

# UNICORN



## GET READY FOR THE BAN



At the The Horseshoe, Newbold Charles and Mary Kennerley consider the options ahead of the ban

which allays fears that it could have been sooner. The British Beer and Pub Association, of which the Company is a member, had pushed for this preferred start date with other trade bodies having asked for at least eight month's notice between receiving the 'still awaited' final guidelines and the commencement of the ban.

In preparation for the new law, the Company is in the final stages of completing an audit of all its houses to assess how each one can best rise to the forthcoming challenge with solutions that are proportionate both in cost and scale.

With such a diverse estate of large and small houses, town pubs and country inns, a 'one-size-fits-all' solution will not be appropriate. With this in mind, Mr William, Mr Oliver and Tied Trade Manager Wayne Roach have already been looking in detail at examples of 'best practice' and the most successful solutions in Ireland, where a ban has been in place for two years.

The trade press is also a good source of regularly updated advice with sound suggestions such as starting to prepare early by banning smoking at the bar and thinking about the issues of noise and litter when smokers are forced outside. It goes without saying that not all houses will be affected to the same extent, with obvious differences between wet and dry-led businesses.

Similarly, some licensees within the estate have already installed covered areas and smoking shelters, while others with restricted space have to look at more innovative solutions.

Ahead of the legislation, the Company will be sponsoring the British Institute of Innkeeping road show at the Macdonald St. George's Hotel in Llandudno on 7th February. In addition, Robinson's own series of road shows in the New Year will provide support and advice in advance of the ban - see insert for full details.

The pub trade has now learnt of the start date for the smoking ban in England. Licensees in Wales, meanwhile, have at least had the benefit of knowing that things will be very different from 2nd April next year when their legislation comes into force.

The Health Minister, Rosie Winterton has now confirmed that the legislation which prohibits smoking in all enclosed public spaces, including bars and restaurants will come into force on 1st July 2007,

FOUR NEW SEASONALS

## 2007

Four new beers will be launched next year to fully replace the seasonal line-up providing regular promotional opportunities as they come to the bar. Each of the distinctive ales has been named to celebrate the characters that have become synonymous with the real-life personalities to be found in so many great British pubs.

	<p>Dark Horse - a 4.3% abv dark malt stout, with a robust after bitterness. February, March and April</p>		<p>Flash Harry - a rich, red, aromatic premium bitter with a 4.1% abv. September, October and November</p>
	<p>Dizzy Blonde - a very hoppy 3.8% abv light, refreshing summer ale made with top quality American Aroma hops. June, July and August</p>		<p>Mr Scrooge Humbug Bitter - a dark, 4.5% abv, full-bodied ale with a distinctive roast malt character. December only</p>

## First class service

Which comes first, the chicken or the egg, is a philosophy that can equally be applied to UPC, where investment in plant and equipment has kept pace with the growth in contract packaging. Likewise, contract customers are attracted by a first class service.

Most recently the purchase of a new high speed Empty Bottle Inspector, to replace the old machine in the bottling hall, has now enhanced the contract packaging service. The new machine was purchased from Procomac, the UK agent for FT Systems in Italy, following a fact finding trip to Piacenza by Mr David and Packaging Manager, Graeme Hall and then a pre delivery inspection by Graeme and Process Control Technician, Ian Fraser.

The up-rated Empty Bottle Inspector has a capacity for automatically looking at 20,000 bottles per hour. "All the bottles that we handle are supplied new, direct from the manufacturer, but we still have to give each one a quality check before filling," explained Ian. "Each bottle is now photographically inspected for chips and defects in its base, neck, side wall and the ring where the crown cork seals the bottle. Because we handle a variety of bottle sizes and styles, we have pre-programmed the machine to analyse each different bottle, and we have the flexibility to programme in more bottle variations in the future."



**Graeme Hall (L) and Ian Fraser with the new Empty Bottle Inspector**

Installation of the Empty Bottle Inspector was carried out over a four day period in September by FT Systems and Procomac's engineers, with on site technical support provided by our own engineering department, including Ian Fraser, Ian Sowerbutts and electrician Barry Jones. This led to a very smooth and efficient installation with minimal impact on production downtime.

A programme of onsite training followed for all operators, supervisors and engineers who have ongoing involvement with the new hi-tech facility.

## IN SAFE HANDS



Fifteen years of service came to an end recently when District Manager Angela Parker retired and handed over responsibility for the houses in Cumbria and north Lancashire to her successor, Derrick Story.

With two decades valuable experience of supporting the licensed trade, Derrick, from Carlisle, is well qualified to share his expertise with the houses within his district.

Having previously worked as a wholesale distribution manager, Derrick entered the licensed trade as an area manager in the mid-1980s before moving on to a free trade role with a national operator. By then he commanded a thorough understanding of the business which he put to good use and set up in a self-employed capacity assisting the pub trade by developing business plans for new starters and providing a successful stocktaking service.

Still with a passion for the business, Derrick progressed to take up the role of northern district manager with a national pubco, while latterly a five-year period as development officer with Cumbria Chamber of Commerce also provided valuable experience for his new role with Robinson's.

With his strong credentials for the job, Derrick has quickly become established with his enthusiasm and experience now there to be called on by the 65 houses within his area.

## BUILDING CAPACITY

The introduction of smooth beer kegging at UPC brought with it a number of technical issues to resolve and as sales in smooth have grown, so has the demand for nitrogen to give the brands their 'smooth' flow quality.

In response, stage one of an upgrading programme will bring about the installation of a new 2,000 litre tank to store the liquid nitrogen that is tankered onto the Bredbury site.

This interim measure will meet demand while additional pipe work is installed and civil works to the floor are carried out ahead of stage two which will further increase capacity to at least 11,000 litres.

With this vastly increased capacity, the inert nitrogen will then also be used to purge on site beer-storage tanks at a lower cost than with the CO<sub>2</sub> that is currently used.

## PERFECT PRESENTATION

First impressions count - and that must be true of the smart new labels on all of Robinson's casks.

The new cask labels are mechanically applied, bear the Company's logo and state its contents. Added to that the efficient system clearly identifies the 'best before' date while a 'Julian date code' determines at what day in the year the cask was filled. The time of racking and sequential numbers are also recorded.

So, not only is there a perfect presentation, the quality circle is involved and product freshness can always be verified!



**Andy Fairs loads up the labels**

### Non-stop production

Studying for a Masters degree in brewing and distilling at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh was the first insight into the British brewing scene for Tracy Brown, who has been appointed as Packaging Brewer, ahead of Stewart Thompson's retirement at Christmas.

Previously, Tracy worked as a Quality Control Analyst for one of the big two national breweries in Canada, where lager is the mainstay of the industry.



**Tracy Brown is a convert to British brewing**

Following her time in Edinburgh, two years with a UK national brewer as a Brewing Team Leader cemented Tracy's passion for the business over here.

"Back home there's not much in the way of traditionally brewed real ale and there aren't as many smaller regional breweries or the variety found here," Tracy told Unicorn.

Tracy is now supporting the brewers and looking after the sampling room where she co-ordinates the weekly tasting sessions. Additionally, her work at UPC is vital in keeping the packaging process moving as she takes on responsibility for stock control and ensuring that the supply of raw materials are in place for uninterrupted production.

# BRAND NEWS



**John Barron (L) added authenticity as he assisted Chris Hellin with the first OB mash.**

The ten-year absence of one town's native beer ended in November when Robinson's re-launched Oldham Bitter - this time also as a smooth product - having purchased the brand and UK distribution rights.

Oldham's brewery closed in January 1989 with production transferred to other north-west sites until it finally came to a halt around 1996 and the townspeople lost their beer.

The shrewd move to resurrect a once-established brand was in part inspired by the Company's ongoing achievement with Wards Bitter. This was successfully re-launched in

Sheffield last year, while a number of houses within Robinson's estate now list it as a guest.

The same meticulous care has been paid to recreating Oldham Bitter with John Barron, a former brewer from OB and longstanding friend of Robinson's Head brewer Chris Hellin, providing authenticity.

The first mash at Unicorn Brewery took place on 24 October when John confirmed that the exact same Goldings, Fuggles and Hallertau varieties of hops were used. It is even believed that the OB and Robinson's yeast strains were derived from the same origin in the 1920's.

The splendid outcome is a 3.8% full bodied, rounded hoppy beer with a clean bitter finish.

See page six for more news on Oldham Bitter and the free trade.

Added choice and variety has also come in the form of Dark Smooth. The 3.7% abv beer, with a slightly sweet palate, replaces Three Shires and has now been launched into the free and tied trades.



By Christmas Garth Higgins and the cellar services team expect to have installed the new Dark Smooth fonts in around 75 outlets.

## Still going strong

Old Tom once again won the hearts and minds of the beer world late in the summer when more than 40 brewers, writers, tasters and retailers gathered to name the 'World's 50 Best Beers' in the International Beer Challenge.

Like all 350 entries in the contest, from every corner of the world, Old Tom was judged not just on its flavour but the overall presentation of the product.

*"The re-branding process over the past year has been hard work for everybody involved but is now paying dividends,"* said Mr Oliver. *"It's a great beer and its new embossed bottle and competition-winning pedigree only serve to raise its profile."*

The news broke in the same month that Checkout, the magazine for the retail sector, singled out Old Tom as the winner of their Quality Drink Awards in the ales and stouts category.

If further evidence was required that the investment in Old Tom had been worth it, then the listings with Sainsbury's earlier in the year and with 227 selected ASDA stores and all 27 Booths outlets in the North West, surely serve as justification. Listings with Waitrose and Tesco will also come on-stream next year in February and May respectively.



## Keeping track

With over 30,000 pins, kills, firkins and kegs to keep track of, the job of manually logging their individual numeric codes is going through an overhaul to automate the routine work.

The new system of bar coding will be rolled out in the New Year and will be 100% accurate in tracking the movements of containers between UPC, tied and free trade outlets, as well as wholesalers. The comprehensive new system also identifies which product is in each container as well as when it was racked.



**Simon Hamilton has the task of bar coding 30,000 kegs and casks**

The introduction of hand-held scanners will also make it possible to track the movements of casks and kegs at any point in their journey, while identifying where the product was purchased and by whom.

As the cost of containers escalates, the new system should go a long way towards reducing losses, as well as speeding up and adding accuracy to the operation.

## ESTATE ACQUISITIONS

Following on from the report in the last issue of Unicorn on the purchase of 15 new houses, a further two properties have been bought in the second half of this year. Both are good trading houses and fit well with the profile of the estate.

The Burlton Inn is an eighteenth-century property on the A528 between Ellesmere and Shrewsbury. Six en-suite rooms in a separate building behind the inn offer contemporary accommodation with a choice of doubles and twin bedrooms, and a twin room equipped for disabled guests. The Burlton Inn with its open fire places and attractive floral displays is well located for many activities and is also well regarded for its food and drink having just been named as 'Shropshire Dining Pub of the Year' for the Third Time.

Y Bryncynan Inn is in a rural location on the A4412 from Pwllheli to Morfa Nefyn. Oak beams, flag floors, pot-bellied stoves and open fires create the atmosphere of this house, which is within easy distance of some superb beaches on the Llyn peninsular.

With a good wet and dry trade the inn has both a bar and a lounge as well as a garden with excellent views. Three en-suite rooms provide guest accommodation and externally a large, enclosed play area with picnic benches has helped build a good family-friendly business in this popular tourist location.

## FIRE SAFETY

From 1st October new legislation came into force in the form of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. This has replaced over 100 pieces of old legislation and the old Fire Certificates have now been abolished and ceased to have any legal status.

The new law places greater emphasis on fire prevention and requires reasonable and practicable precautions to be put in place. As required by the order, all tenancies in the estate must undergo a Fire Risk Assessment, for which the Company has arranged for a specialist contractor to provide a thorough and cost-effective audit. To assist and support tenants the Company is to provide financial support for the initial audit. A percentage of the cost being passed on to tenants while a proportion of any remedial work that is subsequently carried out will be shared by the Company.

## Good housekeeping

Over the years the area at the rear of the Brewery, still affectionately known as the 'top field', has served many purposes. A site for returnable beer bottles, wines and spirits, the cooper's shop and even a coal store during the miners strike of the 1980s have been among its guises.

Most recently it has been developed as a car park accessed off Aspley Street, and that use has now progressed one stage further as investment has been made in stage one of a well-planned development.



*Building for the future – Tommy Coughlan played his part*

Anybody who has recently passed by cannot have failed to notice that a new vista has been opened up and the profile of the Brewery raised by the demolition of the high perimeter wall and its replacement with a less imposing low-level wall and railings. As the work falls within Stockport's conservation area, great care has been taken to ensure that it is sympathetic to its surroundings with reclaimed brick having been used in the construction process.

Consultant architects Cruickshank and Seward worked with the Company on the project that will increase the new secure parking area to 50 spaces. Access to the gated car park and a new visitor reception will be via the swipe-card system or through an intercom to the main reception.

The new reception, with a visitor toilet and disabled access, will also be an employee entrance to the rear of the site.

Meanwhile, the refurbishment of the Cold Liquor Tank Room has also been the subject of close attention with a new lining for both tanks having been installed and the room's ceiling replaced. The completed work ensures that standards at the Brewery are as high on the inside as they are on the outside.

## Queens Arms sets the standard



*Brian Stokes (L) liaised closely with District Manager Tony Massey throughout the refurbishment*

Public space has been increased three-fold at the Queens Arms, Cheadle following major investment and expansion at the house.

Its good location on the main arterial route between Cheadle and the M60 made it a sound proposition for refurbishment.

Architects John Dixon Associates were appointed to carry out the architectural and interior design package, working alongside Pochin Contractor's site agent, Neil Bosson.

Although the original structure has been retained, a large L-shaped extension has added to the width and depth around the house.

Throughout the development new licensee Brian Stokes has been closely involved, while the Company ensured that the desired outcome was achieved.

The installation of a new catering kitchen within the extension had been essential to add a food service at the Queens Arms, and the additional space has also provided valuable room for a new, larger cellar. Above the house licensee's accommodation has been similarly upgraded.

A clever division of the public space, with a combination of timber, ceramic and carpeted flooring, linked to the two original snugs has retained the traditional feel of the original pub. Meanwhile, open fires, wood panelling and large windows give an open and bright ambience within the new extension. The central bar and back bar extend throughout the house to provide good service and visibility to all areas.

Maximum use of the prime location has also been made by moving the car park to the rear of the property, and adding a distinctive entrance porch to the enlarged rendered frontage of the house. York flagstones have also been laid to build on the impressive kerbside appeal. Of course, adequate provision has also been made for the imminent smoking ban.

## The Ship steers a new course

A change of tack has set The Ship at Roose on a new course following a major refurbishment.

The all-encompassing work to develop an entirely new house within the existing shell sets a high standard to serve the rapidly developing community on the outskirts of Barrow that continues to grow around it.

The Company acquired the property around 13 years ago, and at the time it was without a catering kitchen. Since then, customer demand has evolved and so justified the development of a catering operation where the same leading standard is applied throughout.

As a total development, with Chief Architect Tom O'Shea Brown at the helm and Neil Robinson-Stanier co-ordinating the interior design, the public space with new bars, natural stone floors, plus new living accommodation has been specified.

Externally, the site has been landscaped and car park resurfaced, so that The Ship's presentation is inviting and accessible for the important family trade. A new patio and smoking area have also been incorporated.

The whole site is very much in keeping with the Cumbrian surroundings with a dry-stone wall having been built around its perimeter. A matching stone porch has also been constructed

for the house, to provide added shelter and an attractive entrance for customers.



*The Ship - In keeping with its Cumbrian surroundings*

The Ulverston-based joiners and builders have manufactured all the bespoke windows for The Ship, and liaised with Pochin and Leck Construction to complete the installation within the construction programme. In addition the Ulverston team have also installed a durable fibreglass roofing system on flat areas of The Ship.

The total overhaul of the house is complemented by new signage which has similarly upgraded the presentation of around 40 houses throughout the estate this year. The rolling programme of re-signing will continue until all houses have been completed. This is being carried out in parallel with the redecoration programme.

# Designed to meet demand

Ten years of hard work at the Waggon & Horses, Matley placed Joe and Lorraine Smith, along with their son Darran, in the enviable position of operating the pub at full capacity.

No longer wanting to turn customers away, they have been supported by the Company with a scheme to expand their premises and add space to the house. Architect Peter Carton provided the solution and project-managed the work to sympathetically build an extension to the 300-year-old-property.



**Hard work pays off for Joe, Lorraine and Darran**

The first stage was to construct an extension which was then temporarily decorated, and a mobile bar and cellar installed. Keg beer was then brought in for convenience while work to the original building got underway. Joe explained: "At this point we moved our business into the new room so that the contractors could continue unhindered in the existing building. In this way we only ceased trading for ten days while the finishing touches were made, cask beer returned, and we prepared to reopen to our customers."

The total transformation of the public areas, included a new bar and a complete interior design and decoration. Additionally new front and rear entrances and, before next season, a patio will enhance the exterior of the Waggon & Horses.

"In recognition of customer trends we have also taken the opportunity to move away from a restaurant service. Although the setting is no longer formal we still have three chefs cooking traditional British pub food, but served

*in contemporary surroundings with wider appeal," Joe said.*

If their predictions are correct, Joe, Lorraine and Darran will once again have a full house - but this time bigger and more profitable!

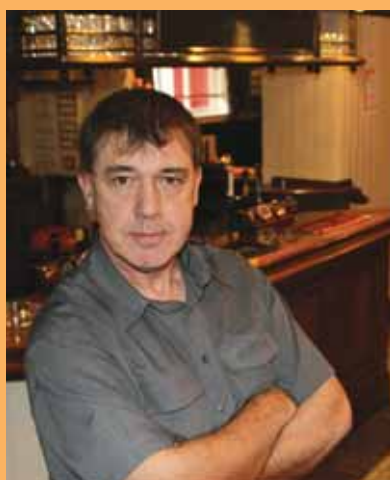
Meanwhile in Dukinfield, The Victoria has undergone a transformation in the safe hands of Senior Architectural Assistant Phill Ingham.

The metamorphosis has seen the total refurbishment and inclusion of an adjoining cottage to create a larger, modern area with a new bar and back-bar installed.

Through good planning, Phill has also been able to incorporate two en-suite letting rooms and a catering kitchen. This provides two valuable new income streams at The Victoria for James and Beverley McRae, who took on the house last April.

Externally good use of existing space has also been made through the demolition of a derelict cottage and garage to make space for a beer garden and provide useful parking space that was previously limited.

James said: "Work had already begun when we started the tenancy, with the Company carrying out the building work, and we have taken on responsibility for fixtures and fittings to complete the project and enhance our business."



**James McRae is pleased with his investment**

Even before the work was fully complete, customers had noticed the difference, thanks to etched windows having been fitted to provide an enticing glimpse into the attractive new interior from the outside. All in all, the design shows the benefits of good planning for long-term stability.

# Only the best will do



**Jill Tims earned her success**

On 29th November the Golden Ball, Ambleside came out top in the annual competition for the best kept bar and cellar in the Ulverston-based estate. However, there was a twist in the tail, for between winning the competition and the presentation evening, top ranking licensee Jill Tims, had moved on for a change in career.

Despite the fact that Jill has moved on, it looks likely that the much coveted Eric Simpson trophy will still take pride of place at the Golden Ball for the coming year. Meanwhile, Jill's husband Gary is keeping up his sterling performance as a drayman, and will no doubt be popping in to check on standards from time to time!

As a result, Ian and Sandra Mills of the Cross Keys, Milnthorpe got to play host for the presentation evening at which they were awarded a very creditable second place. Third position went to Lelsey Dantinnis at the Boot Inn, Eskdale Valley where she has made a great impact since the house was acquired earlier this year.

As ever thanks go to the sponsors Chemisphere and Coors Brewers and to all the judges, with special thanks for Stewart Thompson.

# Taking on the tenancy

Since acquiring the White Swan at Great Sutton on 17th May this year, David Morris has happily made the transition from manager to tenant.

David had already been at the house for eight months when it was brought into the Robinson's fold during which time he had significantly increased the turnover. The application of straightforward principles like a hands-on approach, good service and well-kept beer had turned round what had been a flagging operation.

To that end, and knowing that he still has scope for improvement, the conversion to a tenancy at the start of November met with his approval. His intentions now are to build food sales to match his 95% wet-led trade, and he is also planning how best to invest in his business to prepare for the smoking ban next summer!

# Sportsman: a tribute

This year's shire horse season was sadly overshadowed by the death of Sportsman who was put down in September due to illness.

Sportsman, 17, had been with the Company for 13 years and Head Horseman John Walker said he would be greatly missed. "He was a great character and never caused an ounce of trouble. He certainly knew when he was in a show - he loved the limelight."

In the months before his death, Sportsman and stable mate Saracen had again done a fine job of representing the Company at events around the country.

Among the highlights were show wins at Great Eccleston, Romiley, Nantwich, Shropshire and West Midlands, Anglesey and Hope as well as the prestigious Cheshire Show at Tabley.

Despite the loss of Sportsman, the Company's commitment to shires remains as strong as ever. Sovereign has already been purchased and is now working alongside Saracen at the Brewery in preparation for next year's show season.

# Barrelage goes up

In a climate where a national year-on-year decline in cask beer sales of 8% has been recorded, Robinson's free trade composite barrelage bucked the trend by rising 20% by September.

The success is no doubt helped by the continued profile-raising activity which encompasses the re-branding process, competition successes with the associated positive PR as well as trade advertising across the relevant drinks media.

The free trade growth would still not be possible, however, without the ongoing activity of a dedicated and passionate team to actively build the customer base and continue nurturing first-class trading practices. A good example is the annual free trade golf tournament that was held at Romiley Golf Club this year. The very popular competition again provided an opportunity for the sales team to cement relationships while they also managed to gain a couple of new customers in the process.

New products, and in particular smooth kegged beers, provide a vital foot in the door at many clubs with the free trade team going on to maximise the fresh opportunities with the supply of a wider portfolio of products. In fact, with the much valued smooth products on board and accounting for 70% of club sales, new free trade accounts are currently being opened at an average rate of one per week.

As testimony to the thirst for the smooth beers that Robinson's now brew, keg and supply, 15 new stockists were won within the first month of Dark Smooth being launched. Like each of the four smooth beers now in the portfolio, this represents good, entrenched business.



Building on that welcome platform, Free Trade Sales Manager Ian Hoult along with Area Manager Danny Bates set off to tread the cobbles and take Oldham Bitter back to its home town. This time, moreover, the beer is available both as a cask and direct supply smooth product - as reported on page three of Unicorn.

In the run-up to the 13th November launch, a strategic press campaign saw the first in a series of high-profile advertisements for the much loved beer splashed across the front page of the Oldham Evening Chronicle with the message - 'It's Back'.

Not surprisingly, the paper's editorial team soon cottoned on to the story and followed up with a report tracking the beer's demise and resurrection. Interestingly during the course of their research they discovered that OB had featured in an advertisement on the front page of the first ever edition of the paper back in 1854.

# Green fingers strike gold



The estate was ablaze with colour over the summer months as Mr Peter and his wife Marlene again faced the onerous task of judging the Floral Competition. This year they took a full seven days to judge the 67 entries and travelled over 1000 miles in the process.

At The Plough at Whitegate hay racks, window boxes and hanging baskets brimming with seasonal flowers act as a powerful magnet to potential customers. While in the beer garden, flora such as palms, yucca, tree ferns, cordyline and fatsia bring an exotic look to the heart of Cheshire!

operation," said David. "The cost of the displays is significant but they are part of the strategy to build business."

Meanwhile, a major redecorating project left Peter and Lynda Young with a challenge to maintain a welcoming appearance at Ye Olde Boote, Whittington.

With the side walls of the house being painted during the summer the couple focussed on the front where work had already been completed.

Hanging baskets, tubs and window boxes all provided an impressive visual impact to regulars and passing trade alike. As part of the pub's commitment to the local community, children with learning difficulties helped out with the displays which earned the house top spot in its category.



Boot Inn, Eskdale Valley

Creating and maintaining eye-catching displays is, of course, costly in terms of time and money. This year's three winners have shown, though, that the investment can pay handsome dividends both in the appearance of a pub - and the trade it attracts.

The house's success comes on top of its winning last year's bar and cellar contest - something that licensee David Hughes believes reflects a commitment to quality.

"For a pub to be successful it's essential to aim for the highest standards in all areas of



The Griffin, Llanbedr D.C.

Meanwhile, a beautiful collection of hanging baskets, mangers and window boxes brought deserved success for Geoff and Marie Hobson at the Dog & Partridge, Bollington in their section.

Flora including geraniums and fuchsias gave their house a vivid multi-coloured look which has also seen them win their Bollington in Bloom contest for the past three years.

Geoff said that their decision to install an automatic watering system was justified both by the awards - and by the effect of the displays on their business.

"We get a lot of walkers round the area - people will often take a picture of the flowers and then stay for a drink."



Church House, Buglawton



Miss Sara was the latest member of her family to join the Company, when she took up a new role at the beginning of September.

**Q What did you do before joining Robinson's and why make the change?**

**A** I worked as a corporate solicitor in Manchester. I do not really think of it as a career change as I shall continue to do some of the things I've done before, and because having qualified as a solicitor it has always been something that I thought I might do.

**Q What is your new role?**

**A** In-House Solicitor, this broadly means that I will get involved as and when appropriate with anything that has a legal angle to it. Legislation is always changing which effects the way that we operate as a company and it is important that we react to these changes.

**Q How has your background prepared you?**

**A** I think when you train as a solicitor you are trained to think and organise yourself in a particular way. You can not possibly know the answer to everything, but you need to know where to find the answer, consider the implications and be able to present yourself in a

logical manner. As a corporate solicitor you learn to look at the overall picture and take a more commercial approach, which is sometimes a criticism of a lot of solicitors. I hope that these are some of the skills that I have learnt and will be able to bring to the Company.

**Q What is it like working in a family business?**

**A** It is certainly very different to working for a law firm, but the differences for me are positive. For a start, there are people who have worked for the Company for many years. As a result they have a lot of experience of both the Company and the brewing industry. I think family businesses tend to be more traditional in their approach often because they have a lot of experience of their industry and are building for the long term rather than the short term. I also enjoy working with my family – there is something unique about working where previous generations have worked before.

**Q Did you always know that you would work for the Company?**

**A** Not necessarily, but it has always been something that I have thought about. I think when you grow up with a family business you are always interested in it. I would rather that the family business benefited from the skills I have learnt.

**Q Outside work, what are your interests and how do you like to spend your time?**

**A** I like to keep active and enjoy most sports including sailing but now tend to do more running than anything else.

**Q If you had to do another job what would it be?**

**A** Something more creative, I have always been interested in art and design, so I think it would be something related to that.

**Q Do you have a favourite pub?**

**A** It is difficult to choose individual houses but I have always liked the Legh Arms in Prestbury. It is attractive inside and out, is in a good location, and I have known it for many years.

## New Faces

Welcome to five new members of staff at the Company. Beverley Taylor provides a new face on reception, Helen Walker has joined as a training assistant while Britta Jansen-Firth, Adrian Makinson and Scott Riley are all working as laboratory technicians.

## Happy Retirement

Tank room operative Jack Shawcross and warehouseman David Hunter have both retired having been with us for 36 and 28 years respectively.

## Fond Farewell

Sadly a number of people connected to the Company have died in recent months.

Driver William Rhodes passed away on 30th April. He joined the Company in 1968 and worked for almost 26 years.

Joe Banks, who joined the Company as a joiner in 1973 and retired from Ulverston as Foreman Joiner in 1994, sadly passed away on 9th November.

After 21 years service, painter Trevor Pickford retired in 1996; we are sorry to report that Trevor died on 8th May.

David Street, a wines and spirits operative, died on 12th June. He had spent 16 years with us before his retirement in 1991.

Dorothy Forward, who retired in 1980 after working as an accounts ledger clerk for 12 years, passed away on 2nd September.

Surveyor Phil Holmes was with the Company for ten years before his retirement in July 1999. Sadly he passed away on 28th November.

It was also with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Kath Smethurst, licensee of The Castle, Oldham Street, Manchester on 27th August.

Our sincere condolences to the families and friends of all those who have passed away.



# Yvonne's Spanish Lesson

Woodford, won the competition draw to join a small party including Mr Paul and Graham Bratley to visit the wine-making region.

The itinerary included a look round the vineyards and a wine-making museum, and the chance to sample some products!

*"The trip was a great experience," said Yvonne. "It has given me added confidence in talking to customers about wine and reinforced the important role that wine can play in a pub."*

Meanwhile, back at the Davenport Arms, Doris the dog kept everyone entertained as she lapped up more of her favourite Hatters and Old Tom.

Her owner, Frank Goodwin is a regular customer and when he's not enjoying a pint with his rock star son Jimmy, who is lead singer with the 'indie' band The Doves, he always has Doris with him for company.



*Doris laps up her favourite tippie – Old Tom*

For those of a similar view to Yvonne, Wines and Spirits Development Manager Paul Quinn is available to offer expert advice on building profits in this area.

It seems that the message is already starting to get across with Paul reporting a 3% rise in sales to the tied trade over the last 12 months.

He admits, however, that some customers - in both the free and tied trades - still do not appreciate the impact that wine sales can have on their business.

*"They are a proven way of improving profits and I'm always delighted to talk one-on-one to licensees about improving trade in this area," he says.*

**Yvonne had cause to celebrate**

"Good wine, good company – and a brilliant time!" was how Yvonne Hallworth described a recent three-day visit to Riocca in Spain.

Yvonne, of the Davenport Arms,

# Roll Over

**D**uncan Stephenson of The Navigation, Marple teamed up with his local fire station to raise funds for charity with the inaugural Marple Firkin Challenge.

The race saw nine teams of eight each pushing a nine-gallon firkin over a five-mile course to Mellor and back.

"They had to stay in contact with it at all times so they couldn't just let it roll on its own," explained Duncan. "Unfortunately

*the firkins were all full of water, not beer!"*

Following the event, in which the Royal Oak at Mellor were the first pub team home, the competitors were grateful to Duncan for laying on much needed refreshment at his pub.

Due to the success of the challenge - whose proceeds were shared between the Fire Service Benevolent Fund and local charities - Duncan is hoping to make it an annual fixture.

# Out and About

## Double win for Ulverston

For the second year running it was the home side who took the footballing honours as a side from the Brewery and UPC travelled up to Cumbria.

Despite a goal from Gary Langdale, the Stockport team could not prevent Ulverston running out 3-1 winners.

The hosts underlined their success at the Piel Castle, Ulverston where, following a buffet lunch, Dave Marshall came out on top in a pool tournament.



*A fine turn out from Ulverston!*

The organisers would like to thank the Company for their donation towards the day as well as the Piel Castle and the Gilpin Bridge Inn, Kendal, where a breakfast for the Stockport team was laid on.

## Bottom to top

Robinson's ten-pin bowling league was won by Bennett Verby 1 in only their second year in the competition. It represented a dramatic turnaround for the side who finished bottom last time.

Only two points behind this year were "The Incredibles", who were also runners-up in 2005. Blue Birds finished third ahead of the other Bennett Verby team.

To round off a fine year, Bennett Verby 1 also clinched the team knock-out, beating Blue Birds in the final. Strike Force won the third place play-off from Blaze of Glory.

The singles competition is currently underway, which will be followed by the doubles. Anyone wishing to enter, or join, a team should contact Phill Ingham at the Brewery.

## Staying Up

A fine end to the season saw the crown green bowls team preserve their status in Cheadle and Gatley League Division A.

Captain Steve Thorneycroft and his team had struggled early on as the side bedded in a number of new players. Having settled on their strongest line-up, however, they reeled off some battling performances to pull clear of the relegation zone.

Anyone interested in joining the side for 2007 should contact Graham Bratley at the Brewery or Stuart Furlong at UPC.

# On the Oche

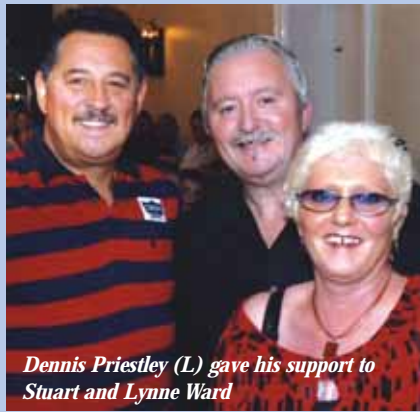
**F**or many pub goers, a good game of darts is the ideal accompaniment to a pint down at their local. Few are as lucky as those at the Kings Arms, Ulverston, however, who had the chance to take on two-times World Champion Dennis Priestley.

The darts legend jumped at the chance to help out his friends Stuart and Lynne Ward, who run the house, raise money for a local breast cancer charity.

While the couple have supported many deserving causes over the years, this one was extra special as Lynne has been receiving treatment for the illness.

Dennis started by playing top players from the local league before opening up the floor to all-comers, with the event finally raising over £900.

"He lost a couple of games at the start but once he'd warmed up he was unbeatable!" said Stuart.



*Dennis Priestley (L) gave his support to Stuart and Lynne Ward*

One of the night's most memorable moments was provided by the youngest player, seven-year-old Brandon Jones.

"He'd been so excited he'd been sleeping with his ticket under his pillow," said Stuart. "He came up and offered 50 pence to play Dennis - which was all the money he had in the world."

"I was so moved I let him have a go - and gave £10 out of my own pocket."

# ALL SHOOK UP!

**L**ifelong Elvis fan James Ruffell sang his way through 32 of The King's best loved numbers to enthral an audience of 320 at a special tribute night.



*The King aka James Ruffell*

James, whose wife Lorraine is licensee of the Hare and Hounds, Low Leighton, raised £2,500 for Christie's Hospital, Manchester when he staged the event for the second year running at the New Mills Arts Theatre.

With the help of a live band and backing tracks, he kept fans hooked as he progressed from Elvis' early career in the 1950s right through to his Las Vegas years of the 1970s.

Not only is this a great money raiser for Christie's but it can only have sent out the right message to the community about the values of James and Lorraine at the Hare and Hounds.