

FREE

Swan Supping



Issue 104

Oct/Nov 2014



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

**Marlow RBL
wins Regional
Club of the Year
Award
See page 5**

Newsletter of the Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch of CAMRA

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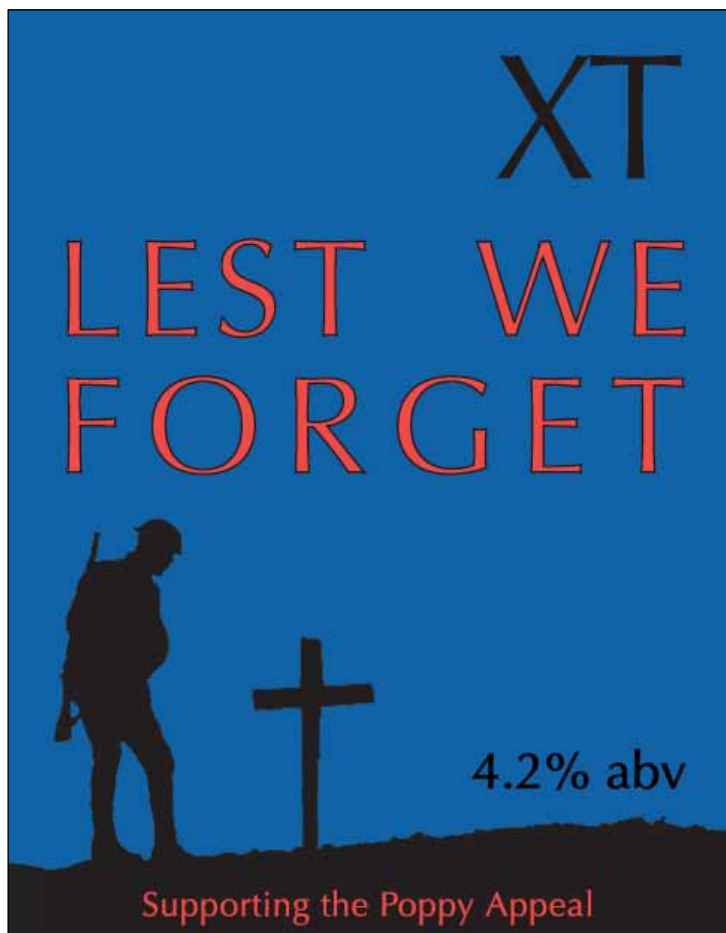


THE MARLOW ROYAL BRITISH LEGION



AYLESBURY VALE & WYCOMBE CAMRA CLUB OF THE YEAR
CENTRAL SOUTHERN CAMRA REGIONAL CLUB OF THE YEAR

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NEWS FROM THE EDITOR



A bit of a mixed bag for this issue's editorial. We were all saddened by the death of one of our landlords, Jonathan Russ-Silsby, from the **Shepherds Crook** in Crowell, early in September. Our thoughts and condolences go to his family and his many friends.

Congratulations to the **Royal British Legion** in Marlow, not only for becoming our first **Club of the Year**, but for being voted the **Regional Club of the Year**! This is the first time that any of our pubs or clubs have won the regional award and the **RBL** will go forward to compete against clubs that have won in the other **CAMRA**

regions. The award presentation, featured on our cover and on page 5, was carried out by Carl Griffin, our Pubs & Clubs Officer, and the certificate was presented to a very proud Alan Sheppard, Secretary of the club, in the presence of the Mayor of Marlow, Suzanne Brown.

The **Marlow Royal British Legion** also features in the brand new **Good Beer Guide** for 2015. As usual, this new guide has caused a lot of comment as there are some old favorites that don't appear and some others that do for the first time in ages. We are blessed in our region as we have far more great pubs than we have allocations in the guide. This will always mean that competition for places will be keen and we need help to sort these places out in future guides. This can be done by sending beer scores to us whenever you visit a real ale hostelry (full details appear on page 18). The more scores we get from a large range of customers means that the more accurate impression of the beer in the pub over the whole year can be attained, making the decision about the pub that much easier. It only takes a few seconds to send a beer score to us, so it won't interfere with your drinking too much!



We hope to see as many of you as possible at our annual beer festival, held to raise money for the **Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity**, which supports the Aylesbury Hospice. This is our 21st festival and takes place on Friday 24th and Saturday 25th of October, at the Bucks CC Sports & Social Club, Lower Road, Stoke Mandeville.

Local **CAMRA** volunteers are required for the festival. Please get in touch if you wish to help either in the setting up, serving or helping to take down the barrels at the end.

As we were going to press, we heard the National **CAMRA** announcement welcoming Tim Page as our new Chief Executive Officer.

Tim (pictured above) will take up his new post on 3rd November 2014. Tim joins **CAMRA** from the East Anglian Air Ambulance (EAAA) and has a great deal of experience in the management and operation of organisations in the charity and not-for-profit sector. He has been appointed following a rigorous recruitment process where his passion and experience shone through, greatly impressing the National Executive and staff team. Please join me in welcoming Tim and raising a celebratory pint to the future.

Speaking of **CAMRA** appointments, the Central Southern region is looking to fill the following roles: Regional Secretary, Regional Cider Co-ordinator and Regional Public Transport Co-ordinator. Our branch is also looking for Brewery Liaison Officers for both **XT Brewery** and **Malt The Brewery**. If you are a **CAMRA** member and would like to take up any of these roles, or require any further information, please get in touch with me. The contact details are, as usual, on page 22 of this magazine.

Thanks once again to all the people who have given their free time to contribute to the production and circulation of **Swan Supping**. Please remember that we are all volunteers and we may not get it right all the time, but we always try and do our best. So if we slip up and you haven't been getting your regular editions of **Swan Supping**, please bear with us and give us a gentle reminder!

Cheers! **David W. Roe - Swan Supping Editor**



NATIONAL CAMRA NEWS



Champion Beer of Britain

Timothy Taylor's Boltmaker was crowned **Champion Beer of Britain** at this year's **Great British Beer Festival**.

The West Yorkshire brewed real ale was judged the Supreme Champion over a host of other finalists in seven different beer categories (Bitters, Best Bitters, Strong Bitters, Golden Ales, Milds, Winter Beers, and the Speciality class), including beers from both small microbrewers and large regional brewers.

Nik Antona, Champion Beer of Britain Director, spoke in praise of the winner. He said: 'It is fantastic to announce Timothy Taylor's Boltmaker as the Champion Beer of Britain 2014. This full flavoured bitter is a modern classic that is as impressive today as the day it was first brewed.'

Head Brewer Peter Eells said, 'I'm speechless. We work very hard to produce great beers and we really believe this is the best beer we can brew – so to have it acknowledged in such an important competition is absolutely fantastic.'

This year's Silver went to **Oakham Citra**, whilst the Bronze award went to **Salopian, Darwin's Origin**.

Overall winners-

Gold – **Timothy Taylors, Boltmaker**
Silver – **Oakham, Citra**
Bronze – **Salopian, Darwin's Origin**

Mild category-

Gold – **Bank Top, Dark Mild**
Silver – **Branscombe Vale, Mild**
Bronze – **Castle Rock, Black Gold**

Bitters category-

Gold – **Timothy Taylor, Boltmaker**
Silver – **Mighty Oak, Captain Bob**
Joint Bronze – **Flowerpots, Flowerpots Bitter & Sambrook's Wandle Ale**

Best Bitters-

Gold – **Salopian, Darwin's Origin**
Silver – **Red Willow, Directionless**
Joint Bronze – **Purity, Mad Goose & Langton, Inclined Plain Bitter**

Golden Ales-

Gold – **Oakham, Citra**
Silver – **Hawkshead, Cumbrian Five Hop**
Bronze – **Salopian, Hop Twister**

Strong Bitters-

Gold – **Church End, Fallen Angel**
Silver – **Blue Monkey, Ape Ale**
Bronze – **Loch Ness, Hoppyness**

Speciality Beers-

Gold – **Saltaire, Triple Chocoholic**
Silver – **Offbeat, Way Out Wheat**
Bronze – **Peak Ales, Chatsworth Gold**

Champion Winter Beer of Britain (from category winners announced in January 2014)-
Cairngorm, Black Gold (Stouts Category)
Dunham Massey, Dunham Porter (Porters)
Exe Valley, Winter Glow (Old Ales & Strong Milds)
Kinver, Over the Edge (Barley Wines & Strong Old Ales)

Champion Bottled Beer of Britain winners (Sponsored by **Beer Hawk**)

Gold – **Marble, Chocolate Marble**
Silver – **St Austell, Proper Job**
Bronze – **Spire, Prince Igor Imperial Russian Stout**



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REGIONAL CLUB OF THE YEAR!

Congratulations are due to the **Royal British Legion Club** in Marlow as they have recently been awarded **Central Southern Regional Club of the Year 2014**, making it the best club in an area covering Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. This follows it winning the **Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch Club of the Year** earlier this year. The club now moves forward to the **National Club of the Year** final, competing against other UK region winners.

The club beat strong contenders from other branch areas in the final including **Wargrave Snooker Club** (Reading & Mid-Berks), **Maidenhead Conservative Club** (Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead), **Hungerford Club** (West Berkshire) and **Goring Social Club** (South Oxfordshire). Scores were submitted by members assessing beer quality, atmosphere, sympathy with **CAMRA** aims, clientele mix, service and welcome and value for money. The greatest weighting was applied to the scores for beer quality.

The committee, volunteers and regulars have turned around this club from one earmarked for potential closure to a thriving community asset in a very short period of time. In doing so they have placed themselves firmly on the real ale map, making it a must visit venue for any discerning drinker. It has been awarded the Ian Hamilton Cup for 2014 which is awarded to the **Royal British Legion Club** showing the most progressive record for comradeship and good management. Part of their excellent work is demonstrated by how the club supports its local Royal British Legion branch. Their collaboration with **XT Brewery** (also within the branch area) resulted in the production of **XT Lest We Forget** charity ale which featured regularly in local pubs in the run up to Armistice Day last year and which will be available again this year. **XT** donated £10 from the sale of every barrel and this total was matched by the **Royal British Legion Club** from sales of the beer in the bar, resulting in £3000 being raised for the Poppy Appeal.



The club is effectively run as a free house and will always have at least four ales on at any one time. Often the bar will have an offering from Derbyshire microbreweries as well as other 'rare in these parts' beers. An up to date list of what is on the bar can be found on the club's website along with what beers are coming soon. **MAD (Marlow Ale Drinkers)** Thursdays are held on the last Thursday of every month where additional special ales are added to the bar and are very well supported.

A highlight on the club calendar are the beer festivals that are held three times a year. They are generally held on the early May bank holiday, August bank holiday and just before

Christmas and are always advertised in **Swan Supping**. The festivals have a strong following with members, locals and **CAMRA** members from far afield. The main attraction being beers that are either rare or from new breweries and act as a magnet for beer tickers or those who just want to try something out of the ordinary.

Entry to the club can be gained through showing your **CAMRA** membership card, however if you are a local to the Marlow area, membership of the Royal British Legion branch is recommended. Membership is open to everyone. There is no requirement for the applicant to have any link with the armed forces. Entry of the club gives you access to beer that is very competitively priced for the Marlow area. The club plays host to many activities and offers crib, jazz, darts, big band and bingo nights every week. A large function room is also available for private hire. The club can be found next to Marlow Railway Station on Station Approach and is only a short walk from the town centre.

The branch wishes the club all the best in the final of the **National Club of the Year** competition.

Carl Griffin (Clubs Officer)



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LOCAL NEWS

ASHENDON

At the **Hundred of Ashendon**, regular ales tend to be **Tring Side Pocket** for a **Toad** and **XT 4** with variety coming from **Vale**, **Chiltern** and recently **Malt the Brewery**. Matt has also tried **Goff's Brewery** from Winchcombe near Cheltenham.

AYLESBURY

Haresfoot Ales from Berkhamsted will be taking over four of the nine handpumps at the **Old Millwrights Arms** over the weekend starting Friday October 17th. The four ales expected are **Lock Keeper's** (3.9%), **Sundial** (3.8%) and two new ales: **Conqueror's** (a dark and bitter/sweet 4.4% premium bitter) and **Totem American IPA** (4.5% hop-heaven with Columbus aroma hops and two others).

The pub's generous 50p discount for **CAMRA** members is under review, and its continuation will very much depend on the increased sales that they need to justify it.

The **Queens Head** has a happy hour (and a half) between 4.30pm and 6pm Monday to Friday when all pints, including their **Sharp's Doom Bar** are priced at £2.90.

Just as we were going to press, we heard of the sad closure of the **White Swan**. Terry, who had been running the pub for around ten years, has finally succumbed to the pressure from the next door's **Wetherspoons** (Bell) difference in pricing. It is to be hoped that it will not be too long before this historic, listed, pub reopens, especially if the owners allow it to be free of any tie.

BRILL

Permanent fixtures at the **Pheasant** are **Skinnery Very Pleasant Pheasant** and **Henry Weston Cider** on hand pump. The other two ales can be from **Vale**, **White Horse** or **Malt the Brewery** for instance.

Permanently available at the **Pointer** are **Vale VPA** and **XT Pointer**. Beside these are two ever changing guests which recently were **Dorset Brewing Company Yachtsman** and **Red Squirrel London Black IPA**.

Looks like there's always something interesting and different and worth trying in the pubs of Brill, shame the bus service from Aylesbury is so pitiful.

CHILTON

Nancy and Dean Taylor now run the **Poachers Pocket**, formally **Chilton Club** but now a pub. They took over in May and are concentrating on offering quality, both for beer and customer service. The pub has two real ales, monthly live music (country and western club), a full-size snooker table and a function hall. A £8.99 carvery starts in October and they intend to support local breweries.

CROWELL

It is with deep sadness that we must announce that Jonathan Russ-Silby, the landlord of the **Shepherd's Crook**, passed away suddenly on the evening of Saturday the 6th September. He was in the company of a dear friend following a tremendous day of rugby at Twickenham stadium.

Jonathan's funeral service took place at St Andrew's Church, Chinnor at 11am on Friday 19th September. Following the funeral service there was a brief committal ceremony at the Chilterns Crematorium, Amersham for family members only. The pub will continue to trade as Jonathan would have wanted.

We send our condolences to Jonathan's many friends and his family.

DINTON

Stephanie at the **Seven Stars** is now serving **Timothy Taylor Landlord** and **Vale Best Bitter**, with a third ale, such as **Rebellion IPA**, when the demand is there.

EASINGTON

At the **Mole and Chicken**, **Easington Bitter** from **Vale** at 3.7% is a permanent feature with different offerings from **XT** alongside. Enjoy a beer with your meal.

GREAT KIMBLE

The **Swan** has recently received a five-star rating for its food hygiene. The pub usually serves three real ales, predominantly from local breweries. On a recent visit there was a fine selection of **XT 3**, **Loddon Ferryman's Gold** and **Tring Moongazing** (which is the most permanently available).

HADDENHAM

The **Twist at the Green Dragon** will be closed on Mondays until the end of October. The **Twist** is serving **Timothy Taylor Landlord** and **Adnams Ghost Ship** which will be supported by a **Locale**.

At the **Kings Head**, Cask Marque accredited Barbara is treating her locals to one or two **Locales** each week. Her choice is largely from the **Punch SIBA** list with all the local breweries available from **West Berkshire** to **Tring**. **Brakspear Bitter** and **Sharp's Doom Bar** are usually available with **Fullers London Pride** less frequently.

Amongst all the regular **Locales** offered at the **Rising Sun**, **Malt the Brewery** ales such as **Malt IPA** at 5% literally fly out as soon as they are put on. Live music from Craig on 25th October and a mini beer festival 28th November to 1st December.

At the **Rose and Thistle**, **Greene King IPA**, **Hadding Tribe** and **Olde Trip** are firm favourites.

HAMBLEDEN

At the **Stag & Huntsman** beer festival in September, they pretty much sold all 21 of the real ales on offer. Brilliant weather and music throughout the afternoon/evening from local artists seemed to keep the constant flow of people happy, as the garden was continually full with a wonderful buzzing atmosphere..... Roll on the 2015 beer festival!

HIGH WYCOMBE

The **Wycombe Swan** are holding a Beer and Food Festival on Saturday 1st of November. This is to celebrate local produce with market stalls, top brewed ales, local ciders and live music. A perfect afternoon for any foodie or ale connoisseur. Tickets (Age restriction 18+): £6.00 in advance, £8.00 on the door (ticket price includes one beer).

ICKFORD

At the **Rising Sun**, Paul Honour is proud of his fourteen years in the **Good Beer Guide**, interrupted just one year due to the thatch catching fire. Regular beers are **Adnams Broadside** and **Southwold Bitter**; **Hook Norton Hooky** and **Black Sheep Bitter**. A weekend guest may be **Tring Side Pocket for a Toad** or something from **XT**.

LACEY GREEN

Alice Hill has left the **Pink and Lily**. We will have further details of her replacement in our next issue.

LEDBURN

The bad news is that builders have moved onto the site of the **Hare & Hounds** to start on a housing development. This **Greene King** owned pub was once a thriving concern with a restaurant of

widespread repute – booking essential on Sundays. The pub had declined over the last few years and has been empty for the last two.

The interior of the Rothschild building was full of memorabilia of the 1963 Great Train Robbery which took place close by at Sears Crossing. The pub was used as the headquarters for the police investigation until the discovery of the gang's hideaway, also not far away at Leatherslade Farm.

LITTLEWORTH COMMON

The **Blackwood Arms** is holding a Beer, Cider and Sausage Festival from Thursday 2nd to Sunday 5th of October. If you can't make the festival, they offer six ales on all the time, including three regularly changing ales outside the **Brakspear** range.

LONG CRENDON

The **Eight Bells** is continuing to provide a regular variety of guest beers which their customers have been loving. **XT** continue to provide excellent and interesting new brews under its **Animal** range, the newest being **Hiss**, which we are sure will go down a treat. In addition they will be rotating their guest pumps over the coming months with beers from **Malt the Brewery**, **Revisionist**, **Jennings** and many more.

MARLOW

The **Two Brewers** is due to reopen on the 18th of October, following private sessions on the weekend of the 4th and 5th. The owner, Anthony Burnham, has informed us that the pub will offer three regular **Rebellion** ales: **IPA**, **Smuggler** and **Mutiny** (with occasional substitution of a **Rebellion** monthly/seasonal offering) plus **London Pride**.

MILTON KEYNES

MK Concrete Pint Beer and Cider Festival is running from the 15th to 18th October at the Buszy near Milton Keynes Central rail station. There will be 90+ Beers and 20+ Ciders and Perry. Live music will be performed on Thursday and Saturday evenings. Admission is Free at all times to **CAMRA** members. Times are Wednesday 17:00 to 23:00, Thursday 12:00 to 23:00, Friday 12:00 to 24:00 and Saturday 12:00 to 23:00.

OAKLEY

At the **Chandos Arms**, Piers and his team are sticking with **Sharp's Doom Bar** and **Greene King IPA**, which suit the locals there.



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OVING

The good news is that the **Black Boy** (pictured above) is to reopen soon. It has been reported that an application for change of use was turned down by AVDC and that it has now been leased to new tenants and could open within the month.

PRINCES RISBOROUGH

Planning permission has been refused to convert the **Black Prince** into houses and apartments. However, planning applications are likely to reappear, hopefully to be refused again.

Greene King refurbished the **Whiteleaf Cross** during August - not a drastic makeover but a general all-round sprucing up. The good news is that pub will be adding a fourth handpump due to the recent increase in popularity of real ales. Unusually for the area the pub serves *Morland Original* which is, according to the landlord, now the pub's best selling beer.

A new traditional sign has been added as part of the refurbishment. This reproduces the well-known painting of the nearby chalk Whiteleaf Cross by early 20th-century artist Paul Nash, perhaps the best known of the British war artists. He was an official artist in both world wars, was brought up in the Chilterns and painted many local scenes. A documentary on the painter was shown recently on BBC4.

QUAINTON

The **George & Dragon** is holding a Harvest Auction on Friday 17th October from 8.30pm in support of Quainton village charities.

STEWKLEY

The **Swan** changed hands in September. New tenants are Donna Hannan and partner Tara Birkett who run the **Enterprise** owned pub for new leaseholders **Arizona Pub Co.** Both are keen to keep the pub much as before - a local pub for local people (and others all welcome) with up to four varying ales and to provide meals on a consistent basis. The pub is now open all day every day from noon, and may open earlier as soon as their new coffee machine arrives. Food will start as soon as kitchen work is completed. Live music will be held fortnightly on Saturdays starting on the 4th October with the Gemini Duo (covers band) from 8pm till late. On the 18th October there will be karaoke with Johnny B then on Friday 31st will be a family fancy dress party

with kids disco for Halloween followed later by a live duo band, Intuition, for the adults.

STOKE MANDEVILLE

The **Bull** continues to offer four real ales. As we went to press, these are **Sharps Doom Bar**, **Chiltern Ale**, **Rebellion IPA**, and a guest beer, currently **Goff's Joust**.

THAME

Beer festivals are like buses. Wait a while and three come along together!

Chinnor Rugby Club's Oktoberfest is on Saturday 4th of October, **Thame Football Club** the weekend of 8th/9th of November and the **Cross Keys** also on the 8th of November.

Meanwhile at the **Cross Keys**, beers from the brewery have been seen and drunk over the last couple of months. In the pipeline is *Hoppiness* (4% hoppy beer), *Red Rory* a traditional beer at 3.7% and a recently tried beer which proved popular, *Windy Indy*, a 4% deep ruby red beer. All should be on at some time over the next couple of months. Get down to check out what must be the tallest sunflowers in Thame. Flower heads the size of dinner plates and 15 feet tall.

The **Falcon** is holding a Game Bird night (feathered variety) on 24th November. Ring or Facebook for further details. *Old Hooky*, *Hooky Lion* and *Doom Bar* are the beers on offer to go with the meal.

The **Rising Sun** continues to have **Brakspear Bitter**, the monthly special from the **Marston's** range and a third ale from **Ringwood**, **Jennings** or **Marstons**.

The **Six Bells** currently have **Fullers Wild River**, a hoppy 4.5 beer using four American hops, *Seafarers*, *London Pride* and a guest beer often locally sourced.

Rebellion beers can be found in the **Birdcage**, *IPA* and *Smugglers*, and across the road in the **Spread Eagle** there is *Smugglers* and *Jump the Gun*, a 4.2 pale and citrus beer. The **Swan** also has *Smugglers* together with **Malt the Brewer Anniversary Ale**, *London Pride* and *Doom Bar*.

TIDDINGTON

The **Fox**, which in 1745 was named the **Three Goats Heads**, has been bought by a local farming family from Great Haseley. The aim is to reopen under its new name of the **Fox and Goat** in the first week of November after a complete

and thorough renovation. The free house will be managed by **Oak Taverns** who are hoping to add it to their local **GBG** portfolio of the **Pink & Lily**, the **Riser** in Haddenham and the **Cross Keys** in Thame. The pub will be a classic country road house with good food, good ales and two letting rooms initially. This is tremendously good news in these days of ever increasingly depressing news of pubs being reclassified for housing. We wish **Oak Taverns** and the owners our very best wishes for the future and will promise to support them off the Arriva 280.

WENDOVER

The **King and Queen** is holding a beer festival over the weekend of Friday 24th to Sunday 26th of October. Over nine ales and two ciders will be available plus a barbecue on the Saturday followed by live music from 9pm and a Hog Roast on the Sunday.

WHITCHURCH

At the **White Swan** the launch of the first Pint into Space on July 5th was a total success except that the all-important photos to record this historic event failed to materialise - possibly due to solar flares cooking the camera. However a second launch has recently taken place and this time the camera worked perfectly. The remarkably clear shots show an example of a pint of **Fullers London Pride** above the Earth together with a **White Swan** Whitchurch banner and another held by a Lego spaceman proclaiming 'One small step for man, one giant leap for *London Pride*'. This will be featured in the next

issue. Currently there are four ales on handpump - **Fullers Discovery**, *London Pride*, *Red Fox* (autumn seasonal) and the excellent **Gales HSB**.

WING

In addition to owning and running the **Queens Head** (which has been in the **Good Beer Guide** for the last eight years) landlady Denise Redding has just taken on a lease at the **Stag** at Mentmore. Just outside our branch, area this famous **Charles Wells** owned pub and restaurant by the picturesque Mentmore Towers estate has had a chequered recent history and been closed for a while. Denise is the ideal person to bring it back to its former prominence as regular visitors to the **Queens Head** will testify and has recently completed a similar venture at the **Wheatsheaf** in Bow Brickhill, also for **Wells**. It is hoped that the **Stag** will reopen at the end of October.

WOOBURN COMMON

The **Royal Standard** is holding a beer festival over the weekend of October 24th to 26th. Around forty beers and ciders will be available including **St Austell Big Job** and **Timothy Taylor Boltmaker (Champion Beer of Britain 2014)**.

WOOBURN GREEN

The **Old Bell** will be holding a German beer and sausage event on the Saturday 4th October as it is Oktoberfest season again. Lederhosen optional.

WORMINGHALL

At the **Clifden Arms** you can try *Doom Bar* and **Fullers London Pride**, and sometimes offerings such as **ESB**.

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FLUSHED WITH SUCCESS!



A Buckinghamshire pub has won national acclaim for the quality of its toilets – which are anything but bog standard.

The **Broad Leys**, in Aylesbury, has taken the title of **Best Pub Loos** at the **Great British Pub Awards 2014**. The awards, organised by leading pub industry magazine, the *Publican's Morning Advertiser*, are recognised as the 'Oscars' of the pub world.

The winners received their award from Sky Sports F1 presenter Natalie Pinkham at a glittering sports-themed ceremony at London's Hilton Hotel, on Park

requesting toilet tours.

The gents' toilets (pictured below) feature light-up LED urinals and a full-length mirror, while the ladies' (shown left) has a more luxurious feel, with an ornate chandelier, and modern furnishings and décor.

Rob Willock, editor of the *Publican's Morning Advertiser*, said: 'Helen and her team at the **Broad Leys** thoroughly deserve the title of **Best Pub Loos 2014**. 'Helen has worked hard to offer toilets with a 'wow' factor, and our judges found that a rigorous cleaning regime helps keep them in tip-top condition.

The **Great British Pub Awards** celebrate the cream of the crop in the pub trade, and the winners should serve as an inspiration to pubs throughout the country.'

< Prepared from a Great British Pub awards Press Release from the Morning Advertiser - Ed.>



Lane, on Thursday, September 11th.

The pub, which is owned by Helen Wood, had already been named joint winner of **Best Pub Loos for the South East & London region**. It competed against the **Woodman** in Highgate, north London, and five other regional winners for the overall title in a rigorous judging process, which included site visits and interviews about the business.

The award's 90 finalists were shortlisted from hundreds of pubs at an initial paper judging stage. The judges were impressed with how the pub loos have become a real talking-point among customers, with some even



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REMEMBER, REMEMBER, THE 11TH OF NOVEMBER

Yes, it's 2014, this year is the big one, one hundred years since the start of 'The Great War', World War One, when the British, amongst so many others, gave their lives to repel the Kaiser from his delusional aspirations of conquering Europe in 1914.

The Royal British Legion will be out and about in all weathers once again during the 'Month of Armistice', selling Poppies and raising funds for the National Poppy Appeal, surely the biggest in recent years.

To commemorate this sombre time, the **Marlow RBL Club** will be once again commissioning Russell and Gareth, (owners of **XT Brewery**), to brew their unique *Lest We Forget* (4.2%), ale, first brewed for last year's Armistice.

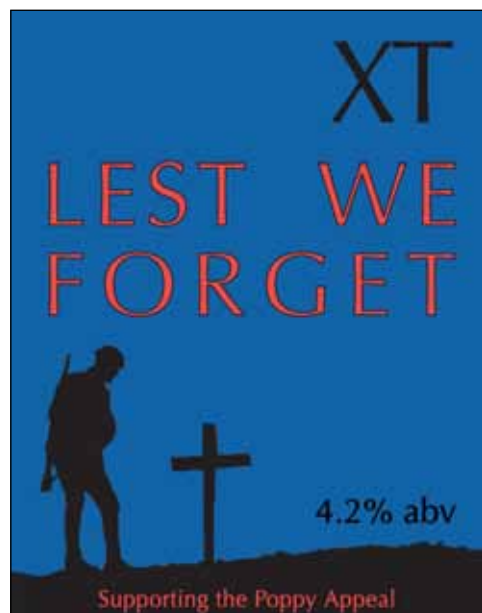
This brand new brew raised some £3,000 for the Poppy Appeal in 2013, a feat that we intend to replicate this year if not exceed.

Lest We Forget will be available at the **Marlow Royal British Legion Club** from Saturday 11th October, through until Wednesday 12th November and possibly beyond. Thanks to our recent entry in the **CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2015**, all **CAMRA** members are welcome to sample this brew with us at this time, with the **Marlow RBL Club** open to everyone on Remembrance Sunday 9th November.

Because of this charitable deed we have recently been awarded the 'Ian Hamilton Cup'. This prestigious national RBL award is presented annually to the RBL club judged to have best supported their branch. This accolade alongside our **GBG** inclusion, **CAMRA AV&W Club of the Year**, **CAMRA Regional Club of the Year** and three annual beer festivals (the next one being our Winterfest 18th December until 21st December), is a measure of the commitment shown by all here at the **Marlow Royal British Legion** to real ale from throughout Britain.

Returning to Remembrance Sunday, I was lucky enough to have the honour of joining the Armistice Parade at last year's Remembrance commemoration, marching to and from the Causeway, via the High Street, a true highlight in my life, of pride and dignity, remembering all that have fallen fighting for free speech and against abject despotism and tyranny.

The Remembrance Parade, headed by The Scots Guards Association Pipes & Drums (South), in Marlow on Armistice Sunday is one of the biggest parades locally and was attended by a one-star General last year, Deputy Lieutenant Brigadier Bill O'Leary.



Always the biggest day on the social calendar for Royal British Legions throughout the world, this year's poignant date is a sombre reminder for those that gave their all for our tomorrows. Remember that the **XT Brewery** will be donating £10 for every



firkin of *Lest We Forget* that is sold to the National Poppy Appeal, so get drinking!

If interested in purchasing a kilderkin/firkin/pin of *Lest We Forget*, please contact the **XT Brewery**, either (01844) 208310 or xt@xtbrewing.com

Alan Sheppard (proud Marlow RBL Secretary)



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David Cameron's complacent and high-handed attitude towards the Scottish independence referendum arguably contributed to the very close-run possibility of the demolition of the state of the United Kingdom. Will his government's similarly cavalier attitude to the continued survival of the great British pub result in the physical demolition of the nearest hostelry to the Chequers estate?

For the last eighty years the **Bernard Arms** has welcomed the Prime Minister's illustrious predecessors for the occasional relaxing, off-duty pint with a world leader. Now, after three years of lying empty and without any apparent care and maintenance from its owners, the pub lies derelict and empty and faces a planning application seeking its demolition – to be replaced by a development of three houses.

Well, that prospect may suit the spivonomics of Cameron, Osborne and their friends in the Bullingdon Club classes but it has left the local community, the people who used the pub for more than the odd photo-opportunity, very concerned at the potential loss of a community asset to property developers.

The pub was listed last year as an asset of community value (ACV), having been nominated by the local parish council and its fate, to be determined in October by Wycombe Council's planning department (see end of article for exact dates). Their decision will indicate whether the Localism Act, in which Cameron's government introduced the concept of ACVs, has effective teeth or is merely a piece of fluffy community window dressing.

Developers are nothing if not predictable. This is what **Swan Supping** said about the **Bernard Arms** in 2012 when the pub had been empty less than a year:

'The pub is famous for having been the occasional watering hole of Prime Ministers past...containing photographs of Winston Churchill outside the pub with President Eisenhower...and the scene of Boris Yeltsin's infamous drinking session with John Major – but [which has been] closed since the end of August [2011].'

'Here's a pub in fine walking country in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It's on a main road in a picture-postcard setting by the village church. At least in the summer it should be pulling in punters from all around but it's shut.'

'The once beautifully hedged garden with magnificent views is now overgrown – a very sad sight for a Prime Minister who'll no doubt invoke the image of the village pub as an enduring symbol of great British culture... But then again, it might make a nifty property development site.'

Since **Swan Supping** made that prescient prediction, the building has fallen into a shocking state of repair – internal photographs are included as support of their application for demolition. It's scarcely credible to believe that the pub was trading only three years ago.

This point is vitally important because the planning application argues that the cost of repairing the damage to make the building habitable, let alone a successful pub business, runs into the hundreds of thousands of pounds. Well, any reasonable person might ask, whose fault is that?

If an ordinary reader of **Swan Supping** found their house had half its roof tiles stripped by some localised twister that left neighbouring properties untouched or that intruders had ripped out all our copper pipework while we'd left the back door open then we might think to make a claim on our

buildings insurance policy – a mortgage company would certainly expect us to.

And if our reaction to our property consequently falling into desperate disrepair was to shrug our shoulders and let it continue to deteriorate then we wouldn't expect any buyer to offer us the full market rate to take it off our hands and make good our neglect.

Nor would we expect the council planning department to do us a favour by granting planning permission for something completely different on the site – for example replacing our falling-down semi with a five storey block of flats we could sell for three or four times the existing property's value.

As the property market being so skewed towards spiralling residential property prices as opposed to businesses like pubs, the sort of return that a site like **Bernard Arms** can fetch for housing is multiples of what it's worth on the market given its current planning designation.

Even in a good state of repair the freehold for the existing business would be unlikely to be valued at anything more than £500,000. The sale of three new houses with superb views in a village setting in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is likely to net substantially more than a million pounds and leave the community with nothing in return. Isn't the promise of becoming an instant millionaire something more appropriate to the national lottery than our planning system?

Doesn't sound like the sort of free-market economics or 'big society' consciousness (remember that?) beloved of the Prime Minister? The community of Great Kimble (including Mr Cameron at weekends) and other potential customers would certainly all be 'in it together'.

As justification for demolition of the pub, the applicants have commissioned a 'viability report' from a well-known firm of licensed trade surveyors and estate agents. This intriguing document can be viewed at and downloaded from the Wycombe council planning portal. Strangely, for a report produced by a company that supposedly markets pubs as going concerns, the document reads to us (as pub-lovers with a good knowledge of the local area) as a little like one of those exercises given to philosophy students in which they have to attempt to argue convincingly that black is white, and vice-versa.

Except that to us, with our knowledge of many pubs that have been successfully reinvigorated in the branch, the surveyors and estate agent's viability report fails to be remotely convincing. For example, it omits to mention that the parish council, declared the pub to be an Asset of Community Value, expressing an interest in buying the property for community use, triggering a six-month moratorium on the sale of the building under the Localism Act.

Particularly galling from a **CAMRA** perspective is that this report attempts to invoke **CAMRA**'s own pub viability test as being 'broadly consistent' with the company's almost completely different set of criteria. The report dwells on the economics of restoring the existing derelict building into a viable public house, whereas **CAMRA** actively supports exploring diversification into joint uses if these will increase viability, such as shops, tourist accommodation and community centres.

As the building has been shut and in a prohibitively poor state of repair for the past three years, there is no evidence that such diversification has been explored. **CAMRA** is also not opposed in principle to additional development provided the maintenance of the community pub itself is not jeopardised. However, the current plans would completely eliminate the pub.

The **Bernard Arms** forms part of the traditional and timeless British triumvirate of village buildings – it is opposite the historic St. Nicholas's church and close by Great Kimble primary school. In the past church worshippers and parents have used the pub car park (now curiously cordoned off with police incident tape) in a voluntary community arrangement – with churchgoers and parents representing one source of the pub's clientele.

There can be few rural pubs with more passing trade. The pub is on a very busy road that connects the two biggest towns in Buckinghamshire, it has a bus stop fifty yards from its door with services every fifteen minutes and a train station with direct services to London within half a mile. It lies in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty within a ten minute walk of the Ridgeway.

Swan Supping has featured other, similar, pubs nearby in much more remote locations that are currently trading very successfully following periods of closure – notably the **Pink and Lily**. This evidence – and that from other rejuvenated pubs like our current **Pub of the Year**, the **Cross Keys** in Thame – suggests that with investment and committed management, the **Bernard Arms** could do likewise.

How Wycombe council handle this application is important for all pubs that have been listed as ACVs because nowhere in the ACV legislation is any compulsion for the owners of a listed property to sell to a community group, even if they offered more than the market price. What the ACV process enables is for the local community to be informed of an imminent sale of a community asset and gives the six month period for a bid to be raised. Nevertheless, **CAMRA** recognises the ACV process isn't automatically integrated into the planning process. If the owner chooses not to sell, the pub is even removed from the ACV register after the moratorium.

The real power still lies with the planning department, who have the ability to refuse permission for pubs to be converted to other uses, just as they prevent huge housing estates and factories being built in the countryside. That a pub has been listed by the local community as an ACV does not offer any automatic protection in itself but it demonstrates the community's concern and, vitally, if it can be proved that the owners of a pub under threat have refused an offer to purchase the property by a community group at the market rate, then this ought to demonstrate the viability of the business with different owners.

While no-one in the local community wants the building to continue to languish in its sorry state, granting planning permission for its demolition in favour of upmarket housing would surely set a precedent that would allow asset-strippers to buy any pub, then close and neglect it in the expectation that eventually the planners and local residents would be ground down in a



war of attrition and accept permanent conversion to housing in preference to tolerating a deteriorating eyesore.

This is surely the nightmare scenario that the Localism Act and the register of Assets of Community Value was introduced to prevent? If David Cameron's government's legislation is proved too impotent to save a community asset on his own back doorstep then all pub lovers should be very worried – especially with some very large pubcos rumoured to be offloading large parts of their estate to stave off financial crises.

Winston Churchill would surely be choking on his Scotch.

The target date to determine the application is, perhaps appropriately, 31st October. To object to the planning application search Wycombe District council's website where all documentation is also publicly available. Standard consultation expiry date is 15th October.

Branch Committee



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Inn Off The Post

In our last issue, we printed a 'rant' from one of our readers who, despite supplying his name and address, decided to remain anonymous on our pages. We printed the letter in the hope that it might spark some replies as we receive far too little mail. We were well rewarded!

The original letter, which can be read online at www.swansupping.org.uk (all issues of *Swan Supping* can be read here!) if your copy of Issue 103 (August/September 2014) has now found its way into the paper recycling, covered a disappointing trip round some of our country pubs an a Sunday afternoon.

Editor,

As you requested, your publishing the last 'rant' has elicited a response from me, a customer of the **Seven Stars** in Dinton and a shareholder of the locally constituted company that bought this beautiful old pub in order to preserve it as a working hostelry.

In a little over two and half years the fantastic landlady, Stephanie Guiraut has transformed the business from moribund to thriving. Whilst there is a landlord, Stephanie's business partner, he has other interests and is never available to work behind the bar to ensure 'open all hours' or nearly so.

As a result the ever smiling and welcoming Steph is always available up to the official closing time of 11pm six nights a week. with the one short day, only ten hours non-stop for her, being a Sunday when the tills are indeed 'jangling' with much needed revenue from extended Sunday lunchers. who are fed until 3pm and encouraged to wind down thereafter. Should drinkers remain or have been joined by locals then she stays open past the published closing time of 6pm until 7pm for last orders. Seldom is there anyone left and with the least inconvenience she closes for a few hours rest.

During the time the **Seven Stars** has been managed by Steph the business has won awards and built a major following occasionally to the detriment of locals who forget to book a table and cannot get more than a drink.

As a shareholder I am delighted at her success. I am less delighted when some ill informed and careless remarks cause her distress especially when they emanate from someone who is evidently confused about closures and locations such that a visit to a doctor might be the kindest suggestion to make. Not a regular reader of your publication I struggle to see what you clearly identified as a misinformed confused sole being worthy of a platform, however modest.

Name and address NOT withheld.

Yours faithfully,

Neill Macklin

Dear Editor of *Swan Supping*,

This email is in response to the 'Inn Off The Post' article 'Are British pub landlords just too lazy'.

Firstly, I would like to say that whoever wrote in needs to check their facts before they email ignorant rubbish.

I personally know the business owners and the landlady of the **Seven Stars** and to say that she is lazy is outrageous and anyone in the local community and those further afield who have actually visited the pub (during opening hours) would, I'm sure, agree. Perhaps, he should check sites like 'TripAdvisor' to get an overview of how customers value the business.



Stephanie, the landlady, has worked tirelessly for the past two and a half years to make the **Seven Stars** a successful and thriving business. She is normally working from 9am until midnight, sometimes later. The couple of hours in the afternoon (sometimes not even that) is her break. On Sundays, and sometimes Saturdays if the weather is nice, she will work straight through. Sunday night is sometimes her only night off in the week. Her staff are also very hard working, courteous and passionate about giving a good service. I am also aware that those working in other pubs in the local area work just as hard.

Perhaps this gentleman needs to come and experience the **Seven Stars** (anonymously) before he makes baseless opinions on the landlady, staff and the service that they give. For starters, does he actually know anything about running a pub or any business for that matter? Perhaps he should try and see how hard it really is.

On another note, he needs to check his geography facts and be more informed about this community (the **Dinton Hermit** has been closed since 23rd December 2013). The **Seven Stars** is definitely in Dinton (and I am counting).

Kind regards

Name and address supplied

Dear Sir,

I refer to the letter published in issue 103, acknowledged by the anonymous contributor to be a 'rant'. 'Rant' is probably the most perceptive observation in the letter.

The argument put forward, verbose and smug in content and style, is based on the most flimsy of research. Only two independent pubs were visited by 'Mr Rant', one of which, as this publication was able to respond, had ceased to trade last year. Presumably the pub in question, the **Dinton Hermit**, was not economically viable? Clearly Mr Rant was not a frequent visitor to this 'nice little local village pub' just a 'short drive' away as he states otherwise he would have known of its fate long before. The **Dinton Hermit**, if it was struggling, obviously could not count on his custom and contribution to profit in its fight for survival.



We are sorry that this person didn't get to experience the **Seven Stars** in Dinton because I am sure he would have enjoyed it as we welcome both drinkers and diners alike.

Our establishment has a good reputation (AVDC village pub of the year 2013) and we are happy with the product and service we provide, however there is always room for improvement and we welcome constructive criticism.

Kind regards,

Stephanie Guiraute.
The **Seven Stars**, Dinton

Just in case you think that all this correspondence is just a bit too serious, we also received the following:-

Dear Country Life,

I noted with some interest that a recent lager drinking correspondent reported playing what must be the Sunday afternoon pub quiz rules (2003) of Mornington Crescent; the game ending only when one finds a pub one can actually get a drink in.

I look forward immensely to future games being reported in your excellent publication.

May I suggest the **Harrow**, Bishopstone, as an opening move.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Trellis,
North Wales

*< Please keep the emails and letters coming in to **Swan Supping**, whether it is just to get something off your chest, to tell us some news we have missed, or where we have got things wrong. We welcome all such missives about our local pubs and breweries. Please send them to me - contact details are given on page 22. Emails are preferred (editor@swansupping.org.uk) as it saves me some typing! - Ed. >*

The second pub visited by Mr Rant had its opening times displayed, though on the occasion of his arrival it was not opening hours. There may be sound reasons behind the **Seven Stars'** choice of trading hours and the owner/landlord might be intending to respond to Mr Rant's unnecessary slur bracketing it as not being a 'real pub' and implied laziness of those running it.

There are many examples known to me of pubs not opening during 'dead hours'. I hold them no grudge. Pubs may be considered to provide a community service but they are not a public service. A pub is not a public library.

Fortunately for Mr Rant his third choice which was a chain pub, the **Bugle Horn**, with open door and a ready pint of chilled lager was able to alleviate him of the 'gasping' condition he described he was in. The nation is relieved. Not quite a church bells across the land celebration, but....

Anyway Mr Rant's closet publicity punt may find some nodding heads but I suggest that now he's found his perfect all-hours pub he continues to grace the **Bugle Horn** with his custom. Alternatively he might like to grasp the nettle and try his hand in the pub business by resurrecting the fortunes of the defunct **Dinton Hermit** and show the beer drinking world how a real pub should be run. But that probably sounds like too much hard work; much harder than pushing a critical pen. Another option for more ready contentment is for Mr Rant to keep some lager in the fridge and when the 'gasping' moment strikes, enjoy a chilled can on the patio. Should there be garden gnomes for company, the conversation must surely be riveting.

David Jones, Maidenhead.

Dear Editor,

In response to the letter in the **Swan Supping** (lazy landlords), David and I understand the frustration of this individual finding two local pubs closed on a Sunday evening, however if he ventured out more often he would find a number of fine hostelrys closed on a Sunday evening. Let me assure Mr Anonymous that we opened for over a year but we lost money so the decision was made in conjunction with the local community (who incidentally own the pub) to close at 6pm on a Sunday. What we don't understand is why he calls us 'lazy'. We work hard to provide a good service to the local community and those who are willing to travel from further away.



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LANDMARK INITIATIVE TO SAVE FAILING PUBS!



A ground-breaking £11.5 million scheme that has so far saved 28 community pubs from closure, and is now spreading out from its Midlands base to other parts of the country, is highlighted by the **2015 Good Beer Guide**.

Project William, the brainchild of Leicester family brewer **Everards**, gives smaller brewers the opportunity to run pubs.

Of the 28 pubs so far reopened, 14 had closed and 13 were trading so poorly they were unsustainable but are now being run very successfully, making a healthy profit.

Roger Protz, Editor of the **Good Beer Guide** comments: 'With 31 pubs a week closing, I salute **Everards** for their initiative in launching Project William, which saved 28 community locals and boosted sales of real ale for both **Everards** and its brewing partners. I urge other breweries throughout the country to investigate launching similar schemes.'

In all of the now thriving pubs real ale has been central to their newly found success.

'The remarkable fact about Project William is that real ale accounts for 63% of beer sales in the pubs – that's a very high percentage and shows the appeal of community pubs that serve good local ale.' Roger added.

Everards, based in Leicester, dates from 1849 and was founded by William Everard, after whom Project William is named. The current chairman is his descendant, Richard Everard, whose company today owns 170 pubs throughout the Midlands.

Project William was an idea that emerged from a discussion between **Everards**' managing director Stephen Gould and Keith Bott, who runs the specialist **Titanic Brewery** in Stoke-on-Trent. As a result, **Everards** bought the **Greyhound**, a failing pub in Stoke, for £145,000 and spent a further £150,000 refurbishing it.

Roger explains how the initiative works in practice and the success it has had, 'The pub was busy from the day it reopened. Under the

terms of the Project William scheme, **Titanic** became the tenant and runs the pub, paying rent to **Everards**. The full range of **Titanic beers** is sold with at least one **Everards**' beer, usually its flagship **Tiger Best Bitter**, on the bar. **Everards** also supplies cider and lager.'

Everards now has ten brewery partners involved in the Project William scheme, these are **Ashover** (Derbyshire), **B&T** (Shefford, Bedfordshire), **Brampton** (Chesterfield), **Brown Ales** (Clay Cross, Derbyshire), **Derby Brewing**, **Raw Brewing** (Staveley, Derbyshire), **Slaughterhouse** (Warwick), **Titanic** (Stoke), **White Horse** (Stanford-in-the-Vale, Oxfordshire), and **Wrekin** (Telford).

The 29th Project William pub will open early in 2015 with **Lincoln Green Brewery** as the partner. Stephen Gould of **Everards** brewery points out that the £11.5 million investment in the scheme was made during a recession and is one of the biggest investments in pubs made in the brewing

industry.

'We're about quality beer in quality pubs,' he says. 'We don't deal with new build, only with existing properties. Some of those pubs have seen trade increase from £3,500 a week to £14,000.'

The scheme now reaches as far west as Shropshire, with two Project William pubs in Telford. One, the **Old Fighting Cocks** in Oakengates, was bought out of administration at a cost of £95,000. The second, the **Pheasant** in Wellington, had been closed for three years and re-opened in the spring of 2014 with ten handpumps on the bar and the relocated **Ironbridge Brewery** – renamed **Wrekin Brewing Co** – at the back.

The nearest pub in the Project William scheme to our branch is the **White Horse** in Banbury, pictured above.

The **Campaign for Real Ale** is an enthusiastic supporter of Project William, which has received several **CAMRA** awards. In April, Richard Everard and Stephen Gould were given the prestigious Bill Squires Award by the East Midlands branches of the campaign. The award was presented in the **Sir John Borlase Warren** in Nottingham, a Project William pub.

CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2015 is available to purchase from all good book stores and online via www.camra.org.uk/shop.



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LOCAL BREWERY NEWS



Malt The Brewery

Malt The Brewery's 'Pump Take Over' at the **Old Millwrights Arms** in Aylesbury was a fabulous success. The brewery team and their club members 'The Maltsters' arrived in style on a London Routemaster. They enjoyed a full selection of **Malt** ales on the bar. Marc, Landlord at the Millwrights said 'Its been amazing, having the Routemaster visit the pub was superb'.

Following accreditation by **CAMRA** for their **Real Ale In A Bottle**, **Malt The Brewery's** brewer, Nick, is delighted to have been awarded his first Gold Star by the Great Taste Awards 2014 for **Malt Dark Ale**. Judged by over 400 of the most demanding palates belonging to food critics, chefs, cooks, farmers and a host of food writers and journalists, Great Taste is widely acknowledged as the most respected food accreditation scheme for artisan and speciality food producers. 'We're incredibly proud to win such a prestigious award after just two years of trading. It's a great endorsement of our product, particularly as the taste tests are done blind' said Nick.

On Sunday 12th October **Malt The Brewery** are celebrating two years of brewing. The brewery will be open from 12pm. The day will feature local music, dancing, food stalls and local attractions. With traditional pub games, traction engines and a hog roast its set to be a great day out for the ale lover. Virginia the farmer on Collingshanger farm, where **Malt The Brewery** is based will also be taking visitors on walks to meet the pigs who enjoy the brewery's spent grains. See the website for more details, www.maltthebrewery.co.uk.

Malt Harvest Ale, the brewery's latest brew has been flying through the pumps. It's the third time this seasonal has been brewed and clearly the brewery is now coming of age. Comments have been incredibly positive and sales of the ale have really caught the team by surprise, selling out much sooner than expected. **Malt Harvest Ale** will be available until the end of the month after which **Malt Winter Ale** will make its third appearance and hopefully with similarly positive results.

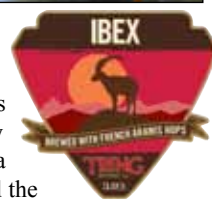
We are on the lookout for a **CAMRA** member to be the Brewery Liaison officer for **Malt The Brewery**. If you are interested, please contact the editor.



Tring Brewery

As the end of the year draws to a close as does **Tring Brewery's** hugely successful 2014 monthly specials range which used a selection of hop varieties from around the

world. To see out the year they will be presenting the Slovenian hopped **Tubby Dormouse**, the French hopped **ibex** and finally returning home back to the UK in December with a Bramling Cross hopped **Robin Red Breast**. If you're a fan of the multi-award winning **Tea Kettle Stout** then you'll be pleased to know their bottle version is back in stock and this time round it's a bottle conditioned version yielding even more complex flavour profiles.



XT Brewery

September is hop harvest time and brings the once a year opportunity to brew with ultra-fresh hops straight from the bine. Normally hops have to be dried and vacuum packed to preserve them, but at harvest time you can brew fresh! **XT** have brewed their **Fresh Hop ONE** – the hops are picked and rushed back to the brewery and added within 12 hours to a new brew. This is the beer equivalent of Beaujolais nouveau – the beer is super fresh and best enjoyed while those delicate hop flavours are still young. The beer uses the same basic recipe as the regular **XT-ONE** but using new English Goldings Hops throughout. This is a limited edition beer only available for a few weeks so get it while its fresh!

The **Animal** beer range from **XT** is joined by two new additions – the **Mole** is a 4.6% Californian Pale Ale brewed with a unique American West Coast yeast – crisp and citrusy. The **Mole** is joined on the pumps by the **Hiss** which is a 4.6% Amber Ale using a Speciality Belgian malt – giving a traditional malty backbone with a contemporary hop finish. Following this year's hop harvest – there are some new **Animal** beers in development using some all new varieties of English hops look out for them later this year.

XT have a stock of oak casks – some of these had to go off for some TLC back at the master cooperage. Oak takes a little more care and attention than regular stainless steel and they need occasional maintenance. These nine gallon firkins are joined by some new larger 36 gallon oak barrels which **XT** intend to use for some small batch aged beers.

The **XT** beer club is growing – the latest club night in September had the members enjoying a couple of special beers and locally produced beery sausages. Club nights are only open to members plus two of their guests.

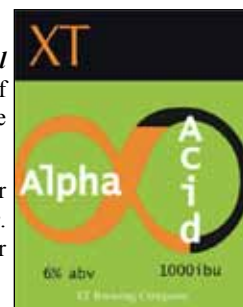
Last year the **Lest We Forget** Poppy Appeal beer helped raise £3000 with the Royal British Legion. **XT** will be brewing the beer again this year from early October and hope to raise more for the appeal this year!

XT will be holding **OXToberfest** on Saturday 18th October. This is a beer festival and open day with free entry, music, and only £2 a pint

XT have made Britain's bitterest beer! **XT-AlphaAcid** was brewed especially for the St. Albans beer festival and weighed in at 6% ABV and 1000 IBU (International Bittering Units). IBU is a measure of the actual bitterness of a beer as contributed by the alpha acid from hops. Because the apparent bitterness of a beer is subjective to the taste of the drinker and the balancing malt sweetness of the beer this is not always an accurate measure of the 'hoppiness' of a beer. But, generally speaking, beers with IBUs of less than 20 have little to no apparent hops presence. Beers with IBUs from 20 to 45 are the most common.

XT also won first place at **Ealing Beer Festival** for **Pi** and third place for **XPA** – not bad out of 300+ beers in one of the biggest festivals in the country.

We are also on the lookout for a **CAMRA** member to be the Brewery Liaison officer for **XT Brewery**. If you are interested, please contact the editor (details on page 22).



THE BEER DRINKER'S BIBLE!

The *Good Beer Guide 2015* is the culmination of effort of thousands of volunteers from all over the country. Every **CAMRA** branch visits as many pubs in their branch as they can several times a year. This is a tall order in the Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe branch, with over 350 pubs to visit! No one person, or indeed small group of people can give this many pubs the attention they deserve, so we rely on reports from YOU, the reader of this magazine! It is your reports that go into the local news section in *Swan Supping*, and help choose which pubs are considered for the Guide. But we need more. *Good Beer Guide* pubs are those that are the best over the whole year, and not just one or two visits. So far this year only 122 members out of 841 in our branch have recorded 3685 scores on beers in 235 of our branch pubs; 94% of the pubs serving real ale in the branch. The pub with the most scores currently, 335 (!), is the **Old Millwright's Arms** in Aylesbury!

Sadly, only 88 pubs (35%) have greater than five scores, 94 with two or fewer, and 15 with no score at all. To have an accurate picture of the branch, and to accurately reflect our branch's pubs in the *Good Beer Guide*, we need more scores, from you. If you are a **CAMRA** member, please score your beer! All you need to do is go to whatpub.com, log in using your **CAMRA** membership number.

Simply search for the pub in which you drank the beer, and its score from 0 to 5 where 0 signifies that no real ale was available and 5 perfect beer. You can find an article on beerscoring on the branch website: swansupping.org.uk. Alternatively, email your score, pub name date of visit and **CAMRA** number to scores@swansupping.org.uk and we will enter it for you.

If you are not a **CAMRA** member, we still need you! Your reports about your local are just as vital! Please tell us about events, interesting beer, changes of landlords. Email editor@swansupping.org.uk, or write to us using the address on page 22 of this magazine.

Publicans, please tell us when you are organising an event. We'll do our very best to publicise it here, and on the branch website, but we can't if you don't tell us about it! Please encourage your locals to report on the excellence of your beer, and to submit scores if they are **CAMRA** members.

AYLESBURY BEER FESTIVAL

The 21st annual *Aylesbury Beer Festival* in aid of the **Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity**, will be taking place on Friday 24th (6pm-11pm) and Saturday 25th (11am-11pm) October, at the Bucks CC Sports & Social Club, Lower Road, Stoke Mandeville. This will bring the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Hospice to a close with a selection of real ales, cider and perry to really whet the appetite!

You can buy a ticket from all **Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity Shops**, by contacting the charity directly or through Aylesbury Tourist Office. All profits will go to the charity, which needs to raise half a million pounds each year, and if you wish to sponsor a barrel, please contact the **Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity** on 01296 429975.

Local **CAMRA** volunteers are required for the festival. Please get in touch if you wish to help either in the setting up, serving or helping to take down the barrels at the end. We guarantee a great time (plus free entry!). The more people that help, the less arduous the work will be.

The venue is opposite the Ambulance Station at Stoke Mandeville Hospital and regular buses (9, 300) run past the venue, so there is no need to drink and drive. This is our latest festival where we have raised money for the Hospice and the beer tends to taste better when you know that the money you have paid is going to a worthwhile cause. Drinking for charity! Wonderful!



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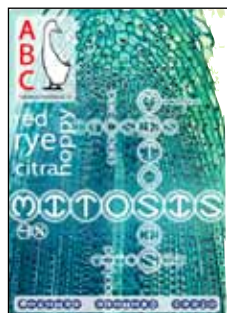
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MORE LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

ABC

Blink and you'll miss these Limited Edition Beers! If you managed to get your hands round a pint of *The Beer With No Name* then lucky you - it was one of the **Brewhouse's** best selling beers, and so we're sure they'll be using chillies again! *AMtERIC* isn't far behind in popularity, with double helpings of the Swedish-grown Hallertau Mittelfrueh hops creating an ode to an old English IPA.

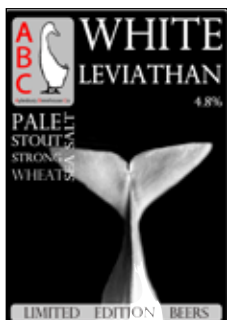


It's **CAMRA** beer festival season, so look out for **ABC** beers at Milton Keynes Concrete Pint, Ascot Beer Festival, Oxford Beer Festival, and Aylesbury's very own Beer Festival!

More Limited Edition Beers are also in the pipeline! Head Brewer Hayden's got his lab coat on and will be brewing *Mitosis*, a 4% experiment using Citra hops & red rye malt for a citrusy, malty explosion on the palate!

Each and every cask of *Mushashi* will be dry hopped, creating a crisp, pale 4.5% with a sharp bitterness that will cut through the floral flavours!

White Leviathan is an ode to Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*; a pale stout at 4.8% brewed with sea salt, wheat malt and hops from the four corners of the globe, resulting in a monstrous beer worth hunting down.



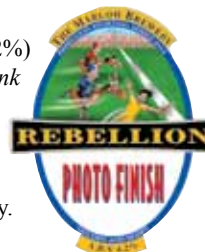
Rebellion Brewery

Business as usual at **Rebellion**. *Red* is out for Autumn with *Roasted Nuts* out in November for Christmas.



Photo Finish (Golden and Hoppy, 4.2%) is out for October and *Slam Dunk* (Amber and Traditional, 4.2%) for November.

The developments to the site continue and the brewery is still busy.



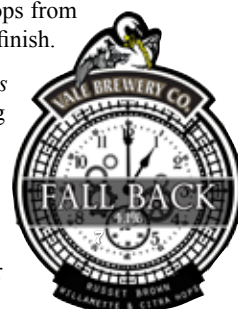
Vale Brewery

Vale Brewery were out in force at the Thame Food Festival at the end of September, bopping along to the live music and seeing many new - and old! - faces. By the end of the day, all the draught ale had been drunk and they went home with just a single case of bottles!

With the clocks going back, the nights drawing in, and more nights by the pub fire planned, they've brewed October's special *Fall Back*. An Autumn ale brewed with the finest traditional English malt from Warminster, and the sharpest Willamette and Citra hops from America, giving a big citrus flavour and a bitter malt finish.

Their brand new November monthly special *Brewers Choice* is now fermenting in the vessels in Brill! Using one of Head Brewer David Renton's favourite English hops, First Gold, it's a single hopped traditional English golden ale at 3.9%.

Vale are not mentioning the 'C' word, but they'll be brewing and bottling *Good King Senseless* in time for any festive activities there may be!



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MICROBREWERY MARATHON



The rise of the straggly bearded Hackney Hipster, with his man-bag and fondness for 'craft beer' has had a refreshing effect on his typical habitat – in newly trendy East London.

Around the newly reopened Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park are more microbreweries than you can shake a relay baton at.

On the last Saturday of September we had a branch pub crawl that started off with an amazing four pub microbreweries.

We started at **Tap East** (above) – in the Westfield Stratford shopping centre – a brewpub from the people behind the Rake in Southwark. We'd visited before at the start of our cable-car Greenwich pub crawl last year.

After a walk through the site of the 2012 Olympics we entered hipster territory in Hackney Wick, with its converted warehouses covered in street art and graffiti. The **Crate Brewery** (left) is in an old whitewashed warehouse by the Lea Navigation canal and



crawls with cool twenty and thirty somethings – our arrival probably increased the average customer age by about ten years – but after a few pints of the **Crate Brewery's** best we were as young at heart as the rest of them. This modern **GBG** pub also serves authentic, if rather expensive, pizzas to soak up the beer.



Then it was off to Homerton to the **People's Park Tavern** – so named because its large garden backs on to Victoria Park. This one-time **Firkin** pub has a large brewery (pictured above right) and serves a dizzying number of its own ales.

The only problem with these pubs is that, compared to other parts of London, they're somewhat off the beaten track in terms of train and tube connections but the bus service is pretty regular. We took a 277 to Hackney Central to the country's supposed most beard-friendly pub, the **Cock Inn**. The barman certainly sported a thick bush on his chin but, at 4.30pm, the local hirsute hipsters were probably still sipping Americanos. Again, the pub had a fine line up of its own ales.

The crawl continued on the London Overground to Dalston Kingsland (a gentrified location where twenty years ago you might have thought twice about visiting in daylight but now teems with cool young things). Last stop was the legendary **Southampton Arms** in Kentish Town – not a brew pub but one of the best selections of ale in the capital.

Mike Clarke

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GRAVEDIGGERS - PART THIRTY-ONE

Old Moses reversed his tractor trailer up to the **Gravedigger's** brewhouse gates. A putrid stench of sickly-sweet rotting fruit filled the air and drifted inside the pub. A couple of groups of hikers who'd unwisely wandered into the **Diggers** for lunch bolted for the doors, clutching their stomachs and noses.

'Good grief. What foul brew have you got in there?' one of the hikers asked Old Moses.

'Aaah. 'Snot a foul brew yet but we'll be working on turning it into one,' Old Moses said. 'It's for the pub cider – all the apples that the pigs wouldn't eat from the floor of me old orchard. It's the maggots and the pig droppings what gives it the special country flavour.'

The hikers looked at their glasses in horror and fled.

James opened the brewery doors and Old Moses tipped the half-chewed, rotting apples into a huge vat. Old Moses hosed the pig manure out of the trailer into the fermenting vessel.

'All set for the apple treading ceremony later on tonight?' Mazz asked, referring to the ancient custom where the portliest villagers pulverised the apples with their dirty feet – a more traditional method of pressing the fruit.

'Oh arr,' Old Moses said. 'Except Fat Freda won't be coming because she's planning that kiddies' coach trip to Toxic Towers. You know, for Halloween.'

'Oh, no. Fat Freda's good for crushing two tons of apples to oblivion with her size twelves,' Mazz said. 'We don't want chunky bits of rotten, pig-nuzzled fruit to be floating in our cider.'

'They's my favourite parts,' Old Moses said.

'This kids' coach trip, it's given me an idea,' James said.

'Me too,' Mazz said. 'There's much more than that's genuinely scary about a night at the **Gravediggers** than at Toxic Towers.'

By the autumn half-term James and Mazz had converted the **Gravediggers** and its outbuildings into an even more macabre horror show that was normally witnessed at last orders.

Bribed by free pints of *Fit Shaced* and *Executioner's Spittoon* the locals took to their theatrical duties with alacrity. Young Duwayne posed as a headless cavalier, which everyone agreed was an improvement on his usual appearance – and that it doubled his IQ. Old Pete merrily reprised his trick of projectile vomiting out of the window from his seat at the bar – except it wasn't the advertised ectoplasm but last Christmas's vintage *Old Ratarsed*. Old Joe limped around the pub dribbling mucus down his blood-stained shroud – but that was nothing to do with the Halloween theme – it was the way his evenings in the **Diggers** normally ended.

As word spread of the incredibly realistic and gruesome Halloween scarefest, children from miles around pestered their parents for a ticket to the extraordinary freak show. Naturally, the youngsters loved the fetid air of menace and enthusiastically downed the non-alcoholic fizzy ox-blood and flattened hedgehog flavour punch which had been lovingly concocted by Fat Freda from, er, ox-blood and flattened hedgehogs.

Fortunately for James and Mazz, the parents queued up to be anaesthetised out of properly witnessing the grisly goings-on with copious quantities of the **Diggers'** mind-altering brews. The brewery tasting room was cleverly positioned to the rear of the recreated torture chamber – the customers' hair-raising screams after sampling Old Moses's special cider travelled straight



through the thin walls and provided a soundtrack to a tableau where a comatose Old Norris was being stretched on a rack over burning coals.

James even harnessed the violent power of the microbrewery's famously fermentation process to create a ride that could rival any of those at Toxic Towers in sheer knuckle-whitening excitement. Children queued to be tied to a bungee rope and then inserted into a steel tube connected to the gases rising from the fermenting tank below. After a minute or so the pressure built up to the point where the child shot straight out of the tube like a bullet and rocketed several hundred feet in the air. The elastic cord prevented the youngster being shot out of earth orbit at escape velocity and yanked the child back to earth for a soft landing in Old Moses's silage tank. The kids loved it, while their parents were deterred from calling health and safety by the firm belief that what they were witnessing was merely the influence of the hallucinogenic beer.

By Halloween night itself the queues were stretching past the abattoir to the other side of village, almost to the old anthrax testing site. But among the yummy mummies' four-by-fours, Mazz was bemused to see a chauffeur driven Rolls Royce inching its way along the lane and even more surprised when a suited business man stepped out, accompanied by a phalanx of flunkies.

'I'm Sir Filthy Scaremtothebank,' the man announced. 'Chairman of Toxic Attractions plc. Our fake, plastic family Halloween attraction has suffered a decline of 42% in visitor numbers since you set up this unfairly and authentically repulsive and disgusting business in direct competition. I insist you close down immediately.'

'Up yours mate. That's capitalism for you,' Mazz declared in her leopard skin dominatrix costume. 'Red in tooth and claw.'

'Can you give me your card for later?' Sir Filthy Scaremtothebank said. 'Except I don't mix business with pleasure.'

'Not so fast,' said a bespectacled female flunky, who revealed herself as representing the local council. 'This pub has been put on the register of Frightening Assets of Recreational Terror and, due to the potential for unplanned excesses of municipal ghastliness, you are obliged to allow existing proprietors of similar businesses make a binding offer to buy your grisly-themed operation.'

'I'll buy the whole concept for a thousand pounds and a year's contract to supply that amazing non-alcoholic punch,' Sir Filthy Scaremtothebank declared, opening his chequebook.

'Well, I think a bar full of overgrown children is enough work for me anyway,' Mazz said, accepting the cheque as Old Moses collapsed in a pool of regurgitated badgers' innards under the bar.

Charlie Mackle

Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

October

Saturday 4th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

12 noon, Chinnor Rugby Club Beer Fest, Thame.

Wednesday 8th WESTON TURVILLE SOCIAL

8.00pm Five Bells, 8.45pm Chandos, 9.30pm Chequers.

Sunday 12th BREWERY OPEN DAY

Malt the Brewery 2nd Anniversary Open Day and Fete, Prestwood.

Tuesday 14th PRINCES RISBOROUGH SOCIAL

7.30pm Bird in Hand, 8.15pm Bell, 8.45pm George and Dragon, 9.30pm Whiteleaf Cross.

Saturday 18th BREWERY OPEN DAY

XT Brewery OXToberfest, Long Crendon

Thursday 23rd PRE-BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

7.00 Meet at the Bucks County Council Sports & Social Club (festival venue) to help with the set-up, followed by a few pints up the road. 8.30pm Bell, 9.30pm Bull, Stoke Mandeville.

Friday 24th & Saturday 25th BEER FESTIVAL

21st Vale of Aylesbury Beer Festival, Bucks County Council Sports & Social Club, Lower Road, Aylesbury. Volunteers are required to help run the festival. Please contact the editor for details (contact info below).

November

Monday 3rd BRANCH MEETING

8.00pm Wheel, Naphill

Saturday 8th PUB BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

12 noon, Cross Keys, Thame.

Tuesday 11th REOPENED PUB SOCIAL

8.30pm Two Brewers, Marlow.

Wednesday 19th AYLESBURY SOUTH SOCIAL

8.00pm Plough, 9.00pm Old Millwrights Arms.

Thursday 27th LOUDWATER/WYCOMBE MARSH SOCIAL

7.30pm Happy Union, 8.00pm King George V, 8.30pm General Havelock.

December

Monday 8th BRANCH MEETING

8.00pm Hop Pole, Aylesbury

Further details can be found on our website

www.swansupping.org.uk

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DON'T MISS OUT!

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

www.swansupping.org.uk/joinin

Swan Supping

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Copy deadline for next issue (due out 28th November) is 14th November 2014.

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

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

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

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Signature(s)

Date



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