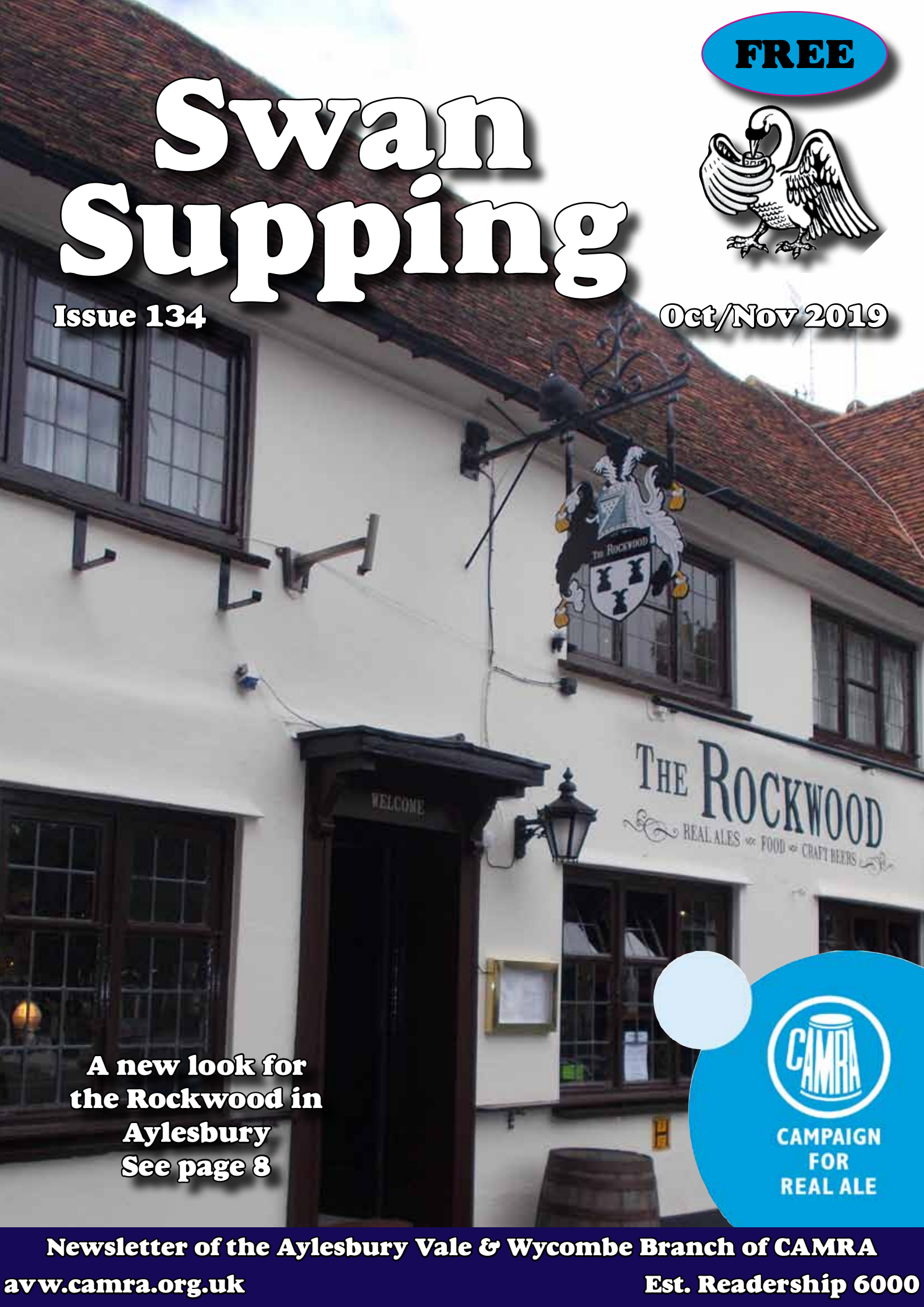


FREE

Swan Supping

Issue 134

Oct/Nov 2019



**A new look for
the Rockwood in
Aylesbury
See page 8**



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

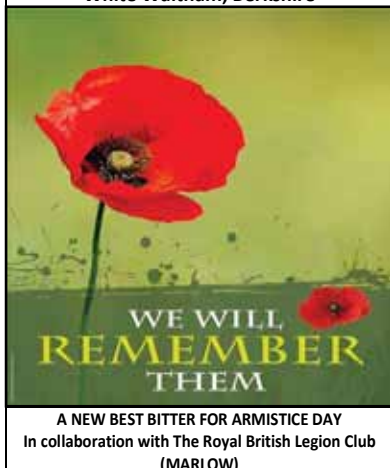
Newsletter of the Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch of CAMRA

avw.camra.org.uk

Est. Readership 6000

**The Royal British Legion
Club (MARLOW)**

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early again!**

**The Royal British Legion
Club (MARLOW)**



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NEWS FROM THE EDITOR



The last two months have been remarkable. I don't just mean all that has been going on in Parliament, but in the pub and brewery trade!

Greene King are in the process of selling up to **CKA Group** which is a real estate group run by Hong Kong's richest family.

150 pubs have been sold to **Admiral Taverns** by **Star Pubs and Bars**.

Both these deals could affect pubs in our branch area and we will do our best to monitor the situation.

There has been mixed news on the pub front. Two recent fires have devastated the **Village Gate**, Worlds End, near Wendover, and the **Royal Oak**, Bovingdon Green.

This bad news has been offset with the heartening news that we will see the reopening of the **Dinton Hermit**, Ford, the **Harrow** in Bishopstone, and the **Swan** at Grendon Underwood later on this year. Also, I'd like to mention a pub outside our branch, the **Shoulder of Mutton**, Little Horwood. This pub near Buckingham closed in August 2018 and has been bought by local shareholders and refurbished which is due to reopen in early October. It is just over the border in the **Milton Keynes & North Bucks CAMRA** branch area.

Further details can be found in our Local News section and we will be covering the reopenings in future issues of **Swan Supping**.

Back to the bad news! We were all very sad to hear that **Hillfire Brewery** had closed! This was a microbrewery set up by a **CAMRA** member from the **Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead Branch**, Neil Coxhead (pictured top right). Situated in a small industrial unit on the Rabans Lane estate he brewed once a week on his 2.5-barrel plant, producing 2-3 well-received ales that featured in a handful of local pubs. Beer was available to take out from the brewery on Fridays and Saturdays. Despite this, and brewing



regularly for the **Rose & Crown** at Stone under their **Willy's Brew** label, the difficulties in establishing a new brewery in this area, especially getting beers into pubs with already established suppliers, appear to have been too much. We wish him well for the future and hope to see him again soon.

Neil also won **Beer of the Festival** last year for his **Nightingale Ale** at the **Vale of Aylesbury Beer Festival** which raises money for the Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity. This year's festival will take place at the Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School, Oxford Road, Aylesbury, on Friday 1st and Saturday 2nd of November.

My thanks to all who have contributed to this issue of **Swan Supping**, especially all those who contribute to our Local News section, and those who deliver the finished magazine to the pubs, breweries and festivals etc. Also, thanks once again to Colin Stanford for the cartoon.

David Roe, *Swan Supping* Editor

editor@avw.camra.org.uk

NATIONAL CAMRA NEWS

Information on the brewing process, beer styles and tastings is front and centre in the **Good Beer Guide 2020**, **CAMRA's** premier publication featuring the very best pubs to find a great pint in the UK.

The **Good Beer Guide**, which surveys 4,500 of the best pubs across the UK, is the definitive beer drinker's guide to the best pints in the nation's pubs. New to this year, it boasts a new education section to fulfil **CAMRA's** commitment to play a leading role in helping beer lovers learn and discover more about their favourite drink.

Features include:

- How beer is brewed, outlining the key ingredients of beer and preparation methods.

- How to appreciate beer, from the best temperature and glassware to tasting guidelines to assess quality.

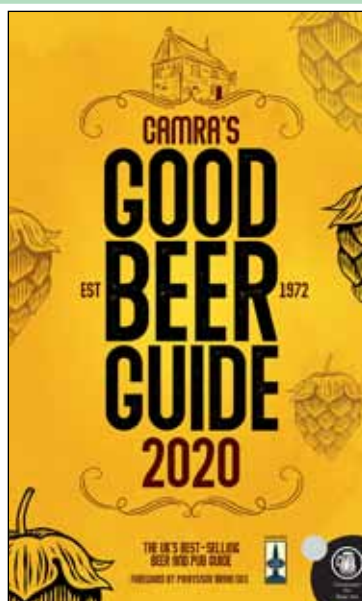
- Guidance on when to take your pint back to the bar, if required.

- Charting beer styles to help find the right style for you.

The ten page section is the latest offering in a series of activities to help members become beer connoisseurs, complemented by tutored tastings at beer festivals 'meet the brewer' events. It is also one of the '10 great reasons' to join the campaigning organisation within its new membership drive.

Alex Metcalfe, Learning & Discovery Manager said: 'The idea is to help anyone become a beer connoisseur and make the information accessible and available to all. Developing your tasting skills is an important step towards learning more about your favourite drinks, and we hope that this new section will give readers the sensory and verbal repertoire to articulate preferences when coming across a novel or unfamiliar brew.

'Beer can be seen as an exclusive or 'geeky' hobby, which can be off-



putting when a novice is trying to decide what to order at the bar. As a consumer organisation, we want to provide all the resources available to help more people feel informed and confident about their favourite drink.'

Nik Antona, **CAMRA National Chairman** said: '**CAMRA** is sometimes called an 'old man's drinking club' - but it is so much more than that to so many people. Whether you decide to join to campaign for great real ale and cider, to save your local from closure, to find the best pubs in Britain or to get more value for money, there really is no better time to support the organisation.

'That's why we've come up with 10 Great Reasons to join - and I'm very proud that our Learn & Discover offering will become a new great reason to participate for anyone with an interest in beer and brewing.'

Free Learn and Discover Zones will be rolled out at **CAMRA** beer festivals across the country, with basic beer-focused content available to anyone on the Learn and Discover platform. Members will be able to access additional 'expert' and 'connoisseur' content, which will continue to be built over the coming months.

Now in its 47th edition, the fully revised and updated guide is researched by independent volunteers across the UK with every pub featured visited at least once for an assessment.

It is the UK's best-selling beer and pub guide, based on combined trade and direct sales. The **Good Beer Guide 2020** was published on Thursday, 12th September 2019 and is available to order at shop.camra.org.uk.

Alternatively, discover all of the pubs listed, and more, with **CAMRA's Good Beer Guide** app, available on both iOS and Android devices at <https://gbgapp.camra.org.uk>.

AWARDS FOR THE RISING SUN



As we announced in our April/May issue, the winner of the *Branch Pub of the Year* in the Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe branch of CAMRA was the **Rising Sun** in Thame Road, Haddenham.

A regular feature in the *Good Beer Guide* (the 2020 edition is now available) for its well-kept beers, the **Rising Sun** was voted for by local CAMRA members and had competition from all the many good pubs in the branch area.

As part of the selection for the pub to represent the Central Southern

Region, a preliminary round of selections took place and the **Rising Sun** took its place in the final three pubs to go through to be voted for *Regional Pub of the Year*.

Unfortunately the **Rising Sun**, along with the **Fleur de Lys**, East Hagbourne, lost out to the **Bell**, Aldworth, which now goes forward to the *National Pub of the Year* competition.

The two certificates for *Branch Pub of the Year* and *Regional Finalist* were presented to Liam and Silvie Kittle by Carl Griffin (pictured left), Regional Director of CAMRA's Central Southern Region, along with Haddenham resident, **Rising Sun** regular and CAMRA member Bill Piers (pictured right).

We would like to thank Haddenham.net for their kind

permission to reproduce their photograph.

The **Royal British Legion** in Marlow which won our *Branch Club of the Year* award, narrowly lost out to the **Hungerford Club** for the *Regional Club of the Year* which it has won for the last few years.

Voting for next year's competition will be announced in a future issue of *Swan Supping*. If you like going to pubs and clubs and are a CAMRA member, why not get involved?

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PUB DEVASTATED BY FIRE



The **Village Gate** (previously the **Marquis of Granby**), World's End, Wendover, was severely damaged by fire during the night of Sunday 4th and the morning of Monday 5th of August.

Despite the efforts of around forty firefighters from Buckinghamshire and Berkshire, the interior was destroyed and a large part of the roof burnt away. This **Star Pub** only reopened in December last year after periods of closure and was still undergoing renovations.

It will take some time to restore (if at all!). Recently the site has been tidied up and the remains of the roof demolished. Work continues on the building but we have no further news at the moment.

Fire has also damaged another branch pub! The first floor of the **Royal Oak** in Bovington Green, just outside Marlow, caught fire on the evening of Sunday the 15th of September. It will be months before the pub is back in action. More details in our Local Pubs section.

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LOCAL NEWS

ASTON CLINTON

The fight to save the **Rothschild Arms**, which we featured most recently in our previous issue, took a new turn as the campaigners took a coach to Burton-on-Trent to seek a face-to-face meeting with the senior management at **Punch Taverns**. This was featured on the BBC News and the fight to save this 172 year old pub continues.

ASTON ROWANT

At the **Lambert Arms**, **Sharp's Doom Bar** and **Vale Red Kite** remain the two ales at the bar of this hotel complex which hosts spirit medium Derek Acorah, late of TV's Most Haunted, on 3rd October.

AYLESBURY

Chiltern Brewery's CAMRA BLO (Brewery Liaison Officer) was fortunate indeed to buy, quite by chance, the first pint of **Chiltern's** superb new charity beer **Chiltern Wheeling** (4.2%). The first cask had inadvertently been placed on sale a day before the official launch and for some strange reason our BLO just happened to be there.... 5p from the sale of every pint will go to WheelPower, the charity for wheelchair sport based at the birthplace of the Paralympic Movement, Stoke Mandeville Stadium.

The **Rococo Lounge** (pictured above right), Exchange Square, is a new Café/Restaurant which offers two craft ales, both on light pressure, **Bath Ales Dark Silk** plus a changing one from **Goose Eye** brewery.

BEACONSFIELD

The **Greyhound Enoteca** which specialises in Italian wines and food is currently closed for refurbishment.

BIERTON

Bad news on the pub front for Bierton! **Fuller's** are reportedly selling the **Bell** and it's unclear whether it will continue as a pub. The charming Thai tenants of a few years' standing are packing up and leaving by the end of September.

The **Red Lion** tenancy is up for sale by **Star Pubs** with the current tenant also leaving at the end of September. It is unclear whether there will be continuity so the pub may well close until a new tenant is found.

To adapt Oscar Wilde: 'to lose one pub may be regarded as a misfortune, to lose both looks like carelessness...'

BLEDLOW

A good range of ales continues at the **Lions of Bledlow**. This delightful country pub has recently sported **Cotleigh Swifty**, **Hook Norton Hooky**, **Parkway Session IPA**, **Loddon This is New England**, **Reunion Beardtongue**, **St Austell Ruck and Roll**, **Adnam's Broadside** and **Wadworth 6X**.

BISHOPSTONE

The renovations at the **Harrow**, which we featured in our February/March issue, are now complete. The team there, led by Sarah Aldous, are putting the final touches to what will seem to be a wonderful new pub after having been closed for such a long period. The opening is scheduled for 26th October. Please check out their website www.theharrowbishopstone.co.uk for



further details, menus etc. Bookings can be made online, via telephone on 01296 748478, or by email to info@theharrowbishopstone.co.uk.

BOURNE END

A recent Friday night appearance at **KEG** (Oakfield Road), the village's micro-bar taproom, unearthed **Green** (5.0%) from the **Moor Brewing Company** and **Pinata** (4.5%) hailing from **North Brewing Co**. These were just two of circa eight draft beers on offer at this ale bar.

BOVINGDON GREEN

The **Royal Oak** (Frieth Road) has suffered a fire in the upstairs at their premises, allegedly thought to have been started from a faulty tumble dryer. Six fire engines attended the blaze, nobody was hurt, as drinkers and diners at the pub were evacuated to the car-park. The **Royal Oak** will remain closed as the damage is assessed and hopefully the semi-rural pub can be resurrected from this disaster to its former glory!

CHINNOR

There have plenty of guest ales on the second pump at the **Chinnor Community Pavilion** to augment the session ale (**XT 4**) over the last couple of months, including **Beartown Best Bitter**, **Lincoln Green Hood** and **XTs 3 and 8**. Still plenty going on at this community hub - a Family Fest in early September included a well-stocked locAle outside bar and televised screenings of the Last Night of the Proms and A Star is Born (2018) followed. The **CCP** is now on **WhatPub**, so you can score the beer should you pay a visit.

Three ales in the form of **Greene King IPA**, **Sticky Wicket** and **Fuller's London Pride** were available in the **Crown** - the largest pub in the village - on an August visit; the **Sticky Wicket** in particularly good form. Congratulations to Den

and Doris who celebrated 20 years at the helm on 1st September, having moved from the **King George V** on High Wycombe's London Road. Further congratulations to them for their 'Best Family Friendly Pub 2019' award win from Little Ankle Bitters - an online kids' guide for mothers.

Plenty of ale, both local and national, on rotation over the three handpumps at the **Red Lion** of late, including locAles from **Rebellion** and **Loddon**. The 11th Rebel Lion music and beer festival held and the end of July was a success, with the weather on good form, along with six locAles from **Rebellion** in 'Slade's Shed'. Quiz Nights continue - two are held a month, with details to be found on the pub's Facebook page.

Morland Original, **Greene King IPA** and **Belhaven Saltire CCC** were the three ales spotted on the pumps at the **Wheatsheaf** last. Although a **Greene King** pub, landlord Roger is planning to introduce a locAle on the third pump via **SIBA**. A busy summer ended with a fundraiser for the St Andrew's Church Roof Fund, and for carnivores, the generously-portioned racks of ribs, steaks and burgers continue with booking essential.

EMMINGTON

LocAles **Rebellion IPA**, **Vale Wychert**, **Loddon Hullabaloo** and **Windsor & Eton Boatman** have been spotted of late at the **Inn at Emmington**. Landlord David keeps the **Rebellion** as a session ale with the two remaining pumps rotating with local guests. The early Friday evening Builders Buffet continues (free nibbles 4pm til 6pm) as well as freshly-cooked pub grub served 6pm til 9pm Monday to Saturday and lunch Saturday and Sunday 12pm til 3pm, including roast dinners on the Sunday.



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FORD

The **Dinton Hermit** (pictured below), just a few miles west of Bishopstone, closed on Christmas Eve 2013. It was occupied by the owner as a private residence, then it was advertised for sale in July this year. It was bought by local group **Moogies Ltd**, planning application has been made to reinstate the bar and reopen as a pub, hopefully in November 2019.

It is planned to extend the pub and landscape the gardens whilst maintaining the existing features in an effort to blend the old with the new.

Moogies also own/run three other pubs in Aylesbury Vale, the **Black Boy** at Oving, the **Eight Bells** in Long Crendon (since 2014) and the community owned **Russell Arms** at Butlers Cross, very close to the Chequers estate.

GREAT KIMBLE

In recent days there has been some activity around the site of the **Bernard Arms**. New fences have gone up and some overgrown vegetation has been cleared. This may herald the demolition of this historic pub, frequented by prime ministers and foreign dignitaries over the years due to its proximity to Chequers. The site has been derelict since autumn 2013. After the pub fell into ruin, developers successfully applied for planning permission for its replacement with private housing. Located on a busy road in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty of prime hiking countryside, if this pub site can suffer this fate then it's difficult to think how any other rural pub can be safe. More updates in future *Swan Suppings*.

GRENDON UNDERWOOD

The **Swan** has been purchased by a group of local shareholders and extensive renovations in a contemporary style are well underway, but no date has been released as to when it might reopen, but likely within the next few months.

HADDENHAM

The **Green Dragon** is still on the market freehold at £495K.

HENTON

At the **Peacock** *Sharp's Doom Bar* and *Tring Side Pocket for a Toad* remain the two ales of choice for drinkers at the bar at this unadvertised eating house which serves between 2,000 to 2,500 meals a week!

HIGH WYCOMBE

After just over five years since holding a beer festival, the **Belle Vue** has decided to start them up again. Following a recent meeting with **Star Pubs** they should be able to access local beers on **SIBA**. The **Summers End Beer Festival** will run from Friday 25th to Sunday 27th of October with around fifteen cask ales and at least five ciders. Live music will entertain on Friday and Saturday nights with an open acoustic session on Sunday during the day. With a bit of luck Armalegga Border Morris will come for a dance during the event.

The **Dolphin** on Totteridge Lane is now the **Everest Dolphin** and offers Indian

cuisine.

The **Sausage Tree** has reverted to its previous name of the **Masons Arms** following the recent change of management.

MARLOW

The August Bank holiday weekend **Summerfest** at the **Marlow RBL Club** (Station Approach) was their 25th Anniversary Beer Festival and was the club's most successful to date with most of the ales selling out before 10pm on Saturday. Fortunately further ales were in reserve to replenish demand for the full Bank Holiday weekends' beery endeavours. Brews for **Butts**, **Crankshaft**, **Moot Oak**, and **Nant** breweries were some of the rare beers available at this thrice yearly event. Plans are now evolving for **Winterfest 2019** in mid-December.

NAPHILL

The **Black Lion** is now under new management.

POSTCOMBE

At the **England's Rose**, **Loose Cannon Gunner's Gold** remains as the solitary ale at this roadside inn. The popular carvery continues on Sundays and Victorian Tea is served in the afternoon Monday to Friday.

STOKE MANDEVILLE

Now under new management, a weeknight visit to the **Bell** saw **Charles Wells Eagle IPA** and **Tring**

Side Pocket for a Toad on two of the three pumps. Due to the proximity of Stoke Mandeville Hospital, they are offering 20% NHS discount plus one on presentation of a valid NHS staff card.

Two ales in the form of **Sharp's Doom Bar** and **Harvey's Sussex Best** were available at the **Bull** - the latter in excellent shape.

At the **Woolpack** two national ales in the form of **Sharp's Doom Bar** and **Fuller's London Pride** are available. The pub is part of the **Mitchell & Butler** chain and the focus is firmly on food, although there is no problem with solo drinking.

TETSWORTH

Black Sheep Bitter and **Pale Ale** as well as **XT 4** have featured on the pumps at the **Old Red Lion** lately. The pub doubles as the local store as well as offering accommodation and food. The breakfasts are well-portioned and will leave you full for the rest of the day!

THAME

There is a new quiz night on a Monday at the **Bird Cage** with a £2 entry fee. Prizes include a bar tab, wine and a booby prize. See website for further details.

At the **Cross Keys**, once a month you can watch up to three films on a Sunday afternoon/early evening in the upstairs function room whilst sipping real ales, craft beers, gins etc etc etc. You don't, however, get ice creams sold by an

usherette!! Visit the website/social media to find out what is showing.

Matt from the **Six Bells** has moved to the **Red Lion Hotel** in Wendover and we await the arrival of another manager at this Fullers managed house which has five beers normally on from the **Fullers** range.

TOWERSEY

Sharp's Doom Bar and **Rebellion IPA** continue on the pumps at the **Three Horseshoes**, which specialises in good food and is a short distance from the Phoenix Trail - a disused railway joining Thame and Princes Risborough popular with cyclists and walkers.

WENDOVER

World's End is now devoid of pubs! The **Village Gate** has suffered massive damage by fire (see the article on page 5), and at the nearby **End of the World** which closed in 2002, building contractors moved onto the site in early September and work is underway, but it won't be returning as a hostelry.

WOOBURN COMMON

The **Royal Standard** is holding a beer festival over the weekend 25th - 27th of October. They will be serving the full range of **Timothy Taylor** beers amongst other beers as yet undecided!

WOOBURN GREEN

The **Queen & Albert** reopened on 27th July 2019 and has been renamed as the **Gray's Inn**.

THE THINKING DRINKERS

The critically acclaimed, five star reviewed alcohol experts 'The Thinking Drinkers' are on tour with their brand new show 'Heroes of Hooch'. It could be of interest as the show is a hilarious look at history's greatest drinkers mixed with a tasting of five free excellent drinks.

The Thinking Drinkers have already had two UK tours, each five star reviewed successes ('An intoxicating success... as interesting as it is hilarious' - Sunday Express) and are coming to High Wycombe's Old Town Hall.

Enjoy five free drinks as the award-winning experts reveal how alcohol has inspired pioneering explorers, politicians and painters, from Plato and Picasso, to Nelson, Napoleon and Norm from Cheers. You'll learn a lot, you'll laugh a lot and, don't forget, you get five free drinks.

They are appearing at High Wycombe's Old Town Hall on Saturday 8th February 2020. A link to tickets (and more information about the show) can be found at: <https://wycombeswan.co.uk/Online/tickets-thinking-drinkers-wycombe-2020>

THE REFURBISHED ROCKWOOD



The **Rockwood**, which was known as the **Lobster Pot** for many years from the seventies, at the top of Kingsbury Square in Aylesbury, was closed during the summer as it underwent a major refurbishment, reputedly costing in the region of £250,000.

As we announced in our last issue, it has now reopened in the capable hands of Dan and Emily Brew.

Dan and Emily were born and bred in Aylesbury and have arrived back in town following their work for the last three years in Bath as tenants of the **Curfew**, which is a traditional **Wadworth Brewery** pub.

The **Rockwood** has had a complete refurbishment inside and out using modern versions of 'heritage' colours to compliment the pub's age as it dates back to the 16th century and is grade 2 listed.

The new incumbents are aiming for a modern pub with a nod to the traditional, encouraging social gatherings with friends, great after work,

and for evening and weekend get-togethers. Plenty of opportunities for socialising as well as a well earned quiet break from the rat race!

They stock a good range of well-kept ales on the bar with an array of five handpumps, one of which serves traditional cider, as well as more modern craft beers on tap and in the fridges. On the back bar they're focusing on a good range of specially selected, quality wines, and a great range of spirits, particularly gins and rums and they also offer a couple of simple, great tasting cocktails.

The kitchen has been fitted with new equipment to allow the **Rockwood** to serve great fresh home made food with a focus on small plates and sharing.

They will host regular events including occasional bands, DJs and some other events that are a little different for the Aylesbury area... Please keep an eye on social media and their website for details

We wish Dan and Emily all the best in their new venture!

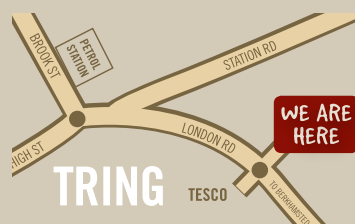


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I'M SO SORRY, THE BEER IS OFF!

I paid good money to drink contaminated samples of cans of *Carling Black Label* surrounded by Arsenal fans! Had I taken leave of my senses?

Actually, no, because the contamination in question was deliberate and part of a course in detecting beer off-flavours and it happened to be taking place (by sheer bad luck) in a pub a stone's throw from the Emirates stadium on a match-day.

The course was run by beer sommelier and certified Cicerone, Natalya Watson (pictured below). Before inspiring any wild flights of imagination by readers, the Cicerone scheme is a US-based system of accreditation of beer knowledge and tasting skills (a parallel to the UK-based beer sommelier scheme). As Natalya (or Nat) hails from California and is based in London, she has qualifications from both. It basically means she knows what she's talking about – not always the case when people pontificate on beer.

And why *Carling Black Label* – surely the *bête noir* of *CAMRA* members – after, perhaps, *Fosters*, *Stella*, *Doom Bar*, *Greene King IPA*, etc. etc. It's precisely because, to showcase the undesirable flavours, the base beer needs to be as bland as possible.

Using a professional kit, Nat 'spiked' ten samples of *Carling* with the chemical signatures of ten off-flavours that are usually tell-tale signs of faults with either the brewing, cellaring or serving of beer. Natayla's course is not specifically geared towards real ale: *CAMRA* also occasionally runs similar courses to educate volunteer tasters who comprise judging panels for the likes of *Champion Beer of Britain*.

Being an experienced ale drinker and having come across a depressing number of bad pints in the course of my research, I was surprised by the subtlety of the contamination in Nat's samples.

One glass recreated the taste of (accidentally) infected beer – caused by poor hygiene and exposure to bacteria like *lactobacillus* and *pediococcus*. It had a detectable whiff of vinegar and had an unpleasant sourness on the taste. Yet, compared to some of the vile Sarsons-like pints I've been served from handpumps over the years, it was positively quaffable.

Infection in real ale is caused by dirty beer lines and poor cellar hygiene often combined with the beer being left open for far too long in its cask, creating a perfect opportunity for bacterial attack. Unless a beer is one of the rare styles has been deliberately infected (some sours and Lambic beers), a pint of ale should never have any unpleasantly acidic quality, either in its aroma or taste.

Disreputable landlords may try tactics like using a sparkler to disguise the smell of an infected beer but usually by the time the glass is a third or more empty, the tell-tale aromas of malt vinegar will collect in the glass. It's shocking how often such blatantly faulty beer is sold by pubs – most often pubs that don't turn over casks of ale quickly enough to maintain their freshness. Such beer should always be returned to the bar. And, no, take it from the professional tasters, it really isn't 'meant to taste like that'.

A more common and less foul characteristic is excessive oxidation – and while an oxidised pint may be drinkable it won't be pleasant and it is still faulty. The tell-tale characteristics of oxidation are aromas and flavours of paper and cardboard. The beer tastes tired and bland and loses hop character.

Oxidation can also be caused by casks being open too long but it can also strike a beer before it even arrives in a pub cellar. If barrels are poorly stored by the brewery or wholesaler, for example, being left outside on a baking hot day then oxidation can occur. It can also be caused by faults in the brewing process itself.

Flawed brewing techniques are also responsible for another notable off-flavour – diacetyl. This is so common in certain breweries' beers that, in low-levels, it's almost regarded as a house-style and it appears that different drinkers have a differing sensitivity to it. It's reminiscent of a smell of butterscotch and sometimes gives the beer a slick and oily feel. Brewers try to avoid it by manipulating the fermentation temperature to encourage yeast to reabsorb diacetyl during the brewing process. Particularly examples of



beers in which the diacetyl flavour overwhelms all others are referred to as diacetyl bombs (or D-bombs).

A more subtle, although very detectable, fault is an aroma of acetaldehyde. This is a chemical produced in the body when alcohol is broken down and is more toxic than alcohol itself (it's implicated in bad hangovers). It resembles a smell of green apples and its presence is often linked to 'green beer' (i.e. beer where fermentation has stopped too early). As real ale undergoes a secondary fermentation in the cask, this 'green' smell can often be detected if a pub serves a cask before it has properly settled after this cask fermentation. Acetaldehyde is unobtrusively present to some extent in all beers and sometimes a small amount is encouraged in a beer's house style.

Most off-flavours are caused by poor practice by brewers and pub cellaring but one fault seems to be encouraged by some brewers' marketing departments. Most bottled beer is highly sensitive to being 'light struck' – where the action of direct light taints the bitter hop oils in a beer, producing an unpleasant aroma that has been called 'skunky'. Brown bottles offer the greatest protection from being light-struck, green bottles less so and clear bottles none at all.

Except in special cases where special immune hop compounds are used (apparently including *Miller Lite*), beer in clear and green bottles can develop these skunky flavours in even a very short time. Despite this, many brewers bottle their beers using clear glass, knowing that it will be stacked on retailers' shelves and exposed to light. There are stories that the effects of being light-struck are so widespread on some brands' products that consumers have become so accustomed to the taste that they complain when they taste the unfamiliar flavour of an uncontaminated product!

There were several more off-flavours in Nat's repertoire, including examples of flavours of metal, rotten eggs and tinned sweetcorn! Isn't the world of beer tasting glamorous?

What the course showed is that there are so many ways for a beer to develop off-flavours that it's a near miracle that so many brewers manage to brew excellent ales, although brewing professionals normally tend to be highly trained and are scrupulous about hygiene. The same can't be said for all pubs – with far too many bad and substandard pints served, even on occasion in *Good Beer Guide* entries. It would be a good start if more serving staff had similar off-flavours training – something that enlightened pub operators are encouraging. After all, there's nothing 'off' about a perfectly served pint of real ale. Some might even widen their horizons beyond *Carling Black Label*!

I'm a taster not a brewer so if any technical errors have crept in, they're all mine.

For details of Natayla Watson's courses visit her website: beerwithnat.com

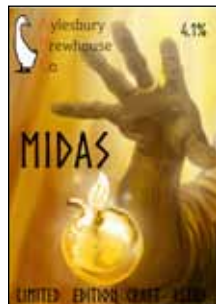
Mike Clarke



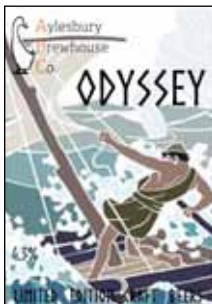
LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

ABC Brewery

Two new beers are available from **Vale Brewery** under the **Aylesbury Brewhouse** banner:-



Midas (4.1%). First Gold hops give this 'Classic' golden beer the Midas touch, by imparting refreshing hints of citrus fruits.



Odyssey (4.3%). An epic ruby coloured ale with a heroic blend of dark malts and a subtle orange aroma. A single-hopped variety beer.

Chiltern Brewery

Following the success of their early autumnal ales, *Kop Hill Ale* and *Copper Beech*, **Chiltern Brewery** released a brand new beer to celebrate this year's Rugby World Cup. **Chiltern Wheeling**, which also raises funds for local charity WheelPower, is a dark amber beer that has proven to be surprisingly sessionable.

300s Old Ale will be available from the last week of October, with *Salted Caramel Ale* and *Festive Foxtrot* sitting alongside the classic old ale in November and December respectively.

The 2019 vintage of *Imperial Stouts* continues! Head Brewer, Tom, says *Export Original* is already tasting beautiful and thanks to its bottle-conditioned nature, will only get better. He looks forward to hearing your thoughts on the new *Royal Vanilla* and *Gingerbread Stout* varieties, too!

The **Chiltern Brewery** will launch their Christmas shop on Saturday 9th November at 11am, with carol singers, mince pies and lots of product tastings lined up to make it a fabulously festive affair.



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Hillfire Brewery



Sadly, the **Hillfire Brewery** has closed!

Neil Coxhead has decided to call it a day after three and a half years. He will be missed, especially at the **Aylesbury Beer Festival**

where he won *Beer of the Festival* with his *Nightingale* last year.

His regular beers were *Lakewood Pale* (4.2%), *California Gold* (4.3%) and *Nighthawk* (5%).

Rebellion Brewery



The last monthly beers of 2019 from **Rebellion** will be as follows:-

October: *Crash Landing* (4.2%). A hoppy pale ale. A small amount of crystal malt to the grist creates a beautiful shade of pale amber and a satisfying malty fullness. We've used both citra and Simcoe hops throughout the brew, with citrus, passionfruit and apricot notes really coming through. A real cracker of a beer!

November: *Wing Man* (4.2%). An amber and malty beer.

December: *Top Gun* (4.2%) A pale and citrus ale.

Look out for details of the 2020 beer range, which will be released later this year.



Gold will be back for winter. Their winter seasonal is golden and hoppy and very drinkable at 4.4%. Big hoppy aroma with a relatively low bitterness making it drinkable and balanced.

Rebellion's winter special, *Winter Royal* will return for December. It will be available in bottles and draft.

Look out for more details closer to the time. It's a ruby-coloured winter warmer, perfect for a post walk beer.

They are hoping to have their new bottling line installed over the next month and commissioned at the end of the October.



Tring Brewery

The Premier League has kicked off and the new season at Watford FC is well underway!

Tring are proud to mark a fourth year pouring at 'the brewers' stadium, opening another Real Ale Bar within the home-stands of the club. The new bar has been christened within the Sir Elton John stand, refreshing matchday punters one nail-biting fixture at a time. Cheers to supporting local.

Their upcoming beers are:-

October: *Clumper* (4.2%). Imperial malt give this beer a hazelnut hue and delicious biscuity flavours. This big malt depth provides the perfect backdrop of steely US Cascade hops.

MORE LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

November: *Codey* (4.0%). This hop forward pale has big hitter after big hitter. Expect intense tropical fruit aromas which are slightly smoothed by the use of plenty of flaked oats

Vale Brewery



A number of new brews are on the horizon, to be enjoyed throughout the autumn:

Try Line (4.2%). Tawny in colour with a soft malt mouthfeel. Intense citrus hops give a strong aroma of orange and lemon.

Electric Mayhem (4.3%). 'It's time to play the music, Its time to light the lights'. Light copper in colour, charged with citra hops to create a gorgeous medley of mango and lime flavours. Go on, unleash your inner muppet!

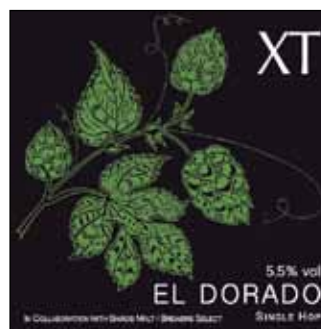
Apollo (4.1%). Head for the stars with this sumptuous golden ale packed with floral hop and biscuity malt flavours.

XT Brewery

There has been a change in the brewing team at **XT**, Fin has moved on in order to start his own brewery. The new brewery will be based in Edinburgh and we will bring you more information on that as plans progress. Rob

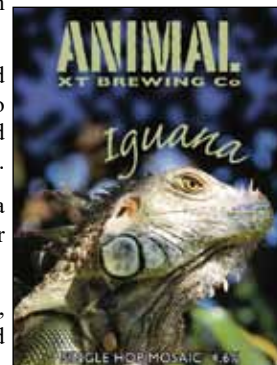
steps into Fin's brewing boots. With a fine pedigree from **Rebellion** and **Skinner's**, Rob looks set to be a fine pair of hands to carry the brewing forward.

A new seasonal special from **XT** has been the result of collaboration with a malt specialist. Dave 'The Malt' sourced and specified two speciality malts – Biscuit Maltz from Germany and a new English Winter Barley Maltodextrin.



The new *El Dorado* (5.5%) golden ale is generously hopped with El Dorado hops for tropical notes, peaches and apricot. The speciality malts give a sweet and full-bodied finish normally associated with a milk stout or milkshake IPA, but leaving the beer dairy free. A sweet and fruity pale ale – perfect for unpredictable autumn weather.

There is a new *Animal* for the early autumn too.



Iguana (4.6%) is a single hop beer, brewed with Oats and Vienna Malt. Mosaic, so named because it gives a range of aromas and flavours, is often referred to as a wonder hop.

It is paired with the biscuit flavours of Vienna and the body enhancing properties of oats for added mouth feel and quaffability.

Rounded off with a pleasantly hoppy finish, carrying flavours of mango, pine, citrus and herbs and aromas of tropical and stone fruit.

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THE CASKITEERS - PART EIGHT

On a drizzly Wednesday morning, the bracing smell of boiling wort and fresh hops circulated in the air of Shackney microbrewery, *Eaten Trifles*. Ruthie, the brewer, had been up bright and early, mainly to avoid the interference of the hipster proprietors, Jacob and Harry, who rarely surfaced before opening time.

Jacob sidled in just before eleven and checked his investment portfolio on his iPhone, while lying on his preferred, green chaise longue in the middle of the bar. He jumped up in response to a banging on the kitchen door. He answered the knock, allowing a foul stench to infiltrate the brewing aromas. A stooping, badly-dressed figure proffered Jacob a black bin bag. 'Here you are squire, scraps from the bins round the back.' He gestured to the back alley behind the many other craft beer bars on Shackney High Street.

'What did you scavenge for me today?' Jacob asked.

'I got a lovely bit of rotten avocado from Matron and Monocle,' the man wheezed. 'A half-eaten jackfruit burger from Carbon Crossroads, a huge wodge of pulled pork from Pebbledashers which will be fine once you rinse the maggots off and this vat of mouldy mac'n'cheese from Stoa in the Hole.'

Jacob looked stern. 'No leftover chargrilled kimchi, you failure of a human being?'

'Sorry, sir,' the scavenger replied.

'I'll give you a guinea as it's destined for the Austerity Peasant's Lunch, I suppose.' Jacob tossed a coin over the man's head so that he'd scurry away. He threw the ingredients into a stainless-steel tray, smothered it with salt and a gunky, gelatinous sauce and slammed it in the oven. 'Our austerity menu is such a breeze!' he declared.

Jacob's attention was suddenly grabbed by Harry's raised, plummy tones emanating from the bar. 'Good morning officer. What would you like? I can recommend a third of a pint of our *Samphire and Poached Quail's Egg IPA*. Twelve percent – a few and your arrest figures will shoot right up!' he boomed. 'Oh, what do you mean, you're here on serious business.'

Jacob dashed into the bar, swerving the police officer and the group of suited, official-looking figures confronting Harry. Jacob careered around the room, swiping *Quintuple Hopped Aribica Martini IPAs* from the small number of lunchtime customers' lips. He then attempted to use his feeble muscle to bundle the women unceremoniously out of the door ('Girly swots are barred!'), their angry companions chasing after them and returning to protest as Jacob locked the door shut.

'Why the jeepers did you clear our bar of paying customers, Jakes old boy?' Harry asked, baffled.

'Because the enemy is within,' Jacob whispered into Harry's ear before loping off to his chaise longue where he picked up a copy of *The Times*, making an unconvincing performance of calm and incipient dozziness.

'Jakes, old bean,' called Harry. 'There seems to be some sort of misunderstanding. This police officer here says he's accompanied by representatives from the licensing authority, the environmental health authority and the Inland Revenue. He says we're trading illegally.'

'Ah, yes, well.' Jacob mentally willed his upper lip to remain stiff. 'That is not actually the case *ipso facto* as this craft beer bar has not actually been trading.'

'That's a complete lie, I saw customers being served alcohol,' the licensing official shouted.

'Och aye! That *Seitan and Jackfruit IPA* has been really shifting,' Ruthie declared proudly, joining the group from the brewery.

'Erm, not trading in the normal sense,' Jacob continued. 'It has, in fact, been operating under *tecta perstillantia unicornis*.'

'I've never heard of that,' the official complained.

'Of course, someone of inferior education wouldn't be well-versed in such abstruse fourteenth-century legal concepts as catalogued in the chronicles of Walter the Absurd.'

The policeman dutifully wrote in his notebook and grunted: 'Oh yes. Walter

the Absurd. Explains it all, sir.'

But the licensing officer challenged Jacob: 'And what is *tecta perstillantia unicornis* supposed to mean?'

'It obviously means, translated via the 1507 edict of Norbert the Rabbit Fiddler, that...' Jacob blustered.

'I'm not wasting time on this, I'm going to check the kitchen,' the environmental health officer said.

'Me too. I'm checking the computers,' the woman from the Inland Revenue agreed.

'It actually means that I, as a scion of a line of indubitably genetically superior heritage, can attempt to do anything I feel I can get away with,' Jacob finally finished.

'Well, we'll see what the court has to say about Norbert the Rabbit Fiddler,' the licensing officer declared.

Jacob leapt up and began jabbing with his finger at Ruthie. 'Then in that case, you need to put her in gaol because she brewed it and this criminal sold it!' He pointed at Harry. 'I did nothing wrong. I just provide the catering.'

'Jakes, mate?' Harry said, perplexed.

'You want to sort this out in the alley,' Ruthie said, holding a rubber mallet studded with metal spiles.

'Give me that,' the Inland Revenue officer said. 'I'm impounding everything. This place has paid no licence duty, tax or VAT from the day it opened.'

A horrendous scream rang out from the kitchen. The environmental health officer staggered in holding a quivering plate of Austerity Peasant's Lunch. 'It's...it's...moving!'

The judge squinted at Jacob through her half-moon glasses as she spoke. He was chained in the dock along with Harry and Ruthie.

'This court has never come across such a wanton combination of fiscal and licensing wrongdoing in a craft beer bar. It has also never encountered a meal as revolting and dangerous as the Austerity Peasants Lunch. Nevertheless, the case is dismissed against Mr Henry Inbred. He is clearly far too stupid to have had any conscious role in this criminal operation,' she declared. 'Similarly, we have found that Ms Ruth Headbutt is a certifiable Glaswegian psychopath and therefore unfit to stand trial. You are both dismissed. Mr Jacob Pinstripe Smug is found guilty as charged.'

Jacob adjusted his tie knot. 'With respect, I think the court has returned the wrong verdict. For example, the jury had working-class plebeians in its composition.'

'Do your time, you rotter,' Harry shouted. 'You were happy to see me carry the can.'

'Dear chap, I hear open prisons are positively luxurious compared to our school dorms,' Jacob replied.

'No open prison for you, Mr Pinstripe Smug,' the judge said. 'We've just approved an application for your extradition after the military coup in the St. Epipodius Islands.'

'The lawless tax haven domicile of my family's hedge fund?' Jacob said, startled.

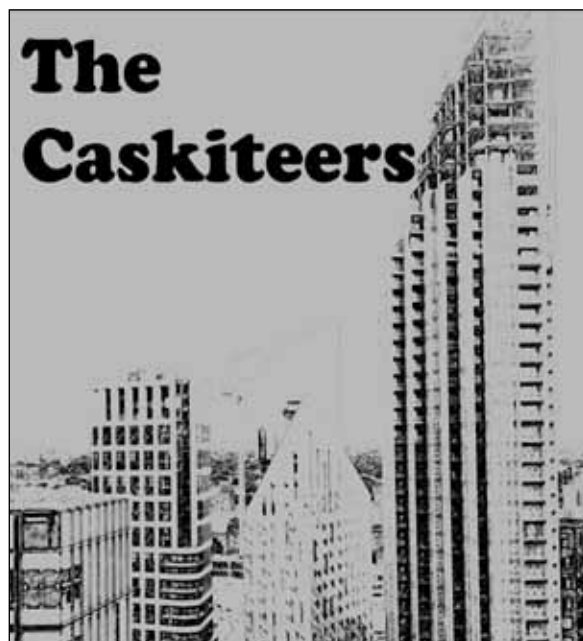
'Crookedest hedge fund in the world according to the paperwork,' the judge read 'They've already got the Swiss bank account details and General Pina Colada, the new Great Leader, has troops ready to meet you off the plane to transport you to Paradise Peninsula prison.'

'No. Not Paradise Peninsula! My ex-accountant's in there.' Jacob's legs turned to jelly. 'I look emaciated enough as it is.'

'All you need to do is to tick your meal preference on this form – rat, cockroach or Austerity Peasant's Lunch.'

'At least it's preferable to another minute with the British craft beer-drinking classes,' Jacob railed unconvincingly and was led away in chains.

Charlie Mackle



Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

October

Friday 4th EARLY EVENING SOCIAL

6.00pm, Fisher's Brewery, High Wycombe

Monday 7th INFORMAL BRANCH MEETING

7.00pm, Wheel, Naphill

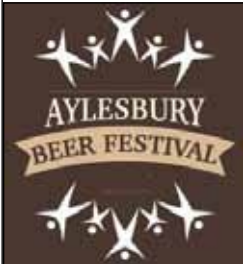
Thursday 24th WENDOVER CRAWL SOCIAL

Starts 7.00pm, King and Queen

November

Friday 1st/Saturday 2nd AYLESBURY BEER FESTIVAL

26th Annual Beer Festival



Held to raise money for the Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity to be held at the

Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School, Oxford Road, Aylesbury, HP21 7QY

Monday 11th BRANCH MEETING

7.00pm, Hop Pole, Aylesbury

Wednesday 20th ASKETT SOCIAL

7.00pm, Stables Bar at the Three Crowns

December

Tuesday 10th BRANCH CHRISTMAS MEAL

6.00pm for 6.30pm, Black Horse, Lacey Green

If you wish to join in, please book in advance with the editor (£5 non-refundable deposit required).

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www.avw.camra.org.uk and facebook

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www.avw.camra.org.uk

Swan Supping

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Copy deadline for next issue (due out 29th November) is 14th November 2019.

Subscriptions :- *Swan Supping* is distributed to over 250 pubs and many other locations in our area but if you would prefer to receive your copy by post we can mail it to you immediately it is published. All you have to do is send £1.50 for each edition you wish to receive to the Editor at the address above (please make all cheques payable to **CAMRA AV & W**) and leave the rest to us! This applies to single copies to UK addresses only. We can mail overseas, but the price will vary depending on the country to which it is to be delivered. Remember that all issues of *Swan Supping* can be downloaded from our website (avw.camra.org.uk).

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Opinions expressed in *Swan Supping* are not necessarily those of the editor, or the *Campaign for Real Ale*.

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

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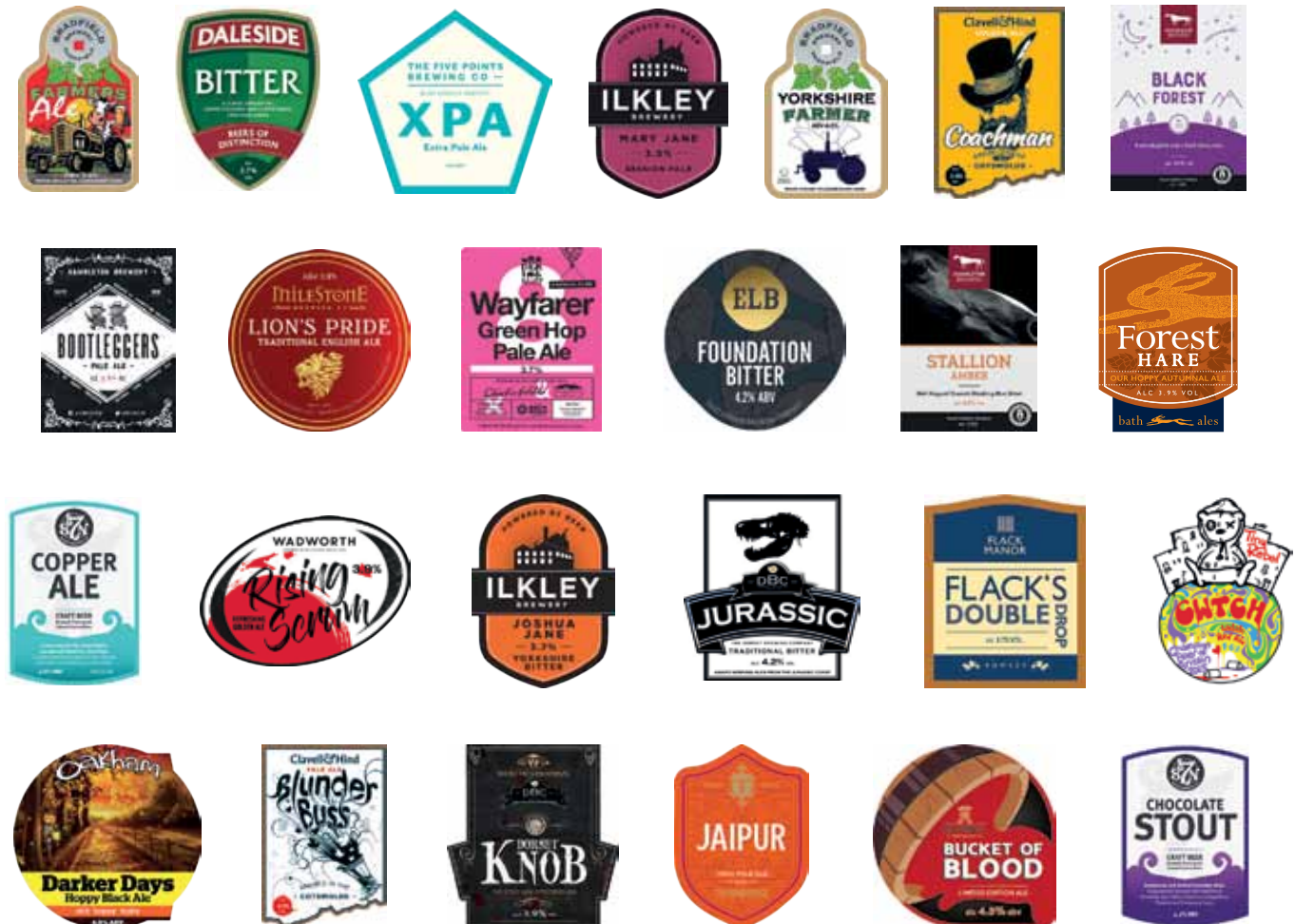
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