

## CUMBRIA CAPTIVATES COPIOUS CONSUMERS...

No less than 56 members filled two Explorers to Cockermouth last Spring to see if the start-up breweries of recent years were holding their own against the big boys, especially as Jennings' now had the clout of W&D (now renamed Marston's) behind it. Micros in Cumbria have now reached double figures and almost all their beers were found to be of very high quality. The county is large (formed of Cumberland, Westmorland and North Lancashire) and the topography seems to help in their success, forming their own catchment areas. Despite late snow (in March), weather for both trips was very good - even spectacular during the second weekend.

## ...AND YORKSHIRE TYKES A LOT OF BEATING!

Our return to East Yorkshire and Hull brought a full house too, and good weather with it. A more leisurely programme offered highlights such as the huge flower display at Bridlington's station buffet, which boasted local ales on handpump and a collection of railwayana.

## SOFIA SORTED

*(continued from page 1)*

As regulars will know, speedy check-in and room access is a speciality of our Explorer Tours and hotels lose brownie points for small lifts - this one has a lift with a capacity of ten! A two-centre holiday will permit seeing much more of the country and Plovdiv has a magnificent art-deco

## BOOKINGS CLOSE FOR THE SUNNY SOUTH-EAST

Closer to home, it seems a trait of the British traveller to travel a long way to seek new places and to ignore attractions nearer to home. With this in mind our Kent & East Sussex Explorer will visit the counties "next door" where the beer scene has somewhat changed and is developing steadily for the better. This also enables visits to some "old favourites" on the rail scene, The Kent and East Sussex and Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch lines. Shorter travelling times also mean a day can be saved (3 vice the usual 4) and rail fares minimised by full use of Network Cards etc. Our May tour is now full and the popularity of it will ensure a repeat of the format in 2008, to Wiltshire and Somerset.

## AUTUMN TRIP TO SCOTLAND

Crossing the border once more, this tour to the capital city and the lowlands starts on Saturday 5th October (to avoid dearer Friday rail fares) from Kings Cross. Our hotel is 12 mins walk from Edinburgh's Waverley station in a quiet area of

Georgian buildings. Brewery visits are planned plus a free day for you to travel further afield or delve more deeply into the attractions Edinburgh has to offer. The city is extremely "well busied" and visits to many of the pubs with good beers and fine historic architecture is simple, with day travel cards costing just £2.30. From our hotel there are more than 30 buses per hour to Princes Street and the city centre.

## BONN XMAS MARKETS & COLOGNE

Our traditional pre-Christmas visit to Germany will again be based at one of the excellent Maritim hotels, which combine fine quality with favourable rates. This year we come closer to home, enabling an easy journey by fast trains throughout from London. Flights are also available. We have rooms in the 4 star Konigswinter Hotel on the banks of the Rhine, just 25 minutes from Bonn city centre by fast tram. Two brewery visits are already assured and there is an opportunity to visit a winery.

style hotel (opened in 1956), close to the centre and cultural attractions. The main railway interest is the 76cm gauge 90 km line from Septemvri (west of Plovdiv) via the new resort of Bansko to Dobrinishte. The throughout journey passes through fine scenery with river gorges, pastoral areas and ends with a climb into the mountains. Three travel options

are offered for those who wish to experience the local "atmosphere" but not to ride a train for five hours. Places are filling quite quickly so if you are planning to join us, please book soon. It is suspected that some brochures did get through the Xmas post and if you have not yet received one please ask us. It is also on our web site (address below).

## Forthcoming Tours

*(continued from page 1, column 3)*

9th June 2007

### Real Ale Ramble 124 Colchester & Mersea Island

Details to be finalised

5th - 10th July 2007

### Bulgaria: Sofia & Plovdiv

See article above for details

29th September 2007

### The Big 3-0

Celebrating 30 years of tours with Crookham Travel - see article on page 1 for further details

6th - 9th October 2007

### South-East Scotland

See article above for details

7-10 December

### Bonn Xmas Markets

See article above for details



## R.I.P. YOUNGS

In October we were one of the last few groups allowed to tour the Young's Ram Brewery before it closed completely. Production had all-but finished and it was a sad occasion, but we were generously entertained in glorious sunshine later that day by the excellent Twickenham Brewery, which was very pleasant..

*Left: a dead Ram modelling brewery fashions in the Young's shop seemed very apposite!*

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