

FREE

Swan Supping

Issue 102 June/July 2014



**Dolly celebrates
100 years!
See centre pages**



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

Newsletter of the Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch of CAMRA

www.swansupping.org.uk Circulation 6000

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The 4th Radnage Beer Festival

Saturday 5th July 2014 ~ 1pm - 10pm

Sunday 6th July 2014 ~ 1pm - 9pm

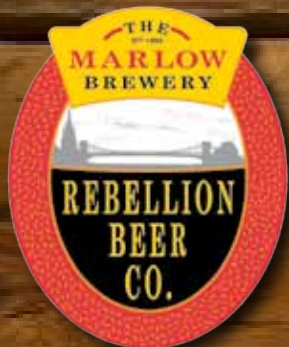
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NEWS FROM THE EDITOR

Summer Events

As you peruse this issue, you will see that there a host of beer festivals to be enjoyed in loads of our favourite pubs.

Although it will be impossible to get to them all especially those that clash on the dates, please support as many as you can - I know I will! Let's just hope that the summer weather doesn't let us down.

Let's also hope that the weather doesn't spoil the best day of the year as we head off to the Black Country again. This wonderful trip only costs £29 for the coach, so don't miss out! Full details on page 13 and contact me to book yourself aboard.



In our last issue, we praised the Chancellor for knocking a penny off the beer duty. I was contacted by someone who signed himself 'Miserly Old Man' who raised the very fair point that this cut had not been passed on to the drinkers, and in a lot of cases the price of a pint has gone up in a lot of pubs. Now, I know that the **Six Bells** in Thame knocked a penny off the price of their pints, but in general rising costs will swallow any benefit the pub can gain from a slight (although very welcome) tax cut. We just have to hope that the rise in prices will be less than it could have been.

One pub that has seen a drop in the price of a pint, even if it is only for **CAMRA** members, is the **Old Millwrights Arms** in Aylesbury. Card carrying members can get fifty pence off each pint of real ale and if you take advantage of their 'Local Brewery Takeover Weekends' like the one recently, pictured above, when **XT Brewery** supplied the beer for all eight handpumps, you can help a local brewery as well!

An Apology

Last issue I gave details of our competition to have a brewing day at the **ABC Brewery** at the **Hop Pole Inn**, Aylesbury. Unfortunately, both the Chairman, Alexander Wright (yes, I'm sharing the apology) and myself have had two very busy (and in my case, difficult) months, so we have been unable to get things organised. This will be rectified as soon as possible and our apologies to our three future brewers.



Sad News

Just as we were going to press we heard the devastating news of the sudden death of Ian Bryenton at the very young age of 32. Ian had worked at CES in Haddenham and came along to branch socials when he could and even did pub surveys for us. We had hoped to see a lot more of him and get to know him even better. We send our heartfelt condolences to Ian's family and his many friends.

Thanks once again to all the people who have given their free time to contribute to the production and circulation of **Swan Supping** and many thanks to Colin Stanford for the cartoon (we ought to organise a whip round to reward him for his splendid efforts).

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

NATIONAL CAMRA NEWS

The tied pubco model is a ticking time bomb the Government must disarm!

CAMRA has mounted renewed pressure on the Government to act now to save Britain's struggling pubs, with a petition delivered to Business Secretary Vince Cable on Wednesday, 14th of May, calling for vital large pub company (pubco) reform.

The petition gained over 30,000 signatures in just five days and surpassed the 42,000 mark ahead of it being delivered to Vince Cable. As well as the delivery of the petition, over 100 campaigners, pub-goers and licensees gathered outside Parliament to rally behind Vince Cable's pledge to end the Great British Pub Scandal.

CAMRA says it is essential that Vince Cable sticks to his guns and makes an announcement in the next few weeks, to allow action before the upcoming General Election.

'It is absolutely vital that the Government disarms the ticking time bomb threatening

the nation's pubs. **CAMRA** is demanding the introduction of a Pubs Watchdog to rule on disputes between licensees and pubcos, plus a guest beer right and a market rent only option for tied licensees. These measures are essential in order to create a level playing field for licensees, ensuring those tied to the large pubcos are no worse off than those that are free of tie.' stated Colin Valentine, **CAMRA**'s National Chairman.

It is now well over twelve months since the Government launched its consultation and

despite several assurances of action, including a recent letter to **CAMRA** from Vince Cable stating that 'We intend very soon to publish the Government response to our pubs consultation and to announce the next steps', the Government has so far failed to make an announcement.

Currently tied licensees must purchase their beer and other products from the pub company at an inflated rate, which is often at least 50% more expensive than the market rate. As a result 57% of tied licensees earn less than £10k a year.

'The reforms **CAMRA** are seeking will enable publicans tied to the large pub companies to make a decent living and invest in their business, protecting thousands of valued pubs and creating a thriving industry. The current model is weighted far too heavily in the favour of the pub company at the expense of the licensee and it is essential the Government acts now to redress the balance, before thousands more people lose their livelihood.' Colin Valentine added.



LOCAL BREWERY NEWS



Chiltern Brewery

Chiltern Brewery, with Roger Protz, started the mash on Wednesday 14th May of *Flanders Pale Ale* to commemorate World War One.

Beer was supplied to British troops fighting in Belgium and France and many Belgian brewers responded to the British support for their independence by adopting the British style known as Pale Ale. A number of Belgian brewers, including *De Koninck*, *Palm* and *Dubuisson*, still brew their interpretations of pale ale.

To mark both this historic beer style and the contribution made by British troops during the war, **Chiltern Brewery** has developed a recipe for a strong, bottle-fermented beer that uses Vienna malt and Belgian hops from Poperinge. The mash, with Roger Protz, editor of the *CAMRA Good Beer*

Guide, helping to stir the grain, was started at 8am. Following fermentation and conditioning, the beer will be bottled and left to age until it's ready for release at the beginning of August 2014. *Flanders Pale Ale* 6.5% vol will be presented in a 375ml champagne style bottle. It will have a subtle burnt toffee flavour, be deep golden in colour with a smooth palate and well balanced single hop note. It will be available from the brewery shop and online at www.chilternbrewery.co.uk and the hope is that some of the limited edition brew will be exported to Flanders for the Belgians to enjoy too!

Malt the Brewery

The brewery is really excited that they have just been given 'Real ale in a bottle' accreditation by **CAMRA**. Malt Ales are all bottled-conditioned meaning that the ale has not been filtered or pasteurised, so yeast continues to slowly ferment remaining sugars in the bottle, then settles to the bottom. Carbonation is totally natural and has been produced during the maturation process. They mature all of their bottles for at least three weeks before releasing them for sale in a temperature controlled bottle maturation room to ensure the ale is at its best.

As with all bottle-conditioned ales, storing your bottles at room temperature or in the larder will help to keep the desired natural carbonation level and the longer you keep them, the better they will get. There's a panel on the bottle label describing how to pour your bottle-conditioned ale, but it is often compared to pouring a vintage port with one gentle pouring action, leaving the yeast in the bottle now it's done its work. For the optimum real ale experience, serve at 11-14 degrees centigrade. Most domestic fridges are set at 4-5 degrees, so chill your ales for a while, but for best results don't leave them in the fridge.



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LOCAL NEWS

ASHENDON

At the **Hundred**, *Locales* are served usually two at a time from *XT*, *Vale* or *Tring* although Matt has decided to give *Malt the Brewer* a go in June. The restaurant is also getting rave reviews from the likes of 'Dirty Stiletto's'.

ASTON CLINTON

The third annual beer festival in Aston Clinton will be held over the weekend starting on Friday 25th to Sunday 27th of July. There will be 36+ beers, six ciders and two perries. Please note that the new venue for the festival is Aston Clinton School on Twitchell Lane.

AYLESBURY

The **Dairymaid** (*Hungry Horse*) has got Kids Go-Karting in their car park on bank holiday Monday 25th August. It is completely free for customers if anybody is looking for something different for their kids to do (it is suitable for ages four to twelve). *Greene King IPA* and at least one guest ale, which changes every week, will be available for non-riders.

At the **Hop Pole** they have completed the refurbishment with new paint and a new floor. Business is going really well with the food being a real crowd pleaser, especially the home cooked Sunday roasts! Ten real ales are always on offer, with traditional ciders and loads of beers from all around the world.

The **Old Millwrights Arms** (OMA) is continuing its series of 'takeover weekends' when six to eight of the handpumps are given over to ales from one local brewery. *Chiltern* will be featured on 6th to 8th June followed by *Rebellion* on 4th to 6th July and *Tring* on 18th to 20th July. Make sure you take along your *CAMRA* membership card and save yourself 50p a pint!

OMA will also be providing ales in Vale Park on June 29th at Jazz in the Park in aid of the Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity.

BLEDLOW RIDGE

The **Boot** is holding their 'Battle of the local Breweries' beer festival on Saturday 12th of July.

BOURNE END

The **Bounty** is holding its annual charity beer and jazz festival over the weekend of 26th/27th of July. Twenty local real ales and twelve real ciders will be available in the marquee.

BUCKINGHAM

A beer festival will be held at the rugby ground on Saturday 19th July with 30+ beers and ciders and perries.

CADMORE END

The **Tree** (formerly the **Blue Flag**) is holding the first Cadmore beer festival on the weekend of the 12th and 13th of July. Plenty of beers and ciders will be available with Indian and English barbecue and outdoor music.

CUDDINGTON

Fuller's pub, the **Crown**, recently had *Longman's Best Bitter* accompanying *Adnams Southwold Bitter* and *Fuller's London Pride*.

DINTON

At the **Seven Stars**, *Locales* tend to be *Rebellion IPA* or *Vale Best Bitter* with *Sharp's Doom Bar* for the less adventurous. Stephanie is always welcoming and runs an excellent restaurant.

EMMINGTON

At the Inn at Emmington: Jerry and Paula are still providing a great real ale stopping off point with good accommodation for a dirty weekend walking in the muddy Chilterns.

FORTY GREEN

Matthew O'Keeffe at the **Royal Standard of England** has taken a *Brakspear* lease at the **Bee** in Burnham. *Brakspears Bitter* and *Oxford Gold* will be available there as well as *Windsor & Eton Windsor Knot* which is good news for one of that brewery's owners who lives nearby and had always been frustrated that he could not get one of his own beers in his village. It is intended to make the **Bee** look like a traditional village pub again by putting back the centuries that have been taken out inside and de-Farrow & Balling it!

FRINGFORD

A beer festival will be held at the cricket club on July 5th with 30 beers and nine ciders and perries.

GRANBOROUGH

Refurbishment of the **Crown** continues with improvements to the rear garden and car park nearing completion. Now a locally owned Free House since being purchased from *Marston's* last year it has become a focal point in village events whilst the public bar goes from strength to strength.

GREAT HAMPDEN

The **Hampden Arms** is holding their Summer Solstice Beer festival from

Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd of June. Beers from all round the UK will be available in their marquee.

GREAT KIMBLE

A row of posts was recently erected across the entrance to the near-derelict **Bernard Arms**. This has had the effect of blocking access to the car park for the congregation of St. Nicholas's church and parents at Great Kimble CoE primary school, who had an arrangement when the pub was open to use the car park out of pub opening hours. This has created a dangerous traffic hazard down the adjoining narrow Church Lane. The barrier was erected shortly after an intention to bid for the pub as an Asset of Community was declared, therefore delaying any sale of the **Bernard Arms** by the owners for six months. When considering the disgraceful state of this historic building it is worth remembering that it is the closest pub to Chequers.

The **Swan** at the other end of the village is continuing its policy of serving predominantly *Locales* with great success, including *Loddon Ferryman's Gold*, *ABC Pure Gold*, *Tring Moongazer* and *Loose Cannon Gunners Gold* and many others in recent weeks.

HADDENHAM

Beer Festival reminder Sat July 5th - 11am to late (ish) - probably past 4pm anyway. Wet weather prepared. Haddenham Youth & Community Centre HP17 8DS. Come by train or Arriva 280. Detailed web site.

The management at the **Green Dragon** will be changing on the 9th of June. Further details next issue.

At the **Rose & Thistle**, *Hadding Tribe* from *Greene King* is proving popular alongside *Olde Trip* and *IPA*.

The **Kings Head** offers *Fullers London Pride*, *Sharps Doom Bar* and a guest off the *Punch* list. Recently *Gun Dog Ales Jack's Spaniels* was available.

On the 5th of July, the **Rising Sun** is offering pre Haddenham Beer Festival big breakfast rolls from 10am and will be open all day with its own mini beer festival with 6-8 ales on tap. Still the best value for money pub in the area at £3.05. Great selection of *Locales* and other interesting and tasty offerings - always something to get the buds going. Good jokes in Compost Corner like 'What happened when Einstein, Pascal and Newton played hide and seek.'

HAZELMERE

Owen Reid and Lise Johansen have

taken over the **Mayflower**. Their intentions are to make it a more family oriented pub as well as doing breakfasts and holding more variety and entertainment nights.

LACEY GREEN

The **Black Horse** is one of only three pubs in nearly a thousand pubs owned by *Admiral Taverns* to receive 100% in its 'Detail to Retail' scheme. This shows that the **Black Horse** has excelled in all areas, including the range and quality of drinks on offer, the cleanliness of the pub both inside and out and the level of customer service.

They are also running a beer festival over the weekend of 2nd to 4th of August. Twenty real ales and ciders will be available, food will be served each day both lunchtime and evening, plus music and face painting for children on the Saturday.

LONG CRENDON

The **Eight Bells** has recently added two new handpumps providing even more choice of guest beers, which over the next couple of months will include beers from *XT*, *Animal Brewing Company*, *Wychwood*, *Goff's Brewery* from the Cotswolds, *Potbelly* from Northants and many more. Interest in the locally produced cider from Radnage and Long Crendon Manor continues to gather momentum including a special version which has been blended with Cascade Hops!

LITTLE KINGSHILL

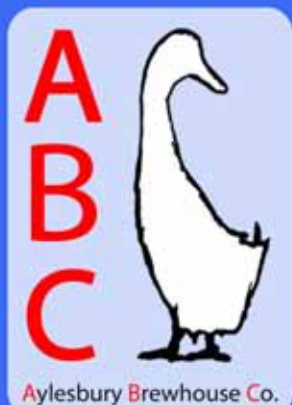
The **Full Moon** is organising a beer festival over the weekend of 27th-29th of June with over 25 real ales and ciders, bouncy castle for the kids, plus BBQ and bands.

MAIDENHEAD

Slough, *Windsor* and *Maidenhead CAMRA* are holding their beer festival at Maidenhead United Football Club from Friday 18th to Sunday 20th July.

NORTH MARSTON

The **Pilgrim** has had a change of management with new tenants Brett and Nadia Newman taking over in early May. Brett, originally from Tasmania has worked in hospitality trades for 25 years and together with Nadia has run music venues and bars in the London area. They intend to run the pub as a more traditional village pub and concentrate on building local trade. More comfortable furnishing is planned to lend a more relaxed atmosphere and there will be no restaurant, tablecloths or



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place settings to deter other customers. Good quality food prepared by Brett will shortly be available in a more 'pub meal' style. Three ales will continue, currently *Sharps Doom bar* and two locales from *Vale*.

Regular events are currently in early stages of development so watch this space!

OAKLEY

The **Chandos Arms** has been under new management since February. The new team are keen to run a 'Pub is the Hub' operation with its quite large country catchment area. Locals are involved in choosing the next guest beer off the *Punch* list which recently included the delicious *Tring Side Pocket for a Toad*. Teams for Aunt Sally and other pub games are being resurrected. Live music regularly. Support this pub

OVING

Unconfirmed reports suggest that change of use has been applied for by the new owners of the **Black Boy**. The pub was sold at auction recently and the existing tenant left shortly after and it has been closed for nearly three months. This pub with its unique view over the Vale of Aylesbury and its picturesque setting will be a very sad loss to the area. It also demonstrates how important it is in these difficult times to develop local custom so as not to rely on fair weather and restaurant income - non-existent in winter and recent wet summers.

PRINCES RISBOROUGH

The **Bell**, which regularly has two real ales on handpump, held a beer festival over the May Bank Holiday weekend.

RADNAGE

The **Crown** is holding the 4th Radnage beer festival on Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th of July. Twenty real ales will be on offer plus ciders.

QUAINTON

At the **George & Dragon** work is under way to convert an outbuilding into a coffee shop and tea room. Breakfasts, light lunches and afternoon teas will be served providing an extra facility for villagers as well as cyclists, walkers and other visitors separate from the pub itself. It will open Tuesday to Saturday 8am-5pm and 10am-3.30pm Sunday from 1st July.

The **George & Dragon** is also holding a beer festival on Saturday 12th of July in aid of the church restoration fund.

SYDENHAM

Roger Dean and his wife Yvonne have taken the tenancy of the **Crown Inn**.

This lovely old village pub has now reopened after it was shut for a few months. They are very keen on selling ales from small local breweries and have just added an extra handpump and are now selling four cask ales. They have *Rebellion IPA* and *Sharps Doom Bar* on permanently, with the other two pumps changing regularly. Recent beers include *Bath Pale*, *Black Sheep Bitter*, *Adnams Ghost Ship*, *St Austell Tribute* and *Chiltern Nut Brown Mild*.

They are now serving food on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings and Sunday lunch, and will expand to doing lunches midweek in the near future.

The Aunt Sally team is now up and running and proving a great success, and they have had the Midsomer Murders

crew filming in the pub and garden recently for a future episode.

TETSWORTH

The **Red Lion** is having a beer festival of nine real ales, some from the *White Horse* and *XT* breweries, plus three ciders from Thursday 19th until Sunday 22nd of June.

THAME

The **Black Horse** is selling real ale at £3 pint on Thursdays.

Cider is becoming more popular with Radnage cider being available on handpump at the **Swan** and 4/5 ciders available at the **Cross Keys**, both pubs having converted one of their existing beer pumps to cider. At the **Cross Keys**, Peter has now completed his Mayorship and after a holiday and a full spring-clean of his equipment, a *Thame* brew may be seen mid to late July. No pressure there.

The **Falcon** is holding a charity golf day at Waterstock on Friday 13th June. All welcome. Contact www.jodf.org for more details.

With the World Cup coming up, many pubs will be showing the games on their televisions. At the **James Figg**, in the Stables, they will be showing matches on their large screen.

At the **Six Bells**, *Fullers* reduced their beers by 1p a pint in line with the budget, the only one to do so, which means that *London Pride* is now only £3.74.

TOWERSEY

The **Three Horseshoes** has settled on *St Austell Tribute* and *Sharp's Doom Bar* with additions during Summer months.

TWYFORD

Long-time member, John Wood, has informed us of the annual charity beef festival held at the **Crown**. This commemorates the former Landlord Dennis Massey who died in 2011.

Normally held in May, but this year it will be on from Friday 13th to Sunday 15th June 2014. Some sixteen beers will be on offer together with a couple of real ciders. The England v Italy game will be shown live on the Saturday.

Public Transport to/from Twyford is not plentiful but it is possible. On Saturdays there is an Arriva service 16 from Aylesbury Bus Station at 13.50 that gets to Twyford at 14.48. The return bus departs outside the pub at 18.48 and ends at the **Cotton Wheel** in Aylesbury at 19.27 (turning into the depot at Rabans Lane). So it's a walk or a bus into town from there! There are no Sunday buses.

This pub is slightly unusual in that although there are two handpumps, they are not used. Instead the beer is brought direct from the cellar in a jug. Only one beer is served at any time so there is no choice, but turnover is now up to seven barrels per week so often a beer changes during the course of an evening. The beer is therefore usually in very good condition. For example, recently it started with *McMullens Country Bitter* in excellent state before running out and moving on to *Rudgate Yorvic Gold*.

WHITELEAF

The **Red Lion** held a well-attended beer festival over the May Bank Holiday. Beers included *XT 2*, *Adnams Ghost Ship* and *Chiltern Brewery Bodgers Barley Wine* (8.5%).

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A DRINKER'S TALE



'A quart of ale is a dish for a king' and 'I would give all my fame for a pot of ale' are two quotations, from *Henry V* and *A Winter's Tale* respectively, by the greatest writer ever to have lived on this planet on the historic importance of beer in British culture.

St. George's Day this year saw the 450th birthday of William Shakespeare – a man who's certainly done more than the patron saint to define the country's collective sense of Englishness – not least in his association with beer and pubs.

Shakespeare praises ale directly in at least three of his plays: the phrase 'cakes and ale' comes from *Twelfth Night*. There are numerous pubs named after Shakespeare and it's highly likely the bard propped up the bar and swilled English ale in some of London's most historic pubs and, of course, in his birthplace, Stratford-upon-Avon.

We paid homage to one of England's most illustrious beer drinkers in the most appropriate way – a celebratory pub crawl to Stratford-upon-Avon. And because two of the stops on the Chiltern line back home featured a selection of interesting *Good Beer Guide* pubs, we also partook of the liquid delights of King Beer that were available in Warwick and Leamington Spa.

With its theatres, Stratford-upon-Avon is a destination for actors and it's likely that thespians may be spotted around the town. One of our eagle-eyed lads exchanged a quick '*Othello*' with a celebrity before we'd even arrived – sharing a carriage with Brigit Forsyth, best known as Thelma Chambers in the classic sitcom *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads*. Despite the series being made forty years ago she hardly looked any different to the repeats on BBC2.



Like one of the bard's plays, the day had its twists and turns and sometimes verged on a comedy of errors – like when we arrived at the first pub, the **Bear at the Swan's Nest**, pictured below, before it had opened.

Fortunately, the bar is part of a posh hotel (the same chain that runs the **Randolph** in Oxford) and they were happy to slake our thirsts a few minutes before official opening. (Later investigation proved that the opening hours advertised on whatpub.com were inaccurate.

The modern technology of the **CAMRA** website proved to be less accurate than the printed word of Shakespeare's day in the form of the **GBG** – a reminder for our branch to check our own *What Pub* data, perhaps?)

The beer selection was a revelation for a hotel bar – with about half-a-dozen handpumps. My pint of **Castle Rock Harvest Pale Ale** was served just as you'd like it.

Chiltern Railways only serves Stratford-upon-Avon every other hour and we tried to squeeze in an extra pub in addition to the town's two **GBG** entries – the historic **Windmill**. This is reputed to be the Stratford's oldest pub and so likely to be where Shakespeare had supped – though he probably didn't get his inspiration from downing **Greene King IPA** (it's of one of their pubs). Luckily the pub also served locale in the form of two **Purity** ales. Pints of **UBU** and **Pure Gold** went down very quickly.



On entering the pub we were unexpectedly greeted by two gentlemen of **CAMRA** – from the local Shakespeare branch. Our **CAMRA** colleagues accompanied us to the third pub, pictured above and below, the **New Bull's Head**, where a fine pint of *Timothy Taylor's Landlord* was on offer.

The pub is unusual as one bar has been converted into a well-stocked local shop – a retort to the likes of Tesco and Morrison's who are busy converting whole pubs into chains of convenience stores. A little innovation could offer the best of both types of community facility.



The local **CAMRA** members passed on some exciting news about a 'micropub' that had recently opened in the town – the **Stratford Alehouse**. Dave and Noj immediately downed their pints and headed away to check it out – even though Spurs were on the telly.

Eddie, Tony and myself were getting peckish and, having been told by the local experts we were only about six or seven minutes from the station,



ordered the pub's takeaway fish and chips (the pub meeting another community need),

Our Shakespeare branch friends were en route to the **Stratford Alehouse** and as we walked with them back into town it became obvious that to arrive at the railway station comfortably on time we'd need to sprout Ariel-like wings.

To be or not to be on the 1337 train was the question – and a couple of our party suffered the slings and arrows of outrageous Chiltern Railways punctuality. Nevertheless, being stranded in Stratford wasn't actually much of a tragedy – with the serendipitous bonus of the **Alehouse** a short stroll from the station.

The rest of us alighted in Warwick. The castle town only boasts one **GBG** entry but it's the one pictured above, the splendid **Wild Boar** – not only the local **Pub of the Year** but also running its own microbrewery.

It belongs to **Slaughterhouse Brewery** whose main premises are elsewhere in Warwick. They installed the small plant shown below in the **Wild Boar** to produce experimental beers. I was kindly shown around by the brewers themselves.

The **Wild Boar** unashamedly hogs many of the attributes of a perfect **CAMRA** member's pub: close to the station, with a suntrap of a beer garden and ale that's so local it comes from within the same building. It's under five minutes' walk from Warwick station so well worth sneaking off the train for a quick sniffer if the opportunity arises.

We had time for a couple of pints of **Slaughterhouse** brews but were still a distance from being, er, slaughtered and so visited the **Millwrights Arms** around the corner while waiting for the train to Leamington. It offered a decent selection of ales and a very pleasant beer garden.





We witnessed another tempestuous train experience when a timetable mix-up meant three of us where stranded at the station for an awkward twenty minutes without beer – too short a time to neck a pint at the **Wild Boar** but long enough to get very thirsty.

We eventually arrived in Leamington which, measure for measure, is Warwickshire's **GBG** capital with five pubs in the good book.

The first, the **Jug and Jester** (pictured above), a **Weatherspoons** house near the station, offered a very interesting selection of ales, including brews from micros like **Grainstore**.

Some of Leamington's **GBG** pubs were rather more far flung in the town's suburbs than they'd looked on the map. By the time we arrived at the **Talbot Inn** we felt like walking shadows.

The **Good Beer Guide** is notorious for the phrase 'back street boozers' – often an affectionate euphemism – but the term fits the **Talbot Inn** with precision. Its front door blended so well

into its terraced location that we thought it was the entrance to the house next door. With an 'understated' exterior – no shouty blackboards here – we feared that the pub itself was shut – or even worse, dead.

After a bit of peering through the window we discovered the pub was indeed open for business and were made very welcome by the landlord, who offered an excellent selection of ales on offer, including a one of my favourites, **Wye Valley Butty Bach**. It was early evening by now and our stomachs were rumbling with thoughts of butties of the solid variety.

We took a rather risky stroll back into town by the Grand Union Canal – luckily the towpath was wide enough to ensure any wobbles didn't result in any of us suffering the same watery fate as Ophelia.

By the time we reached the **Benjamin Satchwell**, an enormous **Weatherspoons** on Leamington's famous Parade, we'd have given our kingdoms for a Large Mixed Grill and its 1983 calories. This thought was obviously shared by all our fragmented party as we all simultaneously gravitated towards the pub at the same time for good value food and interesting beers – those who'd caroused for longer in the **Stratford Alehouse** had wisely visited the **Wild Boar** en route. The **Benjamin Satchwell**'s range included **Celt Experience's Dark Age** and the **Yeasty Boys Gunnamatta Earl Grey India Pale Ale** (originally from New Zealand but guest brewed at **Adnams**).

The day's taming of the brew was by now taking its toll. Some of us, who were nearing our twelfth pint, stayed in the **Benjamin Satchwell**.

However, I sought out a final gem from the **GBG**, the **Woodland Tavern**, pictured below, about five minutes out of the town centre. It's a marvellous two-roomed boozer, the type of community pub that most **CAMRA** members would love to have around the corner.

Leamington has the ambience of a Midlands version of Brighton – although with slightly less water. In keeping with its thriving ale-appreciating, alternative culture, a band was setting up for a live session music in **Woodland Tavern's** lounge bar so we supped our final pint of the day in the friendly public bar – appropriately enough it was **Slaughterhouse Brewery's** refreshing **Saddleback Best Bitter**.

Our band of beery brothers reunited at the station for the train back to Bucks, having happily sampled many excellent beers and fine pubs during the day. Everything might not have gone entirely to plan but we all agreed that all's well that ends well. **Mike Clarke**



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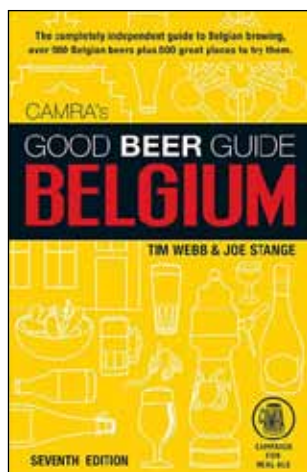
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Good Beer Guide Listed

Quiz Night 1st Thursday in the month

SUMMER READING FROM CAMRA

Good Beer Guide Belgium (7th Edition)



This is a comprehensive guide book for any visitor to the original home of craft beer. Now in its 7th edition, the book has been exhaustively updated by Tim Webb (co-author World Atlas of Beer & The Pocket Beer Book) and Joe Stange (co-author Around Brussels in 80 Beers) to reflect the growth in the Belgian beer market that has taken place in the five years since the previous editions publication. Author, Tim Webb, sees Belgian influence reaching far beyond just visitors to that country, he said:

‘With an increasing audience for handcrafted, de-industrialised and non-corporate beers, Belgian brewing’s distinctive blend of tradition, invention and quality will continue to fuel a growing

demand for complex and interesting beers far beyond its borders. This book gives people all the advice they need to get out there and explore what’s on offer. There’s a great chance and challenge for brewers everywhere to get inspired and get creative as a result.’

Split into two distinct sections, the book first takes an in-depth look at over 900 beers produced by the country’s diverse array of brewers - from global giants to equipment sharing proto-brewers. Each brewer is presented with full contact details and given a rating out of five for quality, while each beer is also given a star rating out of five.

Then, having acquainted the reader with what to drink, the guide turns to the tricky question of where to drink it. Over 500 bars, cafes, bistros and beer shops are hand-picked by Tim and Joe from the ultra modern to the incomparably traditional. Organised into regional listings, each bar entry includes full address information, details of size & range of the venues beer list and key dos and don’ts for visitors.

The Beer Select-O-Pedia

Written by Michael Larson, co-founder of beer review website The Perfectly Happy Man (www.theperfectlyhappyman.com), the book uses a ‘Periodic Table of Beer Styles’ to guide readers through the vibrant and diverse world beer scene - from English Golden Ale to German Doppelbock to the latest Hyper beers from North America and all points in-between.

Roger Protz, Consultant Editor for the book said: ‘This book is excellent for anyone interested in the vast, rich and fascinating world of beers - not just the UK’s real ales but also those brewed

around the globe. The best part is you can discover and enjoy at your own pace - no matter how much you already know about beer - whether you are dipping your toe in for the first time or diving straight in at the deep end.’

All the styles are presented alongside full-colour illustrations with an ‘Atomic Structure’ diagram featuring key facts about a style’s ingredients, famous producers, food matches and titbits of trivia. While a small selection of sample beers are supplied for each style to get the reader started the book encourages readers to search out, experience and enjoy these styles for themselves.

CAMRA’s Good Beer Guide Belgium £14.99 (*CAMRA Member Price* £12.99) and *Beer Select-O-Pedia* £12.99 (*CAMRA Member Price* £10.99) are both out now and are available from *CAMRA* at www.camra.org.uk/shop and in all other good bookshops.



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BALLOON INTO SPACE

As covered last issue, the 'Balloon into Space' event at the **White Swan**, Whitechurch, takes place during the afternoon of Saturday 5th July from the large back garden of the pub. The actual time of the launch depends on clearance from Heathrow air traffic control.

The plan, devised by regular local customer and rocket scientist Chris Smith, is to send a balloon up to a height of 35 miles and then for it to return to earth within a 10-12 mile radius of the pub. A specially designed container has been made to take the first ever pint of **Fullers London Pride** into space. The substantially sized balloon will be fitted with video and tracking devices to monitor its progress on TV at mission control, which will be in the main bar. It is hoped that as it ascends, viewers will see the pint boil over. If successful a recovery team will be guided to the landing site to return the craft to the pub for examination. Chris works for European Astrotech Ltd, a company based in nearby Westcott that provides engineering, technical and advisory support to the space propulsion industry including satellite equipment design. There will be live music from Harry Payne to help things along and food will be available all day as will souvenir Space Crackling later if the mission completes according to plan. The event is sponsored by European Astrotech who will also provide the equipment. To get a better idea of the mission visit www.europeanastrotech.com and select High Altitude Balloon – Launch Blog.

Another new feature at the pub will be regular Cornhole tournaments. This is an outdoor sport from the corn growing region of the USA around Iowa, otherwise known as 'lawn darts for drunks' amongst other more vulgar nicknames. A cloth bag of dried corn is played in a manner not too dissimilar to boules and aimed at a hole in a sloping ramp placed some yards away. For a better explanation... google it. The **White Swan** can be contacted on 01296 641228.

Mick White



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BEST DAY OF THE YEAR

Coming up is our annual coach trip to the Black Country. Most people who have joined us in the past reckon that it is the best day of the year as we travel round some of the best pubs in the country. Slightly later this year due to the World Cup and the danger that England might progress further than the quarter-finals this year (well, we can dream), it is on Saturday 12th of July. As this is the date of the third place playoff which nobody cares about and even the football fans will probably have tired of the matches by then, it seemed like the perfect time.



As usual, we are picking people up from Aylesbury (9.45am outside the **Broad Leys**) then Princes Risborough (opposite the **Bell**), High Wycombe (at the **White Horse**) and Stokenchurch (outside the **Mowchak**). We are then whisked away to the **Coach & Horses** in Weatheroak to partake of food and the fine ales from the **Weatheroak Hill** brewery. We then head to the **Waggon & Horses** in Halesowen (pictured above) to enjoy a fraction of their wonderful range of beers on their fifteen handpumps.

The route from here varies every year, but we will definitely be going to the **Olde Swan**, Netherton, which is the home of **Ma Pardoes** beer, the **Bull & Bladder**, Brierley Hill, and will finish off at the home of **Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild**, the **Beacon Hotel** in Sedgley, which is always one of the many highlights of the trip. We aim to be back in Aylesbury by midnight, returning via the pickup points in reverse order.

The cost will be a mere £29, which is the bargain of the year. There are a limited number of seats on the coach (which will have a loo on it) so it is recommended that you book as soon as possible as places are going fast. Please book by contacting the editor (address details on page 26).



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Charity Raffle
This year, in aid of the Alzheimer's Society.
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A National Treasure celebrates her 100th birthday!

Dolly Saville reached a remarkable landmark when she turned 100 years old on Saturday 19 April 2014. The **Red Lion** went to town to celebrate the occasion and **Fuller's** also sent their director Richard Fuller to make sure she was honoured properly for her long service to the **Red Lion** and, of course, to Wendover.

Dorothy Oakley was born in Eton in the South of Buckinghamshire a few months before the outbreak of World War I. The family soon moved and she remembers as a small child dancing in Cardington where the airships were built. Her maternal grandmother Deering lived in Tring Road, Wendover and by the end of the war the family had moved there. After the war, she remembers almost no cars but one cart a day going up Tring Hill to Halton so it was perfectly safe for the children to play hopscotch and marbles in the road. They also enjoyed romping in the fields around Oxen Hill above the

Rose and Crown long before Princess Mary Hospital was built nearby.

At 14, she left school and went into service as a housemaid.

She married in her late teens and her daughter Anne was born soon after, followed by her son Roland.

When war broke out several years later, her husband joined the RAF and Dolly had to get a job to support the family.

She had never done bar work before but was offered a job in the hotel by the landlord who spotted her walking past one day with her children.

Despite not having worked in a bar before she eventually thought that she would give it a try. She started just washing up glasses in the saloon bar. Then, after she'd been there about five or six weeks she was asked if she could serve. Even though she was concerned that she might give customers the wrong change, she did, and got on



very well.' Dolly has now been working at the **Red Lion** in one guise or another for 76 years!!

During that time she was taught to serve behind the bar and had no problem adding up the orders or working out the change in her head. She also turned her hand to the bedrooms, teas and reception work. One day she cooked scampi for Dame Margot Fonteyn and was allowed to serve her too (after taking off her chef's whites).

Other entertainers she has served include Margaret Lockwood, Anika Rice, Jimmy Saville and Pierce Brosnan. Bosses she has known include Major Allbrook, Mr Lilley, Mr Hicking then Phil and Jan Hills who renamed the bar after Dolly when it was refurbished in the early '90's, and Martin Howard, the current manager.

Everyone was invited to the **Red Lion** car park for an Easter Fair full of stalls to raise money for Dolly's nominated charities. The **Fuller's** dray horses, Griffin and Pride, got in on the action arriving nice and early in anticipation of Dolly's arrival.

Tim Cooper, MD of **Dayla**, was compère for the event. In the 19th century his great grandfather owned the pub and Dolly served at the reception there for his parents' wedding in 1948. He is a regular and has known Dolly all his life which seems quite short in comparison with hers!

Tim kidded Dolly that a member of staff had let them down at the **Red Lion** that evening and asked Dolly if she was willing to step in and do an extra shift. Needless to say, she immediately agreed to do so! Tim is pictured above right with two Dollies!

Richard Fuller, director of **Fuller's Brewery**, congratulated Dolly on her long service and gave her a present from **Fuller's**. Alex Banks sang Hello Dolly and presented Dolly with 100 roses prepared by The Flower Gallery. An RAF escort (pictured bottom left) led the crowd in giving her three cheers.

Tom Hunter-Watts, Mayor of Aylesbury, congratulated Dolly's family and the whole Wendover community for their support.

Bob Duggan, chairman of Wendover Parish Council, presented her with the key of Wendover and a certificate for the Freedom of Wendover,

Martin Howard, Manager of the **Red Lion**, also congratulated Dolly on her star performance as a barmaid and colleague. He later said: 'There were lots of surprises for Dolly including a beautiful birthday cake designed and made by the London based chocolate company Choccywoccydoodah, 100 roses, various presents and even a letter from the Prime minister. Everyone worked so hard to make the day special for Dolly and her family - particularly our own Sarah Mitchell.'

The Polka Dolls (pictured with Dolly on the cover) entertained the crowd as Dolly left the stage and then the **Fuller's** dray starting taking children on rides.

Jackie Stewart, champion racing driver and local resident, therefore a local at the pub, presented Dolly with a signed magnum of champagne (see the photo bottom right) and he forbade her to spray it everywhere!

Five generations of Dolly's family (pictured top left) then went to a special party hosted by **Fuller's** inside the **Red Lion**, along with friends and colleagues.

Jane Bravey, Operations Manager for the Red Lion says: 'Dolly is a fantastic asset to **Fuller's** and the **Red Lion** and we are incredibly proud to have such a dedicated member of staff and friend in Dolly. She likes to do a good job and keep busy so she continues to work three shifts a week. If you



have lunch at the **Red Lion**, she may well serve you so please say hello. She is a truly amazing lady and, in our eyes, a national treasure.'

When Dolly started at the pub a pint cost a mere eight pence and *London Pride* wasn't on the bar until 1959. Dolly has seen two monarchs take the throne and 14 Prime Ministers in Parliament. Dolly loves meeting people and sharing a joke when she is behind the bar, which is a good job when you consider that she estimates that she has served around two million pints!

Commenting on the day, Dolly said: 'I'm overwhelmed at all of this. I've no idea what you will do next year - but I will still be here and I'll still be working.' She is now officially the 'World's Oldest Barmaid' and only has one year to go to beat Hideko Arima, from Japan, who, according to the Mail Online, was formerly the world's oldest barmaid. She worked at her tiny bar, Gilbey Ai in Tokyo's Ginza district for 52 years until she was 101, and died in 2003.

Many thanks to the Wendover News and to Sarah Mitchell from the **Red Lion** for their help with the article and providing the photographs. It was a pleasure for me to be there and join in the celebrations for a remarkable feat for a remarkable lady.

David Roe



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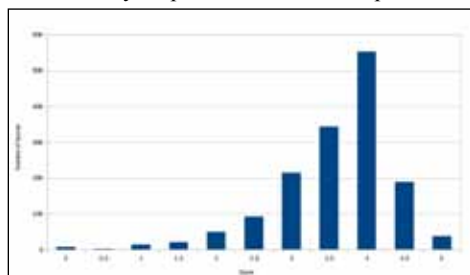
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GOOD BEER GUIDE SELECTIONS

It seems a bit early to be talking about the 2015 edition of the *Good Beer Guide*, but back in February of this year, the branch needed to produce the list of pubs, together with the descriptions and beers served for the branch's thirty-four pub allocation. This covers a large proportion of Buckinghamshire, and a little section of Oxfordshire around Thame.

In an effort to be more accountable to our membership, we began using the previous year's scores from *CAMRA's* Beer Scoring system as a primary guide when choosing the candidates.

The *Good Beer Guide* entries are always chosen fresh each year, so that inclusion one year has no bearing on inclusion the following year. Good Beer Guide entries are there solely on continuing merit in the year prior to the selection point.



We are blessed with a large number of great pubs, so competition is fierce. The chart shows the number of scores at each level achieved so far around the branch (see the scoring scheme below). The large majority of beers scored are beers in good form, with a large number exceeding this!

With this in mind, I would urge all *CAMRA* members to consider scoring at least some of their pints they drink, most especially good or bad ones. Pubs without scores are in grave danger of not being considered for the *Good Beer Guide*, so it is important that you submit scores!

So far this year, we have received over 1500 scores with 179 of 273 pubs in the branch represented, with the **Farmers' Bar @ The King's Head, Hop Pole Inn**, both in Aylesbury, and the **Cross Keys** in Thame receiving the most scores. Obviously there is some way to go!

Here is how you can help:

To enter a score, go to *CAMRA's* national pub system, **What Pub** (whatpub.com). Log in using the link just below the title. You'll need your membership number and password. If you have not logged in to a *CAMRA* website before, the password is your postcode in capital letters with any spaces removed.

Use the site's search facility to find the pub you wish to enter a score for.

On the right-hand side of the pub's page is a box titled Submit Beer Scores. Simply fill this in and click the Submit Score button at the bottom. Use the link marked Show Advanced Options to add a price and a comment to your score. We do take into account comments made!

The scoring scheme is shown top right. Please remember though, you are scoring how well the beer has been kept, not whether you like it!

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.

Consideration should also be made for the end of a barrel. If you point out that the beer is cloudy, or tastes off, and the landlord apologises immediately and offers a different one, you should not mark them down.

For further information, please visit the *Swan Supping* Website: swansupping.org.uk/campaigns/beerscoring

Alexander Wright - Branch Chairman



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DERBY DRINKING

It was my good fortune in mid-May to be sent on a course, through work, which involved a five-night stay in Derby, one of the UK's great drinking cities. The fortunate residents of Derby are lucky enough to have no fewer than eleven breweries, of which seven are brew pubs, within the city's boundaries. The local **CAMRA** branch are a very motivated bunch who are keen to exhibit their city as the leading real ale city in the UK, rivalling Sheffield and Norwich. Their website claims that they are the Real Ale Capital of Britain in terms of different ales per head of population. It was during February that the local branch found 290 different real ales served at any one time across the city during their beer census. This compares to Norwich's 259 and Sheffield's 257 found in their 2012 censuses.

If you arrive by train you will be greeted by several great pubs within seconds of the station. The **Alexandra Hotel**, the birthplace of **Derby CAMRA** has been a stalwart of real ale for many decades. Now owned by **Castle Rock Brewery** it offers eight guest ales as well as those from **Castle Rock**. A peculiar but delightful ale called **Cocoa Gusto** by **Castle Rock** was a favourite. A minute's walk away was my first brew pub of the trip, the **Brunswick Inn**. This was an amazing multi-roomed pub with a selection of fourteen real ales including eight from the in-house **Brunswick Brewery**. It was here that I experienced two rarities; firstly was the East Midlands delicacy of Huntsman's Pie (Chicken, Pork & Stuffing layers in a Pork Pie form) followed by a gathering of the Socialist Worker's Party who appeared very partial to Real Ale. Literally outside the railway station is the not so surprisingly named **Station Inn**. This pub is famous for serving **Bass** from the jug.



A little isolated from the city's other great pubs, lying to the south of the centre, is the **Falstaff** (pictured above). This is the supposedly haunted home of the **Falstaff Brewery**. Set in the corner of a row of Victorian terraces this pub really stands out elaborately against its ordered surroundings. When visited it offered four **Falstaff** ales with my favourite being **Falstaff Phoenix**. Further to the west stands the **Rowditch Inn**, home to the **Rowditch Brewery**. With an unassuming frontage it is surprisingly spacious inside. The pub always has one of its own brewery's offerings at any one time alongside many others. At the time of visiting the offering was **Full Flower Moon**.

Only a couple of minutes' walk away, hidden away in residential streets, is the **Dancing**

Duck brewery tap, the **New Zealand Arms**. This open plan bar divides into two with one offering half a dozen ales whilst the other offers a similar number of real ciders. **Dancing Duck's Duck Berry** was the highlight of my visit.

A visit to the north-eastern edge of the city, the other side of the River Derwent, is very rewarding with several great pubs within a short distance from each other. Following enjoyable visits to the **Smithfield** and **Peacock Inn**, each serving exclusively brewed house ales amongst others, the next stop was the **Exeter Arms**. This was an incredibly busy food orientated pub which has been transformed by **Dancing Duck Brewery**. The food is delicious and was washed down with an equally tasty **Dancing Duck DCUK**. A stone's throw away was the **Brewery Tap**, home to **Derby Brewery**, a modern refurbishment of a once demolition threatened corner pub with artwork all over the walls. It offers ten handpumps including at least six of its own ales. An Imperial Russian Stout called **Elgood's Black Eagle** was a tasty and fortifying treat. Just a couple of hundred metres up the Mansfield Road, around the corner from the **Coach & Horses** with its great quality ales, stands a real highlight of any Derby trip, the **Little Chester Ale House**. This micro pub, looking more like a small shop, serves superb ales from the local **Wentwell Brewery**. **Wentwell's Farm Hand's Bitter** was in tiptop condition on my visit.

My next day involved a trip to the city centre. The hard to find **Crompton Tavern** is well worth seeking as it usually has a great offering from the **Kelham Island Brewery**. At the time of my visit it was the harrowingly named **Gentleman Death**. Possibly this was not the best choice to start the day at nearly 7% but tasty all the same. Next stop, the **Babington Arms**, was voted the best **Wetherspoons** in the UK for real ale. Its electronic beer board, displaying 17 ales, read more like an airport departures board and you could see beers disappearing and appearing as you watched. A stop more for its history than for the beer, as a very expensive **Doom Bar** was its only offering, was **Jorrock's**. It is famous for displaying a skull of a Saxon female found when the cellar was made deeper and as being where Bonnie Prince Charlie demanded lodgings at his furthest South advancement during the Jacobite Rebellion in 1745. Just around the corner stand three pubs that would delight any person interested in pub architecture. The first is the **Old Bell** which opens out into a courtyard inn with a Tudor hall for a bar. Second is the cavernous Standing Order, an ornate **Wetherspoons** conversion of a 1870s bank. Finally there is the National Inventory of Historic Interiors listed **Ye Olde Dolphin Inne**. Dating from 1530 this is Derby's oldest pub and oozes medieval charm. **Acorn's Butter Bump** was a favourite here.

To the North of the city centre stands the mural clad **Old Silk Mill** (pictured right). It stands within a World Heritage Site containing the silk mill which was the first factory in the world. Thankfully the ale range more than lives up to the area's heritage status and **Brewster's Up T'Summit** was thoroughly enjoyed. Around



the corner stands the **Flowerpot** with perhaps the largest range of ales in Derby (at least 18), including eight from the in-house **Black Iris Brewery**. It has a room where live music is held most nights and I highly recommend the Tuesday Gurkha curry night. Ales like **Black Iris' Liqueurice Alesort** are very popular. Next my tour took me to the **Furnace Inn** where I gate crashed a **Derby CAMRA** meeting. Lots of interesting ideas were exchanged and many great beers from the pub's microbrewery, **Shiny Beers**, were enjoyed. My favourite was **Shiny Beer's Golden Man**. After brief stops at the **Horse & Groom** and **Seven Stars**, both serving great quality ale, I visited the **Five Lamps** which exhibits eleven handpumps serving beers from local microbreweries. Rescued from an uncertain fate in 2010 it was soon awarded local pub of the year in 2012. **Landlock's One Beautiful Day** was very enjoyable.

As my week was rapidly coming to an end I treated myself to a wildcard visit near my lodgings and visited the 'diamond in the rough' pub that is the **Olde Spa Inne**. This grand hotel built in 1773 to take advantage of the iron water spring found in the area served a delightful **Tetley's Mild** and **Thwaites Magic Sponge**. The latter had a pump clip made from a yellow sponge clipped to the pump. It was there that I was left wondering when my next opportunity will be to visit this wondrous city.

Carl Griffin



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MORE LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

ABC Brewery

Big news for Aylesbury's only brewery - bottling has started! Limited edition runs of selected brews are now available bottle-conditioned from their brewery shop at the brewery. The first to be bottled, since the *Sink or Swim* brewed in collaboration with Roger Protz, is *Hei Tiki* - 5.5% New Zealand IPA brewed exclusively with NZ hops for a full fruity hoppiness with a balanced, floral malt body.

The second limited edition run of bottles is the popular *Indian Gold*, a 4.7% golden ale brewed with freshly ground black pepper - originally grown in India - and American hops, for an easy drinking spicy bitterness.



Brews coming up include *Codex*, a 3.8% golden ale brewed with English hops for a light, traditional English ale, and *Perspective*, a pale ale brewed with lager malt and high alpha hops for a powerful hoppiness!

Ever wanted to brew your own beer? Well now you can, with 'Brewer For A Day' down at ABC! Get involved from start to finish in all aspects of brewing alongside Head Brewer Haydon Overton. An ideal gift for someone with an interest in beer who wants to know a little more about the art of brewing or perhaps just to make a change from all those boring hot air balloon rides and fast car track days! Contact them for more info and to arrange a great day out at Aylesbury's only brewery!

The next Brewery Tour and Tasting has been scheduled for Saturday June 28th - an afternoon of tasting their new beers in Haydon's capable hands, where you'll get to try their brand new limited edition beers and find out what makes ABC different from every other brewery in the UK!



Rebellion Brewery

Following on from their May beer *Snookered*, a 4.2% red and fruity ale, the June special from *Rebellion* is *Stepover*, which is a 4.2% amber and citrus beer.

Their seasonal beers have now changed, as it's officially summer with *Blonde* now in, which is a 4.3% light golden, refreshing and slightly citrusy ale.

Tring Brewery

Summer's here and although the weather might not be a clear indicator of this, the fact that *Tring Brewery* has released their popular seasonal brew, *Fanny Ebbs Summer Ale*, certainly is.

Alongside this pale, crisp 4.0% beauty the brewery continues to run their core range and monthly specials which for June, July and August include the Australian hopped *Cassowary*, Czech hopped *Wild Boar* and New Zealand hopped *Kiwi*.



On 7th June the brewery will be launching a limited edition beer called *The Gaffer*. This will coincide with one of the brewery's Saturday tours, held at 2.00pm and the arrival of the beer's namesake, a 104 year old steam engine. To book a place on the tour call the brewery on 01442 890721. *The Gaffer*, a 4.2% five malt, Eldorado hopped beer will be available as a bottle-conditioned and cask variants from the brewery shop and local pubs.

Vale Brewery

Available in June is *Vale's* new monthly special, themed around the World Cup. *Telstar* is a bronze/copper coloured bitter kicking in at 3.9%. The name is after the football first used in the 1970 world cup in Mexico. It has

32 Black and White panels, and at the time aided visibility in days of Black and White TV.



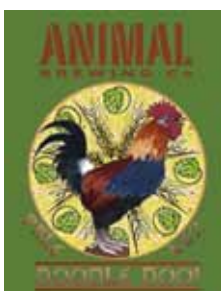
In July, *Vale* get theological again, with the launch another interesting special. *Occam's Razor* is a British summer bitter, Bramling Cross and other English hops offer a subtle spicy finish. Fresh and easy drinking this is perfect for a summer day. The beer gets its name from a Franciscan friar and scholar William of Ockham. His theory went 'In the absence of certainty, the fewer assumptions that are made the better'.



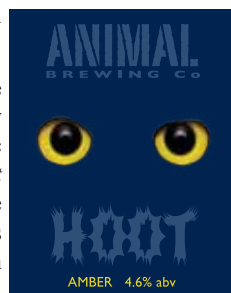
XT Brewery

XT have launched their new beer club. Offering four beery social evenings a year for you and two friends at the brewery plus special offers and discounts in the shop. See the website for full details

Their next brewery open day is Saturday 12th July from 10:30 with free entry - a range of XT beers plus some one-off special beers, all at only £2 a pint.



The *Animal* range saw the very hoppy *Doodle Doo* 4.6% IPA available in May giving a big hop aroma from lashings of aromatic New Zealand hops. June sees the new amber *Hoot* at 4.6% which uses a rare Belgian coffee malt. The *Animal Rabbit*, Motueka IPA from last summer is now available in bottles - in a slightly stronger form at 5% for bottles over the cask version.



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ACT NOW!

I hope that you are reading this on a nice sunny day in a pub garden somewhere. The British weather may have forced you inside, but wherever you are, I would like you to look around and appreciate the pub that you are sitting in.

Most pubs have been around a long time, some, such as the **Royal Standard of England**, Forty Green, for over 900 years. They are such a fundamental part of local communities that they are often taken for granted. Pubs are where people have been meeting and socialising for hundreds of years, but this is now under threat in a way that the country has never seen. Since you are reading this, you are not one of the many people who drink wine and beer solely at home. The large majority of people don't use their pub, and this is a great shame given the huge benefit to any community that a pub brings.

In this month of European elections, the papers will bemoan people's lack of participation in politics, but with everyone locked safely in their houses, how are they going to discuss issues of the day with their neighbours? How many of us will meet our neighbours at all? The closure of so many of the country's pubs has gone hand in hand with this culture, and we are now at the point where the last pub in many communities is facing closure.

Since the last edition of *Swan Supping*, we have learned of another two pubs that have been bought from Pub Companies and are in the process of being turned into shops.

The **Downley Donkey**, that has been bought by Morrisons caused a shock to the local community. Steve Baker, MP for High Wycombe, said, 'Ultimately, the power to decide whether our local independent stores flourish rests with the people of Downley using their purchasing power. It is clear the pub failed to succeed commercially as too few people patronised it.'

The **Swan & Castle**, Quainton, had been shut for a few months before being surreptitiously turned into an 'Office' thus circumventing planning laws.

Both pubs have vociferous supporters, but it is likely to be too late. Once the Heras fencing has gone up, it is often too late to save a pub for its community. It is vital, therefore to take advantage of one of the few supportive pieces of legislation that recent governments have introduced.

The Communities Bill introduced the Communities Asset Register. This allows communities to come together to protect assets like pubs and corner shops to stop them being redeveloped and removed from community use. A pub listed on the register is protected from redevelopment or sale without giving the local community the opportunity to bid to buy it.

The group that registers the pub is notified that a sale or change of use is going to take place, and a six-week moratorium is put in place to allow the community group to make a decision on whether to make a bid. The bid does not have to come from the group that made the registration, and there is no financial obligation from anyone nominating a pub.

If the community wants to make a bid, they are then given six months to raise funds.

The last issue of *Swan Supping* (101) included a form that you could fill in



to list your local. Please use it! If you haven't got a copy to hand you can read the instructions and download the form from the Branch Website: <http://www.swansupping.org.uk/campaigns/acv>

The Government has given us a really powerful piece of legislation, but your pub must be registered to be protected. Too often, locals have tried to get a pub listed after the developers have moved in, but this is too late.

Please, please find twenty people willing to sign their name to protecting your pub. There is no financial obligation, and it might just be the thing

that keeps your local open. Just the fact that a pub has been listed is enough to dissuade developers from attempting to close it.

Protecting your pub is not something **CAMRA** can do alone. We have lobbied government hard to obtain this legislation, but it needs **you** to perform this last step.

Act Now. Your local needs you!

Alexander Wright



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GRAVEDIGGERS - PART TWENTY NINE

One morning in late April, James was busy clearing the remnants of the beer barrel explosion behind the bar, which had been the climax of the **Gravediggers'** Easter beer festival. It was the type of day when the sun threatened to break through the plume of chemical factory emissions. Mazz prized open a couple of filth-encrusted windows for the first time in six months. Fresh air rustled the cobwebs hanging between the beams; shafts of sunlight illuminated the mucal fag that circulated in the confined air. Mazz gave James a peck on the cheek.



'Blimey! You're full of the joys of spring,' James said, taken aback. 'It's that time of year – before the locals have shot all the songbirds for waking them up before noon,' Mazz said. 'The bunnies are frisking, the sap's rising.'

'Sap's about the only thing that's been rising around this pub for the last few years,' James said, looking at Old Pete, slumped against the bar well before midday.

'We're missing a trick – a pub should be a place for free young spirits to mingle, get to know each other over a few drinks, kindle a bit of passion, come back again as couples for a nice, romantic meal,' Mazz said. 'And in the long run those birds and the bees will make us new customers.'

'Mazz, are you crazy, this is the **Gravediggers**,' James said. 'Most of the male young farmers would sooner chat up their combine harvester than dare look at a woman. The girls would rather clean up after the rear end of a horse than smile at any of the blokes.'

'A little encouragement's all that's needed – something to loosen their inhibitions. With a bit of research, imagination and the right contacts you can come up with a little something to gets things stirring – celebrating the fertility of old Mother Earth,' Mazz winked at James. 'And what better time than May Day?'

Old Moses spent several moonlit nights roaming the hills scouring the undergrowth for the secret ingredients. He said their identity had been secretly passed through his family for immemorial generations since pagan times. At a crucial point in the brewing process he revealed his haul to James, ticking off each item as it pitched into the boiling liquor.

'Fifty seven stoat droppings, dried sludge from the silted up millpond, three year old ground stag's antler, one hundred and one fermenting dead slugs,' Moses incanted as the ingredients swirled into the fermenting vat.

'Are you totally sure about the slugs?' James asked, stirring the mixture.

'Oh, they is crucial to the recipe,' Moses said. 'All we need now is the blessing of the Morris men on May Day sunrise and this ale will bestow potency and fecundity on all who sup it.'

'And I bet potency and fecundity are not the only pleasures that drinking it will bring,' James said, holding his nose and closing the lid on the foul-smelling, fermenting liquid.

Dawn on the first of May and the Growlswick Morris dancers performed an ancient fertility rite over the **Gravediggers'** latest ale while the casks were ceremonially tapped and spiled.

'It'll make them all feel like they were twenty-one again,' Old Moses promised as he took a sip of the green foaming brew – named *Mayday!*

Mazz had organised a special 'singles night' later in the evening. As an ice-breaker for the socially dysfunctional unattached villagers, she combined a type of speed-dating with the return of the Morris dancing.

After downing enough *Mayday! Mayday!* as was necessary, the singletons of the village danced or staggered around the maypole to the accompaniment of Growlswick Morris's well-lubricated accordion player. When the music stopped each turned to the dancer beside them. If they fancied the look of their partner, they shook their bells sweetly. If love wasn't in the air, the unlucky partner received a clobbering with the stick.

A few promising matches had been forged. Young Giles, owner of the sexiest muckspreader in the locality, had been the subject of much stable-girl jangling. Others weren't so lucky – Young Duwayne had been taken away by ambulance with a broken arm, inflicted with great gusto by Karate Kylie from the abattoir.

But it wasn't only the youngsters who were feeling the stirring effects of *Mayday! Mayday!* Old Pete and Old Joe had acted peculiarly out of character since downing several pints of the pagan fertility brew – smiling, laughing and nudging each other in the ribs.

Mazz regretted her choice of a skimpy Cupid's outfit on hearing primeval grunts when she wandered into the public bar. She was more accustomed to the sound of snoring. So James was astonished and Mazz relieved when, for the first time in living memory, the wizened old regulars strolled gamely out of the bar before ten, grinning at each other. Their spritely jaunt was a stark contrast to the usual collapse on the floor before closing time.

The next morning as James prepared to open up, Old Mrs Pete, Old Mrs Joe and Old Mrs Amos hammered on the **Gravediggers'** front door. James was reluctant to answer, fearing that the latest brew had finally finished off the regulars for good.

'That *Mayday* ale,' Old Mrs Joe shouted. 'How much more have you got left?'

'About ten barrels-ish,' James said cautiously, wondering if he'd have to quickly empty it down the drain.

'Thank heavens for that,' Old Mrs Moses said, with an old milk churn in her shopping trolley. 'Fill this up quick. Don't tell me what's in it but Old Moses is like a teenager again – I'm not letting him out of the house until he's made up for forty years lost time.'

'Neither are we with our new men,' the other women said, shoving containers towards James. 'You should rename that beer *Griagra!*'

A week later and Mazz surveyed the empty public bar. James had made a roaring trade brewing the renamed *Griagra* for off-sales. Old Moses had scoured hundreds more acres for replenishment stoat droppings. The beer's fame had spread way beyond the village. But with lovebirds, young and old, locked away behind closed doors to take advantage of the ale, the pub had become barren and lonely.

'We're making so much money from *Griagra* I'm thinking of converting the whole pub into a big brewery,' James said. 'After all, no one's coming in here any more.'

Before Mazz could reply, a pugnacious American in a suit barged through the pub door, flanked by a couple of thick-necked minders. 'I'm Ernie Million, CEO of multinational pharmaceutical giant, Pfister. You've gotta stop selling that beer right away. It's infringing our patent rights.'

'But it's an ancient pagan recipe,' Mazz said. 'Made from natural country ingredients.'

'Yeah, that might be so, young lady, but Pfister paid your chancellor George Poshborne half a billion pounds for the next fifty years for exclusive rights to stoat droppings throughout the whole of Merrie England. We've mass spectrometered this ale and those precious babies are sure in the mix,' Ernie said, triumphantly. 'But if you keep schtum about the, ahem, secret ingredient we'll agree not to sue the backside off this place – so long as you hand us over the rest of the barrels.'

James signed a legal contract as the last of the *Griagra* disappeared down the lane in a Pfister truck. 'Well, I'd better put on an old barrel of *Toxic Sludge*. I was starting to miss the old boys anyway.'

'I wouldn't be in his shoes when the wives find out he's made off with the *Griagra*,' Mazz said. James joined her to watch Ernie Million ran across the pub car park towards his limousine being chased frantically with pitchforks and carving knives by Old Mrs Pete, Old Mrs Joe and Old Mrs Moses while their weary menfolk sneaked back into the **Diggers'** bar. *Charlie Mackle*

Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

May

Friday 30th HIGH WYCOMBE EARLY EVENING SOCIAL

6.00pm Rose and Crown, 6.45pm William Robert Loosely, 7.30pm Bell, 8.15pm Falcon, 9.00pm Hobgoblin.

June

Tuesday 3rd AYLESBURY EARLY EVENING SOCIAL

7.00pm, Aristocrat, 7.30pm Bricklayers Arms, 8.00pm Old Millwrights Arms

Saturday 7th BIERTON & BROUGHTON SATURDAY LUNCH SOCIAL

12noon, Dog House, Broughton Crossing, 1.00pm Red Lion, Bierton, 2.00pm Bell, Bierton

Wednesday 11th SOCIAL

8.00pm White Lion, Cryers Hill, 8.45pm Harrow, Hughenden Valley, 9.30pm Gate, Bryants Bottom.

Monday 23rd June, BRANCH MEETING

8.00pm, William Robert Loosely, High Wycombe.

Friday 27th HADDENHAM CRAWL

7.30pm Green Dragon, 8.00pm Rose and Thistle, 8.30pm King's Head, 9.15pm Rising Sun.

July

Friday 4th PUB BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

6.30pm, Derehams Inn, Loudwater.

Saturday 5th HADDENHAM BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

12 noon, Haddenham Community Junior School.

Saturday 12th BLACK COUNTRY TRIP

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Thursday 17th COUNTRY SOCIAL

8.30pm Stag and Huntsman, Hambleden, 9.15pm Frog, Skirmett.

Tuesday 22nd SOCIAL

8.00pm Plough, Marsh Gibbon, 8.30pm Greyhound, Marsh Gibbon, 9.15pm Swan, Grendon Underwood.

Saturday 26th LEIGHTON BUZZARD PUB CRAWL

Start 12.30pm Red Lion, 1 North Street then crawl through rest of town. (150 bus leaves Aylesbury at 11.40am, last bus back to Aylesbury 8.42pm)

Monday 28th BRANCH MEETING

8.00pm, Cross Keys, Thame.

September

Saturday 6th AUNT SALLY AND BEER FESTIVAL

12 noon Mason's Arms, Headington

October

Friday 24th & Saturday 25th BEER FESTIVAL

21st Vale of Aylesbury Beer Festival, Bucks County Council Sports & Social Club, Lower Road, Aylesbury

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Edited by David Roe

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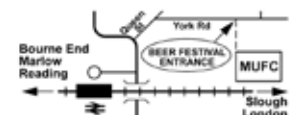
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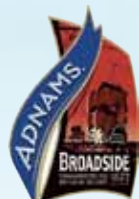


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