

The Four Journals of the **Sunday Afternoon Drinking Club At The Saxon** **S.A.D.C.A.T.S.**

Compiled and Edited by Bob the Bank



VOLUME ONE

The Prologue

My favourite pub session of the week has always been Sunday Lunchtime and I have enjoyed most over the last 20 years in The Saxon Inn, Child Okeford. Firstly under the reign of Roger & Hilary, later in the time of Alan & Margaret, and more recently with Peter & Helen. During these years licensing hours have changed a good deal. That illicit pint eagerly enjoyed in the early 90's at 4 or 5pm is now quite normal. But the regulars in attendance have changed with the times – and all day Sunday opening seemed close to an end when one cold wet Sunday in January, Kath & I were the only ones there at 4pm. Happily new friends have joined the session and unconsciously moved to a mutual meeting time of 4pm.

Kath & I had been accustomed to leaving at 7pm to give our old friend Sooty his twice daily shot of insulin, and under a chant of 'Poor Old Sooty!' would wend our weary way home.



On Sunday 25 March 2007 while trying to solve an Acronym for another drinking game I suddenly hit on SADCATS as what our little group had become. The prime objective had been to support our local pub at a time when we were the only customers, to ensure it remained open all day on Sundays especially for the summer. In those early wet winter days we were still the only customers and so it did seem like our own private drinking club.

Sadly on Friday 30 March, poor old Sooty passed away, but the other SADCATS live on!



Members & Supporters 5pm Sun 1-April'07

At the time, we were contributors to the community pub website started on 'Facebook' by our Student friends who use the pub when not at Uni. So, we set up our own SADCATS web-page. Tony & Teresa, and Tony & Wendy had done trips to Devon in previous years to find decent pubs and explore the countryside and suggested we should all go off on Tour together for a long weekend.

Before you know it we have our 1st 'Event' organised, a Riff-Raff Controller (Tony M) to filter applicants, and the 6 founder members are all booked into The Castle Inn, Lydford. As I seem to have the most spare time I was given the task of designing a society logo and ordering some special polo shirts in readiness for the 1st Tour.

The date was set, arrangements made and these are the diaries of the adventure. The rest as they say, is history and of course

TRULY AMAZIN' !

The “**TRULY AMAZIN’ !**” Tour

Day 1 - Friday 15 June 2007

At precisely 1100 Hrs The Tour Bus rolled into our drive with Tony & Teresa, and Tony & Wendy already a’board. Stowing our bags a’stern we joined the crew. Tony Morris took the Helm with Wendy in charge of Navigation, Kath & Bob a-mid-ships, Teresa and Tony A in the aft bunks.

Destination – Castle Inn, Lydford, EX20 4BH approx 110 miles, but we are in no rush and The Tour Bus fully laden will be limited to a maximum safe cruising of 60 knots, allowing for wind.

We promptly set sail and all goes well as we watch the countryside glide by comfortably. The Helm officer out-ranked Navigation and so it was decided the best route for a busy Friday lunchtime would be via Dorchester. As we joined the end of the queue on the A35 by-pass at Troy Town Hill there was much dissention in the ranks! Helm took its lambasting but as our refute earned us a “Fuck Off!!” we all realised Tony M has chosen the best route!

As novices, Kath & I had not realised it was necessary to engage this congested route across Dorset in order to make our first run ashore as soon as we were over the Devon Border and the Sun was over the yard arm!

① **The Old Inn, Kilmington**

This is a lovely thatched Inn set on the south side of the A35 just west of Axminster in Devon. A GBG (Good Beer Guide by CAMRA) listed pub full of character. Several rooms, two bars, a reasonable menu, pleasant beer garden away from the busy road and plenty of parking. Four hand pulls offering:

Otter Bitter 3.6%
Otter Bright 4.3%
Otter Ale 4.5%



Tony A, Teresa and I got stuck into the Otter Ale, while Kath had a coffee, Tony M (Helm) had an orange juice and Wendy used The “L” Word! Something too embarrassing to mention either here or in the drinks ordering! Never mind. We love her really, and as long as she orders it herself it’s great to have her smiling face along!

This is our lunch stop, but it seems we all took the option of a full fry-up before we left home so no one is really hungry. The menu was a bit limited in the lite snacks dept but Kath & I shared a Tuna baguette which came with chips and Kath negotiated a second plain baguette so I could make a chip roll out of the deal. Pretty good value at £4-95 then!

Tony wasn’t hungry, Teresa didn’t want to waste drinking time, but Tony A & Wendy had a full sized meal. All in all we rated this pub highly. If we ever work out our own marking system, I’ll try to put Star ratings here.

The ‘Time Keeper’ blows the 5 min warning whistle and having duly watered we climb aboard the Tour Bus singing: “The wheels on the bus go round and round....”

I vaguely remember the voice of the Stewardess: “Ladies & gentlemen we are commencing our decent to Honiton. Please return your seats to the upright position, stow trays, extinguish all cigarettes and prepare for landing!” Somehow I missed the Honiton by-pass, the M5 and most of the A30. Apparently I was 5/4 on to fall asleep first! So before I know it we have turned off the A30 at Okehampton taking the A386 for Tavistock.

The Crew are pointing out various watering holes which have been visited before. Some we will not be trying again, but it seems we will be eating at The Bare Ass tomorrow night!

② **The Fox & Hounds Hotel, Bridestowe**

This non-GBG pub was much liked by the crew on previous visits. A good old coaching Inn on the A386 standing at the head of the junction as the road comes out from Bridestowe village. The bar staff are very friendly. Two hand pulls offering:

St Austell, Dartmoor Best 3.9%
St Austell, Tribute 4.3%.

The Landlord has been in residence for some 36 years and obligingly is just changing the Tribute for us so we get stuck in. Sorry Wendy! There is a hidden room behind the fireplace in the main bar and we retire there to play Pool. The Team are in high spirits and we play with much laughter. Firstly in pairs then an individual knockout.

Returning to the bar for more beers we learn they can hear almost every word from the pool room, but our barmaid remarks that it is great to hear people in the pub laughing and having fun!

We didn't like to check whether they knew we were having a farting contest?! That was the source of the laughter. Mr Morris won by several lengths having the ability to fart to order at a moments notice. Totally unprepared for this – except maybe the beans for breakfast – I failed miserably. But, *I'll be back!*



Suitably well oiled we said our farewells and trundled down the road to Lydford and our hostelry

③ The Castle Inn, Lydford



A friendly Landlord says our 3 rooms are ready and we are given the keys to rooms 5,6,& 7. For Kath & I this is a special weekend being our 1st Wedding Anniversary! So the rest of the crew bestow room 6 and its four-poster bed upon us for the occasion.

A quick unpack and we meet back in the bar. Lots of character, very cosy, and the landlord is on duty. Although this is no longer a GBG listed pub there are 3 hand pulls offering:

Timothy Taylor, Landlord 4.3%

Fullers, London Pride 4.1%

Otter Ale 4.5%

Personally, I don't rate Taylor Landlord very highly and as we've been drinking at 4.3% decide to move up to the Otter Ale @ 4.5%. Whilst we all down the beer, clearly it is past its best. In fact you would best describe it as "Endy" !

"Landlord ?

Yes.

Sorry I thought you were calling me!

No, I want a pint of Landlord!"

Another mistake. Not perfectly clear and a bit musty. The clues were there. Complaining that Kath's draught Coke was flat we hear the retort:

"Of course it is. She didn't want any Ice!"

In desperation I go to Pride for my third. I guess its OK but for me this beer is too sickly. Thankfully it is time to take our seats for dinner and we wash this down with 2 good bottles of red wine. The meal goes well except the 3 lads all go for Gammon steaks. The Landlord is now serving in the restaurant and very adept at swivelling on his heels like Twizzle and doing a quick exit. Consequently he has bugged off before we can let him know we don't think much of the rasher of bacon which he thinks is gammon! Nowhere to be seen and likewise I can't get any ketchup. Like good Englishmen we decide not to complain – he will get his come-uppance!

Fortunately the wine is quite good. I have chosen well and Mr Morris does not complain!!

Fed and watered we return to the bar and facing a beer desert I resort to a whisky. I have an emergency Laphroaig with me, just in case! Anyway, it is our Anniversary, so Kath and I retire early to our four-poster!

Teresa has no tea bags in her room and goes back to the bar to ask the Landlord for more supplies. In typical John Cleese fashion he informs all at the bar that he cannot serve them as he needs to go and find tea bags for this woman!! It's not just the beer that's *Endy* here!

Day 2 - Saturday 16 June 2007

We meet as agreed for breakfast at 0830, fully kitted out in our **SADCATS** Tour shirts. All take the Full English, just the eggs that differ. Twizzle the Vanishing Landlord is on duty and we are short of: Orange Juice, Milk for cereal, butter, toast, ketchup, etc, etc. The service is a real pain!

Booted up we begin the main activity for today. Walking Lydford Gorge - 3½miles. Ambling our way round we take a full 2 hours. Surprisingly it's quite light and the scenes are worthy of our cameras. No doubt some views will also find their way onto canvas, Wendy?



Outside Lydford Castle



The White Lady falls.....?.



The bowels of the Gorge!



The path was difficult and dangerous in places but never fear our own caped crusader is here!



Is this a bridge too far?

All in all a quality walk which we all enjoyed so cream teas all round in the Café as we finish.

After climbing the hill back to The Castle Inn we climb aboard The Tour Bus once more for an outing on the moor! Teresa takes Helm and Bob moves into the Navigators seat. He has a plan. It's getting late into the lunch session and we can't be sure whether all the pubs on the list will be open all afternoon.

So the plan is to get to The Elephants Nest first because The Peter Tavy Inn **WILL** be open all day! Once again we pass the Dartford Inn at the head of the pass. Apparently there is no call for real ale in there! We motor south along the A386 for 5 miles or so and are about to take the left turn to Horndon when Helm suddenly spots a pub on the right. Teresa can't understand why we are trying to avoid said pub and sweeps across the road into the car park. We don't know why either, but she has certainly made a good call here.

④ **The Royal Standard, Mary Tavy**

This GBG listed roadside establishment has been refurbished with an emphasis on food. However, we are made to feel welcome and 2 beers are available on hand pull:

Skinnners, Spriggan Ale 3.8%

Sharpe's, Will's Resolve 4.5%

Sadly I neglected to take an outside shot of this place but the barman obliged with a group shot in the bar.....



This is the 1st pub outing for the shirts. They generate much interest and we explain the founding of **SADCATS** (see Prologue).

The crew are all impressed by the specials board and we enquire about a table for later in the evening. They can fit us in, but we decide to wait until we have finished the afternoon tour just in case. Upwards & onwards. Next stop:-

⑤ **Elephant's Nest, Horndon, Mary Tavy**

A GBG entry for many a year. I have not visited for some 20 years and am pleased to see that nothing has really changed! From the hand pulls:

Palmers IPA 4.2%

Palmers Copper Ale 3.6%

Princetown Jail Ale 4.8%

Otter Bright 4.3%

Countryman Strong cider 6.5%

There are quite a few whiskies including Laphroaig, the food looks good, and this remote pub has a lovely beer garden.



The Bar



The SADCATS on Tour!



It's The "L" word again!



The Pumps



The Drinkers



Our Girls in the pub garden

Having posed for our group photos the Landlord enquires of shirts and logo. He is interested to learn of The Saxon as he knows the area and applauds our support for our local pub!

To the tune of "Widcombe Fair/Tom Cobleigh" the Bus roars off to the next pub.

*Tom Pearce, Tom Pearce, lend me your grey mare
All along, Down along, Out along lee,
For I want to go to Widcombe Fayre
Wi' Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Guernsey, Peter Davy,
Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawk, and
Uncle Tom Cobleigh and all
And Uncle Tom Cobleigh and All !!*

⑥ Peter Tavy Inn, Peter Tavy

After discussion Helm agrees to try the short cut via Cudliptown. In a previous life I knew a Mr Cudlip who ran a coach firm! I feel this does not bode well and sure enough our 1st attempt takes us into a dead end. But Teresa is quite determined and confidently pilots the bus down some very narrow lanes arriving at pub no. 6 in excellent time. Despite my assurances the Peter Tavy Inn is **NOT** open all day, only until 3pm. It is Closed!! Shut! For this serious offence the Riff-Raff Controller decrees that I must suffer the brunt of serious piss-taking for the rest of the day! What can I say. I'm sorry, I really am sorry, I'm so fuckin' sorry!!! This is what we missed. 5 hand pulls and on my last visit the following were on offer:

*Princetown, Jail Ale 4.8&
Summerskills, Tamar best 3.7%
Sharpe's, Doom Bar 4.0%
Blackawton, West Country Gold 4.1%*



Luckily I have one more pub up my sleeve as we complete the round trip back to base.

⑥ Mary Tavy Inn, Mary Tavy

A bleak looking roadside pub which is no longer GBG listed. Once an old inn of character it has been refurbished into one bar at rear with pool

table, and separate restaurant in the older front part of the building.



Probably the local CAMRA felt as we did that all the original character had been lost. However, we were made to feel welcome and the group photo is taken while we sup the only real ale – St Austell Proper Job 4.5%



We decide there is time for one more pub call and so it's back to

② The Fox & Hounds Hotel, Bridestowe



The barmaid greets us like old friends and we learn she was in the bar at The Castle last night when she asks Teresa if she got any Tea Bags? The standing of the 'Endy' Landlord at The Castle is discussed and the consensus is as you would expect.

We order several pints of *Tribute*. It's my round and as usual I find I have no folding money left! Without asking I am immediately offered tabulation and so I also enquire about any snacks as there are now several pints to be soaked up. It's quite late in the day by now (about 5pm) but we are given a menu! The barmaid goes on to ask what we had in mind. *"How about some cheese & ham toasties and a couple of bowls of chips & cheese?"* She smiles and says: *"I'll go and tell chef to rustle them up for you!"* We are well sorted out and retire to the little pool room to continue our game and wait for the food. Incidentally, I couldn't find any of it on the Menu!!

We commence another round of Pool and record our Farts on the blackboard so provided. Sorry Tony, it's my day today and I must overcome my *faux pas* at the Peter Tavy Inn. So I diligently farted longest, loudest and strongest. The windows were opened, everyone coughed and you could have cut the air with a knife. What a time for the food to arrive!! These were goodly portions, very tasty and very well priced too!



As a famous snooker commentator once said:
"For those watching in Black & White....."
Well I'm on Yellows and Tony's on Reds
"Tony, Did I forget to tell you I won the Dorset Area Pool Cup at work? And I used to play in the Blandford Pool League for The Cricketers?"
I've WON!!!!

I may have won the Pool, and farted well today but my second wind has come too late, the Farting Contest *per se* was limited to Friday and so
(To the Tune of PINBALL WIZARD).....
"I've just handed The Air Gold Cup to Him...."

Watered and fed we head back to The Castle. A quick brush up and we are ready for the off. We have decided to turn up at The Royal Standard unannounced and see what happens. As we are leaving our friendly Landlord approaches with pen and diary in hand to see if he can secure a table booking for tonight. This after all will be worth some £120-£150 to him. He winces as I tell him we

will leave our booking as we are not sure what time we will be back. He tries to worm his way on-side. Apparently it will be quite busy later and he won't be able to guarantee us a table in the restaurant although he feels sure he will be able to squeeze us in the bar somewhere. Firmly I tell him that's quite all right and he retreats, dejected, with tail between legs. Takings are going to be down tonight, old chap! Was that Come-Uppance, or was that Come-Uppance?

The Tour Bus seems to know it's way to The Royal Standard. Although we have not phoned, as we walk in they are moving tables together to make a '6'. Obviously the afternoon barman has primed the team. We are most welcomed. We have another beer and order our meal. The waitresses are most attentive, and the young blonde one also attractive, but we prefer not to notice that! The scallop starter is superb, the sirloin done to perfection. We have already drunk a fair bit today and decide not to have bottles of wine at the table. However, there are many fine wines available by the glass and I select a rather good Chianti.

This was an excellent evening and so we are all grateful to Teresa for refusing to pass this pub by earlier in the day! Although it did fill up, the service was excellent and we were very well looked after and I think we all agreed this had been not only a very good find but superb value too.

However, time moving on, Helm needs to retire urgently to the bar and take on copious amounts of alcohol. So we return to base camp to find a pleasant lady behind the bar. It is however, a very hot evening and so we retire to the secluded rear garden. Tonight, the Landlord has improved. Timothy Taylor's that is! And so several pints are consumed. An emergency whisky is not required.

But this has been a long day of walking & drinking and sadly at 50+ this takes it's toll, but I'm sure most of you knew that anyway! Once again I want to go to bed early!

Tony & Wendy follow while Teresa & Tony pay another visit to the bar to check out the brandy. Teresa gains the confidence of the bar lady and discovers that she is the ex-wife of the Landlord. Although divorced they continue to run their business – the Castle Inn. Sadly our feeling is that this will not last.

Day 3 - Sunday 17 June 2007

0830 Hrs – here we are again SADCATS!!

How strange, the Landlord is attentive, have we got all we need etc, etc. We think his ex-wife overheard our comments and passed them on.

He has a friendly face – he could succeed, but the group has already decided to look elsewhere next time. How many others have done the same? We were shown round The Fox and that will do nicely!

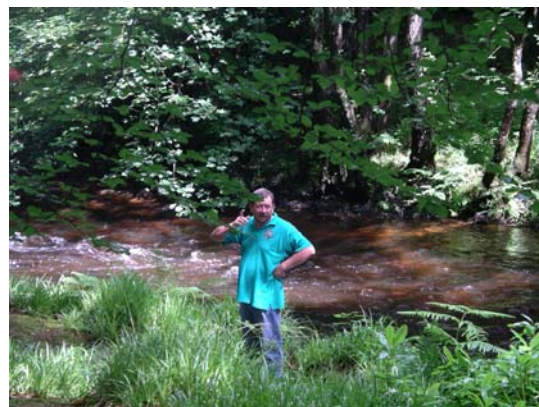
With our gear stowed 'aft on't Tour Bus we wave a final goodbye to Lydford as Tony takes the Helm and pilots us to Drewsteignton via the arduously narrow back roads of Castle Drogo. The lanes get very narrow. Is this one way? This time we dare not question the route. I am sure all will become clear, especially to the woman who has stalled her Porsche and blocked the lane!

At the end of the lane we find a little car park which, at 10am, is quite empty. We disembark for a little stroll along the river as we do not have to be at our lunch stop, just up the road, until 1230. A few yards down the lane we cross an old stone bridge and looking to the left there is a sight to behold!! Pubs don't get much more pictureskew than this!

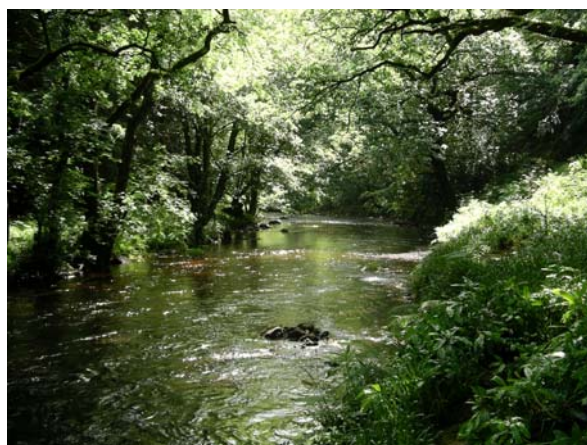
7 Fingle Bridge Inn, Drewsteignton



This remote non-GBG Pub/Restaurant/Tea Room has an amazing garden along the river bank. Picturesque doesn't really do it justice – see the above photo. As it's still quite early we proceed with our walk.



"Git yer bloody Dawg outta moi field!"



Picturesque just like The Gorge!



Make a Wish!



A bridge too near, Tony?

The time was just after 11am. We'd finished our ambling along the river and crossing back over the bridge we posed for the above group photo. The pub beckoned and appeared to be open for teas & coffees which we decided to enjoy on the river bank terrace. Seasoned drinkers of our age know the licensing laws inside out and would not embarrass themselves by ordering beers at this time on a Sunday morning. As we struggled out with our various trays I thought to ask: "Incidentally, what time does your Licence start?" To which the reply: "Oh, we are open already. You can have a beer if you like."

Teresa can't understand why we have bought all these teas and coffees when we could be drinking Doom Bar! It would be rude not to, wouldn't it? So before we leave we treat ourselves to a round of Doom Bar. Three hand pulls provided:

St Austell, Proper Job 4.5%

Sharpe's, Doom Bar 4.0%

St Austell, Dartmoor 3.9%



Tales from The River Bank!

As we leave the car park is now full. We don't have far to go, just up the lane really, and Tony has booked a table for us at 1230.

⑧ **Drewe Arms, Drewsteignton**



This pub is a find and a half! In fact it is "Truly Amazin'!!" Sitting in its own square next to the church it is the epitome of an English village pub for which time seems to have stood still. In the entrance passage there is a serving hatch, a tiny shelf too small to be called a bar and yet upon it we find a large bowl of crisps to nibble as we drink!



There are 4 ales on gravity dispense:

Otter Bitter 3.6%

Otter Ale 4.5%

Otter Bright 4.3%

Princetown, Jail Ale 4.8%



The area behind the hatch doubles as the cellar and four real ales are jacketed and racked up for gravity dispense. Clearly the best way to sample well conditioned real ales. Three were indeed sampled and in excellent condition. We moved to the garden terrace at the front of the pub having ordered our food. 'Roast of the Day – Lamb' was the popular vote.



The pub has multiple function rooms including a 21 bed bunk room hidden away – a refurbishment so well done you wouldn't know they were there.

Sadly we must leave, but we are well fed and watered. Just time to pose for a farewell picture with the magnificent Tour Bus:



The route home takes us back to the start:

① The Old Inn, Kilmington

So as we pass 'Go' without collecting our £200 we console ourselves with another splendid pint of Otter.



From here we take a sprint home with a view to being at The Saxon for our usual time – 4pm. Along the way there is much jesting as to who needs the loo. But the offered pee stop is turned down and really there is nowhere else to go until we get to Wildernis and I only just make it. I did warn Tony that we hadn't put the bathroom door back on, but he used it anyway – in full view!

And so we come to the end of our 1st little adventure – 'Six Go Mad In Devon'.

We arrive at the pub at 1615 have made good time but as we are all late we apologise to each other as we go through the door!

Time for a final group photo:



We all agree it was :

"TRULY AMAZIN'!"

APPENDICIES

It is usual on these trips to give various awards for a number of categories. Sometimes just the bare statistics do. This special trip however deserves both.

The Statistics:

Non-GBG Pubs visited –	4
GBG Pubs visited –	<u>4</u>
Total Pubs visited –	<u>8</u>
New Beers for Bob –	1

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

Chairmen's Award for Best Pub:

Fox & Hounds, Bridestowe

Chairmen's Award for Best Beer:

Princetown, Jail Ale 4.8%

Elephant's Nest, Horndon &
Drewe Arms, Drewsteigton

Explorer's Award for Barperson of the Weekend:

Barmaid at Fox & Hounds, Bridestowe

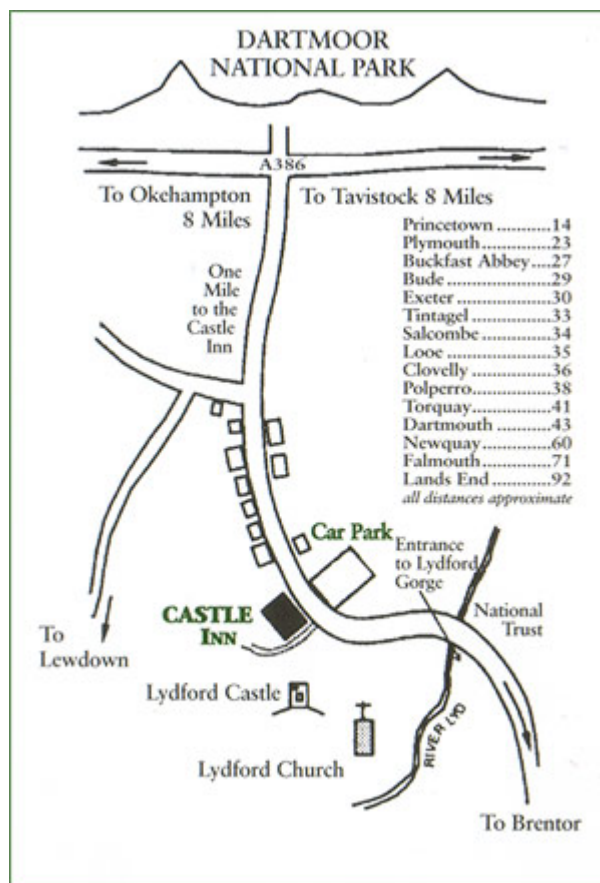
The See it, Shoot it, Eat it Award for Best Eatery:

The Royal Standard, Mary Tavy

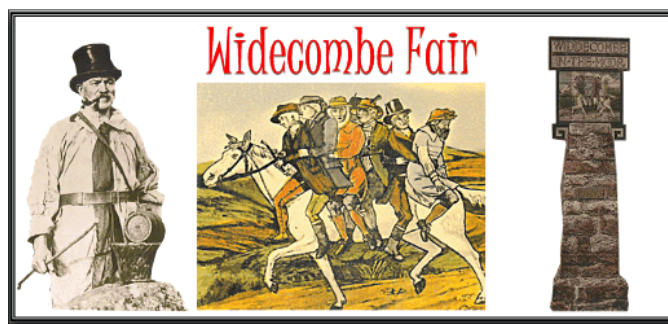
and finally - Awards for Crapiness

The Watney's Red Barrel Award

The Castle Inn, Lydford



NEXT STOP !



Mon 10th & Tue 11th Sept 2007

Contact the team via their Facebook page

S.A.D.C.A.T.S.

Via www.facebook.com