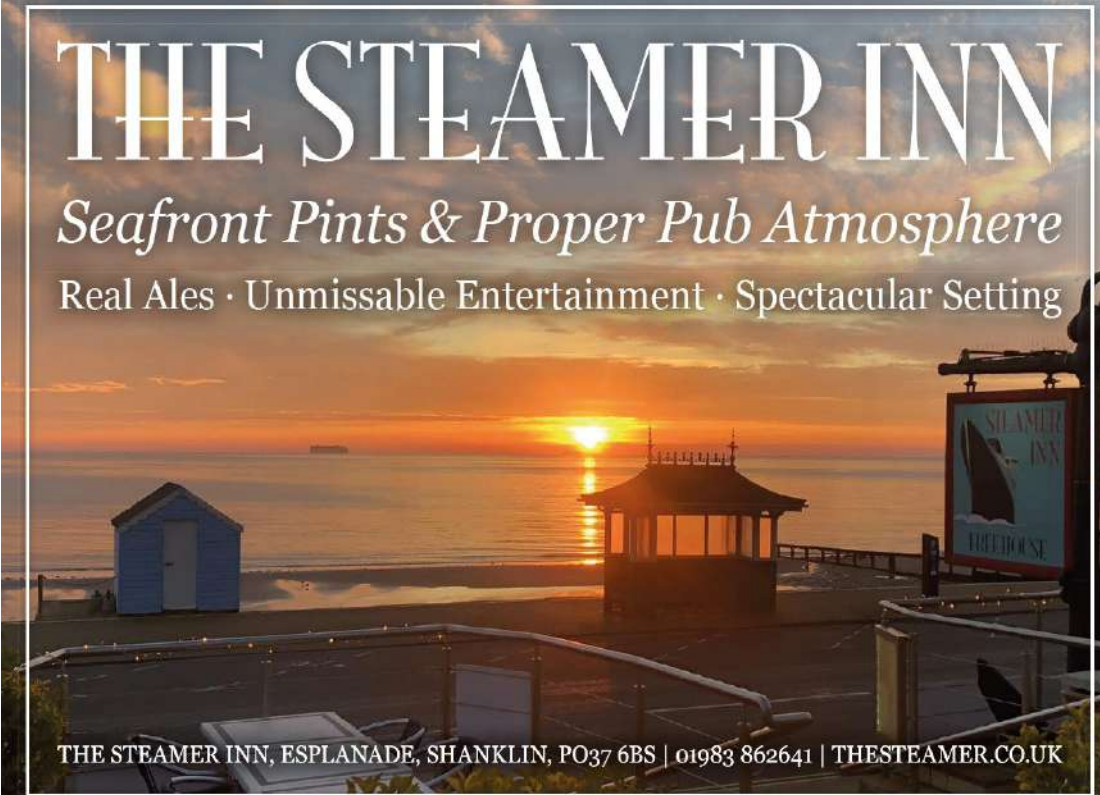
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More and more brewers are producing their beers in keg as well as cask, opening the door to new flavours and styles. One of the most interesting developments is the KeyKeg – a modern type of keg that lets brewers serve real ale with freshness and consistency.

A KeyKeg is a strong plastic shell containing a flexible inner bag filled with beer. Unlike a traditional metal keg, the gas used to dispense the beer never touches the liquid. It flows around the outside of the bag, gently squeezing the beer out. Because the beer isn't exposed to gas or air, it keeps its natural live-yeast carbonation, doesn't risk going

flat, and is protected from oxidation, which can cause off-flavours. This design helps preserve the beer's character and aroma.

A filled KeyKeg has a shelf life of around six to twelve months, depending on the beer style and packaging. Once opened, it continues to perform well for much longer than a cask. Because no air ever touches the beer, a tapped KeyKeg can stay fresh for four to six weeks, sometimes even longer, whereas a cask is usually at its best for only three to five days.

Traditional bitters and many porters and stouts still shine brightest in cask, conditioning

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Does all this sound familiar? Too right. Back in the 1960s and 1970s it wasn't the Big Four, it was the Big Six – Grand Metropolitan (Watneys), Allied, Whitbread, Courage, Bass Charrington and Scottish & Newcastle. All UK-owned, but with exactly the same aim as today's Big 4: dominate the market with factory beers and freeze out the small guys. And they would have got away with it but for **CAMRA**, which became the most successful consumer organisation in history. In 1970 there were around 100 independent breweries left; now there are some 1500, and although that's slightly down on recent years it's still an impressive growth rate. We should be grateful there remains a challenge to Big 4 hegemony.

Whilst factory beer is still their main concern, the Big 4 know that owning a niche brewery or at least a "craft" label is no bad thing. Heineken snapped up Beavertown in 2022 and Carlsberg acquired Marston's, though they soon ditched its more interesting beers. A few streets away in Burton, on the old Bass Charrington site, lies Molson Coors, proclaiming its commitment to UK brewing with an enormous poster of Carling Black Label slapped across its front. And what an affront that is – 200 years of UK brewing represented by a Canadian lager. It's hard to find anything more symbolic of how the Big 4 misrepresent UK beer.

Another disturbing aspect of Big 4 factory brews is the ingredients they use. Back in Big 6 days even keg beers were made principally with malted barley, water and hops (and probably a few other things they didn't want to disclose). Today's multinationals have a whole new store cupboard of adjuncts to replace expensive barley, notably rice. San Miguel contains 15–20% rice and Bud Lite an astonishing 30%.

Call that brewing? I don't.

Brian Jacobs



appears on the bar.

- **Buying up “craft” brands** Many popular “craft” beers are owned by the Big Four — not by small independent brewers.
- **Misleading branding** Beers marketed as “foreign” or “craft” are often brewed in huge UK factories, pushing genuine local producers aside. For instance, “**France’s No.1 beer, Kronenbourg 1664**” is actually brewed in Northampton
- **Massive marketing budgets:** Global brewers spend millions convincing drinkers they’re buying independent beer — when they’re not.
- **Price manipulation:** The same brands are sold cheaply in supermarkets but at high prices in pubs, hurting landlords and consumers alike.

Uniform lager dominance Flooding pubs with identical lagers squeezes out variety and real flavour.

CAMRA’s Position

CAMRA fights these practices because they harm pubs, limit choice, and mislead drinkers. We campaign for fair access for independent brewers, honest labelling, and a diverse beer culture.

In the UK beer market, the term “**Big Four**” brewers usually refers to the multinational companies that dominate pub supply and beer sales. They’re not an official cartel, but together they control most of the taps in tied and managed pubs.

Here’s who they are:

Together, these four account for roughly **80% of UK beer sales**, mainly through pub-tie contracts and exclusive distribution deals. Smaller independent brewers often struggle to get their beers on the bar because these giants control supply chains, marketing budgets, and tap access.

Here’s where the **Big Four brewers** produce most of their UK beer — they each operate large regional plants, often inherited from older British breweries:

The modern “Big Four” are simply the **global successors** of the old British brewing empires:

So the Big Four today are not new — they’re the **international descendants** of the old British giants.

gently and evolving over a few days. But modern styles such as highly-hopped IPAs, saisons and dry stouts often taste better with higher carbonation, served cooler, and without losing hop aroma to the air. KeyKeg keeps these beers bright, aromatic and lively, presenting them exactly as the brewer intended.

For pubs and breweries considering KeyKeg, the economics are straightforward. A new KeyKeg typically costs around £19, and refurbishing a used one – fitting a new inner bag and testing it – usually costs about £10. The

initial equipment outlay for a pub – coupler, gas regulator, and dispense lines – is roughly £150–£250, depending on setup. After that, it’s an affordable, flexible way to provide draught ale.

Please note: KeyKeg is a proprietary name. Other *bag in a box* products are available.



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CAMRA REPORT: BEER IN THE UK

For some 50 years, CAMRA has championed the cause of natural beer and the pubs to drink it in, but it has come under severe criticism from members in recent years for a lack of direction in its policies, guidance and financial management. However, its newly-published report **Beer in the UK** is a well-researched and articulate document that has gone some way towards re-establishing CAMRA's credibility and authority.

The report takes an objective view of the current state of the beer market in the UK, and it makes very uncomfortable reading, all the more uncomfortable because you soon realise that we've trod this path before.

So, let's have a look at this report and its findings. Here are the salient points:

- ◆ Although alcohol consumption has been fairly static since 1980, beer consumption has halved, overtaken by wine and other drinks.
- ◆ Until 1990, 96% of beer produced in the UK was by indigenous brewers; now only 20% of it is.
- ◆ Smaller breweries which produce 'interesting' beers are largely blocked from the market by massive overseas corporate brewers.
- ◆ Multi-national brewers routinely mislead drinkers about the provenance of their products; the impression is created that the beer is brewed to high standards overseas when, in many cases, it originates from a UK beer factory – San Miguel, for example, is brewed in South Wales and Moretti gets no closer to Italy than Manchester. And that good old Cornish beer Doombah? Burton-on-Trent!
- ◆ And we in the UK pay the highest beer taxes in the world which further disincentivises smaller brewers who aim to produce quality, distinctive beers.



The Big Four

Brewer	ABInBev 		Molson Coors 	
Base	Belgium	Netherlands	USA/Canada	Denmark/UK
Main UK Brewing Sites	Magor, South Wales	Manchester Tadcaster, North Yorkshire	Burton-upon-Trent, Staffordshire	Northampton Burton-upon-Trent Wolverhampton
Why it Matters	The world's largest brewer, with a strong presence in premium lager brands sold in UK pubs.	Owns Star Pubs & Bars, giving it influence over one of Britain's largest pub estates.	Controls major mainstream lager brands, including Carling, and backs them with substantial marketing.	Formed through Carlsberg's 2020 merger with Marston's, giving it reach across both lager and cask ale.

So, the common thread in most of the above is big multinational brewers – the 'Big Four'. Let's have a closer look at this and how the Big Four control what's on the bar.

Most drinkers think their local landlord chooses what's on tap. In reality, global brewers quietly decide what you can buy — and what you can't.

Here's how they do it:

- **Pub ownership and tied contracts:** Big brewers and pub companies lock pubs into exclusive supply deals, forcing them to sell only certain brands.
- **Pubcos and distributors pressure exclusive commercial agreements Even independent pubs** to stock global brands instead of local beer.
- **Market dominance and tap-line control:** Four companies control around 80% of the UK beer market, giving them power to dictate what