

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

Compiled and Edited by Rob of the Bushveld



VOLUME THREE

The Burra Tor



Day 1 - Friday 16 November 2007

Was it a good idea to trade our Trusty Tour Bus for a Jaguar?

Well we ought to get there faster, shouldn't we?

But, was it a good idea to let Bob take charge of Helm and Navigation?

Now I wouldn't have gone that way.....

First of all Bob and Kath have forgotten to pack their Tour Hats, so instead of departing Child Okeford at 11am we head back to Shroton. But do we simply pick up the hats? Do we f***! This turns into a fag break, toilet stop, and Bob thinks it's a good time to wash The Jag's windscreen!!!

And which way will he go? Apparently the fastest way to Dartmoor is through the back lanes of Manston, Todber, Fifehead Magdalen, Buckhorn Weston and Wincanton before joining the notoriously busy A303 !!

Now just let me say, I wouldn't have gone that way!

With recent local knowledge of his chosen route you'd think Bob would have remembered that the road was Closed at Wincanton!! *Chortle, Chortle* as Jaguar roars to a halt. Unperturbed Bob banks right and we are on a circular flight path to drive down Wincanton High Street. And so is everyone else in Wincanton. *Ho, Ho, Ho!*

Then just as it looks like we are finally going to get on the by-pass someone wants us to stop in Morrison's to buy fags! At 12 noon (1hour after

scheduled departure) our trusty steed has covered a mere 16 miles, i.e. Average Speed 16mph !!!!!

But soon we are swooping round the curve onto the '303' and our Jaguar gives a powerful roar as it moves into the fast lane – 'Think that's got it!'

Car and Driver appear quite at home cruising down the outside lane and lesser mortals graciously move to one side as we glide past. From the corner of my eye I can see the speedometer but apparently my angle of view has distorted the figure! Probably best to recline my chair and get some sleep.

I am woken by some cursing on the approach to the Ilminster by-pass as 'Tosser' in large Volvo fails to move out of way and continues to block our path. This apparently foils a crucial overtaking manoeuvre which will leave us bogged down for the frustrating 16 mile stretch of single carriageway until we reach Honiton. I suppose I should have sympathised, but actually this was my best opportunity to point out that ***I wouldn't have gone this way!!***

As we join the Honiton by-pass, once again the Jaguar gives a familiar roar as it races past those who have held us up! Bob had been looking to sneak in a 'Tea Room' stop, just to annoy me, but time is pressing on, and so is our Jaguar! In no time at all we join the M5. Bob feels he should have stopped at the last 'greasy spoon' van-in-a-lay-by just before Honiton but settles for looking for one when we take the A30 the other side of Exeter.

We hardly notice that the M5 has become the A30 and at this speed it would be difficult to stop for a Greasy-Spoon even if we saw one! As we take the 386 for Tavistock we almost stop at a pub on the junction, but No. And before you know it we are approaching the Fox & Hounds at Bridestowe and as if on some preloaded command the Jaguar slows and parks itself. It's 13:20 and we have covered a lot of miles in a short time, but ***I wouldn't have gone that way!!***

D.A. (Guest correspondent & Honorary SADCAT)

❶ The Fox & Hounds Hotel, Bridestowe

This non-GBG old coaching Inn was much liked by the crew on previous visits



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 our friendly Barmaid remembers us from our last visit! I need food before beer and The Fox Whopper sounds like it fits the bill.



Teresa, Tony & I take the Whopper. Just look at that plateful for £4-95. A burger bun split in half - each with good homemade burger, thick rashers of bacon and topped with cheese! + Bowl of chips to come! How do you eat that? With difficulty. Now that's what we call value for money grub that speaks volumes for the pub's reputation. Oh, and the beers are good too!



Our destination Hotel is a little bit in the middle of nowhere and so I have taken extra time to research pubs in the area. Not necessarily just those in the GBG. This time I have printed entries from the website ['beerintheevening.com'](http://beerintheevening.com) and info from ['allpubs.co.uk'](http://allpubs.co.uk) and ['pubutopia.com'](http://pubutopia.com). This gave me an extensive list of places to look at in the Yelverton/Horrabridge area.

Sadly, two of our Founder Members (Tony & Wendy) could not make this trip, but we were joined by latest recruits Andy (Tony M's brother) and his wife Liz. I say 'joined' but this trip was actually arranged by Liz who graciously included us in a Family & Friends package at a luxurious hotel on the moors.

Andy & Liz were in their own car and due to arrive some time behind us. When we eventually found a mobile phone signal we arranged to meet in one of the pubs near Yelverton after conducting a drive by survey, or perhaps sampling the odd pint. Three of the four 'Allpubs' entries (Halfway House, Burrator, Leg O'Mutton) were easily rejected on drive-by basis and the one we liked (Walkhampton Inn) didn't open until the evening. Before we could find the highly recommended Leaping Salmon or avoid the 'Horror of Horrabridge' - London Inn we had gone full circle and found The Rock Inn.

❷ The Rock Inn, Yelverton



Large roadside non-GBG pub stands proud of the roundabout where the A386 meets B3212 coming down from Princetown. There are 3 separate bars, and we were at home in the Farmers Bar (front left) where we found 3 hand pulls offering:

St Austell, Tribute 4.3%.

Princetown, IPA 4.0%

Princetown, Jail Ale 4.8%

Time to phone Andy & Liz and let them know where to meet us. Would you believe "under the clock of Victoria Station"? Beer quality was definitely worthy of an elusive GBG entry so the six of us made ourselves comfortable by the cosy fire and the party was under way!

As Andy ordered the next round Teresa made the *faux pas* of the weekend!

"I'll have a Half. I'm feeling a bit 'Bloated'."

I had to point out that she was beginning to sound like a 'girl' and I think she wanted the floor to open. Realising her mistake she quickly changed her order to 'PINT'. The menu looked tempting enough to eat here but we had better fish to fry.

③ Moorland Links Hotel, Yelverton



A wintry picture of our secluded hotel - opened in 1934 and set in 9 acres of Dartmoor.

Having settled in our rooms we meet in the bar before dinner. A keg only affair where we have to drink red wine – by the pint! The restaurant, food and service are excellent and soon we are all 'Bloated' and struggling to finish our pints of wine.

Day 2 – Saturday 17 November 2007 A Walk on the Moor

After a hearty breakfast. Well that was me anyway. Always stick to the 'Full English'. You know you can't go wrong. Those taking Porridge had problems you don't want to know about and acknowledged I had made the right choice!

We consulted the map and decided we might get 2 pubs in by walking about 3 miles to Meavy. We crossed the A386 and then had to negotiate 2 fairways of the public golf course.

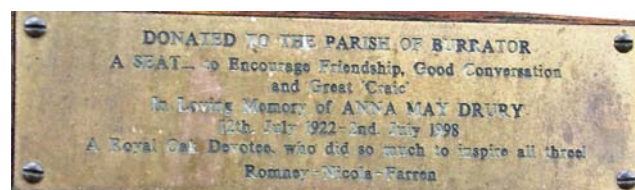


Emerging from the fairway we find ourselves in Clearbrook and do not expect the PH on our old OS map to still be a working public house. Particularly as it has not otherwise shown on our radar. We are just starting a game of "Guess which house was the pub" when Tony claims he can see the pub sign! We remain unconvinced, but soon learn he is right. And a quick squint through the window reveals four hand pumps in use! Tony is excited by this find as it is very close to our no beer hotel. However, I still recommend caution for this otherwise unlisted pub. In any event it is still some while to opening and best use of time seems to be making the trek to Meavy.

It didn't look far on the map, but I should have taken more notice of those OS black chevrons! The hills were very steep and the short distance took over an hour to complete. The village setting seems idyllic! Time for a group photo.



What's on 'ere then?



A dedication to Anna Drury who helped preserve the tree, now needing an acro prop to stay upright.

4 The Royal Oak Inn, Meavy



A classis GBG listed Inn of the Moors. The pub is a former 15th-century church house inn. It takes its name from the oak tree on the village green which is reputedly some 800 years old. This is one of the few remaining traditional pubs, with a flagstone floor, old beams and an inglenook fireplace. Some of the seats are pews from the adjacent church. Tradition is that it was known to King John and his followers, and King Charles is said to have hidden in the large split oak that stands on the green in front of the inn which was also used as a peat store by the publican in years gone by.

Today there are 4 hand pulls offering:

Princetown, Inmate Pale Ale 4.0%

Princetown, Jail Ale 4.8%

St Austell, Tribute 4.3%

Sharpe's, Doom Bar 4.0% (Guest)

A friendly Landlord greets us and asks about our Shirts & logo. I explain the history (See TA No.1) which he thinks is great and hopes he gets similar support from his locals. We are surprised to find that he knows our pub and has only been at The Oak for 2 weeks having previously run the Blackmore Vale at Marnhull. Small world isn't it? But of course he also knows my mate Les and reminds me of a time when he had to take the two of us home and I had to leave my Jag at the pub. I'd forgotten that one!



Landlord Stephen Earp and wife Julie

Group photo in front of the inglenook fire in the right hand bar with flagstone floor. We seemed to blend in quite well and tried the snack menu. The bacon & mushroom bap seemed a little over priced at £4-50 but there was lots of thick bacon in a very large bap and plenty of mushrooms fried in butter! Another feature of the bar was the oddly sloping floor and an uphill struggle to get to the loo! Tony managed this and washed his hands under the geyser which was so hot he scolded his thumb. Searching for my beer after the photo I find a sheepish Tony soaking his burnt thumb in it! "Sorry the fullest pint was easiest to get my thumb in!"



Timing was becoming crucial as we didn't know if the pub in Clearbrook was open all day like the Oak on a winter Saturday. Around 1pm I went into the lounge bar to use the Landlord's phone to call a Taxi and spotted the hand pumps.



I'd picked up a card for Yelverton Taxis at our hotel and the staff recommended them for this journey as it was quite local. It was over 30 mins before I could get an answer and wished I hadn't bothered. The guy was as helpful as a hole in the head.

At 2pm we gave up looking for a lift and decided to walk back to Clearbrook. A large lady ensured us that there would be no problem as it was open all day! Upwards and onwards then!

But before leaving, Kath ran a sweepstake on when we expected the rain to start! Anywhere between 18:40 (Liz) and 21:00 (Kath). Luckily the hills were loaded in our favour on the return leg and the journey only took 45 mins.

An interesting walk where we encountered strange characters!! Remember Dave Angel from The Fast Show?



"Get yer knickers on and make some tea!"



Can I hear Rain?

Word of the Day ~ 'Surreptitiously'

Andy was the 1st person to get this into conversation of the day as we climbed the hill to Meavy. Little did he know I had already Farted, Surreptitiously!!!! Once again I deserve The Ayr Gold Cup.

5 The Skylark Inn, Clearbrook



A non-GBG pub sitting at the end of a small row of houses and looking out over the moor.

4 beers on hand pull:

St Austell, Tribute 4.3%

Otter, Otter Ale 4.5%

Courage, Directors 4.8%

Tetley, Tetley Bitter 3.7%

The young female staff look at the clock as we enter at 14:45 and are quick to say they close at 15:00. Never mind, we will quickly try the Otter and the Tribute. Our samples are too cold and far from clear.

The tables are all laid for food and this feels like a restaurant that sells beer. Not very good beer and poorly 'managed'. It's obvious why this place doesn't appear in any of the good pub/beer guides.

Definitely NOT - *all aboard The Skylark!*



A lengthy afternoon session was not to be. Probably just as well, and we walk back to the hotel for a short kip and scrub up for the evening challenge. Check out the entries on pubsulike.co.uk which I only found when we got home!

There is another pub approx 2 miles away down some very narrow back lanes. Tony remembers it from recent years and I know it from a previous life some 20 years ago. My memory is a lovely little pub tucked away down some very narrow lanes selling good beers and being quite busy for its size.

In the lanes we met a girly new Mini and burbling to a halt I flashed my lights to let her through. The blonde driver winds her window down and asks if I'm telling her there's been an accident? No I'm letting you through; there isn't room for both of us!

⑥ The Who'd Have Thought It, Milton Combe

Non GBG pub. 4 Hand pulls offering only 2 Beers:-

Skinnners, Betty Stoggs 3.8%

Princetown, Jail Ale 4.8%



At 18:40 we're the only people in the pub and greeted by a cheery young lad behind the bar. He quickly points out that the credit card machine is not working and as I order a Pint of Skinnners he pours me a small taster and asks if I think it's OK as he has a sore throat. Apparently someone had said it was off earlier in the day. The characteristic of this beer is a fruity taste which to me often tastes almost sour. I confirm mine is OK but the others select Jail Ale which is decidedly off!



We take guidance from the most recent entry on '[Beerintheevening](#)' before taking our seat.

"Have family in village and pub was always important part of village. Since new ownership no one goes and when we were last there the pub landlord's dog shat on one of the seats and the staff didn't clean it up". Anonymous 2 Nov 2007



We sat by the log burner which was going out and Teresa coaxed it back to life with the bellows. Our host was pleased and obligingly took our photo.

Another guy comes out from behind the scenes and quickly dumps some things over the bar and does a runner leaving our barman firmly holding the baby. At this point we are also told there is no food tonight! Sadly this pub is on its last legs. It's a nice place and we hope someone saves it as it should be – A Good Pub and back in the GBG.

⑦ Drake Manor Inn, Buckland Monachorum

A very cosy 16th Century 2 bar pub. Predominantly food but there is a public bar with dartboard. It would be a nice place to eat and there is a beer garden. Pub is squeezed into narrow street near Church where parking has a difficulty factor. Some years ago this was an Ushers house as evidenced by two of the 4 hand pulls offering:

Courage, Best 3.8%

Sharpe's, Doom Bar 4.0%

Greene King, Abbot 5.0%



Although quite busy for food which has spilled into the public bar we find a large table



The dart board is almost visible on the wall behind us to the right. In front of it is the last spare table and three people sit down shortly after us. From the corner of my eye I can see they are looking somewhat furtively at our shirts, and the dart board! As I look, they ask: "Are you the Dart Team?"

They were quite relieved to find our shirts had nothing to do with darts! As we left for our sumptuous meal at The Moorland Links someone was heard to ask if we were 'The Morris' which of course $\frac{2}{3}$ of us are, but not the sort with bells on!

Pub was in the 2006 GBG, but not the recently published 2008 edition. The beer quality was good so we can only assume it's the usual CAMRA politics!

Day 3 – Sunday 18 November 2007

0830 Hrs – It's time for breakfast again as Liz & Andy must leave early. This time no one orders porridge! We have been very well entertained by the Hungarian Head Waiter Mark and we learn that his wife is the Chef responsible for our great meals. It's great to find foreign nationals who have made so much effort with their English that they can tell jokes and make them funny! Well done Mark!

The rest of us will take a leisurely drive back over The Moor and find a couple of pubs on the way.

⑧ Moorish (Morris?) Café, Ashburton

I thought Mousebender would appreciate another visit to this nice Mousi Tearoom, but it was Closed!

On the approach to Bridport the rain we had placed bets on yesterday finally arrives like a brick wall. We aborted our attempt to visit The Crown Inn at Uplogers as the car park was overflowing and so wound our way along some very narrow lanes to find the next secluded Dorset pub.

⑧ Spyway Inn, Spyway



First licensed in 1745 as "The Three Horseshoes Inn" when the blacksmith's forge was on its west end. In 1845 the whole property was bought by Mr Richard Williams whose family kept the public house for the next hundred years. This Inn is

reputed to have been much used by the notorious Isaac Gulliver, leader of a large band of smugglers during the late 18th Century. The pub was renamed in 1975.

Luckily we are able to park. Although the two dining areas are busy there is room for us in the bar. 3 Beers on gravity in the cellar:

Otter, Otter Bitter 3.8%

Otter, Otter Ale 4.5%

Butcombe, Bitter 4.0%

There is no reason to see why this pub was dropped from the GBG a few years ago.

Had a strange bunch of regulars who were unable to pronounce local place names correctly but apparently we were sat in their seats! Never Mind, who's round is it anyway.

The rear beer garden is very pleasant and worth a visit in the summer.

⑨ European Inn, Piddletrenthide



This historic non-GBG pub was refurbished earlier this year and now has 3 Hand pulls offering: Copper Ale + 2 Guests:

Palmers, Copper Ale 3.7%

Dorset Brewing Co, Ammonite 3.8%

Dorset Brewing Co, Chesil 4.1%

The unusual name of this pub dates back to 1860 and the first landlord who served in the 39th Regiment of Foot (The Dorset Rifles) during the Crimean War which was known as The European War (*British in collusion with the French against the Russians*)



The pub sign shows the Admiralty at Sevastopol in the background and in the foreground the drum of the 39th Regiment next to a Russian cannonball and the regimental hat of the 39th.

10 The Green Man, Kings Stag



3 Hand pulls offering: Exmoor Ale + 2 Guests
Exmoor, Exmoor Ale 3.7%
Shepherd Neame, Spitfire 4.5%
Another Guest Ale not sampled

Another pub to have recently changed hands. The skittle alley is a large Carvery offering 4 roast joints at only £7-95 per head. There are copious wines at very reasonable prices and the locals are friendly. When the Carvery closed at 3pm all the spare parsnips and roast spuds were put on the bar – several bucket loads! There's hospitality for you!

I think we need a SADCATS Sunday lunch trip to give it the full once over.

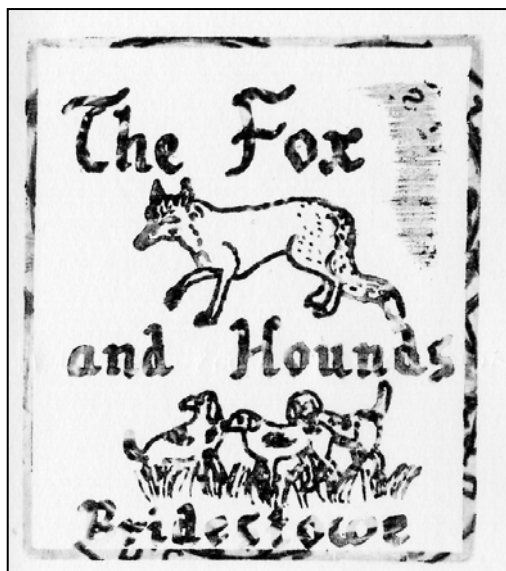
Sadly there was no time to check out The White Thorn Inn at Shaugh Prior, maybe next time!

A Post Script from The Moor

During this trip I added another stamp to the:

S.A.D.C.A.T.S. LETTERBOX ALBUM

No.3 The Fox & Hounds, Bridestowe



Well, as Bob Flemming used to say,
"Think that's got it!"

I don't think I've forgotten anything.....

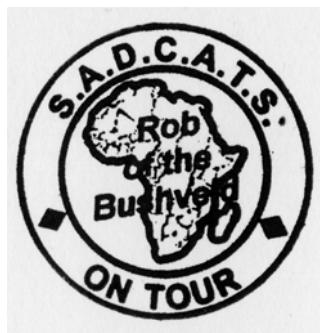
Hang On! "I've forgotten **Myself**" and

Oh dear, "I've lost my back door!"

"Got any spare Underpants, Tony ?"



"No. Got any Puffins ?"



Rob of the Bushveld
Editor

Addition for Volume Two – Widdecombe Tour

The missing external shot of The Prince of Wales



APPENDICIES

In accordance with our normal practice on these trips here are the black & white statistics and our nominations for those who deserve special mention.

The Statistics:

Non-GBG Pubs visited –	8
GBG Pubs visited –	2
Total Pubs visited –	<u>10</u>
New Beers for Bob –	0

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

Chairmen's Award for Best Pub:

Royal Oak Inn, Meavy

Chairmen's Award for Best Beer:

Sharpe's, Doom Bar 4.0% (@ROI)

Explorer's Award for Barperson of the Weekend:

Barmaid at Fox & Hounds, Bridestowe

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

Fox & Hounds, Bridestowe

Tony's Top Tea-room:

No Entries this time!

and finally - Awards for Crapiness

Joint Watney's Red Barrel Award

The Skylark Inn, Clearbrook
&
Who'd Have Thought It, Milton Combe

NEXT STOP !

t.b.a

Hopefully something before
the committee arrange their
outing to the
Isle of Man in 2008

Contact the Crew via their Facebook page

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www.facebook.com

Or Bob the Editor via

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