

# All ship shape and Bristol fashion...

**ORGANISERS** of this year's CAMRA/English Heritage Pub Design Awards were so pleased to have a New Build award winner that they travelled all the way to Bristol to present it.

Only rarely do the judges feel that the award is worth granting. This year they did, and the winner was the Bristol branch of Zerodegrees, cited as "an unashamedly contemporary architectural statement that nestles snugly into the dense and complicated urban grain of Bristol city centre and manages to combine cutting-edge design with a warm architectural welcome."

Other winners who traveled to Bristol to pick up their awards were the Racecourse, Salford (Refurbishment award), the Gothenourg, Prestonpans, Scotland (English Heritage Conservation award), the Yarborough Hunt, Brigg,



Lincolnshire (Joe Goodwin award), and the Yorkshire Terrier, York (Conversion to Pub Use award), with the Arcadia Ale & Wine House, Arndale Centre, Leeds, highly commended.

**CAMRA South-West**

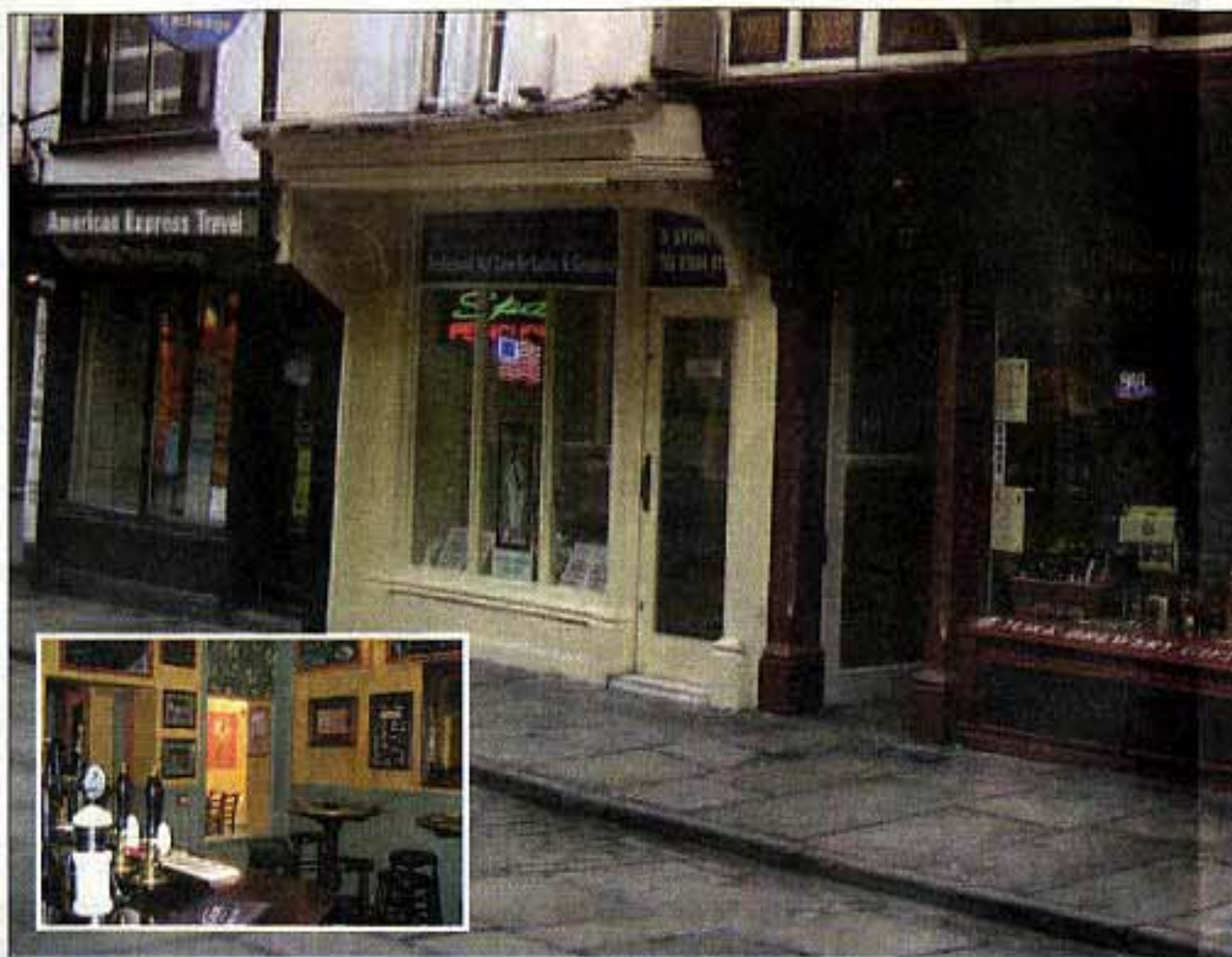
Regional Director Ian Packham is pictured, left, presenting the English Heritage Conservation award to Adele Conn of the Gothenbourg, Prestonpans, Scotland.

● Full report – see p8-9.





Back from the dead – the Prestoungrange Gothenburg in Prestonpans, Scotland, above, left and below



Judge Steve Parissien delivers the verdict on the designs which

# Best entries for 2

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**John Cottrell** Senior Membership Services Manager

## CAMRA AGM 2006

Notice is given to all members of the Campaign for Real Ale Limited that the 2006 Annual General Meeting will be held at the Winter Gardens, Blackpool on Saturday 8 April and Sunday 9 April, 2006

### Business

- 1 To receive and adopt the accounts for the year to 31 December 2005 and the reports of the Directors and Auditors.
- 2 To elect members to the National Executive (Board of Directors).
- 3 To re-appoint the Auditors and to authorise the Directors to fix their remuneration.
- 4 To receive reports of campaigning activity during 2005.
- 5 To consider and, if thought fit, to pass Special Resolutions and to debate motions.

All motions for debate must be received at the registered office of Campaign for Real Ale Limited, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW by first post on FRIDAY, 3 FEBRUARY, 2006.

### Nominations

Nominations for election to the National Executive must also be received at the registered office of Campaign for Real Ale Limited, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW by first post on FRIDAY, 3 FEBRUARY, 2006. Each nomination must be proposed and seconded by 10 members of the Campaign and be accompanied by a signed declaration from the candidate that he or she is willing to stand. Candidates for election to the Conference Procedures Committee, to be elected at the 2006 AGM, must also put their names forward by the same date, Friday, 3 February, 2006.

**PAULA L WATERS CHAIRMAN**

THESE are momentous times for the Great British Pub. The potential of all-day drinking has opened up a Pandora's box of profits and perils. Traditional pub-and-brewing companies now operate in worlds far removed from their historic commercial origins. And the imminent smoking ban threatens to create an "us and them" world of smoky boozers and spotless family inns.

Imaginative owners and their architects have already begun to take advantage of the social and commercial opportunities offered by new legislation, creating interiors which interpret the traditional pub virtues – welcome, warmth, functional variety, social inclusivity – either in a definitively contemporary idiom or by sympathetically restoring what is already there.

Significantly, many of these schemes acknowledge the competing demands on pub use by deliberately devising different, function-related design solutions for internal spaces. Less inspired designers, however, continue to churn out the same characterless catalogue refurbishments, dismal temples to ersatz-heritage which fail to evoke any sense of place or uniqueness – and which usually scare off returning customers, too.

Particularly and depressingly prevalent in today's refurbished pubs is the Tear-it-out Tendency: the preference for robbing old buildings of their original plan and room partitions in order to create one big drinking and eating area. The alleged reason for these depredations is usually ease of monitoring the customers' activities (so watch what you're doing if you're in one of these establishments). In reality, of course, it simply cuts the wage bill.

All too often pub walls are demolished with no thought of what this does to the integrity or future of the building. "Opening out" – or, to use modern euphemistic parlance, "streamlining" – generally means gutting.

Subsequently, of course, designers are then often asked to go to all the trouble of creating the illusion of 'private' areas that are anything but. Even then, a pub without walls remains confusing and illogical to customers.

Most crucially, eradicating a pub's original room plan also leaves the owner with no options for diversity, at a time when pressing issues such as implementing the smoking ban and providing spaces for families would seem to suggest that the most sensible way forward would be to retain traditionally-divided buildings. The Victorians' much-derided separation of public and private bars has much to commend it in these days of social and functional disparity.

Thankfully, these are not drawbacks found in this year's crop of award winners, which represent one of the strongest (and most eclectic) set of designs it has been our pleasure to announce in over 20 years. Between them, they prove that investing in good pub design – whether creating a contextually-sensitive newbuild or rescuing a much-loved landmark from dereliction and decay – makes economic as well as social and aesthetic sense.

It is hugely refreshing to be able to announce a New-build Award winner – something the judges have, over the years, been rarely able to do. **Zerodegrees** in Colston Street, Bristol, was designed by local architects Acanthus Ferguson Mann (led by the current RIBA President and co-star of TV's *Demolition*, George Ferguson) as the second branch of a bold new brewpub-and-restaurant concept. The resulting building is an unashamedly contemporary new architectural statement that nestles snugly into the dense and complicated urban grain of Bristol city centre and manages to combine cutting-edge design with a warm architectural welcome.

Outside, the steep stone wall to the south has been impressively rebuilt, with



the glazed walls and wave roof of the new building rising imperiously above. They've even found room for a small south-facing terrace equipped with starkly modernist plastic seating. Inside, the brewing kit is all exposed – as is increasingly the case with new brewpubs – with the pipe connections to the blue bar counter amusingly over-emphasised and pink ambient lighting giving the grey industrial forms a rosy glow. Downstairs is primarily oriented as a student pub (the smarter restaurant is on the first floor), and while the concrete floor is dull and overly institutional, the bar seating comes in the form of adjustable stools – though how many merry students they will ultimately deposit on the utilitarian grey floor is anyone's guess. Altogether, **Zerodegrees** represents a beacon of good and successful design, and a wake-up call for more timid pub owners.

The Refurbishment Award was won this year by the **Racecourse** in Lower Kersal, Salford. A massive Brewer's Tudor edifice of 1928, formerly a hotel, its powerful exterior has been nicely restored. Inside is even more impressive, if a little let down by the over-eager heritage clutter. (A number of the visiting judges suggested exactly where the much-featured pixies could stow their bagpipes.)

Some internal partitions have, sadly, already gone,

but many remain, allowing for pleasantly varied room use. The woodwork has been sensitively restored (with the interwar period very much in mind) and, where appropriate, painted; the imposing central staircase restored; and the boarded floors repaired and waxed in a good, traditional fashion which not only makes contextual sense but is also far more practical (and cheaper to maintain) than carpeting. The central bar has wisely been demodernised – shaved of its more recent, unsympathetic additions, restored to its original island site, and returned to its 1928 form.

As with so many modern refurbishments, some of the materials used already look a little shabby; more investment at the start of a project is always worthwhile, as better quality fixtures and finishes will last far longer. But three cheers for Oakwell Brewery and its architects, the Maddox Shelley Partnership, for rescuing and revitalising a semi-derelict landmark. This is the sort of brave project that can light the fuse of urban regeneration.

The English Heritage Conservation Award winner is the **Prestoungrange Gothenburg** in Prestonpans, Scotland. The Goth dates from 1908 and is one of only three surviving Gothenburg pubs – semi-temperance outlets created to limit alcohol abuse, in which staff originally received bonuses for selling soft drinks and food rather than beer and spirits.

By 1960 all of the Scottish Gothenburgs (a concept imported from Sweden to Edwardian Scotland by Thomas Nelson) had succumbed to commercial pressures and abandoned their original moral stance. Cleverly, though, the phoenix-like rebirth of the Prestoungrange Goth has reinterpreted Nelson's original charitable enterprise for the 21st century, with profits being channelled into the local Arts Festival and related initiatives. In addition, while the first Goth sold beers from the now-defunct





On track – Racecourse, Lower Kersal, above and right. Shop 'til you drop – the Yorkshire Terrier in York, main picture and inset

# which show how it should be done 20 years

Fowler's of Prestonpans, its worthy successor brews its own beer on-site.

Here is a pub which celebrates, not hides, its colourful history, and which makes excellent use of its unusual floor plan. The different bars, each with their own sense of tradition and atmosphere, have been admirably restored. The ceiling mural in the main James Fewell bar reinterprets a local 16th-century design, and is well partnered by the plain and sturdy tables which, as you might guess given the age of the building, have a Mackintosh flavour to them, and by cream-painted walls, well-restored tiles, bright stained glass and varnished wooden floor (itself yet another triumph for common sense over catalogue cliché). Congratulations, then, to Steve Larcombe of Purple Design and the client, East of Scotland Public House Ltd, for a gutsy and full-blooded conservation success.

The judges decided not only to nominate an outright winner for the Conversion to Pub Use Award, but also to highly commend an excellent runner-up.

The winner, the Yorkshire Terrier in York, initially presented a tricky problem for its new owners. The York Brewery's proposal for converting a shop and back yard in the city's historic Stonegate originally met with opposition from the city council, which enforces a strict policy of retail-only on this busy thoroughfare. The brewery therefore ingeniously adapted the scheme to feature a shop (selling, appropriately, brewery merchandise and memorabilia) on the street front.

The resulting pub interior, by local architects Waites and Moorey, is admirable. A profusion of mirrors makes the rooms both jewel- and tardis-like. There are, thankfully, no gaming machines, pool tables or jukeboxes to distract the interior; instead, it's a solid, traditional family pub – welcoming, friendly and intimate. New facilities have been in-

corporated with care in this venerable building; thus the toilets on the first floor are now accessible for the disabled by stairlift.

Highly Commended in the Conversion category was the Arcadia, a small split-level bar in Headingley's bland Arndale Centre in Leeds. Space is at a premium here, but what there is has been treated with imagination and sensitivity, a mezzanine having been inserted to provide additional seating and impart a sense of scale.

The treatment of the interior successfully ignores the mediocrity of the pub's architectural context: the match-board bar front, the green, red and cream colour scheme, the varnished wood floors (once again, a very welcome change from heritage carpets), the brewery memorabilia on the walls, and the plain, modern wooden seating and tables all help to create the atmosphere of a traditionally-inspired refuge rather than just another shopping centre unit.

The Joe Goodwin Award for the best refurbished street-corner local is always a difficult one to determine. This year's winner, the Yarborough in Brigg, Lincolnshire, may not adhere to all the definitions of the award but does a very good job. The old pub was closed over 30 years ago, robbing the community of a much-loved local and social focus. It has now been reopened with cream-painted walls, appropriate local pictures and simple furniture. Heightening the ceiling over the bar may have been necessary; in general, however, the judges commended the result as distinctly worthy of Joe Goodwin's memory.

All in all, then, we have a highly impressive stable of winners. At a time when new design, ethical conservation, and sustainable construction are the fodder of weekly TV, these should provide models of good practice for owners and architects alike. We urge them all to seize the day, get back to the drawing board, and provide us with pubs that are appropriate for the 21st century.



Street fighter – Yarborough in Brigg, Lincolnshire, above and below



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