

FREE

Swan Supping



Issue 140

Spring 2024



**The Buckinghamshire
Branch of CAMRA
celebrates fifty years of
campaigning!**

See Report on Page 4



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

Newsletter of the Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch of CAMRA

avw.camra.org.uk

Est. Readership 6000

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NEWS FROM THE EDITOR



Our apologies for making you all wait for so long between issues of *Swan Supping*. We do intend to get back to a more regular schedule, but you must appreciate the difficulties involved!

Sadly, I'm having to list a lot of people who are no longer with us, but are still missed.

We heard that Bryan Spink, my co-editor for the first couple of years, passed away in April 2022. *Swan Supping* was started using Bryan's computer at the **Huntsman**, Walton Court, when he was the landlord.



Bryan moved away from Aylesbury and ended up in Northwich, Cheshire, so we only tended to see him at the **Great British Beer Festival!** He maintained his love of real ale, especially at the **Salty Dog**, Doctor Who and he also championed live music, not just by going to gigs, but promoting groups on his YouTube channel.

Brian West passed away in August, just four months after a Pancreatic Cancer diagnosis. Brian was at his happiest in a pub with a pint in his hand. So, distributing *Swan Supping* around Thame's drinking establishments was not really a chore. He enjoyed beer festivals and those in Haddenham, Stoke Mandeville and the **GBBF** (where he is pictured below in the centre)



in London, were all regularly attended.

Brian was a keen train enthusiast and helped at our local Steam Railway - Princes Risborough and Chinnor Heritage Railway. He drew the line at being Santa on the Christmas special, preferring to manage the beer purchasing

and sales. His last years were unusual in that his beloved Brentford FC managed to gain Premiership status for the first time since they were in the old 1st Division in 1946/47. As a season ticket holder their two successful seasons gave him a lot of joy.

In January we also lost Bruce Seymour, an active **CAMRA** member in Aylesbury. Bruce had become very reclusive since Covid and following a bad fall last November which led to a sharp deterioration in his health and hospitalisation over Christmas. We understand that Bruce had stipulated in his will that he did not want a funeral and his brother in North Wales arranged for a short service to be held there instead.

In Marlow we lost John (JJ) Wilkinson who was a leading light at **Marlow British Legion**, including organising many of their popular beer festivals, and picking up barrels from Derbyshire breweries on his trips to his beloved Chesterfield FC.

Also, on the day before his 70th birthday, a great friend of mine, Keith Vance, passed away following illness and a spell in hospital. He was well known in the **Old Millwrights** and the **Bricklayers**, as he and his wife, Chris, went through the day's papers enjoying a few drinks and friendly conversation with the other customers.

Our condolences go to the families and many friends of all those whose passing has been listed above.

Black Country Trip

This year's **Black Country Trip** is scheduled for Saturday 29th of June and has already been booked as we didn't want to miss out on the date planned as we did last year! The cost is £41, which is just one pound more than the trip last September! Full details are given on page 14. The best day out of the year won't disappoint anyone as we visit both old and new favourites.

This will definitely be the highlight of the summer as **CAMRA** have announced that there will be no **Great British Beer Festival** this year due to building work which is to be carried out.

Once again, my thanks go to all who have contributed to the making and the delivering of this issue of *Swan Supping*. Special thanks to Colin Stanford for his cartoon.

David Roe, *Swan Supping* Editor

editor@avw.camra.org.uk

NATIONAL CAMRA NEWS



Reacting to the launch of the 'Fresh Ale' concept by CMBC, the **Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA)** has asked for investigations into whether the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations have been breached.

The **Campaign** has written to National Trading Standards and Trading Standards Scotland asking for an investigation into the products, which use a cask handpump to serve the beer, which is kegged rather than cask conditioned.

This is the start of the 'Handpump Hijack' campaign to raise awareness of misleading beer dispense, and make sure that the handpump remains a signifier of cask-conditioned beer.

In the letters, Gillian Hough, National Director and Chairman of **CAMRA's Real Ale, Cider and Perry Campaigns Committee**, said:

'**CAMRA** believes that these practices come under the scope of the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008, as the average consumer may choose to buy the product on the basis that they believe it to be cask conditioned beer, which in this case it is not.

'We believe that this falls foul of the Order's provisions in Section 2 to protect consumers from presentation which is likely to deceive the average consumer or cause the average consumers to take a transactional decision he would not have taken otherwise.'

Nik Antona, **CAMRA National Chairman** said: 'Misleading dispense is particularly detrimental to beer drinkers, as hijacking a handpump to serve a keg beer removes a genuine cask product from the bar, reducing choice of different formats for consumers.

'Unfortunately, **Carlsberg Marston's Brewing Company** have a track record on potentially misleading marketing, having already badged **Wainwright** as 'A Lake District Original', despite it being brewed over 100 miles away in Wolverhampton.

'We hope that Trading Standards bodies across Great Britain will take swiftly coordinated national action to address misleading beer dispense and safeguard the handpump as an indicator of cask beer.'

The Crooked House, Himley

Following the news that the owners of the **Crooked House**, Himley have appealed against the order to rebuild the pub, **CAMRA Pub and Club Campaigns Director**, Gary Timmins said:

'To hear that the owners of the **Crooked House** in Himley have appealed against South Staffordshire Council's enforcement notice to rebuild the demolished pub is concerning albeit fully expected news.

'The complete destruction of the **Crooked House** shocked the nation and struck a chord with the public, exposing a wider scandal of potentially unlawful pub conversions and demolitions. The appeal is a mockery of all the hard work put in by dedicated campaigners who championed for the pub's future.

'**CAMRA** is following the case of the **Crooked House** closely and believes accountability needs to be taken for the obliteration of the iconic pub. Systematic change to bolster planning policy is needed to avoid situations like this arising again in the future.'



FIFTY YEARS OF CAMPAIGNING!



Fifty years of campaigning for local pubs and breweries has been marked by the *Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe branch of CAMRA*.

The first meeting of *CAMRA* in Buckinghamshire was held on 3rd December 1973 at the **Rose and Crown** in Saunderton. Sadly, the pub is now one of the growing number of ‘lost pubs’ in the branch, having been empty for several years.

Nevertheless, the local *CAMRA* branch was delighted to have been able to invite Robert Watson, the pub landlord who hosted that first meeting, to the fiftieth anniversary celebration.

Robert, who was also a founding committee member of the branch, was presented with a certificate to commemorate the first meeting by David Roe, the longest-serving chairman of the *Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe branch* over the past fifty years.

Held at the fifteenth century **King’s Head** in Aylesbury, the

presentation was toasted by many local *CAMRA* active members both past and present. These included past branch chairmen covering almost the past forty years: ‘Noj’ Williamson, David Roe, Carl Griffin and Simon Isted. Alexander Wright sent his apologies.

No cakes were to be seen but reminiscences were exchanged over a barrel of *Beechwood Bitter*. Members brought along memorabilia from the past half century, which included minutes from the first meeting, photos, branch newsletters and editions of local Buckinghamshire pub guides from over the years.

Tom Jenkinson from *Chiltern Brewery* also addressed the gathering, representing Buckinghamshire’s oldest existing brewery, a mere forty-three years old. Greg Smith, MP for Buckingham, also spoke at the celebration. Greg’s support for the beer and pub industry led Jeremy Hunt, the Chancellor of the Exchequer refer to him as ‘a defender of the great British pint’ in the recent Autumn Statement. Tom and Greg Tom paid tribute to *CAMRA*’s successful achievements in preserving real ale as a unique British beer style and to the vital contribution of *CAMRA*’s volunteers over the past fifty years in supporting local breweries and preserving the great British pub.

Mike Clarke, current chairman of the local branch, raised a pint to all the excellent breweries and pubs in the local area and looked forward to another fifty years of real ale drinking in Buckinghamshire.



SAVING YOUR LOCAL

Pubs that have survived hundreds of years shouldn’t be wiped out by transient economic factors or temporarily poor management. The traditional pub is one of the cornerstones of British social life and can have more than an intangible benefit to a local community. It’s a well-known truism among estate agents that access to a good local pub can add as much as 10% on to the value of surrounding houses.

We only need to read the local news section in this edition of *Swan Supping* to find that Buckinghamshire Council have recently given permission for the **Rose and Thistle** in Haddenham and the **Rose and Crown** in Stone to be converted to housing, leaving those villages with only two and zero pubs respectively. This ignores the fact that in the village of Oakley, the local parish council even bought their local village pub itself, the **Chandos Arms**. Pubs such as the **Seven Stars** in Dinton and the **Russell Arms** in Butler’s Cross have all been bought by local communities — and continue to thrive in this type of ownership. There’s also evidence that previously unprofitable pubs can be turned around rapidly by committed and entrepreneurial management. Just look at our 2024 *Pub of the Year*, the **Cross Keys** in Thame.

One way for local communities to influence planning decisions is to protect their treasured local by listing it as an *Asset of Community Value (ACV)* with the local authority. *ACV* listing deters property speculators, who try and argue the pub is not a community asset. This is much harder if the pub is on a register of exactly that type of asset.

Under the Localism Act 2011, once a pub is listed as an *ACV* it cannot be sold quickly and without the knowledge of the local community. If a pub is put up for sale then the local community is

given a statutory opportunity to make a bid to purchase the pub on behalf of the community — and time to raise the funds to do so. This does not apply if the pub is sold as a continuing business (a going concern): the legislation only applies to sales which would deprive the community of an asset. There is no obligation on the seller to accept the community’s bid but it does prevent quick sales to property speculators of which the community would often be unaware.

CAMRA can assist with the *ACV* application process see https://camra.org.uk/campaign_resources/saving-your-local-pub/. The application is then assessed by the local authority. Successful applications are then listed on the *ACV* register for five years, after which they must be renewed.

Even if you think your local pub is not vulnerable to closure, be warned. *ACV* applications cannot be made retrospectively. The pub trade is notoriously volatile and a pub that is trading well one year may well go into rapid decline the next — because of change of licensee or other circumstances.

ACVs aren’t a magic bullet solution for the problems currently faced by our cherished pubs. The pub owner still has a right to sell to whoever they choose, albeit once the local community have exercised a right to bid. Nevertheless, they are a vital tool in the campaign to preserve the traditional local. Many communities have found out that they would have benefited from the *ACV* when it was already too late. Why not investigate this protection for your local before it’s too late?

Some parts of this article previously appeared in a CAMRA authored article in the Bucks Free Press and some references have been drawn from CAMRA national campaigning materials.

THE PUBLIC HOUSES OF CHINNOR

At the turn of the century Chinnor, now a large village in South Oxfordshire, located at the foot of the Chiltern Hills, boasted seven pubs along with the **Sports & Social Club** which had a bar that served non-members; so, eight licenced venues which always made for a decent pub crawl! Along with three previously-closed pubs, we look at those that have come and gone in this article, and those that have endured.

We start with the **Wheatsheaf** which is the first pub you see if entering the village from the M40. This area of Chinnor was originally a hamlet called Oakley which became subsumed into Chinnor in the mid-1970s due to expanding housing developments. I remember this as two-barred pub back in the 1980s when I was a lad, which had an old car in the beer garden for the kids to play in! It served home-cooked food, but with children not being allowed in pubs in those days, I used to have to be content with a bottle of pineapple juice in the garden. Currently a **Greene King** pub, it's been knocked through into one room now, with various extensions and additions over the last 10–15 years or so.

Where Oakley Road meets Station Road, the **Crown** – the largest pub in the village, and still a going concern – is located by the roundabout. A former **Aylesbury Brewing Co. (ABC)** pub, this was said to have been used as a courthouse during the English Civil War.



Next-door-but-one up Station Road is the former **Kings Head** which has stood boarded up since 2012. Affectionately known by locals as the 'Hole-in-the-Wall', this had a ghost named 'George', who was thought to have been a soldier

from the English Civil War, who prior to the smoking ban introduced in 2007, disliked the table ashtrays stacked up on the bar at the end of the night, so would unstack them on the bar top by the morning! There was said to be a tunnel from the **Crown** to the **Kings Head's** cellar which was used as a holding cell during the aforementioned conflict.



Heading back down Station Road, turning right at the roundabout, and walking past the c.13th century St. Andrew's Church, then turning left past the parade of shops down the High Street, the long building to the left of Ivan Cammack opticians is a private residence named the Old Nelson.



This was the former **Nelson** pub, which closed in the 1950s.

Halfway down the High Street on the right-hand side is another former pub, now another private residence. 'Chairmakers' is the former **Chairmakers Arms**, potentially

named after the 'bodgers' who plied their trade in the hills. This ceased to be a pub in the 1930s after a fire.

At the junction of the High Street and Lower Road is the **Red Lion**. Originally three cottages, which were knocked together, the building is over 300 years old and the pub is, pleasingly, still going strong.

Opposite the **Red Lion** on Lower Road/Lower Icknield Way is Unicorn Cottage which was a former pub called the **Unicorn**. Little is known about this pub, bar an appearance on the 1891 census.



Heading up Lower Road past the Chinese takeaway is Aston House. This is the former **Royal Oak** which was a freehouse at the time of its closure in 2011. On closure, the building was divided into four flats which went on sale for £250k each!



At the top of Lower Road where it meets the end of Station Road is the former **Bird in Hand** which retains its Morland's painter ceramic plaque. This

pub, which closed in 2000, was the birthplace of Chinnor RFC in the

1960s who now play in Thame and at time of writing have worked their way through the Rugby pyramid to National League 1.



It made national news in the late 90s when a previous landlord staged live strip shows on Fridays evenings. This was also said to have been haunted, with a ghost in the cellar. Local legend states that a tunnel runs from its cellar up to the **Crown**.

The final pub is halfway up Station Road and was until 2013 the **Black Boy**. The original building sat against the road, but burned down in the 1930s, with the current building being its replacement. Popular with local sports teams, it boasted the largest beer garden in the village, but is now a furniture restorers.

For further details, please check my photos on the **Lost Pubs Project** or search for Movement80 on Flickr.



David Slade



LOCAL NEWS

ASHENDON

A local campaign has been set up to save the **Hundred of Ashendon**. The pub is currently on the market and the campaign is raising funds towards a community purchase. The campaign recently received the excellent news that it had been successful in securing a £300,000 grant from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to assist in its purchase of the freehold and towards refurbishment. The campaign still requires around £80,000 in pledges over the summer to meet its target, approaching its target but would still welcome pledges of support. This is a pub in a very rural part of the branch and if it was permanently lost many local communities would lack a pub for miles around. Please see <http://www.ashendonparish.org.uk/community/ashendon-parish-council-10421/hundred-public-house/> for further information.

ASTON ROWANT

Fuller's London Pride and *Rebellion IPA* were to be found on a recent visit to the **Lambert Arms**, a Mercure hotel whose bar pleasingly continues to be open to non-patrons, albeit £6.10 for a pint of the latter raised a Roger Moore-style eyebrow. The popular carvery continues between 12pm and 3pm every Sunday.

AYLESBURY

As we delivered the last issue of *Swan Supping*, we found that the **Harrow**



(pictured above) wasn't just closed two days a week, it had closed altogether! It remains closed and its future is uncertain. As this used to be two pubs, the **Harrow** and the **Barleycorn**, which combined to be named after both pubs before becoming the **Farmyard and Firkin**, you can see we are losing a lot of our local history.

The **Hop Pole** held its Easter Beer Festival over the recent bank holiday weekend. Fourteen real ales and a range of real ciders were available on gravity plus a large selection of beers from **Vale Brewery** on the handpulls at the front of the pub.

BENNETT END

The planning application to close the **Mash Inn** was still undecided at the time of writing.

BLEDLOW

The *Lions of Bledlow* continues to support five handpulls: *Wadworth 6X* was augmented by *locAles Loose Cannon Detonator*, *Tring Side Pocket*

For a Toad, *Loddon Hullabaloo* and national *Young's Original*. The pub will soon revert to its summer opening hours and is sure to remain popular with walkers, dog walkers and cyclists alike. The American war drama miniseries *Master of the Air*, which was recently released on Apple TV+ included scenes filmed at the pub (whose name was changed on film) as mentioned in a previous *Swan Supping*.

BUTLERS CROSS

The **Russell Arms**, a community owned public house, reopened on the 11th of March after undergoing a refurbishment. The new tenant is an extremely popular Tik-Tok chef called Roland May, better known by his social media handle *DaddyMayCooks*. His fans have been driving from across the country to the **Russell Arms** and it's now incredibly busy, but it's still a pub for drinkers.

CHINNOR

The **Red Lion** continues to be the go-to venue in Chinnor for real ale, with four ales on at any one time; depending on your visit, there is a mix of local and national beers, with *XT 3* remaining as the session ale. The street food vans have returned to this **Oak Taverns** pub, available Wednesday through to Saturday, and the weekly Quiz night (every Wednesday) continues to be popular. Their first Comedy Night of the year begins on April 11th. Chinnor Community Pavilion serves up to three *Rebellion* ales from 22-pint mini-pins via keg dispense.

The **Crown** has reduced its handpumps down from three to one, with *Fullers London Pride* the default ale. Similarly, the **Wheatsheaf** is currently serving just *Greene King IPA*, with two pumps unclipped.

CROWELL

We have recently received some bad news on a planning application submitted last year. South Oxfordshire District Council has granted permission to close the **Shepherd's Crook**, Crowell and turn it into private housing.

An almost identical application was made in 2020 which the council rejected conclusively with reference to national and local planning guidelines. It's therefore a surprise that the council reversed its previous decision that the pub should not allowed to be permanently closed and converted to housing. The owners had not attempted to open the pub in the meantime so could supply no evidence of post-lockdown viability. South Oxfordshire

planning department commissioned a viability report on the pub from a consultant as part of its decision-making process. Those in **CAMRA** who have read the report (available on the council's planning portal along with the case officer's report) were surprised that the report did not appear to consider the different viability calculations that would apply if there was a community purchase of the pub (or if a private benefactor acquired the pub on behalf of the community). There have been several examples of these types of ownership saving rural pubs in our branch area (notably the parish council purchasing the **Chandos Arms** in Oakley).

The local parish council and a large proportion of Crowell's residents had objected to the application. We are concerned that if similar criteria are now being applied to other change of use planning applications in South Oxfordshire then we could lose many more rural pubs. We would urge all our Oxfordshire members to lobby their local councillors about the importance of saving pubs and to submit applications to protect their local pubs as Assets of Community Value.

EMMINGTON

Dave at the **Inn at Emmington** has kept his three-ale line-up going, with *Rebellion IPA* continuing as his session ale. Happy Hour remains in situ: Monday to Thursday, 5pm to 7pm, all pints £4.35. Homecooked food is a feather in the **Inn's** cap, with meals available from 5.30pm to 9pm in the evenings, and roasts available from 12pm 'til 4pm on Sundays. With Spring about to be sprung, their fantastic garden will come into play along with their Aunt Sally pitch, which is available for anyone who fancies throwing a stick or two at the doll!

HADDENHAM

Haddenham Summerfest
Saturday 6th July 2024
10:30am to 8pm
 A great family event, home to probably the UK's biggest one day beer festival
 Plus Live Music, Theatre, Food and a wide range of drinks
 Location: Tibbs Flood Recreation Area, Pegusis Way, Haddenham, Bucks HP17 8FJ
 Buy your tickets at: www.haddenham-beer-festival.co.uk

Haddenham Beer Festivals' Summerfest 2024 will take place on 6th July at the Tibbs Road playing fields HP17 8FJ from 11am -8pm.

Now in its 21st year, the biannual beer festivals have raised over £400k for local good causes. With entertainment on three stages and a big screen for Euro 2024, there will be plenty to entertain you while sampling the 100+ ales (real and craft), 40+ ciders and much more.

Ticket and ale prices are being held at 2023 rates. Advance tickets available at

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www.haddenham-beer-festival.co.uk.

Haddenham, is to lose of one its few remaining pubs, the **Rose and Thistle**, leaving it with only two pubs. Buckinghamshire Council's planning committee decided to approve a change of use application for conversion to residential housing despite a huge number of objections from local residents and the parish council. The council was particularly concerned that the large expansion of housing in the village was not being matched by the council's safeguarding of community assets, such as local pubs.

HENTON

The **Peacock** continues with a single real ale – **Sharp's Doom Bar**, although there are some ales available in bottled form.

HIGH WYCOMBE

The **Chiltern Taps** is now closed and boarded-up following the pub's owners, **RedCat Pub Company** going into administration. See the article on page 12.

Work has started on the site of the **White Horse** public house to turn it into multiple occupation housing. A sad end for a once very popular music venue which helped launch groups such as the Kings of Lyon.

MAIDENHEAD

The **11th Maidenhead Beer and Cider Festival** will be held on Friday 5th and Saturday 6th of July at the NMCC Sports Bar at Summerleaze Park, off Summerleaze Road, Maidenhead SL6 8SP.

Opening times for both days are 12 Noon to 11pm. Tickets are £5 in advance which can be obtained via the website (www.mbcf.camra.org.uk), or £7 on the door. **CAMRA** members receive £2 worth of beer tokens and the prices have been held at last year's level.

MARLOW

The **Hughenden Masonic Lodge** became a specialist lodge in October 2022 with a theme of craft beer and real ale appreciation. They have real ales provided by **Rebellion Brewery** at the bar for their meetings as well as doing a beer tasting during the meal afterwards. They have sampled beers from various small breweries, examples being **Steam Machine**, **Mad Squirrel**, **Harbour** and **Thornbridge**. They also arrange trips to beer festivals and breweries – but alas not **GBBF** this year!

There is a most confusing saga with the Marlow **Wetherspoon's** pub name. Their first name was to have been the **Brass Thimble**, then changed to the **Swan Hook**, now (according to **Marlow Free Press**) it is to be the **Grand Assembly!** Whatever the final decision on the name, the pub is scheduled to open at the end of July in the former M & Co. shop.

POSTCOMBE

Rebellion IPA remains as the lone ale at the **Englands Rose**, a roadside A40 pub, formerly the **Feathers**, albeit served from a 22-pint mini-pin, with a good variety of bottle ales available. Open for breakfast, lunch and evening meals (with booking advisable) it has a 2-acre garden out back which catches the sun's rays on a clement day and can be hired out for private functions.

PRINCES RISBOROUGH

There has been some good local pub news. The **George and Dragon** has now reopened after a period of closure.

QUAINTON

A community fundraising campaign was set up to buy the **George and Dragon** which was understood to be under threat of closure towards the end of last year. The community was on course for raising the target amount when news emerged that the pub was no longer under threat and it continues to operate as previously.

SPEEN

A planning application to convert the **King William IV** to residential use has been made to Buckinghamshire Council and has received many objections from local residents.

STOKE MANDEVILLE

The **Bell** reopened in early March after a short closure, and is now under new management.

STONE

The **Rose and Crown** has closed for good with Bucks Council approving a planning application for the pub to become a dwelling house, despite it having refused a similar application only last year. The Council had previously approved plans that seriously undermined the pub's viability (e.g., building on the car park, demolishing the kitchen).

SYDENHAM

As mentioned in the Local News section of the previous edition of **Swan Supping**, Pete & Tina departed the **Crown** on 17th February. However, the **Sydenham Pub Co.** has been quick in finding erstwhile replacements, and we are pleased to announce that Andon and Galina took on the lease



week commencing 11th March, with a view to re-opening in early April. More information in the next edition.

TETSWORTH

XT 4 remains as the house ale at the **Red Lion**, a roadside freehouse, which doubles up as the village store. They have increased the choice to an additional ale, but otherwise two of the three handpumps remain unclipped. Local brewery **Vale's Skyhopper** is, however, currently available on keg and there is a good selection of bottled ales to purchase. With B&B rooms, breakfasts, afternoon teas and Thursday nights seeing Bikers Night, with a £7.50 meal special offer, this is one village pub that's not resting on its laurels.

THAME

Hot on the heels of its decision to allow closure of the **Shepherd's Crook** in Crowell, South Oxfordshire Council's planning department has decided to allow the elimination of another pub in its area. This time it's the **Swan Hotel**, a very historic building has been closed for a few years but it's not that many years since it was a thriving and popular coaching inn on the high street with good beer. What may have influenced the decision is that it's hardly the last pub in the town centre. Thame is unusually blessed with nine pubs (or gastropubs) along its main street, putting other similarly sized (and larger) towns in the branch area to shame. However, only one other pub remains in other parts of the town. The council cannot be allowed to be complacent and appear to favour property developers over its local communities.

TOWERSEY

Just outside Thame, the **Three Horseshoes** has returned to a two-ale line-up with **Sharp's Doom Bar** the house ale, and rotating guests – **Otter Over the Bar** on a recent visit, but **Black Sheep Bitter**, **Timothy Taylor Landlord** and **Deuchars IPA** have made appearances of late. Always renowned for its food offerings, Sunday roasts remain popular with bookings essential.

The alternate monthly Quiz night / Bingo nights continue, as well as the 'Last Thursday of the Month' Open Mic Night. They now have a darts teams up and running and the pizza menu goes live again in April.

WENDOVER

Over Easter all seven pubs in Wendover participated in a crawl - get a card stamped in each with any drink to enter a prize draw.

Sponsored by the Parish Council the prize was a free drink in each of the pubs every month for the next three months!

Pubs are:- **Packhorse**, **George & Dragon**, **Red Lion**, **White Swan**, **Craftyard**, **King & Queen** and the **Shoulder of Mutton**.

WINGRAVE

Local **CAMRA** member, Chris Stovold, has sent us the following very welcome news!

Following closure last October, the **Rose and Crown** (pictured above) had remained empty throughout the winter and has been sorely missed.

We have just learnt that new tenants have stepped forward and announced the great news that the pub will re-open on 10th May 2024.

The tenants are planning a range of ales on rotation and lagers and ciders together with a selection of wines. Discussions are still underway with the brewery to finalise the beers list.

They will also be preparing family meals using local produce and intend to continue the tradition of live music at the venue. Roasts and affordable meals will also be on the menu.

Also planned will be early opening on a couple of days to provide breakfasts and/or tea and cakes for community groups to meet up.

Residents of Wingrave and the surrounding villages are really looking forward to the reopening, countering the current trend of pub closures.



We all know beer prices have soared recently, especially in the capital, and pubs are finding it harder to attract customers - surely the two can't be related? So, it was a welcome sight to find a queue of impatient punters queuing outside a London pub at five-to-twelve one Saturday morning last January.

Maybe it wasn't so surprising, seeing as that pub was the **Mayflower** in Rotherhithe? This marvellous pub ticks all the boxes: great location, steeped in history, an olde world cosy interior and, most importantly, six excellent real ales on tap.

The queue may have been a little larger than normal Saturdays. Apart from being formed of some inquisitive tourists (many of them Americans – of which more later) its numbers were swelled by expectant drinkers from all over **CAMRA's Central Southern Region**. For this was the first stop on the annual regional London pub crawl social – organised this year by the **Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe Branch**.



The **Mayflower** is located directly on the south bank of the River Thames, a short walk from Rotherhithe Overground station. Its attraction for many of those American tourists is that the pub is built at the place its namesake ship departed for the American colonies in 1620, containing the Pilgrim Fathers who reputedly founded the United States.

There's certainly a nautical theme inside the pub. The interior has low beams and wooden floors that might have been found on a seventeenth-century sailing ship. Outside is a seating area on a jetty overhanging the Thames. Rather surprisingly, especially as **CAMRA** considers it of regional interest, the pub interior only dates back to 1957, although there's been a pub on the site since before the Pilgrims sailed.

The Puritans probably wouldn't have enjoyed the real ale on offer as much as we did. Out of a selection of six, I sampled three excellently kept examples: *Chop & Change* from **Vocation** (an unusual draught beer from this brewery), *Treebox* from **Park Brewery** and

a lovely dark oatmeal stout, *Flapjack* from **Cellar Head Brewing Company**.

By the time we were due to leave the **Mayflower**, our numbers had swelled to a very impressive thirty or more. There was further history to explore en route to the next pub as we had a wide river to cross and no bridges closer than Tower Bridge, a mile or so upstream. The Overground line from Rotherhithe (since named the Windrush Line) uses the Thames Tunnel. Built by Mark Brunel and his son, Isambard between 1825 and 1843, it is the first tunnel in the world to have been constructed beneath a navigable river.

A brief train ride took us to Wapping, the start of the itinerary proper, which followed the north bank of the river. A half mile stroll in the direction of Canary Wharf, past the many warehouses and dock buildings converted into yuppie flats and gated communities, brought us to the **Prospect of Whitby** on Wapping Wall.

The pub is exceptionally old and well preserved. I referred to my copy of the excellent *East End Pubs*, a book written by Alistair von Lion and recently published by Hoxton Mini Press. 'A celebrated classic... a pub of great riches... it is essential to explore all the nooks and crannies. [It has] a rare pewter-topped concave bar... the eighteenth-century upstairs bar... has existed since 1520 with an original floor and 19th century façade... a gallows stands in the river by the outside deck.'

Why on earth is it named after a coastal town in Yorkshire you may ask. Apparently it was christened after a coal boat that used to unload nearby at London docks.



While it's usually a decent ale pub (on a previous visit there were four interesting ales on handpump) the **Greene King** pub couldn't slake the thirst of a sudden onslaught of **CAMRA** members and the choice temporarily reduced to two ales. I managed to get one of the last pints of **Southwark Brewing Company's Potters' Fields Porter** and, sadly, its lack of condition confirmed its end of the barrel status. As we left some new ales were pulled through and more choice was restored.



On the way to the next pub was the **Wapping Tavern** on Wapping Lane, a temple to the evil keg as it has twenty taps of craft beer and no real ale. A few of our number succumbed to its lure.

A much more traditional venue was next on our list, just off Wapping Green. **Turner's Old Star** is described in *East End Pubs* as 'a nostalgic viewpoint into the cosy old ways of East End traditional pubs.' Once owned by painter JMW Turner and converted from two pre-industrial cottages, the pub is an archetypal family run, London street-corner local, complete with pool table and racing on the TV. A warm welcome is given alike to regulars and visitors, such as ourselves. The locals didn't seem to mind a sudden influx of **CAMRA** types taking over half their pub,



GOOD DAY OUT!



bottled selections. Several of us headed for the windswept, Thameside terrace, possibly hoping to use their new-fangled electronic devices like mobile phones, which are banned in all **Sam Smith's** pubs. Or maybe they just wanted to swear? (Also banned.)

A short walk then took us to the **Town of Ramsgate**. The pub is Grade II listed and East End Pubs reports that it is 'believed to be among the oldest pubs on the Thames with records going back to 1545.' It also has spectacular riverside views and is located next to Wapping Old Stairs, which used to lead to ferries used hundreds of years ago to cross the Thames. There are also rumours the pub's cellars used to house prisoners awaiting transportation to the British colonies.

The spectacular view that we were most interested in was of the four handpumps. I partook of a **Harvey's Sussex Best**. Like the **Prospect of Whitby**, it's a long thin pub with a bar on the left as you enter and has a welcoming and lively atmosphere.



Unfortunately, I missed the ornate barometer mentioned in the **Good Beer Guide**.

We now had to leave Wapping and head west towards the eastern fringes of the City, passing close to the site of the infamous News International Wapping plant built in the late 1980s, although it's now been demolished.

The next pub was in a fascinating area on the edge of the City of London where new buildings housing financial businesses are literally across the street from virtually unchanged parts of the old East End. There are a surprisingly large number of pubs due to City drinkers during the week although at the weekends they cater mainly for locals.

One such is the **Sir Sydney Smith**. This is a friendly pub with a front bar facing on to the street and a back bar with bare brick walls tucked behind the servery. The walls are lined with photographs detailing episodes from the local area's rich history. Two handpumps were serving real ale on our visit. I chose **Deuchars IPA** from **Caledonian (Greene King)**.

The **Sir Sydney Smith** was the last call on the official itinerary but it's around the corner from an iconic venue that was well deserving of a visit. Just past the Jack the Ripper Museum is the nineteenth century Wilton's Music Hall and its **Mahogany Bar**, which was open to public prior to that night's theatre performance and offering a fairly unique pizza!



The legendary building was restored from derelict. Both the music hall and the bar have been renovated using a policy of 'conservative repair', which means that after restoration work is completed areas of the building are left undecorated with a unique 'stripped down' appearance that's a little reminiscent of the appearance of ancient monuments.

By this time the advance guard of our party had reached the bar, which had earlier boasted three **Adnams** beers on handpump. Unfortunately for the remainder of us, they drank the place temporarily out of real ale.

Fortunately, there's a more than decent old school boozier just on the other side of the DLR and Fenchurch Street railway bridges, the **Brown Bear** in Shadwell. This had **Timothy Taylor Landlord** and **Black Sheep Bitter** on draught. Its Edwardian interior highly rated by the local **CAMRA** branch. According to East End Pubs, the **Brown Bear** is a place where 'the social history of the East End oozes from the ground'.

After an afternoon enjoying some great beer in a fascinating and historic part of London, that's a sentiment that could equally be applied to all the pubs we visited.

Mike Clarke

albeit briefly and convivially.

It's also a free house, which meant that on our visit it featured three ales from **Southwark Brewing Company**, brewed a stone's throw across the river. I sampled their **Nelson's Gold** and **Mayflower Session IPA** and found them to be enjoyable and well-kept, hopefully what their porter is like when in good condition.

Next it was back to the riverside and the capacious **Captain Kidd**, a **Samuel Smith's** pub converted from a warehouse. Unlike many **Sam Smith's** pubs in central London, the **Captain Kidd** deigned to serve real ale – albeit the familiar choice of one – their **Old Brewery Bitter**. I had a half, although it's not one of my favourites. This view seemed to be shared by many of our number who chose some of **Sam Smith's** more interesting



LOCAL BREWERY NEWS



Chiltern Brewery

The **Chiltern Brewery**, Buckinghamshire's and the Chiltern Hill's oldest independent brewery has been presented with Silver and Bronze awards for two beers – Chiltern Lager (Silver) and Earl Grey IPA (Bronze).

Brewery Partner Tom Jenkinson, said: 'For two of our beers to win National awards, in two categories, in one year, is amazing! Its incredibly difficult to win the Regional competition, but then to go on to win an award in the National competition is wonderful and a credit to the brewing team.'

Chiltern Lager, 3.8%, won Silver in its category of kegged lagers. It is creamy, light, and smooth. It is their take on an English craft lager, brewed with the craft market in mind.

Earl Grey IPA, 3.9%, won Bronze in its category of light, speciality cask beers.

Earl Grey IPA, a pale gold and innovative draught beer, delivers a refreshing citrus burst. Brewed with Bucks Grown Barley and the finest, freshest English hops the beer is a bright and fragrant brew.

A photo of the brewing team – James, Dave and Ally, with the awards, taken in the brewhouse appears above.

Malt the Brewery

Most local members will probably be aware of the closure of one of the larger breweries in the branch – **Malt the Brewery** in Prestwood last autumn. They will be sadly missed.

Oak Taverns

Following on from purchasing three new pubs last year, the **Sun** at Wheatley, **Crown** in Marcham and the **Red Lion** in Yarnton, **Oak Taverns** have decided this year they would look to add one more new acquisition, yet to be found.

They have been overwhelmed with the huge support from **CAMRA** this year with organised trips around their pubs and the awards given to them throughout the year. They are especially pleased and proud of Trudi and Peter at the **Cross Keys**, Thame, once again winning **AV&W CAMRA Pub of the Year** (see page 10) and are also pleased to announce that the **Kings Arms** in Wantage and **Cross Keys** in Wallingford have also won their respective **CAMRA** regions' **Pub of the Year** awards.

They have also set their **Dead Brewer** program for the rest of the year with a couple of beers resurrected from last year and a number of new ones for 2024. March-April **Shillingford LX ale**, May-June **Henry Panton & Sons XPA**, July-August **Scrases Golden Bitter** and September-October **Halls IPA**.

This is all against a backdrop of an ongoing cost of living crisis,

high utility costs and despite the living wage due to go up in April. It is probably said too much, but there really hasn't been a more difficult time to operate a pub. So please pop into your local pub and support it, whoever operates it!

Tring Brewery

Tring Brewery have announced the results of their 2023 charity campaigning, raising over six thousand pounds for TiggYWinkles Wildlife Hospital.

TiggYWinkles was founded by Les Stocker in 1983, and is now the busiest wildlife hospital in the world. The charity's round-the-clock care for British wildlife is made possible by regular fundraising drives, along with vital public donations.

Tring's campaign for TiggYWinkles started in January 2023 and has seen activities including an exciting online raffle, collections at all four of the brewery's membership nights and a sell-out charity beer festival (**ToadFest**) hosted in May.

The release of **Hibernation Ale** marked the campaign's launch – one of twelve 'monthly specials' that were brewed to champion TiggYWinkles. Beer names and imagery were drawn from the vivid realm of British wildlife, with ales such as **Dashing Duck** and **Opulent Owl** enjoyed by discerning drinkers in the home-counties.

For 2024, **Tring Brewery** are teaming up with Hector's House, a Berkhamsted-based charity, to reduce the stigma of talking about mental health. They will produce monthly special beers to raise awareness for Hector's House, and plan to host unique fundraising events throughout the year.

Hector's House was founded in 2016 to campaign in the name of Hector Stringer, a Tring local who sadly took his life aged 18. Based in Berkhamsted, just down the road from the brewery, Hector's House aims to prevent suicide and reduce mental health stigma through education, awareness and support.

Vale Brewery

Vale Brewery is thrilled to announce the launch of its new branding and brand identity, marking a significant milestone in the company's journey. This rebrand reflects Vale's commitment to quality, community, and the power of beer to bring people together.

Since its establishment as an independent, family-owned brewery in 1995, Vale has been dedicated to brewing high-quality beers under the stewardship of Dave Renton, Head Brewer of the last 25 years. The brewery prides itself on being a welcoming, inclusive place where a sense of belonging and joy permeates every interaction.



MORE LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

‘Our new **Vale** brand is not just about a change of design. It is a reaffirmation of our core values and our promise to always produce beer that brings people together, creating lasting connections and memorable experiences,’ said Joe Brouder, Managing Director. ‘We are proud of our Buckinghamshire roots, and our new branding celebrates this heritage, showcasing the beautiful local landscape and the bonds forged within it.’

The rebrand includes a fresh look for all core and seasonal beers, complete with new designs, tasting notes, and stories that capture the essence of their enjoyment. Additionally, **Vale Brewery** is reintroducing its **ABC** brand of one-off small batch brews.

In line with the rebrand, **Vale Brewery** is excited to announce an expansion of its distribution network into East Anglia, Essex, Kent, and the South Coast, among other areas.

Looking ahead, **Vale Brewery** is approaching its 30th anniversary, a testament to its enduring legacy and commitment to brewing quality beer. ‘As we celebrate this landmark year, we invite our

loyal customers and new friends alike to join us on this exciting journey forward,’ Jimmy Brouder, Operations Director, added.

Vale are also kicking off spring with the return of a firm favourite and a new charity collaboration! They



are partnering with @victauk, a charity that supports children and young adults who are blind or visually impaired.

Great fun was had welcoming the VICTA team to the brewery for the launch of their spring seasonal beer *Marathon Runner*, a highly quaffable blonde ale with light citrus and blackcurrant aromas, perfect for a post-run refreshment! Vale will be donating 10p from every pint sold directly to VICTA. Their MD, Joe, will be running all 26.2 miles of the London Marathon as part of the VICTA team, alongside Ed and the team from the **Red Lion**, Dagnall.

Marathon Runner is available in the brewery taproom and various beer houses all through April - so make those pints count!



BLACK COUNTRY COACH TRIP

Saturday 29th June 2024

Bookings are being taken for our 32nd trip and the cost is £41 per person. Members and non-members are all welcome to join us on the best day of the year.

The coach will pick up in Aylesbury outside the **Broad Leys** at 9.40am and then at the following: Princes Risborough (Opposite the **Bell** 9.55am), High Wycombe (Desborough Avenue 10.10am) and Stokenchurch (10.20am). Please note that the timings after Aylesbury are approximate and depend on traffic. Other pick-ups on route can be catered for.

Due to popular demand, we will once again start at the **Coach & Horses**, Weatheroak, to break the journey and enjoy their superb range of beer and quickly served food.

We will visit lots of old favourites, such as the **Bull & Bladder** and the **Beacon Hotel** (pictured), plus we plan to revisit the **Fountain** in Lower Gornal which now has its own brewery and regularly features ten beers!



After a full day’s enjoyment, we will drop off in reverse order, with the bus due to arrive back in Aylesbury before midnight!

Contact the editor (details on page 14) to book your place!

Space is limited, so make sure you don’t miss out!

Drink the **BEST BITTER** of the Chilterns



Monday to Saturday 10am to 5pm

www.chilternbrewery.co.uk



PUB OF THE YEAR!

We would like to announce the results of our *Pub of the Year 2024* competition. We had a good response to our online poll and many thanks to the members who voted.

The winner was the **Cross Keys** in Thame. The photo below shows Peter and Trudi from the **Cross Keys** being presented with the winner's certificate on the 21st March by Mike Clarke and Simon Heap, Chairman and Secretary of the local branch.



Many congratulations to the **Cross Keys** and the team there. We asked our members who voted if they'd like to give reasons for their decisions. One member said of the **Cross Keys**, it has an 'excellent selection of both real ale and cider. The pub is very much aligned with *CAMRA's* aims and principles.'

The competition was very close with all five shortlisted pubs receiving a good level of support. We had two joint runners up – the **Red Lion** in Chinnor and the **Rose and Crown** in High Wycombe. Both have been presented with their certificates by members of the local branch.

consistently.'

The **Cross Keys** will now move forward to the county round of Pub of the Year. It will be up against Mid-Chilterns winner, the **King's Arms** in Tring, and North Bucks and Milton Keynes winner, the **Victoria Inn**, New Bradwell. Any branch member is welcome to judge in the next round of the competition but all three pubs must be visited. Please email branch.contact@avw.camra.org.uk if you are interested and we will pass on details when they are available.

Congratulations also to the **Royal British Legion** in Marlow, which is once again our *Club of the Year*.

The **Red Lion** in Chinnor was described by our members as 'Chinnor's de facto real ale pub. Beer quality is always top notch...popular with locals and well-run by Nicola. Always interesting ales from usually local breweries. Good food trucks. Three generations of our family love it!'

The **Rose and Crown** in the centre of High Wycombe was described as 'a traditional pub with a great atmosphere and serves quality real ale

THE CHILTERN TAPS

So, we seem to have lost yet another pub in Wycombe town centre.

A town once famous for the great number of its pubs is now down to a tiny proportion of that. You will have heard people say 'if you don't use it then you lose it' but, locally anyway, that's nonsense. The saying round here really needs to be 'if you do use it then you lose it'.

The few pubs left in the town are now so busy on most nights that it can't be too long before they close as well. And it's not just pubs of course. Any kind of civic amenity seems ripe for closing whether it's banks, post offices, public toilets, police stations, libraries, gymnasias, village halls or British Legions. Even shops are closing like crazy. But let's concentrate on pubs and one pub at that.

The **Chiltern Taps**, which is very convenient for the Eden Centre and the bus station, was formerly called the **Hog's Head** before it became the **William Robert Loosley**, a *Wetherspoons* pub. After they sold the pub it was eventually acquired by the *RedCat Pub Company* and that has now been placed into administration. The decision was taken to close immediately several of their pubs. But it does seem strange to close the **Chiltern Taps** as I have been told that it had been one of their more successful venues. A decent pub until the evening and then it turned itself into rather more of a night club.

There were big screen televisions to satisfy the football fans and late-



night music for the ravers. For ale enthusiasts there were usually two beers on and the *Timothy Taylor Landlord* was nearly always in excellent condition. There were even ciders on offer from bag-in-boxes (although not ciders that *CAMRA* approves of). There was craft keg beer if that's your sort of thing. The staff were good and friendly and there was never a long wait for service. The food was pretty basic but also pretty well priced. The drinks were not the very cheapest in town but they were a long way from the most expensive. All in all the place was doing everything right.

The closure of the **Chiltern Taps** simply means that the remaining pubs in the centre are even more packed than they were before. South Buckinghamshire needs more pubs, particularly as the population of the area increases. A pub isn't just a place to eat and drink, it's where the darts team play, where you learn to play pool, where you cry when the England team lose again, where the quiz nights are held and where (being British) people can complain to each other about the weather.

Hilaire Belloc said 'When you have lost your inns, drown your empty selves, for you will have lost the last of England.'

And the Specials foretold the future when they said 'This town's becoming like a ghost town' and how true that is becoming.

Elvis Evans

THE CASKITEERS - PART FOURTEEN

Jacob and Harry didn't know whether to be worried or optimistic. The Shackney craft beer bar scene seemed recently to have suffered from a severe bout of financial fisticuffs due to the 'cost of living crisis,' something that had apparently affected the great unwashed for the last couple of years.

Dressed in his favourite gold-embroidered 'Class of Eton 2016' hoodie Harry gazed ruefully down Shackney High Street at the forest of For Sale signs and boarded up bars. 'They're dropping like those flying buzzy things,' Harry said

'Bees?' Jacob volunteered, looking up from his top-of-the-range Medlar not-so-smartphone.

'No, those little blighters we have all over the brewery that we use pater's agri-industrial pesticides on,' Harry replied.

'Bluebottles?' Jacob suggested, pushing his spectacles up the bridge of his nose.

'Yes, the craft beer bars are dropping like bluebottles.' Harry smiled at finding the right expression. 'Look. **Pia's IPAs, Wasted and Waistcoated, Beermorals, the House of Cords, Silver Spoon in Your Pint, Proud to be Cloudy, the Hop, Skip and Glug, Kate's Kölsch and Kitchen** – they've all closed down. This place is becoming a ghost-town.'

'Surely that should be good news for our very own **Eaten Trifles**? Smash the competition, create our own Shackney craft beer monopoly and charge even more eyewatering prices than we do already,' Jacob said. 'That's the basis of our free-market philosophy.'

'Speak for yourself, Jakes. I'm not in this to make filthy lucre. I'm here to have a jolly good time with my chums – and now they've all headed back to their castles and country estates.'

'I rather like having the bar empty night after night. At least that way there's no risk of riff-raff coming here by accident,' Jacob said, folding the bar's copy of the *Daily Fax Transmission* into neat creases. 'And look how pristine the place is with no customers to sully it.'

He gestured at the bar with its rows of shiny, polished taps, untroubled by the inconvenience of having to serve beer.

Harry craned his neck a little further to survey the junction at the end of the street. 'And what's worse, **Sunnyforks** is jolly busy down there. People are spilling out on to the street with pints of ordinary brown beer enjoying their pre-9am happy hour.'

'We'll have ordinary brown beer in **Eaten Trifles** over my dead body,' Jacob declared.

Harry wondered whether he still had the shotgun in his flat that he'd borrowed from his father.

'I'm sick of being Harry no mates. We need to do something to liven the place up and get my pals through this door again,' Harry said.

'So be it, *ergo astra sum*,' Jacob replied. 'I shall call in Richy.'

'Shame there's no proper heliport in Shackney,' Richy said as he arrived the next morning at **Eaten Trifles**, dressed in a blazer and über casual open-necked pink shirt. 'My pilot had to land on Silicon Roundabout.'

'But you've only travelled a couple of miles,' Harry replied. 'Couldn't you have come by car?'

'And be environmentally unfriendly?' Richy protested. 'Time is money – ask my spreadsheet. And I'm popping over to California this afternoon to try this cool new smoothie bar.'

Richy was a proper tech-bro. At twenty-three, just out of Camford University and Ivy League grad school, he was already a multi-trillionaire. He strolled around the bar making notes on his solar-powered laptop, which he then had to take outside again as it wouldn't work in the shade.

'Now, before we discuss your business reset and blast-off plan, how about a sample of our amazingly groundbreaking craft beers,' Jacob suggested. 'We have a marvellous selection for you: *Silver-Plated Saison, Samphire*

and Poached Quail's Egg IPA, Pancake Cookie Dough Apricot Parmesan Shaving Sour, Jerusalem Artichoke and Bone Marrow Gueuze or, my personal favourite, *Beard Oil Slick IPA*.'

'Just water for me,' Richy replied. 'I never touch alcohol. It increases my fiscal drag.'

'Down to business then,' Jacob said, reluctantly pouring glasses of Shackney tap water as the three sat down around a stripped, reclaimed school desk in the bar.

'Guys, I calculated your average price for a pint of this beer stuff is £12.69, I've got this genius idea to enable you to sell the beer for £59.25,' Richy said.

'Hit me with it, bro,' Harry enthused.

'Don't have a craft beer bar in Shackney. You should move to Mayfair instead – tap into the hedge fund market,' Richy explained.

'Isn't Mayfair a tad expensive?' Jacob asked uncomfortably, with a sickening realisation that Richy was, in fact, much richer than his own blue-blooded family.

'No. It's really affordable. I own three penthouses there – and my girlfriend's father owns most of Bond Street,' Richy said. 'The hedge-fund guys there will rock up outside your bar in their Lamborghinis and Bugatti, sink five of your fifty-pound craft beers and speed off to the airport.'

'Have you ever thought, Richy, that you might be a tiny bit out of touch with our moderately affluent hipster customer base?' Jacob asked, knowing even his father couldn't run to Mayfair property prices.

'Hey, I'm just a regular guy,' Richy said. 'And there's nothing a bit of Google Analytics can't solve.' He looked at his device on the table. 'OK. Don't say I can't switch my whole strategy in the blink of an LED. As I know nothing about beer, let's think about food. I've got this genuine working-class mate called Liam. He comes from the actual north.'

'Steady-on old bean. Do they allow people from the north into Shackney?' Harry asked in horror.

'So long as they stay "below stairs" so to speak,' Richy said. 'Liam would be the top bloke for sorting out your catering – or should I say – dry offering.'

A couple of weeks later, burly Liam had opened his pop-up food stall inside **Eaten Trifles**.

Jacob inspected its large sign as Liam opened for business.

'Erm, all you can eat for a pound?' Jacob asked. 'That's something of a bargain.'

Liam brandished a ladle in Jacob's direction. 'Any idiot can make their tea for 20p. That's 80p per serving pure profit.'

'Our clientele are rather knowledgeable about the culinary zeitgeist,' Jacob mused.

'Don't talk foreign to me. Did a plate of gravel ever do anyone any harm?' Liam raged, red-faced. 'Did it? This country's gone soft.'

'And, isn't there a misspelling here?' Jacob pointed at the menu, with its one item. 'Surely you mean gravel?'

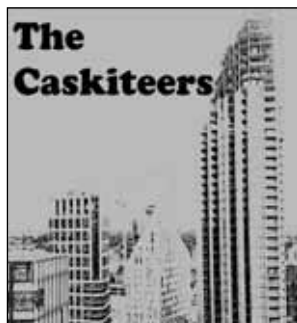
'No. Gravel. Good old industrial gravel. Gerritt dahnya!' Liam pointed at his three different flavours of gravel – coal, cobbles and whippet. 'It's cheap, fills yer belly and I guarantee you'll not get fat on it. I can get a ton delivered for a hundred quid. Really puts my Steradent, to the test, mind you.'

Richy stood proudly by as his northern prodigy heated the gravel on a brazier.

'Would you care for a portion?' Jacob asked Richy.

'I'd love to, mate,' Richy replied 'but I'm fasting for ninety-six hours. And I'm working on my next scheme – my super tech-bro mate Eli is going to invent the first AI craft beer bar.'

Charlie Mackle



Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

April

Monday 29th BRANCH EVENING SOCIAL

6.30pm, Clifden Arms, Worminghall, 7.15pm Fox and Goat, Tiddington, 8.00pm Old Fisherman, Shabbington.

May

Friday 3rd BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

5.30pm Wheel, Naphill

Saturday 4th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

12 noon, Royal British Legion, Marlow

Wednesday 8th HIGH WYCOMBE SOCIAL

6.30pm Falcon, 7.30pm Rose and Crown (and others tbc)

Tuesday 14th BEACONSFIELD AND ENVIRONS SOCIAL

6.00pm Beaconsfield Taps, 7.00pm Royal Standard of England, Forty Green, 8.00pm The Lions of Beaconsfield, Knotty Green

Thursday 16th BRANCH SOCIAL

2.30pm, Rebellion Tap Yard, Marlow

Wednesday 22nd BRANCH MEETING

7.00pm, Cross Keys, Thame

Saturday 25th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

12 noon, White Horse, Hedgerley

June

Saturday 1st BEER FESTIVAL

Marlow Football Club

Wednesday 12th EVENING SOCIAL

7.00pm Stag and Huntsman, Hambleden, 8.00pm Frog, Skirmett

Saturday 15th BUCKINGHAM JOINT BRANCHES SOCIAL

Joint social with Milton Keynes and North Bucks Branches.

Starts 12 noon at the Mitre, then New Inn, Woolpack, White Hart, Kings Head, Grand Junction.

Saturday 29th BLACK COUNTRY TRIP

Book now for the best day out of the year. Email the editor (contact details below) to book your place and to receive details on how to pay (the cost is £41 per person). Further details on page 11. Space is limited - don't miss out!

July

Friday 5th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

Noon onwards. 11th Maidenhead Beer and Cider Festival held at the NMCC Sports Bar at Summerleaze Park, off Summerleaze Road, Maidenhead SL6 8SP.

Saturday 6th HADDENHAM SUMMERFEST

Tibbs Road playing fields, Haddenham HP17 8FJ from 11am



**Further details can be found on
www.avw.camra.org.uk and facebook
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Editorial Address : 16 Jasmine Close, Aylesbury, Bucks HP21 9SH.

Tel : 01296 484551 E-Mail : editor@avw.camra.org.uk

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