

FREE

Swan Supping



Issue 136

Feb/Mar 2020



**The Cross Keys in
Thame was lit up for
Christmas
See Local News**



**Campaign
for
Real Ale**

Newsletter of the Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch of CAMRA

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NEWS FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome to 2020 - I trust you all had an enjoyable time over the festive season.

The changes from the last issue are quite stark as we now have a different dynamic in Parliament and the Brexit withdrawal bill has been put through with barely a murmur. We are all in for a very interesting year!

According to a new Office for National Statistics (ONS) report, the number of pubs and bars in the United Kingdom increased in 2019, the first such increase for a decade. This was only a small increase (315) especially when one considers that since

2001 a quarter of the country's pubs have shut their doors for good. High taxes, high prices, supermarket competition, even the smoking ban have all been blamed, but new types of pub, such as micropubs, and community-owned pubs, are on the increase along with food-led pubs. Let us all hope that this small increase doesn't turn out to be a small 'blip' on the downward spiral we have experienced for so long.

We have had a certain amount of good news on this front as the **Rothschild Arms** in Aston Clinton, featured in recent issues, has been saved. This has taken a great deal of work from a lot of people who were prepared to fight to save their pub from extinction. Further details are given in our Local News section on page 6. They deserve every congratulation, as do the people who have resurrected the **Harrow**, Bishopstone, and the **Dinton Hermit**, Ford, both of which have featured in *Swan Supping*.

Threats to pubs still continue in our area and concern has been expressed that the **Assets of Community Value (ACVs)** that the branch helped set up are due to expire. There is also the threat of pub closures due to the potential merger of Stonegate and Ei Group, which between them own the **Chiltern Taps**, the **Antelope** and the **Three Tuns** in High Wycombe. We cannot, therefore, rest on our laurels, and we must do whatever we can to help our pubs survive. Local **CAMRA** members can help by getting involved and this can start by coming along to our Annual General Meeting at the **Kings Head** in Aylesbury on Monday 2nd of March starting at 7pm. Further details about the meeting appear in the panel to the right.

The AGM is not all business as we always get to enjoy some great beer, have a bottle raffle plus same (hopefully) good conversation. This year, we also have a guest speaker from **Chiltern Brewery** as they enter their fortieth year of brewing. Please try to come along.

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

BRANCH AGM

The Annual General Meeting for the **Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch** of **CAMRA** will be held on Monday 2nd March at the **Kings Head**, Kings Head Passage, Aylesbury HP20 2RW. It will start at 7.00pm and the venue is a restored 15th-century coaching inn owned by the National Trust, with cobbled courtyard and bar run by **Chiltern Brewery** which is celebrating their fortieth year of brewing.

Alexander Wright will be standing down as Chairman at this meeting, therefore a new Chairman will need to be elected.

All other committee positions are also up for re-election at the meeting. If you wish to stand for any position then please look up the description of the role on the **CAMRA** website (<https://members.camra.org.uk/group/guest/branch-opportunities>).

This is the most important meeting of the year and sets out our priorities for the coming year - and one at which we'd very much like to hear directly from as many of our members as possible.

Apart from the AGM and branch meetings, the branch likes to organise social events to visit pubs in the local area (and occasionally elsewhere). We are very keen for suggestions from members -- maybe a pub with new management or one that's off the beaten track that deserves increased attention. Socials can be arranged flexibly at any time to suit our membership's preferences (weekends, weekday evenings or lunchtimes). We'd like to hear your ideas.

We aim to finish the meeting early to allow members to make public transport connections.

If you are a local **CAMRA** member and you care about the branch, please do come along!

**There will be a free buffet
and a bottle raffle will be held to help pay for the evening
(please bring along bottles to be raffled off).**

NATIONAL CAMRA NEWS

Economies of Ale

In response to the new Office for National Statistics' report, 'Economies of ale: changes in the UK pubs and bars sector, 2001 to 2019', Nik Antona, **CAMRA** National Chairman, commented:-

'We cautiously welcome the trend these figures suggest, that small pubs and bars are beginning to 'bounce back' after years of decline and figures have increased between 2018-2019 nationally.

'Unfortunately pubs continue to close across the country, particularly in small or rural communities. This means the loss of the social, cultural and economic benefits that come with a well-run local.

'To ensure pubs survive and thrive, they need a fair tax system and stability going forward. **CAMRA** continues to call on the Government for a review of the business rates system, as was promised in the Conservative general election manifesto, and a lower rate of tax on beer sold in pubs. We urge that these requests are reflected in the forthcoming Budget to help save the great British pub.'

Champion Beer of Britain award to include new beer styles

CAMRA will include new beer styles in its **Champion Beer of Britain** competition, the winner of which is announced each August at **Great**

British Beer Festival in Olympia London.

A review by dedicated beer writers, brewers and **CAMRA** members was launched to determine the most relevant beer styles in the market, resulting in the most far-reaching update since 2008.

The new styles were unveiled at the **Manchester Beer Festival** in January and will feature at the **Great British Beer Festival Winter** in Birmingham (4th-8th of February - more details on page 4) at a series of information/tasting sessions run on opening trade day.

Christine Cryne, who chaired the review said: 'The range of beers in the UK has moved on substantially over the past decade, and our **Champion Beer of Britain** competition needs to reflect that. Many beer styles that were not really noticeable on the market a decade ago have become more prominent and vice versa.

'As a result, the total number of judging categories has been increased and new styles will be entering the competition for the first time, such as IPAs and Pale Ales.

'These changes ensure that the **Champion Beer of Britain** competition remains up-to-date and truly reflects the very best beer in Britain.'



WINTER FESTIVAL MOVES TO BIRMINGHAM!

CAMRA is hosting the *Great British Beer Festival Winter* at the New Bingley Hall,, 1 Hockley Circus, Birmingham B18 5PP.

After three superb years in Norwich, which in turn followed successful festivals in Manchester, a team of volunteers from across the West Midlands are now in the process of bringing this festival much closer to our branch and this is too good an opportunity to miss!

As the West Midlands is a region built on the trade and innovation of the industrial revolution, 2020's festival will be themed 'A Festival of a Thousand Trades', celebrating industry, diversity, and creativity throughout time. This theme will define the drinks on offer, which will include a range of spirits and non-alcoholic options to accompany over 400 beers, ciders and perries that will represent the region, the wider United Kingdom, and beyond.

Alongside a fantastic range of drinks, the festival will also feature:

- A range of local food vendors
- Tutored tastings and talks
- A stage packed with music acts and entertainment
- The announcement of the winners of the *Champion Beer of Britain* winter style categories
- And much more!

Opening Times

Tuesday 4th February – 13:00 – 22:30 (CAMRA members and trade only before 17:00), Wednesday 5th February – 11:00 – 22:30, Thursday 6th February – 11:00 – 22:30, Friday 7th February – 11:00 – 22:30, Saturday 8th February – 11:00 – 19:00

Last entry 30 minutes before close

Getting There

You can take the 16 and 16W bus from Moor Street station (5 min walk from Birmingham New Street) towards Hamstead (Green Ln) | West Bromwich. Get off at the Hockley Circus stop and the venue is a 4 minute walk away. This journey qualifies as a Short Hop on National Express West

Midlands buses, costing just £1.50 each way.

Alternatively, take the 74 bus from Colmore Circus (8 min walk from Birmingham New Street) towards Dudley | West Bromwich and get off at Hockley Circus. The venue is then a 4 minute walk away.

Jewellery Quarter station is a 14 minute walk to the New Bingley Hall, and is served by West Midlands Trains, Chiltern Railways, and Midland Metro. Take the Metro from Birmingham New Street towards Wolverhampton St George's. Get off at Jewellery Quarter and the New Bingley Hall is a 14 minute walk.

Alternatively for the fitter ones among us, the New Bingley Hall is a 34 minute walk from Birmingham New Street station.

Tickets

Tickets will be available to be purchased on the door, but why not save money and buy your ticket in advance at <https://winter.gbbf.org.uk/tickets/>? Advance ticket holders will have priority entry if the venue is at capacity.



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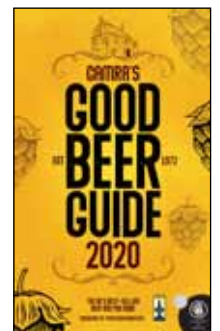


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LOCAL NEWS

ASTON CLINTON

Two handpumps have been moved from the centre of the bar at the **Crows Nest** to a position nearer the far end as you enter, making them less prominent. On a recent visit only one was in use serving a good drop of *Adnams Sloe Storm* - a dark spicy winter ale!

The **Rothschild Arms** has been saved from development!

After a long campaign by locals including a visit to **Punch** headquarters on a coach, **Punch** agreed to start negotiations with the landlords Stuart and Gemma Ladyman. Alongside the campaign, Liz Tubb had, on behalf of the pub, taken the matter to court and had succeeded in getting the matter to the High Court. This is probably one of the first cases of its kind and shows how cases like this can be fought.

The case was withdrawn once **Punch** agreed to sell the pub to its landlords.

Contracts were exchanged on 15th January and completion 29th. The landlords are completing extensive refurbishments on the pub and intend to reopen mid February. Locals cannot wait!

AYLESBURY

The **Aristocrat** has undergone another change, back to what it has been for many years, a 'wet-pub'. The new landlord is Nigel Playford and this is his second pub, the first was the **Village Gate** in Wendover which was devastated by fire last year due to a faulty ice machine after he had been there for only nine months.

Nigel took over the **Fullers** tied **Aristocrat** on the 5th of November last year and following a three-week refurbishment it reopened on the 28th of November. Since then trade has steadily increased as the customers can once again enjoy pool, darts and sport



on TV, things the previous incumbents had stopped. The now dog-friendly pub offers *London Pride* and *Oliver's Island* on handpump plus live music and karaoke with a private function room available for private parties. Three letting rooms are being refurbished and the garden will receive a make-over in the Spring. Opening hours are 3pm-10.30pm Monday to Thursday, 2pm till late on Friday, 12 noon to late on Saturday and 12 noon till 11pm on Sunday.

The **Horse & Jockey** has up to four real ales. Regulars are *Fullers London Pride* and *Sharps Doom Bar* and both are very popular. On Mondays and Thursdays these beers are available at a great price of £2:79, cheaper by 20p for **CAMRA** members. *Black Sheep Twiligher IPA* has also appeared.

A recent visit midweek to the **Rockwood** saw three of the five handpumps in use. *Rockwood Bitter* (3.8%) claimed it was brewed in Burton whilst *Palmers Tally Ho* (5.5%) is a rarity in this area. The third pump had *Rosie Pig* cloudy cider.

BISHOPSTONE

Hard to believe that the **Harrow** has only been open just over three months – it might just seem longer over Christmas in the pub trade! But this is just the beginning – they are looking forward to the spring and summer, when they can make use of their fantastic patio and garden space. Plans are afoot to

have an outdoor bar, local beer festivals, gin weekends ... the possibilities are endless. They will be starting the planting out of the beds and planters, and reworking the kitchen to allow them to cater for what hopefully will be a sunny, and very busy, period. They're looking at expanding their vegan and vegetarian menus (including vegan and gluten free friendly beers), as well as tweaking the à la carte options.

The **Harrow** (whose interior is pictured above) currently hosts three local ales, *Chiltern Pale Ale* and *Beechwood*, and *Vale Gravitas*. They will, in the future, have a regularly changing local guest ale, and any suggestions are welcome! They also have a private dining room, which is free to book, suitable for medium-sized parties and works events.

CADSDEN

The **Plough** reopened before Christmas after a short refurbishment and under new management. We hope to report more details about any changes in a future *Swan Supping*.

CHINNOR

Rebellion beers have featured heavily at the **Red Lion** recently including *Rebellion Roasted Nuts*, *Smuggler* and a barrel of *Winter Royal* in the run-up to Christmas which didn't last long! Monthly Quiz nights continue as well as bimonthly karaoke.

CROWELL

LocAles *Rebellion IPA* and *Animal Hop Kitty* were joined by **Timothy Taylor Landlord** at the **Shepherd's Crook** on a recent visit to this country pub just outside Chinnor.

CUDDINGTON

A beer and bangers festival will be held in March at the **Crown** in aid of the Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity. It takes place on Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th from 12 noon until 11pm. They will have a selection of twelve cask ales and a Prosecco bar. All money raised from the festival bar and the bangers will be going to the hospice!

EMMINGTON

LocAles from *Animal / XT*, *Chiltern*, *Loddon*, *Rebellion* and *Vale* have graced the three pumps at the **Inn at Emmington** over the last couple of months, including the highly regarded *Rebellion Winter Royal* as well as beers from slightly further afield in the shape of *Gun Dog*. Real cider is proving popular here with three available at the last visit - *Lilley's Merry Monkey* and *Wild Dog* and *Orchard Pig Hogfather Off-beer*. The **Inn** remains busy with the weekly Friday Builders' Buffet returning (free bar snack and nibbles from 4 'til 6), home-cooked pub grub served Monday-Saturday 6-9 and Saturday and Sunday lunchtimes 12-3). Local band the Muttz Nuttz play on Leap Day, 29th February and all Six Nations matches will be screened in the bar area. David and Sharon celebrate three years at the helm on 31st March with a quiz and bingo party - warm *Swan Supping* congratulations to them.

FORD

The **Dinton Hermit** has had a good first

January and is fast becoming a real ale destination. They serve *XT 4 (Dinton Hermit)*, *Chiltern Pale Ale*, *Tring Side Pocket for a Toad*, and *Animal Narwhal* (North Atlantic pale ale) on the bar pictured bottom left. Sunday lunches in particular are very popular and being located on the Aylesbury Ring, local footpath improvements are making it more accessible for walkers.

The work on their outside landscaping is underway and they are aiming to have the outside seating areas completed in time for the late Spring.

Their next event will be a Valentine's menu from February 13-15th followed by a special Mothering Sunday menu on March 22nd.

They have had a fantastic response since opening with a lot of support from local residents and people travelling to them from surrounding villages.

GRENDON UNDERWOOD

The **Swan** is now trading again. Closed since Spring 2018 and after extensive refurbishment, it reopened just before Christmas. Further details next issue.

HIGH WYCOMBE

Winter warmers, Christmas specials and just recently Burns Night brews have all been filtering through town centre **Wetherspoons** establishment the **Falcon** (Commarket). *Oakham Below Zero* (4.1%), *Sambrook's Powerhouse Porter* (4.9%) and *Haggis Hunter* (4.3%) from Scottish brewer **Harviestoun** are some of the cask ales that have been on at their bar wickets during the winter period. **CAMRA** members 50p discount with their valid tokens.

High Wycombe Rugby Club, Kingsmead Rd, will be holding a beer festival from Friday 21st to 23rd of February offering beers from the following breweries; *Rebellion*, *Chiltern*, *XT*, *Fishers*, *Bucks Star*, *Malt the Brewery* and *Vale*.

They have three music acts on the Saturday and the 6 Nations games live on the big screen and a BBQ on the go for food on Saturday. Free entry and the drinks are at very affordable prices.

The **Masons Arms** now has real ale. There is a handpump serving *Greene King IPA*. There were also two fonts serving *Rebellion Winter Royal* and *Fishers APA* when visited recently.

Street-corner locals' local the **Rose & Crown** (Desborough Road) is still showcasing four handpumped cask ales. Recent beers have included *Dartmoor Jail Ale* (4.8%), *Ossett Nervous Turkey* (4.3%), *Otter Elf* (4.0%) and house beer *Thwaites Crown Jewels* (3.8%). Devon ales from the **Salcombe** brewery have also featured of late in this re-energised public house.

ICKFORD

The **Rising Sun** has a guest ale at the weekend with *Harvey's Pale* featuring recently. Something a bit different that has proved popular has been **Adnam's Ghost Ship** citrus pale ale at 0.5%.

LONG CRENDON

The **Churchill Arms** regularly has an *Animal* on tap such as *Hen*. Regular ales are **Timothy Taylor Landlord** and **Tring**





Side Pocket for a Toad.

The **Eight Bells** is getting ready for St. Valentine's Day with a special menu. Serving *XT 4*, *Animal Hen*, *Vale VPA*, with *XT Hop Kitty* on order.

LUDGERSHALL

At the **Bull & Butcher** other ales have been tried but they always have to return to *Greene King IPA* to satisfy the wants of the locals. The Six Nations and St. Valentine's Night will feature heavily on the local social calendar.

MARLOW

At the **McMullen's** emporium **Baroosh** (56-58 High Street) in the centre of town, only one solitary cask ale remains on the bar, at present the January monthly special *Oatmalt Stout* (4.4%), a rather intriguing Winter brew. The **Baroosh** appear to be only rotating their breweries monthly specials of late, so worth a pop in when in the High Street. It has also been reported that it may change its name to the **Duke of Clarence!** We will keep you informed!

The **Chequers** (pictured above) on the town's High Street has reached the finals of the Publican Awards 2020, a national competition that rewards the 'cream of the cream' of the UK pub industry! Operated by Henley-based pub operator and brewer **Brakspear**, the pub is shortlisted for the Best Pub Accommodation Award, the winners of which will be announced in March.

Reaching the finals is the first stage in the Publican Awards' rigorous judging process. The next steps include a visit by judges to several of the pubs, professional mystery visits and a panel interview in London for the **Brakspear** senior management team.

A respectable **Brakspear Gravity Bitter** (3.4%) is the sole real ale attendee on handpump at the **Claytons Lounge** (Quoiting Square) when visited at the end of January.

Since its opening in mid-November, the **Crafty Taproom** (77 High Street) has had a multitude of craft beers through their taps, with the likes of *Elusive*, *Mad Yank*, *Phantom*, *Quantock*, *Time & Tide* and *Tiny Rebel* breweries to name but a few.

Over the festive period the **George & Dragon** (The Causeway) had an unusual Christmas brew available, *Adnams Sloe Storm* (4.0%) that washed the turkey roasts down pleasingly.

A recent attendance at the **Old Brewery**

(High Street) uncovered four real ales, **Rebellion IPA** (3.7%) & **Roasted Nuts** (4.6%), **Sharp's Doom Bar** (4.0%) and **Fuller's London Pride** (4.1%). A resident DJ was 'banging some tunes' on the Friday night in question.

Three town brewed **Rebellion** beers, namely *IPA* (3.7%), *Roasted Nuts* (4.6%) and January monthly special *Knockout* (4.2%) were on parade at the **Ship** (West Street) recently. Still a popular watering hole for the locals in the town.

OAKLEY

The regulars at the **Chandos Arms** love **Fuller's London Pride** and **Greene King IPA**. Wednesdays & Thursdays see ribeye or fillet steak with all the trimmings and a sauce for £15, lunch-times or dinner. Chateau Briand for two for £30.

PRINCES RISBOROUGH

The new management of the **Bird in Hand** celebrated its first anniversary in January. The popular community pub has served a wide and changing range of real ales during this time. It's only a five minute or so walk from Princes Risborough station, so a lot cosier than the waiting room for the many readers who pick up *Swan Supping* at the station.

Owners Darrell Peter and Sarah Cook of Tring business **Craft Yard** are opening their third craft beer taproom at 39 High Street (old NatWest bank) hopefully during May 2020. Other **Craft Yard** premises are sited in Tring and Aylesbury, this new venture will hopefully link up the **Bell** (Bell Street) and the **Whiteleaf Cross** (Market Square) whilst on a pub crawl in the town. Another public house in Princes Risborough is the **Bird in Hand** (Station Road), handy when walking to and from the town's train station. The town, like most places, has had their public house numbers diminish in recent years, with the **Black Prince** and the **Buckingham Arms** calling time and the **George & Dragon** currently closed!

SYDENHAM

Timothy Taylor Landlord, **Rebellion IPA** and **Smuggler** were the three ales spotted on a recent visit to the **Crown**, a community-owned village in the delightful village of Sydenham (Midsomer Murders territory!)

Landlord Pete formerly worked for **Rebellion** so the beer quality is always

top-notch here. Sunday roasts are very popular, served between 12 and 3.45 on a Sunday with booking essential. Occasionally live music is performed here, with local faves MFU playing recently. Check their Facebook page for further details.

THAME

The **Cross Keys** (pictured all lit up for Christmas on our front cover) is holding a beer festival on Saturday 22nd February where there will be beer, comedy and music. Beer available all day, live music from midday and comedy from 8pm.

TIDDINGTON

The **Fox & Goat** currently serves *XT 4*, **Young's Bitter** and **Greene King Abbot Ale**. Upcoming events include a St. Valentine's Dinner at £40pp, and they are showing all the Rugby Six Nations matches with **Guinness** at half price during matches.

WENDOVER

It looks like the inevitable is a bit closer with the remains of the **Village Gate** now on the market. The pub was devastated by a fire last year (see our October/November issue) and is now being offered as an 'excellent redevelopment opportunity'. Meanwhile, building has started on the site of the **End of the World**.

WINSLOW

The 15th **Winslow Beer Festival** will be held on Friday 13th (7pm - 11pm) and Saturday 14th (Two sessions: Matinee 1pm - 7pm (hopefully with Live RBS

Six Nations Rugby being shown), Sat. Evening 7 - 11pm) of March at the Public Hall, Elmfields Gate, Winslow, Bucks. MK18 3JA.

As ever, a varied selection of forty beers and ciders this year from around Britain. This is a Festival run by the Lions Club of Winslow and run as their major fund-raising event for local charities, so come and 'Drink for Charity'. Last year they raised over £10,500!

New for 2020: Gin and Wine Bar with gins from local distiller Fox Denton Estate.

Session entrance fee £5 including a commemorative glass and programme. Light refreshments available. Tickets available in advance from 1st March from the **Bell Hotel**, Market Square, Winslow.

Details of the beers that will be on offer will be available from 1st March on the Winslow Lions Facebook and Twitter Pages.

This is the Lions' fifteenth festival and has proved to be very popular so ensure you get your tickets early, as venue capacity will restrict numbers.

More details will be available on their website www.winslowlions.org.uk.



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HAVE WE LOST OUR

Incongruous as it may seem at the start of 2020, but some of this country's institutions remain beacons of international culture. Near the very top of this list is the magnificent British Museum in London.

This world-renowned centre of erudition sits a little off the beaten track for many who visit London for more workaday purposes, like shopping on Oxford Street or in Covent Garden, going on demonstrations or visiting the theatre or cinema. Consequently, the tree-lined streets that surround the museum in leafy Bloomsbury are surprisingly tranquil.

But London being London, that presents a great opportunity for a pub crawl that's both historic and unlikely to encounter the crowds of modern-day, lager louts that descend on the West End on busy evenings. The crawl zig-zags along the streets between two adjacent Piccadilly Line stations – Russell Square and Holborn.



We start at Russell Square. Literally behind the tube station, on Herbrand Street is the **Friend at Hand**. According to *CAMRA's WhatPub* website it's the only pub in the country with that name. But it does have a lot in common with many other London pubs in being a **Greene King** house. Since the recently taken-over brewer snapped up the *Taylor Walker* pub chain a couple of years ago, the streets of London appear to have been swamped by these East Anglian invaders. There's a **Greene King** house on every street corner in some places.

Fortunately, the old *Taylor Walker* pubs continue to sell a variety of ales from outside the **Greene King** portfolio. On my visit, the **Friend at Hand** offered *Sambrook's Red Ale* and *Portobello's Japanese Pale Ale (JPA)*. The pub is comfortable, decorated with mirrors and dark wood. While it attracts a touristy dining crowd, it also offers a friendly welcome to drinkers.

Opposite the pub is the curiously named Horse Hospital, dating back to 1797 and built as a stable for sick cab drivers' horses. It's currently an arts venue but is under threat of imminent closure due to prospective large rent increases. It's a familiar story to pub lovers – places of communal pleasure constantly facing being turned into housing development 'opportunities' – opportunities that are, of course, only of benefit to super-rich investors.

Hopefully, one pub that will never fall to the property speculators is the next on the crawl, reached by a stroll down Guilford Street. The **Lamb** in Lamb's Conduit Street is famous for its interior – subject of a *CAMRA Heritage* listing. This historic *Young's* house has a rare example of the moveable 'snob screens' that were in fashion in the late nineteenth century to give privacy to



drinkers at the bar.

The real ale range extends beyond the *Young's* brands. Sadly, but unsurprisingly after the family sell-off of the Ram Brewery in Wandsworth, these are now brewed by *Marstons*. On my visit handpumps offered many beers from London brewers who've picked up the baton dropped by *Young's*. They included *Sambrook's Red and Pale*, *By the Horns' Hopadelic*, *Wimbledon's SW19* and *Dorking's Pacific Gold*.

A very short walk from the **Lamb** is the **Perseverance**. Ale drinkers whose memories stretch back to the 1980s and 90s will remember the pub as the **Sun**. In this incarnation it was a trailblazer in the pre-Beer Orders days for real ale choice, offering a wide selection of ales from small breweries when most pubs were tied to their owners' ranges. As the **Perseverance**, it leans towards gastropubbiness with menus on clipboards and that malarkey but it retains an airy, stripped-back charm. There are now four handpumps, mostly featuring ales from small breweries, such as *Five Points Pale*.



The **Perseverance** is on the corner of Great Ormond Street, home of the children's hospital. Some of your fellow drinkers may be off-duty medical staff drawn from around the globe by the hospital's world-renown. Walk down Great Ormond Street and cross quaint Queen's Square to find the **Queen's Larder** on the corner with Cosmo Place.

The name **Queen's Larder** isn't a topical reference to any precautionary royal stockpiling of spam and tinned King Edwards. It refers to Queen Charlotte, wife of George III, who reputedly rented a room under the pub while the king received treatment nearby for insanity. It's a snug, cosy pub, decorated with fascinating pictures and bric-a-brac. The gallant theme even runs to providing poetry in the gents' toilets.

Despite the pub's small size there were still some unusual ales on offer: *Truman's Zephyr* and *Black Sheep's Monty Python's Black Knight Reserve* (maybe in honour of the sadly deceased Terry Jones – whose erudite interest in history must have seen him visit many museums.)



R (ELGIN) MARBLES?

The **Swan** is virtually next door in Cosmo Place. On first impressions, it's a long, narrow, rather standard-looking **Greene King** pub. However, the **Swan** offers an impressive range of ales. It included on my visit: *Avocet* from **Exeter Brewery**, *Powerhouse Porter* from **Sambrook's**, *Hammerton's NI* and *Wimbledon's Copper Leaf* and *Common*.



The **Swan** is also a pub that champions traditional British food. One blackboard proudly lists a choice of Fish and Chips, Big Fish and Chips, Chicken and Chips, Scampi and Chips and, as an exotic twist, Halloumi and Chips. That sort of variety doesn't come cheap. The asking price for just the basic fish and chips is £13.79. Then again, it's right by the tourist hotel strip along Southampton Row so maybe it's a snip for European or American visitors who nowadays are able to convert their own currencies at near parity at the local bureaux de change.

Bloomsbury Way. On the opposite corner is the **Old Crown** – a rare **McMullen's** pub in the capital. It serves a couple of the Hertford brewer's real ales from cask – typically *Country Bitter* and *AK Mild*. It has a small downstairs bar but there's a lounge upstairs and a restaurant on the floor above that.



It also opens until three o'clock in the morning on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings so convenient for real-ale drinking hell-raisers. It may also be handy for performers from the Museum



of Comedy, which is opposite, in the undercroft of St George's Church, Bloomsbury. This hosts an intimate venue where well-known comedians discreetly practise their new material in front of small audience.

Head down New Oxford Street to High Holborn and the last pub – the legendary **Princess Louise**. Its spectacular late nineteenth-century décor has long elevated it to the status of one London's most celebrated pubs. The island bar is surrounded by a restored multi-roomed interior adorned with a spectacular array of gilt mirrors, marble finishings and other Victoriana.



Unfortunately, the same can't be said about the real ale. In fact, you're fortunate to get a choice of one: **Sam Smith's Old Brewery Bitter**. Many of the steadfastly old-fashioned Yorkshire brewer's pubs in London are keg only – a salutary example of how miserable life would be if we ale drinkers were crazy enough to turn the clock back to the pre-CAMRA darkness of the early 1970s.

From the **Princess Louise** it's a short walk to Holborn tube station where one can reflect that, even without setting foot in the British Museum itself, with pubs like these it's easy to imagine oneself stepping back in time.

Charlie Mackle



Leaving the **Swan**, we cross busy Southampton Row. The most direct route heads towards Bloomsbury Square but the **Holborn Whippet** on Sicilian Avenue is well worth a short detour. Run by the same people as the **Euston Tap**, this busy bar serves an excellent selection of cask and keg ales, often from the likes of *Siren Craft* and *Dark Star*.

Walk along Great Russell Street for a first glimpse of the magnificent colonnaded façade of the British Museum itself. As well as foreign tourists, keep a sharp eye out for coachloads of school children in high-visibility tabards. You may wish to take a detour from the pub crawl inside the museum itself to check on the Elgin Marbles (don't worry it's free). If so, it's easy to form the impression that, apart from the odd mad professor or other weird expert in something or other, no British person over the age of eighteen ever sets foot in the British Museum. With such a selection of good pubs in the vicinity is that such a surprise?

The closest pub is even named in honour of the museum. The **Museum Tavern** is another Victorian **CAMRA** heritage pub with splendid stained-glass windows and five sets of doors, reflecting its multi-roomed history. Another **Greene King** pub, it also has a decent variety of ales, including *Sambrook's Junction* and is a regular outlet in the capital for *Theakston's Old Peculiar*.

Continue down Bury Place to the busy junction of New Oxford Street with

LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

Chiltern Brewery



2020 is set to be a big year at the *Chiltern Brewery* as the second-generation family run brewery enters into their 40th year of brewing!

The brewery started the decade by releasing the limited edition *Chiltern Ruby* in cask, which proved hugely popular both at the brewery shop and the brewery tap, the *King's Head* in Aylesbury. Needless to say, the beer was named after the 40th Anniversary milestone this year! Throughout the year the brewery will be releasing a number of limited edition brews that celebrate what the brewery has become best known for - reviving traditional styles of beer and pioneering new ones.



Another development at their shop in Terrick is the installation of keg lines so visitors can enjoy the brewery's growing range of keg beers - *Chiltern Craft Lager*, *Golden Harvest* and *Chiltern Black*.

Head Brewer Tom Jenkinson is also proud about the brewery's 40th Anniversary Celebration Ale, available exclusively in bottle. For this limited edition sparkling ale, they have used only the finest British malts along with Olicana and Bramling Cross hops to brew a smooth, fruity and powerful IPA that is



the ideal replacement for champagne at any special occasion. They have only released 1,000 bottles, so make sure to get your hands on one whilst they're still available!

Fishers Brewery

Most of the success of *Fishers* is via 90% keg sales at the taproom and to their contract clients but in an attempt to diversify again in 2020 they have revived their core four cask beers for wholesale and the local pub trade, permanently available for the year. They will have an additional beer on cask and keg every 60 days or so to run alongside, too. For January and February this is 3.8% *NZ Pale* in cask and a 7% *DIPA* on keg.



After a busy December, they brewed furiously for the whole of January to build up stock. They have moved their taproom bar upstairs and have eight keg lines on at all times and revamped their membership scheme to include the following: *Fishers Brew Co.* baseball cap, free pint at all public brewery events (comedy night, open night, gigs etc), increased discount of 20% across bar and shop plus free venue hire for members.

They're having their monthly open evening on Friday February 7th - why not join the branch there for a social?

Loddon Brewery

Loddon ended the year well, with a record-breaking Christmas which saw year-on-year December sales up 28%. A large part of this was down to their taproom and shop, which has really taken off over the past 18 months. This year they plan to continue reinvesting, increasing its size and moving the shop to its own dedicated building.



Head brewer Jake has lined up a load of new beers for 2020, carrying on the theme of brewing totally new styles while remaining loyal to their core brands.

The monthly special for February is *Six Pack* (4.2%) which is a blonde ale (Six Nations rugby) and for March it is *B'Gorrah* (5%) which is an Oat Stout (St Patrick's Day).

Their session IPA Quad Series for January and February is *Eureka Quad* (4.4%) - US hop, dark fruits and herbal flavours. For March and April it is *Rakau Quad* (4.4%) - NZ hop, passionfruit and pine flavours.



They offer Saturday Brewery tours. Starting in March, three tours each Saturday 10am, 12pm, and 2pm.

Rebellion Brewery

Rebellion's 2020 sporting beer range has started with *Knockout*, which has proved very popular.

February's monthly beer is called *Sin Bin* (4.2%). This dark and mellow beer will be perfect to enjoy whilst watching the Six Nations Rugby.

March's beer is called *Slipstream*. It will be red in colour and will offer drinker a lovely malty experience.

Gold (4.4%) is still their seasonal beer with *Amber* (4.3%) coming in the Spring.



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MORE LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

Tring Brewery

Tring Brewery are proud to announced that they have joined forces with Chilterns Dog Rescue Society - their charity of choice for 2020. The team at **Tring Brewery** will collaborate with the local rescue centre, brewing twelve monthly specials named after our fun-loving, furry friends. In return for their beery inspiration, **Tring Brewery** will raise funds and awareness for Chilterns Dog Rescue Society throughout 2020.



Chilterns Dog Rescue Society was founded in 1963, finding homes for tens of thousands of dogs over 50 years in the local area.



XT Brewery

The New Year sees a new pair of hands at the **XT** brewing helm with Craig Bennett taking over as head brewer from Vinny Rosario. Craig has over twenty years of experience in brewing, having worked at a number of breweries both big and small from around the country.

He is a brewing graduate from Herriot Watt and qualified with the Brewing Institute Master Brewer Programme. Craig will be brewing the full range of **XT** and **Animal** beers and heading up the brewing team at Long Crendon while adding a few speciality brews of his own to the already extensive beer line up. Craig is passionate about cask beers and will be a great addition to the team at **XT** working to promote and develop the amazing range of beers in the **XT** portfolio.

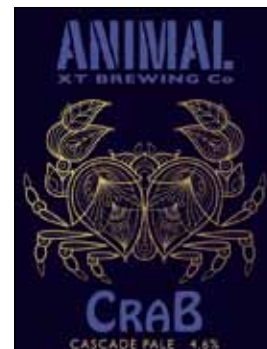
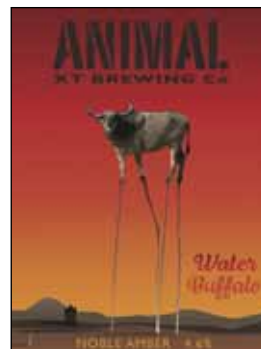
After five years at **XT**, Vinny has now ironically moved up to Craig's old home town of Edinburgh to start his own brewing venture there. The new brewery will be called **Origin Brewing** and Vinny has teamed up with another former **XT** brewer: Fin Heslop to develop a range of new beers which they expect to start flowing from their taproom in summer.

The new year has also seen a new bottle beer – the **HopKitty** is now available in bottle, but the cat has been at the cream and the bottle puss weighs in at 4.6% - the brewers wanted a more punchy version than the pub cat. Expect all the same great hop forward flavours but with longer claws

The **Animal** cask beers have been flowing as well with a brace of new wildlife:

Water Buffalo (4.6%). A Noble Amber - packed with the most noble of hops and continental malts. Regal floral, orange and herbal flavours in the forefront with hints of black pepper, blackcurrant and spices dancing in the background. Finished off with biscuit notes for a delectable beer, proving that sometimes you can't beat old-school!

Crab (4.6%). An artful but sideways look at a pale ale matched with a citrus twang from north American cascade hops.



The first beer in this range was January's *Hair of the Dog* (4.0%). This hop forward golden ale utilises US Simcoe hops for punchy, fruity flavours and tropical aromas. Rye malt has been used in the grist to provide a crisp, spicy finish.

The beer for February is *Snaggletooth* (3.9%). Bramling Cross is a stalwart British hop, bringing blackcurrant flavours and spice to this amber beer. Notes of sweet malt and raisins are derived from Aromatic malt rounding out this bright, British ale.

Tail Chaser (4.1%) is the offering for March. Showcasing a new English hop and a heritage malt, this pale ale is brewed using oats for a smooth, soft mouthfeel. Expect citrus, marmalade and spice from X35.

To round off their amazing year collaborating with Gaddesden Place Riding for the Disabled, **Tring** are pleased to bring back the most popular monthly special of 2019 – *Nosebag*. *Nosebag* made its delicious debut during February last year, their first ever attempt at an Extra-Special Bitter. The classic ESB is characterised by its balance and extreme drinkability.

Paying homage to this style, they have used black malt to give colour without astringency and Fuggle hops to offer a fine but gentle aroma and bitterness. Back as their first seasonal of 2020, *Nosebag* will be available on draught until the end of February.

Vale Brewery

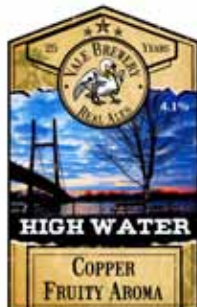
Vale Brewery have been proudly brewing award winning real ales for 25 years, and to celebrate, they have created some fantastic new brews to see us through the year!

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

Best Buy (4.3%). A light copper premium ale style with intense roast malts. Rich biscuit aroma with hints of honey on the nose.

Templar (3.9%). Deep Golden Ale with soft malt flavours combined with floral hop aromas, resulting in a well rounded finish.

High Water (4.1%). Copper in colour, this ale has aromas of fresh pineapple and hints of pear. A well-balanced brew.





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THE CASKITEERS - PART TEN

On an extremely dark and dispiriting Friday at the end of January, Harry picked up the post from **Eaten Trifles**' personalised doormat, which had the greeting 'No Proles. Loaded Hipsters Only' embroidered into its stiff bristles. It made Harry think fondly of Jakes, who'd come up with the wording. As luck would have it, another analogue Instagram post (known to proles as a postcard) had dropped through the letterbox.

Harry admired the images of sunny beaches fringed by palm trees with turquoise seas enjoyed by frolicking young members of the international jet-set.

It fell to Ruthie, the Scottish brewer, to read Jacob's message on the card to Harry. 'Pater managed to embezzle a few million from an NHS private finance initiative to get me out of the clink and now I'm in a luxury all-inclusive resort themed as a pirate ship. Shame I'll have to leave tout suite for my month skiing in Crookstown, Colorado. I'll perhaps be back for the Henley Regatta. By the way, give them hell in the Shackexeunt negotiations.'

'Shackexeunt?' Ruthie paused to question the term.

'Yes, it's Jake's sophisticated Latin way of referring to our declaration of independence from the Shackney craft beer community and removing ourselves from its shackles,' Harry replied, slightly hesitantly.

'But I keep telling you, you're slap bang in the middle of the Shackney High Street craft beer strip. It's the only reason folk ever come through the door,' Ruthie said.

'Jakes says he's got Shackexeunt done and it's up to me to sort out mere geographical details,' Harry said, stroking his beard in a dangerous sign that he might be having an independent thought. He then decided better of it. 'Carry on reading.'

'OK,' Ruthie looked again at the postcard. 'Meanwhile, old bean, I must admit it's rather spiffing lounging in the sun drinking champagne on tap, enjoying the fruits of my hard work.'

'Work! That fraud doesn't know the meaning of the word,' Harry fumed. 'Whereas I'm in this dreadful, dismal country with my nose to the single Arabica estate coffee-grinder.'

'Yous means grindstone?' Ruthie shook her head indignantly. 'You must have spent about three hours in the bar in the whole of last week – and that was buying punters drinks to show off your new lassie, that Demelza.'

'Exactly!' Harry agreed. 'And it's so tough creating that atmosphere of bonhomie of mine host. I mean, trying to remember the difference between a *Quadruple-hopped Celeriac Porter* and a *Double Coconut Apache Sour* is a tough gig in any chap's book.'

'You try brewing them, then,' Ruthie muttered under her breath.

'And Demelza, she's such a stick,' Harry said. 'She so happily pops down to Shackney to sip on a *Pea Tendril* and *Nightshade Infused IPA*. I do rather enjoy a canter with her, but the poor filly is frightfully homesick.'

Next evening, Harry and Demelza hosted a party of their hipster friends at Eaten Trifles. Demelza had the flame-haired, wild-rose beauty that only the most expensive salons could engineer. As she held a glass of *Witch-Hazel* and *Ozone Triple Bock*, she looked longingly at the new man in her life as he tried to impress his boarding school chums by sinking a yard of *Kimchi* and *Parsnip IPA* down in one.

Any drinkers with human empathy could have detected a sadness in Demelza's eyes and a tragic wistfulness in the way she stared into her sixth of a pint of *Carpet Cleaner Porter*. But there were, of course, vanishingly few craft beer bar hipsters who weren't narcissistic and self-obsessed egotists. It fell to Ruthie to take Demelza to one side.

In a heart-to-heart around the back of the mash tun, Demelza poured out her angst. 'I'm homesick. I want to go back to my own county — a place where the sun shines slightly more than in Shackney and where a hipster is an operation you can get on the NHS,' she sobbed. 'I need to return to my beloved Cornwall – to the simple life of growing cauliflowers and daffodils. It's a place of true romance, where every old pub hasn't been turned into a craft beer bar but is converted into a celebrity-chef seafood restaurant instead.'

Ruthie nodded attentively with an arm around Demelza's shoulder, offering her a sip of *Peppermint* and *Harts' Horn Mild*.

Demelza continued. 'Cornwall is a place where we harvest apples with our own teeth and then tread them to make our drink — my drink — scrumpy! But how do I tell Harry I don't really like craft beer?'

'Yous could boak it all over his precious checked shirt so he ends up with lumps in his beard?' Ruthie sympathetically suggested. 'That's the polite Glasgie way.'

'If that's the only way to get Harry to a hard life of surfing in West Country!' Demelza said. 'But I still have to convince his scary mater.'

'And doesnae she own the **Eaten Trifles** freehold?' Ruthie asked.

Harry's mother, Elyssa, was a formidably stern woman. She sat at the head of one of **Eaten Trifles** trendily recycled wooden schoolmasters' desks. Harry and Demelza huddled together at the far end while she heard their request, brow deeply furrowed under her furry hat.

'So, you want to be released from your **Eaten Trifles** duties to go and become a beach bum in Cornwall?' she thundered, slamming her handbag on the desk. 'But you still want to be paid out of the profits from here?'

'Well, one can't live on fresh air, mater,' Harry replied.

'Fresh air is what can be found between your ears,' Elyssa retorted.

Demelza downed a third of *Roman Ammonium IPA*, which instantly gave her the courage to stand up. 'Don't be so cruel to the love of my life, you miserable old boot.'

'Go west of the Tamar to idle in the land of the savage cider drinkers and I shall disinherit you both, you Celtic gold-digger,' Elyssa raged.

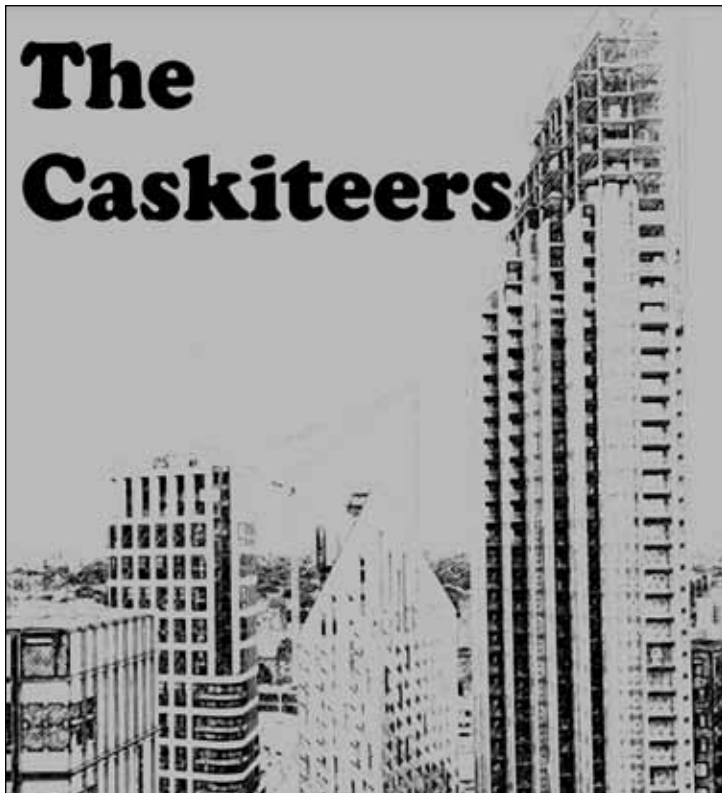
'Maybe I could open a craft beer bar on the beach?' Harry suggested.

'No. You promised me scrumpy,' Demelza cried. 'It's me or craft beer. It's money for doing nothing or a rosy apple future with me in a far-off land.'

Harry took a gulp of *Artichoke* and *Fig Platinum Ale*. 'Tough call,' he mused. 'Mater, can you sub Demelza her train fare back to Truro?'

Demelza stormed out, ripping the doormat with her needle-sharp Louboutins.

Charlie Mackle



Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

February

Monday 3rd INFORMAL BRANCH MEETING

7.00pm, Hop Pole, Aylesbury

Tuesday 4th - Saturday 8th G.B.B.F WINTER

Great British Beer Festival Winter has moved to the New Bingley Hall, Birmingham following three years in Norwich. As always, the Great British Beer Festival will include a wide range of beer styles, from stouts and porters to bitters and golden pales. See page 4 for further details.

Wednesday 19th HIGH WYCOMBE SOCIAL

Start 6.30pm Rose and Crown

Saturday 22nd CROSS KEYS BEER FESTIVAL

12.00 onwards Cross Keys, Thame

March

Monday 2nd BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7.00pm Kings Head, Aylesbury. All local **CAMRA** members should try to come along as we decide the future of the branch. Besides the business part of the evening, there will be a buffet, a bottle raffle and a guest speaker from **Chiltern Brewery**. Full details on page 3

Friday 6th SOCIAL

7.00pm, Fisher's Brewery, High Wycombe

Monday 9th BRANCH MEETING

7.00pm, Bird in Hand, Princes Risborough

Thursday 19th SOCIAL

7.30pm, Horse and Jockey, Aylesbury

Tuesday 31st SOCIAL

8.00pm, Harrow, Bishopstone

April

Friday 3rd - Sunday 5th CAMRA NATIONAL AGM

CAMRA's National Annual General Meeting and Members' Weekend, takes place in York. More details next issue.

Further details can be found on
www.avw.camra.org.uk and facebook

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Keep up with the latest local pub news, be given beer festival information plus the latest social details, please join our e-mailing list by going to:-

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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 out 31st March) is 13th March 2020.

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

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Le De Spencers Arms

The 'Le De' is a little flint pub, nestling in the woods at the back of Downley Common surrounded by acres of beautiful AONB land with miles of trails. Making it the ideal refreshment stop after hiking or biking. Inside you will find a warm, friendly atmosphere with an open fire, low ceilings and rustic beams. Landlady Sarah serves excellent home-cooked food alongside a great line-up of real ales and wines.

Visit our website for the menu, planned events, local walks and read some of the history of this 250 year old pub.

01494 535317
www.ledespencersarms.co.uk

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