

**FREE**

# Swan Supping



**Issue 113**

**Apr/May 2016**



**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**



**Lynne  
celebrates 20  
years at the  
Black Horse!  
See Local News.**

**Newsletter of the Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch of CAMRA**

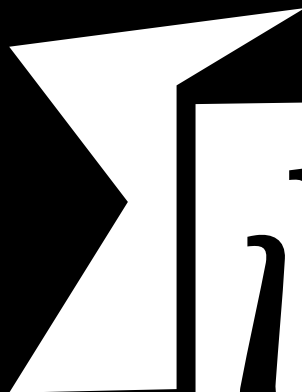
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**Circulation 6000**

# COUNTRY & BEER FESTIVAL

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SAT 30th APRIL - MON 2nd MAY

NEW MENU STARTS  
24th MARCH



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## NEWS FROM THE EDITOR



As we went to press, lots of our local **CAMRA** members were heading off to Liverpool for the annual **CAMRA Members Weekend and AGM** in Liverpool. Although this may mean that some *Swan Supping* deliveries will be a few days late, I'm sure they will catch up as soon as possible.

I'm unfortunately missing the event this year, due to holding the fort for *Swan Supping* and not getting myself organised in time as getting accommodation in Liverpool has proved tricky.

One of the things that is bound to be discussed at the AGM is the future direction of the campaign. This 'Revitalisation Project' will be launched by **CAMRA** founder Michael Hardman as we try to determine who we represent now, and who should we represent in the future to help secure the best outcome for the brewing industry and the pub trade. It will feature in future issues, but we have made a start already as we have consulted our members about how we are doing in a recent Branch Survey. The details of this survey appear in our centre spread, so please read it and feel free to contact us if you have any comments.

We understand that the **2017 National AGM** will no longer be held in Eastbourne and will in fact be moving to Bournemouth. Apparently the original venue has scheduled renovations to take place during the weekend. Local members are pleased about this as it was held in Eastbourne a few years ago and Bournemouth will offer a brand new selection of pubs to be enjoyed.

### **Black Country Trip**

The annual excursion to the Black Country this year will take place on Saturday 9th of July and the expected cost will be £31. This will be our 26th trip and we will be visiting lots of old favourites, such as the **Bull &**

**Bladder** in Brierley Hill and the **Beacon Hotel** in Sedgley, and we usually find a pub that we have never been to before. This is the best day of the year, so make sure you don't miss out. Get in touch with me (contact details on page 22) to ensure your place on the bus as space is limited.

### **Pollination for the Nation**

Last issue we advertised a promotion in conjunction with the 'Pollination for the Nation' campaign. This is a campaign to plant plenty of seeds which can grow into flowers for the bees to pollinate. Without bees there is no pollination, and that would lead to no hops being produced and therefore no beer!

Unfortunately the take-up by pubs has been, to say the least, disappointing! Only one pub has so far come forward and they are not even in our branch area. Obviously a rethink is required - any suggestions?

### **In Conclusion**

Congratulations are in order for Lynne Comley at the **Black Horse**, Lacey Green, as she recently celebrated twenty years in charge of the pub and she features both on our cover and in the Local News section. It is so refreshing to be able to report on a long tenure when we are constantly reporting changes of management in our local pubs.

We also report on a couple of new small breweries starting off locally - let's hope they can maintain the high standards of all our other local breweries with which we are so blessed.

Spring heralds the start of the beer festival season which seems to last most of the year. Support as many as you can - you might even enjoy yourself!

My thanks to all who have contributed to this issue of *Swan Supping* either by way of writing articles, sending pub news and pictures, Colin Stanford for the cartoon, and those hardy souls who deliver the finished magazine to the pubs, breweries and festivals etc.

*David Roe, Swan Supping Editor*

## NATIONAL CAMRA NEWS

### **National POTY and COTY**

Just three years after being opened on the site of a former nightclub, the **Sandford Park Alehouse** in Cheltenham has been named the **CAMRA National Pub of the Year**.



Pub owner Grant Cook (pictured left - photo: **Tom Stainer**) put in an offer on the Grade II listed building while on holiday in Thailand - a decision which has been rewarded by the Ale House being named the best pub in the country. To create his perfect pub, Cook put up extra walls, a Georgian-style stairwell and converted the main dance floor into a cellar.

The award-winning pub has ten real ale hand pumps and one dedicated to real cider, which means it is able to cater for a wide audience of real ale lovers. As well as an amazing real ale and food selection, the **Sandford Park Alehouse** also holds an annual cheese and cider festival.

The three other finalists were, in alphabetical order, the **Drovers Rest** in Carlisle, **Kelham Island Tavern** in Sheffield and the **Yard of Ale**, a micropub in Broadstairs, Kent.

The **National Club of the Year** is the **Albatross**



**RAFA Club** in Bexhill-on-Sea which saw off competition from more than 28,000 clubs nationwide. The award was presented to Karen Pelham, Chief Steward, (pictured below - photo: **Ayo Kila**)

The **Albatross** was judged in the final as the winner ahead of three other award-winning **CAMRA** clubs from across the country, the **Cheltenham Motor Club**, the **Kinver Constitutional Club** in Staffordshire and the **Orpington Liberal Club**.

### **Beer tax freeze a missed opportunity**

By failing to cut beer tax for a fourth year in a row, the Chancellor has missed an opportunity to support the ongoing revival of brewing in the UK.

**CAMRA** had been pushing for a cut in beer tax which would have prompted additional investment in the industry, protected jobs and importantly, supported stable prices for customers.

**CAMRA** Chief Executive, Tim Page, said: 'A freeze in beer tax is an opportunity missed to back the continued revival of brewing in the UK. With UK drinkers paying the second highest rate of beer duty in Europe, a beer tax cut was needed to keep pubs open, boost the brewing sector and to keep the cost of a pint stable.

'However, the sustainability of smaller community pubs has been boosted by welcome decisions to cut commercial stamp duty and the business rates paid by small businesses. The extension of small business rate relief will save publicans of smaller pubs thousands of pounds annually which will help keep community pubs as viable businesses and at the heart of community life. Likewise, cuts in commercial stamp duty will reduce the financial barriers faced by people looking to purchase small community pubs to keep them open and serving the needs of local people.'

Note: The reductions in stamp duty will only apply in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The business rates change only applies to England.

## PUB AND CLUB OF THE YEAR AWARDS



### *Pub of the Year and Cider Pub of the Year*

In an unprecedented move, the **Cross Keys** in Thame has done the double and been voted by members as the **Branch Pub of the Year** and **Cider Pub of the Year**. The pub won the **Cider Pub of the Year** last year and went on

to be runner-up in the regional award. Previously the pub had won **Branch Pub of the Year** in both 2012 and 2014.

Peter and Trudi Lambert have been in charge of the pub for just over seven years and have dragged the pub from the worst establishment in Thame to a place that has a great following. The pub's own brewed beers are eagerly awaited as are the annual beer festivals.

The **King's Head** in Aylesbury came second in what became a two-horse race for the coveted title.

It is hoped that the **Cross Keys** will perform well in the **Regional Pub of the Year** competition as it comes across the **Wheatsheaf** in Maids Moreton and the **Red Lion** in Little Missenden in the Buckinghamshire round of the regional competition before potentially competing against the Oxfordshire and Berkshire winners in the final.

Many thanks to all of those that beer scored not only the **Cross Keys**, but also all the other pubs in our branch area and to those that subsequently voted in the branch pub of the year

competition. It is only through beer scores that pubs are considered for the pub of the year award and **Good Beer Guide** entry.

### *Club of the Year 2016*

Incredibly, following a membership vote, the **Royal British Legion** in Marlow has won the **Branch Club of the Year** for the third year in a row. The club has also gone on to win the regional club of the year in the two other years that it has won the award, and it is hoped that the club can also go on to do the treble.

The hard work of Alan Sheppard, John Wilkinson and their team has paid dividends as the club has gone from strength to strength. Highlights of the year include the May bank holiday beer festival as well as beer festivals on the August Bank holiday and just before Christmas. The beer festivals always tend to have a focus on 'rare in these parts' Derbyshire beers alongside local favourites.

Members of **CAMRA** are permitted, on production of their membership cards, to free entry into the club. Regular visitors are however recommended to join the club itself.

Many thanks to all of those that beer scored throughout of the year. Your input significantly affected the winner of this competition.

*Carl Griffin (Branch Chairman).*



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*May 15th Quiz in aid of the MPS Society at 8pm. £2 per team member (max 6 per team).*

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## LOCAL NEWS

### AYLESBURY

We are delighted to announce that Aylesbury has a new brewery!

Neil Coxhead has started **Hillfire Brewery** in a unit in Edison Road off Rabans Lane. He has been test brewing and his first beer in a pub will be at the Easter beer festival at the **White Horse** in Hedgerley and is called **Beacon A.P.A. @ 4.7% ABV**. We hope to have more details in our next issue.

In April, the **Aristocrat** will be offering **George Gale Redwood (4%)** alongside their permanent ales **Fuller's London Pride** and **Oliver's Island**.

The planned refurbishment of the **Buckinghamshire Yeoman** which we reported on last issue has been cancelled. Two ales are on offer here: **Greene King IPA** and **Sharps Doom Bar**.

The **Ember Inns** owned **Horse & Jockey** has been run by Hayley since November. This food-led pub is very keen on its ales and offers **St. Austell Tribute**, **Sharps Doom Bar**, **Brakspear Bitter** and **Ember Pale Ale** from **Black Sheep** plus **Westons Old Rosie** for the cider fans. Special beer and food offers for burgers on Tuesdays and steaks on Thursdays.

At the **King's Head**, with the weather brightening up, the summer BBQs on a Friday evening will soon be back. The **King's Head** has been nominated for several awards this year including the Buckinghamshire and Berkshire Life Food and Drink Awards. They



were runners-up in the Pub of the Year category for 2015 and your vote could help in ensuring they are shortlisted again this year. Please vote at [www.foodawards.berkshire-life.co.uk/vote-online/](http://www.foodawards.berkshire-life.co.uk/vote-online/)

### BANBURY

**Banbury Beer & Cider Festival** has sadly been postponed due to problems securing an alternative venue for the planned dates whilst building work occurs at the Army Reserve Centre.

### BRILL

The **Pheasant**, now serving **Vale's Brill Gold**, **Chiltern Beechwood**, and **Skinners Pheasant Ale** as their regular beers, will be holding a St George's Day Beer Festival on 23rd April.

There will be at least 20 real ales and ciders available, many of which will be local, and more information will be available over the coming weeks on their website: [thepheasant.co.uk/news](http://thepheasant.co.uk/news).

### FRIETH

Villagers are supporting plans to reopen the **Yew Tree** after the council have rejected plans to redevelop the site, but there is a long way to go.

### GRANBOROUGH

The **Crown** is holding a Royal Ascot event on Saturday 18th June. A marquee in the garden will be equipped with large TV screens and plenty of champagne. The event will be a dress occasion. For tickets contact the **Crown** by phone 01296 670216 or [info@thecrowngranborough.co.uk](mailto:info@thecrowngranborough.co.uk)

Saturday 9th July is Charter Fair Day at the pub with games and music events.

Recent ales have included **Jennings Cockle Warmer** and **Ringwood Best Bitter** whilst currently there is **Chiltern Bitter**, **Jennings Cumberland**, **Ringwood Razorback** and **Vale Wychert** all on hand pump.

### HADDENHAM

The next **Haddenham Summerfest** will be held on Saturday 2nd of July.

The **Rising Sun** was offering a full range of **XT** and **Animal** beers when visited by a certain brewer and his wife recently. See the photograph above.

### HARDWICK

The recently refurbished **Bell** has had a change of ownership. New landlord Ben Groves and business partner Alex McMullen bought the pub from previous owner Ian Tring in December. Ben has been in the trade for 20 years, his most recent pub being the **George & Dragon** in Princes Risborough.

Three ales are currently available, **Young's Bitter** as a regular, with **Courage Directors** and **Sharps Doom Bar** as guests. These will vary by trial and request. The restaurant is open seven days a week for lunch and dinner with both à la carte and bar snacks on the menu.

Many events are currently being planned for the summer such as theme nights, beer festivals, quiz nights and the like. For details phone 01296 640005, email [ben@dinefreefrom.com](mailto:ben@dinefreefrom.com) or view the website: [www.thebell@hardwick.com](http://www.thebell@hardwick.com)

### HAZLEMERE

The **Mayflower** has been put on the market by **Fleurets** with a leasehold price of £105,000.

### LACEY GREEN

Lynne Comley has recently celebrated twenty years at the **Black Horse**

and features both above right and on our cover. Besides having a great reputation for food, there are four real ales on offer: **Brakspear Bitter**, **Otter Bitter**, **Revisionist Irish Peated Ale** and **Sadler's Hop Bomb** were available when visited. She has now started on the next twenty years by signing a further five-year lease on the pub with **Admiral Taverns** and keep your eyes open for another beer festival later on this year!

The **Whip Inn** will be holding their 23rd beer festival over the weekend of Friday 13th and Saturday 14th of May. Over thirty real ales and cider will be available from microbreweries from across the UK plus local breweries. The beer tent will be open from 12-11pm both days and there will be jazz on the Saturday afternoon.

### LITTLEWORTH COMMON

The fifth St. George's beer festival takes place at the **Blackwood Arms** from Thursday 21st to Sunday 24th of April. Twenty real ales and ciders will be available.

### MARLOW

**McMullens** owned bar and diner **Baroosh** (High Street) offers three of their brewery beers, one of which is the monthly special, currently **Mac's 16 Golden Ale (4.0%)**.

Marlow's latest pub addition the **Botanist** (West Street) has kept faith with their four real ales that they launched on their opening night. Manchester based **Cloudwater Passionate Blonde** is joined by three Bucks beers namely **Chiltern Beechwood Bitter**, **Rebellion Smuggler**, **Vale Gravitats**.

Town centre pub the **Chequers** (High Street) still offers four beers from their brewery owned portfolio at **Brakspear/Wychwood**. **Brakspear Bitter & Gold** alongside **Wychwood Hobgoblin** and **Oasty Toasty** (monthly special) were present in mid-March.

John and Tracy Hudson will be vacating their **Duke of Cambridge** (Queens Road) pub in early June for a new venture in Brittany, France. The **Duke** appeared in the **GBG** for many consecutive years during in the 1990s when it was the flagship venue for the town's real ale scene. Tout le meilleur John et Tracy. News of the new tenants in the next issue.

Street corner **Greene King** flagship pub the **Marlow Donkey** (Station Road) has an interesting guest ale on from time to time with **Goddards Fuggle-Dee-Dum (4.8%)** gracing the bar of late. **Greene King IPA**, **Abbot Ale** and house beer **Off The Rails** alongside **Rebellion Smuggler** make up the other beers on parade at the five hand-pulls.

Mill Road public house the **Prince of Wales** has dropped **Fuller's London Pride** for a further local brewery beer from **Rebellion**. Town brewed **IPA** and **Smuggler** are complemented with **Brakspear Bitter** and **Sharp's Doom Bar**.

Newly elected **Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe CAMRA Club of the Year 2016**, the **RBL Club** (Station Approach) is hosting their Springfest beer festival over the Mayday Bank Holiday (see

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advert for opening times). This will be the club's 15th beer festival to date, hosting three a year, and will present circa twenty real ales and two real ciders for the discerning drinker. During the month of May the club will be again showcasing their 'May is Mild Month' with a mild being available throughout the 31 days of May. Recent guest ales at the club have included; *Waeen Mellow Drama* (5.0%), *Bowland Buster* (4.5%), *Leighton Buzzard Restoration X* (5.0%) and *Raw Calypso Golden Ale* (4.2%).

The **Three Horseshoes** at Burroughs Grove offers six hand-pumps with four *Rebellion* beers on show, (*IPA*, *Mutiny*, *Zebedee* (seasonal) and *Lionheart* (monthly special), a changing guest ale (*Doom Bar*, when visited) and *Old Rosie* cider. *Chiltern* brewery core brew *Beechwood Bitter* was the previous guest ale prior to *Doom Bar*.

Recently relaunched end-of-terrace historic pub the **Two Brewers** (St. Peters Street) have five real ales on their bar including three *Rebellion* ales, *Greene King IPA* and *Fuller's London Pride*. This pub had a champagne relaunch gathering of late after their fire damage enforced closure a couple of years ago.

On Friday 3rd and Saturday 4th **Marlow Football Club** will be holding a beer festival starting at 12 noon. The local branch will be assisting with running the bar at the festival and are seeking volunteers to serve – contact chairman@swansupping.co.uk.

## MARSH GIBBON

Recently on offer at the *Plough* were *Fullers London Pride*, *Vale Brill Gold* and the excellent *Animal Raccoon*.

## OVING

The **Black Boy** is now open all day on Mondays. All ales are constantly varied and are mainly local and there is now normally a choice of three. *Animal Raccoon*, *Ringwood Best Bitter* and *Thwaites Wainwright* featured at the last visit.

## PRESTWOOD

*Greene King* wanted to change the name of their pub the *Chequers Inn* to the *Prestwood* but met with a lot of local opposition and they now intend to call it the *Chequers Tree*.

## QUAINTON

Five varying ales are usually offered at the *George and Dragon*. The current line-up has *Chiltern Double 50*, *Otter Amber Ale*, *Tring Hummingbird*, *Vale Wychert* and *XT 2*. (Those tried were in fine form). Various events coming up

include Quiz nights, a Bingo night and a Pizza evening.

## THAME

At the **James Figg**, Jack Bull, their chef, has come second in a nationwide competition to find the U.K.'s best burger. To come second nationwide, they must be good, so wash one down with one of the beers from *Vale Best*, *XT 13*, *Purity Mad Goose* or *Sharps Doom Bar*.

Meanwhile along the road at the **Cross Keys**, congratulations are in order for becoming the branch *Pub of the Year* as well as the branch *Cider Pub of the Year*. Eight beers and eight ciders normally on at any one time.

## TWYFORD

Two *Tring* ales were on offer at the **Crown** when last visited. These were *Side Pocket for a Toad* and *Redshank*. Both on hand-pump.

## WENDOVER

Pete and Shelley Donne have taken on the **Punch** owned *King and Queen*. They are offering *Youngs Bitter* plus two other beers: *Adnams Ghost Ship* and *Wadworth 6X* when visited. They are holding a beer festival over the May Bank Holiday from Saturday 30th of April to Monday 2nd of May.

## WHITCHURCH

The **White Swan** has again go many events planned for the summer, starting on Thursday 21st April with live music to celebrate the Queens 90th birthday. On Sunday 24th April there will be another space shot – to send a British astronaut on the international space station a pint of *London Pride*!!? This follows on from the previous successful mission to send a pint of *Pride* into space last year.

On Saturday 30th April May Day celebrations include a pig roast, a Tug of War and live music. Tuesday 14th June will see the *Whitchurch Morris Men* at the pub. Another fixture to remember is that of the now annual *Whitstock Music Festival* to be held from Friday July 29th to Sunday 31st. All details 01296 641228 or [www.whiteswanwhitchurch.co.uk](http://www.whiteswanwhitchurch.co.uk)

## WING

Recent ales featured at the **Queens Head** include *Chiltern Pale*, *XT 3* and *Hornes Triple Goat*. The latter is an excellent IPA at 5% from the nearby brewery in Bow Brickhill.

## WINSLOW

The *Vale* pub the **George Inn** is due to have a take-away shop installed in April for Belgian and other bottled beers similar to the *Hop Pole* plus two or three cask beers. This pub has been transformed since *Vale* took it over – they recently had *Vale Gravitas* and *Best IPA* in superb nick. They are also looking to have a restaurant on the upper floor.

## WOOBURN COMMON

The **Royal Standard** is holding a May Bank Holiday beer festival from Friday 29th of April to Monday 2nd of May. Fifty beers and ciders will be on offer.



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## BRANCH VICTORY AGAINST APPEAL OF PUB'S ACV LISTING



For the last year, *Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe CAMRA* have been proactively listing pubs as Assets of Community Value (ACV) in order to reinforce the recognition of pub's positions as the social hub of the local community and empower the local community to have a say in the future of pubs that are important to them. The latter increasing democracy at a local level.

The branch recently faced the first appeal against the listing of a pub as an ACV when *W H Brakspear & Sons Ltd* appealed the decision by South Oxfordshire District Council to list the *Rising Sun* in Thame.

They argued, with the assistance of Freeth solicitors, that the branch was

not eligible to nominate the pub under the legislation and that the pub is not a community asset. The latter point of appeal is quite peculiar as pubs can surely only survive if they are a community asset, otherwise people would not patronise them.

We were invited by South Oxfordshire District Council to assist in the defence against the appeal. As Freeth Solicitors had argued that holding music events and quiz nights were ancillary to the operation of the pub and therefore cannot be used as an example to prove a community asset, we countered that if an activity was ancillary every pub would be required to provide it in order to be viable. We also demonstrated that groups also use the pub for social meetings. The panel found our argument to be more convincing, reinforcing the point that the pub is in fact an Asset of Community Value and dismissing the appeal.

It is hoped that the decision will discourage frivolous appeals against pubs' ACV status. Certainly it should serve as a warning to pub owners against Freeth's encouragement to appeal ACVs, as it only serves to line Freeth's pockets. Unfortunately, the solicitors are the main legal establishment across the country that are

driving these appeals.

It is also interesting to note that during the last year, the branch has not lost a single pub that is listed as an ACV. This goes some way to support our argument that if permitted development, allowing pubs to be converted to other uses without requiring planning permission and public consultation, was removed, pub owners would be more inclined to invest for the future of the pub and not endeavour to prove unviability in order to make a sizeable profit through permitted development.

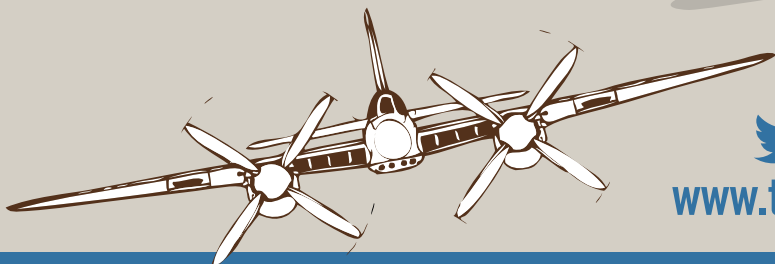
*Carl Griffin (Branch Chairman)*

# FLYING HIGH

FOR 2016, ALL OUR  
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**TRING**  
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## BREATH OF FRESH AIR FOR THE GREEN DRAGON!

Restaurateurs Matthew (Chef) and Kate and Front-of-house Simon, have moved from *Bluebella Roo's* in Berkhamsted to inject some life and spice into the once thriving **Green Dragon** down by the church, green and pond in picturesque Haddenham. Sadly in recent years the establishment has wrestled with its concept and has had an identity crisis resulting in villagers avoiding it like the plague.

The pub has been closed for almost four months and in recent weeks there has been much speculation as to who would take over this village treasure.

Under a new enlightened management team that is both ready and willing to listen to customers, maybe this time the **Dragon** will breath fire again. Two real ales are currently being served with at least one a *Locale*. *Red Squirrel* and *Tring* have both featured already with Simon keen for feedback and ready to experiment. In the summer it is hoped business will necessitate a third hand pump being put into operation.

Matt and Kate hope to inject a new lease of life into this delightful pub by creating the highest quality of food served in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere for all locals to enjoy.

Celebrating the best of locally sourced produce and changing of the seasons,



the **Green Dragon** will also offer a great selection of real ales, carefully selected award-winning wines, scrumptious bar snacks and promises to rustle up a mean Sunday roast!

Children and muddy boots are also welcome to this family run pub as one of its aims is to ensure the **Green Dragon** is the perfect meeting point for the local community to catch up, relax and create lasting memories in comfortable surroundings close to home.

Opening early for coffee for school mums and passers-by, lunches follow around noon, suitable for both business people, individuals, and groups such as walkers, with dogs most welcome. Open

throughout the afternoon and evening, drinkers are as welcome as foodies, trying out some of Matthew's delightful innovations.

The team is excited about the challenge and the prospect of 'making it work this time' which is all the village wants and needs. It won't happen overnight but from what we've seen and tasted so far, all bodes well.

The **Green Dragon** is at the centre of the Wychert Way walking trail that links villages such as Dinton, Cuddington, Cheersley and Kingsey. Walking groups are very welcome with parking and toilets available before the 'off'.

**Bill Piers**



**The Pheasant**  
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## St George's Day Beer Festival

Saturday 23rd April 2016  
12 noon until 11pm

At least 20 Real Ales and Ciders,  
The Long Crendon Morris Dancers,  
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Look out for more news at [thepheasant.co.uk/news](http://thepheasant.co.uk/news)

*The Pheasant, 39 Windmill Street, Brill, Buckinghamshire, HP18 9TG*  
01844 239370 [info@thepheasant.co.uk](mailto:info@thepheasant.co.uk)

## A NEW KING AND QUEEN AT THE KING AND QUEEN!



Absolute madness, or a stroke of genius? Giving up your career of 35 years in the music business to take over a village pub, might seem like the former to many, but for Pete and Shelley running a pub in their home town was a lifelong dream.

So when the **King and Queen** became available at almost the exact time that Pete had taken the momentous decision to make a career change, it seemed like perfect serendipity.

Pete says 'We had always talked about running a pub, so when our son (all three of our children and our five grandchildren live in Wendover too) saw the sign outside the pub, we thought it was the ideal opportunity. I want to bring continuity and consistency back to the **King and Queen**, but at the same time inject some of the zeitgeist and imagination that has perhaps been lacking in recent years.

'It's a lovely old pub, with a sweet little garden and it deserves to be at

the heart of village life. As well as taking inspiration from my time in the music industry, I want to engage with the local community and create a truly inspiring and collaborative space. Something that people feel they really have a stake in. Great drinks, honest food and an eclectic programme of live music and events, are at the heart of what we want to achieve.

'We have a lot of things in mind over the coming months, but also love the prospect of Wendover residents (young, old and in between) getting in touch and bringing their own enthusiasm and ideas to us, we really feel that a truly great pub is something that the whole town can feel a part of. Having spent the first couple of months settling in, we've kicked off properly with a new menu in mid March and events also started around then too.

'There'll be a beer festival over the May bank holiday weekend, coinciding with Wendover Celebrates. I was delighted when I heard that the theme was the Wild West, as it gave me the opportunity to indulge one of my musical passions, so the theme for the beer festival will be (loosely) Country and Western. So dig out your cowboy hats and boots and call in for a beer and a bite to eat and some good times.'



## Hidden Treasure 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. Outside is a large attractive garden with a patio, prettily planted arbour and a safe children's play area.

Be sure not to miss our annual Beer and Cheese Festival, from Friday 1st July until Sunday 3rd July. When you can savour the great combination of carefully selected great British ales and farmhouse cheeses. Visit to our website and Facebook page for details.



01494 535317 [www.ledespencersarms.co.uk](http://www.ledespencersarms.co.uk)  
The Common, Downley, High Wycombe HP13 5YL



## JOY(S) AT BULL & BUTCHER




Entrepreneurs Stewart and Dawn Joy, locals originally from Long Crendon and Wheatley have returned from 15 years in Spain to inject some continental fizz into the quintessential 'English pub on green' **Bull & Butcher** at Ludgershall. With a brother in Bicester 5 miles away, a sister in Oakley, and numerous friends and acquaintances from when they frequented the Oak in Oakley, they are really excited about the challenge and prospect of developing something traditional but just a little bit different.


Noting the enormous success of the **Lion** at Wendlebury, feeding off the huge population increase in Bicester, the pub will offer a warm welcome alongside wholesome British food. The English chef, also from Spain, was part of a successful and profitable team out there.

Stewart admits he's no real ale expert, but is committed to serving ale and learning all about keeping it and maybe even talking to it. With a friend working at **Vale Brewery** in nearby Brill and close connections with Long Crendon, **XT's** birthplace, local ales are expected to feature prominently. A Summer beer festival is already in preparation.

The 'new people' got the keys at 7am on Saturday 12th March and by mid afternoon, punters watching the rugby were being served beer continental style at their tables negating a disruptive trip to the bar - thanks Dawn - we'll tell our friends and we'll come back for more.



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# BEER FESTIVAL

## THE WHIP INN 23rd BEER FESTIVAL

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**Friday 13th & Saturday 14th May**

**30+ Real Ales & Cider**

**Microbreweries from across the UK Plus Local Breweries**

**Saturday Afternoon Jazz**

**Beer Tent Open Friday 12-11pm Saturday 12-11pm**

**Don't drink & drive. The 300 bus from Wycombe Risborough & Aylesbury stops outside the pub**

**The Whip Inn, Pink Road, Lacey Green, Bucks Tel: 01844 344060**

# Branch Members' Survey

'Where are they all, then?' That's the shout that occasionally goes up at local branch events when it's mentioned that **CAMRA** has approximately 830 members who live within the boundaries of Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe.

We organise many events, such as the Aylesbury beer festival and our recent Annual General Meeting, that are busy and well attended (standing room only at the recent AGM). But there's always a tendency to look around to wonder where the other seven hundred or more are lurking and, perhaps, most importantly to ask ourselves if the branch committee are representing this 'silent majority'.

Naturally, there are many **CAMRA** members who are happy to support the campaign by paying their subscription and we're very appreciative of their support – that financial commitment helps cement **CAMRA's** status as the one of the largest consumer organisations in Europe – of anything – not just beer.

There are also many **CAMRA** members who, for various reasons, such as working long hours elsewhere, are unable to get engaged with local branch activities. And there are others whom we know like to support **CAMRA** in their own individual way, for example, persuading their local pubs to serve **LocalE** or writing to MPs or councillors.

As a local branch committee we want to ensure we reflect the views of all our local members and, while we might not be able to meet a large number in person, there are many ways in which we can communicate with them, not least through the pages of *Swan Supping*.

So to coincide with the branch AGM we decided to carry out a members' survey – using an online survey tool. We wanted to use the results to: understand if we were in tune with the wider membership; ask what we could do better; and to gather information on members' preferences regarding branch activities (if any).

So what did the wider membership want to say – if, indeed, anyone was interested at all in telling us anything?

And speak they did! The first thing for us to say is 'Thank you'. For an unsolicited email survey, we had an excellent response rate. Everyone has inboxes full of unopened, unsolicited emails: for commercial organisation the typical number of people who merely open an email of this type is apparently around 2%.

The results of the survey were presented to those members who attended the AGM in February. While the survey was fairly short (10 questions), it generated a great deal of fascinating data – far too much than can be presented in *Swan Supping*. However, those who participated (and maybe many others) might be interested in the following summary of the most interesting findings.

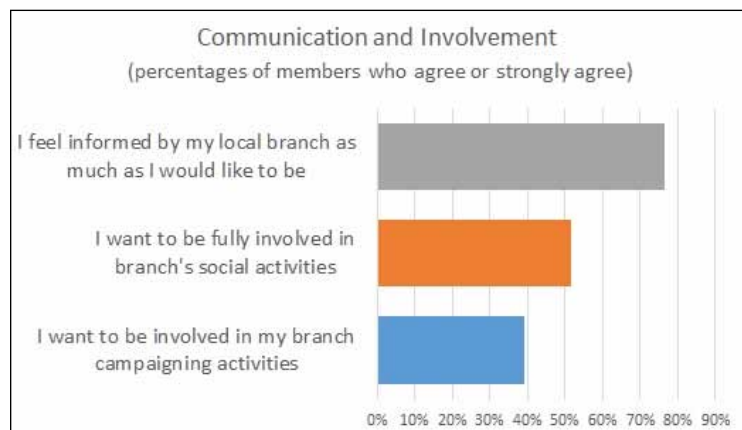
The percentage of our members who took the trouble to complete the survey was a very impressive 11%. This rate in itself shows a good level of engagement with local members, and makes our results statistically significant.

## Response by Location

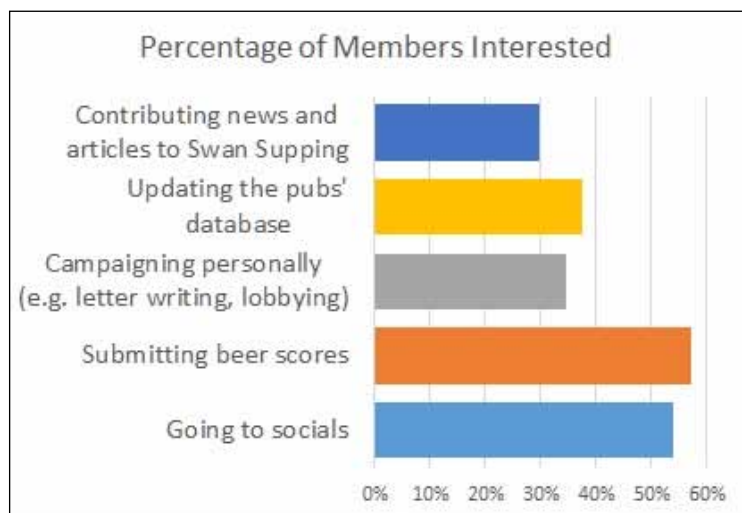


As the pie chart shows, responses were well spread across the branch, with a slight emphasis towards the Aylesbury area.

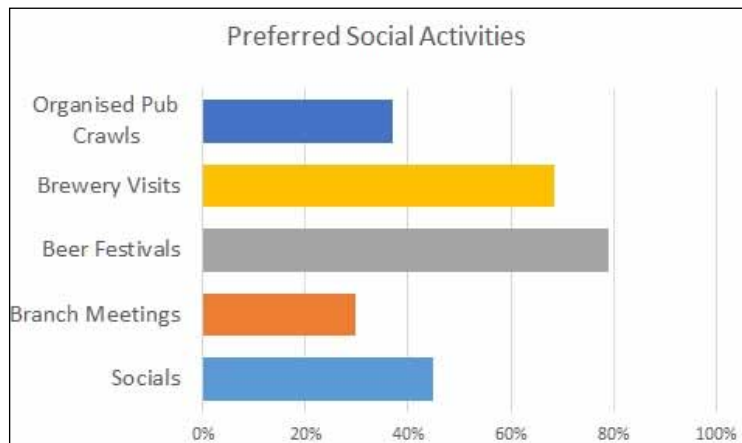
We asked how involved members would like to be with the branch. Slightly under 40% said they would like to join in campaigning and just over 50% expressed interest in social activities. So active participation isn't for everyone but it's appreciated by the vast majority: over three-quarters of the respondents felt we did a good job in communicating branch activities.



Regarding members' preferred type of involvement with the branch, it was significant that the three of the highest were activities that could be performed individually by members: for example, submitting beer scores, campaigning personally and updating the pubs' database. Over 50% of members responding also expressed some interest in the branch's social activities.



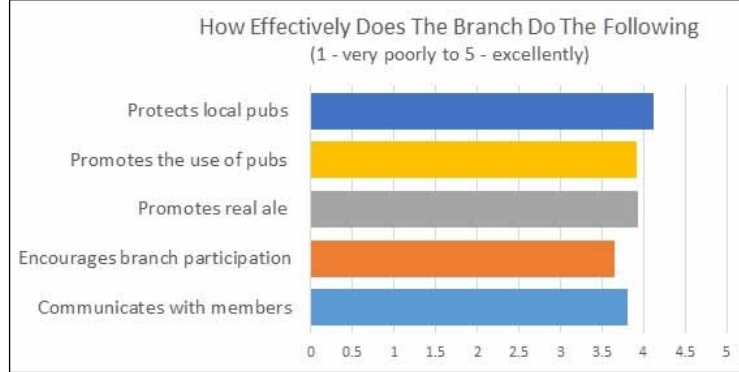
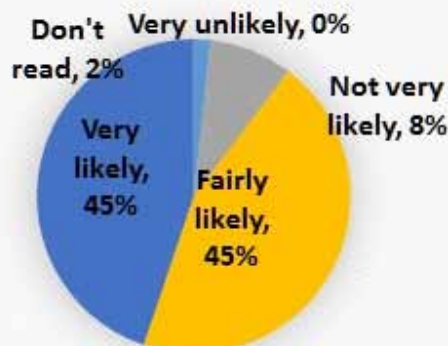
Of the different types of social activities, beer festivals and brewery visits were resoundingly the most popular – 70% of respondents were interested in both.



We asked a series of questions about preferred days and times of the week for socials. The answers didn't reveal any momentous surprises: weekday lunchtimes were least popular. However, some overall preferences could be discerned: Wednesday, Thursday and Friday (in particular) were the most favoured evenings with no pronounced inclination towards early or late in the evening. (Tuesdays and Sundays were the least popular evenings.) Saturdays



## Likelihood of Obtaining News Via Swan Supping



that we 'represented local beer drinkers and pub customers'.

The lowest of the scores in this section was for our encouragement of branch members' participation (although this was still significantly in positive territory). This is something we can aim to improve on – with this survey providing a first step.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the more than 150 pubs in the branch now that are now registered as Assets of Community Value, there was a very strong score on the branch's record on pub protection: well over 4 on a scale of 1 to 5.

In conclusion, the survey results are mostly encouraging for the local branch committee. The respondents predominantly thought we are doing a worthwhile job, with no widespread disaffection over the amount of communication. Most respondents were also content with their own current levels of engagement in **CAMRA** activities. However, as we're all volunteers and we're always appreciative of any extra help and would like try to encourage some of our less involved members to consider becoming more active in the branch.

Enthusiasm for beer festivals and brewery visits was high amongst respondents and we therefore may plan some of these types of events later in the year to encourage more members to get involved – our activities almost always involve beer so they can't be that forbidding.

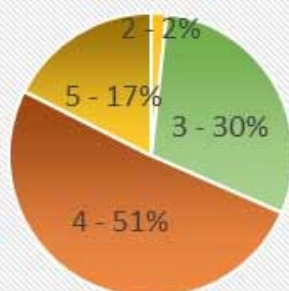
As an incentive for members to complete the survey, **XT Brewery** kindly donated a prize of two bottles of beer plus glass and beer voucher for a prize draw. Colin White of Aylesbury was the lucky member whose name was picked out of the hat at the AGM (see picture of him receiving that lovely beer).

Many thanks to all the other members who also responded to the survey. If these results prompt any further thoughts from our local membership please get in touch via the contact details found in **Swan Supping**.

**Mike Clarke**

## Represents the interests of beer drinkers and pub customers in local branch ?

(1 - strongly disagree to 5 - strongly agree)



One source of information the respondents thoroughly endorsed was **Swan Supping** – a stunning 90% of the sample said they were fairly likely or very likely to turn to **Swan Supping** for branch communication.

Clearly, all the above mentioned methods of communications tend to complement each other and the survey shows the importance of us using a varied selection. However, the reassuring message for all our valued advertisers in **Swan Supping** (and anyone thinking of placing an advert) – the magazine is highly valued by a loyal readership.

The survey ended with some questions on the effectiveness with which the members believed the local branch achieved **CAMRA's** campaigning objectives. Perhaps the key question was about representation of local drinkers. A resounding 68% replied that they agreed or strongly agreed





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## GRAVEDIGGERS' BOOK

The **Gravediggers' Arms** is probably the worst pub in England. Its microbrewery produces brews that are even more foul than the tempers of its unhygienic regulars. Beers like *Old Septic Tank*, *Undescended Gonad* and *Ferret's Liver Liquorice Stout* would be guaranteed to give even the most fanatical beer tucker the hangover from hell.

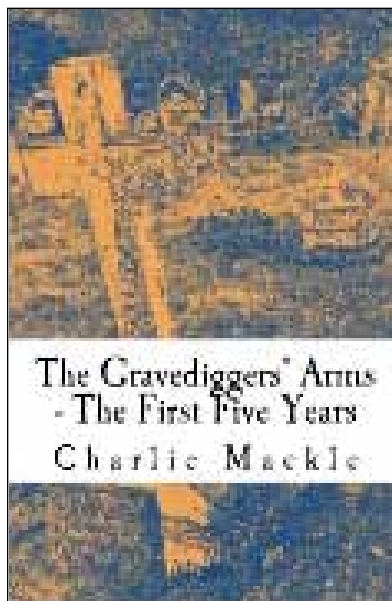
Nestling in a secluded setting somewhere between the abattoir and the toxic waste dump, the **Gravediggers'** is the ultimate pub that you wish you hadn't stumbled into.

Follow the mind-boggling schemes dreamed up by landlord James and Mazz, his enterprising barmaid, in their valiant bids to turn the Diggers into a semblance of a viable – and clean – pub. And discover how each of those futile attempts is invariably thwarted by the incorrigible locals, including the truculent trio of Old Pete, Old Joe and Old Moses.

*The Gravediggers' Arms* by Charlie Mackle collects the first thirty pint-sized instalments of life in the **Gravediggers' Arms** as published in *Swan Supping*.

Published on 1st April as a proper book with real pages, 'The Gravediggers' Arms' will be available to order at the special limited-edition price of £6.99 (£7.99 from 1st June) from [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk). Search for Charlie Mackle or the ISBN of: 978-1530608690.

All profits will go to branch funds.



**Marlow Beerfest 2016**

**Friday 3rd June**  
4pm - 10pm

**Saturday 4th June**  
12pm - 10pm

*30 Beers & Ciders*

**Marlow Beerfest**

at

**Marlow Football Club**

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[www.marlowfc.co.uk](http://www.marlowfc.co.uk)

[beerfest@marlowfc.co.uk](mailto:beerfest@marlowfc.co.uk)



## TAPLOW MICRO-BREWERY

A tiny new micro-brewery located in Taplow has become registered to brew commercial craft beers. **moogBREW** is the creation of Margi and Id Williams and will celebrate its launch with an event at the **Royal Standard**, Wooburn Common on Friday 1st April.

The brewers aim to make a virtue of their tiny set-up by supplying small batch, limited release, and speciality beers to local craft beer and real ale enthusiasts.

**moogBREW**'s 'core range' comprises just two beers – **RSP**, an easy drinking low ABV pale ale and **Porter**, a dark beer with complex malt flavours. There will be four seasonal beers, which will change each year, plus occasional one-off specials.

A striking feature of **moogBREW**'s beer is the artwork adorning their bottles and pump-clips, which feature the work of animators and comic artists.

Margi says: 'We are determined to keep this small, local and DIY. We don't want our beers disappearing into an anonymous distribution chain. It is important to us that we always have a direct relationship with the consumers of our beers. Their feedback is worth so much.'

Id expands on this: 'Our tiny brewhouse is at the end of our garden. The biggest batch we can brew is about 90 litres – that is barely two firkins. We'll be selling bottles directly to consumers at street markets, with the occasional cask for local pubs or beer festivals.'

**moogBREW**'s first sales were at Maidenhead's Eat On The Street event, which was a great success, with all the beers selling out before the end of the day.

*Prepared from a Press Release from moogBREW.*



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**Number 16 bus stops outside**

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Bingo Night, start 7.30pm

**Monday 18th April**  
Pizza Night, from 5 to 8pm

**Sunday 1st May**  
Quiz Night, start 7.30pm

**Sunday 29th May**  
Quiz Night, start 7.30pm



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## A BEERY BREXIT?

With the referendum on UK membership of the European Union rapidly approaching, a group of ale-loving Brexit campaigners are aligning themselves with the anti-EU cause. They argue that a vote to leave will allow Britain to re-establish the purity and integrity of its traditional beers.

‘The evidence is indisputable,’ argues Dave Breakup MP, chairman of campaigning group Hopping Mad. ‘Before the UK joined the EEC in 1973, bitter was our best selling beer. Within a few years, encouraged by advertising that brainwashed the average working man, lager had insinuated itself on to the bars of the nation’s pubs. What’s more, around the time of the Treaty of Maastricht in the late 80s, lager overtook dear old English ale in sales.’

The first demand on the activists’ list is to ensure British beer is solely brewed from British ingredients. A spokesman for pressure group Support Hops Indigenous To England who’d changed his name by deed poll to East Kent Goldings said, ‘Think of it as an extension of **CAMRA’s** successful **LocAle** scheme. We produce the best malting barley in the world and, in parts of the country, hop growing is ingrained into rural life. Yet some unpatriotic brewers insist on using European hops. Frankly, this is bonkers, and when we leave the EU we will have the power to stop this madness and ban these continental interlopers.’

Indeed, the prospect of banning European hops outright – or at least putting punitive tariffs on importing the crop – is seen as essential by some Out campaigners. The spokesman continued: ‘British hops have traditional, sensible names like Fuggles or Bramling Cross. Those Euro hops have names you can’t even pronounce – like Saaz or Styrian Golding – so how do you know what kind of filth you’re drinking? You don’t, do you?’

‘Call me a simple man if you like but I believe that European hops should stay in Europe and go in their continental beer, which is so pale and anaemic that no self-respecting Englishman would want to drink it. No! Enough is enough! Drink English! Drink brown liquid!’

Anti-Euro hop campaigners insist they are not hostile to continental hops themselves, just that they’re not compatible with traditional British beer styles. ‘These European hops are just too aromatic for our tastes. They need to be used in their beer styles which your Frenchman or German might find palatable. Some of my best friends are European – or they’ve been there on holiday at least – and their hops are fine for them. But they’re not for us English. We find them way too hoppy and not to our more refined palate.’

‘This important move could turn the tide against the pernicious trend towards brewing golden ales in the UK,’ continued Dave Breakup. ‘These light coloured beers are alien to the English way of life and brewing them is obviously the mark of a traitor and fifth-columnist. If I see a pub serving these pseudo-lagers in my constituency I ask the landlord when, come that glorious day when we’re out of Europe forever, if he’d like to be deported to a Romanian gulag. Not many of them say they would, I’ll tell you!’

Other, more fundamentalist campaigners, want to ban the use of hops altogether in British beer. ‘It’s only been since the end of the 15th century that English ale has been adulterated in this way,’ says historian Whyte Cliffs of splinter group, Hop-Scotched. ‘In fact, the correct definition of the word ‘ale’ is for an unhopped brew. It’s thought hops were introduced from – ‘he spits on the gravel of his country house’s drive’ - France! If these ales were good enough for Henry VIII then they’re good enough today. Don’t these barbarians respect our sense of tradition?’

Whyte Cliffs warms to his theme: ‘Look at what these mad Belgians do with their so-called beer – they even put fruit in it. If we stay in the EU who’s to say the bureaucrats won’t force us to brew all our beer with mandatory pineapple and guava? It’s a real risk that can only be reduced by voting out.’

So much for beer’s ingredients. What about the finished product in a post-Brexit world? The campaigners have the importing of continental beer in their sights too, with some wishing to strike a trade agreement that completely bans the import of European beers following a Brexit.

Colonel Ronald Atkins Perrier, an outspoken advocate of total Euro beer prohibition states: ‘You know you can’t drink their water when you go on holiday over there? I’m told water is a significant ingredient in beer. So surely we should ban this foreign sewage liquid on public health grounds?’

‘Look at the patriotism of Nigel Farage,’ Colonel Perrier continued. ‘Almost every photograph of the great man shows him with a pint of brown, British beer in his hand. And it’s invariably **Greene King IPA**. Yes. **IPA** – **India Pale Ale** – nothing to do with Europe. A good old Commonwealth beer, which I infer from the name, is brewed in the subcontinent by that renowned craft brewer **Greene King**. The simple point is this: we don’t need the Europeans or their smelly hops.’

Asked what would replace imported European beers in the event of a complete ban following a Brexit, campaigners pointed to recent history.

Dave Breakup said: ‘Back in the seventies, our enterprising brewers made a fabulous range of continental-style beers all brewed in solid, traditional places like Luton, Romford and Reading. Who can forget the taste of *Skol* or *Grunhülle*, our home-grown lagers? And by being half the strength of their continental equivalents they turned a tidy profit for the brewers. After all, we’re all in this together.’

‘Let’s not neglect *Hofmeister* either and its mascot, George the *Hofmeister* bear. Remember him, an untrustworthy chap covered in hair and in possession of an insatiable sexual appetite? This provided an admirable public service role in reminding English folk about the perils of life across the channel.’

If an EU referendum resulted in beer blockade along the channel surely drinkers would be entitled to a change every so often? So who would satisfy the tastebuds of British drinkers who wanted to try something a little more exotic every now and again? Colonel Perrier has no doubts: ‘Our ex-colonial partners have brewed beer perfectly adequately while removed from the tyranny of Brussels.’

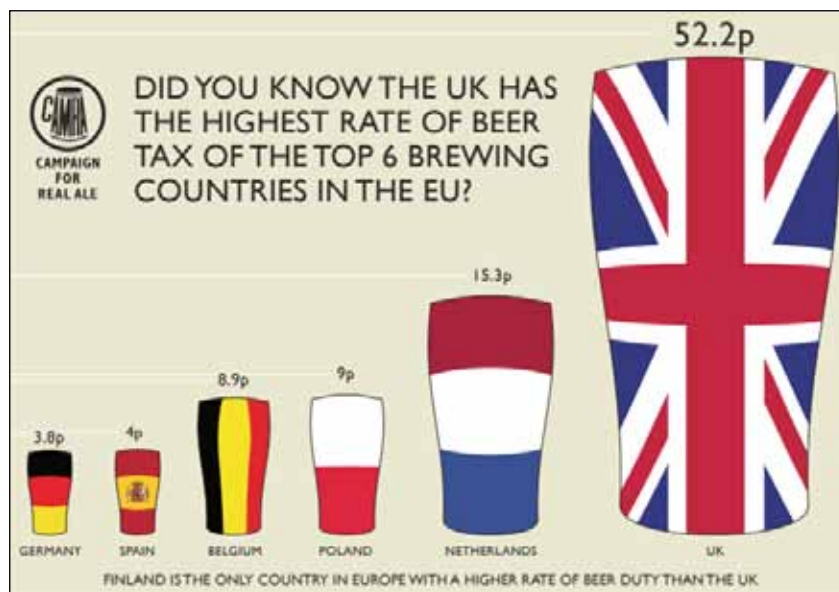
Pushed for examples of such beers, Colonel Perrier replied without hesitation. ‘I’ve heard there’s a very popular American brew called something like **Budweiser** – truly the King of

Beers – and our antipodean cousins are said to have produced the tastiest lager – **Fosters**. It’s very popular with the Sheilas apparently.’

The campaigners are so confident that the British public will be persuaded by their crusade that they’re lobbying the government to bring forward the date of the referendum.

Dave Breakup argued, ‘We think 1st April would be entirely appropriate.’

**Ella Mira Check**







# MARLOW ROYAL BRITISH LEGION



**CAMRA Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Club of the Year  
2014, 2015, 2016**

**CAMRA Regional Club of the Year  
2014, 2015**

## SPRINGFEST 2016

### 20 REAL ALES

**Thursday 28th April 19.00 – 23.00 (Beer Festival Opens)**

**Friday 29th April 11.00 – 23.00 (Club Quiz in evening)**

**Saturday 30th April 11.00 – 23.00 (Live Band Saturday night)**

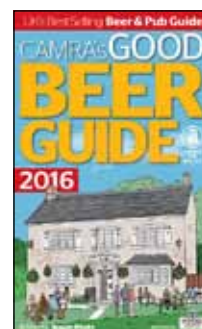
**Sunday 1st May 11.00 – 20.00 (Family Day, free live music, bbq)**

**BH Monday 2nd May 11.00 – 23.00 (Open Crib Match)**

**New Bottled Beer range launch at our beer festival**



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# LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

## ABC Brewery

Brewing at **ABC** is back. After a few weeks of no brews, due to all the exciting building work going on at the **Hop Pole**, the **ABC** brewer has just come up with this one - **Steam Punk IPA**. Coming in at a nice strong 5.1%, this deep golden delight uses the finest American and English hops for quite a pleasing tipple.

As **ABC** isn't your usual brewery, only producing one-off brews, they don't come up with the usual. They've created a limited edition range. The Artist's edition. Each beer is inspired by the artwork produced for the pump clips by an up and coming artist from around the UK.

*Daylight Moon*, is inspired by Ohmar Majeed's painting he did for **ABC**. A 3.7% dark red colour with really light hoppy flavors that contradicts itself. Look out for more to come from this range. £2 per cask will go to art therapy in Buckinghamshire.



Falling at 125 mph you would have reached terminal velocity. In the days of the traveling circuses, one of the main attractions was the high diver. These daredevil divers would wow crowds by jumping from extreme heights into water.



*Terminal Velocity* 4.1% is packed to the rafters with the wonderful Simcoe hop, this dizzy single hopped pale ale will surely bring in the crowds.

## Chiltern Brewery

Following the success of *Earl Grey IPA* (3.9%) in March – a collaboration with Birchall tea, the brewery is launching a dark mocha *Columbian Coffee Porter* 4.1% vol as a new limited edition draught beer for April. Promising all the mouth-watering aroma of smooth roasted coffee beans for a café crème flavour and finish, it is a dark smooth roast ale infused with Granja La Esperanza Margaritas coffee from a model farm in Columbia, courtesy of bespoke family coffee roasters Chartley Coffee. Another very exciting collaboration project.



April sees the return too of seasonal favourite, award-winning draught *Nut Brown Mild* (3.9%), a dark amber gently hopped chestnut and chocolatey ale, complex and balanced, that's great for the spring and food matching with red meats and cheeses. There will be a welcome return too for seasonal

draught *Cobblestones* (3.5%) for the months of May and June; crisp and refreshing with hints of blackcurrant.

It's also an exciting time for bottled beers with two new bottle-conditioned ales being launched from April to June. In a 750ml champagne bottle, and the result of the brewery's 2000th Gyle, *MM* is a sparkling ale slowly conditioned over twelve weeks to produce a smooth and delicately balanced India Pale Ale at around 8.7%. *Queen's Birthday Ale* (7.2%) is launching with a special release of just ninety 500ml bottles to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday. Look out for them on the shelves of the brewery shop in Terrick.

It promises to be a wonderful spring for ale!

Finally, Head Brewer Tom Jenkinson has been delighted to announce that limited edition draught beer *Chiltern Double Fifty* raised over £700 for the Chiltern Society and The Chilterns AONB, to help them with their fantastic work in preserving our beautiful Chiltern Hills. Well done and thanks to everyone who bought a pint to add to the total.

## Malt The Brewery

Fresh from the success of *Malt Starry Nights*, *Team Malt* jumped into another new brew in February.

*Malt Icknield* has been in the making for some time and was finally test brewed in February, with the first commercial brew taking place at the start of March.



Launched to the trade and the brewery club members mid March it has been a roaring success.

Described as 'Deep, complex and moreish'. *Malt Icknield* is a celebration of provenance and tradition.

Brewed with floor dried malt from Warminster Maltings, Britain's oldest working maltings. Using barley from the Icknield series. *Malt Icknield* is 4.5% ABV and made with all British hops.

With the Icknield Way running through much of the brewery's local landscape and past many customers, the name was an obvious choice for their latest ale.

## Rebellion Brewery

**Rebellion Brewery** have just won the *Society of Independent Brewers Award for Community Support* (pictured above) at this year's *SIBA National Beer Awards* in Sheffield. Tim Coombes received the award on behalf of the **Rebellion** staff and customers, adding 'We owe



a huge thanks to all our dedicated staff, who are very charity and community focused and the thousands of **Rebellion** customers who regularly donate whilst on-site at **Rebellion**. Without their help and good will, none of this would have been achievable'.

The awards look to congratulate excellence in the brewing industry across a variety of categories, from pump clip, can and bottle design, to efforts taken by brewers to make their business eco-friendlier. The *Community Support Award* is awarded to the brewery showing outstanding commitment to integration into and support for local community life.

Coming Monthly  
Specials:

May

*Explorer* (4.2%

- Amber and

Citrus),

June

*Armada*

(4.2% -

Copper and

Refreshing),

July

*Evolution*

(4.2% - Tawny

and Fruity) and

August

*Agincourt* (4.2% -

Amber and Hoppy).

*Blonde* (4.3% - golden and

refreshing), their Summer

seasonal will return from

May, hopefully

bringing with

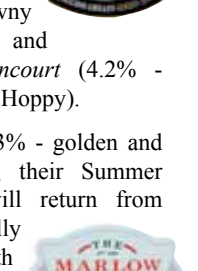
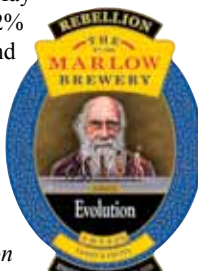
it the summer

sun.

The brewery development continues over the next few months with their new 50 barrel mash tun to be installed in April, along with additional hot and cold liquor tanks. The raised walkway will replace the scaffolding around the top of the brewhouse, allowing the brewers easy access to the mash tun and copper.

## Vale Brewery

February saw two milestones achieved. **Vale** brewed their 15,000,000th pint and also fulfilled the largest single order (719 firkins) they have ever taken (see above).





## MORE LOCAL BREWERY NEWS



Building works at the brewery continue. The warehouse is nearing completion and work will then commence in the existing building and surrounding area.

Beers in the pipeline and coming soon include:

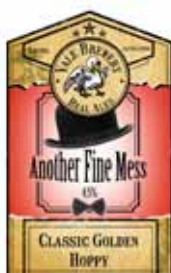
**IKB** (4.1% ABV), after one of the most ingenious and prolific figures in engineering history, Isambard Kingdom Brunel is responsible for building dock yards, ships, bridges and the GWR. In his honour, they have created a well-engineered English IPA using the finest spring barley and classic English hops.



**Go Lightly** (3.8% ABV). Perhaps the most striking and elegant woman in modern cinema, Audrey Hepburn, starred in one of the most famous films to date, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. This stunningly refined and complex, pale, hoppy beer is well worth

watching out for.

**Another Fine Mess** (4.5% ABV). A classic golden beer for a golden classic. This beer is what you would expect from **Vale Brewery**. Meticulously put together and timed to perfection for a refreshing early summer beer full of fine pale malts and sunny hops.



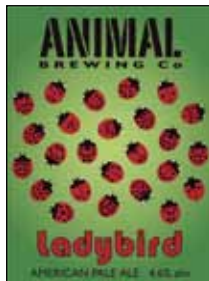
### XT Brewery

The brewery expansion continues with the completion of the new office space and brewery laboratory. More new vessels arrive in the spring to help meet demand for the **XT** and **Animal** beers and the brewery space can now be reconfigured



following all the recent expansion works.

The latest **Animal** beers are **Animal Chitter** (which is the sound badgers make), a rye amber ale and **Animal Ladybird**, an American Pale Ale packed with lovely US hops.



To celebrate the new building opening and a significant point in their brewing history **XT** have made a 7.2% black IPA ... **XPA-Black**. This is a heavily hopped dark version of the ever popular **XPA American Style IPA**.

**XT** have purchased several large oak casks and have filled them with a variety of beers – these will be aged for at least three months and then released in limited edition cask beers or bottles.

Some exciting brewing collaborations are in the pipeline – one with a local coffee company and another with an avant-garde Italian brewer.. more news in our next edition.

The next brewery open day is on St George's day (Saturday 23rd April) from 10:30. Free entry, all beers £2 per pint.



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## GRAVEDIGGERS - THIRTY-NINE

The toilet situation in the **Gravediggers'** public bar was becoming more than an inconvenience. In one enormous surge the locals' bladders had emptied into the creaking drains the results of a particularly heavy session on the deadly combination of *Purple Poisoner* and *Deadly Lethal Ammonium Nitrate Head Exploder*. This was a culmination of years of toxic treatment for the **Diggers'** long-suffering drains, which promptly collapsed on that side of the building. A huge sink-hole opening up in the lane outside that almost consumed Old Moses's muckspreader.

James had been forced to declare the Gents in the public bar out-of-order (there was no Ladies – such a facility would have been as redundant in the public bar as beer-pipe cleaning fluid). Faced with the inevitable call of nature many of the regulars 'improvised' – but others plucked up the courage to make the dreaded walk into the lounge bar.

Being resolutely unspoiled by corporate redesigns or twee gastropubification – or any 'modernising' developments of the last century, The **Gravediggers'** remained a two-bar pub – with the good, old-fashioned social divide that this implied.

On the extremely rare occasions when Old Joe or Old Pete dared to venture into the posh side, they carefully lifted the latch on the interconnecting door and shuffled as inconspicuously as they could attempt across the carpet, keeping their heads bowed below the horse brasses and paintings of hunting scenes.

As they passed, the conversation about rising house-prices and the most prestigious prep-schools awkwardly ceased and the women reached into their handbags for bottles of Chanel Number 5 to mask the disgusting smell that wafted around the refugee from the Other Side of the pub.

The smart side of the pub was busy only on Friday evenings, when second-home owners swung their Jags off the M666 and Sunday lunchtimes when wealthy retirees moved on from the golf-course bar.

Nevertheless, James and Mazz made a considerable profit on the posh side of the bar via happily charging the well-heeled punters eye-watering prices for their vodka martinis – aptly mixed with the bottled tears of nearby families who had been priced out of even the lowest rung of the local property ladder.

The prosperous drinkers could also be persuaded to sample the **Diggers'** microbrewery beers, provided they were presented in serving platters



of thirds-of-pints and were dispensed from glitzy-looking fonts on the bar and described as 'Craft Beers of the Month', which included *Peasants' Gizzard*, *Venus Slug Trap* and *Grim Silage Slops*.

However, the tacit co-existence of the two bars was being placed under intolerable stress by the micturating perambulations of the grubby locals. After Old Pete had left a trail of noxious gas for the third time in the evening, the lounge bar was in silent ferment. Some of the drinkers even raised their eyebrows in unspoken horror at each other from the mismatched, distressed wood tables.

Sir John Boons, who was a fixture at the bar when he made his weekly visit, choked on his **Gravediggers'** distilled, artisanal *Maggoty Carcass* gin as Old Moses grunted past on his way to the facilities. Sir John turned in red-faced anger to James at the bar and exploded.

'Look here, mine host,' Sir John spluttered. 'This is really taking the Carr's water biscuit. We have nothing against these dirty, uncouth, smelly, uneducated verminous genetic mutations of the human race but they really must stay on their own side of the bar. It's where they belong.'

Lady Boons, who'd been downing a Pomms Number One Cup garnished with manure-spattered nettle leaf, also chimed in: 'Exactly dear, when I wheel my trolley along the aisles of Waitrose I don't expect to bump into customers covered with more muck than the organic vegetables – so why should consorting with the unwashed be the case when I visit the public house.'

'Well, it is a *public* house,' James said from behind the bar. 'If I bar someone it has to be for a good reason. Not because I just don't like the look of them.'

'Good grief man. Knowing whether a man is a good egg or not by looking at the cut of his jib is what the British Empire was founded on,' Sir John retorted.

The discussion at the bar was overheard by retired General A. Fig, finishing his plate of the **Gravediggers'** lounge bar signature dish – the

Raw Roadkill Grill. 'Come, landlord, we have nothing against the common man inhabiting his side of the hostelry. In fact, the sound of their uneducated and uncouth activities occasionally provides a frisson of *je ne sais quoi* to the atmosphere in the more refined. But it's each to his own. If they prefer to wallow in their own filth, then they're at liberty to do so.'

'But only as long as they never again pass through that door into our lounge bar again,' Lady Boons insisted.

'Isn't the great thing about the British pub that it serves all parts of the community,' Mazz shouted from the other side of the bar as she pulled a pint of *Septic Fleabite* for Young Duwayne. 'We all coexist and rub along in the same place and recognise our differences?'

'Poppycock,' Sir John retorted. 'The same place? We might be separated by only a thin wooden door but culturally we are worlds apart. When was the last time I ever set foot in the public bar? That connecting door should be locked shut forever.'

'Trouble is, those drains will need reinforcing with six-inch thick stainless steel tubing so I'll need to sell far more *Peasants' Gizzard* than you people drink to get those public bar toilets operational again,' James said.

'Forget your trivial practicalities what made Britain great is democracy,' the General declared. 'We reasonable, right-thinking folk demand a referendum!'

'Yes. Let the people speak,' declared the whole lounge bar, rising up in unison. 'We want our independence back!'

'I'd be happy to oblige,' James said, to the fervent applause of his prosperous customers. 'But the fact is that you'd lose.'

'Why?' General Fig demanded.

'Because there's more of *them* in the public bar than there is of *you* in here. Even the illiterate ones are capable of putting an X in a box – just.'

'But we spend more money on our drinks! Don't you understand democracy?' General Fig raged.

Suddenly the latch lifted on the door connecting the bars. The customers in the lounge bar huddled against the walls as the door edged open and Old Moses poked his nose through.

'Fear not,' Sir John said. 'All we need to do is hold our noses and engage in a little subtle persuasion.' He gestured to Old Moses as he gingerly entered the lounge bar. 'Come here, let me buy you a drink my good man, how does a pint of *Toxic Sludge* tickle your fancy?'

...to be continued!

Charlie Mackle

## Branch Diary

*Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!*

### April

**Friday/Saturday/Sunday 1st - 3rd**

**CAMRA MEMBERS' WEEKEND AND AGM**

Guild of Students, Liverpool University.

**Wednesday 6th BRANCHSOCIAL**

8.00pm Osborne Arms, Lane End (bar of Lane End Tandoori), 8.30pm Old Grouse, Lane End, 9.15pm Chequers, Wheeler End Common

**Monday 11th BRANCH MEETING**

8.00pm, Lions of Bledlow

**Thursday 21st HIGH WYCOMBE EARLY EVENING SOCIAL**

6.30pm Belle Vue, 7.15pm Bootlegger, 8.00pm Falcon, 8.45pm Bell, 9.30pm Phoenix, 10.00pm Rose and Crown

**Saturday 23rd BEACONSFIELD BEER FESTIVAL**

Beaconsfield Rugby Club, 12 noon (the local branch will be assisting with running the bar at the festival and are seeking volunteers to serve – contact chairman@swansupping.co.uk)

**Friday 29th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL**

7.30pm, Royal British Legion, Marlow.

**Saturday 30th BERMONDSEY BEER MILE RE-RUN**

Start 11.00am, Four Pure Brewery, Bermondsey, London, SE16 3LL and then (provisionally) 12 noon Partizan Brewery, 1.00pm Kernel Brewery (offsales only), 1.30pm Brew by Numbers, 2.15pm Anspach and Hobday, 3.00pm Southwark Brewing Company, 3.45pm Dean Swift (pub), 4.30pm Draft House Tower Bridge (pub), 5.15pm Bridge House (pub).

### May

**Wednesday 4th EARLY EVENING SOCIAL**

7.00pm Bird in Hand, Princes Risborough.

**Monday 9th BRANCH MEETING**

8.00pm, General Havelock, Loudwater.

**Friday 13th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL**

7.00pm, Whip Inn, Lacey Green.

**Thursday 19th AYLESBURY NORTH SOCIAL**

7.00pm Horse and Jockey, 7.45pm New Zealand, 8.30pm Hop Pole.

**Sunday 22nd SUNDAY LUNCH SOCIAL**

12 noon, Garibaldi, Bourne End (booking in advance advisable).

**Wednesday 25th BRANCH SOCIAL**

8.00pm Hampden Arms, Great Hampden, 8.45pm Gate, Bryant's Bottom, 9.30pm Harrow, Hughenden Valley.

### June

**Friday/Saturday 3rd/4th MARLOW BEER FESTIVAL**

12 noon (the local branch will be assisting with running the bar at the festival and are seeking volunteers to serve – contact chairman@swansupping.co.uk)

### July

**Saturday 2nd HADDENHAM BEER FESTIVAL**

**Saturday 9th ANNUAL BLACK COUNTRY TRIP**

Further details can be found on our website  
www.swansupping.org.uk, facebook and meetup.com

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## Swan Supping

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

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

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