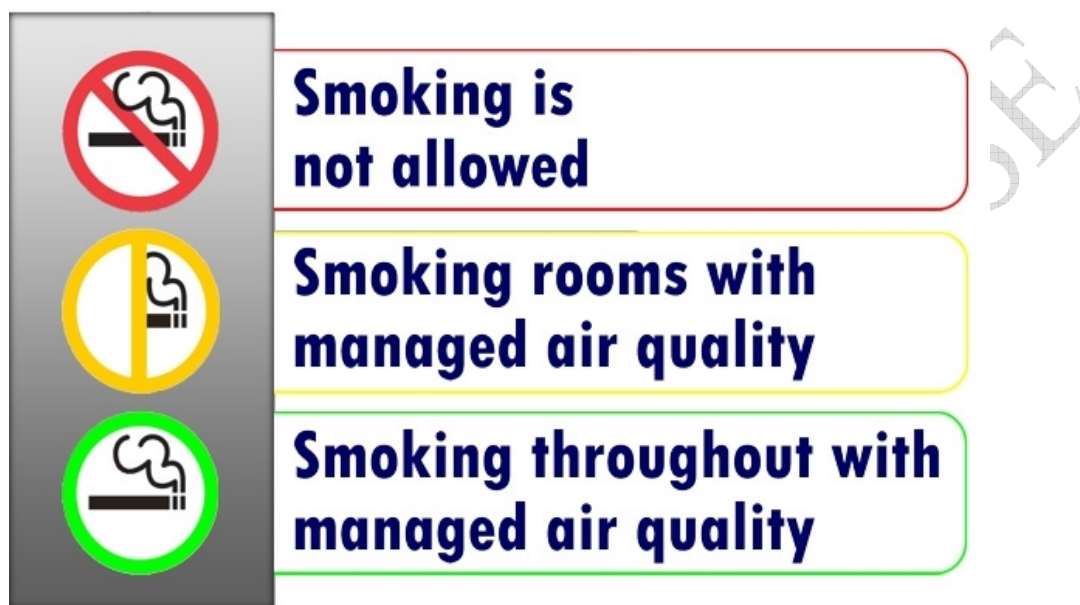

NEWSLETTER 3. 2008

We have all seen the compulsory no-smoking signs on every door of every workplace and work vehicle in the land. Freedom2choose has produced an alternative: the 'traffic light' system:



It reflects the possibility of incorporating choice into smoking restrictions, allowing establishments with many rooms to cater to both smokers and those who prefer smoke-free environments, and smaller outlets to express a preference.

INCREASING RESISTANCE

The first weekend in May, Freedom2Choose and Freedom2Choose Scotland signed up to the new International Coalition Against Prohibition at their inaugural summit.

The Aldebaran Treaty (A landmark is made) by John Gray

'During the last few days covering the 1–3 May a group of people gathered for a Summit meeting on board the Aldebaran, an old sailing ship docked at the small port of Hoorn, in Holland. (Hoorn is fairly close to Amsterdam.) The purpose of this Summit was twofold: firstly to establish the existence of the International Coalition Against Prohibition (ICAP), and secondly, to plan for the 1st International Conference Against Prohibition intended to take place either in mid autumn or early next year.

'We are pleased to announce that the Memorandum and Articles for ICAP were successfully agreed and signed by an international body of subscribers and the document will now move forward to Companies House (UK) where ICAP will be registered as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. This has been a significant agreement between national representatives, many of whom had never

Freedom2Choose : Contact: Freedom2choose c/o John H Baker 22 Glastonbury House, Priestfields, MIDDLESBROUGH, Cleveland TS3 0LF Tel/Fax: (0845) 643 9469
Freedom2Choose (Scotland) : Contact: Freedom2choose Scotland c/o Mary Moriarty, Port o' Leith Bar, 58 Constitution Street, EDINBURGH EH6 8SS Tel (0845) 643 9552

met before, and which will also be known from now on as **The Aldebaran Treaty**. (Aldebaran is the boat shown below, and Treaty was signed on board.)



'Planning for the International Conference will also go ahead, although there is an enormous amount of careful and painstaking work necessary to be undertaken.

'As representatives of European and transatlantic nations and organisations we are now bound in solidarity against smoking bans and the so many other damaging prohibitions that are lucrative and fashionable in today's world of scientific fraud and political stupidity where adults are treated as children and freedom of choice is under threat. Furthermore, although all our strategies and objectives have not been fully agreed, as much of this will be decided at the coming International Conference, we now have the vehicle with which to co-operate nation with nation and this co-operation has already started. Also, as a result of the Summit, one of the participants – well known British publican and freedom fighter Nick Hogan – has already been invited to Brussels by a British MEP in order to lobby and network.

'Coverage by the local Dutch press was very good and Freedom to Choose representatives Nick Hogan and Bill Gibson also did interviews with an independent British radio journalist. Countries represented by the signatories of ICAPs governing document include: England, Scotland, Wales, Germany, Holland, Denmark, Italy, America and Canada.

'Organisations represented at the Summit were: **Freedom to Choose (UK)**, **Freedom to Choose (Scotland)**, Forces International, Forces Italy, Forces Holland, Forces Germany, Dary (Denmark), The Danish Smokers' Party, The Party Against Nannyism (Holland), Smokers' Interest (Holland), The Association of Dutch Coffee Shops, The Hungarian Association of Smokers' Societies.

'We have also had positive responses to the formation of the Coalition from a Group in Belgium as well as established organisations such as My Choice, CAGE in Canada, The Smokers Club and PASAN in the USA.

'We are on the march and will not stop now!'

Further examples of resistance in recent weeks have included a Pubwatch ban on Gordon Brown entering licensed premises in Skipton and Craven, North Yorkshire; a meeting held in Hartlepool in April between social club bosses and their MP, Iain Wright (clubs losing one-third of their members since the ban was implemented in July 2007); Bavaria has seen leaders of the Christian Social Union move to relax the ban after poor local election results. The formation of the International Coalition Against Prohibition will strengthen resistance to the smoking ban yet further.

Jill Pell's long awaited study has still not been published. Claiming a 17 per cent drop in cardiac admissions following implementation of the Scottish ban, it was debunked only weeks later by official statistics showing a longer-term gradual drop in cardiac admissions of around 4–5 per cent. The study turns out to have been nowhere near ready for publication when its results were released in September, 2007. Unfortunately news of the Scottish heart attack miracle circulated the globe and was quoted in a Herald article on 26 March this year (2nd anniversary of the Scottish ban). Author Chris Snowden challenged Dr Richard Simpson who took the 'published' results of Jill Pell at face value. In a dialogue that he published on his website at http://www.velvetgloveironfist.com/index.php?page_id=30, he exposes (Scotland's Shadow Health Spokesman) Dr Simpson's apparent ignorance of the actual level of cardiac admissions both around the smoking ban and over the last 40 years, and his carelessness in claiming that unpublished studies have been published.

Over two centuries Scotland has earned a reputation for pioneering medical science: such as Fleming for penicillin, and Sir Archibald McIndoe, who rebuilt the faces of horribly wounded World War 2 pilots, for plastic surgery. What a tragedy that its prominence in the field should be tainted by such work.

The founders of Action on Smoking and Health, the Royal College of Physicians expect to achieve a smoke-free society in the next 20 years. By this, it means that nicotine will be delivered to smokers via patches and gum – that is, to those who have failed to stop smoking **or are unwilling to quit. It is chilling to see a medical association suggest that people should be coerced into taking nicotine substitutes.**

In the interests of public health 'targets', nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) is already widely prescribed, and in many cases this means publicly subsidised. Publicly funded literature on the dangers of smoking (and passive smoking) is also widely available.

Pharmaceutical companies benefit from public subsidy: far from being just benign agents helping people to quit smoking, they have a real interest in the promotion of smoking bans, and in the expected moves to restrict high street tobacco sales, which are significant tools in the promotion of their products. It means nothing to them that they are waging a trade war on the back of public funds and simultaneously depriving the public of the freedom to choose.

Source: [The Government's Public Health White Paper Cm 6374.](#)

SURVEY OF PUBS

The first Freedom to Choose survey of the impact of the smoking ban on the hospitality trade in England was recently completed. Conducted by YorView on behalf of F2C, the results make for some grim but unsurprising reading. Despite the Health Secretary's claims that the smoking ban will not create long-term economic problems for pubs, 64% of pubs reported a loss of trade since 1 July 2007, of which an overwhelming 98% blame the smoking ban, in whole or part. Many landlords said that they have had to cut staffing levels or opening hours.

Sixty-eight per cent want the ban to end completely and for choice to be restored, with smoking rooms cited as the most preferred option. Many considered the alleged health risks on which the ban was based to be exaggerated, wanted alternative solutions or believed that owners and workers should have the right to choose for themselves. Nearly half of pubs reported problems with providing outside smoking areas due to cost, planning restrictions, noise or a lack of suitable space.

The survey also revealed that 97% of publicans feel that the government is unsympathetic towards the problems faced by the hospitality trade, while 96% expect further restrictions to be imposed. Cheap supermarket booze, taxation, red tape and measures to combat binge drinking were amongst further sources of concern.

The ban is so unpopular with landlords that 35% say it will change the way they vote at the next General Election. Nineteen per cent of these plan to switch from Labour to Conservative and 43% to 'other', with a party that opposed the smoking ban as the most preferred cited option for that group.

Colin Grainger, Chairman of Freedom to Choose says, 'This survey shows in no uncertain terms how devastating the ban has been for those in the hospitality industry. It should be a clarion call for politicians of all stripes. The message is loud and clear: the ban is disproportionate to the perceived harms of second hand smoke.'

Godfrey Bloom MEP, writes in the foreword, 'With over 20 pubs a week closing I feel a major cultural platform is being removed from the British people.'

The survey concludes by recommending that political parties advocating choice based upon the scientifically demonstrable solutions such as those promoted by Freedom to Choose can benefit from the support of publicans and their clients, while also improving public health in the process.

Freedom to Choose is distributing the survey findings to the press and media, trade bodies and MPs. A copy is available for download on our website.

Stop press ... Bookmakers William Hill have declared odds of 33/1 against the smoking ban being overturned before the next (UK) general election. Their report mentions the unpopularity of the ban with customers and landlords, and comments on the failure of non-smokers to make up losses since the ban came in. The bookie also declares that the fortunes of UKIP may improve (from 1000/1 against winning the next general election) once voters realize that they are the only party committed to repealing the ban.