

Dear Member

**The fourtharch Old Boys Tankard Club
NEWSLETTER**



Annual Tour 11th September 2010

The Ilchester Arms, Symondsbury, Bridport, Dorset.

The second fourtharch outing was held at the above establishment on the evening of the 11th September 2010 and was chosen by Mogi. For any prospective new members this is an annual event to meet at a favourite hostelry discovered and chosen by one committee member anywhere in the UK and possibly continental Europe.

The Rule

There is only one rule and that is you must have had at least one pint of real ale in the chosen establishment and concluded that other committee members will enjoy your choice.

The Task [or reason for going]

Once the venue has been chosen and everyone is in attendance or on-site there is only one task to perform, apart from having a jolly good time and that is to decide where next years venue is to be.

This years Report

Written by Bill Portland

Proprietor of the Redcliff Guest House, Weymouth

Greetings folks, my name is Bill Portland, the wife and I own and run the Redcliff guesthouse in Weymouth, it's a 24/7 operation therefore not much chance to get away for the odd pint of two [and the wife of course] so could you imagine my delight when I got a booking from a Mr. Morgan on behalf of Team fourtharch - four real ale geeks coming to Weymouth for the weekend to drink the county dry. This was the perfect opportunity to join this group under the guise of a kind of local real ale tour guide and sup a few for myself.

Day 1

On the Friday of that weekend the first one arrives by train from Cardiff, picks the room with the best view, has no lunch and says that he is away for a walk around the coast and have the wife and me any ideas for the best route. The wife gives him the usual dog walkers and busybodies' old railway line path and then I jumped straight in and overruled her suggestion and told him to head straight for the Cove House Inn at Chiswell and get the bus back to Weymouth that drops you near the dreadful statue of George III. He was gone and from my comfy chair in the front room I could see Mr. NoLunch had a sprightly walk with a real direction and purpose. I had sown the first seed – if you are looking for a good boozier, Bill Portland is the man to ask.

Three hours later the next one arrives by car from Cardiff and they do say that in every group there is always a joker and Mr. Morgan was it, for no sooner had I introduced myself than he came straight back and said that if I reversed my name it would sound a bit like a coastal area of Dorset – now let me see would that be Lyme Regis or Swanage or maybe Mr Durdle Door?

“No” he exclaims “Portland Bill!”

In all my years I had never noticed that – this guy was obviously very quick witted and a comic genius and was going to be fun for the weekend. I then decided to work on a series of subliminal suggestions by peppering conversations with the names of pubs and real ales but no sooner had I mentioned the Cove House Inn than Mr. Morgan asked where the *dreadful* statue was so that he could also get the bus out there where no doubt Mr. NoLunch had been all afternoon – lucky sod.

Next thing I know its around 9pm and the last two have arrived by car, Dr Love from Bath and Richaaaaaaaaaaaaard from Cambridge and whilst parking up in my exclusive 10 vehicle car park all four of them start arguing about the rooms and who has got the best view. Mr Morgan is complaining that whilst Mr NoLunch and Dr Love have a sea view he and Richaaaaaaaaaaaaard only have a Weymouth car park to look out onto. Mr NoLunch comes back at him with the question “Well what did you expect to see out of a window in Weymouth, a car park in Torquay or maybe the hanging gardens of Babylon with herds of wildebeest charging across the Serengeti behind?” I thought that was pretty clever stuff and it closed down the augment very quickly – I must remember that one when other guests complain about the view

By the time I had got out of my comfy chair [I also have a comfy chair in the bedroom] they had disappeared into the night – Friday night – Friday night in Weymouth – town will be full of crumpet. Never mind they are here for two more days and I was determined not to let this opportunity go.

Day 2

Every morning at around 8am I can be found just outside having a smoke before the breakfast rush, suddenly Mr NoLunch joins me and announces.

“I say old chap, jolly good suggestion yesterday – the Cove House Inn, it was absolutely spiffing don’t you know.”

Has this guy arrived from the 18th Century or something? He continued

“As a tour Rep. you are jolly good, I could have stayed in the Cove House all day”

I bet you did, I thought to myself

“Got any other good suggestions old boy?”

To stop myself lamping this idiot I decided to join in with what I thought was funny accent day by speaking in biblical references to see if he would twig it.

“ I suggest you cast your nets to the other side Mr fishier than men and head for the Smugglers Inn”

Mr NoLunch looked confused at this so I gave up and simply pointed across the bay to the east and told him to head for the large white building in the distance and beyond that you will find the Smugglers – another interesting pub. He seemed to be more interested in the white building at this point and asked me what it was.

“A dreadful old Pontins Holiday Camp” I told him

“How absolutely wonderful darling – I simply have to see it close up” he said whilst holding himself in with excitement – we’ve got a right one here.

After I have cooked all the breakfasts I usually do a meet and greet in the dining room and as I walked in the Team fourtharch joker, Mr. Morgan was retelling the gag about reversing my name to form a famous coastal area in Dorset, I thought that this piece of observational humour was so good that it was worth a second telling and stood by as the laughter rang out. Now was my time to jump in with Team fourtharch and get myself invited to join them so I asked what they were up to today

“The Hall & Woodhouse brewery tour” they all said collectively

“Oh I love Badgers” I said suggestively, to which Mr. Morgan replied

“You’d love Ron Davies then”

Before the laughter could die down they were gone and away in the one car to beer paradise without me again, I must admit though it was another masterly comeback from Mr. Morgan – he should be on Television.

Yes you guessed it, I was upstairs sitting in my comfy chair at around 5pm when it sounded like the dray lorry had arrived in the my car park but no it was Team fourtharch loading up bottles that they had presumably purchased during their visit to the Hall & Woodhouse brewery shop. Then they started moving all the cars around again as frantically as the metropolitan police who had just received a tip off that Osama bin Laden had been spotted in Sainsbury’s on the Acton road. They all poured themselves into the one car and were away again to who knows where but I bet it was a pub and I bet they would all have a pint of real ale in their hands at some point during the evening leaving me with only the wife and Simon Cowell for company.

Day 3

Yep, I am outside having my fag before the breakfast rush and yep, there is Mr NoLunch again who says

“Absolutely brilliant find yesterday landlord”

“What the Smugglers Inn?” I asked

“No old chap, the Pontins Riviera Hotel – I have never seen such a dreadful and offensive building in all my life, it is positively dripping in bad taste and not only that it was built facing the wrong way”

At last I could agree on something with Mr. NoLunch and replied

“Yes, appalling isn’t it?” to which he says

“Appalling indeed - and I absolutely loved it darling”

And he walked away into the distance leaving me so open mouthed that the next thing I knew was a sudden burning sensation in my hand caused by my cigarette and shouting in my left ear from the wife

“Ere, Barnacle Bill don’t you know there are 30 breakfasts that need cooking in ‘ere?”

I cook breakfast on automatic pilot these days and I was soon on my Sunday morning meet & greet in the dining room – I headed straight for the Team fourtharch table to find Mr. Morgan telling the Portland Bill gag again to some new guests – I suppose a third run out for the joke was worth it until I overheard Dr. Love complain that it was the 9th time he had heard it that morning. Once the laughter, at my expense, had died down I asked about the Hall & Woodhouse brewery tour to which they said nothing but all made a sort of hand gesture that looked like they were throwing pints of beer over their shoulders – have I invited freemasons or some sort of secret society to Weymouth?

They then began to tell me about all the pubs they had “popped” into last night - an ale drinker’s wish list, at that point I decided that when it comes to drinking real ale these guys were in the premier league and if I had joined them there was no way that I would have been able to keep up so I threw in the towel at which point Dr. Love stands up and announces “Ready for a bit of bird spotting gentlemen?”

As if all that crumpet on Friday night wasn’t enough, these guys were out for some more and on a Sunday morning! I don’t know where the Welsh get their energy.

Having given up I settle into my comfy chair in the front room and I am joined by Mr. Morgan, Dr. Love and Richaaaaaaaaaard whilst they wait for Mr. NoLunch to pack his very extensive wardrobe upstairs and I am told of the true purpose of the weekend visit. What a fantastic idea to meet every September in a favourite pub anywhere in the UK [as long as it doesn’t involve *fecking* rowing boats] this year’s choice being Mr Morgan’s and would you believe he chose the Ilchester Arms just down the road in Symondsburry - one of my favourite little country pubs

As they talk of the Ilchester’s landlord, barmaid, good food and ale at the pub and of their previous visit I get the feeling that I am sitting on the top of a giant pint of Guinness and my chair begins floating towards beer heaven and as if things couldn’t get any better Dr. Love shows me the excellent proposal put together by Richaaaaaaaaaard for their 2011 visit that will be The Nutshell @ Bury St Edmund’s. This is just one serious and professional unit and I simply have to wish the project good luck, besides I don’t think I could get the wife and myself into the Nutshell at the same time.

Mr NoLunch appears and suggests they make a move as apart from the crumpet chasing or bird spotting, as they like to call it they intend visiting not only the Smugglers Inn but also a couple of tourist attractions - Portland Castle and the Citadel* over on Portland Bill

“Oh, by the way Bill” exclaimed Mr Morgan “What do you call a man with a seagull on his head?”

I must admit that the first run out of the Portland Bill joke was very very amusing but the 50th telling including various adaptations were all now beginning to get on my tits, so much so that I was considering calling the Citadel that is not a tourist attraction but in fact a real prison and asking them to lock Team fourtharch up for a few hours when they get to the top.

It was time for the guys to leave and as they all troop off Mr NoLunch suddenly turns back and says

“By the by Padre – good luck with the Pope’s visit next week”

The Pope isn’t coming to Weymouth I thought as he continued with

“We saw all the signs marking out Il Papa’s route last night, good move to keep it all away from the local schools! Toddle pip old chap”

As they all went through the back door up to the car park I sat back into my chair and thought – I’ll have what they’re drinking!



Apologies

The Portland Bill Joke [+ adaptations]

Next years venue chosen by Richaaaaaaaaaard

The Nutshell, Bury St Edmund's

The pubs

Cove House Inn at Chiswell

Smugglers Inn [very busy on Sunday lunch time and normally car parking problems but not for the Mogster]

Most of the pubs in Weymouth

The Hall & Woodhouse brewery

Beers

Badger – recommended by Ron Davies

Tanglefoot

Blandford Fly – After 6 pints you turn into Jeff Goldblum in the Fly.

River Cottage Stinger – Huge Burnley Milking-stool stinging nettles concoction.

Seasonal Cask Ale

Fursty Ferret

Note: The original brewery is to be demolished very soon to make way for a fully automated brewery next door so the team were lucky to catch a piece of history before it disappears.

***Citadel:** A prison where prisoners are kept.



Paul, Rich, Mogi & Gez