



Swan Supping

FREE

Issue 19



Campaign for Real Ale

Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch

AUG/SEP 2000



THE CHANGING FACE OF AYLESBURY



Is the Aylesbury pub scene better or worse than it was, say, five years ago? The answer may depend how old you are and which side of the bar you are on.

For teenagers and under 25's, the answer must be 'Yes'! New outlets such as the **Hogshead** and **Yates'** seem to have attracted a huge clientele. Together with **Chicago Rock Café** and **Bar Med** (not really pubs) these places follow an identifiable theme repeated all over the country and appear trendy, bright and exciting especially to younger customers.

These new venues pose an undeniable threat to the old fashioned town centre pubs many of which have become drab and run-down by comparison.

Can these pubs survive? The better ones will if they can retain the loyalty of their customers by offering good ale, food with some individuality and personal service from a friendly landlord. Obviously this is not as easy as it sounds when the new theme pubs can entice customers with special price offers and other gimmicks.

Aylesbury has 39 pubs but can so many cope with all this competition? Surely more will have to close as well as the **County Arms**.

Some pubs have hardly any lunchtime trade; for example, I recently went into a town centre pub at about one o'clock and there was not one customer to be seen. Also, there was a sign outside boasting 'Traditional Cask Ales' but there were no handpumps on the bar!

Aylesbury's community pubs on the other hand probably face a

more secure future. The pubs away from the centre and on housing estates have a 'captive audience' which doesn't have to drive to get a drink and many of them provide facilities for children and attract a cross-section of all age groups.

Whether it is by changing to provide something different, such as offering a large range of real ales from all over the country, or specialising in food that is not straight out of the microwave, Aylesbury's older pubs have a fight on their hands if they want to survive! NH

OUR BIGGEST ISSUE YET – 16 PAGES

Derek and Carol French welcome customers both old and new to

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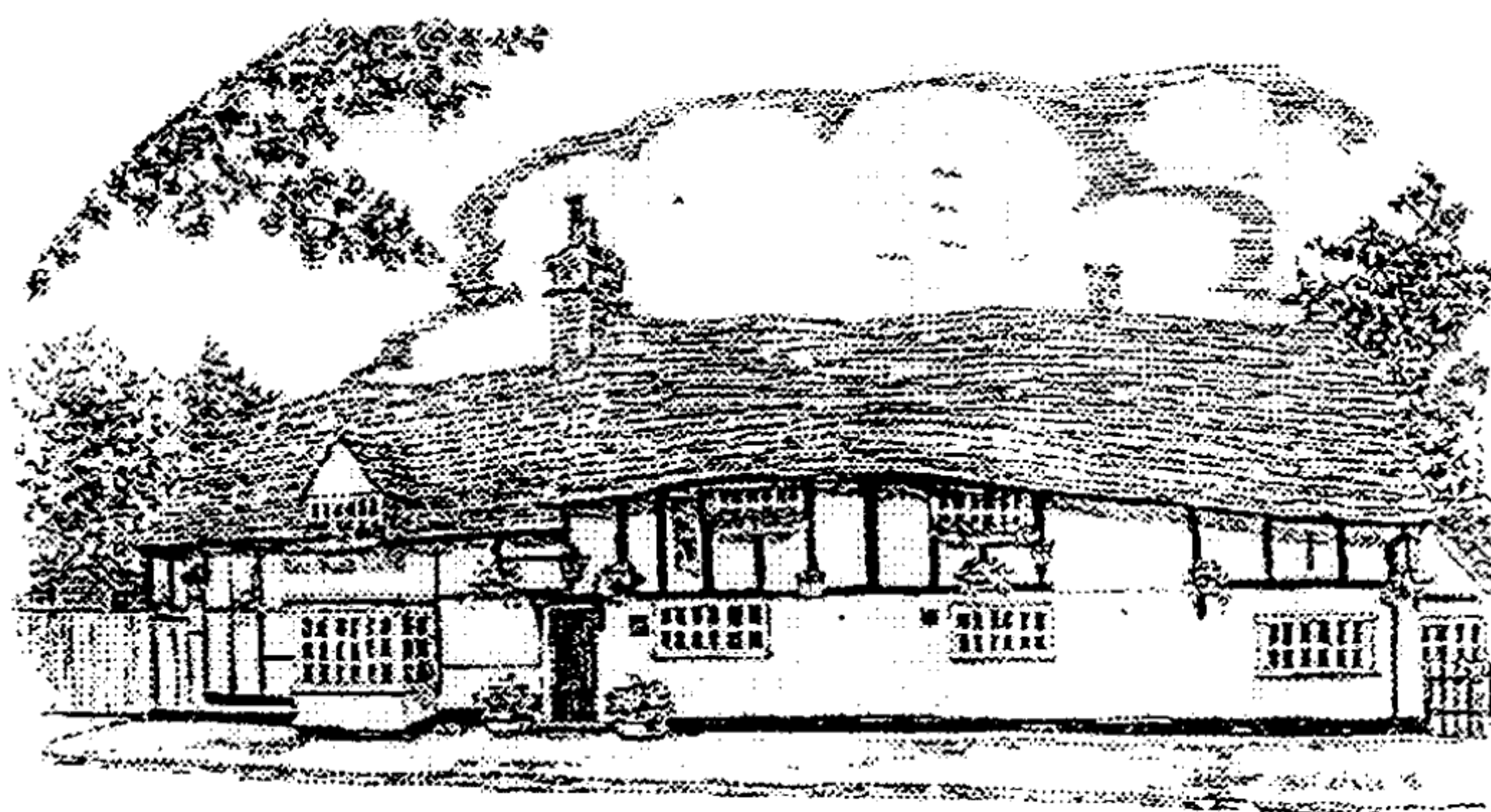
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Local News

ASKETT

The **Three Crowns** has reopened after having been closed for five months. It is now run by Simon Bendix and Beccy Robey for whom it is their first pub. They are currently serving *Greene King IPA* and *Marstons Pedigree*

ASTON CLINTON

The **Oak** held a successful beer festival in July. They totally sold out, despite the poor weather, with the *Stonehenge Danish Dynamite* being the first to finish. The only beer to cause a problem was the *Ridleys Rumpus* which exploded when tapped, but still managed to settle in time to sell out on the Sunday night.

AYLESBURY

Gary Smith and Rita van Rensvurg are the new tenants at the **Aristocrat**. The previous landlord, Greg Collom has moved to the **Lord Louis**, Stanstead Abbots, which is to become a *Fullers* house.

The **County Arms**, which is owned by the *Alehouse* group, has closed and its future is uncertain.

Geoff Smith, landlord of the **Rose & Crown**, Wingrave, has relinquished control over the **Market Tavern** which is now being run by its holding company.

Courage Directors has been taken off at the **Whistlin' Duck** which no longer does any real ale.

BEACONSFIELD

The **White Horse** has been sold by *Courage* to a 'refined' cafe-restaurant chain - an Italian version of *Cafe Rouge*.

BLEDLOW RIDGE

The **Boot** has been bought and it is due to reopen as a pub soon. We hope to have more details next issue.

BRILL

The **Sun** has made a further planning application to become a residential property.

BROUGHTON CROSSING

Anna Bower and Tony Armriding,

from the **Queens Head**, Chackmore, have taken over at the **Old Moat House**.

HADDENHAM

The **Crown** is still being refurbished. The notice outside says that the **House of Spice Bar & Restaurant** will be opening soon.

Mick and Aileen Mock have sold the **Rising Sun** to *Oak Taverns* which is based in Thame. It is now run by Mike Platt and Beverley Carter who took over on June 13th. They are selling *Charles Wells Eagle* and *Bombardier* and will always offer one beer from *Vale* brewery, as well as having guest beers. A fourth handpump may be added soon.

HARTWELL

The **Bugle Horn** was closed on 7th July for renovations which will take about three months.

HIGH WYCOMBE

New landlord and landlady at the **BelleVue** since April are Chas Spencer and Mandy O'Reilly. The beers currently on offer are *Adnams Bitter* and *Fullers London Pride*. The walled garden is now open, giving an attractive area with tables and chairs ready for summer if it ever arrives.

Peter Sadler is the new landlord at the **Hogshead**.

Brian Thorogood finished at the **Masons Arms** on July 3rd, after having been there since October 1995. A new couple, Don and Sally, formerly of the **Rifle Butts** have taken over, and the pub is currently being decorated/renovated.

Since 18th May, Terry and Mary Powell have been running the **Queen**. They were formerly publicans in Bedfordshire and Windsor and are currently serving *Fullers Chiswick* and *London Pride*.

MARLOW

A planning application has been made to demolish the **Bank of England** and build ten two bedroom flats.

The **Clayton Arms** has reopened after its long refurbishment as the **Clayton Lounge**. However, it could not be further from the classic pub it used to be. It is now an upmarket bistro which serves no real ale. What on earth were *Brakspears* thinking when they designed this?

Whitbread have moved out of the town completely, following the closure of their offices in the High Street. A pizza restaurant will be built on the site.

MORETON

The **Royal Oak** is currently 'not trading' but the owner says that it is being 'done up'.

SHABBINGTON

The **Old Fisherman** is now under the new management of Daniel and Patricia Elliman, who have run bars and pubs in such diverse places as Newcastle, Hereford and Majorca.

TOWERSEY

The **Three Horseshoes** is now managed by Dave & Jenny Matthews who moved there from the **Old Moat House**, Broughton.

WENDOVER

The **George**, which has been closed for a long time, has reopened under its previous name of the **George & Dragon**. It is doing both traditional ale and food.

WEST WYCOMBE

The **Friend at Hand** is still boarded up and there is no news on its future.

The **Plough** is still being tipped to become an eating house.

WESTON TURVILLE

Ken and Zena Nickels have retired from the **Chandos Arms** which is now being run by the owner of the 'My Kinda Pub' chain, Peter Webster.

The **Plough** will be holding a summer beer festival from Friday 17th to Sunday 20th of August. The festival will be run on similar lines to the recent one at the **Oak**, but virtually all the beers will be different from the previous festival.

WHEELER END

Tricia and Terry Ward have been in charge at the **Chequers** since May 24th, and will stay there until Frank and Josh from the **Prince Albert**, Frieth, take over in September.

WINGRAVE

The **Rose & Crown** will be holding the **4th Wingrave Beer Festival** from Friday 22nd through Sunday 24th of September.

(Continued on page 15)

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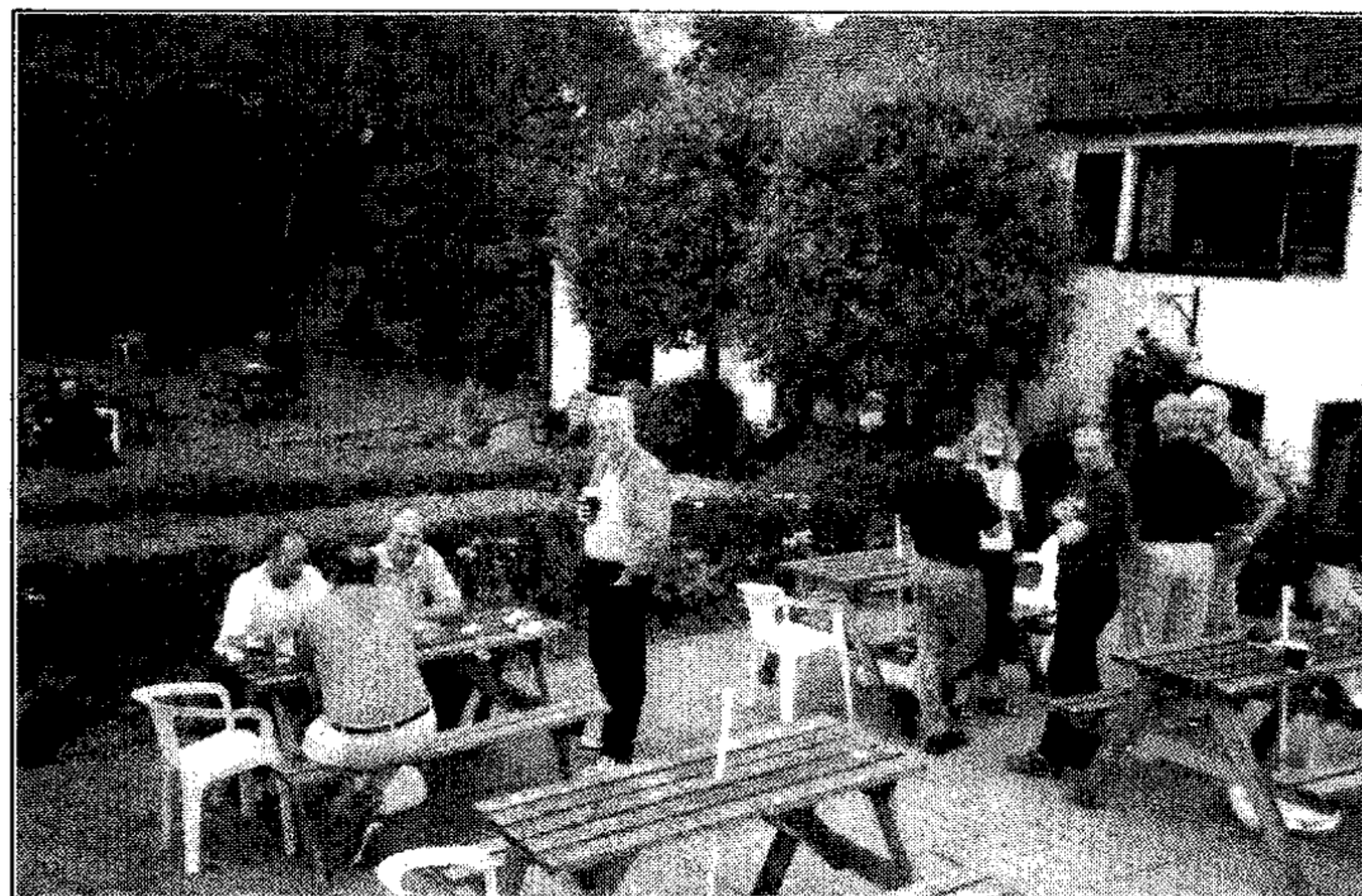
BLACK COUNTRY TRIP 2000

The annual *Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe* outing to the Black Country started for me with some drizzling rain in High Wycombe, a downpour as the coach floated through 'Chicken Sh*t Canyon' on the M40 near Stokenchurch, followed by dry temperate conditions - an excellent day to sample some Black Country beer!

First stop, as in the previous two years, was the **Coach & Horses** at Weatheroak, a pub with its own micro-brewery, but stocking guest beers. It is set in beautiful rolling countryside only ten miles from Birmingham. This hostelry still retains its public bar and in addition to a separate restaurant, food is served in all areas including a very pleasant garden. Victuals were of their usual high standard as well as the beer!

Next on the itinerary was the **Waterfall** at Blackheath, still with some of the letters in its name high up on the wall at a crazy angle, as observed last year. There is a new landlady, very welcoming, who provided free sandwiches (she must have guessed that our chairman would be present! - (Thanks! - Ed)).

Now was my chance to try some *Enville Ale* with its honey nose and taste. Numerous guest ales were also on tap. Here I got into conversation with a couple of lorry drivers, and after we had discussed and solved the world's problems, they recommended a selection of unspoilt pubs worth visiting on



Happy drinkers at the Coach & Horses

their delivery routes. We took our leave after thanking the landlady for her hospitality.

Now on to the **Vine (Bull & Bladder)**. This is a large building with attached brewery and many rooms, one being for parents and children, situated at the top of Brierley Hill. This is nearby to the Delph run of eight locks, a Victorian feat of engineering which is still in use and well worth a diversion! There are no guest beers at the **Vine**, but with

(Continued on page 4)



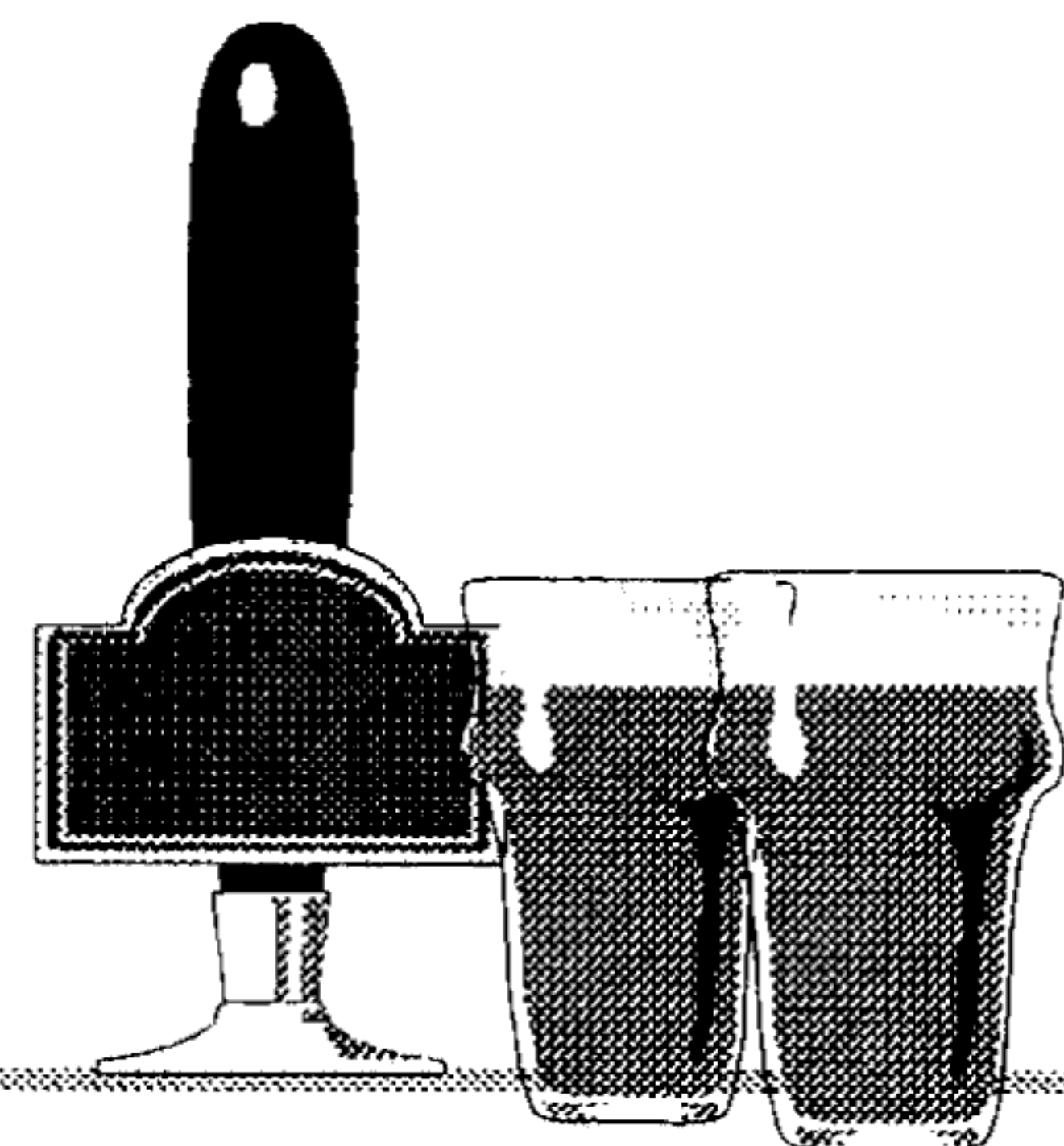
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 WENDOVER***

OUR TRIP TO MIDLANDS' HEAVEN



The Waterfall, Blackheath

(Continued from page 3)

Batham's Mild, Bitter and XXX, what more do you need? Also, the pork scratchings, served in unmarked bags, are the best I've tried!

On to the **Blue Brick Tap House**, a short distance from our last venue. Another large pub but boasting bare floorboards, brick walls and lit with gas lights. The 'house' beers went down well!

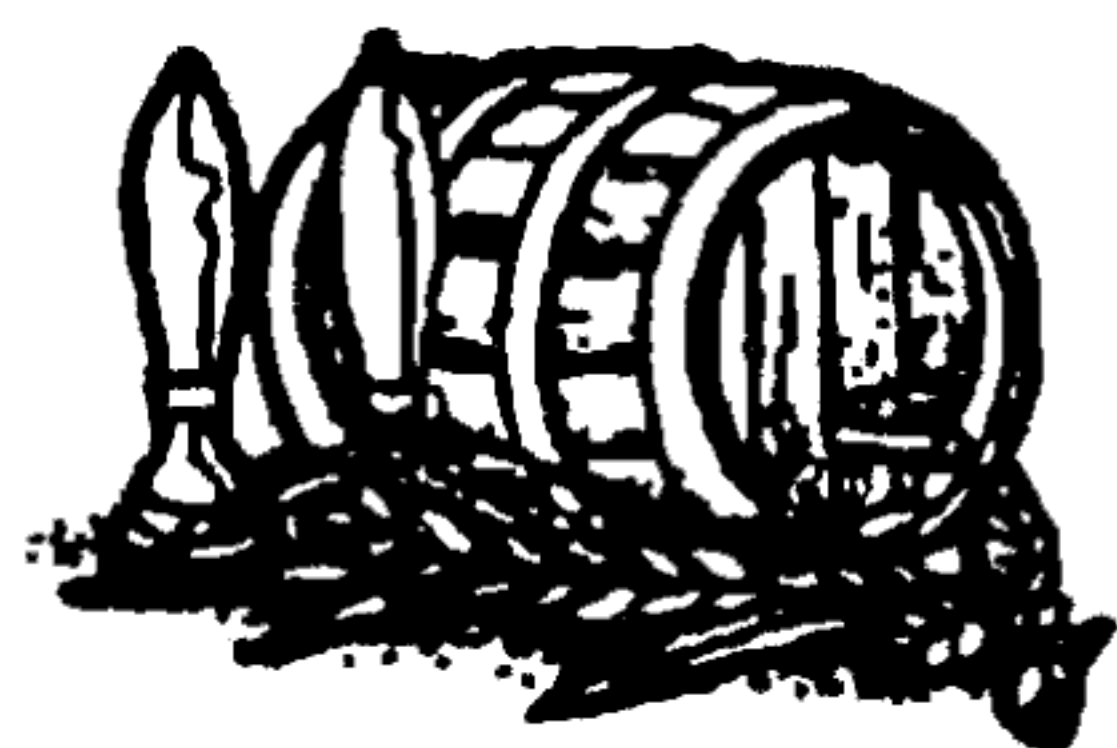
The following pub was the **Rising Sun** at Tipton, which had been voted the *CAMRA Pub of the Year* for 2000. A two roomed pub with good ale selection, numerous malt whiskies and friendly locals. One young man sitting near us detached himself from his friends to enquire who and where we were from and then spent some time telling us about the local brick and iron industries. These used to be the mainstay of local employment, alas now gone.

The penultimate stop was the **Beacon Hotel**, Sedgeley, which is the home of the **Sarah Hughes** brewery, and my chance to have my annual pint of *Dark Ruby Mild*. Liquid nectar as usual, in convivial surroundings. However, queuing at the island bar to purchase this made me think that I ought to drink halves in future, for into the room came a group of bristly chinned/bearded 'ladies' dressed in frocks! This was the point at which I retired to the back room (children's room).

We ended up at the **Waggon & Horses**, Halesowen. Looking from one end of the bar can be seen an array of handpumps stretching to infinity, actually about fifteen, and a difficult choice at the end of the day! The barmen were consistently busy serving us, but eventually we had to go.

Today was a trip to remember and Motts Coaches were as reliable and courteous as usual.

Tony Gabriel



Rose & Crown Wingrave

(Off A418 Aylesbury to Leighton Buzzard Road)

2000 Good Beer Guide
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Runner-up in the
Aylesbury Vale
Pub of the Year Competition

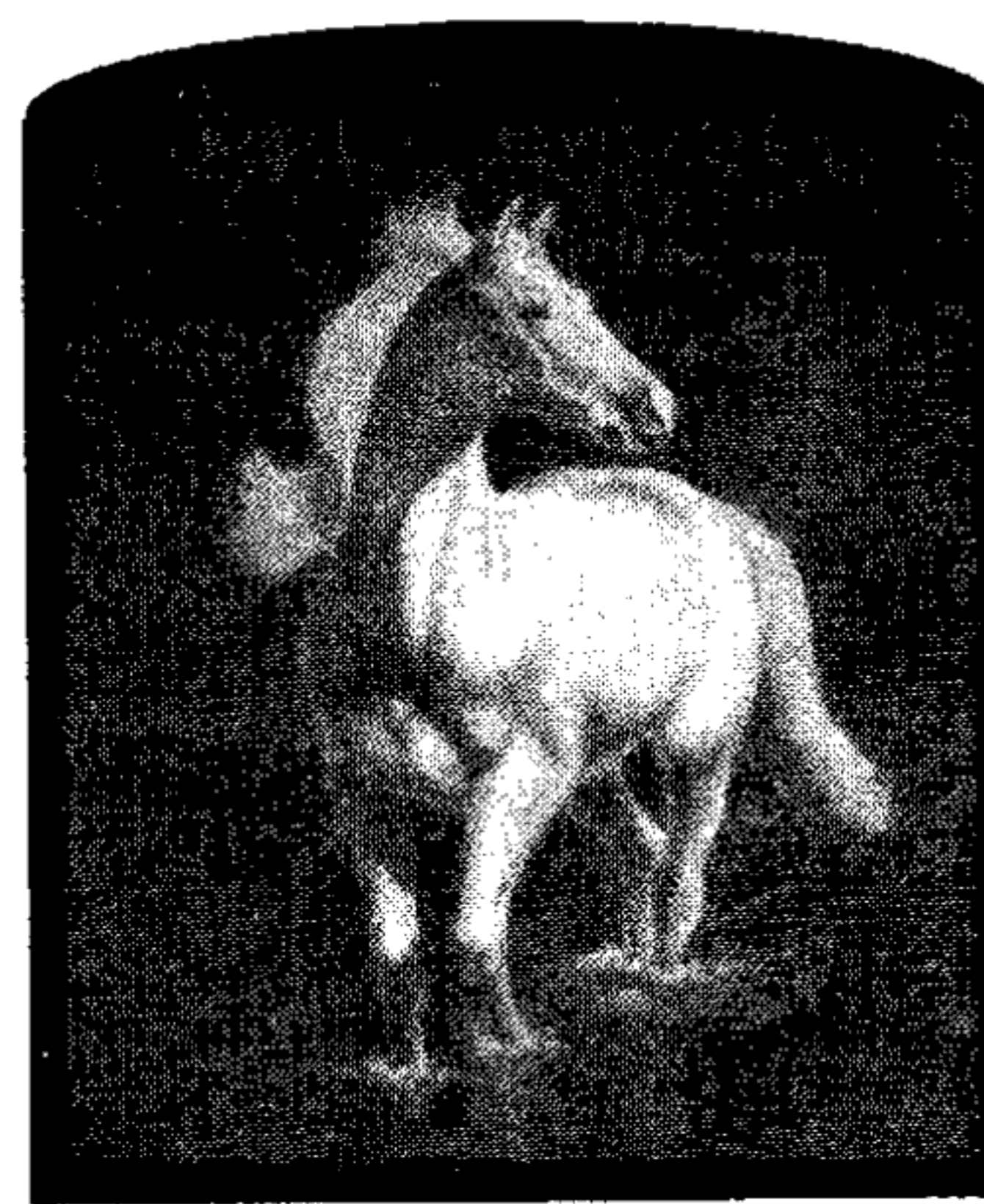
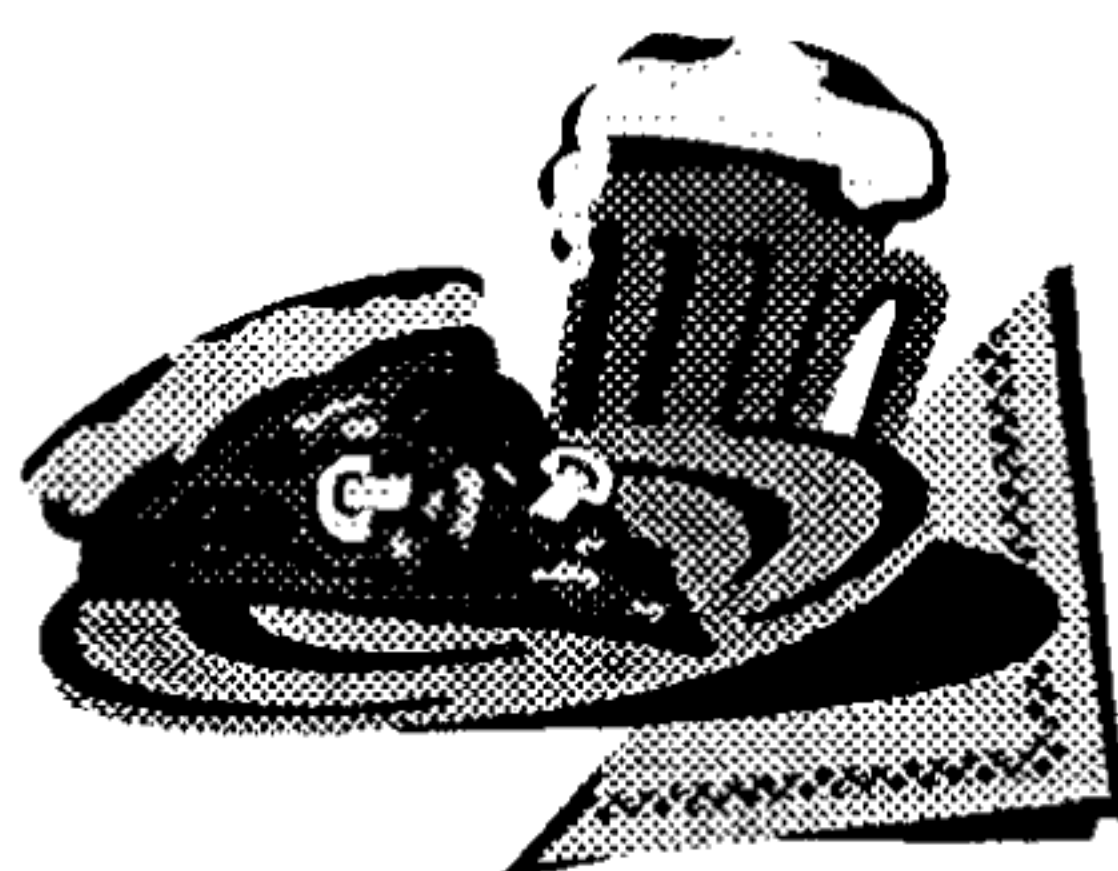
4TH WINGRAVE BEER FESTIVAL

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LOCAL BREWERY NEWS



Brakspears launch new autumn ale

The latest seasonal beer from Brakspears will be a dark, reddy brown ale which will be available from the end of August. Called *Leaf Fall Brew*, it will have an ABV of 5.1% and features 'Best Roasted Wheat'.

It has been brewed with a blend of Pale and Crystal malts, with a mixture of Pacific Gem, from New Zealand, and Target hops.

The bad news is that it has only been produced for the *Great British Beer Festival*, so you may well have missed it!

However, a new version of *Olympic Gold*, last produced for the games four years ago, is to be brewed for this year's Olympics.

This follows on from an announcement that Brakspears are to invest £750,000 in its brewery to increase production by 25%. This will not involve major changes to the main brewing plant, only replacing items that have worn out. The main changes will be a new boiler, cold conditioning tanks and refrigeration units. The utilities and cask handling equipment will all be overhauled and upgraded.

Rebellion prepare a special tribute for the Queen Mum

The Rebellion Brewery from Marlow, has produced a special beer to commemorate the 100th birthday of the Queen Mother. It is called *Betty's Best* and is a reddish, full bodied beer with an ABV of 4.7%.

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The Clifden Arms

NATIONAL NEWS

Champion Cider of 2000

Old Rosie, produced by Herefordshire cider maker **Westons**, was awarded the top cider prize at the *Stockport Beer and Cider Festival*.

Westons, which has been producing cider since the early eighteenth century, has won three out of the four top prizes awarded in the competition over the past two years.

Colin Jones of **Westons** said, "We're absolutely thrilled. It's marvellous that **CAMRA** has honoured us in this way. What's more important than winning awards though is being appreciated for what we do."

Explaining **Westons** success in recent years Mr Jones said, "We use only good, honest, traditional apples and pears from within a 15 mile radius of the brewery for our ciders and perries. You'll find no concentrate in any of our products."

2nd prize: *Gwatkin Yarlinton Mill Medium*, Abbey Dore, Herefordshire
3rd prize: *Luscombe*, Buckfastleigh, Devon

Champion Perry of 2000

The **Dunkertons Cider Company** of Luntley, Herefordshire picked up the top perry award for its wonderful *Medium Dry*.

The judges claimed it was perfectly balanced, delicate, aromatic, with just a hint of elderflower.

Ivor Dunkerton of **Dunkerton's** said, "We're delighted to be named a **CAMRA** winner. Since 1982 we have prided ourselves on making first class cider and perries from our organically grown orchards."

2nd prize: *Weston's Sweet*, Ledbury, Herefordshire
3rd prize: *Gwatkin Oldfield Sweet*, Abbey Dore, Herefordshire

Two cask ale clubs share Club of the Year award

The **Rushden Historical Transport Society**, Northamptonshire, is housed in a former railway station saved from closure by train and real ale enthusiasts. Its gas lit bar offers six ales always on tap from independent breweries.

The second winner was the **Wakefield Labour Club**, known locally as the 'Red Shed' which offers a range of Belgian beers along with many guest beers.



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|-------------|---|
| Sun 6 Aug | THE RAILMEN TRIO
50s/60s Rockabilly Blues |
| Sun 20 Aug | GOOD OLE BOYS
60s/70s Blues Rock 5-piece |
| Sun 27 Aug | SUGAR CREEK
50s/60s Rockabilly Blues trio |
| Sun 10 Sept | LES PAYNE
Rock, Blues, Folk |
| Sun 24 Sept | to be announced |

TWENTY YEARS AT THE ROSE & CROWN

On Sunday 4th June, Barry and Helen Purkins celebrated 20 years at the **Rose & Crown** on Desborough Road, High Wycombe. In these days of rapid licensee turnover, it is a notable achievement to have survived so long in the same pub. From noon until 10.30 p.m., many former and current regulars turned up to congratulate Barry and Helen and to partake in substantial food and the usual range of traditional beers and other drinks.



Even more notable is the great variety of traditional beers served over the years, and the consistent high quality which has been recognised by the inclusion of the **Rose & Crown** in the *Good Beer Guide* every year since 1993.

In the whole country, the *GBG* contains the top 10% of pubs. In High Wycombe town centre the **Rose & Crown** has been the only public house selected for the last three years, the only other entry being **Wycombe Wines** off-licence.

When Helen and Barry took over the pub in 1980 it was fizz only - *Courage Tavern* keg, JC "draught" and Simmons keg IPA. In December 1980 *Courage Best Bitter* was introduced and it has been the standard best seller since. In August 1981, the pub layout was altered and *Courage Director's* bitter joined BB. The **Rose & Crown** pioneered *Wychwood* beers in High Wycombe and more recently has been the main outlet for a variety of beers from the most local brewery, *Rebellion* of Marlow Bottom, *Blonde Bombshell* being the

most popular brand. Hundreds of guest beers have been served, the most notable including *Hook Norton 12 Days*, *Burton Bridge porter*, *Exmoor Beast* and *John Willie Lees mild*.

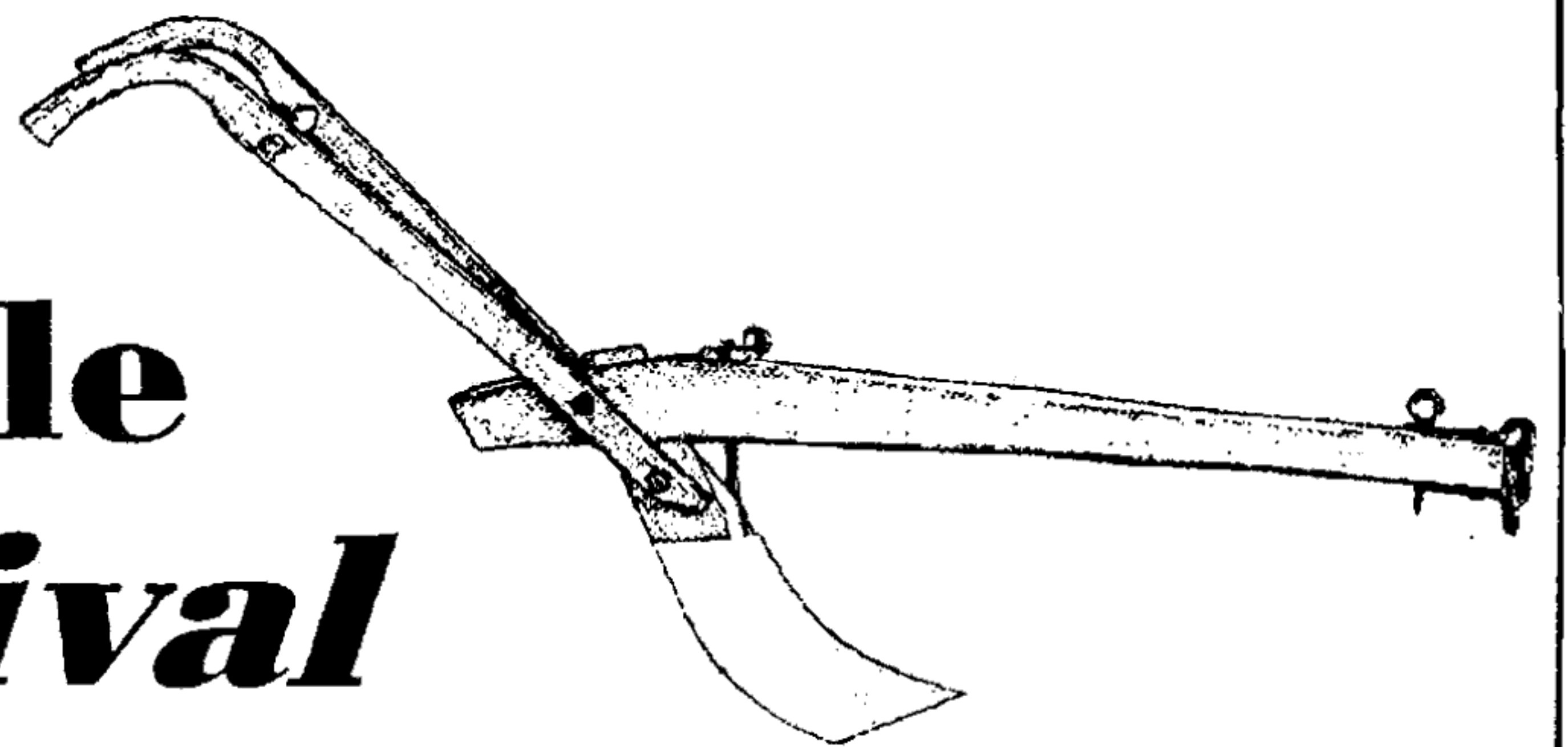
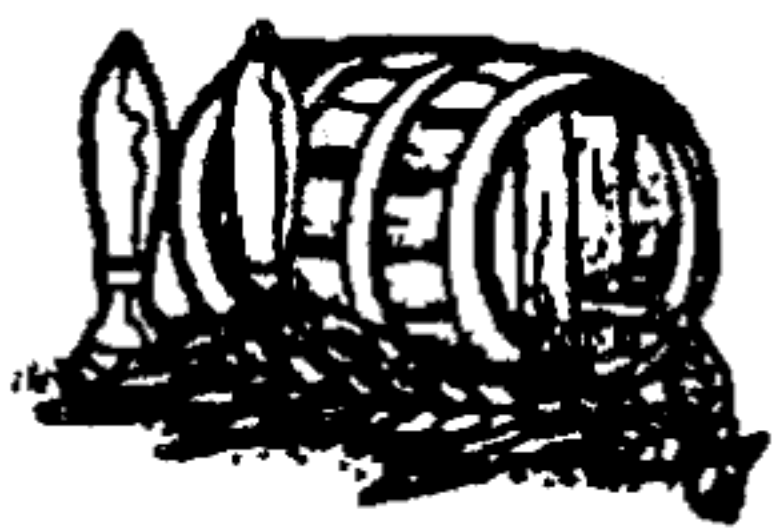
The **Rose & Crown** is a traditional pub in other ways, with bar billiards, ladies' and men's darts teams, dominoes, crib and a football team which won the Sunday combination cup final in 1993.

A major concern for over ten years has been the fate of the pub in the varying plans of Wycombe's Western Sector development.

Some versions suggested that the pub might be demolished, others including the 'final' one have the pub on the edge of the first stage of the new development. For Barry and Helen to have maintained such high standards of beer quality and hospitality during such an uncertain period is yet another reason for congratulation.

Nigel North

The Plough, Weston Turville *Beer Festival*



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FOUR CRAWL AROUND BAMBERG

If you recognise the names *Fassla*, *Zum Spezial*, *Schenkerla* and *Klosterbrau*, then you are probably salivating already. These are four of the best pubs in Bamberg, Germany and they all serve tasty and distinctive beers.

Bamberg is acknowledged by UNESCO as city of "World Cultural Heritage" and by us as a beer drinkers' paradise. It has nine breweries and some of the best bars in Europe. It is situated in Northern Bavaria in an area known as Franconia and is about 130 miles north of Munich. It a beautiful city on the River Regnitz and has many Renaissance and Baroque buildings. Luckily it was hardly damaged during the war.

In May I spent a few days there (and in Munich) with three other CAMRA members from Aylesbury: Dave Roe, Mick White and Simon Allen. Three of us had visited Bamberg previously but it was Mick's first time there. We stayed at *Fassla*, a home-brew pub which has comfortable bedrooms and a tap room



Sign at entrance to Fassla Brewery

with scrubbed wooden tables where the locals drink from breakfast time until about midnight. This was very much a pub for the locals rather the tourists but we sampled their *Lagerbier*, *Gold-Pils* and the dark *Zwergla*.

Directly opposite *Fassla* is *Zum Spezial*, a classic brewery guest house with a fine half timbered frontage bedecked with flowers. Like so many of Bamberg's best bars there are wood panelled walls, wrought iron fixtures, a green tiled stove and long wooden tables. Their speciality is *rauchbier*, a style of beer peculiar to this area. The

smoky flavour is created during brewing by kilning the malt over a beechwood fire. Although this is a very unusual flavour until you get used to it, we all agreed it was a delicious beer.

Schenkerla is probably the most famous bar in Bamberg because its distinctive *rauchbier* may sometimes be seen at British beer festivals and the bottled version is exported. This picturesque building is nearly always packed with tourists.

Their *rauchbier* is very dark with a powerful smoky flavour – another excellent beer, but for session drinking we preferred the less smoky *rauchbier* at *Zum Spezial*. The interior at *Schenkerla* has two bars and courtyard; one bar has a vaulted ceiling and part of the pub is a former monastery.

Klosterbrau is another splendid historic brewery guesthouse situated among half timbered buildings near the river. Brewing has been done there



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KINGSBURY SQUARE, AYLESBURY



A BEER DRINKERS' PARADISE

since the 16th century. It has all the traditional features, several rooms, wood panelled walls and a very convivial atmosphere. We enjoyed their dark *Schwarzla* and *Braunbier*.

Mahrs Brau is a wonderful brewery tap with traditional bars and beer served from wooden barrels. Because of rain (and a reluctance to leave such an excellent place) we spent a whole afternoon there. *Kellerbier*, *Pils* and the stronger *Bock* were all sampled.

All the bars mentioned so far should be on a "not to be missed" list, but we visited plenty of others worthy of a visit: two more brewery taps – **Greifenklau** and **Keesman**. The latter is conveniently opposite **Mahrs**. **Kaiserdom** beer at their hotel near the brewery was served by a Scottish manager.

Maisel beers which are quite widely available were tried at **Maisel-Brau-Stubl** and at **Zum Sternla**. And at



Drinking at Schenkerla

Kachelofen the delicious unfiltered *Kellerbier* from nearby *Butterheim* is served in stone mugs.

We didn't have time to visit all the beer attractions. Normally in May three or four beer gardens on the outskirts of the city would have been open but this year it was not warm enough. Nor did we get round to visiting the Beer Museum at the towering *Michaelsberg Abbey*.

In all the bars we visited it was apparent how popular wheat beer has become. This is not just a trendy fashion for the young; all sorts of people now drink

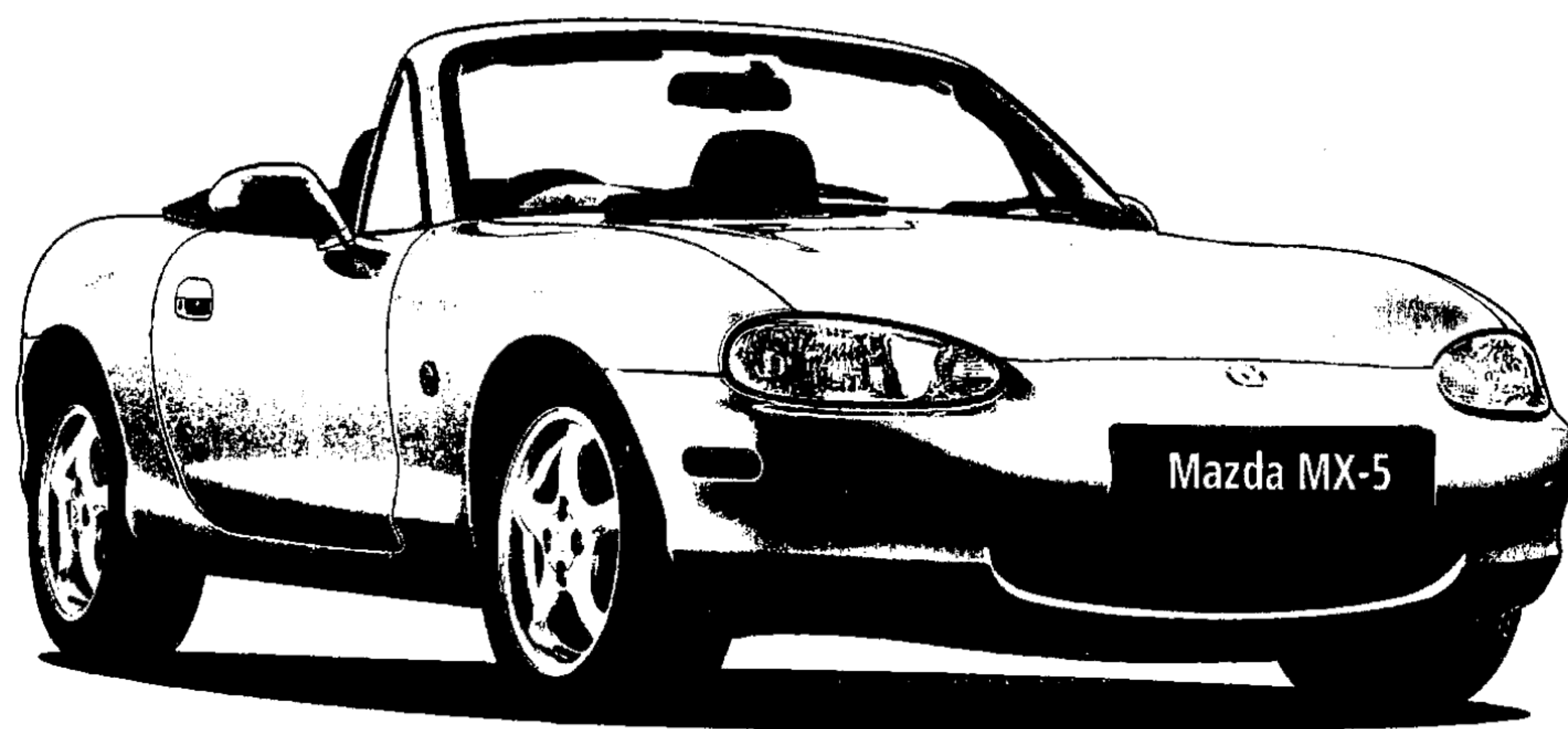
wheat beer (usually unfiltered), men and women, young and old.

Most of the beers we drunk were around 5% ABV in strength (which here in England would be considered quite strong by beer standards), but because of the high quality ingredients and the beer purity law in Germany (*das Reinheitsgebot*), none of us suffered from a hangover in Bamberg. Honestly! Now Munich was another story – maybe for the next issue.

We are indebted to **Michael Jackson**, the 'beer hunter' for germinating our interest in Bamberg through articles in '*What's Brewing*' in the 1980s and to John Conen whose booklet *Good Beer in Bamberg and Franconia* guided us to all the right places on earlier trips and to Graham Lees' book the *Good Beer Guide to Munich and Bavaria* which was invaluable on the latest trip.

Nick Holt

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Oxford pub crawl

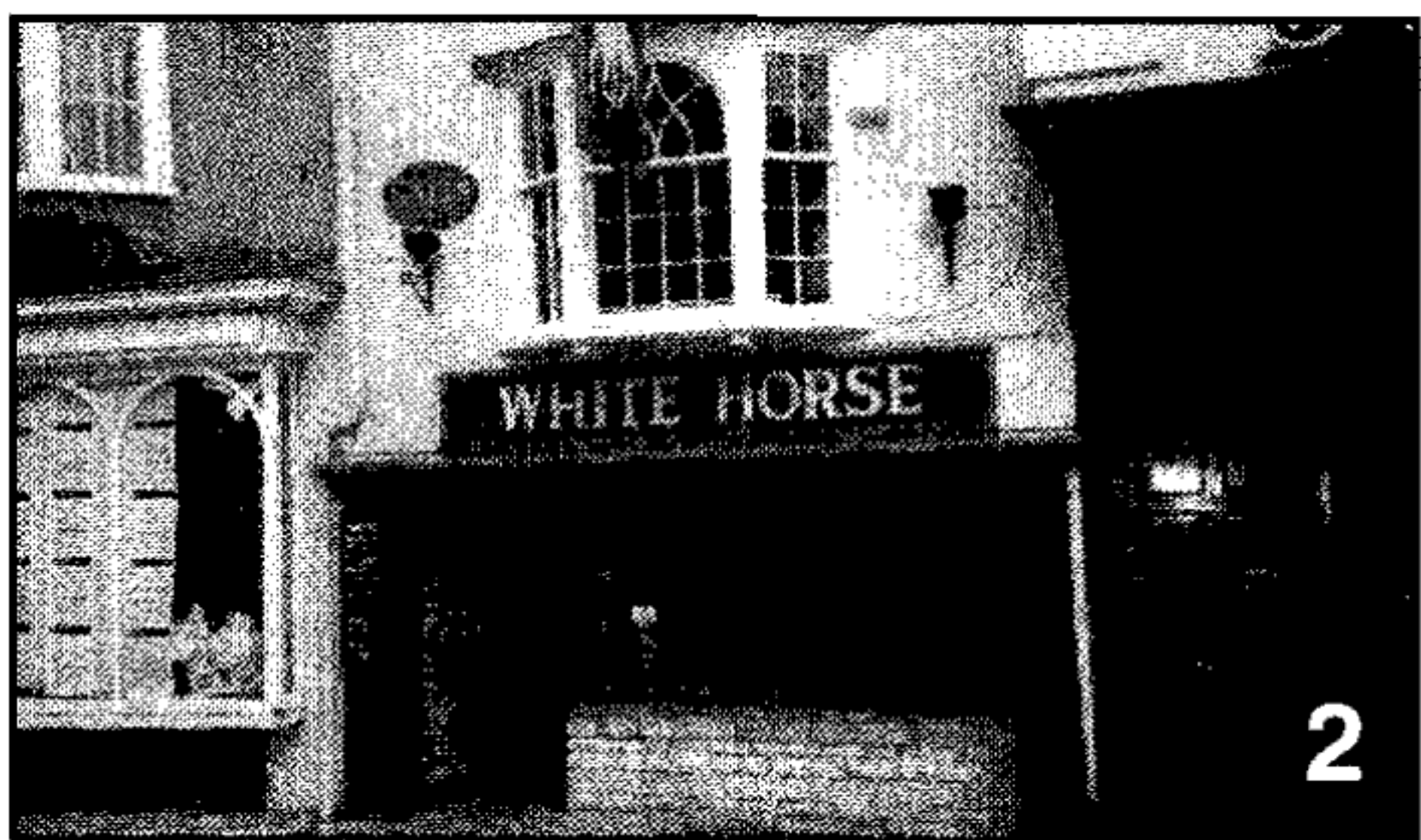
Just for once this is not a report of a pub crawl that has happened – this is one you could do anytime. The crawl is based on Barrie Pepper's 1999 book *50 Great Pub Crawls* which was reviewed in *Swan Supping* 15.

The crawl starts near the bus station but since we haven't got space here to give full directions, we suggest that you either buy the book or get a street plan from the nearby Tourist Information Office.

You could start with a pint of Samuel Smith's Old Brewery Bitter at **The Three Goats Heads** (1) in St. Michael Street. This is the only outlet for Sam Smith's in Oxford and is reasonably priced too.



1



2

At the **White Horse** (2) in Broad Street, next to Blackwell's Bookshop, you should find Burton Ale, 6X and a guest beer such as Adnams.



3

A stone's throw away is the **Kings Arms** (3), Holywell Street which stocks the full range of Young's beer from London.

Tucked away in Bath Place, just off Holywell Street is the **Turf Tavern** (4). This was Oxford CAMRA's Pub-of-the-Year in 1999 and no wonder with a colossal range of beers to choose from. There are always ten real ales (five regulars and five guests). Recently beers from the following breweries have been available: Caledonian, Boddington, Wadworth, Archers, Batemans, Wychwood, Cains, Wells, Brakspear and many micro breweries.



4

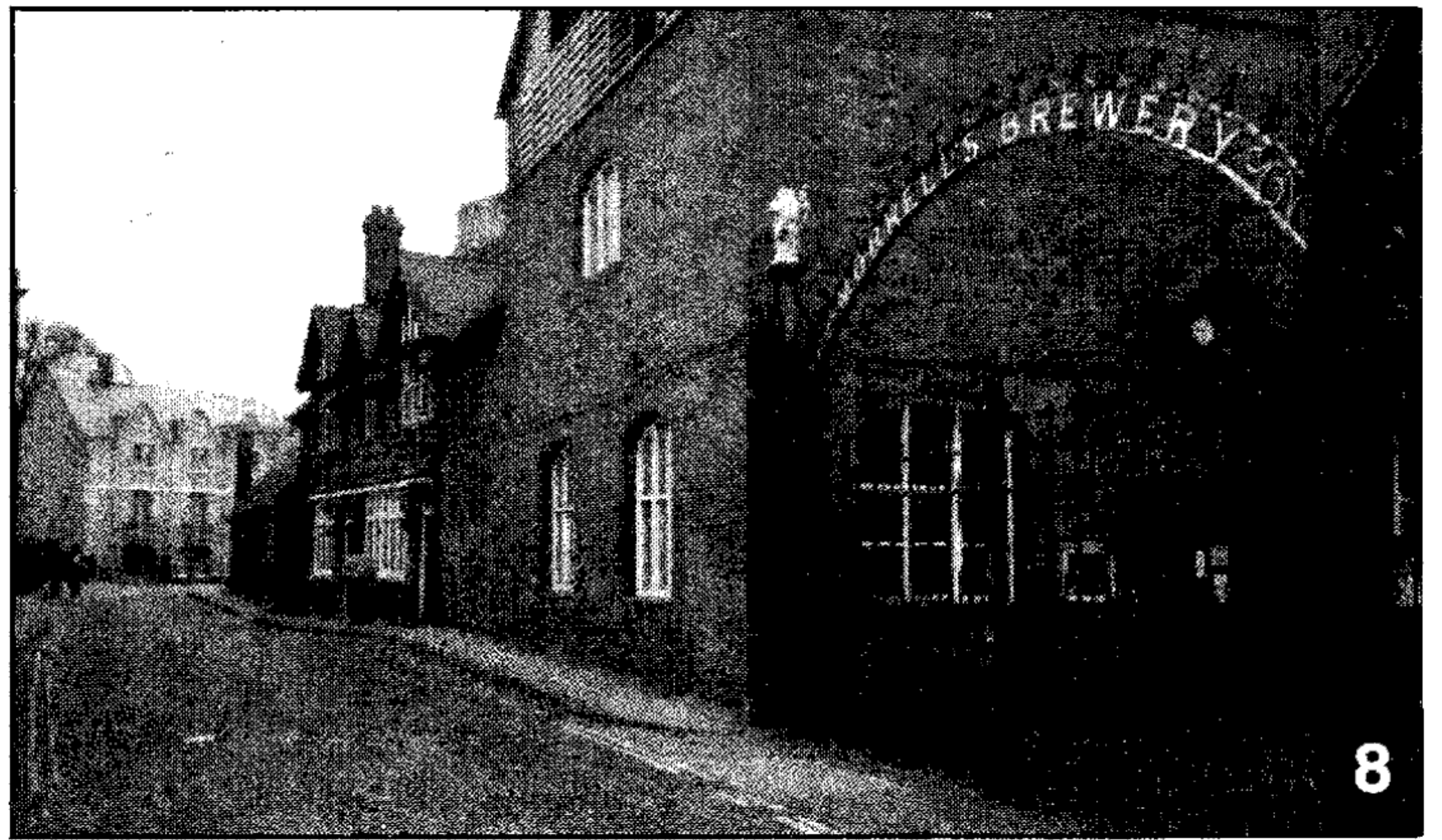
The **Bear** (5) in Alfred Street, just off the High Street, is famous for its enormous collection of ties. Beers at the Bear should include Tetley, Bass and Burton.



5

Nearby is the **Wheatsheaf** (6) in Blue Boar Street; a Whitbread pub under new management. Beers include Flowers, 6X and a changing selection of guests.

The **Crown** (7) is in a cul-de-sac on the west side of Commarket and sells beers from the Bass range.



8



6



7

The last pub on the crawl is the **Brewery Gate** (8) which used to be the Morrell's brewery tap until the brewery was closed last year. The Morrell's "Oxford" beers are now brewed in Dorset by the Thomas Hardy Brewery. You can still admire the fine gateway of the defunct brewery next to the pub.

Of the eight pubs on Barrie Pepper's suggested crawl, the Turf Tavern, the Wheatsheaf and the White Horse are in the current edition of the *Good Beer Guide*. Other pubs in the city centre worth visiting are the Hobgoblin, Jude the Obscure and the Wharf House.

Nick Holt

50 Great Pub Crawls is published by CAMRA Books, tel: 01727 867201.

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Mick and Wendy Rolley

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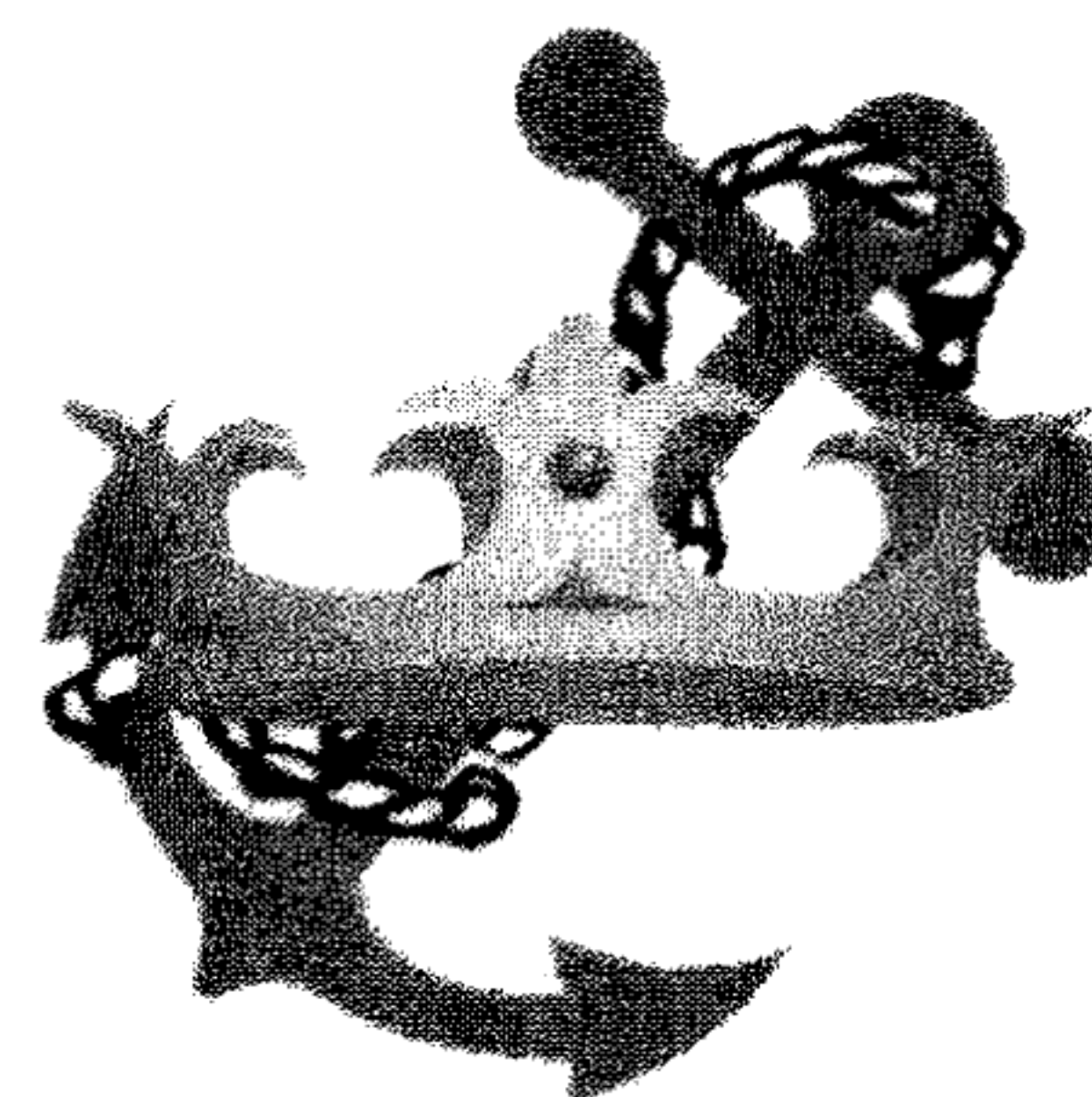
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(CAMRA members Prices in brackets)

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Wed 2nd August 5pm - 10.30pm £5 (£4)
Thu 3rd August Noon - 10.30pm £6 (£5)
Fri 4th August Noon - 10.30pm £6 (£5)
Sat 5th August 11am - 7pm £4 (£3)
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*We asked you to say when the
Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch
of CAMRA held their first meeting.*

**This was held on
Monday 3rd December 1973
&**

*The three closest entries from those
received were from:-*

**ALISTAIR BLACKETT
NICK HOLT
COLIN STAINES**

**We are currently preparing an
article about the history of the
branch and would be delighted to
hear from anyone who attended this
inaugural meeting.
Please contact the Editor!**



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SCOTTISH BEER TRIP

For those of you who like to mix beautiful scenery, dramatic views and lots of hiking with your real ale please read on. This is a short description of our nine night trip to the west side of Scotland.

Arrived in Ayr, Ayrshire, in time for lunch at the **Wellington**, a friendly pub near the beach, which only had one real ale on at the time, *Wallace IPA* 4.5%, £1.90, but it was a good one. The food was very good and cheap. After a nice long walk along the beach in sunny warm weather, we decided to continue our pub crawl of Ayr. First off was **Burrowfields**, near the cinema and station, for the *Harviestoun Brooker's Bitter & Twisted*, 3.8%, £1.90, a light and very refreshing bitter. A nice pub with a very friendly staff who did try to get the second pump working for another ale, from Orkney, but had no luck.

After a 15 minute walk we were at the **Chestnuts Hotel** in a nice quiet area of Ayr. They had *Elgoods Cambridge Bitter*, 3.8%, £1.70, *Manns St. George & Dragon*, £1.70, and Bass which was not on while we were there. A short walk from there to the **Old Race Course Hotel** we were able to enjoy *Ridley's Hoppy Easter Ale*, 4.3%, £1.90 and *Cain's Doctor Duncan's IPA*, 3.5%, £1.75. They also had *Harviestoun Lager* but as time was getting on we didn't get to sample it.

The following day found us driving up the coast to catch the ferry to Arran. Arran's attractions include Brodick Castle, the ancestral summer home of the Hamiltons. Not overly expensive to tour either! While on Arran we recommend that you sample some of the locally brewed beer. The best place for this is the **Ormindale Hotel** where they had the *Arran Ale*, £2.00, and the *Houston Peter's Well*, 4.3% £2.20. You can tour the **Arran Brewery** and take home some of their beer in bottles. We did attempt **Duncan's Bar** near the ferry but the quality of the beer explained why it is no longer in the *Good Beer Guide*.

The following day was spent hiking up to the top of Goat Fell, the mountain behind Brodick Castle, so needless to say there was only time in the evening for a quick pint or two at the **Ormindale Hotel**.

We decided to continue north by using the ferry on the north of Arran and drive to Fort William via Oban.

On the way is the **Kilmartin hotel**, which only had one real ale, *Orkney's Red McGregor*, but it was well worth the stop. The church across from the hotel has a great selection of medieval carved burial stones and the valley has numerous standing stones and cairns. As we continued north of Kilmartin there was the Carnassarie castle (ruin). After wandering through the castle and watching swallows fly around us we were on the road again, past Fort William to the Isle of Skye.

Our first night on Skye was spent in the only pub in Portree that had real ale, the **Royal Hotel**. Only one tap but it was from the local brewery Isle of Skye, *MacNab's* 4%. Delicious. They always have a malt whiskey of the month for a good price. The next day we were off to visit Dunvegan Castle and the seals that shelter in the harbour next to it. The small boat ride out to the seal colony was well worth the £4. We drove a short distance to the **Stein Inn**, the oldest Inn on Skye, for lunch. They were in the middle of refurbishment but were very happy to serve us to the only real ale they had at that time, *Orkney Dark Island*. The best ale of our trip!

After lunch it was off to the Talisker Distillery for a tour and of course a sample of their 12 year old Scotch. Made the traditional way and at £22 a bottle in the gift shop. Before returning to Portree for the night we stopped off at the **Sligachan Hotel**. This is the best place on the Island for real ale drinkers as it usually has eight or more ales on tap. The ones that deserve a mention are the *Isle of Skye Easter Bunny*, 4.6%, and the *Black Cuillin*, 4.5%.

The next day was devoted to sightseeing and beachcombing but there was time for lunch back at the **Sligachan Hotel** where we stayed with our favourite from the day before the *Black Cuillin* but we did have a taste of the *Caledonian* 80/-.

After our three days on Skye we drove south to Rockcliffe, but no drive through Glencoe is complete unless you stop off at the **Clachaig Inn**. We tried the *Black Isle Red Kite*, 4.2%, and the *Isle of Skye Red Cuillin*, 4.2%. Peace and quiet reigned in Rockcliffe however there was no Scottish ale to be found. We will be going north of Dalbeattie on our next trip to a pub that has been recommended to us for its real ale.

Ron Walbom



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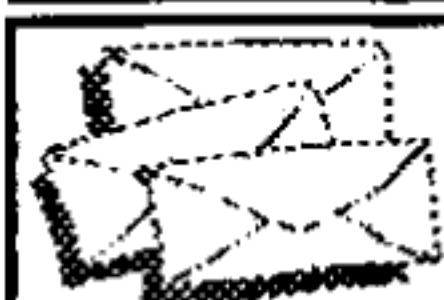
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Letters

KING OF THE BEER FRONTIER

**Oh!, Mr.Brakspear, what have you done?
You had two pubs in Marlow, but now
you've only one!**

I read with interest Ted Bruning's full page write-up on *Brakspear's [What's Brewing, July]* and his interview with brewery M.D. Jim Burrows, but there was no mention that planned improvements to the tied estate might result in conversion to a keg-only pub - of all places **The Clayton Arms**, Marlow.

For decades **The Clayton Arms** was one of the most traditional town centre gems and had rightly featured in no fewer than 22 *Good Beer Guides*, but after a total refurbishment it has emerged as an up-market bistro called **Clayton's Lounge** with not a single handpump in sight. At least the brewery's other pub in Marlow, **The Chequers**, saw the handpumps survive that refurbishment last year.

I can understand breweries need to run profitable pubs, but if Mr. Burrows can spot a good marketing niche in bars serving tapas, cocktails and keg beer, I'm sure he could buy up and convert one or two of my town's superfluous pizza parlours or Estate Agents and keep his traditional gems intact before too many more bite the dust.

So come on, Mr. Brakspear, the least you can now do is reinstate some of your excellent real ale back into my local.

John Williamson.

(This letter has also appeared in 'Whats Brewing'.
We have approached **Brakspears** for comment and will print any reply next issue. - Ed.)

It's 9am and I'm walking meaningfully to Marlow train station to catch the 9.14, which will in turn lead to Paddington via Maidenhead. It's a bright Friday morning and today I'm on the REAL ale trail again!

Destination, Kingston upon Thames for their 1st Beer Festival. All that accompanies me on my travels is a pen and the newspaper for the mandatory crossword.

En-route to Kingston, I encounter the Wimbledon crowd for the singles and doubles, the Lords tie establishment eager to see a days play, and the Hooray Henrys ready for some rowing, or so they say! But me its one thing I crave today. BEER, real beer.

The Festival opens at 11 am until 3 pm for its lunchtime session. I arrive at 11.30, quickly exchange £1.50 for a souvenir pint glass then wade straight into the milds. After sampling the low strength *Ballards Midhurst* and *Goachers milds*, I dare to attempt the *Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild* at a full 6%.

Drinking half pint measures enables you to take on board more ales and I'm soon on to the bitter. I venture around to the other side of the horseshoe bar to discuss with some of the organisers the origin of the festival while tasting the *Ringwood Boondoggle* and the excellent *Taylor's Ram Tam*.

This is a new event and has apparently gone some way to fill the gap left when Dorking Beer Festival discontinued. While learning this I aptly acquired

my 'Find of the Fest' *Weltons Dorking Pride* at 2.8, although low in strength it 'boomed' with flavour and was simply "Nectar in a Glass".

A little later while surveying the **CAMRA** stand, I came across a smart bespectacled gentleman by the name of Mike Clemence, a fellow branch member. After that I was introduced to a couple of his drinking partners from Wendover and it was eyes down to some serious tasting.

Oakhams JHB, Stonehenge Second to None, RCH Pitchfork and the dark mystic *Iceni Roisin Dubh* were on the menu and greatly received.

Due to the time of year, all the casks and pipework were encased with jackets and tube insulation to keep the muggy conditions from reaching the beer, which certainly worked as the ale was spot on.

Time was drawing on as I managed to test the *Ossett-Excelsior*, *Kelham Island-Easy rider* and the *Splendid Kitchen - Seasonal Beer* ?

We exited the Festival to find a couple of taverns to consume some food with our drinks, a chicken *Korma*, if my memory serves me.

Talk was of the excellent beer in the Festival, the pleasant staff and in general the naivety of the Festival which made it so special.

As I am returning to normality on the train home, the thought is hopefully of a 2nd Kingston Beer Festival, maybe I will purchase a T-shirt next year to mark this super little event.

Alan Sheppard

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Local News

(Continued from page 2)

WINGRAVE

The **Rose & Crown** will be hosting the **Wingrave Beer Festival** from Friday 22nd to Sunday 24th of September.

WOOBURN MOOR

John Tutton, one of the new owners of the **Mother Redcap**, says the transformation from pub to 'an upmarket Indian-French fusion' restaurant is progressing well behind the boarded up windows. Apart from a slight planning hitch with the car park it could be opening in two-and-a-half months.

WORLDS END

The **End of the World** held their third Sunday Music Festival at the end of July. Following its continuing success, it will be held again next year.

They are offering a two for one deal on both food and drink from 5pm-7pm from Tuesday to Friday. Also the possibility of having traditional cider is being investigated. Watch this space!

WYCOMBE MARSH

The **Papermakers Arms** have had an outline application for a residential development. Agents Philip Marsh are acting for **Morrells**. Could be up to seven homes instead of the pub.

JOIN CAMRA TODAY

Just fill in the form below and send your remittance (payable to CAMRA) to Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 4LW

Rates are Single £14, Joint £17 (at same address), Student/OAP/Unemployed/Disabled £8, Joint OAP £11 (at same address), Under 26 £8 date of birth

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Useful Addresses

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Internet: <http://www.camra.org.uk>

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
For comments, complaints or objections about pub alterations or developments -
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Aylesbury
HP20 1UB
Tel: 01296 585406

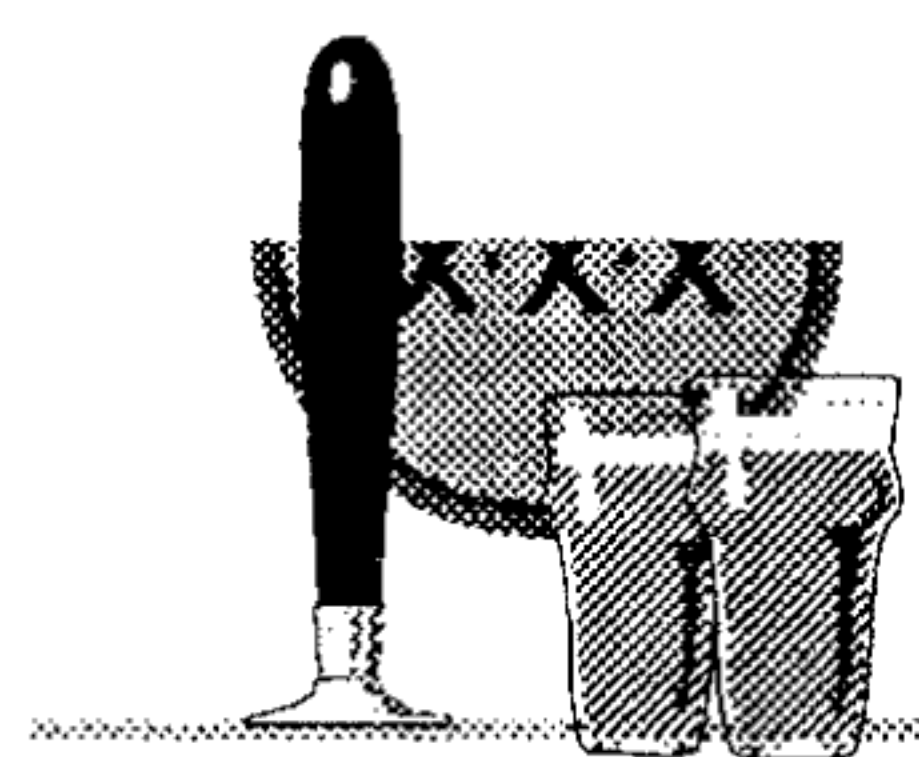
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Beer Festival Diary

AUGUST

1-5 (Tue-Sat): GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL (See page 12)
 8-9 (Fri-Sat): NORTH NOTTS BEER FESTIVAL, Banqueting suite of the Market Hotel, West Carr Rd, Retford.
 17-19 (Thu-Sat): BARNSELY BEER FESTIVAL, the Union Bar, Eastgate, Barnsley.
 17-20 (Thu-Sun): 2nd WORCESTER BEER & FESTIVAL, on the Racecourse
 18-19 (Fri-Sat): PORTSMOUTH BEER FESTIVAL, at The Guildhall, Portsmouth
 22-27 (Tue-Sun): PETERBOROUGH BEER FEST 2000, on the Embankment, Bishops Rd, Peterborough.
 24-27 (Thu-Sun): CLACTON ON SEA BEER FESTIVAL 2000, at St James's Hall
 25-27 (Fri-Sun): HIGH PEAK & NE CHESHIRE BRANCH 3rd REAL ALE BAR, at Glossop Rugby Club, Hargate Hill Lane, Charlesworth, Glossop, Derbyshire
 25-26 (Fri-Sat): MUMBLES BEER FESTIVAL, Ostrime Centre, Mumbles, Swansea.
 31-SEP 2 (Thu-Sat): FURNESS MILLENNIUM BEER FESTIVAL, at the Coronation Hall, Ulverston.

SEPTEMBER

1-2 (Fri-Sat): 10th HARBURY BEER FESTIVAL, in the Village Hall, Harbury
 2-3 (Sat-Sun): SOMERSET CAMRA BEER FESTIVAL, platform at Minehead Stn.
 5-9 (Tue-Sat): 14th CHAPPEL BEER FESTIVAL, at the East Anglian Railway Museum, Chappel & Wakes Colne Stn, nr Colchester, Essex.
 7-9 (Thu-Sat): 1st AYRSHIRE REAL ALE FESTIVAL, at the Concert Hall, Troon
 7-9 (Thu-Sat): LINCOLN BEER FESTIVAL, at the Lawn Complex, Union Rd.
 7-9 (Thu-Sat): 26th SHEFFIELD BEER FESTIVAL, Hallam Union, Nelson Mandela Building, Pond St, Sheffield
 7-9 (Thu-Sat): TAMWORTH BEER FESTIVAL 2000, at The Assembly Rooms, Corporation St, Tamworth
 7-9 (Thu-Sat): 2nd TWICKENHAM BEER FESTIVAL, at York House, Richmond Rd, Twickenham
 8-9 (Fri-Sat): 11th SHREWSBURY REAL ALE FESTIVAL, at The Music Hall, The Square, Shrewsbury
 9 (Sat): MAIDSTONE BEER FESTIVAL, Museum of Kent Life, Sandling, Maidstone
 13-16 (Wed-Sat): 8th MILTON KEYNES & NORTH BUCKS BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL, at the Wilton Hall, Wilton Avenue, Bletchley
 13-16 (Wed-Sat): STOKE BEER FESTIVAL, Leek Road (Staffordshire University).
 14-16 (Thu-Sat): BIRMINGHAM BEER FESTIVAL 2000, Aston Students Guild, Aston Triangle, Gosta Green
 14-17 (Thu-Sun): BOOZE ON THE OUSE BEER FESTIVAL, at the Burgess Hall, St Ivo Recreation Ctr, Westwood Rd, St Ives, Cambs
 14-16 (Thu-Sat): 'RHYTHM 'N' BREWS' -- THE 21st DARLINGTON BEER + MUSIC FESTIVAL, at the Arts Centre, Vane Terrace, Darlington
 21-23 (Thu-Sat): 21st BURTON & SOUTH DERBYS CAMRA BEER FESTIVAL, at the Town Hall, Burton on Trent
 21-23 (Thu-Sat): LETCHWORTH BEER FESTIVAL, Plinston Hall, Broadway, Letchworth, Hertfordshire (a short walk from Letchworth BR Stn
 22-23 (Fri-Sat): 7th NORTHWICH BEER FESTIVAL (Joint with Rotary) at the Memorial Hall, Northwich, Cheshire.
 26-30 (Tue-Sat): 18th IPSWICH BEER FESTIVAL, Corn Exchange, King St, Ipswich.
 26-30 (Tue-Sat): 7th WESTMORLAND BEER FESTIVAL, at The Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal (NOTE CHANGE OF MONTH + VENUE).
 27-30 (Wed-Sat): ST ALBANS FESTIVAL, Alban Arena, St Peters St, St Albans.



Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

August

Wednesday 2nd BRANCH GBBF GET TOGETHER
 5:30pm onwards - Great British Beer Festival, Olympia (Festival details on Page 5).
 A table will be booked in the CAMRA lounge. Contact editor for further details.
 Monday 14th ASKETT SOCIAL
 9:00pm Black Horse, 10:00pm Three Crowns
 Monday 21st BRANCH MEETING
 8:30pm Queens Head, Aylesbury
 Monday 28th BANK HOLIDAY LUNCHTIME SOCIAL
 Noon - Red Lion, followed by a meander through the town

September

Wednesday 6th STOKENCHURCH CLUB EVENING
 9:30pm Stokenchurch Club
 Monday 11th ICKFORD/WORMINGHALL SOCIAL
 8:00pm Royal Oak, 9:00pm Rising Sun, 10:00pm Clifden Arms
 Thursday 14th HIGH WYCOMBE SOCIAL
 9:00pm Bird in Hand, 10:00pm Queen
 Tuesday 19th BRANCH MEETING
 8:30pm Rose & Crown, High Wycombe
 Wednesday 25th GIBRALTAR/DINTON SOCIAL
 8:00pm Bottle & Glass, 9:00pm La Chouette, 10:00pm Seven Stars

October

Monday 2nd AYLESBURY SOCIAL
 8:00pm Dairy Maid, 9:00pm New Zealand, 10:00pm Horse & Jockey
 Friday 13th LONDON PUB CRAWL
 Starts 5:30pm George IV, Portugal Street, near Holborn. Full details next issue.
 Friday 27th/Saturday 28th VALE OF AYLESBURY BEER FESTIVAL
 Stoke Mandeville Community Centre. A map will be provided in the next issue.
 Charity beer festival held in conjunction with the 'Friends of Florence Nightingale House'
 Over thirty Real Ales plus Ciders & Perry

Swan Supping

Swan Supping is distributed free of charge to pubs in the branch area.
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Copy deadline for next issue, due to be published on 1st October 2000 is 14th September.

Subscriptions :- To receive editions of Swan Supping by post, please send SAEs to the Editor.

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Acceptance of an advertisement in Swan Supping by a pub or its availability there does not guarantee CAMRA approval of the outlet.

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