

**FREE**

# Swan Supping



Issue 117

Dec 2016/Jan 2017



**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**

**The Cross Keys,  
Thame, wins  
Regional Pub of  
the Year Award!  
See Page 5.**

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

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

**Circulation 6000**



# WINTERFEST 2016

## Circa 15 Festive & Enigmatic REAL ALES

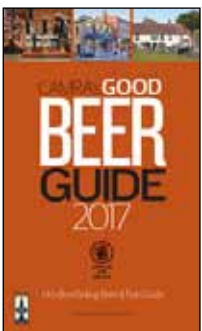
### FESTIVAL OPENING HOURS

Friday 16th December 11.00 ~ 23.00

Saturday 17th December 11.00 ~ 23.00

Sunday 18th December 11.00 ~ 20.00

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## NEWS FROM THE EDITOR



As announced in our last issue, the **Cross Keys** in Thame, which was our **Pub of the Year**, has gone on to be named **Regional Pub of the Year for the Central Southern Region of CAMRA**. Carl Griffin, our previous Chairman and our current Regional Director can be seen awarding the certificate to Peter and Trudi Lambert and further details are given in the article on page 5.

Sadly the **Cross Keys** didn't make the final four in the competition (see below) but to make the list of the top sixteen pubs in the country is a fantastic achievement and is the furthest any of our branch pubs has gone.

Over Friday 2nd and Saturday 3rd of December, Aylesbury is hosting the latest **CAMRA NERDs** meeting when the National Executive (NE) and the Regional Directors (RDs) get together to discuss weighty **CAMRA** matters. Our thanks go to both the **Bricklayers Arms** and the Multi-Cultural Centre where the meetings will be held. It is hoped that after all the hard work at their meetings they will be able to sample some of our fine pubs in the town centre as well as taking advantage of a coach trip we have planned to take them to **XT Brewery** followed by the **Cross Keys** in Thame so they can all see that they must have made a mistake in not voting it as a finalist in the **Pub of the Year** competition, before being dropped off at the **Hop Pole** to have a look at another brewery.

Roger Corbett, a **CAMRA** member emailed me to say 'As it became so contentious I wonder if you might please print an erratum in your next issue

about the Page 3 bottom article 1st paragraph where it is stated that, as usual, the **CBOB** awards were announced during the afternoon of 9th August in the hall of the **GBBF**. This was not the case this year when the Trade Day crowd was denied the announcements which were instead made at an exclusive (paying guests) hotel location in the evening. It caused much dissatisfaction at the Trade Day afternoon as you can imagine.'



Well, I think we just got a bit carried away with the fact that nearby breweries, run by friends of many of our members, had won such prestigious awards. With **Bingham's Brewery** winning Gold for their **Vanilla Stout** and **Tring Brewery** also getting the bronze award for their **Death or Glory**, we can now only hope that one of the many fine breweries we have within our actual branch boundaries can follow suit next year.



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

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all!

David Roe, *Swan Supping* Editor

## NATIONAL CAMRA NEWS

### National Pub of the Year Finalists

Although we are sad that our first ever Regional Pub of the Year, the **Cross Keys** in Thame, didn't make the final four, let's see which pubs did make the cut!

**George & Dragon, Hudswell:** At the heart of the village, this homely multi-roomed country inn has a large beer terrace offering fantastic panoramic views over the Swale Valley. Rescued and refurbished in 2010 after a successful community buyout, it now offers its own library, shop, allotments and various other community facilities, as well as food and drink. Either **Rudgate**



**Ruby Mild** (4.4% ABV) or **Wall's Northallerton Dark** (4.5% ABV) are always available, with other beers mostly from Yorkshire breweries.

**Salutation Inn, Ham:** **CAMRA Branch Pub of the Year** again and former national Pub of the Year 2014, this cracking rural freehouse/ brewpub is within walking distance of the Jenner Museum and Berkeley Castle. The enthusiastic landlord has turned brewer (**Tiley's**), keeping an inspired selection of ales and eight real ciders and perries.



The pub has two cosy bars, a lovely woodburner and a skittles alley/ function room. Food is served lunchtimes and occasional evenings only. Live folk music and piano sing-alongs occur fairly regularly.

**Stanford Arms, Lowestoft:** The spacious open-plan bar has a large array of handpumps serving mainly local beers - it is a rare outlet for **Redwell** brewery. A fine collection of beer trays adorns the walls. To the rear is a courtyard garden with its own wood-fired pizza oven (Friday is pizza night) and a small aviary. A food night is held most Wednesdays (booking required) and a dish of the day is available late Saturday afternoons. Live music features on most Saturday evenings and on Sunday afternoons.



**Swan with Two Necks, Pendleton:** Dating from 1772 as a licensed farm, the pub sits beside the stream in the heart of the village. The landlords have been in charge for 30 years and are renowned for their welcome and hospitality. **National CAMRA Pub of the Year** in 2013, you will find five beers here (including a mild) and a changing cider on the bar. **CAMRA** members receive a discount. Home-cooked, locally sourced food, is served daily; booking is essential at weekends, especially for the Sunday roast.



The **National Club of the Year** finalists include four clubs that share a great commitment to quality real ale:

The **Albatross Club (RAFA)**, Bexhill  
**Dartford Working Men's Club**, Dartford  
**Cheltenham Motor Club**, Cheltenham  
**Leyton Orient FC Supporters Club**



# VALE OF AYLESBURY BEER FESTIVAL



being consumed on Saturday - and the new and exclusive Florence Nightingale Sausage was a big hit, with customers to Kings Farm Shop now making it a special request when buying from Kings Farm Shop itself.

Festival-goers much enjoyed a performance from the Towersey Morris Men, who also did a spontaneous bucket collection and raised £127. The MFU and Milk, performing in the 'Hangout Marquee', added to the party atmosphere.

The festival was opened by David Lidington, MP for Aylesbury, who is pictured right pouring out a pint of one of the many local ales on offer among the record-breaking 32 sponsored beers available. David is being watched by David Roe, one of the **CAMRA** volunteers who helped out at the festival and Emma Carroll from the charity.

The first beer to run out was 22 from the **Dancing Duck** brewery but **Beer of the Festival** was **Bat**

The 2016 Aylesbury Vale Beer Festival entertained and lubricated over 450 people over the two days of the festival. The event made a fantastic £4,100 for the Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity with drinkers on the Saturday buying a record number of pints: 1011 just on that day!

from the **Animal Brewery**. This was a clear winner from the voting sheets provided to all the drinkers. Other beers that showed well were **Guardsman** from **Windsor & Eton** and **Death or Glory** from **Tring**.

The new Sausage Festival was also a sizzling success, with over 200 sausages

Thanks to everyone who attended, and to all the sponsors and suppliers who helped to make it such a great event. See you next year!



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## REGIONAL PUB OF THE YEAR



Since 2009 Peter has opened *Thame Brewery* which was a one-barrel plant at the back of the pub and after learning how to brew (literally from a book) started producing a small range of beer that never seemed to be available for as soon as it appeared on the bar it disappeared again as the locals consumed it so quickly. *XT Brewery* have since gone on to brew some of Peter's recipes but it is now hoped that with a new fermenter which was recently installed, brewing in Thame will become a more regular feature of the pub.

Peter also became Mayor of Thame for a year. There seems to be no end to his talents!

After having won the *Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch Pub of the Year* award (not for the first time) for 2016, the **Cross Keys** has gone on to win the Regional Award for the *Central Southern Region* of **CAMRA**. This meant that it was among the top sixteen pubs in the country. Sadly, it didn't make the last four of the competition, but this is a remarkable feat

The transformation of the **Cross Keys** in Thame is a truly remarkable story.

The pub was thought to be a lost cause after a series of landlords had done their best to make the place work but had found that even exotic dancers could not keep the place open.

So in early 2009, after it had been closed for six months, the **Cross Keys** was taken over by *Oak Taverns*. *Oak Taverns* turned to Peter and Trudi Lambert who had already revived one of their pubs in west London. They were asked to takeover the pub for a month to assess its potential. Peter and Trudi trebled the turnover within a month, then trebled it again and so decided to stay. Thankfully, they are still there!

lost pub to being the first *Regional POTY* for the branch shows that it would be a certainty to win a 'Most Improved Pub' award for the whole country.

Our cover shows Carl Griffin, Regional Director and former Branch Chairman, presenting the certificate to Peter and Trudi in early October and the picture on this page shows some of the many **CAMRA** members and locals who attended the presentation. Just take a look at the hundreds of pumpclips on the ceiling which only represent a fraction of the number of different ales from all over the country that have featured! Long may they continue!

*David Roe*

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## LOCAL NEWS

### ASHENDON

December should be a busy month for pubs and the **Hundred of Ashendon** is no exception. There are a couple of events which will keep them particularly busy: on Thursday 15th December there is the annual Sloe Nouveau when bottles of sloe gin made locally are judged by all present and on Saturday 17th December the annual carols and auction which funds events in the village. Please check with the pub for Christmas and New Year opening hours. Between 2nd and 9th of January the pub will be closed for its normal January break. As always, there will be a good selection of local ales available during the Christmas period with guests from **Rebellion, Chiltern and Tring**.

### ASKETT

After several months work at the **Three Crowns**, the former barn adjoining the small car park has been opened as a second bar. Called the Stable Bar & Gallery (pictured above) it opened in early October. The main building continues as a restaurant and bar with amended opening hours of Tuesday-Saturday 12-2.30 and 6.30 - 9.30pm. Sundays 12-4pm Not open Mondays.

### AYLESBURY

The **Bell** at the bottom of the Market Square has been covered by scaffolding for the past two months as this **J.D. Wetherspoon** pub finally returns to its former glory as a hotel. After nearly a year of work inside the pub this will see the completion of fourteen rooms which will be available from the planned completion date of the 24th of January when the rooms will be on offer at a discounted rate for an initial period. Further renovations to the downstairs part of the **Bell** may mean that the pub will be closed for a short time in the New Year.

The **King's Head** has festive lunches which are being served from 28th November to 13th January from 11.30am - they ask you to book please on 01296 718812 (menu available on website) - there is a new winter menu too, food on Fridays from 5pm to 8pm and look out for their annual Celebration of Porters, Stouts and Dark Ales early in the new year.

Chris Murch celebrated a year at the **Old Millwrights Arms** with a three-day party including a beer festival and lots of music. He was feeling very camera-shy so a picture of Neil Coxhead (who we hope to feature next issue), serving a pint of his own **Hillfire 3C** (below) was snapped instead!

A Christmas Beer and Music Fayre which will run at the **White Swan** from Friday 2nd to Monday 5th December. It is four days featuring twelve real ales, many direct from the barrel, and live music each evening. The price throughout the weekend is £3 a pint and entry to the music events is free.

### BOURNE END

The **Garibaldi** made it into Michelin Eating out in Pubs Guide 2017. The Team are delighted to be included in such a prestigious guide book within their first year. There are over 27k pubs in the country and just over 500 pubs are listed in the book. They also received 100% in a recent **Cask Marque** inspection.

A very welcome addition to the drinking scene in the southern area of our **CAMRA** branch is a new bar in Bourne End which opened its doors on Saturday 19th November. Previously a café and before that, we believe, a hairdresser, the new bar is named **KEG** and is to be found at 12, Oakfield Road, Bourne End SL8 5QN, which is off the Parade main



road. As the local shops and restaurants are there, the new bar will be very handy for all locals and visitors to the village.

The outside signage announces 'Keg Craft Beer Tasting Bar' but fear not real ale drinkers as there is something here for all tastes including cask beers, craft keg beers, bottled beers, wines, gins, pork scratchings, popcorn, growlers for take-home draught beers, and a fine selection of classic pop/rock LP records on the turntable.

**KEG** takes its name from the initials of licensee Kim who is ably supported by partner Carl and their team. On a recent visit the real ales were **Stardust Brewery American Pale** 4.5% and **XT 6** - also 4.5% - which expired to be replaced by **Binghams Brickworks Bitter** 4.2%. **Stardust** is a very new brewery from White Waltham just south of Maidenhead so we believe this is its first outing to our area. Craft keg beers include samples from **Siren, Four Pure, Tiny Rebel, Beavertown, Bavo Pilsner** from Belgium and cider is from **Thistly Cross**.

Opening hours are currently 11am - 8pm Monday to Friday; 11am - 9pm Saturday; 12pm - 6pm Sunday.

### BRYANTS BOTTOM

The owners and publicans of the **Gate** have moved to Dorset but retain ownership and a new management team is in place.

### CADMORE END

No further news on the planning application at the **Old Ship** to provide car parking. It went to appeal in March following initial rejection of the application but no new public information has been forthcoming.

### EMMINGTON

Featured beers in December at the **Inn at Emmington** include **Rebellion IPA** (always available), **Chiltern Foxtrot** and **300s Old Ale, XT 25 Xmas Ale** and whatever **Animal Brewery** invents next! Guests from further afield include **Hopback Summer Lightning** and **Fuller's Bengal Lancer**. Towersey Morris will be performing their Mummers Play at the **Inn** on Friday 16th December at 8.30pm

### HADDENHAM

Liam and Silvie, together with their dog Coco (pictured above), celebrated the

completion of their first year running the **Rising Sun** on Saturday 26th November 2016 with a party-in-the-pub for their ever growing following. To make the celebration really personal and special they brewed their own ale at **XT** called **Coco** with added chocolate flakes.

Barbara is holding the fort at the **Kings Head** while **Punch** continue in their search to find someone to take over. Currently serving **Rebellion IPA** and **Sharps Doom Bar**. Christmas specials will also be available.

At the **Green Dragon, Loddon Hullabaloo, Black Sheep Holy Grail** and **Shipyards Brewing Co American Pale Ale** are set to feature

### HARDWICK

Christmas meals are now available at the **Bell**, £22.95 lunchtime and £27.95 evenings. Booking is recommended for all meals and parties and also for the Christmas Quiz - Tuesday 20th December 8pm.

For details of all Christmas and New Year events phone 01296 640005 or visit [www.thebellathardwick.com](http://www.thebellathardwick.com)

Ales on offer at last visit were **Courage Directors, Vale IPA** and **Youngs Bitter**.

### HIGH WYCOMBE

The **Hour Glass** in Sands has its own beer made for them by **Caledonian Brewery** and named **THG**. Also the pub has an enthusiastic landlord who is doing a lot to boost trade and make this a popular pub.

After some early teething problems, the **Red Squirrel Emporium Shop** has settled in nicely with both regular, and a constant stream of new, customers sampling their range of cask, keg and bottled beers.

On 12th November they held a very successful 'Red Squirrel Day' offering: free 1 litre Growlers (normally £2), core beer range tutored tasting, a meet the brewer Q & A plus tutored pizza and beer pairing.

Cask beers on offer now are two regulars, **London Porter** and **Mr Squirrel Bitter**, plus three guests at the weekend and up to three guests during the week. Two ciders are on offer, one of which is real. These alongside 13 keg and some 200 bottled beers. **London Porter** is proving to be particularly popular.

Over the Christmas period they will be

staying open later until 10:30 pm. Two Xmas ales will be available: *Ebenezer Rouge Cask* ale, an American hopped Dickensian red ale and *Slamdog* a brown wheat beer.

The **Rose & Crown** was the 2016 Regional Winner of *Enterprise Inns* Community Heroes Certificate for outstanding contributions to the local community and has won £1000 to spend on charity events.

The **William Robert Loosley** is now owned by the *Slug & Lettuce* group but will be part of 'Common Room' an alternative brand for the group. It will appear as such from the new year.

## LACEY GREEN

As we were going to press, we have heard the sad news that Nick Smith is leaving the **Whip** in early December. This is a sad loss as Nick has run one of our favourite pubs for a long time and won our *Pub of the Year* competition as well as gaining lots of fans for his wide range of consistently good ales which appealed to regulars and 'tickers' alike. We all wish Nick all the best for the future. Further details will appear in our next issue.

## LONG MARSTON

Toby Davidson from our neighbouring branch has informed us that *Fullers* have finally decided that the **Queens Head** is no longer a 'viable' proposition considering the investment required and are putting the pub on the market. Tim Ayling, the landlord is waiting to hear how much they want for it. There is an ACV on the pub and we await developments!

## MARLOW

The **Duke of Cambridge** in Queens Road has reopened after refurbishment to include new bench-style seating and a sports theme throughout the bar. Food is available to include daily specials and a range of handmade stonebaked pizzas to eat in or to take away. On a recent visit the choice of real ales was *Brakspear Bitter* 3.4%, *Rebellion IPA* 3.7% and *Rebellion Gravity* 4.2% which was their monthly special for November. All signage both outside and inside the pub has been changed to 'The Duke @ Marlow'.

The **Royal British Legion** is holding their *Winterfest* for 2016 from Friday 16th to Sunday 18th of December and will be offering about fifteen festive and 'enigmatic' real ales.

For two months only at the Old Town Hall, the Pop Up Picture House will be screening something for everyone. Tickets include a two course fixed menu cooked by Tom Kerridge's expert team from the **Hand and Flowers**, an interval ice cream treat and a comfy seat to enjoy the movie and the bar will be serving a selection of *Rebellion* beers, plus wines and soft drinks throughout the evening.

## NAPHILL

The mooted purchase of the **Black Lion** has been abandoned and it continues under the existing ownership.

## OVING

The **Black Boy** has continued to feature *Animal* and *XT* ales amongst the ever-changing range of three. At last visit *Ringwood Bitter* accompanied *Animal Flutter* and *XT 4*.

## PRINCES RISBOROUGH

The **Bell** has had a recent facelift, inside and out, and has recently offered some very interesting and unusual ales for the area. Recent *Champion Beer of Britain*, *Boltmaker*, from *Timothy Taylor* was recently spotted on the bar.

There has been a change of licensee at the **Bird in Hand**. Keith and Hannah, who introduced an impressive six handpumps, left the *Greene King* pub at the start of the autumn. However, on a recent visit the new management continue to a wide choice of ales, which, on a recent visit, comprised six *LocAles* (which may be a record in the branch).

## QUANTON

The **George and Dragon** now has a larger public bar floor area, achieved by moving the bar itself back into the servery area. Five ever-changing and mainly local ales continue to be served with more space to enjoy them in.

A Quiz Night will be held on Tuesday 27th December at 7.30pm and a Darts Knockout on Wednesday 28th at 7.30pm. A New Years Eve Party will be held from 8.30pm to 1am with buffet and champagne served at midnight.

## SPEEN

The **King William IV** is still up for sale. We are awaiting news of the Speen Playing Fields Association as it attempts to secure the future of the last pub in the village.

## STEWKLEY

The **Swan** goes from strength to strength since its new incarnation in early September when it was taken over by Rachel Woolley and her partner Ollie Hack. Through their efforts the pub is being rapidly reinstated as the social centre of Stewkley.

A choice of four ales continues and they are consistently well kept. The kitchen has been refurbished and food is available at weekends and increasingly during the week as word gets round. The Sunday roasts have proved very popular already. The pub is both child and pet friendly and has Sky and BT Sport as well as being a WiFi Zone.

Up-and-coming events for December start with Easy Jazz from 4.30 on Sunday 4th. There is a National Christmas Jumper Day on Friday 16th and the Annual Sloe Gin Competition will be held on Sunday 18th. A Christmas Quiz with Raffle will be held on Thursday 22nd in support of the school.

## SYDENHAM

After extensive refurbishment, the **Crown Inn** has reopened with a new look, under new management. Alongside a full seasonal lunch and dinner menu, plus wine list, the pub now offers eight beers and ciders on draught. *Rebellion IPA* and their seasonal beers will be stocked full time, plus there'll be appearances from guest brews from

across the region, including *Loddon, XT* and *Chiltern* breweries. For more details on the pub's transformation and opening times, please visit [www.crownsydenham.com](http://www.crownsydenham.com).

## THAME

The **Birdcage**, a *Bermondsy Pub Co* pub, is at the moment dispensing two beers during the week and three at weekends. On the pumps when last visited were *Deuchars IPA*, the regular beer, *Fullers London Pride* and *Charles Wells Poppy* on the third pump, which will normally have beers from local breweries on. They have just become Cask Marque accredited and they are now giving 10% off real ales to *CAMRA* members, on production of a valid membership card. Starting in January, they hope to do a regular 'meet the brewer' evening. Check social media for details.

The **Cross Keys** unfortunately didn't make it to the last four of the *National Pub of the Year* competition but reaching the last 16 was no mean feat. A successful beer festival was held in November when a *Thame Brewery* beer *The Long Game*, made an appearance. There is another brew on the go and if it comes out as planned it will be a light golden bitter with a strength about 4.2%.

The **Swan** has reduced the number of pumps from five to three as they were just not selling enough. They have on a new beer called *The Swan*, a 3.7% traditional bitter brewed by *Greene King* and on sale for £3.30/pint. Other beers were *Old Speckled Hen* and *Greene King London Glory*. Coming for

the Christmas period will probably be *Fireside by Black Country Ales* (4.5%) and *Rocking Rudolph* from *Hardy & Hanson* (4.5%).

## WENDOVER

The new *Hope Springs Brewery* is a part time operation run by David Elliott using a 25 litre kit. The first beer he created for commercial sale in early October was *Bucks Pale Ale* (5% ABV) available in 330ml bottles.

## WHITCHURCH

Christmas events at the **White Swan** start with the launch of the Christmas Menu on 1st December. There is Christmas Bingo and a Meat Raffle on Tuesday 13th at 8pm, followed by a Crazy Christmas Jumper Competition and funny gift exchange (Chinese Auction) on Tuesday 20th December.

Karaoke starts at 7pm on Boxing Day and there is a Festive Quiz on the 28th. The New Years Eve Party theme is Diamonds and Tiaras.



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## FOLLOW THE BEAR

George the *Hofmeister* bear has a notorious place in *CAMRA*'s gallery of villains. Readers of a certain age will have fulminated and raged against the furry fellow – seen to be the embodiment of everything that was wrong with the beer industry in the 1980s.

*Hofmeister*, despite its German sounding name, had as much connection with Germany as *Watney's Red Barrel* – one of the few beers that may have matched *Hofmeister* in terms of its quality.

Weighing in at a puny 3.2% ABV and brewed by *Scottish Courage*, *Hofmeister* was viewed as typical of the bastardisation of traditional European beer styles by the then 'big six' brewers in the UK. These beers were produced with cheap, unauthentic ingredients and brewed for speed rather than long maturation (the word 'lager' means 'store' in German), the greedy brewers tried to get their captive tied-house customers to throw eight pints of this session-strength beer down their necks on a Friday night.

Wanting to sell a poor product at premium prices, the brewers relied on clever advertising, although George was hardly Thomas Mann or Nietzsche. Instead, he hung around pubs, playing pool with the lads and chasing scantily clad young ladies on the beach. His wide-boy persona proved very popular, although even in those days of Thatcherite excess, there may have been an element of irony to his public popularity.

Eventually UK-brewed premium lagers, while not wholly authentic but a big improvement on anaemic brews like *Hofmeister*, eclipsed the session-strength brands. *Hofmeister* was retired as a brand in 2003, having passed into the ownership of *Heineken*.



But now the bear is to be resurrected. A consortium of beer entrepreneurs has relaunched the brand, hoping to appeal to contemporary customers' more sophisticated and quality conscious tastes.

And new *Hofmeister* is everything that old *Hofmeister* wasn't.

For a start, it's authentically German – brewed in Bavaria by a family brewery. Not only that, there's guaranteed to be no chemicals in it or adulteration with dodgy ingredients as it's brewed to the famous *Reinheitsgebot*, which forbids anything but barley, water, hops and yeast into the beer.

The beer is a Helles style lager and is a respectable 5% ABV. It's an extremely drinkable brew that would go down well at the Munich *Oktoberfest*.

The new owners have rights to the *Hofmeister* name but the notorious branding and George himself remain the intellectual property of the inheritors of the original owners so we won't be seeing the anthropomorphic bear enjoying a tippale on our TV screens.

Nevertheless, at the launch of the beer in London, George made an unofficial appearance. The original bear costume, dressed in his legendary yellow polyester jacket and trilby hat had been bought by a collector and lurked in the corner of the bar, happy to pose for photos.

The new *Hofmeister* has already attracted considerable press coverage and will be distributed by *Marston's* on a regional basis at first. If you see the name in a pub near you, be comforted that you've not fallen through a time-warp into the bad old days of beer and be assured that this version is all that the old *Hofmeister* should have been.

Mike Clarke

## Hidden Treasure Le De Spencers Arms



The 'Le De' is a little flint pub nestled in the woods at the back of Downley Common, ideally located for winter walks. It has a warm, friendly atmosphere with an open fire, low ceilings and rustic beams. Landlady Sarah serves excellent home-cooked food alongside a great line-up of real ales and wines. The seasonal chill will soon be forgotten.



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



## LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

### Aylesbury Brewhouse Co.

It's been all go at **ABC** with beers coming out left, right, and centre and there's still a load more to come. Throughout the next few months you can expect to find dark, hopped delights alongside pale Germanic styles and massively hopped citrus lovelies.

Whats coming up:

**S\*M\*A\*S\*H** 4.3% Pale and hoppy. Nice and simple this one: Single malt (Maris Otter) and Single hop (Simcoe). Done.



**Inertia** 4.1 % Traditional copper bitter. The resistance to any change in motion. It's always hard to get started but once you're off it gets so much easier. A traditional style beer nothing mad, weird, or over the top just a good old pint of ale.

Δ 4.6%. Heavily hopped IPA. Low colour crystal malts and tons of hops (Citra, Chinook and El Dorado) for those addicted to the latest super hoppy hand-crafted accessory. To satisfy the hardest hop users they're going to be dry-hopping this one too.

**Mutant Ale** 4.7% Dark and hoppy. As part of the Artist's Edition range they are doing at **ABC**, **Mutant Ale** is inspired by artwork from up and coming artist Tom Rees from Herefordshire. How on earth can you have a black IPA? It's in the name, Indian PALE ale. Things mutate and ale is now beer, is now craft this and called blah blah blah now. Dark malts and lots of hops. Call it what you want but it's going to be a good one. £2 of ever cask sold

goes directly to art therapy.



For Christmas, **ABC** are pleased to add to the line up: **Reindeer** 4.6% Red Hoppy Ale and **Lord of Yule** 4.2% Light Copper Seasonal Ale



The **Hop Pole** in Aylesbury is going great with manager Ian, chef Tony and staff really making the pub a great place to eat and drink. The dining area looks into the **ABC** brewhouse where the beer at the bar was made just the other side of the glass. you can't get more locally produced than that. The perfect place for a pre Christmas get together.

### Chiltern Brewery



Tom and George Jenkinson and the **Chiltern Brewery** were 'over the moon' to be voted The Pride of Buckinghamshire and Berkshire Life recently at the magazine's 2016 Food and Drink Awards (pictured left). Tom described the win as 'superb'.

The brewery's Christmas shop in Terrick, now open six days a week, has a

brilliant selection of unique gift ideas including a variety of hampers and even a hamper wrapping service on Friday and Saturdays 10am-4pm up to Christmas. There are beer flights, presentation packs of bottles, beer crates, and lots of food treats to match your favourite ales. If you would like to buy any of the award-winning ales or seasonal specials, look out too for *John Hampden's Golden Harvest Ale* and *Lord-Lieutenant's Cream Porter* making rare appearances on draught. Do pop into the brewery shop. You can call them and arrange to collect too on 01296 613647 to make the run-in to the 'big day' more relaxing – or make any day the 'big day'! No excuse



for not being organised. Bottled beers can be ordered for delivery on the website.

At the close of a great year for accolades, bottled *John Hampden's Golden Harvest Ale* (4.8%) and *Monument Gold Pale Ale* (3.8%) both won Bronze at **SIBA's** Midland Independent Beer Awards 2016 in the Small Pack Premium and Standard Bitters and Pale Ales categories respectively. Bottle-conditioned *Bodger's Barley Wine* (8.5%) was voted a 3 Star Beer by the Beer Awards and permanent draught ale *Chiltern Black* won joint best beer of the festival at the **Local** micropub in Markyate.

Seasonal and limited edition ales were well received across the year offering a good mix of traditional favourites and new beers like the *Colombian Coffee Porter*. The brewery have asked stockists to complete a survey giving feedback on which beers and styles they and their customers would like to see in 2017. An old favourite, dark claret and 'cunningly' tasty *Foxtrot Winter Ale* (3.9%) is the seasonal offering for December together with award-winning draught *300's Old Ale* (4.9%), available until the end of January.

Great news too for coeliacs and those intolerant to gluten who can now enjoy four of the bottled beers. The recipes haven't changed, but they have just been formally certified as gluten-free.

Finally, **Chiltern Brewery** would like to thank everyone who has supported them this year and let them know that they are working hard on another great range for 2017.

### Malt The Brewery

It's been a busy few months over at **Malt The Brewery**. Anyone who has visited their brewery shop recently will no doubt have witnessed the amassing of barrels and bottles that's been taking place in the brewery hall in preparation for Christmas.

**Team Malt** are proud to still hand bottle all their ales, giving you the 'real ale in a bottle' experience and a truly local product. It also means you get a great choice, currently there are nine ales available and with their great 'Pick & Mix' offer you don't even have to decide which one not to have!



**Malt Winter Ale** makes its return at the end of November, with a new recipe for 2016. It should be making an appearance on a bar near you soon. It will also be available as bottled-conditioned ale as soon as the yeast has finished doing its job, hopefully also the end of November.

The brewery shop and tasting bar will be open every day until 7pm in the Christmas week - 19th - 24th December - allowing you extra time to pick up a locally made gift for friends or family or to simply

stock up for yourself!

The brewery will also be repeating the carol singing evening which proved so popular last year. It is being planned for Thursday 15th December. Please check their website nearer the time. [www.maltthebrewery.co.uk](http://www.maltthebrewery.co.uk).

**Malt the Brewery** is partnering with Chilterns Samaritans and Wycombe Cycling Club to support a cycling event on 1st July 2017 from West Wycombe House.

Pick 'n mix from three rides of 25, 50 & 80 miles. Proceeds go to Chilterns Samaritans and as it's the 1st day of the Tour de France, there'll be big screens at the finish showing the day's racing. A **Malt Ales** tent will also provide refreshment and rehydration!

### Rebellion Brewery

The monthly special for December is *Finest Hour* (4.2%) which is described as golden and crisp. *Finest Hour* is a golden pale ale with a crisp hoppy



# MORE LOCAL BREWERY NEWS



finish. The use of Liberty, Motueka, Mosiac and Amarillo hops means this beer is loaded with aromas of tropical and citrus fruit. The vast majority of the hops are being added at the end of the boil. This means they will extract all of the aroma but will keep the bitterness relatively low.

It's one of their most eagerly awaited and most popular beers; *Roasted Nuts* is back in the shop and available now! This winter warmer is deep ruby, complex and flavoursome; packed with intense, distinctive malt and hop character. It will be brewed until February, so there's lots of time to enjoy it.

They are also very pleased to be brewing *Roasted Nuts Extra* this year! The 5.8% bottled version of *Roasted Nuts* will be available in the shop soon, look out for details....



## Tring Brewery

2016 has been a good year for *Tring Brewery* with a number of key awards for their beers including Gold at the *SIBA* National finals for bottled *Pale Four* and *Death or Glory* which took Bronze in the Champion Beer of Britain Awards.



The range of twelve monthly specials produced in 2016 as part of a fundraising project for the de Havilland Aircraft Museum hangar project leads into a new aviation-themed project for 2017 with the brewery, this time, supporting Herts Air Ambulance.

The success of the year has to be the newest addition to the range, *Drop Bar*, a 4.0% pale ale which very early on found itself permanent places in pubs across the region. *Drop Bar* will soon be available from the brewery shop in bottles. The brewery finishes the year on a festive note with *Santa's Little Helper* 4.8% and *Comet* 4.3% which is the last of the de Havilland series and naturally shares its name with one of the Santa's reindeers.



## Vale Brewery

*Vale's* brewery news is brief. Whilst working hard to keep up with demand, they have been working on what's coming next.....and are pleased to offer the following beers to comfort us during the festive season and beyond.

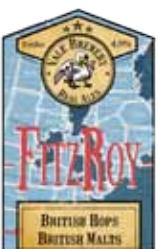
Beers in the pipeline and coming soon include:

*Paradise Lost* (4.0%) golden ale. *Vale* are going against the grain and brewing a golden beer for December. With tropical flavours they aim to offer a taste of summer in the depths of winter.

*Christmas Star* (3.6%). A roasted malty Christmas Ale that is the perfect festive pint.

*Good King Senseless* (5.0%). A classic rich ruby Christmas Ale! Dark, meaty and strong! Traditionally brewed with pale, crystal and chocolate malt and choicest whole cone hops.

And to welcome in the bright lights of 2017 they will be brewing *Fitzroy* for January. Brewed with British hops and British malts at 4.0% ABV.



## XT Brewery

It's been a busy time at *XT* – they have been celebrating their fifth anniversary, picking up awards for the *XPA* from *SIBA* and for the third

year running *Lest We Forget* has successfully raised funds for the British Legion poppy appeal.

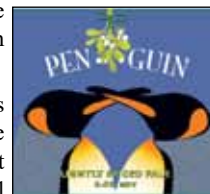
As part of their fifth birthday celebrations the brewery tasting room will be undergoing a makeover, enabling a wider range of beers to be offered for sampling in a more convivial environment.

They have been working on a whole host of new Christmas and winter beers including:

*Animal: Penguin* – for bottle only this is a crisp pale ale, single hopped with New Zealand Motueka then lightly spiced to give a warming seasonal twist.



*Animal: BAA-Humbug* is a White Stout – taking the characteristics of fine stout – roasty coffee flavours, full body, hints of chocolate – but in a pale beer – a new unexpected twist on a traditional style.



*Animal: Meow* – The cat's whiskers: it's a Munich Dunkel - a German style Dark Bier: smooth malty flavour, toasted malt bread flavours and aromas from use of melanoidin-rich Munich malt. Smooth European Nobel Hops add the hop finish.



*XT-Twenty Five* – a super smooth rosy red beer for Christmas - the Alt Bier makes a welcome return for the season – slow brewed and with late hop additions.

There is a very special Imperial Stout maturing slowly in oak casks – which should be ready in the spring for a new range of bottle-conditioned beers.



**Brewery shop open:**  
**Monday to Thursday 9.30-4.30**  
**Friday & Saturday 9.30-6.00**

Take home fresh beer available in 2 litre bottles and 5 litre mini-casks. Also a wide selection of bottled beers and brewery merchandise. Pre-order beer in 36 and 72 pint casks.

Love beer? Come and join our friendly Beer Club (for details see website - [xtbrewing.com](http://xtbrewing.com))

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## GRAVEDIGGERS - PART FORTY-THREE

It was a frosty, dark December night and the atmosphere in the **Gravediggers** was even more morose than usual.

'I'll be glad to see the back of this wretched year,' Mazz said, chipping encrusted phlegm off the rims of the pint glasses.

'It depends if you're a glass half-full or half-empty type of person,' James replied.

'If any of our beer's in the glass then it has to be half-empty every time,' Mazz said. 'At least that way you convince yourself the worst's over already.'

'On the half-empty side, I've been looking at the cost of our imported ingredients in the New Year,' James said. 'Pulverised octopus entrails up fifty per cent, essence of fetid mangrove swamp up shooting through the roof and pickled albatross guano doubling in price.'

'We're certainly going to have to pass that kind of rise on to the customers here,' Mazz said. 'And they're only just about managing.'

'Just about managing to stay alive after drinking our beer?' James suggested.

'So what on earth is the glass half-full scenario,' Mazz asked, despondent.

'The silver lining is the export market! We've never properly seized the opportunity to sell our uniquely flavoured beer across the world – now we can market our premium product at bargain prices.'

'This country's made itself unpopular enough without inflicting our specialities on our continental cousins' Mazz said. 'It could provoke a whole new cold war.'

'We'll mobilise our regulars to be brand ambassadors – use them as authentic symbols of traditional country life on the advertising – like they do with the rednecks they use to sell American whisky,' James replied. 'Get them out on publicity trips abroad. Their rustic charm will go down a storm.'

'There'd be a storm if the pests and diseases lurking in their beards and bodily hair escaped and laid waste to the entire agricultural output of the western world,' Mazz said. 'Us keeping them propping the bar up in here is more effective than any quarantine for biohazards. None have left the village in the last twenty years – who knows what's mutated in their warm, moist areas?'

James tested his idea by showing Old Moses a map of the world on his phone and asking him to name the countries. Old Moses's best guesses were Tellytubbyland and Tuborg. The geography test was interrupted by a loud bang at the door. The locals stared at each other in disbelief.

No one ever arrived at the **Gravediggers** after half-past ten.

James opened the door to find a bedraggled couple, shivering in the cold.

'We'd like a room for the night?' a bearded man asked.

'I'm sorry,' James said. 'All our rooms are booked out to the construction crew exhuming the graveyard for the high speed rail link that's about



to lay waste to the local countryside.'

'They don't look like they're from round these parts,' Old Moses said. 'We should send them on their way.'

'But my wife's about to give birth and there's a ten month waiting list at the maternity unit at the local hospital.' The man pointed to the woman's bulging stomach.

'There might be some room between the tanks in the microbrewery,' Mazz suggested.

\*\*\*\*

James set up a few planks between old beer barrels, lent the couple some empty sacks of fungus-grade malt and left the pair in the cold microbrewery.

Soon gasps and yells could be heard ringing around the fermenting tanks.

'I know that *Elf Ed-Banger Ale* was strong stuff but that's an extreme reaction,' James said, clearing up the mud from the bar floor. 'Serves them right for helping themselves.'

'Men!' Mazz rolled her eyes. 'It's a good thing that *Elf Ed-Banger* kills all known germs as we'll need some disinfectant in there.' She rolled her sleeves up and headed purposefully towards the brewery.

In a few minutes the commotion ceased and the sound of a baby crying rang around the fermenting vessels. Mazz carried a bucket to the brewery door and presented it to James. 'I've solved the problem of that special brew you were planning for Christmas Day – *Placenta Pilsner* will really wash the turkey down.'

Suddenly a rumbling sound came from one of

the tanks and a huge stream of gas blasted through the skylight in the roof.

'Oh no, that methane is going to interact with the mass of electrically charged ions emitted from those dodgy pylons leading to the nuclear power station,' James said just as the gas ignited several thousand feet above the **Gravediggers**. It created an intense burst of light that could be seen from miles around.

Believing that the flash of light heralded a new brew from the **Diggers'** brewery, Old Pete, Old Joe and Old Moses trooped into the brewery bringing along the sheep that they'd been spending the night with.

All were entranced by the newborn baby, wrapped in an old sack of Howitzer Hops, and were intrigued especially by the bright yellow halo that hovered above his head.

'Well, I suppose a sip of *Elf Ed-Banger* has caused much stranger side-effects in the past,' James said.

\*\*\*\*

The family were content to stay in the microbrewery for many days after the birth and the baby contributed to the flavour of several new brews – such as *Happy Nappy Stout* and *Dribble and Vomit IPA*.

A sense of peace and reconciliation filled the pub and the regulars found an idea conversational partner in the new-born child.

Twelve days after the birth a gold-plated limousine pulled up outside the **Gravediggers** and three middle-aged men in knocked on the door of the microbrewery. One had very strange hair, one was stripped to the waist and the other looked remarkably like an electrocuted frog.

'Isn't that Ronald Rump, Vladimir Sputum and their bitter-drinking crony, Nigel Jaginthegarage?' James asked.

'This can't be right. The story says they're meant to be three *wise* men!' Mazz said.

'Let the *Elf Ed-Banger* work its magic,' James said, offering each of them a huge, purple foaming tankard of beer.

Glugging back the beer, each of the men suddenly transformed, their strained faces softening up. Rump bounced the baby on his knee while eagerly consuming the ale. It was almost as if he'd undergone some sort of conversion.

'You know folks, this amazing beer has made me realise there's more to life than being a billionaire and the most powerful man in the world,' Rump announced to his friends. 'I'm going to give all this business and politics up right this second, become a craft brewer and turn my skyscraper into a British pub.'

'Is there any antidote to this beer's effect?' Nigel asked, worried and pulling out a large chequebook.

'No. The effects are completely irreversible,' James replied, grinning.

'2016 isn't turning out to be that bad after all,' Mazz said, giving Rump a top up of *Placenta Pilsner*.

**Charlie Mackle**



## Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

### December

**Saturday 10th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL**  
12.00pm, Haddenham Winterfest

**Friday 16th AYLESBURY CHRISTMAS CRAWL**  
Start 7.00pm Hop Pole then pubs in the centre of town.

**Friday 23rd HIGH WYCOMBE CHRISTMAS CRAWL**  
Start 7.00pm. The Bootlegger, then going on to the Red Squirrel Brew Shop and Heidrun

**Saturday 24th CHRISTMAS EVE SOCIAL**  
12:00pm, King's Head, Aylesbury.

### January

**Monday 9th BRANCH MEETING**  
8:00pm Rising Sun, Haddenham (tbc.- check meetup.com/Facebook/website)

**Thursday 19th PRINCES RISBOROUGH WALKABOUT**  
Starts 7:00pm Bird in Hand, followed by Bell, George & Dragon and the Whiteleaf Cross.

### February

**Tuesday 28th BRANCH AGM**  
7:00pm Royal British Legion, Marlow (tbc)

Further details can be found on our website  
[www.swansupping.org.uk](http://www.swansupping.org.uk), facebook and meetup.com  
CATCH UP DURING BRANCH SOCIALS:-  
PHONE 0792 215 8971



## CHAIRMAN'S THOUGHTS



Firstly may I take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Please remember a pub is not just for Christmas: they need our support all year around. On my rounds delivering *Swan Supping* I am pleased to see the pubs I deliver to thriving, so let's continue to support them all, not just locally, but throughout the UK.

Mentioning the new year I am looking forward to our annual Black Country trip and of course to the *Great British Beer Festival* as well as our many socials we will be arranging which I hope will include a trip to the *Winter Ales Festival* being held in Norwich for the first time.

Congratulations to the three pubs in our branch being Michelin starred for 2017! They are the **Garibaldi** in Bourne End, the **Russell Arms** in Butlers Cross) and the **Pointer** in Brill. As so few pubs were selected nationwide to have three in our branch is very good news.

Please remember we arrange many socials throughout the year and we would love to see you at any of them even if you're in a pub that we are visiting please say hello. Please contact me if you have any suggestions for pubs worth a visit. *CAMRA* members please submit beer scores via WhatPub as this is used for the entries to the *Good Beer Guide*.

Finally it's not too late to go to the *CAMRA* shop where you can buy various books and clothing for those last minute stocking fillers.

*Simon Isted*  
A V & W Branch Chairman



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## Swan Supping

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

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Edited by David Roe

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Copy deadline for next issue (due out 31st January) is 13th January 2017.

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

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01/15

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