



LIFE MAGAZINES

MONTHLY A5 LOCAL LIFESTYLE MAGAZINES

OPINION - **Co-operation. Ale. Music. Riotous. Amazing.**

There is a shadowy organisation at large in our society. Its secretive members hide their identities behind beards, funny hats and leather jerkins. They talk in a strange language to confuse outsiders, using words such as firkin, fermentation and Throstlethwaites Old Pig Sticker. They communicate via an underground newsletter that is discretely passed from hand to hand in places where people meet and they have a simple aim; that every pub in the land should sell beer with bits in it that is served at room temperature.

This organisation is, of course, CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, and they are currently in my good books for two reasons. Firstly, because I like warm beer with bits in and would like to see more of it around and, secondly, because CAMRA has described the street I live on as "The Golden Mile." There is a reason for this; there are three pubs within a quarter mile stretch and every one of them is a good real ale pub, selling a constantly changing range of proper beer that is well kept and extremely good value. In fact, I can wander down to one of my local boozers every night of the week and try a different beer every time.

Anyway, spurred on by CAMRA's acclamation, or maybe just because they felt like it, the three of them arranged a beer festival over a long weekend in early July. I don't know how many different ales they had available between them but it was lots and you will doubtless be pleased to hear that I didn't try a pint of each and every one of them. To add to the fun, each pub had a live band playing and one of them had a kid's fun-day on the Sunday. Even the weather Gods smiled on their enterprise and the sun beat down throughout the three days of the festival – the organisers of Glastonbury must have been green with envy.

For reasons best known to themselves, the three landlords didn't seek my assistance in marketing their event, instead relying on word of mouth and some hastily prepared sandwich boards at the side of the road. Puzzlingly, the whole thing was a rip roaring success with seemingly thousands of punters eagerly congregating to neck down gallons of bizarrely named concoctions, particularly on the Saturday night. The whole thing was hugely good natured, masses of fun and a real social event for the whole town. I went down to the paper shop on Sunday morning expecting to find a blighted wasteland of broken glasses and pavement pizza but there was nothing, just a few weary looking revellers getting ready to start it all over again.

I can't tell you how much I approve of this impromptu event. Three businesses that are (admittedly friendly) rivals working together for the common good, a really great time had by everyone with no accompanying public disorder and a chance to bring the whole town together. This really proves that people will still go out and spend money if they think they're going to have a good time, that our local pubs still have a lot to offer and, significantly, that you don't need a grant from the development agency or the support of the district council to make good things happen.

Credit where it's due, the three pubs in question are the Old Coach House, the Hearty Goodfellow and the Bramley Apple, all in Southwell. Well done to all of you and please do it again soon; I'll even throw in some free publicity for you next time. And well done to CAMRA too; keep up the good work.

Howard Clemmow