

# Dates for your Diary

- 4th July **Sausage and Cider Festival** - Isle of Wight Steam Railway, Havenstreet
- 3rd - 5th July - **Highdown Beer Festival** - 20 Real Ales
- 11th July - **IW CAMRA Pub and Beer of the Year Awards** Ale House Cowes 3pm
- 17th - 26th July - **Ventnor Fringe** - tickets now available - see <https://vfringe.co.uk/>
- 18th July **Real Ale Train** - Isle of Wight Steam Railway, Havenstreet
- 1st - 2nd August - **Chale Show** - Chale Recreation Ground
- 8th August - **Dainty and Hobbit's Beer Festival** - Newclose Cricket Club 11am - 8pm
- 29th August **St Helens Mini Beer Festival** The Pavilion, St Helen's Green
- 14th - 17th September - **Dainty's Bar** Wolverton Garden Show
- 10th - 11th October **WightRider** - Ryde Bus and Coach Museum

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](mailto:editor@wightwash.org.uk) It's FREE!!

# Wightwash

Volume 2, Number 105



Magazine of the Isle of Wight branch of CAMRA

# Summer Issue 2026

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also in this FREE Issue...

**Birds and Beer, Ale and the Law, Prize Quiz**  
**Island Characters, New Faces**

and much, much more...



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



Wightwash website

Wightwash can be contacted by phone 721557 or email [editor@wightwash.org.uk](mailto:editor@wightwash.org.uk)  
Wightwash Website [www.wightwash.org.uk](http://www.wightwash.org.uk)

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## 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.

Joining CAMRA means standing up for real ale, real choice, and real community. You'll support independent brewers, protect heritage pubs, and help ensure future generations enjoy traditional pubs and well-kept ale.

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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 August win the prizes.

Send answers to - The Editor, Wightwash, Oakdene, Rookley, Ventnor, PO38 3NH or email - [editor@wightwash.org.uk](mailto:editor@wightwash.org.uk)

- 1/ How many time zones are there in Russia?
- 2/ In which musical does Nicely Nicely Johnson appear?
- 3/ From which country did the USA purchase Florida in 1821?
- 4/ Who holds the record for running the fastest London marathon in under 2 hours?
- 5/ What does beer contain which ale traditionally did not?
- 6/ Who wrote Tom Sawyer?
- 7/ Which Isle of Wight brewery brewed Battleship Brown Ale?
- 8/ Who was US Vice President in June 1972 when the Watergate Scandal broke?
- 9/ and 10/ Identify these famous composers.



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### Answers to the Winter Quiz

- 1/ Peregrine Falcon
- 2/ Norway
- 3/ Cherries
- 4/ Annie
- 5/ 1994
- 6/ Gold
- 7/ Diamond
- 8/ Betty Boothroyd
- 9/ Edvard Munch
- 10/ Johannes Vermeer

Sue Abbot wins a meal voucher and Simon Wheeler wins a case of Yates' beer.

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

The WIGHT MOUSE INN



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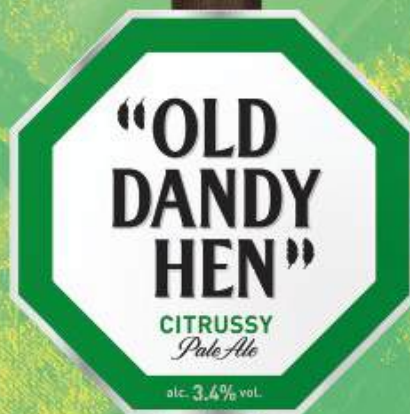
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Please note the deadline for the Autumn Issue will be 15th August 2026



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](mailto:editor@wightwash.org.uk)

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

We got it wrong (again!)

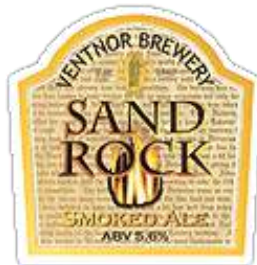
**Clarification Regarding Sand Rock Smoked Ale**

I thought I ought to bring page 13 in the winter issue to your attention, referring to the article by John Nicholson, who mistakenly stated that Sand Rock Smoked Ale was brewed by Yatesy.

In fact, it was brewed regularly by Xavier at Ventnor Brewery. Xavier's recipe for the Sand Rock Smoked Ale (5.6%) was made using peated malt. It won an award from the Beer Writers' Guild and was served with the cheese and biscuits course at their annual dinner in the Guildhall, London, hosted by George Bateman (Batemans Brewery) and John Young (Young's Brewery).

Sand Rock beer was an excellent accompaniment to cheese. As Xavier's mother, I simply wanted to set the record straight.

Thanks Donna!



some of his home brews, one of which incorporated cherries into the brewing process. For cider drinkers, Henry Westons Organic Cider was also available.

All in all, it was a splendid event for everyone who attended, thanks to Simon and Emma's superb hospitality and Dave's passionate love for ornithology, which complemented each other perfectly.



Paul Sheldon

**Update:**

The event raised £110 for the **Roy Dennis Foundation**, helping their work returning native birds to the wild.

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included, such as Goddards Duck's Folly and Purity Mad Goose from the Purity Brewery in Warwickshire, along with more obscure references

such as "Tactical Nuclear Penguin" under a chapter relating to flightless birds.

At the Pirate Bar, four superb special beers were brewed by

Simon specifically for the event:

1. **Peachcock Pale** – a fruity peach IPA at 5.5% ABV, with peach purée added during the later stages of fermentation, akin to an East Coast USA pale ale
2. **Bitter (n) ESB** – 5.3% ABV
3. **Brent Porter** – 5.0% ABV, a full-bodied porter with dark malts
4. **Golden Charm** – 4.8% ABV, a spring beer brewed with Riwaka hops

Also available from the cool box were various and unusual Harvey's bottled beers alongside some Fuller's specialities. Brian Jacobs, another Crafty Crew member and the much-loved Isle of Wight CAMRA Treasurer, contributed

## Goddards & Powder Monkey

My quarterly chat with Bob Simpson began later than expected, as Bob was busy unloading six large vats of beer by forklift — enough to fill around **25,000 bottles**. The delivery was Powder Monkey's recreation of **Brickwoods Sunshine Ale**, once a familiar sight across the Solent



before the Portsmouth brewery was absorbed into the Whitbread empire. Goddards now have the task of bottling it for a major national

supermarket chain.

This forms part of Powder Monkey's wider programme of heritage revivals, which also includes **Pompey Royal (4.3% ABV)** and beers from their recently acquired **Castle Eden** and **Maxim** breweries in the North East. Castle Eden is approaching its **200th anniversary**, to be marked with a special commemorative brew titled "200". Pompey Royal will also be available in bottles shortly.

Goddards' own seasonal ale, **South Island (4.2% ABV)**, has



been performing strongly. Now available in cask, it has proved popular enough at Goddards Bar & Kitchen that it may temporarily replace **Inspiration (5% ABV)** for the summer. The bar is getting through about a cask a week, with keg sales remaining steady. With brewing and distribution running at pace, Goddards have brought in brewers from Gosport to help keep up, and even Bob has been out on delivery runs to the mainland.



May was a particularly active month at the Bar & Kitchen. It began on **2 May** with the inaugural **Folk and Ale Festival**, featuring Moonshine Border Morris, Mr Baker's Dozen and the East Cowes Sea Shanty group. The following weekend

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saw **Rydabus**, bringing an impressive collection of vintage buses to the site, with many visitors combining their trips with brewery tours and special food and drink offers.

The **Bank Holiday weekend** was the busiest of all. The **Vintage Tractor and Steam Weekend** showcased vintage tractors, stationary engines, lorries, steam traction engines and a vintage bus from the Isle of Wight Bus and Coach Museum, along with a visit from the well-known *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* car. With large crowds throughout, four staff were needed behind the bar to keep up.

**13 June marks the brewery's 33rd birthday**, and on **21 May, Ian Mout** celebrated an impressive **25 years** with Goddards — making him their longest-serving team member. This follows **Nigel Eldridge's 21-year** anniversary last month. Congratulations to both!



Ian



Nigel

*Tim Marshall*

Goddards Brewery BLO

Canada Geese, Coots and Moorhens were present on the river, a Grey Heron flew overhead, and Common Whitethroats were both heard and seen in the hedgerows.

The return route along the woodland edge provided close



White Tailed Eagle

ornithology, which began in 2017 and eventually culminated in his current business, *Natural Links*, connecting people with wildlife and the natural world.

Dave is also in the process of compiling a book focusing on the connection between birds and beer. This explores pub signage,



Grey Heron

views of Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs in full song, along with Chaffinch, Great Tit and Blue Tit. There were also many butterflies on the wing, including Orange Tip, Green-veined White, Peacock and Speckled Wood, as well as Large Red Damselflies and glimpses of Emperor Dragonflies.

On arrival back at the Pirate Bar, Dave gave a laptop presentation consisting of a short talk of around forty minutes on local birdlife, followed by a social gathering which included bird-themed beer tasting. The presentation charted Dave's interests and career in

beer names, local history where appropriate, and breweries themselves that use bird names and imagery. Planned chapters include wading birds such as Oystercatcher under the heading "Wading Inn", and "Tales from the Riverbank", featuring birds such as Kingfisher and Sea Hawk, the latter being an old name for Osprey. Other chapters incorporate Magpies (Dave being a supporter of Newcastle United), leading into breweries such as the Magpie Brewery of Nottinghamshire, established in 2006, and beers including Magpie Jay IPA (5.2% ABV) and Thieving Rogue. Many other examples are



# Sunday Roasts

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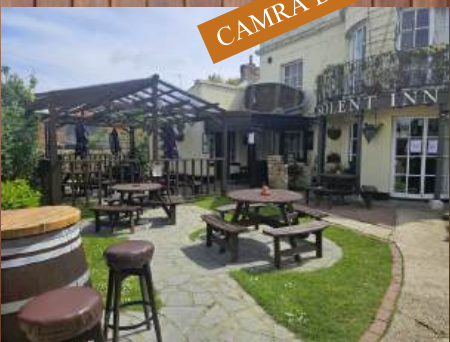
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### Birds and Beer in Brading

On Saturday, 25 April 2026, a Bird Watching and Beer event took place in Brading, combining ornithology with craft brewing in an enjoyable and sociable afternoon. The bird walk was led by Dave Fairlamb of *Natural Links* fame, with



beer kindly provided alongside generous hospitality at the "Pirate Bar" (also known as Simon Dixey's garden and home of a Crafty Crew member) in Brading.

The meeting point for the walk was Brading Railway Station car park at 14:00. The route followed a roughly circular path taking in Fattening Marsh, the Old Sea Wall, and the western end of Brading Marshes, before returning to the Pirate Bar at approximately 15:30.

For those who wished, an alternative start was available at the Wheatsheaf in Brading, which is under new management and was offering three beers for St George's Day. As the Pirate Bar opened from 13:00, a few participants chose to enjoy an hour or so at the Wheatsheaf instead of joining the walk, before making their way directly to the Pirate Bar.

The walk itself attracted around fifteen Isle of Wight CAMRA members, all of whom thoroughly enjoyed the ornithology, which was expertly presented by Dave Fairlamb as he led the group around the route. Starting from Brading Railway Station and heading towards Fattening Marsh, the group walked along the edge of the Eastern River Yar and were treated to the songs of Reed Warbler, Sedge Warbler and Cetti's Warbler in the reedbeds and scrub, with Skylarks singing overhead.

From the Old Sea Wall, the group looked east across Brading Marshes and were delighted to see both resident adult White-tailed Eagles in flight before they landed to perch in a tree. Marsh Harriers were seen hunting over the marsh, while Buzzards soared high above. Egyptian and

# GODDARDS BREWERY

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### Island Brewery

Business as usual, for Island, now stocking up for the summer festival rounds, also, to cater for the rise in popularity of the keg (craft) version of **Tennyson IPA**. Putting it through gas and cooling it down, making it a craft beer, particularly suits the super-bitter Simcoe hops. If you find a keg and cask version on at the same venue, try them both to see the difference and how you prefer it served – craft or cask.

There is a change of personnel at the brewery. Tom has left to become a full time fireman and Mike has taken his place, to learn

afresh, wanting a change from working at the likes of Gurit. He seems to be settling in well, but considering Tom's 10 years experience, there is a little way to go yet. I wish him well.

Talking with Ashley, despite the business of the season, there is a little slack on the bespoke beers that they brew. Ashley was wondering if there might be some uptake on the **Black IPA**, especially as quite a number of other breweries seem to be offering it as a seasonal beer. Talking of Island's bespoke beers, one of my favourites, or should it be two of my favourites were the marmalade

stays in the portfolio – as I'm sure it will be.

Brewed in early April, Graham and I (JS) visited Josh at the brewery on the 15<sup>th</sup> April to see the first cask filled and watch Graham spile it.

Then the 24<sup>th</sup> April was a special day in The Volunteer, when the resurrected Burts VPA recipe emerged from the cellar. Locals remember more than one meaning of VPA – Ventnor Pale Ale, Ventnor Premium Ale and possibly other versions, but the reproduction of a taste from the past was a delight to enjoy. Our host Graham Perks generously



offered a pint 'on the house' to those making the effort to venture south to this eclectic part of the island.

Our thanks to Graham Perks and all at Yates' for a splendid beer and a very convivial evening

*Richard Dakin & Jeff Sechiari*

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One problematic area was the fabled spring water as there is no analysis of its profile to try and match to – with a town water supply the analysis is available so you can then add any salts required to suit your need, but not knowing the starting point to aim for makes this impossible. The yeast then used is also not available, and would presumably have adapted itself to the equipment and environment at Burts over generations, so the Yates' yeast had to be used.

On reflection the resulting 3.8% brew was possibly slightly weaker than the original and this may be



The new pumpclip

tweaked in the future if the beer proves to be so popular that it

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beers, the porter and the strong ale, both, if I remember, at 6% ABV. Chris, who brewed them, said it had to be 6% to carry the marmalade, and I would agree with him.

If you are looking for an outstanding special beer to try, I can recommend the Black IPA or either of the marmalade beers.

When I visited the brewery, they were just finishing off a brew of **RDA**, runner up in the latest IW Branch Beer of the Year. It is amazing how popular this beer remains, year on year, always first or second in Beer of the Year. Joking aside, this is very unusual for dark beers, which, on the whole, amongst the UK beer drinking population, are not so popular as lighter bitters, even then, bitters with moderate characteristics tend to be the most popular choice. 'Explain that!' I suddenly pounced on Steve Minshull, brewery owner, who I have not seen for some time.

Jumping out of his skin, Steve spluttered 'glad to see - to hear, that you are getting better, John.' Steve went on to explain that the brilliance in RDA that makes it so enduring, is that the flavour is in

the aftertaste, not up front as in many other stouts and strong beers, which, very soon, can become an assault on your tastebuds requiring some light refreshment like a weak Belgian sour fruit beer or properly brewed ginger beer or the like.



John Nicholson

BLO Island Brewery & IW Branch Chairman

### Yates' Brewery

As I arrived at the brewery to catch up with the current news, a batch of **Plum Porter** was just about to head off for bottling. This will have a slightly revised label with Josh's name listed on the back label. The next cask brew planned is **Don't Look Back in Amber**, which should be in trade by late June. This time the brew has the addition of a new American hop, PINK ID158, the first time this has been available in the UK. Keg **Beachcomber** is now available at the Chine and Ventnor's

Met Bar and is proving popular. There is also a new glass for Beachcomber on its way, adding to the range in the new style.

Continuing their drive towards British and traditional ingredients, Yates' is now using Isle of Wight Barley as the base Pale, Extra Pale and Lager malts for all of their beers, with just necessary amounts of speciality malts added to brews, according to the needs of the recipe.

Following the successful launch of the recreated **Burts VPA** (see elsewhere in this august journal),



Challenger, another renowned British hop adding cedar and green tea aroma and a little lingering bitterness due to its slightly higher alpha acid content. All in all a very well balanced and



Graham spiles the first cask of Yates' VPA under the watchful eye of Josh





Graham pulls the first pint

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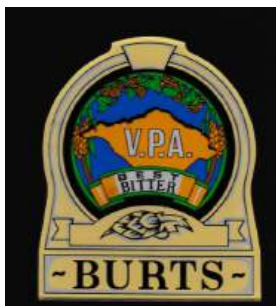
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Yates' Revive VPA

This spring Head Brewer, **Josh Davies**, and the team at **Yates'** launched their interpretation of the legendary **Burts VPA** at Graham Perks' **Volunteer Inn**, Ventnor.

Over the winter months Josh had spent many happy hours exploring the pages of the Burts brewing books from the late 20C. Talking to drinkers with



The original pumpclip

fond memories of Burts beers the popular choice for a recreation was VPA and so it was to be.

Josh settled on a 1994 brew and then selected current malts and hops to match the profile of those used 30 years ago. The malt bill comprised Isle of Wight pale malt, crystal malt (which provided the caramel flavour consistent with pale ale and bitter ale of the time) and a tiny amount of black malt to adjust the colour to a mid-brown. Hops employed in the recipe were East Kent Goldings, giving a fresh and delicate floral, herbal and slightly spicy aroma, and

thoughts are turning to another Burts recreation, perhaps a stout or porter this time.

Josh continues to experiment with the pilot plant and recently Steven Wright, acclaimed cellarman at the Duke of York in Cowes, spent a day with him creating an Altbier. There will be just two firkins of this and they are targeting June's 'Beer Day Britain' for its arrival on the bar.

Josh is looking to recruit an apprentice to train up in the brewery. Once in place this may mean more special one off brews

as the pilot plant will be used for training. Another member of staff would also mean a bit more time for Josh to explore new ideas and experiment with the kit. We look forward to see what evolves.

To round my visit off, as I left an Isle of Wight Grain lorry appeared, right on cue.

Best wishes from all at Yates' and from me. Enjoy the summer with fine cask ales in fine Island pubs

*Jeff Sechiari*

BLO, Yates' Brewery

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### Wight Knuckle Brewery

After a busy May, Wight Knuckle are well underway with preparations for the hot summer months and the vibrant goings on that really bring the Island to life.

There's been an amazing initial reaction to the "33 Parishes" 100%



Isle of Wight Blonde Ale which is appearing in bottles and on taps all across the Island. The response has been so

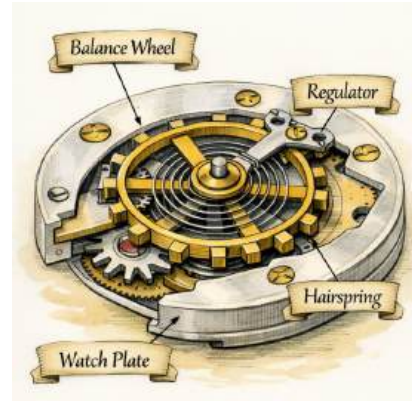
positive and not only do people love the beer, but it is doing its job of drawing people's attention to the Isle of Wight as a UNESCO recognised Biosphere Reserve and highlighting some of the amazing grains and hops we produce.

Moving forwards, the brewers have been thinking about what would be a delicious beer to see our drinkers into the summer. So without further ado, we give you Table (3.2%) our deliciously juicy, table strength, session pale ale, bursting with citrus and grapefruit. It's refreshing, easy drinking and so moreish with a lower ABV so you can enjoy a few of these in

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to drifting. Hooke demonstrated that a balance wheel regulated by a spring could maintain a steady oscillation, giving timepieces a consistent rhythm. This development laid the foundation for modern mechanical timekeeping and had far-reaching effects on navigation and scientific measurement. A dispute later arose with the Dutch scientist **Christiaan Huygens**, who published a similar design, but evidence suggests Hooke had demonstrated the principle earlier.

Hooke's diaries record a life rich with melodrama and eccentricity. He came to London as a fatherless boy of thirteen to seek his fortune as a painter, rising by his wits to become an intellectual celebrity. He never married but formed a long-running illicit liaison with his niece. A dandy, boaster, workaholic, insomniac, and inveterate socialiser in London's fashionable circles,

Hooke's irascible temper and passionate idealism proved fatal for his relationships with men of influence — most notably **Sir Isaac Newton**, who, after one violent row, wiped Hooke's name from the Royal Society records and destroyed his portrait.

Despite his flaws, Hooke's brilliance was undeniable. From the Monument's design to the mechanism inside a watch — and even the experiments behind Boyle's Law — his ideas continue to shape the modern world, securing his place as the Isle of Wight's most remarkable and overlooked pioneer.

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After the **Great Fire of London**, Hooke worked closely with **Sir Christopher Wren** on rebuilding the city. Among their most recognisable



achievements is the **Monument near London Bridge**. Hooke played a major role in its design and, characteristically, saw an opportunity to combine architecture with scientific inquiry. He intended the Monument's hollow central shaft to function as a giant vertical telescope, allowing measurements of the Earth's movement — an ambitious idea reflecting the breadth of his thinking.

One of Hooke's most significant innovations was the **balance spring**, a small coiled spring that transformed the accuracy of pocket watches. Before its introduction, watches were unreliable and prone

the glorious sunshine and it seems to be very on trend with the market heading towards smaller percentages, with people chasing flavour over alcohol content.

It'll be heading out islandwide so make sure to track it down and see just how nice it really is!

If you need to know any more about us and what we do, please find us at [wightkneblebrewery.com](http://wightkneblebrewery.com) or check us out on socials. Have an amazing summer and we'll see you at the taps.



*Team Wight Knuckle*



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## Sir Robert Hooke

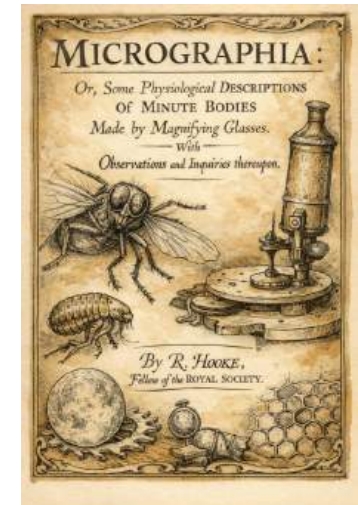
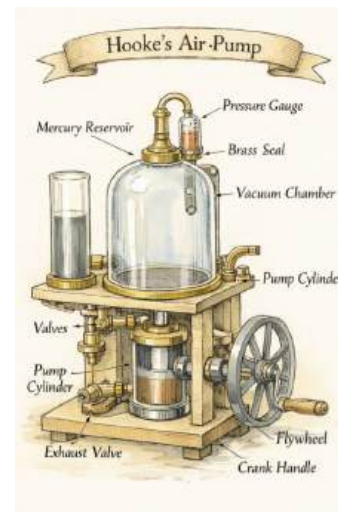
*The Isle of Wight's Overlooked Genius*

Sir Robert Hooke, born in Freshwater in 1635, remains one of the most versatile and inventive figures in British scientific history. Although often overshadowed by more famous contemporaries, his contributions shaped fields as varied as architecture, physics, microscopy, and timekeeping.

Before his rise to prominence in London, Hooke worked closely with the chemist **Robert Boyle** at Oxford. He designed and built the improved air-pump that allowed Boyle to conduct the experiments on the "spring of the air" from which **Boyle's Law** was later derived. Much of the painstaking experimental work was carried out

by Hooke himself, and without his mechanical ingenuity the discovery would not have been possible. Their collaboration marked the beginning of Hooke's long career at the heart of English science.

He was the first **Curator of Experiments at the Royal Society**, and author and illustrator of *Micrographia*, a lavishly illustrated volume of engravings showing natural phenomena as



seen under the new microscope. Hooke was also a virtuoso performer of public anatomical dissections and reputedly kept himself going with liberal doses of cannabis and poppy water (laudanum).

### Obituary – Emrhys George Barrell 1948-2026

Emrhys Barrell will be remembered across the boating, beer and classic-car communities as a true innovator. A qualified naval architect, he managed boatyards building craft for international sailing and powerboat races, and also designed and built boats of his own. He was an early pioneer of electric propulsion for small craft, canal boats and riverboats. As editor of several powerboat and canal magazines, he tested boats and equipment with a rare mix of rigour, experience and enthusiasm.



Many will know him best for his early involvement in the **Campaign for Real Ale**. As chair of the **Isle of Wight Branch**, he helped organise successful beer festivals and played a key role in promoting real ale in island pubs. More than once he personally sourced and installed handpumps to keep real ale available when breweries were reluctant to support it. Several pubs owe their survival, at least in part, to his efforts.

His love of canals and narrowboats blended naturally with his interest in pubs, and many memorable holidays combined the two. Later, when he developed a passion for classic cars — especially his much-loved Triumph Stag — he brought the same energy and curiosity, quickly earning the respect of a new circle of friends.

Whatever Emrhys turned his hand to, he did so wholeheartedly. Even when plans went awry, his good humour, loyalty and generosity shone through. Full of ideas and always ready to share credit, he was a valued friend to many.

He will be greatly missed by his family and all who knew him.

**Nick Ward**



Isle of Wight Distillery, Home of Mermaid Gin, were delighted to announce that its signature Mermaid Gin has been awarded Silver at the prestigious Farm Shop & Deli Awards 2026.

The Island-made gin, distinguished by its smooth profile and locally foraged rock samphire, was recognised at one of the UK's most respected independent retail awards - a celebration of the very best products championed by farm shops and delis across the country.

Judges hailed it as "a fabulous product" that "shouts premium," praising the way it combines "the minerality of the sea with wild foraged botanicals" and its "smooth" taste with "wonderful herbaceous notes." The packaging, they added, "feels boutique" and perfectly captures its Island origins.



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**The Wheatsheaf, Brading**

Gary Bird has been on the Isle of Wight for seven years, while Elaine Woodall made the move just over a year ago. Both work in the construction industry, and it was at the **Wheatsheaf** in Brading that they first met and later got engaged.



Just a week before their engagement party, the pub closed. After some careful calculations, they decided to buy it themselves. The **Wheatsheaf** reopened last November, and since then, Gary and Elaine have been busy giving it a fresh new look inside and out.

There's still a little work to finish in the garden before the full summer season starts. It will soon feature a covered area, a lawn, extra seating, benches and even a full-size table-tennis table.

The **Wheatsheaf** is a free house, serving regular ales **Vectis Venom** and **St Austell Tribute**, plus a rotating guest — currently **Millie George** from the **Pennine Brewery**.

and fraud. It banned adulterated foreign hops mixed with sand, twigs and powder, protecting both English merchants and drinkers.

So from the **Assize of Bread and Ale Act 1267**, through Richard II's **Alehouse Sign Act 1393**, to the **Hop Act 1603**, the law has spent centuries making sure we get decent beer in decent pubs. I'll drink to that!

*Paul Hathaway* aka **The Pubwright**



The full version of this article can be found at <https://wightwash.org.uk/alelaws.php>

**N.B.** Anyone wishing to take on the role of Ale Taster should apply in writing to: HRH Charles III c/o The Royal Household, Buckingham Palace SW1A 1AA

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today. Even William Shakespeare's father, John, served as Ale Taster for Stratford-upon-Avon in 1556. The tradition continues in Alcester, Warwickshire, where the modern

Ale Taster still visits each pub to certify its beer.

The importance of ale extended beyond taste. In 1854, Dr John Snow's investigation into London's cholera outbreak revealed that workers at the **Huggins Brewery**, who drank only beer, escaped infection — proof that ale was often safer than the local water supply.

By the early seventeenth century, hops had become central to brewing, but not without problems. Poor-quality imports led to the **Hop Act** of 1603, introduced under James I to prevent contamination



James I

Live music is a big part of the pub's programme, with an eclectic mix ranging from ska and punk to rhythm and blues. A monthly rock 'n' roll and jive night has become a favourite.

Gary and Elaine are also looking forward to getting the darts and pool teams together for the coming season.

Two extra TVs are being installed in time for the World Cup, with coverage from TNT Sports.

Gary and Elaine are getting married on 29th July. The reception will be at the Wheatsheaf, of course. All are welcome!



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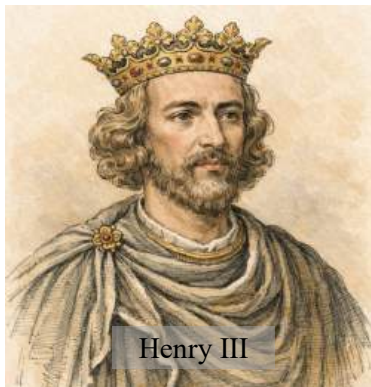
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## Ale (and Bread) and the Law

In days gone by (well, medieval times) bread and ale were absolute necessities for daily life. Bread goes without saying, but ale was needed to quench thirst and

provide calories for those whose days were spent in hard labour. Clean water was scarce, so ale was the safer choice. But it wasn't beer as we know it today. Ale was brewed from malted grain, water and yeast, often flavoured with herbs gathered locally. Hops, which lend beer its bitterness and help preserve it, didn't arrive in England until the fifteenth century. Because these two essentials were so vital, King Henry III introduced the **Assize of Bread and Ale Act** in 1267. This law linked the price



Henry III

of bread and ale to the cost of wheat and barley, ensuring that when grain prices rose or fell, so too did the price of the finished goods. It was an early form of consumer protection — a medieval price-control system designed to keep everyone fed and watered. Quality mattered as much as price. Each town's **Court Leet**, a local manorial court, appointed an **Ale Taster** (or Ale Conner) to test every new brew. To make his job easier, Richard II introduced the **Alehouse Sign Act** of 1393, requiring every alehouse to display a sign so the Ale Taster could easily

identify where ale was being sold. At a time when most people were illiterate, pictorial signs were essential. Failure to hang a sign meant forfeiting one's ale a remarkably practical way to regulate quality and maintain standards. The first Ale Taster in London was appointed in 1377, and remarkably, four are still appointed there



Richard II

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