



'Briar & Bothies'

The newsletter of
THE KEARVAIG PIPE CLUB



CLASHGOUR REVIEW: FIVE GO MAD IN TINY TIN HUT, 04-06/11/12

Two KPC stalwarts and a non-member – Mr K Thomson of Tesco-town, Dunfermline, a greenhorn in the art of the Briar & Bothy – rendezvoused, after a brief perambulation, at Clashgour; the tin hut run by Glasgow University Mountaineering Club. Any Chap worth his tobacco would have rapidly deduced that the hut was suffering from the influence of student-types due to the abundance of 'funny' signs adding considerable clutter to an already bijou space. However, Clashgour boasts a few facilities to keep a Chap in a modicum of comfort such as a gaseous-hydrocarbon cooker-grill, three comfortable smoking-chairs and a carpeted sleeping area. The cast-iron stove was functional when fully cleaned out, but lacked that all important 'visible-flame', much loved by the winter bothying Chap.

After the advance party were suitably ensconced in said rudimentary shelter, 'the children' arrived after dark. Messrs Dazbo & Bananas whom, judging by their inane grins had obviously opened some of their presents early on a West Highland Line sojourn. They then proceeded to open yet more of their presents with a glee usually reserved for a pre-pubescent-short-trousered-schoolboy who has just discovered some adult literature in his Father's under-garments drawer.

A very late night was in store for all, after KPC members continued to imbibe to excess the beverages on offer in between bowls of the stupendous 'Peterson's 2012 Special Reserve'. At this point it is worth mentioning that Uncle Jesse, having discovered a 'box' of ghastly red wine (A Chap would only ever decant **quality** red wine into a suitable drinking vessel, namely a fine wine glass or crystal decanter, from a bottle and never a 'box'. That is so, well, er, 'Essex'. Ed.) presumably left by a student-type lacking in basic wine-etiquette, proceeded to fade from the going's on in the play-pen and fall soundly asleep in his comfy smoking-chair. A swift inspection of Uncle's discarded briar revealed a quantity of tobacco that far exceeded what any KPC Chap could reasonably claim as dottle. More than one quizzical eyebrow was raised, and the incident was duly noted in the ledger.

The Tiny Tin Hut at Clashgour



Uncle Jesse gets to grips with a Straight Bulldog at Clashgour



"The fact is, Squire, the moment a man takes to a pipe, he becomes a philosopher. It's the poor man's friend; it calms the mind, soothes the temper, and makes a man patient under difficulties. It has made more good men, good husbands, kind masters, indulgent fathers, than any other blessed thing on this universal earth."
"Sam Slick, The Clockmaker"

Unfortunately but rather predictably, Monday morning was a messy affair. The consumption of intoxicating beverages was a major contributing factor to this beastliness; however the audible vibration of Mr. Bananas's respiratory structures – a sound akin to a stuck hippopotamus repeatedly pulling its legs out of dense alluvial river-mud - ensured that the Chaps present were in a sleep-deprived state as they emerged from their bags in search of hot infusions and non-steroidal anti-inflammatories. Hearty breakfasts and a bright morning brought a modicum of relief from the symptoms of said self-inflicted ailments, and Messrs Matron, Jesse & Thomson set off to scale a nearby peak whilst 'the children' went out to play on their BMX bicycles unsupervised.

The second evening at Clashgour saw the return of a more grown-up ambience, with the Chaps concentrating on telling ripping yarns over multiple bowls of fine aromatic tobaccos and the not-for-beginners 'Gauntley's Deliverance'; a curious aromatic mated with Latakia to form a veritable powerhouse of a smoke.

One splendid yarn by KPC founder member Dazbo, worthy of a mention in despatches, concerned his hapless attempts to secure the attentions of various red-headed ladies during a womanising phase in his colourful life. This tale was latterly likened to a well-known supermarket marketing slogan; namely the ASDA 'knock-back'. Much mirth was garnered from this wonderful tale of courageous battling against the odds. (*A lesson for all bounders and cads out there. Ed.*)

An early night turned into a long night, as once again, Mr Bananas bombarded our cosy shelter with a barrage of unbecoming sounds emanating from his partially obstructed airways. If it were possible to harness and convert the energy in this Chap's snoring to heat, the chore of hauling 20kg of coal to any rudimentary shelter would be a vestigial task by Jove!

A dank Tuesday morning arrived, and this fact combined with the aforementioned nocturnal disturbances gave the perfect excuse to Uncle Jesse, Mr Thomson and Sgt Matron to vacate the premises a day early, when in reality they simply, to use common parlance, 'minced-out'. Responsible adults having departed, the remaining alcoholic beverages were left in the care of Messrs Dazbo and Bananas for a grand finale to the Clashgour moot. Needless to say these staunch Chaps, freed from the tyranny of responsible adults, imbibed the lot before returning on the 'up' express from Bridge of Orchy the following day.

Clashgour Moot continued:

Oh dear, one knows it will end in tears; 'the children' at play at the Clashgour moot



Clashgour Review Scorecard (out of 5):

- Building fabric = 🐦 🐦 🐦 🐦
- Fireplace = 🐦 🐦
- Facilities = 🐦 🐦 🐦 🐦
- Cosiness = 🐦 🐦 🐦 🐦 🐦
- Pipe friendliness = 🐦 🐦 🐦 🐦

"A pipe is the fountain of contemplation, the source of pleasure, the companion of the wise; and the man who smokes, thinks like a philosopher and acts like a Samaritan."
-Edward George Bulwer-Lytton, 1st Baron Lytton

Chap's Corner

In this edition we have a look at pipe shapes. This is a crucial area for any Chap, and being able to match the right pipe for the right occasion is an essential skill that KPC members should have off pat.



Apple	Bent Apple	Author	Billiard	Bent Billiard	Blowfish	Brandy	Bulldog
		 <small>Oval Shank</small>					
Bent Bulldog	Calabash	Canadian	Cavalier	Cherrywood	Chimney	Churchwarden	Cutty
Diplomat	Dublin	Egg	Freehand	Gourd Calabash	Hawkbill	Horn	Liverpool
	 <small>Oval Shank</small>						 <small>Round Shank</small>
Lovat	Lumberman	Oom Paul	Panel Billiard	Poker	Pot	Prince	Rhodesian
 <small>Round Shank</small>							
Bent Rhodesian	Strawberry	Tankard	Tomahawk	Tomato	Vest Pocket	Volcano	Zulu

The above chart shows the majority of common pipe shapes available to the Chap of today. A lot of the above shapes could, and should be accommodated in the daily life of a Chap, but some are considered inappropriate for some occasions and consequently should be used with caution, whilst some shapes are down-right vulgar and have no place in a Chap's smoking cabinet.

As a small, but important test of your 'Chapishness' can you spot which of the above shapes should **never** be used by a Chap under any circumstances?

Answers on p. 10



"I hated tobacco. I could have almost lent my support to any institution that had for its object the putting of tobacco smokers to death... I now feel that smoking in moderation is a comfortable and laudable practice, and is productive of good. There is no more harm in a pipe than in a cup of tea. You may poison yourself by drinking too much green tea, and kill yourself by eating too many beefsteaks. For my part, I consider that tobacco, in moderation, is a sweetener and equalizer of the temper."
-Thomas Henry Huxley

How Pipes Helped Win The Battle of Britain in the Summer of 1940

The role of briar and leaf in the winning of the Battle of Britain is often overlooked by an ignorant non-pipe-smoking public, so we at the KPC would like to address this pernicious societal problem square on: If it were not for the combination of briar and leaf we would all be speaking German now, and this article sets out to put the record straight!



Our Chaps demonstrating superior morale using their Straight Apples during the Battle of Britain

Introduction

A largely disinterested public has long forgotten just how great the impact of World War II was on Britain and British pipe production. In fact for all intents and purposes it put a full decade of pipe making on hold, so much so that when addressing the overall history of English pipe making one moves from the late 1930s to the early 1950s barely noting the intervening decade. This is quite in contrast with the Great War (World War I for younger readers) when Britannia ruled the waves. Thus, in WWI fine pipe tobacco was readily available and pipe making, while perhaps limited to some extent if only because most bowls were rough-cut in France, seems to have continued apace, and post-war quickly blossomed into a quite remarkable worldwide expansion.

World War II was a sharp contrast, the sea was no longer an exclusively British domain (as closet-lefty rotters had neutered the Royal Navy), and briar fields for pipe production were actually part of the front lines, with wartime rationing both draconian and prolonged. Few, and for the most part uninteresting, British pipes were produced during the 1940s. It would appear that during World War II and for a good bit afterwards, the Italian briar necessary for high quality smooth finished pipes was in extremely short supply while the situation for Algerian briar necessary for a 'Shell finish' was only somewhat better. Likewise, vulcanite for stems was either a rationed or prohibited material, so that many, if not most, and perhaps all war time pipes were fitted with horn stems, (Horn is a very comfortable stem material but begins to crack almost immediately) and to the best of my information it was never used or offered by some manufacturers such as Dunhill other than in World War II. So, it was a miracle that our Chaps had access to pipes at all in 1940!

Dark Days...

As any Chap of a certain age will tell you, the summer of 1940 was a dark time indeed for our green and pleasant land. Supplies of crucial briar and pipe tobacco were under extreme threat from the infamous 'Bosch Briar & Baccy Blockade', as outlined above. Of particular concern was the potential interruption to the supply of the essential 'smoky' Latakia from Syria, used in quintessential 'English Blends' that kept our Chaps fighting fit. The Germans were aware that this could be our Achilles heel, but it is amazing what lengths a Latakia-deprived Chap will go to when his tobacco supply is threatened.

It was also a time when Hitler's rum-cove-in-chief, Herman Göring, a non-pipe smoker, and commander of the Luftwaffe was doing his worst to prepare for a Nazi invasion of dear old Blighty, by sending hordes of bombers over the English Channel to pummel us. But I think you'll find that the Bosch-bounder was no match for British backbone and briar!

***"May my last breath be drawn through a pipe, and exhaled in a jest."
-Charles Lamb***

How Pipes Helped Win The Battle of Britain in the Summer of 1940, cont..

Background to the Battle

Between 10th July and 31st October 1940, the heavily outnumbered RAF with its 1,963 serviceable Spitfires and Hurricane fighter planes, and by inference at least 3,926 Straight Apples (every RAF pilot would have had at least two pipes, and the Straight Apple was our RAF Chaps' favoured shape) fought off the attacking Luftwaffe with 2,550 aircraft, mostly Messerschmitt Bf 109E and Bf 110C fighters and the odd pipe – mostly flamboyant and flimsy meerschaum-lined Calabash Gourds, usually associated with lounge-bounders and opium abusers.

In the course of the battle, the Luftwaffe lost 1,887 aircraft and about 3 pipes, while the RAF lost 1,547 aircraft and 3,094 pipes. The cost in both aircraft and briar was high, but British air defences held and this signified a first major military defeat for Nazi Germany and was a crucial turning point of WWII. It was Winston Churchill, who, with the Battle of Britain still at its full height, so pointedly acknowledged the invaluable contribution of our briar-toting air force during his speech in parliament: "*The gratitude of every home in our island, in our Empire and indeed throughout the world, except in the abodes of the guilty, goes out to the British airmen, who, undaunted by odds, unwearied in their constant challenge and mortal danger, are turning the tide of world war by their prowess and by their devotion to briar and leaf. Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.*" So, the deadly combination of Spitfire and Hurricane acting as the tip of the RAF spear with the Straight Apple (see below) as the rigid shaft ensured that our Chaps prevailed.



The sturdy Straight Apple and superb Supermarine Spitfire of the RAF

Versus



The flimsy Calabash Gourd (no wonder they lost, Ed.) and the mediocre Messerschmitt 109 E of the Luftwaffe

"When all is said and done, love is trite compared with the spirituality of a tobacco pipe."
-Jules de Gancourt

How Pipes Helped Win The Battle of Britain in the Summer of 1940, cont..

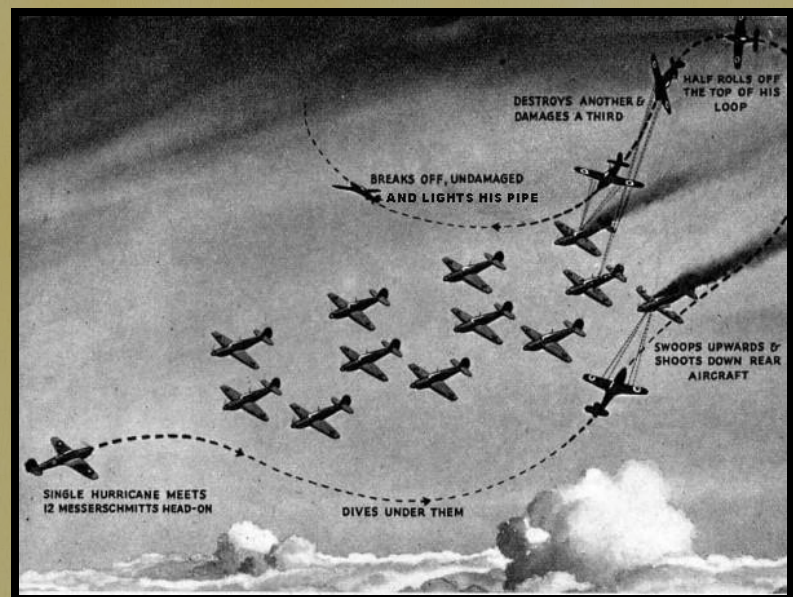
Pictorial Guide Showing How Briar & Leaf Skills Won the Battle of Britain:

Aha! Fritz thinks he's nailed Ginger, but the Bosch bounder doesn't realize that Ginger has merely emptied his lit bowl out of his canopy forming a smoke trail as a cunning decoy. Fooled, seconds later Fritz found himself with Ginger on his tail in a hail of .303 rounds. Splendid pipe skills, top hole Sir!



Who says Chaps can't multi-task? Ginger enjoys a bowl, a book, and a haircut after returning to base.

Diagram showing the correct time to deploy a bowl during a dogfight.



"When you pray with this pipe, you pray for everything in the universe, and everything in the universe prays with you."
-Black Elk, Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux

How Pipes Helped Win The Battle of Britain in the Summer of 1940, cont..

How Briar & Leaf Was Deployed in Winning the Battle of Britain

The most obvious contribution of briar & leaf in winning the Battle of Britain was the maintenance of superior morale and stiff-upper-lip for our brave pilots. As RAF Commander-in-Chief, Air Vice-marshal Sir Hugh Dowding remarked at the height of the conflict on a day the Germans christened 'Adlerdag' (Eagle Day, 13th August 1940): *"If Göring had bombed the tobacco fields in Latakia, Syria, instead of our air fields, the result could have been very different. Along with radar, the Spitfire and the Hurricane, a straight Apple stuffed full of a fragrant English Blend gave our Chaps the edge"*.

Radar was a new secret invention at the time of the battle and proved useful in tracking enemy aircraft. However, early radar suffered from combined troubles of teething problems and air-raids and was often out of commission when needed most. When our radar was inoperative, our ever resourceful Observer Corps used a variety of pipes, usually straight billiards, to point at and count enemy aircraft. Using the 'Pipethagoras' technique (named after a famous Greek pipe-smoking mathematician) even the altitude of the Bosch-blighters could be estimated.

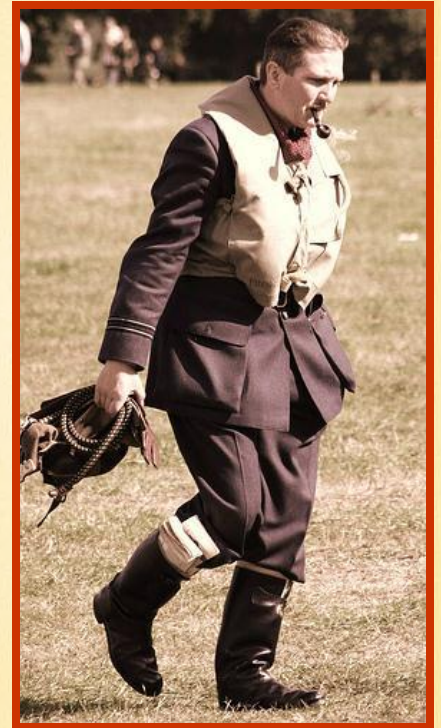
Downed airmen were another problem. Imagine having just bailed out after shooting down umpteen He-111's after some yellow-nosed bastard of an Me109E had turned your 'Spit' into Swiss cheese, only to find yourself floating in the channel. The ghastly problem of wet tobacco was solved by issuing all our pilots with waterproof Bakelite boxes to secure their tobacco and matches in, so that morale could be maintained even whilst waiting for fresh tobacco and rescue from a friendly fisherman. One pilot recalled: *"I'd just bagged a brace of He111's when the Hun in a 109 came out of the sun in a typical unsportsmanlike fashion and put a burst into my Spit. I had to bail out and soon went kersplash into the drink you know. Still, life-jacket inflated I got my stash out of my Bakelite box, and voila, full bowl on the go. Bloody marvellous, what!"*

A special mention should be made of the RAF ground-crews who smoked day and night to keep our aircraft serviced, re-armed and in tip-top form. If these Chaps had not had access to fine pipe tobacco that subsequently kept our pilots airborne heaven only knows we may have heard the sickening crunch of the Nazi jackboot in The Mall.

The End of the Battle of Britain

By October 1940 the RAF had held firm like a stout briar, and the Luftwaffe had been snuffed out like a limp cigarillo, scuppering Hitler's little games. Given the superior numbers of German aircraft (*but not pipes, Ed.*), one could have been forgiven for thinking it was actually possible for the Luftwaffe to win the battle. But of course, our Chaps had superior morale due to their damn fine 'secret weapons' that confounded the Bosch and won the day; Cry God, for Harry, England and St. George! One wonders if our archers smoked pipes at Agincourt...

One of our Chaps returned from a sortie enjoys a bowl after giving Jerry another good hiding!



"A Dutchman without a pipe is a national impossibility. If a Dutchman were deprived of his pipe and tobacco, he would not even enter Paradise with a glad heart."
-Schotel

TOBACCO & PIPE OF THE MONTH

Continuing our Battle of Britain Theme, this edition covers the unbeatable combination of a quintessential 'English Blend' and a briar to match. Any Chap, RAF or otherwise, can see that this would be a splendid choice when in the cockpit, club, pub, shed, or rudimentary shelter.

The Straight Apple

Samuel Gawith's 'Squadron Leader'



From the manufacturer: *This tobacco epitomises the traditional English tobacco. Blended dark and bright Virginias, together with Latakia and Turkish leaf results in a perfect, medium bodied product which gives a rich and slow burning smoke.*

Review: The perfect ammunition for a Straight Apple. A medium strength non-aromatic smoke, where the smoky Latakia is evident but not overpowering. When at the bar of your local whilst wearing your Irvin flying jacket, nursing a pint of Best and smoking a bowl of this fine tobacco, you should have no problem in getting the ladies to break formation and stray into your cross-hairs...

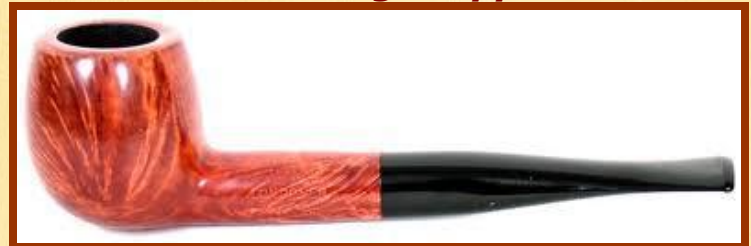
Strength:



Flavour:



Room note:



The similarities of the Straight Apple to the Straight Billiard are immediately obvious. However, the Apple's bowl is just a little more bulbous than the Billiard, suiting the firm grip of the pilots' hand. The straight Apple was the undoubted favourite of all WWII RAF fighter pilots, including the legendary and indomitable fighter-ace, Group Captain Sir Douglas Bader CBE, DSO & Bar, DFC & Bar, FRAes, DL – see below. Pipe-smokers of the free world owe an immeasurable amount to Chaps like Bader and his devotion to the Straight Apple...



*"I have some friends, some honest friends, and honest friends are few;
My pipe of briar, my open fire, a book that's not too new."
-Robert Service*



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A forum for KPC members to share their thoughts regarding all things briar, rudimentary shelter, and anything else of pressing import.

Dear Chief Chap,

I read the latest edition in a state of beguilement. How could a chap such as myself on the furthest fringes of the pipe smoking fraternity, i.e. one who neither owns a pipe or even smokes, could come up with wondrous new ways in which Chaps could entertain both themselves and others, whilst reeking out a Bothy, and I came up with this superb specimen (see below).



I can see it now; the raucous evenings spent smoking the various reeky leaves and drinking home made libations through an old sock all to the strains of Baker Street as played by the great man himself, The Chief Chap good old Sgt Matron himself. I hope you will consider both purchasing the above saxophone pipe (I am on commission) and maybe entering it into the next newsletter.

Yours in total and abject awestruckness,

Jim Easdale, aka Cpl. Punishment

Dear Jim, many thanks for the unusual suggestion. I have a suggestion for you: take one of the blue and red pills before your afternoon nap and remember your potty, (or should that be you're potty?). Ed.

Dear Sgt. Matron,

Having listened incessantly to your pipe smoking escapades and having, now myself, been captured up in the whirlwind of this pipe smoking world you have spoken so fondly of - thanks to your recent 'Rudimentary Shelter Crash Courses' - in this new art of the smoking of this "Bauwky"* stuff of yours - I must say, it is a rather pleasant past-time.

This "Bauwky" stuff - whatever it is - creates an air of calm around the inhaler, and makes the room smell nice and stuff.

Er, yes, I was wondering if maybe those labels we peel off with the government health warnings might be something a chap might consider looking into in this new frontier of "Bauwky" smoking?

Recently, due to all this "Bauwky" smoking, my mouth feels like the inside of Jimmy Savile's sock drawer, and I'm thinking this might not be a good sign.

Being a Chap, though, I've persevered through this hurdle by endeavouring to smoke the dryness away in a realisation that this might merely be teething problems and that once I've properly performed the "prepping of the mooth"** this "Bauwky", of yours, becomes staple diet.

Anyway, it is rather enjoyable, so, er, well, yes, more power to you and off you go, er yes. Keep up the good work Sir!

Captain Festerviewazoid, the Third, Esq, OBE, HND, NC

Dear Captain,

I'm afraid the misguided Government 'health warnings' are a modern affliction that one can do little about, just another bureaucratic burden for the Chap to bear. Perhaps a stern letter to your MP is in order? In the meantime you may nestle in the comfy armchair that is the KPC where such ghastly nonsense is duly ignored and treated with the contempt it deserves.

You are correct to persevere with your favourite blend and your 'Savile-mouth' will indeed fade with time. Ed.

NB. *"Bauwky" is a phonetic colloquialism meaning 'tobacco', often used by Chaps who have the unfortunate affliction of hailing from certain impoverished western parts of The Kingdom of Fife. **Similarly, "tha mooth" should be interpreted as "the mouth", Ed.

Pipe Babe of the month

Claudia is a rare beauty indeed – a lady that takes her bowl to bed! I think you'll find that any Chap given the chance would not hesitate in sampling her succulent boudoir-blend...



Pipe shapes that a Chap should never use, answers from p.3:

Blowfish – There are only a few situations in a Chap's life when he should be blowing fish, ahem, but this dreadful shape of a bowl does not constitute one of them.

Cavalier – Best left for Gentlemen who bat for the other side.

Gourd Calabash - only for opium addicts and Germans.

Horn – Too many opportunities for some lout to snare a Chap with a 'witty' double entendre.

Liverpool – best that a Chap not be associated with anything from Merseyside. Stick to the 'Lovat' as it's a similar, but superior shape with no ugly associations.

Tankard – very, very, working class...

Tomahawk – leave this one to the Native Americans, after all we took everything else!

Tomato – can you imagine, in an intimate moment, describing your briar to a Lady as a 'Tomato'? Do not even use this bowl in your greenhouse.

Volcano – Volcano's have long been extinct in Britain just as this abomination of a bowl should be.

How did you do?

9 = Top Chap – have your batman pour you a large one,

5 – 8 = Basically a good Chap but it is advised that you seek guidance from a more experienced Chap.

0 – 4 = you are not a Chap and never will be.

KPC Notices

Another bumper issue for members and readers alike this month. Thanks for to all contributors for correspondence etc.

KPC t-shirts still available from the Editor at the bargain price of £12-99.

All letters to the Editor, articles and other correspondence should be addressed to:

The Editor
The Kearvaig Pipe Club
Kearvaig
Cape Wrath
BR1 AR5

Or electronic (if you must) communication to:
kearvaigpipeclub@btinternet.com

Coming In the next edition of Briar & Bothies:

- ✔ *Pipe of the month*
- ✔ *Tobacco of the month*
- ✔ *Chap's corner*
- ✔ *Pipe Babe of the month*
- ✔ *Famous pipe smoker*

