

**FREE**

# Swan Supping



**Issue 105**

**Dec 2014/Jan 2015**



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FOR  
REAL ALE**

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See page 5**

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

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lagers category, SIBA South keg **GOLD**

**Jack Black IPA**, Hertfordshire Beer of  
the Year **SILVER**

**Red Tail Citra** bottles – SIBA Eastern  
competition **SILVER**

**Redwood American IPA** – Beer of the  
festival, St Albans Beer Festival  
**BRONZE**

**London Porter** - SIBA Eastern  
competition **BRONZE**

**Legally Blonde Hefeweizen** speciality  
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## NEWS FROM THE EDITOR

### Pubco Reform

The main news is that there has been an important victory for beer drinkers, pubgoers and licensees as the Government was defeated recently in a Commons vote.

This vote should help secure the future of pubs and **CAMRA** is delighted that, after ten years of our campaigning, MPs have voted to introduce a market rent only option for licensees tied to the large pub companies - a move that will secure the future of the great British pub.



The Government was defeated by 284 votes to 269 with MPs from all parties voting in favour of a new clause to the Small Business Bill that will empower pubco licensees to choose between a tied agreement and a market rent only agreement that will allow them to buy beer on the open market.

Allowing over 13,000 pub tenants tied to the large pub companies the option of buying beer on the open market at competitive prices will help keep pubs open and ensure the cost of a pint to consumers remains affordable. The large pub companies will no longer be able to charge their tenants prices up to 60 pence a pint higher than open market prices. A full report appears on page 8.

However, don't get too excited and rush down to your local **Punch** or **Enterprise** pub and expect the price of your pint to have dropped dramatically! There is a long way to go as I'm sure that the law of unintended consequences will hold sway as the pub companies find ways to recover their revenue stream.

The main worry is that a lot of pubs will be sold, and, as we know, pub sites sold for housing receive far more money than if the pub remains in business. We should preempt this move by ensuring that as many pubs as possible be listed as 'Assets of Community Value' to make it as difficult as possible for the pub to be closed. If you haven't done so and are unsure how to do it, please get in touch with me (contact details are on page 22) and we will give you as much help as we can.



### Time for Pubco Reform

#### Beer Festival Success

October's Vale of Aylesbury beer festival raised over £5,000 for the Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity. This was our 21st festival raising money for the charity and we will be doing it all over again next year in October at the Bucks County Council Sports & Social Club in Aylesbury when we hope to raise even more money. A full report plus photographs appear on pages 14 and 15. Many thanks to all those who gave their time to organise the festival, rack the beer, serve it and then take down the barrels at the end of the festival. We can't do it without all your help.

Thanks once again to all the people who have given their free time to contribute to the production and circulation of **Swan Supping** and a special thanks to Colin Stanford for his seasonal cartoon, combining Christmas and remembering the First World War.

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!

All the best for Christmas and the New Year.

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

## NATIONAL CAMRA NEWS

### CAMRA's National Winter Ales Festival 2015

Where: The Roundhouse, Derby, DE24 8JE

When: Open from Wednesday 11th – Saturday 14th February 2015

In 2015 **CAMRA's** flagship **National Winter Ales Festival** will return to Derby for the second year running, with over 400 beers available the Festival will showcase some of the very best ales,

ciders, perries, bottled world beers and mead in three separate areas.

Located beside the Pride Park exit of Derby Railway Station (just 93 minutes from London) Derby's historic Roundhouse could not be in a more convenient location.

Four Brewery Bars have been agreed: multi award winning **Blue Monkey** from Nottingham; innovative **North Star** from Derbyshire both in the Main Hall, Derby's very own **Brunswick**

**Brewing Company** in the Music Marquee and Yorkshire's shining gem **Brass Castle** in the Carriage Room.

The **National Winter Ales Festival** is home to **CAMRA's** prestigious **Champion Winter Beer of Britain Competition** which sees the four winter styles of beer (porters, stouts, old ales/strong milds and barley wine/strong old ales) being gathered from across the UK to be judged and a winner declared. Though the festival itself has lots of pale beers and golden ales to choose from too.

The website [www.nwaf.org.uk](http://www.nwaf.org.uk) will be updated regularly with details of admission prices, live entertainment, tutored tastings and special hotel rates thanks to our partners at [www.visitderby.co.uk](http://www.visitderby.co.uk). There are no advance tickets as this is a pay on the door event. Well behaved and supervised under 18s are welcomed until 19:00 each evening, after which they must leave due to a licensing requirement.

The feedback from 2014 revealed that our customers loved the building, the beer quality and selection as well as the hot and cold food which was available. So why not join them and come and see Derby at its beery best!!

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## CIDER PUB OF THE YEAR



A traditional 16th century thatched roofed pub in a small Dorset village the **Castle Inn**, West Lulworth, has been crowned the best place in the UK to enjoy a pint of real cider by **CAMRA**.

The pub has been run by the Halliday family for over thirty years – Alex Halliday is the current landlord and the third generation of his family to run the pub,

‘It’s absolutely fantastic to win the *National Cider Pub of the Year* competition. We’ve been pushing real cider for years now and hope that us winning this award will put Dorset cider on the map.’ Alex Halliday,

landlord at the **Castle Inn** said.

Located near to the beautiful Lulworth Cove and Durdle Door of the Jurassic Coastline, the pub is a hit with regulars and visitors alike, with the choice of real ciders and perries being a significant draw for many.

‘At any one time we have around fifty to sixty different real ciders available in the pub and we believe that once people try proper real cider they will realise how much better it is than commercially produced stuff, which often only contains around thirty percent apple juice!’

Real cider is made from 100% natural apple juice with no additives or chemicals and is served naturally still, unlike commercially produced cider which is force-carbonated to give it fizz and, as Alex mentions above, can often contain as little as 30% apple juice. Real perry is produced in exactly the same way as real cider but with pear juice instead of apple juice. Sarah Newson is the organiser of the *Cider Pub of the Year* competition and had this to say about the **Castle Inn**,

‘The **Castle Inn** is a very worthy winner of this much coveted award. Their commitment to real cider and perry is second to none and the quality of drinks they have in the pub at any one time is truly staggering. As

well as that the pub is a beautiful place to enjoy a drink, with all the country charm you could hope for.’

The announcement of the award marked the start of **CAMRA**’s October long Cider Month campaign. **CAMRA** urges pubs around the country to try stocking a real cider and to encourage their patrons to give this traditional British drink a try.

The other three finalists were the **Rising Sun** in Berkhamsted, the **Railway Arms** in Downham Market and the **Hop and Vine** in Hull.

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## MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!



The photo actually shows a miniature pint with the Lego figure as the actual pint was in a specially designed container closer to the centre of gravity to aid stability.

Having reached a temperature as low as -55°C the *London Pride* was still frozen when it was recovered and looked like a block of foam. Once back at the pub it was thawed out and sampled by brave regulars.

One described it as 'muddy' whilst another said it was 'pretty grim'!. Not surprising considering what it had been through. The miniature and astronaut are now a feature behind the bar of the pub.

Regular customer and rocket scientist Chris Smith devised the operation which was launched from the back garden of the pub.

Chris works for European Astrotech in nearby Westcott, who specialise in propulsion system development for space vehicles and also supplied the equipment, a 200lb high altitude balloon, HD cameras, three tracking devices and a recovery vehicle etc. For more pictures of this and similar launchings go to [www.europeanastrotech.com](http://www.europeanastrotech.com) and select High Altitude Balloon – launch Blog.

Landlady Ros Bangs commented: 'We can safely say we are the world's only Astro Pub'.

*Mick White*

Following the partial success of the attempt to put a pint into space on the 5th July from the **White Swan** at Whitechurch, which we featured in our April/May and June/July issues, the second try a few weeks later achieved all objectives.

Accompanied by a Lego spaceman a pint of *Fullers London Pride* was taken to an altitude of 24 km (approx. 80,000 ft.) by which time it had both boiled and frozen at the same time. Eventually the balloon burst and descended to earth to be tracked and recovered to be returned to the pub. This time the on board camera recorded the event successfully.



# THE WHEEL

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## LOCAL NEWS

### AYLESBURY

The **Aristocrat** will be holding a Giant Christmas Quiz on Thursday 18th of December, starting at 7.30pm. This is in aid of 'Free Christmas Lunch' at St. Mary's Church for those who have nowhere to go or have nobody to be with over the festive period. When visited, three ales were available: **Fullers London Pride** (with a free scratchcard offering loads of prizes), **Fire Cracker** and **Seafarer's. Jack Frost** (4.5%) will appear in December.

The **Bricklayers Arms** closed during November but is due to reopen at the end of the same month. No news can yet be confirmed, so check our next issue for full details.

At the **Broad Leys** the seasonal spirit will be enhanced by some of the real ales they will have on during December which include **Rocking Rudolph** (4.2%) and **Yule Love It** (4.0%).

**Dayla** are moving back into their old site as well as operating from Aston Clinton.

Trade has grown well for them since they moved to Aston Clinton in September 2010. In those four years their turnover has risen by 42 % with a strong growth in cask ale as well as wines through their dedicated James Pettit Wine Merchants.

A small team will operate from the High Street and yet Aston Clinton remains their headquarters with even more improvements being made there in order to accommodate more staff and stock. Their temperature-controlled chilled cask ale store boasts storage for up to 1500 firkins and once again they have been awarded **Cask Marque** Distributor Charter. This they have held every year since 2006 and **Dayla's** most recent scores for the excellence in handling real ales have seen 100% consistently being achieved.

The **Hobgoblin** is due to reopen at the end of November as **Fever & Boutique**. This aims to be Aylesbury's fabulous new bar and nightclub, so we don't hold out too much hope for lots of real ale. There will be three separate areas for music, Fever, Boutique and Kukui.

The **Hop Pole** are now running their Christmas menu £27.50 per person for four courses and Christmas buffet £10 per head. Xmas Eve Swing A Long from 9pm - 40s and 50s theme fancy

dress optional. Table reservations with buffet provided for £5 per head are selling quickly!! They have also been shortlisted for the Bucks Herald Best Bar 2014.

The beer menu at the brewery's tap, the **Farmers' Bar** at the **Kings Head** continues to attract much favourable comment as does the Christmas food menu with a delight of local offerings and dishes linked with our region. There is always a carefully chosen selection of guest beers and ciders on offer from George and his team which is well worth investigating.

The **Kingsbury** offers all its real ales at £2.05 a pint. They always have **Sharps Doom Bar** with either **Old Speckled Hen** or a beer from **Marstons**, currently **New World**.

The **Old Millwrights Arms** are holding a 'Winter Warmer festival' over the weekend of Friday 5th to Sunday 7th of December. They will have four small batch stouts from **Twickenham Brewery** which are only available in twenty pubs in or around London (one of the other pubs is their sister pub, the **Stag & Hounds** in Farnham Common). Other beers available that weekend will be **Rebellion Roasted Nuts**, **Windsor & Eton Conqueror**, **Red Squirrel Winters Tail** and **Jack Black IPA** along with **Great Heck Black Jesus** (6.5%). There will be a January sale with real ales at £3 per pint from Monday to Thursday plus other weekly specials. This will be the starter for the regular beer club on Tuesdays which will regularly feature local ales at £3 a pint, with one at the lower price of £2.50.

The **Queens Head** has reached the last twelve of the Bucks Herald Pub of the Year competition. This **Punch** owned bar offers **Sharps Doom Bar** and **Westons Old Rosie**.

Alongside the **Courage Best Bitter** and **Thatchers Cheddar Valley**, the **Rockwood** offer beers from **Punch's** Finest Cask range, currently **St. Austell Trelawny** with **Exeter Avocet** to follow.

The **White Swan** is still closed, but the owners are actively searching for someone to take it over, hopefully before Christmas.

A new café called the **Works** (not to be confused with the nearby discount bookshop) has opened at the top of the Market Square on a site which was previously a travel agent and an art gallery. They specialise in savoury

crepes and waffles and sundaes made with home-made ice cream. To drink there is coffee, wine and beer. A shame that the only one of the latter available is bottled **Peroni** lager.

### GREAT KIMBLE

At the time of going to press, Wycombe Council had not announced its decision on the application to demolish the historic **Bernard Arms** and replace it with three houses. The planning portal on the council website showed a very large number of objections, including a petition containing over a hundred signatures. This decision will give an indication of how seriously Wycombe Council views pubs as community assets to be protected.

The **Swan** continues with its successful promotion of **LocAles**, with four available on a recent weekend. The pub will host an evening of Christmas carol singing at 7.30pm on 16th December, a Christmas pub quiz on 21st December and on Boxing Day at midday the Owlswick Morris will perform a traditional mummers' play. In the New Year the pub will host regular live music nights, the first being Nikki Loy, a singer-songwriter, at 8.30pm on Saturday 17th January. The **Swan** also offered recently a beer whose pumpclip is shown above, but it is nothing to do with our regular feature on page 21!

### HADDENHAM

The latest **Haddenham Winterfest** will take place on Saturday December 13th from 12noon to 5pm at Banks Park HP17 8EE (next to the Village Hall).

Why not join us at our social as we enjoy Haddenham's biggest Christmas party - a beer festival with a difference!

A great afternoon of entertainment with live music, dancing and food galore, plus a fantastic selection of real ales, world beers and mulled wine. Please check out the feature on page 10.

### HIGH WYCOMBE

The **Bootlegger** is closed for refurbishment and we understand that it is reopening as a craft beer pub. Building work is reported as going slow and has a revised reopening date of the 10th December.

Dan has left and a new manager is in place, Spencer, who intends keeping a varied beer range, the regular beers being from the **Rebellion Brewery**. It is reported that there will be a discount on these **Rebellion** beers for **Rebellion**



beer club members. With Wasps Rugby club leaving Wycombe they are looking for new revenue streams and as such are now showing the football and apparently viewing your chosen rugby match will not be guaranteed as before. The TVs will also be on more often as they now have SKY & BT Sports to pay for.

The **Wycombe Rugby Club** beer festival was held in November. The beers were all local and there was a general 'Wet 'n Wild' animal theme to the beer names.

A recent visit to the **Pheasant** found no real ale on. They usually have one available and the pump is still there so we think it will come back.

The **Roundabout** has reopened as the **Phoenix** and is serving pins of **Rebellion** beer on gravity.

Pins of **Rebellion** beer are also available now at the **Wycombe Swan** theatre.

### KINGSWOOD

The **Cook & Fillet** (sic) which was the **Crooked Billet** is now the **Akeman Inn**.

### MARLOW

The **Royal British Legion** will be holding their Winterfest from Thursday 18th to Sunday 21st of December, offering fourteen real ales, real cider and craft lager.

### OVING

After several months closure the **Black Boy** has reopened. Ian and Lisa Mendola, who also run the **Crown** at Gawcott, took over on a free-of-tie lease on 17th November.

They intend to concentrate on developing it as a village pub for drinkers with value for money food rather than going the 'gastropub' route as others have previously. Three ales are dispensed by handpump; **Sharps Doom Bar** and two guests, currently **Timothy Taylor Boltmaker** and **Vale Wychert**.

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## QUAINTON

Always a treat for ale lovers the choice of five beers at the **George & Dragon** recently consisted of: **Hook Norton** Flagship, **Malt Harvest**, **Vale Self Preservation Society**, **XT 3** and **Hook Norton** Hooky Bitter.

Christmas menu is available from 2nd December at £20 per head lunchtime and £25 evenings for 3 courses with tea or coffee. Events coming up: - Breakfast with Santa 9-11.30am Sat 20th Dec, £10 per child includes breakfast and gift. To book email charlnov3@tiscali.co.uk Quainton Handbells at the **G&D** Coffee Shop and Tearoom Sat 20th Dec 11am with mince pies and mulled wine. Darts Knockout Sat 27th Dec, 8pm.

## STEWKLEY

Following a kitchen refurbishment at the **Swan** food is now being served Tuesday to Saturday, 12 noon till 9pm and Sunday 12 – 4pm. A fine selection of favourite pub meals, bar snacks and daily specials are on offer as well as a childrens menu from £4.95 and Sunday roasts at £9.25.

Increasing sales have brought the choice of ales back up to four. Recent guests include such favourites as **Timothy Taylor** Landlord, **Hook Norton** Old Hooky and **Wychwood** Dogs Bollocks.

## THAME

The **Cross Keys** held a very successful festival in early November. There were three **Thame Brewery** beers on although the **Crazy Maisy** sold out very quickly.

The other beers were **Windy Indy** and **Hoppiness**. All told, there were, during the day, there were twenty different beers on show. As soon as one ran out, another came along straight away – unlike a large company whose main beers seem to be ‘Coming Soon’. Never seen Peter behind the bar so much. There was even live music all afternoon in the upstairs function room which added to the enjoyment. Well done everyone.

Congratulations to everyone at the **Thatch** for coming second in the Observer Food Monthly National competition. They also serve **Doom Bar** and, at the moment, **Vale VPA**. A bit on the cold side but still enjoyable.

## WENDOVER

The **Twist@Wendover** in the High Street, (was the **Two Brewers**) is now called **Wendover Point**. Still has two handpumps which have featured **Rebellion** ales and now **Chiltern Brewery** are delighted to be supplying **Chiltern Ale** to the newly opened pub.

## WINSLOW

The tenth **Winslow Beer Festival**, run by Winslow Lions, will be held at the Public Hall, Elmfields Gate, Winslow, Bucks. MK18 3JA on Friday 20th and Saturday 21st of March. More next issue.

## WOOBURN COMMON

The **Royal Standard** are offering **Rebellion** Roasted Nuts throughout the winter. Other strong beers in December will be **Windsor & Eton Magna Carta** (7.2%), **Dark Star** Critical Mass (7.4%) and **Imperial Stout** (10.5%).



# George & Dragon, Quainton

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Evening - £25 per head, 3 course + tea/coffee

Sat 20th Dec, 9 – 11.30am – Breakfast with Santa  
£10 per child includes breakfast and present. To book email  
charlnov3@tiscali.co.uk

Sat 20th Dec, 11am Quainton Handbells at the G & D coffee shop + tea room with mince pies and mulled wine.

Sat 27th Dec, 8pm – Darts knockout.

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# LANDMARK VICTORY FOR BEER DRINKERS



There has been an important victory for beer drinkers, pubgoers and licensees as the Government was defeated recently in a Commons vote.

Tim Page, **CAMRA** Chief Executive said after the vote: 'Today's landmark Parliamentary vote helps secure the future of pubs. **CAMRA** is delighted that, after ten years of our campaigning, MPs have today voted to introduce a market rent only option for licensees tied to the large pub companies - a move that will secure the future of the Great British Pub.'

'The Government was defeated by 284 votes to 269 with MPs from all parties voting in favour of a new clause to the Small Business Bill that will empower pubco licensees to choose between a tied agreement and a market rent only agreement that will allow them to buy beer on the open market. Allowing over 13,000 pub tenants tied to the large pub companies the option of buying beer on the open market at competitive prices will help keep pubs open and ensure the cost of a pint to consumers remains affordable. The large pub companies will no longer be able to charge their tenants prices up to 60 pence a pint higher than open market prices.'

'This simple choice should spell the end of pubco licensees being forced out of business through high rents and tied product prices.'

'Thank you to the 8000 **CAMRA** members and campaigners who lobbied their local MP to help make this happen and to those MPs that voted to support pubs. **CAMRA** are now urging the Government to accept the outcome of the vote.'

Gareth Epps, a public affairs coordinator for the Fair Deal for your Local Pub and a **CAMRA** member as well as a Lib Dem activist in Reading added: 'Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. In fact, it's the only thing that does.'

'To paraphrase Margaret Mead, Tuesday's Commons vote to unshackle tied publicans was achieved by the most disparate group of campaigners imaginable. From the Federation of Small Businesses to the licensees' branches of Unite and the GMB, we all got round what had to be quite a big table.'

'But most remarkable of all were the publicans. Being a licensee can be

a lonely business. And they came together in a way never seen before. Social media gives people with common interests the ability to connect: and connect they did. Tenants of the biggest pubcos supporting each other often through disputes that drove them to the brink. In some cases bankruptcy, homelessness and ill-health are the prices paid: that personal edge has been at the heart of the campaign for change.

'All these cases, too, are what drove the vote. MPs know that industry spin about the causes for 31 pub closures a week are just that: when they see the good pubs go, they form their own view. When more and more pubs are being lost to supermarkets without planning permission (Enterprise Inns' figures published yesterday, ironically, show it now leases 22 closed pubs to the likes of Tesco, such as the **Maiden Over** in Earley, Berkshire) they get angrier still.

'The campaign was launched in a pub closed by Enterprise Inns at hours' notice, and reopened as a free house after a community campaign. The launch cost a little over a thousand pounds; the main expenditure. With passion, expertise and not a little skill among our volunteers, who needs staff? We all got motivated by the blatant injustice. When I was elected to West Oxfordshire Council some 14 years ago, my first task was to rehouse a couple turfed out of their local after 30 years by a greedy pubco. Sadly I've seen similar things happen all too often since.'

'There is more to be done: stopping the ridiculous loophole allowing good pubs to become supermarkets without permission is the obvious next step (and **CAMRA**'s Pubs Matter campaign is designed to do just that). The industry backlash has been hysterical and will no doubt spark fresh myths to bust. But for now we can look at the detail, as the Government has said it cannot overrule the will of Parliament. We can thank the eleven coalition organisations including of course **CAMRA**, the inspirational Greg Mulholland, the rock solid Labour support led by Toby Perkins.... and Jo Swinson, who brilliantly handled a difficult debate but without whom there wouldn't have been a Bill at all. Cheers!'





## BRITAIN'S BEER REVOLUTION

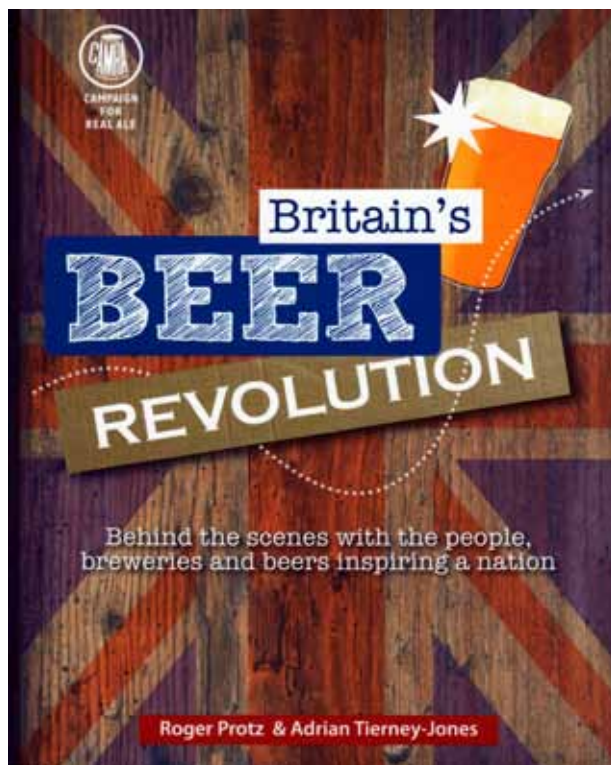
From London sour beers to Scottish whisky stouts – Britain's Beer Revolution is taking place in every corner of the country and is detailed in a book published by **CAMRA** in October.

Gone are the days when British beer drinkers were stuck with the choice of bitter or lager when ordering at the bar, as thanks to a revolution in British brewing over the last decade there are now more different styles of beer being brewed than ever before.

In London you can drink refreshingly tart *Berliner Weisse* such as the **Kernel's London Sour**, in Scotland you'll find strong imperial stouts aged in whisky barrels such as **Harviestoun's Ola Dubh**, and in Yorkshire you can enjoy a pint of super-hopped, citrusy red ale such as *Rapture* by the trail-blazing **Magic Rock Brewery**. The choice and variety of British beers has never been bettered, with all corners of the UK feeling the effects of Britain's Beer Revolution.

To celebrate Britain's thriving beer culture **CAMRA**, have published Britain's Beer Revolution, a contemporary look at the most influential breweries, places and people in the nation's flourishing beer scene – as well as what makes them so special.

'The word revolution is not mere hyperbole. The change is dramatic. Brewers used to be content with producing Mild and Bitter, now drinkers can choose from a vast range of styles that includes the new and highly



popular Golden Ales, beers aged in whisky, Bourbon and Cognac barrels and stunning recreations of India Pale Ale, Porter and Stout. There are also beers made with such exotic and unusual ingredients as chocolate, coffee, herbs and spices -- and more and more beers are being made by women brewers as the ancient craft of 'brewster' is restored.' Roger Protz, Co-Author of Britain's Beer revolution.

Co-authored by award-winning beer writers Roger Protz and Adrian Tierney-Jones, the book includes focuses on brewers - both new and well-established names - beer destinations and beer trends. This really is the most up-to-date snapshot of British brewing available to buy today.

'The great thing about beer in Britain at the moment is the variety, in no small part driven by the growth of real ale breweries. Everywhere you can find local brewers of all shapes and sizes trying new revolutionary things, whether they be new recipes, new production methods, new distribution outlets or new ways of marketing and branding their beers.

It shows real dedication to the brewer's art in the 21st century. Adrian Tierney-Jones added.

Britain's Beer Revolution is available to purchase now through **CAMRA's** website and via all good book shops. Visit [www.camra.org.uk/beerrevolution](http://www.camra.org.uk/beerrevolution) to purchase the book at a special introductory rate of £10 (RRP £14.99) or watch authors Adrian and Roger discuss some of the beers that are featured.

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## HADDENHAM BEER FESTIVALS

There are a lot of beer festivals these days, from small pub ones with half a dozen beers going up to the Great British Beer Festival with over 800. This, of course, is no bad thing but how do you make yours stand out from the crowd and make people come back for more?

In this article, I'm going to assume you know how to run a beer festival and just share a few tips on how to make it more successful. These are things I've picked up during my time helping to organise the **Haddenham Beer Festivals** – the Summerfest being one of, if not the, biggest one-day festival in the country.

You've heard the expression 'location, location, location' – well it's as true for beer festivals as anything else. If you're lucky enough, like Haddenham, to be on main bus and rail routes then you don't have much of a problem but if you're out in the sticks then the best beer festival in the world is going to struggle to reach its full potential.

You may not be able to do much about this so advertising is going to be even more important to you. Get the word out and about as much as possible. Posters and signs have their place of course but also use social media to spread the word. If you have a village or local website write an article and ask them to put it on their site. Consider creating your own website – it's relatively cheap and easy these days – and then use social media to promote it. Explore areas that give free space to non-commercial events such as local radio and free publications – provide them with copy, the less work they have to do the more likely they are to publish your material. And don't forget **Swan Supping** is there to cover all things beery!

Now think about who you want to come to the festival. The typical view of any beer festival is a number of middle-aged blokes sitting round tables, looking at the tasting notes and ticking a few boxes. Ask yourself why that is. Well, actually, don't bother because I'll tell you – the majority of drinkers these days, male and female, are used to more salubrious surroundings. The days of spit and sawdust boozers are gone but many beer festivals still retain that ambience. So think about how you can make your venue more attractive and comfortable to your customers – a bit of decoration and clever lighting can do wonders for a bland village hall. Even go as far as looking at using a marquee – it's surprising how much more inviting a well appointed marquee can be as opposed to a brightly lit, echoing, hall. Look at how you can make the festival more family friendly by putting in children's activities – that means mum and dad can both come and if the kids are happy the parents are too.

Food offerings can be a make or break point for any festival. We invariably get the munchies after a few beers (well, I do!) and a bit of decent grub goes down well. Most festivals will have a barbecue with a long queue but there are plenty of mobile food outlets offering top quality nosh varying from

fish & chips through burgers & pies to pizzas and more exotic vegetarian creations. A variety of food makes your festival stand out and all you have to do is book them – no cooking involved!

Beer! It's a Beer Festival so you've got to have beer. And cider. But what else? Well, how about good wine. You've gone to great lengths to get quality beers and ciders then just nip to Asda for a few '3 for a tenner' bottles of wine. Why not look at sourcing some good quality wine instead? Speak to some wholesalers and ask what they can do for you and rather than sticking to the usual canned fizz look at providing more unusual soft drinks such as traditional lemonade, ginger beer and so on. Tea & coffee from a mobile coffee van will be vastly superior to anything you can supply yourself – and it's hassle free! Think about providing some low/non-alcoholic beverages too. We've come quite a way since the ghastly **Kaliber** and some of the non-alcoholic drinks, ciders in particular, are very pleasant and will make non-drinkers and drivers feel included.

Finally, always be ready to adapt and change. Don't be afraid to try something new but also learn by your mistakes. Ask your helpers for their opinions on what they think could be improved and listen to your customers. They will spot things that you, as an organiser, miss. Don't be offended by criticism – just take it on board and learn from it. After all your hard work just remember people are far more likely to criticise than praise.

Of course, there are hundreds of things to be considered when organizing a beer festival and I've only touched on very few here but they are the things we, at the Haddenham festivals, have found to be the most important to, and talked about, by our customers. Above all, make sure your festivals are fun for all concerned.

**Pete Summerskill**





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<p><b>WINTERFEST</b></p> <p><b>Thursday 18th December (19.00-23.00), Friday 19th (11.00-23.00),          Saturday 20th (11.00-00.00), Sunday 21st (11.00-20.00)</b></p> <p><b>REAL CIDER 14 REAL ALES CRAFT LAGER</b></p> <p><b>Station Approach, Marlow, Buckinghamshire SL7 1NT</b></p> <p><b>Tel: 01628 486659      <a href="http://www.RBLMARLOW.CO.UK">www.RBLMARLOW.CO.UK</a></b></p> <p><b>LOCATED 50 METRES FROM BRITISH RAIL TRAIN STATION MARLOW</b></p>		

## BERMONDSEY BEER MILE



The Bermondsey Beer Mile is a popular crawl to some of London's hippest new breweries. It's an interesting view of craft-brewing life in London today - still joyfully in a state of independence and not overtly commercial. How things will develop in the coming years is anyone's guess - but this is a tour worth doing sooner rather than later... before the informal charm is polished away.

The breweries all set up temporary bars and trestle tables on Saturdays for you to enjoy their draught craft-keg or bottled beers. The breweries are built into railway arches with paved yards to the front. Mostly the beers are strong IPAs, hefty stouts and porters or whacky Saisons and experimental brews -

didn't see a session bitter all day. There were quite a few 'table IPAs' under 3% available too - surprisingly tasty. The beers on draught were sold in 2/3 pint glasses.

The trestle tables, working brewery surroundings and slightly ramshackle feel all make for a very sociable day - we found all the other beer tourists very friendly (especially as you will generally be trailing each other all day) and every stop would be a babble of chatter among similar minded beery folk.

The tour is made up of seven breweries and one bar, and for ease I would suggest starting at the furthest point and working your way back towards central London. The breweries are generally open from 11am to about 5pm on Saturdays - except **Kernel** which closes at 2pm. This makes things a little tricky as they are the mid point. So if you realistically want to do the whole set you'll need to start early.

To start the tour head for London Bridge station and the overland 'Southern' trains. You need platform 14 and the train to South Bermondsey. The train journey is just 5 minutes and they run every 15 minutes.

Leave South Bermondsey station and head for **Fourpure Brewery** Unit 22, Bermondsey Trading Estate, SE16 3LL - 0.3 miles away. Walk out of the station and down towards the right, Rotherhithe New Road and after around 500m on the right you will see Bermondsey Trading Estate and Screw-Fix. Walk through the estate following the road and back under the railway arches, the brewery will be right ahead of you.



**Fourpure Brewery** is probably my personal favourite; it's a professional looking set-up and one of the largest. They purchased the 20-barrel kit from Purity Brewing. Their beers are all sold in keg or can - yes cans! Cans may have a reputation for holding the most awful of beers and to many should only be used by louts and tramps - but honestly - give it a try and you will be very pleasantly surprised.

Next head to **Partizan Brewery** - 8 Almond Road, SE16 3LR - 0.4 miles. Walk out of the trading estate and turn left back the way you came. Then take the next major right up Galleywall Road. At the end of the road turn right and then immediately right down Almond Road. Partizan is in an arch on the left around 300m down the lane.

**Partizan** is rather different to the orderly **Fourpure**, seating is outside on pallet stacks and a temporary bar is placed in front of the brewkit. The brewery itself is amazingly squashed into a fairly small railway arch, the six-barrel plant came from **Kernel**. The beers are all one-off specials and they use more unusual ingredients.

After **Partizan** go on to **Kernel Brewery**, Arch 11, Dockley Road, SE16 3SE. This is 0.7 miles away and will take around 15 minutes. Return to the top of Almond Road and turn left, then carry on until you turn right down Blue Anchor Lane, then cross St James Rd, with the railway on your right, go down Lucy Road and Kernel will be on the right.

**Kernel** is the original and set the mould for this south London 'new-wave' of breweries. They are the one everyone wants to copy and they also started



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this Saturday-at-the-brewery trend. There is a huge range of beers on tap and bottle. Right next door is a bakery and cheese maker and several people were in the brewery enjoying their bread and cheese lunch with beer.

Next up is **Brew By Numbers** - 79 Enid Street, SE16 3RA. This is around 0.5 miles away. With the railway on your right, turn right down Rouel Road. Left then right, this turns into Enid Street and **Brew By Numbers** is on the right.

**Brew by Numbers** (pictured right) - again quite a lot of equipment and stock all piled into a railway arch and the temporary bar area opens out on to the yard in front. A fine selection of beers all number coded by style / recipe - now who would number their beers? Silly idea!

Lunch Time! There is an artisan street market selling all kinds of cracking food called the Maltby Street Market. Leave **Brew by Numbers** along the railway arches until you reach Abbey Street and turn left then first right down Gelding Place. The market is in this area. There are lots of street traders along here and plenty of places to enjoy a hearty lunch (if a little pricey)

Next up is **Anspach & Hobday & Bullfinch** - 118 Druid Street, SE1 2HH. (Two breweries in one) 5 minute walk, 0.3 miles. Walk to the top of the market street with the arches on your left, then turn left down Millstream Road and back under the arches. Turn right onto Druid Street and Anspach is on the right hand side.

The two breweries (one of which is pictured below) here offer some indoor seating and a fairly wide range of beers.

Next door is the **Bottle Shop** - this is worth a visit as it fits in with the character of the day and is both an informal shop with a range of bottled beers and a bar with seating on a mezzanine area under the railway arches. We enjoyed an excellent tasting session with **Weird-Beard Brewery** who were doing a meet-the-brewer night.

Also in the same arches is the newest of the breweries in our crawl: **Southwark Brewery** - newest and yet the only one of the group to make their beers for cask. The brewery was only a week or two old when I visited and we had a very interesting chat with the guys there talking through their set up.

By this time it was early evening and the last visit of the day is very close to Tower Bridge - the **Dean Swift** pub - this is tucked away in a side street under the once mighty **Courage Anchor Brewery**.



Thanks to **North Oxon CAMRA** and John from **Turpin Brewery**.

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## MEMORIES OF THE FESTIVAL!



1. Simon Morgan from the *Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity* obviously not enjoying the hard task of checking the beer is in fine form.

2. An early casualty as the Champion Beer of Britain, *Boltmaker* from *Timothy Taylor* brewery sells out. A sad sight for the punters, but a welcome one for the charity.



3. Branch Chairman and one of the organisers of the festival, Alexander Wright, enjoying a beer with local councillor, Allison Harrison, and Aylesbury MP David Lidington.

4. Red labels on the barrels show that these are the strongest beers at the festival. Always popular, always delicious.

Roll on next year!

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# GREAT SUCCESS FOR AYLESBURY BEER FESTIVAL!

I have been managing the bar at the Vale of Aylesbury Beer festival for a number of years now. If you have not been, it is held in the sports hall at the Bucks County Council sports and social club, just opposite Aylesbury ambulance station.

Organising the festival is one of the highlights of my year, despite the many hours that I, and the rest of the team put in. As you may know, the Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity and *Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe CAMRA* have been organising the festival for over 20 years now. The hospice, celebrating their 25th year, are primarily responsible for the festival, doing the bulk of the organisation and marketing, leaving *CAMRA* the very pleasant (but time-consuming) job of organising the beer, and volunteering to man the bar.

I was rather late starting the organisation this year, but we are blessed with local breweries, and the most difficult part of the organisation is making a choice! With over 400 beers to choose from, sourced from the local breweries and other small breweries they do business with, not to mention the drinks distributor, *Dayla*, it is often difficult to choose.

My aim is always to get a range of strengths and tastes, this year from the 3.4% *Three Tuns Mild*, to the 8.5% *Chiltern Bodgers Barley Wine*. It is harder than you might think!

The Hospice Charity were also hard at work, arranging for the hire of the



hall, food, sponsorship for the beers, glasses, tickets and publicity. The festival is the result of a lot of hard work and volunteer time.

The beers were delivered on the Wednesday before the festival, and after a struggle getting them into their correct positions on the stillage, they were left to sit for a few hours before tapping. It is very important to allow real ale to settle, as when it is delivered, there is lots of yeast floating around the barrel. It is this yeast that provides the cask conditioning that is an important part of the real ale brewing process, and distinguishes it from keg bitters and lagers. Once a barrel is placed on the stillage and chocked in position, the yeast begins to settle to the bottom of the barrel. Any movement will then stir it up; this is why you can't move a barrel once you have started to serve.

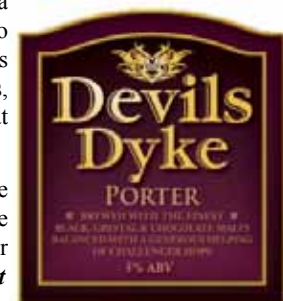
The festival opened at 6pm on Friday, with an expectant queue of drinkers. Friday evening is always a great time to visit, as the beers are all in tiptop condition, and there's no chance of anything running out. We had a good early crowd, though while it remained busy all evening, a few more people would have been nice.

A large dent was made in the stocks on Friday, and I was looking forward to another successful day on Saturday. The festival opened at 11am, and again, we soon had a steady stream of visitors. As well as the beer, we also had a number of ciders and perry, including the local *Radnage cider*.

Saturday at the festival is generally less rushed, with drinkers staying to sample extensively. Unlike last year, we had a good number of staff, so there was never a wait for your drink. If you would like to help next year, please get in touch!

The festival closed with some beer remaining, which is always a little disappointing. If you did not come this year, please consider putting it in your calendar for next year! There is an excellent bus service from Aylesbury and High Wycombe bus stations; you really have no excuse! We did, however, raise £5,400 for the hospice, a substantial increase on last year. I'd like to thank all the volunteers that help make this festival happen, as well as all the attendees, who gave so generously, in return for a great pint or two!

Finally, it's my pleasure to announce that the beer of the festival by narrow popular vote was: *Downlands Devils Dyke*, a 5% porter from West Sussex. *Alexander Wright*





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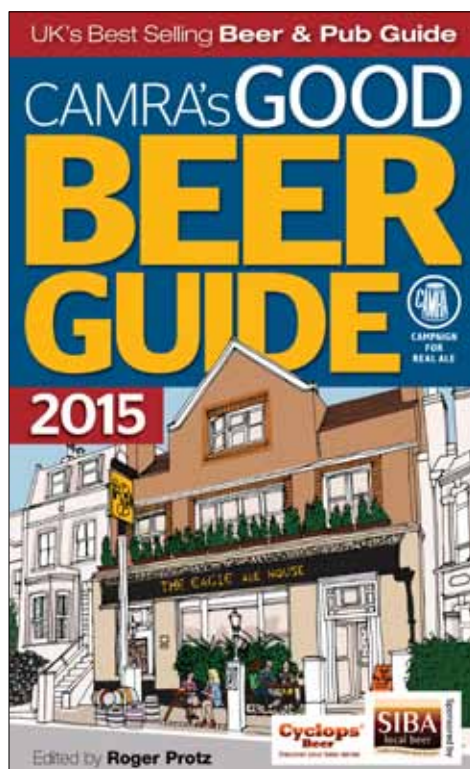


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# BEER SCORING AND THE GOOD BEER GUIDE



Beer Scoring is an important part of how **CAMRA** identifies the very best pubs around the country for inclusion in the *Good Beer Guide*. 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 our readers!

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.

Since my last report, the total number of scores for the year has gone up to 127 members making 4,034 visits to 242 pubs, a 9% increase in visits since the last issue! A further five pubs have now received greater than five scores, well done!

If you are a **CAMRA** member, please score your beer! All you need to do is go to [whatpub.com](http://whatpub.com), log in using your **CAMRA** membership number.

Simply search for the pub in which you drank the beer, and score from 0.5 to 5 where 0.5 is undrinkable and 5 is perfect. Basically, 0.5-1.5 are not beers you would want to drink, 2-3.5 are good beers, and 4-5 are great beers. You can find an article on beer scoring on the branch website: [swansupping.org.uk](http://swansupping.org.uk).

Alternatively, email your score, pub name date of visit and **CAMRA** number to [scores@swansupping.org.uk](mailto: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](mailto:editor@swansupping.org.uk), phone me on 07970 633952, or write to us using the address in the back of this magazine.

0	No cask ale available.
0.5	Vinegar, thick sludge — undrinkable!
1	Beer that is barely drinkable. You'll probably not bother.
1.5	Drinkable with considerable resentment.
2	Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.
2.5	Slightly better than a 2, but nothing you'd come back for
3	Good beer in good form. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again.
3.5	A great pint, you may cancel plans to move to the next pub.
4	Excellent beer in excellent condition. You'll be in this pub for a while
4.5	Cancel the rest of the evening's plans.
5	Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely. Scoring a five would generally be a combination of a particularly great barrel that has been kept and served perfectly.

If you are a publican, please tell us when you are organising an event. We will 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.

**Alexander Wright**  
AV&W Branch Chairman



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## THE FOX & GOAT (RE)OPENS



Craig to run it. In turn Craig has a lively team of youngsters providing courteous and rapid-response service.

This 'Local pub that serves good food' (the pub's mission statement), comprises a bar and an eating area. Real ale is very much to the fore. Initially Craig will be offering *Sharp's Doom Bar*, because it's so popular and 'it flies out', with at least one *Locale* from *XT* and a third guest.

Open only two weeks, and the cellar is shifting nine firkins a week with some serious drinkers in attendance. Space in the new, but rather small cellar, is already at a premium, but is a vast improvement on the previous one that was located in an outhouse. With the 280 bus stop right outdoors, both Wheatley and Thame are but a few minutes away.

We wish this pub a great and long and splendid future.

### Bill Piers

<It may be short notice, but we are holding a branch social at the **Fox & Goat** on Tuesday December 2nd starting at 8pm.

We will be taking advantage of the excellent 280 bus service operated by Arriva, running from Aylesbury to Oxford which goes past the pub, and more importantly, allows us to enjoy a night out without someone having to drive and then restricting their intake.

The pub appears to have been quite similar in condition and position to another of our pubs which has featured many times in *Swan Supping*.

The **Bernard Arms** in Great Kimble has been closed for a long time and requires a lot of work. It is also on a busy road with loads of commuters plus a popular and regular bus route, the 300, which runs from High Wycombe to Aylesbury.

This pub has been deemed unviable and will probably become housing. Perhaps a visit to the **Fox & Goat** might cause them to reconsider their actions. However, I wouldn't hold out too much hope! - Ed.>

The **Fox & Goat** in Tiddington is open for business and is buzzing, giving the locals back a local.

After an extensive refurbishment, this 'pub-with-no-future' has, virtually overnight, become the area's thriving local. The general manager is Craig Bennett, who comes on the scene with a raft of experience. He's more than happy with the locals' response and is also attracting passing trade off the busy Thame to Oxford A418, which no doubt will include intrepid Arriva 280 explorers.

The pub was rescued by a local farming family who had watched it deteriorate from an attractive pub to a failing Indian Restaurant to a rat-infested site destined for demolition. A six-figure sum has been invested, the farmer rapidly expelling the rats. The floor of the eating area has been lowered by around a head's height to provide headroom beneath the original oak beams - after all this was a sheep-drovers' inn called the **Three Goats Heads** in 1745. Rather than try and run the pub themselves, local pub company **Oak Taverns** of Thame have taken it on and installed

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# LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

## ABC Brewery

A couple of **Aylesbury Brewhouse's** 'Brewers For A Day' helped dig out the mash tun, weigh out the hops, and transfer the wort for *Mitosis*, their brand new red rye ale. **ABC's** BFAD is the perfect Christmas present for the lady or man in your life that loves beer!

As the nights draw in, beer drinkers may tend to try darker beers such as porters or milds, but have you ever tried a pale stout? *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.



The **ABC Brewery Shop** will be open over the festive period for you to pick up your Christmas beer! There's nothing better than fresh real ale, so drop by the shop behind the **Hop Pole** and book your beer for Christmas and New Year!

## Chiltern Brewery

**Chiltern** are offering a trio of winter bottled beers. First in this trio is the limited edition bottle-conditioned *Black Chocolate Stout* (9.5%), which has proved very popular. A sumptuously smooth Imperial stout, aged for 18 months and brewed with a special blend of 100% British roasted malts, including chocolate malt, it is deep and velvety and the perfect accompaniment to the festive season.

Second is *Glad Tidings* bottled winter stout (4.6%) which made a welcome return at the end of last October. This is their award-winning black sweet stout with a unique style and flavour, perfect as a winter warmer, which featured in beer writer Jeff Evans' World Top Ten Christmas Beers in 2011.

WWI commemorative beer, *Flanders Pale Ale* (6.2%), brewed with Roger Protz, makes the third in the trio, ideal for Christmas gifts or just as warming drinks. As a tribute to the style of beer made for the troops and as an historical 'first' for them, they have used hops from Poperinge in Flanders and Vienna malt to create a subtle burnt toffee flavour with a smooth palate and a well balanced hop note.



The winter draught, *Foxstrot* (3.9%), is still on tap in December. Displaying an exceptional balance of premium malt and choice English hops, this limited edition ale is dark and irresistibly smooth; complex and 'cunningly' tasty! They also have their ever



popular *300's Old Ale*, which is also being served from at their brewery tap, the **Farmer's Bar**, at the **King's Head**.

They are also launching newly designed 18 and 36 pint beer boxes in time for Christmas parties and gatherings. These have been designed using their new branding and aim to look stylish adorning any table!

Their trio of winter beers are available online at [www.chilternbrewery.co.uk](http://www.chilternbrewery.co.uk) or in the brewery shop in Terrick. In both places you will find an appealing range of Christmas gift ideas, including foods made with the beers, and bottled beer presentation packs with branded glasses.

Finally, do look out from January onwards for 2015's exciting series of limited edition and seasonal beers. They will be launching their new beer calendar for 2015 soon when you can expect to find a new permanent beer for the year plus some other exciting additions.

## Malt the Brewery

The brewery celebrated two years of brewing on Sunday 12th October. Over 750 people turned out to enjoy real ales and local food. The event included excursions on a Routemaster bus, Farm Walks to see the pigs and live music. Visitors also enjoyed **Malt Dark Ale** sausages on the BBQ.

Following accreditation of their Real Ale in a Bottle, Malt were awarded the Gold SIBA Regional Winner 2014 for 'Standard Mild Ales'. The same ale was awarded a Gold Star at a blind tasting at the Great Taste Awards 2014. As a SIBA Gold winner Malt Dark Ale will now go through to the national competition in March 2015.



Nick and Jenny, the brewery founders were also invited to the Houses of Parliament to showcase their brand and products to MPs and Parliamentary officials. Nick said, 'It was a great honour to be invited by Cheryl Gillian, the day was truly memorable'.

Their beers were deemed so important that they merited their own armed guard!





# MORE LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

## Rebellion Brewery

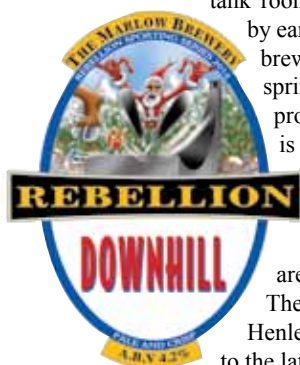
At the Wycombe Partnership Community Champions Awards in September, **Rebellion** won the Business in the Community award. The **Rebellion Brewery** does a lot to support local charities including Wycombe Homeless Connection, Camp Mohawk and Scannappeal.

Winter ales now available: *Roasted Nuts* (November to February), their ever popular strong dark bitter, and the monthly specials for December is *Downhill* (4.2%), a pale and crisp ale.

The new shop has been a success. All the feedback they've had has been positive with an ever expanding selection of new local produce in there along with the beer and wine.

They are planning to have the fermentation tank room fully operational by early 2015, and the new brewhouse installed in the spring. With the final main phase of the project taking place in the early summer, which is the redevelopment of the bright beer tank room, they hope to have most of the work completed by early July.

Christmas plans are in full swing and they are open on the Sunday before Christmas day. They will also be at Marlow, Bourne End and Henley spreading beer samples and Christmas joy to the late night shoppers.



## Tring Brewery

*Death or Glory* takes its name from the regimental motto of the Queen's Royal Lancers and was first brewed back in the early 90's after the idea for the beer was conceived by a previous director of the brewery, Kerr Hill, a former Lancer himself. Ever since, it has traditionally been brewed every year on October 25th to commemorate the anniversary of the Charge of the Light Brigade, when in 1854 the 17th Lancers made their fateful charge into the Valley of Death.

*Death of Glory* has already matured in tanks and along with other beers for the festive season will be available in the shop which will be well stocked with the usual gift packs, bottles, merchandise, vouchers, members packs. They'll be another failed attempt at making the whole place look festive with some tatty tinsel, a beer tin tree and this year...an alternative Christmas soundtrack!

## Vale Brewery

There are three more awards to go up on the wall at the brewery; *Gravitas* won Silver in the Bottled Beer category in the SIBA Society for Independent Breweries' Midlands Region Beer Competition 2014, with *Black Swan Mild* winning Bronze at the same competition in the Mild Ales category! The third award came from, possibly, the UK's most southerly beer festival; the keen drinkers at Falmouth Beer Festival voted *Black Swan Mild* Session Ale of the Festival! Both award winning beers are available all year round from the brewery in bottles, minipins, polypins and firkins.

Amongst the absolute horrors of World War I, stories of hope and friendship will survive. *St Yvon*, the *Vale* December beer, pays tribute to the Christmas Day football match between English and German soldiers, played on the St Yvon battlefield in Flanders fields. We're sure you've already seen the Sainsbury's Christmas advert (other supermarkets are available), *Vale* came up with the idea back in July, and we all know that imitation is the



sincerest form of flattery! *St Yvon* is a deep red ale brewed with English and German hops at 4.2%, with hints of rich ripe red berries and soft bitter finish.

And while we're on the 'C' word, you'll be pleased to hear *Vale* have brewed and bottled *Good King Senseless* (5.2%), their full bodied, deep ruby winter ale, with hints of red berries, chocolate, and malt bitterness. It's available in bottles and draught from the brewery shop in Brill, and in bottle from the **ABC Shop** behind the **Hop Pole**!

The brewery shop in Brill will be open every day over Christmas and New Year, apart from Sundays, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Year's Day.



## XT Brewery

During October, *XT* have been commissioning new brewing equipment to increase capacity and meet the growing demand for their beers. The new kit is now on stream and the brewery is certainly looking very full these days!

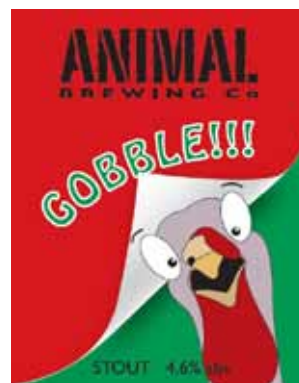


The change in seasons has brought the opportunity to brew some darker beers and *XT* have made some winter specials:

The *NINE* is a black ale brewed with an eclectic mix of roasted malts and generous additions of American hops, this beer is available for December, along with the Christmas special, *XT-25*. The 25 is a chestnut ale brewed in the German Altbier tradition - slow brewed at a much cooler

temperature than usual to give a smoother character. It takes about three times longer to make compared with a regular ale.

The *Animal* range is joined by a seasonal beer, *Gobble!* This is a stout brewed with roasted cocoa beans and orange peel to give a rich coffee orange edge to a satisfying traditional stout recipe.



The Poppy Appeal beer *Lest we Forget* has been a great success again and *XT* hopes to make another significant donation to the British Legion this year.

The next open day at the brewery is on Saturday 6th December, giving you a chance to sample all the seasonal specials, and the next members only social night is Thursday 4th where club members can also enjoy some one-off beers.







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## GRAVEDIGGERS - PART THIRTY-TWO

One November lunchtime a bedraggled, long-haired Irishman shambled into the **Gravediggers** bar.

‘A pint of f\*\*\*\*\* **Guinness** please,’ the Irishman said.

James assumed that the man was a distant relative of one of the locals. He was certainly rude and scruffy enough to fit the bill.

‘We don’t sell over-commercialised brews like **Guinness**, I’m afraid,’ James said.

‘Just give me the f\*\*\*\*\* **Guinness**,’ the man insisted.

‘We have our own **Gravediggers** stout on tap – *Bull’s Bladder* – made with real ox blood.’

‘Fine, f\*\*\*\*\* fine,’ the man said and pulled a top-of-the-range mobile phone from his pocket.

James noticed that the locals in the bar were all staring at the Irishman while scratching their heads and stroking their chins – as if he was somehow familiar. But he realised from the expensive watch on the Irishman’s wrist and the fast car outside that this was no relative of theirs.

Mazz appeared in the bar and pulled James aside. ‘What’s Nob Soldoff doing in the pub?’ she said, excited. ‘You know, that ex-punk rocker who organised all those charity records and concerts years ago.’

‘Damn, I should have realised from the swearing,’ James said.

Mazz approached Nob reverentially. ‘Not often we get celebrities like you in our out-of-the-way little pub,’ she simpered.

‘You’s might be seeing a whole f\*\*\*\*\* lot more of some more spoilt, rich f\*\*\*\*\*,’ Nob replied. ‘I’m looking for some s\*\*\* hole in the a\*\*\* end of nowhere where no f\*\*\*\*\* press will ever discover that we’re recording the biggest f\*\*\*\*\* Christmas charity single ever. Have you’s got a big barn or something where we can set up our mobile recording studio in secret?’

‘If you can work around the equipment in the brewery, we might have just the perfect place for you,’ Mazz replied.

\*\*\*\*

A couple of days later Nob and his team of recording engineers had transformed the **Diggers** brewery into a recording studio fit for the cream of British musical talent. As is rock stars’ habit, the Christmas charity single session was due to start at ten at night and continue until sunrise the following day. A fleet of limousines ferried the megastars from their private jets at the airport to a private luxury spa resort that nestled incongruously in the next valley to the **Gravediggers**. From there they were smuggled through the barbed wire and guards in a deluxe trailer camouflaged as Old Moses’s muckspreader. The only exception was Nob’s fellow Irish star, Bonzo, who said he’d walk to the **Diggers** along the local river.

On arrival the celebrities were secretly deposited in the **Gravediggers** bar, which acted as a green room (authentically decorated with rotting silage) while each singer waited to lay down their vocals on the track. James and Mazz laid on refreshments from the **Gravediggers** range of beers, which they rebranded as craft ales, much to the approval of the trend-setting stars.

Kate Hush, the reclusive singer-songwriter, sipped on a half-pint of *Undescended Gonad*. Nob had managed to coax her away from the retirement cave beneath the Himalayas from where hadn’t emerged in the last thirty years.

‘Wow! It’s unbelievable,’ Kate said, savouring the taste of the brew. ‘I can really taste those authentic countryside flavours – is that really weasel cheese?’ She left for her session in the studio pirouetting in a long dress and muttering something about being inspired to do some shows.

James handed Rich Keefards, guitarist with the wrinkliest band in the world The Extracted Gallstones, his fifteenth pint of *Fit Shaced*.



‘Man,’ Rich drawled. ‘I’ve done every imaginable drug and drunk every type of hard liquor in the history of the world but this is the most mind-blowing s\*\*\* I’ve ever had in my life.’ He stared out into the space from his bar stool with the vacant grin of a man who’d found what he’d been looking for all his lifetime. ‘I’m going to ask the band to reform for a tour where we’ll charge the punters five thousand pounds a seat so I can install a pipeline to pump this stuff from here to my condo in L.A.’

For local colour a few select locals were allowed into the bar on the condition they were so sozzled and cross-eyed that they wouldn’t be able to recognise any of the celebrities.

James was worried that Nob’s plans might not be going quite so swimmingly when Lady Baa-Baa went missing after downing two pints of *Septic Fleabite* and was found in the adjoining field by Old Moses trying to exchange fleeces with one of his sheep.

Events took a more serious turn when PC Thicke, the local bobby, popped in for his regular pint of *Deadly Lethal Ammonium Nitrate Head Exploder* around one in the

morning. Unlike most of his senior command, PC Thicke wasn’t a follower of teenage boy-bands and didn’t recognise the members of the latest sensation, Lost Direction, as they downed pints of *Toxic Sludge*.

‘You’re nicked, sonny my lads,’ PC Thicke declared as he bundled all the members of Lost Direction into his van, insisting that they were fourteen at the oldest.

Nob emerged bleary eyed and stubble-faced into the bar at four in the morning. ‘Right, we’re ready to record the f\*\*\*\*\* happy-clappy, sing-along chorus.’

He was greeting by the sound of snoring as every celebrity singer had collapsed unconscious onto the **Gravediggers** floor. U.S. country megastar Saylor Twift’s high heels had set fast into the filthy, sticky mess on the **Gravediggers** floor, along with Kate Hush’s long, now green, hair.

‘Wake up, you bunch of f\*\*\*\*\* f\*\*\*\*\*!’ Nob yelled. ‘We’ve got to have this out for download by tomorrow morning. We need some f\*\*\*\*\* singers.’

‘Well, we have a few regulars whose karaoke sessions don’t shatter the windows,’ Mazz suggested to Nob.

‘As well as some that do,’ James added.

‘I’m rounding ‘em up. I’m f\*\*\*\*\* desperate,’ Nob said, kicking Old Pete, Old Joe, Old Moses and Young Duwayne out of their semi-comatose stupors.

The regulars staggered into the brewery, spluttering and grunting their way through the song’s lyrics.

\*\*\*\*

Two days later James and Mazz intently watched the BBC One *Wrong Show* as presenter Adrian Snivells dared to venture his opinion to Nob Soldoff that the new megastar charity single wasn’t actually very good.

‘What do you mean it sounds more like a strangled cat than Saylor Twift? The girl’s just been on a f\*\*\*\*\* tour for the last five years...yeah I’m sure Kate Hush had laryngitis...and Lost Direction, well their f\*\*\*\*\* voices finally broke.’

Nob produced a bottle from his baggy jacket and smacked Adrian Snivells over the head for his impertinence and then winked at the camera. James and Mazz recognised the reinforced bottle specially designed for *Fit Shaced*.

‘I don’t care if it’s f\*\*\*\*\* crap,’ Nob held his stomach. ‘I’ll tell yer, what those celebs endured to make this record was worse than any Aussie f\*\*\*\*\* jungle. Just give us your money.’

Charlie Mackle

## Branch Diary

*Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!*

### December

#### Tuesday 2nd REOPENED PUB SOCIAL

8.30pm, Fox and Goat, Tiddington

#### Friday 5th WINTER WARMER SOCIAL

8.00pm Old Millwrights Arms, Aylesbury

#### Monday 8th BRANCH MEETING

8.00pm Hop Pole, Aylesbury

#### Saturday 13th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

12 noon, Haddenham Winterfest, Haddenham, Banks Park HP17 8EE

#### Monday 15th BRANCH CHRISTMAS DINNER

7.30pm, White Hart, Aylesbury (bookings and meal choice to Mike Clarke/branch contact by 8th December please).

#### Friday 19th AYLESBURY CHRISTMAS CRAWL

Starts 7.00pm Hop Pole, Bicester Road.

#### Wednesday 24th CHRISTMAS EVE SOCIAL

12 noon King's Head, Aylesbury.

### January

#### Saturday 3rd 280 BUS PUB CRAWL

Start 1pm St. Aldates Tavern, Oxford, followed by more Oxford pubs and then a number of stops on the 280 bus back to Aylesbury via Thame.

Haddenham and other exciting destinations (exact times to be finalised nearer the time when a reliably up-to-date bus timetable is available).

#### Monday 12th BRANCH MEETING

8.00pm, Belle Vue, High Wycombe.

#### Thursday 22nd HIGH WYCOMBE CRAWL

Starts 7.00pm Bootleggers, 7.45pm Hobgoblin, 8.30pm Falcon.

#### Wednesday 28th WENDOVER CRAWL

Starts 7.30pm Shoulder of Mutton, then 8.00pm King and Queen, 8.30pm White Swan, 9.00pm Red Lion, 9.30pm George and Dragon, 10.00pm Pack Horse.

### February

#### Monday 2nd BRANCH MEETING AND GBG SELECTION

8.00pm Cross Keys, Thame (venue tbc)

**Further details can be found on our website**

**[www.swansupping.org.uk](http://www.swansupping.org.uk)**

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# Swan Supping

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

Circulation **6000** copies.

Edited by David Roe

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Tel : 01296 484551 E-Mail : [editor@swansupping.org.uk](mailto:editor@swansupping.org.uk)

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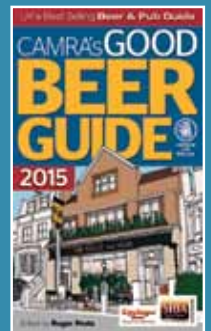
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