

**FREE**

# Swan Supping

**Issue 101**

**Apr/May 2014**



**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**

**Protect your local as an  
Asset of Community Value,  
or risk losing it forever!  
Full instructions on  
Page 12.**



# War of the BEER FESTIVAL

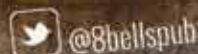
A variety of beers from Lancashire & Yorkshire



The  
**EightBells**  
Long Crendon

**EASTER WEEKEND**  
18<sup>TH</sup> 19<sup>TH</sup> 20<sup>TH</sup> 21<sup>ST</sup> APRIL

FAMILY FUN ALL WEEKEND. KEEP UP-TO-DATE. VISIT: [8BellsPub.com](http://8BellsPub.com)



**NEW CIDER LAUNCH** - LONG CRENDON CIDER

FANCY DRESS COMPETITION - FAIRY TALE THEME

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BREAKFAST BUTTIES DAILY FROM 10AM TO 12PM  
BBQ, BEEF CURRY, KEBABS. PLUS  
DAILY SPECIALS SERVED ALL DAY

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19<sup>TH</sup> HAIR OF THE DOG  
20<sup>TH</sup> ROCKIT SCIENCE

CHARITY EVENTS IN AID OF THOMLEY ACTIVITY CENTRE  
INCLUDING RAFFLE & STOCKS  
**COMEDY SPORTS DAY** **GARDEN GAMES**



## NEWS FROM THE EDITOR



As part of the celebrations for the launch of the 100th issue of *Swan Supping*, we held a well attended lunch at the **Kings Head**, Aylesbury, which we feature on page 9.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank George Jenkinson and his staff for their wonderful hospitality and to all those at **Chiltern Brewery** for the presentation of bottles of *Swan Supping* which was a tremendous surprise. Things like that make all the hard work producing the magazine seem even more worthwhile.

However, if you thought we would rest on our laurels, you could not be more wrong.

This issue, we are spearheading a national **CAMRA** campaign to get as many pubs as possible registered as Assets of Community Value. To this end, we are including a form as an insert to the magazine to make it as easy as possible. Full details are given on page 12. We have seen so many of our pubs disappear over the last few years and we are determined to do all we can to stop the rot, or at least slow it down.

We are taking advantage of the Localism Act 2011 which allows a Parish Council, a community interest group or a group of 21 people who are on the electoral register in the local planning authority area, to nominate a



### Make May a Mild Month

As many of you know, **CAMRA** promotes mild every year and encourages everyone to 'Give Mild a try in May'. Like many CAMRA members, I don't restrict my drinking of the wonderful stuff to just one month a year, in fact it is usually my first pint of call in any pub which serves it, so go ahead - give it a try!

### Competition Winners

As part of the celebrations for our 100th issue, we held two competitions. The prize for the first was a one litre Growler, filled with the winner's choice of ale (worth £15) which has kindly been donated by **Malt The Brewery**. The prize, to be collected from the brewery in Prestwood, was won by Chris Tranter, who got the correct answer to the question about how many copies of *Swan Supping* have been printed up to issue 100 which was C) 423,000.

For our second competition, **ABC** have kindly offered the opportunity to assist in a special brew in commemoration of this milestone. The three places available (on a date to be arranged) were won by correctly answering the following questions:-

- 1) Which year was *Swan Supping* first published? 1997
- 2) The new **ABC** logo features what animal? An Aylesbury Duck
- 3) How many copies of the 100th issue of were printed? 6500

The winners were John Kearney, Neil Drury and Louise Mathias. All three will be contacted and a suitable date arranged.

### Finally

The Black Country trip has lost another regular following the sudden death of Roger Olney, pictured here outside the Fässla-Keller in Bamberg, previously the brewery tap for Maisel, closed in 2008. Very much a joker, many will remember his antics during the photograph being taken outside the **Bull & Bladder** at Brierley Hill (if you don't know what I'm referring to, I suggest you book in for our next trip (July 12th) when I will be happy to explain). His funeral showed his value to the community with 2-300 people packing the church (All Saints Leighton Buzzard), the majority of whom came back to the *Swan*, Stewkley, afterwards for a drink to celebrate his life.



Thanks once again to all the people who have given their free time to contribute to the production and circulation of *Swan Supping* and many thanks to Colin Stanford for the cartoon (let's hope that we have seen the last of the floods which affected so many parts of our branch!).

Cheers!

David W. Roe - *Swan Supping* Editor

## NATIONAL CAMRA NEWS

### Beer Duty cut again!

**CAMRA** celebrated after Chancellor George Osborne announced during the Budget that beer duty will be cut by 1p for a second year running.

Thanks to the incredible efforts of over 6,500 **CAMRA** members who lobbied their MP ahead of the Budget, consumers will yet again be raising a glass to the Chancellor to toast another Budget for British beer drinkers.

Beer supports nearly one million jobs and generates over £22 billion in taxes, and another cut in beer duty in 2014 will help maintain a healthier pubs sector.

Chancellor George Osborne also announced that duty on ordinary cider has been frozen - which is fantastic news for all those real cider drinkers!

Mike Benner, **CAMRA** Chief Executive commented: '**CAMRA** is delighted to see the Chancellor implementing an unprecedented second consecutive cut of a penny in beer duty.

This is not only about keeping the price of a pint affordable in British pubs but helping an industry which has been in overall decline continue on its long road to recovery. **CAMRA** cares greatly about the future of the Great British pub and it is clear from this Budget announcement that the Government do too'.

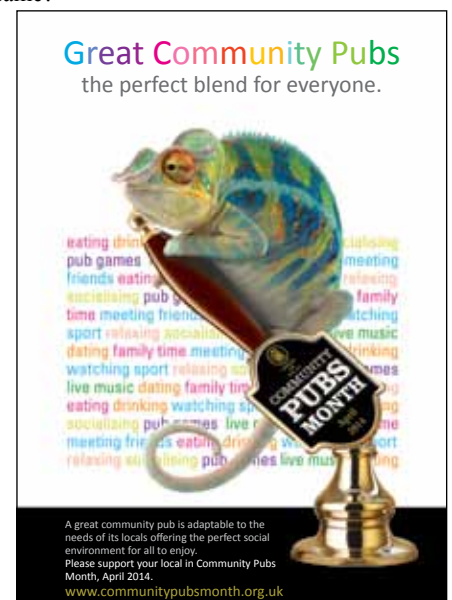
### Community Pubs Month

April is Community Pubs Month and **CAMRA** has circulated over 7,000 publicity packs to pubs all over the country in preparation for this month focused on local activity.

A community pub offers the perfect social environment for all locals to enjoy. Whether you want a quiet pint, time with the family, a romantic meal or just a game of darts with friends - a great pub should be able to adapt to the needs of the community.

Community Pubs Month aims to raise the profile of pub-going. We would like to encourage you to pop in to your local this month. Why not invite

other members of your community to do the same?



## THE USUAL SUSPECTS

The branch held its AGM in the Gatehouse chamber at the **King's Head**, Aylesbury on 24th February. Our annual get together allows us to elect the committee for the following year, to inform members of the previous year's progress, and to set aims for the branch for the coming year.



**Alexander Wright**

This year, we have a new treasurer and a new pubs officer, the posts being taken up by David Roe and Carl Griffin respectively. Please see the branch website for the AGM minutes.

### **Alexander Wright – Chairman**

Alexander joined **CAMRA** in 2000 at the Great British Beer festival. An active member of the branch since 2004, he has held various positions over the years, including Treasurer and Membership Secretary. He is also a member of two National **CAMRA** committees as well as a regular volunteer in the **GBBF** press office.

chairman@swansupping.org.uk — 07970

633952

### **Michael Clarke – Secretary**

Mike hails from Lancashire and was brought up on pints with creamy heads. He joined **CAMRA** back in 1988 but didn't become an active member until moving to Buckinghamshire from London a little over ten years ago. An enthusiastic writer (he's just completed an MA in Creative Writing) he enjoys contributing articles to **Swan Supping** and, er, writing the branch meeting minutes as Branch Secretary.

secretary@swansupping.org.uk



**Michael Clarke**

### **David Roe – Treasurer, Magazine Editor**

David Roe joined **CAMRA** in 1975 having been introduced to real ale by a friend from university. Moving to Aylesbury in 1979, he joined the local branch in 1980, and quickly became part of the committee. He has held most of the committee roles in the intervening years, most notably branch chairman from 1991 to 2011.

For most of this time he has been editor of our branch magazine, **Swan Supping**, now at over 100 issues.

editor@swansupping.org.uk



**David Roe**

### **Simon Allen – Membership Secretary**

Simon joined **CAMRA** in 1989 at the Greenwich beer festival. He has been a committee member since the mid-90s and ran the branch website for several years. He has also held several committee positions over the last few years.

membership@swansupping.org.uk

### **Elvis Evans – Cider**

Formerly regional cider coordinator, Elvis is a keen campaigner for real cider as well as ale.

cider@swansupping.org.uk

### **Bill Piers – Locale**

locale@swansupping.org.uk

### **Sandra Griffin – Young Person's Contact**

young.members@swansupping.org.uk

### **Eddie Harman – Swan Supping Delivery Coordinator**

### **Tony Gabriel**

### **Christine Harman**

### **Peter Hoade**



**Simon Allen and Elvis Evans**



**Sandra Griffin**



**Carl Griffin**



## **Beer Festival Equipment**

**Hire of Barrel stillage, cooling, taps, bars etc**

**Barrel (9gl) Stillages/ Racking, traditional wooden 2 x 9gl, 12 x 9gl**

**Taps, Chiller Saddles & Insulation Jackets**

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## PUB OF THE YEAR AND CLUB OF THE YEAR



Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe CAMRA are very proud to announce the winners of the **Pub and Club of the Year** awards 2014.

The **Pub of the Year** competition is CAMRA's recognition of excellence in the pub industry, and the **Cross Keys**, Thame, has beaten 270 other pubs in the Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe branch area to win this prestigious award.

Competition in the branch is always fierce, but two runners up, the **Royal Standard**, Wooburn Common and the **Whip Inn**, Lacey Green were pipped at the post by the Cross Keys' consistent excellence.

The pub's unique character, with an ever changing selection of real ales and friendly, welcoming atmosphere is an irreplaceable asset to the local community.

Peter Lambert, landlord of the **Cross Keys** and the current Mayor of Thame

said, 'I'm genuinely surprised to have won this award again so soon. I'm very touched and proud of my wife Trudi and the rest of the staff for working hard to keep standards so high.'

The presentation (pictured left) was made by Branch Chairman, Alexander Wright, to Peter and Trudi and the photograph was taken by Frank Millar.

The **Cross Keys** will now go against winners of other branches in the **Central Southern CAMRA Region** for a chance to compete in the national Pub of the Year competition that will be announced later this year.

Meanwhile, the **Club of the Year** certificate, the first time this award has been made for the branch, was awarded to the **Royal British Legion**, Marlow.

Carl Griffin, Branch Pub and Clubs Officer, presented the award to Alan Sheppard, who accepted the certificate on behalf of the club.



Members of the branch, the Club Chairman and President were also in attendance.

On the night of the presentation, four very well-kept beers were available with a highlight being **Brampton Mild**.

Members were also informed of the exciting beers that are ordered for the early May Bank Holiday Festival which will feature many 'rare in these parts' Derbyshire ales.

AS SEEN  
ON TV

# THE CROSS KEYS

## THAME

01844 218202

### 8 ALES

### 3 TRADITIONAL CIDERS

NOW SERVED OVER 1200  
DIFFERENT ALES  
IN 3 YEARS

## REGULAR BREWS

### AYLESBURY VALE & WYCOMBE PUB OF THE YEAR 2012

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER @ THECROSSKEYSTHAME





## LOCAL NEWS

### AYLESBURY

The two **Wetherspoons** (**Bell** and **White Hart**) are involved in the nationwide beer festival, between Friday 28th March and Sunday 13th April, where fifty real ales will be on rotation including ten from international brewers.

The **Hop Pole** is holding a beer festival from Wednesday to Monday over the Easter bank holiday. The beers on offer are exciting in their variety with many that are rare in this area.

The **Old Millwrights Arms** is really getting into its stride now. They have eight handpumps serving a changing mix of **Greene King** and local beers from **Animal**, **Chiltern**, **Rebellion**, **Vale** and **XT** plus others recently from **Windsor & Eton** and **Brains**. They're expanding their range of ciders (bag-in-box) and have a new menu with ale-based gravies. There's also a great range of British and foreign bottled beers to drink in or take-away.

### BIERTON

The **Bell** are offering great value 'Kwik lunch' (£6.95 from Tuesday to Saturday) offers on both their authentic Thai and traditional British menus. Food available evenings also. **Fuller's London Pride** and **HSB** on regularly - both very well kept.

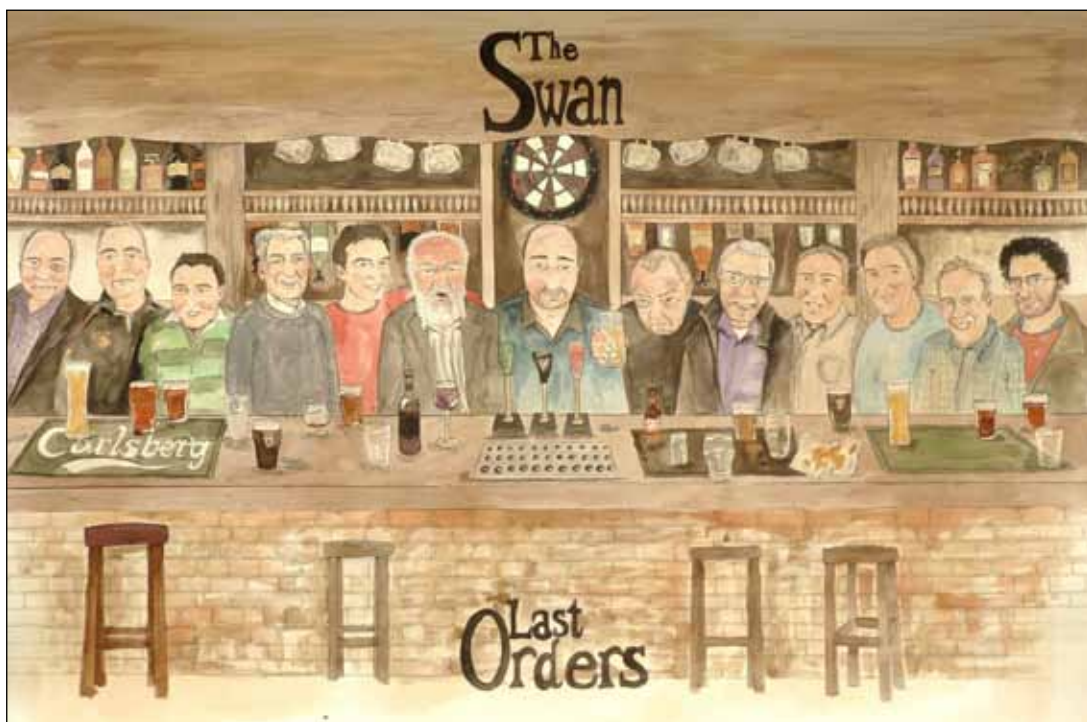
The **Red Lion** are holding their annual Beer festival over the Easter Bank Holiday 18th - 21st April.

### GREAT KIMBLE

Combining the spirit of Easter with that of April's Community Pubs month is a brilliant take on Leonardo's 'Last Supper' by Aylesbury artist, Rachel Morris. It shows Mick Caffrey in the centre of the picture surrounded by twelve beer disciples (or locals) from the **Swan**. Stop by and see if you can recognise any of the characters (one is a branch committee member). The image is reproduced by kind permission of the artist. Rachel's website is [www.rachelmorrisart.com](http://www.rachelmorrisart.com) and she can be contacted by email on [info@rachelmorrisart.com](mailto:info@rachelmorrisart.com).

### HADDENHAM

The **Green Dragon** has had 'a lick of paint' and reopened in late March with free canapés. Patrick has decided to take it on himself from **Enterprise** as **New Dawn Inns** have pulled out.



### HIGH WYCOMBE

The **Beech Tree** in Amersham Road has reopened after a £190k refurbishment. After being closed for four weeks, it was reopened by the Mayor, Trevor Snaith. Besides having a facelift both inside and out, a children's play area has been installed to make it less of a summer pub and more of a pub for all seasons.

**Wetherspoons'** pubs (including the **Falcon** and the **WRL**) are holding a nationwide beer festival, between Friday 28th March and Sunday 13th April. Fifty real ales will be on rotation including ten from international brewers.

The **Wendover Arms** has gained planning permission to extend the hotel and pub to provide an additional seven bedrooms. The car park has also been changed to allow for three more spaces.

### LACEY GREEN

Nick at the **Whip** is holding his 21st Beer Festival in May on Friday 16th and Saturday 17th. 30+ real ales and cider will be available representing microbreweries from across the UK plus local breweries. On the Saturday afternoon there is jazz and the beer tent will be open 12-11pm both days.

Nick has had to install new beer engines as the other ones had worn out after pulling several hundred thousand pints since he took over. The format stays at

around a third repeats, a third Locales and a third completely new ales (up to 4162 completely different ales so far).

### LEIGHTON BUZZARD

As reported in the last issue the **Black Lion** reopened recently as part of the **Burlison Inns** group. Just a few doors down from **Wetherspoons** in the town centre, next to all the bus stops, this pub now has eight ales, eight real ciders, three draught Belgian beers and over fifty bottled Belgian beers. All this and restaurant free. All samplings so far have been impressive. How about a trip to Leighton? *<We are suggesting a social to be planned for a Saturday afternoon in June - Ed.>*

### LONG CRENDON

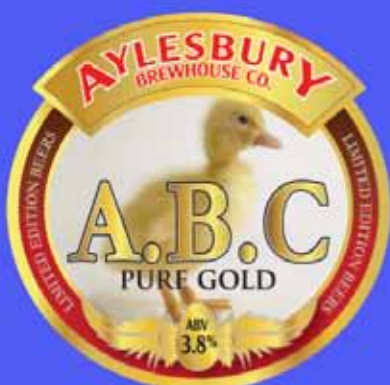
The **Eight Bells** is holding a four day festival over Easter. The theme is the War of the Roses with Lancashire and Yorkshire beers on offer - who will come out on top..? In addition and over the next couple of months they will be offering a variety of guest beers from local brewers such as **XT**, **Chiltern**, **Vale** and **White Horse**, plus others from further afield such as **Brewsters**, **Brightside** and **Springhead**. **Long Crendon Cider** from **XT** will be launched on the Saturday. Barbecue, live music and Morris men will also be included in the weekend of fun.

### MARLOW

Chinese food to eat in or take away has been a Marlow favourite for many years at the **Coach and Horses** but this may change soon as the Poon family are leaving although no date has yet been fixed. Tom Kerridge from the **Hand and Flowers** is believed to have shown an interest in taking on the pub. The regular real ales are **Fullers London Pride** and **Brakspear Bitter**.

Real ales at the **Cross Keys** are **St Austell Tribute** and/or a **Caledonian Brewery** beer with recent offerings being their **Flying Scotsman** and the rugby-themed **Over The Bar**. All real ales are £2.50/pint from 11am to 8pm all days of the week, rising to £3.70/pint after 8pm. A half-pint is £2.00 at any time!

The **Hare & Hounds** has changed temporarily to the **Continental Bakehouse**. It will run as a bakery/café for up to two years whilst the owner intends to convert the pub into a five bedroom house and place another two/three houses on its land. The premises will be fully licensed and serving **Rebellion** beers. They are starting by serving breakfasts, pastries and afternoon teas with, hopefully, an evening dinner menu to follow. Fortunately they cannot trash the pub as much as they would no doubt have



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liked, as it has just, in the nick of time, been granted Grade II listed status by English Heritage.

Flooding does not seem to have affected many of the pubs in the Marlow area. Even the **Two Brewers** was unaffected, although the water came very close and, if the property has cellars, then the rising ground water might well have affected them. However, there seems to be very little, if any, progress on reinstatement and the remains of the pub are somewhat inadequately protected against the elements.

## MEDMENHAM

The **Dog and Badger** still stands forlorn and unlet (see our cover picture). We have a very strong suspicion that, sadly, despite its reputed founding in 1390, it will not reopen as licensed premises.

## OVING

The **Black Boy** is currently closed and as far as is known is seeking new tenants. The privately owned pub recently changed hands at auction though this does not seem to have anything to do with the departure of the previous tenant.

## STEWKLEY

The **Swan** celebrates Easter with four ales and live music from cover band Dizzy on Good Friday Evening. Sunday lunch will feature Roast Turkey with all the trimmings.

## THAME

At the **Cross Keys**, beers from the brewery over the last year have been as common as hen's teeth (there was one at the *Haddenham Beer Festival*)

but this could all change shortly. Pete's year as Mayor comes to an end in May and there is a rumour that brewing will recommence towards the end of June – see website for details. We wait in anticipation to see what he calls his first brew – something to do with his Mayoralship perhaps or maybe *Mr Splodge*?

The **James Figg** has *Doom Bar* on all the time and rotates the other three pumps. At present there is *Vale Best*, *Purity Mad Goose* and *XT 6*. Coming very soon is *Amber Whale Premium*, a 4.3 amber ale from the *Whale Ale Brewery*.

## WELL END

A pub that was badly affected by the recent flooding was the **Spade Oak**. It had to close for about a month when the sewage system went into reverse but, we understand, it is now open again. The flooding was certainly an unwelcome baptism of water for the new landlady to find on her arrival.

## WENDOVER

Dolly, the soon to be, 100 year old barmaid at the **Red Lion** has her birthday on 19th April. There is going to be a horse-drawn dray come to her house to take her down to the pub for celebrations in the bar named after her which we hope to cover in our next issue.

## WOOBURN COMMON

The **Royal Standard** will be holding a mini Easter beer festival between Friday 18th April and Sunday 21st April. As usual The **Royal Standard**'s idea of a mini festival is a regular pubs idea of a large festival.

*Lynn and Nigel welcome you to*

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## NEW WELCOME AT THE CHANDOS ARMS



After a brief closure for refurbishment the **Chandos Arms** at Weston Turville reopened with new faces at the helm at the end of January. Chris and Carmel Williams are now in charge at this **Wells/Youngs** tenancy which has had a bright and sympathetic refreshment of décor.

Chris, from Aylesbury, has been in the trade before for several years and has recently spent two years in logistics whilst Carmel was previously a social worker. They have three children, Dylan, Charlie and Rubie. Whilst the two other remaining pubs in the village are primarily restaurants Chris is determined to keep the **Chandos** very much a traditional drinkers and village social venue. The two main drinking areas will remain as they are, as will the dartboard. Meals are served mainly in the adjoining smaller restaurant.

Four ales are on handpump from the **Wells/Youngs** range and can vary. Currently these are: **Wells Eagle IPA**, **Wells Bombardier**, **Wells DNA** and **Youngs Special**. All those sampled were in fine form. Opening hours are:

Monday to Thursday 12-11, Friday and Saturday 12-12, Sunday 12-10.30. The large front garden is well equipped with tables and seating to enjoy drinks in a pleasant setting during the summer.

Meals are served Monday to Saturday 12-3, 6-9 and Sunday 12-5. Meals are all home cooked with a Jamaican twist, as Carmel is part Jamaican. There is a carvery every Sunday, a 'light bites' menu at lunchtimes Monday to Saturday and a seniors menu Monday to Friday lunchtimes. The summer will also see barbecues in the garden and a special Jamaican food night will be held on Saturday 12th April.

Other events for the future will be family fun days and live music events, the latter of which kick off on Saturday 26th April with guitarist James Manders and his band.

More information on all the above can be found on [www.chandosarmswestonturville.co.uk](http://www.chandosarmswestonturville.co.uk) or by phoning 01296 613532.

**Mick White**



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## CELEBRATING 100 ISSUES OF SWAN SUPPING



Saturday 1st February 2014 marked the publication of the 100th issue of *Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe CAMRA's* branch magazine, *Swan Supping*.

This magazine was first published in the spring of 1997 by Brian Spink and David Roe, and was initially a quarterly publication, produced at the back of the **Hogshead** in Marlow with just 1500 copies. The 100th issue, published over sixteen years later, has a circulation of 6500, a whole 5000 more than the first!

As we could not let this significant milestone go past unrecognised, we organised a celebratory party at the excellent **Farmers' Bar** at the **King's Head**, Aylesbury.

On the day, over 35 branch members and visitors attended the event (pictured above), including George Jenkinson, landlord of the **Farmers' Bar**, and Steven Lambert, an Aylesbury Vale District Councillor.

The event has allowed us to celebrate our award-winning magazine - *Swan Supping* has recently

won the *Central Southern Region Branch Magazine of the Year* - and to invite members who had not attended a branch event before to come along and get to know the committee, and other active members.

After welcoming the guests, and ensuring everyone had a beer and some food, the branch chairman, Alexander Wright, surprised the editor, David Roe, with a special certificate on behalf of the branch for all the time he has put into editing all 100 issues of the magazine over the entire sixteen years.

Finally, **Chiltern Brewery** surprised all of us with a special commemorative bottle of ale featuring the 100th issue front cover as a wonderful memento of the day.

Here's to the next 100 issues!



## THE FARMERS' BAR

THE CHILTERN BREWERY TAP

AT THE KING'S HEAD

The Chiltern Brewery's historic courtyard inn at The King's Head, Aylesbury

Fine English Real Ales from our Brewery

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For regular Tweets please follow us on Twitter [@kings\\_head](https://twitter.com/kings_head)



# The Hop Pole



83 Bicester Road  
Aylesbury Bucks HP19 9AZ  
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Email: [thehoppoleaylesbury@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:thehoppoleaylesbury@hotmail.co.uk)

Website: [www.hoppolepub.com](http://www.hoppolepub.com)

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& American beers
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Available - Served 12-4 pm  
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- ✓ Families Welcome

## IRISH, BUT FRENCH

**Bottle-Conditioned Ale in the Deep South!  
Of France that is! And it's Irish!**

In Toulouse for Heineken Cup Rugby in January, my son and I were fortunate enough to find a good English/Irish style pub offering bottle-conditioned ales from the **Dungarvan Brewery** alongside some good Belgian and French beers too. My tipples pictured below were Black Rock stout and Copper Coast Irish red ale, both of which I enjoyed immensely. They are traditionally brewed and bottled on-site in Dungarvan, Co. Waterford made using only four ingredients – barley, hops, yeast and water. No chemicals are added to the beers, they are unfiltered, unpasteurised and vegan-friendly.



Beer descriptions are:  
**Black Rock** stout is a full flavoured, smooth, dry stout that has been described on more than one occasion as "the way stout used to taste". Made from roasted barley which gives a rich, chocolaty flavour complemented by herbal hints and notes of vanilla and

aniseed. This is a medium-bodied stout with a light carbonation and a smooth mouth-feel.

**Copper Coast** is a smooth, fruity ale with a definite caramel character created by the use of crystal malt in the brewing process but with an added hop balance that is not always present in red ales and which offsets the sweetness of the caramel flavours.

For anyone wishing to discover more about the brewery, the website is [www.dungarvanbrewingcompany.com](http://www.dungarvanbrewingcompany.com)  
*Peter Hoade*

## Ian & Lynne welcome you to The Black Horse, Lacey Green

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**Pub open all day Friday, Saturday, Sunday & Bank Holidays**

**Please note: The pub is closed Monday until 5pm**

***Sunday Roast ~ £9-95 for two courses (Children under 6 free!)***  
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Check for further details on – [www.blackhorse-pub.co.uk](http://www.blackhorse-pub.co.uk) or email: [lynnecomley@btconnect.com](mailto:lynnecomley@btconnect.com)



# LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

## Rebellion Brewery

Zebedee, their Spring beer has been out from March and *Touchdown* (Amber and Fruity 4.2%), their March monthly has been out from the start of the month. A point of interest for *Hole in One*, their dark and complex 4.2% April beer is that they have used the malt grown on-site by the farmers. It's one of a number of malts used in the beer and will be available in April.

As for other news, the new on-site shop build is under way with plans to be in the new larger shop by the Summer. Following on from the new shop will be developments to the brewery that will increase their capacity and therefore allow them more flexibility with their range of beers. Exciting times ahead for sure! They can update you with the latest news and beer availability on facebook (RebellionBeerCo) or on Twitter (@RebellionBeer) and they are looking forward to a busy and hopefully dry summer.

## Tring Brewery

Tring's decision to brew monthly specials using hops from around the world has resulted in some incredibly popular beers. So popular in fact that the Austrian Sladek hopped special for March sold out in record time. With the American hopped *Blue Jay Brown Ale* and Argentinian hopped *Armadillo* coming later in the year they are sure they could be seeing more record sales. On how they will cope, Ben Marston commented 'longer, more frequent brew runs or rations on the staff beer allocation. Actually forget the rations bit!'

It has been officially confirmed that *Kotuku* is now a permanent addition to the *Tring Brewery* range. This 4.0% light golden ale is brewed using additions of rye crystal malt and New Zealand hops. In an earlier, albeit darker incarnation, and under a different name, this was the beer that took Best Bitter award and Silver overall award at last October's *Wetherspoon* National beer festival. Having now been intensely trialled for three months the brewery are completely behind the product. *Kotuku* for those wondering is the Maori word for a particular type of White Heron and symbolises everything rare and beautiful.

As always with *Tring Brewery* there's more than just brewing going on. Having just held a charity event called the Dapper Drinker at which invited guests, dressed in their finery, stood the chance to win a £650 suit from tailors Wiliam Young 1876, they have now moved onto another competition.

This time in conjunction with the Tring National History Museum, Woodland Trust and bag makers, Millican, the brewery have established the 'A shot In The Park' photographic competition. If you're a budding photographer then head to [www.ashotinthe park.com](http://www.ashotinthe park.com) from 15th April for more details.

## XT Brewery

XT have created their annual special for 2014 - the *XT-14* which is a Saison style beer. With the anniversary of the start of the Great War, the beer commemorates this historic occasion. It's made with wheat malt and special semi-wild Belgian yeast, resulting in a very different fruity and naturally hazy beer combined with generous additions of hops from around the Commonwealth. It has split opinions, with many beer festivals and pubs loving the beer, while others weren't quite ready for its more unusual appearance and flavours.

Last year's special, the *XT-13* Pacific Red Ale proved so popular it has stayed on the brewing schedules and will continue to be available. The

recipe has changed several times as the beer is made with hard to find North American, Australian and New Zealand hop varieties – it is now in its 12th variation!

This Easter sees the launch of Long Crendon cider at the **Eight Bells** pub beer festival, a fitting venue as the cider is produced at Long Crendon Manor and sold exclusively through **XT Brewing Co**, who are also based in the village. This year four varieties are available, though in strictly limited quantities. Each variety is Medium Dry and 5.5% ABV and named according to the timing of the apple harvesting: *Late Summer*, *Early Autumn*, *Mid-Autumn* and *Late Autumn*. The apples for *Late Summer* are all locally sourced, whilst the Autumn varieties are made primarily using the famous Dabinett cider apple from Herefordshire.

The brewery has four Open Days planned for this year: Saturday 26th April, Saturday 5th July, Saturday 18th October and Saturday 6th December. Each of them are from 10:30am till late afternoon – FREE entry. Kids are welcome with free soft drinks available. The days will feature a range of XT beers at £2 a pint plus local food will be available, with entertainments, plus unique one off brews.

Also they are shortly to be launching the **XT Beer Club** – membership will include quarterly club nights at the brewery, special one off club member only beers, brewery gifts and other beery treats. See [xtbrewing.com](http://xtbrewing.com) website for more information.

The *Animal Brewing Co* range of beers continues to bound out of the brewery barn. *Woof* rye ale, made with roast rye malts, was available February and March, the new *Hoot* and *Doodle-Doo* beers currently under development will be available from April.



## George & Dragon, Quainton

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## PROTECT YOUR LOCAL!



### *List it as an Asset of Community Value*

Pubs across the country are under threat from a multitude of sources, from pub companies who charge tenants exorbitant rents to service their unmanageable debt levels, beer ties, excessive beer tax, VAT disparity on food compared to supermarkets and government planning guidance which allows their conversion to restaurants, betting shops and local supermarkets. Over the past few years, our area has seen a great number of pubs converted to local supermarkets, restaurants and residential dwellings that offer no social or cohesive value to our communities. Some villages like Ford, Medmenham and Widmer End have lost their community hubs recently.

Thankfully legislation has been put in place by the government that empowers communities to be able to protect and potentially take over institutions that further the social well-being or cultural interests of their community.

The Localism Act 2011 allows a Parish Council, a community interest group or a group of 21 people who are on the electoral register in the local planning authority area, to nominate a pub as a community asset. The District Council has an obligation to list a pub if it furthers the social well-being or interests of the local community, or has done so in the recent past, and that it is realistic to think it will do within the next five years.

If the pub is subsequently put up for sale, or if a change in planning use is applied for, a six week period is instigated where any entity from the local community can register an interest to buy the pub. Should an interest be registered, a further six-month moratorium period begins to enable the local community to raise funds in order to bid for the pub. At no point during these periods can the pub be sold or have its planning use changed. It is also worth pointing out that by listing the pub, or lately registering an interest to bid, no commitment is made by anyone to part with any money. However, by listing a pub as a community asset, a strong signal is sent out to predatory developers or supermarket chains, as well as local planning departments, that the local community will not give up on their pub without a fight. A developer is more likely to prey on an unprotected pub where the process of converting it to another use is unlikely to receive as much opposition.

Within our branch area we have achieved a reasonable level of success in getting pubs listed by local councils. So far, seven pubs have been successfully nominated by their communities and a further three are in the final days of the council's decision period.

The pubs successfully nominated so far are; **Garibaldi** in Bourne End, **Crown** in Granborough, **Hundred of Ashendon** in Ashendon, **Pilgrim** in North Marston, **White Swan** in Whitchurch, **Fox Inn** in Tiddington and **Bernard Arms** in Great Kimble (despite its long closure).

Three of those pubs, the **Garibaldi** (the photo above shows the celebrations at the **Garibaldi** following the success of village buyout), the **Pilgrim** and the **Crown** are now successfully trading under local ownership.

The three pubs yet to have a final decision issued by the District Council are the **Swan & Castle** in Quainton, **George & Dragon** also in Quainton

and **Chandos Arms** in Oakley. Nationally, over 300 pubs have now been listed as community assets.

All 86 Parish Councils within our branch area were sent a letter and guidance in May 2013 explaining the process of listing community assets. An offer of assistance from members of this **CAMRA** branch was contained within the letter.

This correspondence received a mixed response from Parish Councils. Community conscious parishes such as Great Kimble, Oakley and Wingrave took up our offer of assistance and proceeded, or are proceeding, to nominating pubs. Others such as Lane End and Thame did not appear to support their social hubs. Parishes such as Stewkley and Aston Abbots declared an interest in discussing protecting their pubs. However, regrettably, most Parish Councils did not respond at all. Some parishes such as Medmenham have been offered further assistance when their only community asset closed but was met with no response.

We would encourage everyone to contact their Parish Council to ask them to represent the local community's concerns and nominate pubs within their boundaries. Alternatively, those that wish to fast-track an application without relying on their parish council should fill in the attached nomination form and gain the signature of 21 locally registered electors. We again offer **CAMRA**'s full assistance in terms of volunteers attending Parish Council or interest group meetings, informal discussions, reviewing the nomination form or anything else that will further pub protection.

Nominations must be sent to the Community Right to Bid Team of the pub's local District Council. The address details are as follows:

For Aylesbury Vale DC: Community Right to Bid, Legal and Estates Services, Aylesbury Vale District Council, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP19 8FF

For Wycombe DC: Community Right to Bid, Wycombe District Council, Queen Victoria Road, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP11 1BB

For South Oxfordshire DC: Assets of Community Value, Corporate Strategy, South Oxfordshire District Council, Benson Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford, Wallingford, OX10 8AX

For South Bucks DC: Community Right to Bid, Head of Environment, South Bucks District Council, Council Offices, Capswood, Oxford Road, Denham. UB9 4LH



## QUIZ TAX



The penny-per-pint reduction in beer tax for the second year running may have caught the headlines in the government's recent budget. However, other measures that were quietly published in the accompanying small print threaten to surreptitiously reclaim some of the cash from pub-goers.

One unheralded initiative is a joint review of legislation involving the Department for Education, Department of Culture and Sport and H.M. Treasury.

The Treasury has long wished to increase its revenue from gaming in public houses and is now claiming that pub quizzes should be subject to a betting tax on the basis that some questions are so easy to answer that the quiz is, in fact, a surrogate lottery. Surprising support has come from Michael Gove at the Department for Education who has seized on pub quizzes as a means of restoring the intellectual health of the nation – reversing the dumbing down tide of popular trash culture and inculcating the symbols of a classical education into the general populace.

Henceforth, all pub quiz questions must conform to standards published by an independent inspectorate, the Joint Office for Competitive Education (JOCE). Every year pubs organising quizzes will have to submit a self-assessment test in which the questions and scores of each team are submitted online – with inspectors making random checks.

Quizzes with a majority of easy categories, such as pop music and sport, will be classed as gaming and a levy of the winnings will be taken by the exchequer at an average of 80% of the winnings. By contrast, subjects which the Secretary of State approves of as culturally enriching, such as Greek mythology, steam locomotives or the collected witticisms of Margaret Thatcher will attract no tax.

There will also be a sliding scale of duty so that very easy questions, such as 'What is David Beckham's latest tattoo?' will be taxed at a higher rate than more difficult 'popular' questions, such as 'When did Spurs last win the league?'

Very erudite questions, for example, those on Etruscan architecture or subatomic physics may even attract a tax rebate.

The chancellor denied that this initiative was just a cynical ploy for those with an Eton education that merely stuffed them with useless, anachronistic facts to further tilt the playing field in their direction in yet more walks of life. He pointed to the imminent appointment of a JOCE Ombudsman to police the scheme, who will take office on April 1st.

*Charlie Mackle*



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# WONDERS OF WALSALL



*Turf Tavern, Bloxwich*

Regular readers of *Swan Supping*, or those who have been on our annual, not to be missed, Black Country Coach Trip, will know that the Black Country is one of the highlights of the real ale scene and contains some of the best architectural examples of traditional pubs. Having made numerous trips to the region over the last few years, I began to realise that there was one sizeable town that I had neglected to visit..... Walsall. I set about recruiting branch stalwart Simon Allen to join me on a trip to the area who instantly became hooked on the idea due to misinterpreting the destination as Poland's Capital city 'Warsaw'. Thankfully he was equally excited by the prospect of visiting the ever popular retreat of Walsall.

Setting off early by train, via Birmingham, we arrived in a surprisingly genteel Walsall full of neo-classical civic buildings signifying the town's prosperous past. Following a stop to refuel at *Wetherspoons* (St Matthew's Hall) we proceeded to visit the *Lyndon House Hotel*. This former

Salvation Army hostel had a range of seven ales that could be enjoyed in surroundings consisting of recycled wooden beams, leather furnishing and fireplaces giving a comfortably homely feel. *Burton Bridge's XL Mild* made for an excellent start to the day.

The next stop on our travels was a visit to nearby Bloxwich. Home to three pubs listed in *CAMRA's* National Inventory of historical interiors, all within touching distance of each other, this was a highlight of our trip. After visiting the *Romping Cat* and the *Bell* we settled into the time warp that is the *Turf Tavern*. This easy to miss mid-terrace pub (pictured above) has been in the same family ownership since 1875 and appears to have been little changed since the 1920s. *Highland Brewery's Seafire* was a delight to enjoy in such nostalgic surroundings.



*Pretty Bricks, Walsall*

Back in Walsall we visited three pubs to the North of the town centre, all of which are architectural gems. The first was the *Rose & Crown* where we received the friendliest welcome of the day. *Slater's Supreme* was our favourite tippie at this establishment. Next we visited the *Pretty Bricks* (pictured above). This was one of the few pubs from where *CAMRA* was launched in 1972, with the Walsall branch being assigned its initial brief of covering the area from Walsall to John O'Groats (and we thought it was difficult covering all our branch area!!). *Full Mash's Bishti IPA* was the highlight of the visit. The large rambling 1930s *Butts Tavern* was next on our list. Fuelling ourselves with *Wye Valley's Butty Bach* and cobs, which are ever present in Black Country pubs (why can't they be more common in our area?!), we continued our journey back towards the centre of town.

After taking a 'dog leg' route via the well-stocked *Longhorn* and *Wheatsheaf* pubs, where *Itchen Valley's Blackcurrant Mild* and *Robinson's Hoptimum Prime* were our favourites, we arrived at the imposing Victorian street corner pub that is the *White Lion*. This pub had a great community feel and served national favourites such as *Timothy Taylor's Landlord*. A short walk later we arrived at *Walsall Cricket Club* where a real ale brewed lager called *Kaiser* by *Welbeck Abbey* was a delightful distraction from the more traditional ales enjoyed on the trip.

To finish off our trip we saved *Walsall's Pub of the Year* until last. The *Black Country Arms* boasts 16 handpumps and is a shining example of how a pub's fortunes can be turned around. Lying empty for 70 years it reopened in 1987 and has grown from strength to strength. Needless to say we didn't have enough time to do this pub justice, but did manage to sample such interesting beers as *Colchester's Brazilian Coffee* and Vanilla Porter as well as the same brewery's *Cat's Whiskers Cream Stout*.

After a tiring day, all that was left to do was to make it home to Aylesbury. This nearly ended in disaster as we almost slept past Haddenham & Thame Parkway where we had to join our connecting bus. Thankfully I woke just in time to drag a comatosed Simon off the train. Very much looking forward to another trip to the area and our branch's forthcoming Black Country Trip on 12th July which I wholeheartedly recommend.

*Carl Griffin*

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## SO WHAT IS CRAFT BEER?



Recently there has been a lot of heated discussion about this seemingly simple phrase. Both **CAMRA** and the Brewers Association **SIBA** are talking at length about how this term should be used and what it 'means'. So why is it a hot topic? The phrase 'Craft Beer' is being used more and more and has started to be associated with beers from a wide range of breweries from very small to the global giants. Compare this to another phrase which has been around for a while and which has significant meaning to readers of this magazine, 'Real Ale' – this by contrast is a carefully defined term - where secondary fermentation occurs in the beer barrel after the main brewing process. The strict definition gives you the consumer a degree of security; it means that you know what you are getting.

There has been craft beer since the dawn of civilization but the term is gradually taking on a more particular meaning and is being used in connection with beers that have more character and flavours than the mainstream products. Generally speaking your local microbrewery will be producing Craft Beer – beers which are full flavoured and interesting. However as this phrase passes into the general beer language we have seen more of the big players jumping on the bandwagon and producing their own so called Craft Beers. There is a danger that the boundaries are blurring and the small scale local beer revolution we are currently enjoying is being hijacked by the brewing giants.

So what are the characteristics of a 'Craft Beer'?

**Small** – small scale production.

**Independent** – the brewery should not be part of a larger group, and ideally an owner-brewer company.

**Authentic** – the beer should be brewed with all high quality natural ingredients, where taste and flavour are a higher priority than cost per unit. The beer should be honest about its origin and ingredients.

Real Ale produced by a microbrewery can be a Craft Beer, but Real Ale mass produced by a multi-national is not a Craft Beer.

The other reason for the increasing use of the term Craft Beer is its connection with the new-fangled Craft-Keg beers. This new term has developed for much the same reason **CAMRA** introduced 'Real Ale' to our language. Back in the sixties and seventies 'ale' became increasingly devalued and its quality spiralled downwards – hence **CAMRA** added a prefix to differentiate a traditionally crafted beer from the industrially produced rubbish.

What is this Craft-Keg stuff then? **CAMRA** promotes and protects cask-conditioned Real Ale where the beer is still 'alive'. These are beers served from traditional hand pumps, the beer lasts three or four days once it has been tapped. This method of production was being phased out by the industrial brewers in the sixties in favour of easy keep keg beers. Keg beers such as lagers and bitters like **John Smith's Smooth** are served under gas pressure through taps and the beer lasts for several weeks once in use.

Keg beers are generally produced by the large brewing groups. They are filtered and pasteurised to kill all life in the beer and then the beer is artificially gassed to make it fizzier than Real Ale. **CAMRA's** bête noire are the keg bitters which historically pushed Real Ale out of pubs across the country. These beers like **Watney's Red Barrel** and **Double Diamond** were brewed for ease of distribution and dispense, all at the expense of taste or character. Rubbish In Rubbish Out - regardless of the method of dispense.

We are currently in the midst of a beer revolution and today's craft breweries are producing an ever widening range of beers. In order to be able to offer an even greater range of beers many of the more progressive brewers have looked again at offering keg beers. A beer served in keg lasts longer than a cask beer enabling pubs to have more beers on offer at any one time. Keg also provides the opportunity to produce more unusual, much stronger or challenging flavours in beers – where a cask might be too slow selling in most pubs. The character of some stronger beers or heavily hopped beers can also be enhanced in a keg. The differences between a Craft-Keg and standard keg beer are huge – hence the need for a new term.

At the **XT Brewery** we produce traditional cask-conditioned beer – that is what we do and it will always be the vast majority of our brewing. Cask beer is an amazing product and cannot be beaten for flavour, however to complement the cask beers, we are developing a range of Craft-Keg beers – these are brewed in exactly the same way using the same high quality ingredients, the beer is filled into keg totally unfiltered and certainly not pasteurised – it is still living as Real Ale and allowed to condition and age naturally in the keg. As the beers are not filtered for all their life, they will also not be as crystal clear as a keg lager. All of the character and flavour of the beer goes into our keg process. The reason for us to use kegs is so we can work with more unusual styles or stronger beers – in complete contrast to the reasons for keg beers of old.

There's a lot going on in the world of beer these days and it is important that consumers understand what they are drinking. The choice of beers will continue to grow and it is likely you will see more Craft-Keg beers alongside an increasing range of cask beers, for either method of dispense - if it's made by a small, independent and authentic - craft brewery – why not give it a try?

We are currently running a trial of **XT-XPA** in Craft-Keg at the **Cross Keys**, Thame with samples available for people who want to give it a try. There is a Cask versus Keg beer festival at the **Grapes** in Oxford from 7th April to 21st April featuring several of our beers in both formats.

**Russ Taylor, XT Brewing Co.** Long Crendon, Bucks



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## WHITCHURCH PUB JOINS THE SPACE RACE!



The **White Swan** in Whitchurch now has new tenants following a few months under a temporary manager.

Peter and Ros Bangs (pictured bottom right) took over the **Fullers** owned tenancy in January.

This is their first pub though Ros has been in the trade before.

Until recently she was in Colorado, USA, where she ran an English style pub involved with the local microbreweries.

Peter was previously in the building trade and originally from nearby Dunstable whilst Ros comes from Surrey. They have two teenage sons, Michael and Pierce, now attending school in Wing.

They have worked very hard over the last two months to get things running as they would like and have achieved much. The pub looks attractive and in good décor inside and out and everything suggests a promising future. Local trade has picked up and future plans should help develop on this.

The pub is open all day every day with food served lunchtime and evenings. There are daily specials in addition to separate lunchtime and evening

menus. As well as the two main bars there is a separate dining room. Three ales are kept, **Fullers London Pride** and **Gales Seafarer** and a varying guest, currently the very excellent **Gales HSB**.

Peter and Ros are determined to develop the position of the pub in village life and hope to get involved in and hold more local events to support local causes and charities. On every third Wednesday a charity quiz night is already well supported. Looking forward to the May Day bank holiday they are starting events in the village on Saturday 3rd May with a tug-of-war in the large back garden. A marquee will be there and live music.

July 5th will see the first pint put into outer space with a rocket launch from the back garden – subject to clearance from Heathrow air traffic control. One of the regulars is a rocket scientist (honest). More details on this event next issue.

Please phone 01296 641228 or go to: [www.whiteswanwhitchurch.co.uk](http://www.whiteswanwhitchurch.co.uk) for further details.

**Mick White**



# WWW.TRINGBREWERY.CO.UK



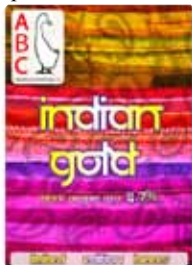
For 2014 our monthly specials will be crafted using carefully selected hop varieties from around the world, from Austria to Argentina, Northern Europe to New Zealand. Available in local pubs and from our brewery shop.



# MORE LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

## ABC Brewery

It's been a busy few months for Aylesbury's only brewery! The first scheduled Brewery Tour and Tasting was a great success, with a visit from the Town Mayor Tom Hunter-Watts to enjoy a few pints!



Also confirmed is an Easter Beer Festival to be held at the brewery, located behind the **Hop Pole** in Aylesbury. With over 40 real ales and real ciders it promises to be a great weekend, with a special beer from the Brewhouse to commemorate the event!

Look out on their website for new brews coming up, including *Saison Du Miel* a honey saison, an all American hopped pale ale called *The Right Stuff*, a black pepper IPA called *Indian Gold*, and more of the golden, refreshing *Pure Gold*.



## Chiltern Brewery

On Tuesday 1st April, **Chiltern Brewery** will host the launch of *Bucks Best*, the beer launched to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Mix96 and to support Mix96's chosen charity for the year, St.

Tiggywinkles Wildlife Hospital. The launch is being held in the Gatehouse Chamber, **King's Head**, and the beer will be available at the brewery shop, the **Farmers' Bar** and other pubs throughout April.

**Chiltern Brewery** were thrilled to have had more success in the 2013/14 London and South East Area Champion Beer of Britain competition.

Their *300's Old Ale* was judged Silver in the Old Ale and Strong Mild Category, a great accolade for a beer that they have been brewing consistently for many years now.

The finals of the area competition took place after a year of beer tastings, tasting panels and nominations. Successful beers are submitted from these into the style final and are conventionally judged by a panel made up of journalists, fellow brewers, and, of course, a few **CAMRA** members.

## Vale Brewery

Of 300 Champion UK beers at the **SIBA** Beer X in Sheffield in March, two were from **Vale Brewery**. Winners from regional competitions were chosen to appear at the festival and *Gravitas* and *Black Swan Mild* were both in attendance.

Coming in April is their new monthly special *Synchronicity*. As Jung, who is visualized on



the pump badge would have said 'Great Beer is no coincidence'.

This 4% bitter is a golden beer produced with two malts not used at Brill previously. A rye malt and a high alpha hop Magnum have created a deep golden hue with a fascinating and complex bitter experience.

In May they have *Innocence*, a 3.8% pale beer, with a low hopping rate producing an easy drinking, soft floral beer.

In line with the low hop theme, as May is Mild month, their ever popular and permanent brew *Black Swan Mild* will be available. But in addition the team have created a new special called *Experience*. This 4.1% brew is a dark smooth mild, looking black in a pub, put your glass up to the light and you will see a deep dark red hue to stimulate the taste buds.



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**8 TRADITIONAL ALES**

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## BEER FESTIVAL FUN IN BELGIUM AND THE US



My husband and I like to combine travel with discovering new beer, and last year we took the opportunity to visit two international beer festivals, both of which were very different from the **CAMRA** festivals we are used to.

The Belgian Beer Weekend is held each

September in Brussels. The action is centred around the famous Grand Place, where a cross-section of Belgian brewers set up shop for three days showcasing over 400 beers. Everything from giants like **ABInBev** (no queue!), to trappist brewers, to famous independent brewers like **Bosteels** and **Achouffe** ('Smurf beer', as I heard one American describe it) are represented. Patrons purchase beer tokens from booths outside the bar area, along with a glass deposit token.

The unique thing about this festival is that each brewer has their own glassware, specially designed for each beer. Most beers are served in 0.2l or 0.3l measures, depending on strength. This makes the festival very quirky, and leads to a lot of conversation about what is in the different glasses. The mini-version of the famous **Kwak** glass was a particular talking point.

In addition to the festival, there are various related events, including a parade of historical horse-drawn dray carts and lots of bands.

It was wonderful trying lots of different beers in such beautiful surroundings. And, of course, there are plenty of bars to enjoy once the festival closes. We would recommend visiting the unique **Cantillon Brewery** or heading to the bars at Place Saint-Géry for relaxed people-watching.



The **Great American Beer Festival** is held each October at the Denver Convention Center in Colorado. The festival showcases around 580 breweries, and tickets for the event are like gold-dust.

This is a very different affair to the **Great British Beer Festival (GBBF)**. Firstly, your ticket includes a 1oz (28ml) tasting glass for unlimited samples. The festival is only open from 5.30pm until 10pm, so entry queues start to form around lunchtime in order to maximise time inside. We arrived at about 3.30pm, and there were hundreds in front of us. No outside food is allowed, but necklaces of pretzels are permitted (deemed jewellery rather than food!), and are great for cleansing the palate.

Once inside, you can go to any bar and get a 1oz sample of anything you want. You're essentially drinking shots of beer, so you never really get to appreciate any of them with a longer drink. American brewers are always fond of their hop-forward beers, but the current trends seem to be barrel-aging and saison style beers. I had a couple of beetroot saison beers, and more bourbon barrel-aged stouts than I care to remember. **Listermann** of Cincinnati, Ohio, was notable, serving up **Nutcase**, a gorgeous peanut butter porter, and **FriarBacon**, a smoked bock which tasted like breakfast in a glass.

Like **GBBF**, the bars are mostly staffed by volunteers, although most also have brewery representatives to answer questions – often the brewers themselves who are more than happy to chat about their passion.

While cask is not common in the US, many breweries like to experiment with it. There were not many available at the festival, but we did come across **Freewheel Brewing** of Redwood City, Calif, who only do cask. Beyond the festival, we visited many breweries, including **Left Hand**, **Odell** and **Oskar Blues**, who all had a cask offering, and the **Falling Rock Tap House** bar in Denver always had at least one cask ale on. The bar hosted many events throughout 'beer week', including some hosted by British beer writers Des de Moor and Melissa Cole.

These two festivals offered two unique national style, both of which we would recommend to anyone wanting to experience a beer festival beyond our little island.

*Louise Mathias*



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## GRAVEDIGGERS - PART TWENTY EIGHT



The Americans sat outside the **Gravediggers** in their large Stetson hats. They spiked the soil underfoot with spurred boots and surveyed the hills in the distance. Inside the public bar Old Pete had begun to run a book on how long the rotten and woodworm infested bench would last before collapsing under the weight of the visitors' super-sized behinds.

The leader of the group, a living effigy of the Marlboro Man, burst through the Diggers' front door like John Wayne bursting into a saloon.

'Another round of *Blandweiser*?' Mazz asked.

'Gee, no, lady. We're ready to try some of your British home-brewed – whaddyacallit – ale?'

'Undescended Gonads?' Mazz asked, palm grasping the handpump.

'Hell, no. I always walk that way. Now gimme four of your English pints.'

The other Americans joined the Marlboro Man in the public bar and held their gloopy drinks warily. Vapour curled upwards from the rim of the glasses and the beer possessed a curious rainbow sheen.

One of the bunch sniffed the surface of the beer. 'Sure ain't like the beer in Texas but I kinda like the smell of methane.' Another took a reluctant sip: 'Well, Holy Moses in a Cadillac, it darned tastes of crude.'

'Crude's the way we like our beer here, just like everything else' Old Pete said, overhearing.

'No, listen up, buddy – crude oil,' the American said.

'I suppose old Amos does run his tractor off it,' Mazz said.

'I gotta meet the brewer this instant,' the Marlboro Man said.

'I'm right here,' James said, chipping encrusted fungus off the glasses behind the bar.

'So is it that marketing BS true – that you get the water for this ale right outta your own well?'

'Yes. It bubbles up right underneath the pub – our own unique source.'

'Let me introduce myself. I'm Jaxon Blastem, CEO of Scorched Planet Inc. Do you own this pub?'

'It's leased it from **Tight Fisted Taverns** plc – a faceless, mercenary pubco who've not spent money on the place in fifty years,' Mazz said.

'Get 'em on the phone for me,' Jaxon said waving a wad of dollars between his fingers.

'We've not had any contact with them for five years,' James said.

'Well, that might change when they hear the word 'fracking'.'

\*\*\*\*

A fortnight later and the **Diggers** locals had built barricades on all the approach roads to the pub created out of rotting silage, rusting farm equipment and sprayed with infected cow slurry. They stood in front of the obstacles holding banners that read 'Frack Off!' and 'You're Not Fracking with Our Beer'.

On the other side of the barricades were huge convoys of gleaming drilling machinery, ginormous bulldozers and a travelling *Blandweiser* bar to slake the thirsts of the impatient oil workers.

Facing the barriers, holding a megaphone and glad-handing a TV crew were George Poshborne and Sir Ivor Hugedebt, Chief Executive of Tight Fisted Taverns.

'Come, come, poor – I mean, working – people. It's futile to stand in the way of progress. All that lovely fracking tax revenue means I can even reduce the bingo tax by a penny. Are you plebs grateful for anything?'

'Bingo's no use if you can't count,' Old Moses yelled from the top of the barricade.

'And what about the blight on the environment?' Mazz screamed from a disintegrating muck spreader.

'You mean it might spoil the view of the abattoir, toxic waste dump, motorway and chemical factory? A modern, efficient fracking site will look so much more progressive and environmentally friendly

than a tumbling-down old pub,' Sir Ivor Hugedebt said, rubbing his hands together and nodding uncontrollably at the Texans.

Old Pete whizzed one of the matured cow-pats he'd fashioned into Frisbees. It splattered straight into George Poshborne's face.

'You put that on the news and I'll never invite your father to number eleven for tiffin again,' George threatened the bubbly blonde TV reporter. He then addressed the massed, mechanical forces of progress: 'Tally-ho, chaps. Let's frack!'

At that point a string of horses vaulted over a nearby hedge, accompanied by baying hounds. The two lead riders removed their helmets.

'Gosh. That's Roubles Richovic and Lord Fund of Hedgerly – the two richest men in the country,' gasped the effervescent TV reporter, while George Poshborne grovelled at their horses' hooves.

'What on earth do you think you're doing, Poshborne,' Lord Fund roared.

'Laying waste to the countryside for the sake of a quick buck, of course' George replied.

'A very quick buck. Once I sell the site to Scorched Planet Inc. then my pubco's debts will be paid off and I'll award myself a huge bonus,' Sir Ivor said.

'No you won't.' Carl from the council dismounted his horse and showed George and Sir Ivor a piece of paper. 'The **Gravediggers** is now a listed Asset of Community Value – these twenty-one people put their names on this application to the council – and they've approved it. You can't sell the **Diggers** until the community have had their say.'

James stepped forward and stared at the document. 'Hold on, there aren't twenty of our regulars who can read and write.'

'No. I circulated the list round the Polo club up on the hill,' Lord Fund said. 'And Roubles drove his Hummer round all the local mansions belonging to his Cashski FC players.'

'But none of those rich people from the gated village up the road would ever set foot in a pub, let alone the **Diggers**,' Mazz said, puzzled.

'Yes. Pubs are just places that keep these vile poor people from cluttering up the streets,' George protested, pointing at Old Joe and Young Duwayne.

'Exactly,' Lord Fund said. 'With the **Gravediggers** open we can sleep safely, knowing that all the local, inbred low-life will be safely drinking themselves into a harmless stupor on these foul brews every night. We know they're down in Grotsville here and not lowering the tone of our posh neighbourhood.'

'And I'm giving notice of a community intention to buy the **Gravediggers**,' Roubles declared.

Lord Fund threw James a wad of cash. 'A pint of *Toxic Sludge* for all you scumbags!' The Americans trudged away, crying into their *Blandweiser*.

Charlie Mackle



## Branch Diary

*Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!*

### April

#### Thursday 3rd SOCIAL

8.00pm George and Dragon, Quainton, 8.45pm Lion, Waddesdon, 9.30pm Long Dog, Waddesdon

#### Monday 7th BRANCH MEETING

8.00pm, Three Horseshoes, Burroughs Grove

#### Wednesday 16th HIGH WYCOMBE COMMUNITY PUBS SOCIAL

8.00pm, Dolphin, Totteridge, 8.30pm Beech Tree, Hazlemere, 9.00pm Crown, Hazlemere, 9.30pm Three Horseshoes, Hazlemere.

#### Friday 18th GOOD FRIDAY BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

Noon, Hop Pole, Aylesbury.

#### Thursday 24th AYLESBURY COMMUNITY PUBS SOCIAL

8.00pm Charter, Aylesbury, 8.30pm, Honey Bee, Fairford Leys, 9.15pm Rose and Crown, Stone.

#### Wednesday 30th SOCIAL

8.00pm, Plough, Cadsden, 8.45pm Red Lion, Whiteleaf.

### May

#### Saturday 3rd SHAKESPEARE'S 450TH BIRTHDAY CRAWL

Train to Stratford-upon-Avon (2 GBG pubs) (dep High Wycombe 0943, Princes Risborough 0954, Haddenham and Thame 1000, arriving 1115). Then 1137 train to Warwick (arriving 1404 – local POTY – 10 handpumps) and then train on to Leamington Spa (5 GBG pubs).

#### Monday 5th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

Noon, Royal Standard, Wooburn Common.

### Tuesday 13th SOCIAL

8.00pm Bell, Chearsley, 8.45pm Eight Bells, Long Crendon, 9.15pm Churchill Arms, Long Crendon, 10.00pm Old Fisherman, Shabbington.

### Friday 16th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

7.00pm Whip, Lacey Green.

### Monday 19th BRANCH MEETING

8.00pm, Broad Leys, Aylesbury (venue tbc)

### Wednesday 21st SOCIAL

8.15pm Chequers, Fingest, 9.00pm Frog, Skirmett, 9.45pm Bull and Butcher, Turville.

### Friday 30th HIGH WYCOMBE EARLY EVENING SOCIAL

6.00pm Rose and Crown, 6.45pm William Robert Loosely, 7.30pm Bell, 8.15pm Falcon, 9.00pm Hobgoblin.

### July

#### Saturday 12th BLACK COUNTRY TRIP

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### October

#### Friday 24th & Saturday 25th BEER FESTIVAL

21st Vale of Aylesbury Beer Festival, Bucks County Council Sports & Social Club, Lower Road, Aylesbury

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# Swan Supping

Swan Supping is distributed free of charge to pubs in the branch area.

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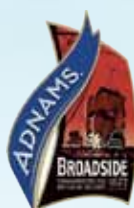
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