

FREE

Swan Supping

Issue 119

Apr/May 2017



**Hobgoblin
changes back to
the Three Tuns!
See Local News**



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

sky SPORTS **THREE TUNS** BT Sport



*Swan Supping
celebrates 20 years!
See page 11*

Newsletter of the Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch of CAMRA

www.swansupping.org.uk

Circulation 6000



MARLOW ROYAL BRITISH LEGION



CAMRA Branch Club of the Year 2014/2015/2016/2017

CAMRA Regional Club of the Year 2014/2015/2016

Presents

REAL ALE FESTIVAL 2017

SPRINGFEST



Circa 18 Enigmatic Real Ales

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18TH BEER FESTIVAL TO DATE***

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4 Amazing tribute acts in one night

ELVIS PRESLEY

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HANK WILLIAMS

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from 1pm’

FESTIVAL OPENING TIMES

Thursday 27th April : 19.00 – 23.00, Friday 28th April : 11.00 – 23.00,
Saturday 29th April : 11.00 – 23.00, Sunday 30th April : 11.00 – 20.00,
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NEWS FROM THE EDITOR



How can twenty years fly by so quickly?

In 1997, two local committee members got together to try once again to get the newsletter the branch had talked about for many years started again. Bryan Spink and I became joint editors and we took advantage of the improvements in computing and were able to use Desktop Publishing instead of struggling with the branch typewriter which had helped produce a couple of photocopied newsletters many years before. The work was largely done on Bryan's computer when he was landlord at the **Huntsman** (sadly demolished a few years ago) so I could

enjoy a pint while he did the proofreading!

Since our initial issue of six black and white pages and a print run of only 1500 copies, we now regularly get 6000 copies of full-colour magazines into the pubs on time every two months. The page count is regularly 20 to 24 pages and we even managed 32 pages once which made deliveries even heavier! Overall we have made a profit from *Swan Supping* over the years despite holding down the cost of advertising to the same level for over six of those years. However, we are owed a substantial amount from previous advertisers and we will be chasing up as much of this money as we can! Although the intention of the magazine is to raise money for **CAMRA** as well as getting our message across to as many people as possible, we cannot sustain too many more recent losses and continue being viable. The last thing I want to do is hand the creation of the magazine to an outside

company who will guarantee to produce the magazine on time but keep any surplus cash. The cost of advertising would also rise, so nobody wins in this scenario! Further reminiscences of twenty years of producing *Swan Supping* appear on page 11.

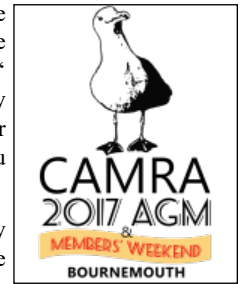
I'm hoping to head to Bournemouth for the **CAMRA AGM & Members Weekend** to join in the potentially lively debate about the 'revitalisation' of the campaign. I'll also try and get to as many pubs as I can in the area as there is nothing better than discovering another little gem that you haven't been to before..

If you are a **CAMRA** member it is also a great way to meet old friends and make new ones and I've certainly missed that side of things over the last two years when I've been unable to join in the fun due to other commitments.

The bad news if you are not a **CAMRA** member is that the cost of membership, after having been held for a few years under the 'Campaign of Two Halves', is going up! As the new campaign will be launched in April, this is the first issue of *Swan Supping* without a membership form in it! However, on the branch diary page there is an advert showing you the path to joining online.

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.

David Roe, Swan Supping Editor



NATIONAL CAMRA NEWS

CAMRA celebrates pub planning loophole closure

Following a successful campaign led by the **Campaign for Real Ale**, the Government announced on Friday 24th of March that it will support a measure to close a planning loophole in England which has allowed pubs to be demolished or converted to a wide range of retail uses without any planning application.

This has not only denied local communities a say in their beloved locals' futures, but also made pubs a 'soft target' for developers, contributing to 21 net pub closures every week.

The Government's decision will bring a halt to developers exploiting loopholes and will give communities the right to have a say in the future of their pubs. The decision will not prevent the development of pubs, but will require developers to apply for planning permission to convert or demolish a pub, allowing for members of the local community to express their opinions as part of that process.

CAMRA campaigners worked closely with the Shadow Spokesman for Communities and Local Government, Lord Roy Kennedy, who won a vote on this issue in the House of Lords last month, and with Ministers, MPs, Peers and departmental officials.

Lord Kennedy of Southwark said: 'I am delighted that the Government have listened to my amendment to close the loophole that allowed pubs to be lost without the local community having a say. This is a victory for common sense, the much loved British pub and responsible drinkers everywhere.'

CAMRA Chief Executive Tim Page said: 'Politicians are chosen to represent the views of those who elect them. We are delighted that in deciding to require owners to apply for planning permission if they want to close a pub, the Government has put the opinions of those who recognise the value that pubs provide to them and their communities above the commercial interests of a few organisations and individuals. This is a fantastic victory for campaigners who have secured the removal of a loophole which allowed pubs to be redeveloped or demolished without reference to the local community or planners. The decision to respond positively to **CAMRA's** campaign is further evidence of Government's support for the pub sector and follows on from the decision earlier this month to provide most English pubs with a £1,000 discount in the business rates they pay.'

'This announcement is the result of the work of thousands of local campaigners and **CAMRA** members who have been calling for an end to the loopholes in existing legislation that have been used by developers to close wonderful, viable and well-supported local pubs.'

'This change also wouldn't have been possible without the dedication of Lord Kennedy in securing the support of the House of Lords earlier this month. Lord Kennedy's efforts to support the future of local pubs at the heart and soul of communities will benefit pub-goers for generations to come.'

'This change delivers real and robust protection to valued community pubs, which previously have relied on communities going through the bureaucratic process of securing **Asset of Community Value (ACV)** listings, or local authorities choosing to use complex and obscure Article 4 directions.'

'We will work with the Government to ensure these measures are implemented as soon as possible to allow pubs across England to start benefiting from the protection of the planning system.'

Price of pints to rise after U-turn on tax

Drinkers have been let down by the Chancellor's decision to increase beer and cider duty in the recent Budget — which will see the price of their pints rise.

The announced two-penny-a-pint increase in beer duty is the first rise in five years. It marks a U-turn by the Chancellor as he risks returning to the days of the much-hated Beer Duty Escalator which contributed to 75,000 job losses, 3,700 pub closures and a 24% fall in beer sales in pubs.

Colin Valentine, **CAMRA's** National Chairman said: 'UK beer drinkers, pubs and brewers have been let down by the Chancellor's decision to increase beer duty for the first time in five years.'

'The rise in beer duty will ultimately hit consumers in their pockets and lead to pub closures across the country. The government's U-turn on beer duty is a real missed opportunity to support consumers. The UK still pays one of the highest rates of duty across Europe, only consuming around 12% of the beer yet paying nearly 40% of all beer duty in the EU. Further beer duty increases will lead to unsustainable price increases in pubs.'

MEETING WYCOMBE LOCAL PLANNING DEPARTMENT



Following the article in the previous edition of *Swan Supping*, which highlighted the disgraceful fate of historic **Bernard Arms** in Great Kimble, the local branch met with representatives of Wycombe Council to directly express our concerns.

The meeting was held with two planning officers who are responsible for future planning strategy and for drafting the overall plan for Wycombe and for assisting local communities to draft their own local plans (as is happening in various parts of Wycombe District at the moment, such as Princes Risborough).

We also invited Mike Chadwick, from the Chiltern Society, to join us at the meeting as the Chiltern Society is also active in campaigning to preserve local pubs in the Wycombe area. Mike also liaises with the planning department on non-pub matters and has a very good understanding of the way the planning system works.

The focus of our meeting was on future policy rather than the enforcement and interpretation of existing policy and guidelines. This is the responsibility of planning application case officers, whom we didn't meet. We still remain, to put it mildly, puzzled how the officer handling the **Bernard Arms** application reached that decision in that case.

However, as mentioned previously, in planning matters there is no right of appeal on behalf of objectors when a decision is made in favour of an application. This means it's vitally important to ensure that planning policy is clear and transparent. We hoped that we could impress on the planning officers responsible for future plans the vital importance of pubs to local communities.

Residents in Wycombe may be aware that a Local Plan for the district is currently under development. Once published and adopted, this plan will provide the basis against which individual planning applications should be considered. Unfortunately, the formal consultation period for the plan ended in autumn last year.

Nevertheless, there is an ongoing process of local communities drafting their own local plans in consultation with the council and we would strongly recommend that the importance of local pubs to a community is explicitly mentioned in such plans. It may make all the difference in protecting your local from an asset-stripping developer.

Overall, our discussions seemed to have been very constructive. The planning officers explained the constraints that they need to work under to formulate their plans (generally many mandates from central government). They were also very interested in making use of the resources that **CAMRA** HQ provides (e.g. the genuine pub viability test, not the doctored versions that property developers have been known to submit).

Our principal concern, which we hope would be explicitly recognised in any local plan regardless of individual meetings with organisations like **CAMRA**, is the recognition that pubs serve a unique, and pre-eminent, role as community facilities

There is a uniquely strong effect that pubs have on community cohesion and social well-being. No other community facility is open at any reasonable time and allows access without membership or prior booking. Effectively, you can walk down to the pub and mix with others of your community without prior organisation.

An important point to stress is that, while pubs are licensed premises, there is no compulsion to drink alcohol when visiting a pub (although we'd prefer that any alcohol that is consumed is good real ale!). It cannot be stressed strongly enough that losing a community pub creates far more fundamental and lasting damage to a community than depriving people of a place to drink alcohol. It removes the only low-cost, informal and impromptu local meeting place.

We stressed that it is vital to preserve the final social hub in a village or locality. There is no comparable venue in terms of social value as the local pub. Planning applicants often suggest that village halls, churches or even scout huts are

alternatives to the pub – these are not alternatives to a pub open seven days a week at lunchtime and in the evenings. Pubs are essentially to stop settlements from being converted from cohesive villages to dormitories with no value other than the sum of the individual housing values – something that should be reflected in any responsible planning policy.

We suggested that the council should consider disallowing 'permitted development rights' for pubs under which planning permission is not required to convert a pub to another commercial use (restaurant, religious establishment, betting shop, veterinary surgery, convenience store, offices etc.). We have lost many pubs in this way.

However, since our meeting, as many **CAMRA** members will know, successful lobbying at Westminster has achieved this objective with **CAMRA's** National Chairman, Colin Valentine, recently announcing that the government was to support an amendment that abolished these permitted development rights for pubs across the whole country.

We await the publication of the Wycombe local plan with interest and hope that it follows the enlightened lead of councils such as Southwark and Cambridge in recognising the importance of pubs. The willingness of Wycombe's planning department to hold this meeting with the local branch – and at a time out of normal office hours – gives us encouragement and the local branch would be keen to attend similar meetings with other planning authorities in our area.

A sobering postscript to the story of the **Bernard Arms** is that three months after the decision on the planning application was made there has been absolutely no change to the state of the site – except more instances of fly-tipping in the car park (see below).

Despite having been granted permission to demolish the building and replace it with housing, the developer is under no obligation to begin work at any time, if at all. This won't be of much comfort to some local residents, who were understandably keen for a decision to be made to bring a conclusion that would have removed the eyesore of a derelict pub from the locality.

When this happens is now entirely within the developers' hands. By contrast, had the application been refused, recent examples in other local authorities suggest that the council could have used powers to force the pub to be restored.



CO-OPERATIVE PUB WINS NATIONAL POTY AWARD



A small village pub which was saved from closure by the local community has won **CAMRA's National Pub of the Year** award – one of the most respected and well-known pub awards in the UK.

When the **George & Dragon** pub in Hudswell closed in 2008 it left the small North Yorkshire village with no other facilities for its residents apart from a village hall. Within two years, the community banded together to form the **Hudswell Community Pub Ltd** group and bought back the pub, reopening in June 2010 after extensive renovations.

The community was determined that the **George & Dragon** (pictured above - Photo: Brian Evans) would offer far more than a traditional pub. As well as acting as a meeting place and venue, it is also home to the village library, a local shop staffed by volunteers, community allotments and free internet access for its patrons.

CAMRA was particularly impressed with the pub's warm and welcoming

atmosphere and strong community ethos. The homely multi-roomed country inn has a large beer terrace offering fantastic panoramic views over the Swale Valley just a few miles from the market town of Richmond. In addition, the current landlord has shown a great passion for quality beer, greatly extending the range of real ales and cider available.

Paul Ainsworth, **CAMRA's Pub of the Year** Finalist Coordinator said: 'The **George & Dragon** is a great example of how a pub has been resurrected as a true community asset. To go from closed doors to winning **National Pub of the Year** in just a few short years is a fantastic achievement for any pub – and all the more impressive for one that is cooperatively owned.

The story of the **George & Dragon** goes to show that in the right hands a closed pub can become viable and successful. We are very impressed with the work the community group has undertaken to save their local and hope that other communities are encouraged by the example when faced with an ongoing battle to save their own local.'

Runners-up in the competition are the **Salutation Inn** in Ham, Gloucestershire, the **Stanford Arms** in Lowestoft, Norfolk and the **Swan with Two Necks** in Pendleton, Lancashire.

The **Cheltenham Motor Club** has won the **National Club of the Year** award for a second year. Since it first secured the coveted title in 2013, the club has

made significant improvements to its seating and bar area. This friendly and welcoming club, formed in 1906, usually has six real ales, three real ciders, a bottled beer bar and a Belgian draught beer.



Hidden Treasure Le De Spencers Arms



The 'Le De' is a little flint pub, nestling in the woods at the back of Downley Common surrounded by acres of beautiful AONB land with miles of trails. Making it the ideal refreshment stop after hiking or biking. Outside is a large attractive garden with a patio, prettily planted arbour and a safe children's play area. Landlady Sarah serves excellent home-cooked food alongside a great line-up of real ales and wines.

Visit our website for the menu, planned events, local walks and read some of the history of this 250 year old pub. Like us on our Facebook page and catch up with the locals.



01494 535317 www.ledespencersarms.co.uk
The Common, Downley, High Wycombe HP13 5YL



LOCAL NEWS

ASHENDON

All ales at the **Hundred of Ashendon** are well-kept locales. On tap, almost without exception, is *Hundred of Ashendon IPA* from **Vale**, usually accompanied by a second ale which, over the last few weeks has been *Rebellion IPA* or *Smuggler, Side Pocket for a Toad* from **Tring** or *Chiltern Gold*. Another regular is *XT 4* from **XT Brewery**.

Over the last few months, the pub has been recognised in the top 50 Gastropub Awards being awarded 37th place. It has also, for the second year in a row, been awarded a Bib Gourmand by the Michelin Guide. Despite the food awards, this is still very much a village pub where you can call in, enjoy a pint and receive a warm welcome from staff and locals alike.

AYLESBURY

At the end of April, the **Aristocrat** is due to have its outside (including signage) refurbished. The pub will remain open during the work and once it is completed it is planned to start doing food again.

The large garden at the back of the **Bricklayers Arms**, which includes a patio and a seated area for the smokers, is currently getting a makeover to prepare for the (hoped for) summer sun. The beers on offer when last visited were *London Pride* and *ESB* from **Fullers** and *Brains SA* and *Vale Wychert*.

The **Green Man** has reopened as a temporary measure whilst the owner (**Punch Taverns**) is attempting to find a buyer. *Fuller's London Pride* is on

offer. Currently the pub does not open on Mondays.

The **Hop Pole** is running a beer festival over Easter featuring over forth ales, craft beers and ciders.

The **Kingsbury** (formerly the **Litten Tree and Bar Med**) has changed into the **Feathers**. It features three regular beers: *Fuller's London Pride*, *Sharp's Doom Bar* and *Tring Ridgeway* plus one changing beer.

Chris Murch left the **Old Millwrights Arms** in mid-March and following a short closure the pub reopened under the management of Tom Davies and his wife Liz Hind. Although this is only Liz's second pub, Tom has a world of experience in the licensed trade (literally) as he has worked in a multitude of places including many in other countries. His last pub was the **Bell** in Clare, Suffolk, and he hopes to settle at the **OMA** for the next five years at least! The beers on offer when visited were *IPA*, *Abbot* and *Old Speckled Hen* from the **Greene King** stables, with *Timothy Taylor Landlord* and two beers from *Rebellion* waiting in the wings. It is hoped that the **SIBA** range of beers will add to the choices soon. Traditional pub food and pizzas will be available in the near future.

HARDWICK

The **Bell** had three ales on handpump at last visit. *Courage Directors*, *Vale VPA* and *Young's Bitter*. Up next are two from **Hook Norton**; *Hooky Gold* and an Easter themed ale – *Hop To It*. The *Directors* was in fine form when sampled. Bookings for meals over the Easter weekend are now recommended asap.

HIGH WYCOMBE

Fisher's Brewing Company has moved to a unit in the Central Park Business centre on Bellfield Road. They've just installed water and electricity at the site and the building work is taking place over the next few weeks. Two of the tanks have arrived too, albeit prematurely! They're also rebranding-more news next issue.

The **Beaconsfield Arms** is under new management! Tracey and Mark Thorne who have had various pubs in the south of England, are passionate about real ale and are currently serving two **Greene King** beers and one local ale. The pub has been recently decorated and they are aiming to maintain three ales subject to demand and possibly increase the number in the future.

The **Red Squirrel Brewery Shop** is now the **Mad Squirrel Brewery Shop** following the name change of the brewery.

The **Three Tuns** (formally the **Hobgoblin**) has reverted to its original name and has been refurbished with TV screens showing Sky sports and BT sports. Serving eight real ales, the pub features on our front cover in a photograph by Peter Hoade!

The **William Robert Loosley** may be closing for a refurbishment in the near future.

GREAT HAMPDEN

The **Hampden Arms** will be open all over the weekend of the Easter Bank Holiday. On the 1st of May Whitchurch Morris Men - will welcome in May Day by dancing outside the pub at 9am. on 15th May, MPS Awareness Day, there is a quiz starting at 8pm to raise money

for this amazing charity. £2 per team member, max 6 persons per team. £25 cash prize to winning team.

KNOTTY GREEN

As we stated in our last issue, the 300-year-old **Red Lion** faced closure after it was bought by developers to be turned into housing. These developers pulled out of the deal at the last minute following a campaign by the locals who were aided by **CAMRA** as we had listed the pub as an *Asset of Community Value* and voted it our *Winter Pub of the Year* for 2016. The **Red Lion** will now remain as a pub, with owners **Punch Taverns** looking at putting in a 'significant investment' to keep it open and running.

LUDGERSHALL

The **Bull & Butcher** is holding a beer festival over the weekend of 26th to 28th of May offering real ale, cider and wine plus live music and a pig roast.

MARLOW

The **Two Brewers** in St.Peter Street held Festiv-Ale over the weekend of 17th-19th March with ten beers including such delights as *41 Degrees South* from **Roosters Brewery** and *Twickenham's Naked Ladies*. 3rd pint tasting boards were available and 10% discount on the price of all beers was offered to **CAMRA** members. We look forward to their next festival if it is repeated in the future.

Friday 28th April until May Day Monday 1st May sees the Springfest 2017 beer festival at the **Royal British Legion Club**.

Over the weekend of Friday 2nd to Sunday 4th of June, Marlow Football Club are holding another beer festival

SMALL BATCH SPECIALS



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MILD

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following their successful one last year. Thirty beers and ciders will be available and the entry fee will be £5 (£2 for CAMRA members) which includes a souvenir glass and guide to the beers. While you have your diaries out, remember that the **Rebellion Brewery** Open Weekend is on Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th of July.

OAKLEY

Taking place on the 10th of June 2017 the fourth Oakfest Beer & Music Festival looks set to be the biggest and best yet. Taking place in the grounds of Oakley CofE Combined School the Festival raises funds for the school itself, the Pre-school and Oakley Church. There will be 11 top local bands and musicians playing from opening at 1pm, right through to midnight. All that music can be washed down with at least 10 casks of wonderful local real ales plus ciders, lagers, fabulous gins and much more, all at very favourable prices. This is a family friendly festival with plenty of activities for children of all ages - from a Bouncy Castle and Face Painting to Street Dance workshops and Axe Throwing! And if you ever fancied having a go at Zorbing, well, now's your chance! There is also a free film show for kids starting at around 7pm. Food is available all day from the barbecue and coffees and cakes are served all afternoon. Oakfest17 starts at 1pm and continues until midnight. There is plenty of parking available and for the first time, camping! More about Oakfest17 can be found at www.cuatoakfest.co.uk where you can also buy tickets online. All day entrance is only £10 for adults & £5 for children. *Pete Summerskill*

OVING

Brakspear Oxford Gold was accompanying **XT4** and **XT17** at a recent visit to the **Black Boy**. A new Spring Menu will help enjoyment of a meal here with that unique view over the vale as the weather brightens towards summer. The garden is open and future events include an Easter Egg Hunt (as weather permits over the Easter weekend) and more of the popular Quiz Nights on the last Tuesday of the month (booking recommended).

QUAINTON

Five ever-changing ales are kept at the **George & Dragon**, most recently seen were: **Chiltern Pride of Bucks & Berks** 4.2 **Hillfire** 3C 3.9%, **Vale Wyche** 3.9%, **Vale Fitzroy** 4% and **XT 4** 3.8%. Always an emphasis on local ales here. Events coming up in April start with Bingo Night Sunday 9th April, eyes down 7.30pm then Good Friday, 14th April is Fish and Gin Day, lunch and evening, and on Easter Sunday 16th April there is a Quiz Night from 7.30pm with teams of 4-6.

STEWKLEY

The **Swan** increased the range of ales to five in January - Three regulars and two guests - and with increasing popularity as their reputation for keeping these in fine condition grows, so has the number of different ales seen each week - some lasting only a day. All are supplied through **Enterprise** who have a much broader choice these days than previously. On the latest visit there was **Butcombe Bitter** 4%, **Courage Best** 4%,

Salopian Shropshire Gold 3.8%, **Taylor Landlord** 4.3% and **Thwaites Lancaster Bomber** 4.4%.

THAME

The **Falcon**, under the present management now for ten years (many congratulations) are Thame's cheapest pub by far. All **Hooky** beers are £2.95 but will be until the beer duty increase takes place. The three beers available when checked were **Old Hooky**, **Lion** and **Nice Try** which is soon to be replaced by **Hooky Gold**. They are promoting cheese and wine evenings on Thursdays, but will probably substitute the wine for one of the nice **Hooky** beers. Just ask. Meanwhile, the **Cross Keys** picked up another two awards - **Branch Pub of the Year** and **Cider Pub of the Year**. It has been spotted on Facebook that **Mr Splodge Mild** is being brewed. If it's on Facebook from the brewery, then it must be true, so check there to find out when it is available.

WING

Just after the last issue went to press the news came out that the **Queens Head** had closed. This was a reluctant decision taken by the owner as it had apparently been losing money for some time and had been on the market for the last six months. This is very sad news for the village of Wing which now has only one pub left - the **Cock**. Only a few years ago there were four. The **Dove** became the **Isha** restaurant a few years back and the **Sportsmans** became a private house last year. Sad news for our branch as the **Queens Head** was a regular entry in the **Good Beer Guide** for many years and has supported **Swan Supping** with regular advertising. The only good news is that the **Queens Head** is being sold as a pub and that owner Denise Redding will continue to run the **Stag** at nearby Mentmore.

WINSLOW

The twelfth beer festival that the Lions Club of Winslow has organised, which took place in March, raised over £11,000 and they are proud to say that to date the festivals have raised over £100,000, all of which has been used to fund many projects for the benefit of the communities in Winslow, the surrounding area and beyond.

WHITCHURCH

Three ales from the **Fullers** portfolio are currently on offer at the **White Swan** - **Gales Seafarers** 3.6%, **Fullers Olivers Island** 3.8% and **Fullers London Pride** 4.1%. As ever there are plenty of events coming up in this true village hub. April kicks off with a Meat Raffle on the 4th and the First Cornhole Tournament will be held on Easter Sunday at 5.30pm. There is a WI Plant Sale on the 22nd and on the week-end of 29th to May Day-Madness includes a pig roast, tug-o-war and live music. An Elvis Night will be held on 27th May and the now annual Whitstock Music and Cider Festival will take place on 28th, 29th and 30th July.

WOOBURN COMMON

The **Royal Standard** is holding a beer festival over the Bank Holiday weekend from Friday 28th of April to Monday 1st of May. One of the many beers that will be on offer will be **Selina Saison** from the nearby **moogBREW** brewery in Taplow.

6th Annual

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20 Real Ales & Ciders

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BRANCH CLUB AND PUB OF THE YEAR AWARDS



Club of the Year 2017

The **Royal British Legion** in Marlow has won the **Branch Club of the Year** for the fourth year in a row. The club has also gone on to win the regional club of the year in the three other years that it has won the award, and it is hoped that the club can also go on to do so again.

The hard work of the team has paid dividends as the club has gone from strength to strength. Highlights of the year include the May bank holiday beer festival as well as beer festivals on the August Bank holiday and just before Christmas. Members of **CAMRA** are permitted, on production of their membership cards, to free entry into the club. Regular visitors are however recommended to join the club itself.

Pub of the Year and Cider Pub of the Year

The **Cross Keys** in Thame has again done the double and been voted by members as the **Branch Pub of the Year** and **Cider Pub of the Year**. This is the third year running the pub has won the cider award and the pub had



also won **Branch Pub of the Year** in both 2012 and 2014.

Peter and Trudi Lambert have continued to build a place that has a great following. The pub's own brewed beers are eagerly awaited as are the annual beer festivals. It is hoped that the **Cross Keys** will perform even better than last year when it won the **Regional Pub of the Year** competition before falling at the next hurdle.

The **Royal Standard** in Wooburn Common came second in the race for the coveted title. Many thanks to all of those **CAMRA** members who entered the beer scores throughout of the year which are used in deciding the winners of these competitions.

David Roe.



WINTER ALES FESTIVAL

This year the **National Winter Ales Festival (NWAf) 2017** was held in Norwich city centre in a complex known as the Halls, between the 21st and 25th of February. The Halls is the most complete medieval friary complex surviving in this country and has been welcoming visitors since passing into civic hands in 1538. It's where the very popular **Norwich Beer Festival** takes place each October.

The **NWAf** was held in its two main halls. The first was St Andrews which housed the main bar and three brewery bars with local East Anglian ales from **Lacons**, **Green Jack** and the third 'Maris Otter' bar being a collaboration between the **Norfolk Brewhouse** and H Banham Ltd where, apart from East Anglian offerings there was 7.5% Barley Wine called *Invierno* from Spanish brewery **Cerveza Dougal**.

The second was Blackfriars which contained the Champion Beer Bar where amongst others, the finalists of the **National Winter Beer** of Britain were present. The winner being **Moor Beer Co's Old Freddy Walker**, a Bristol-brewed 7.3% Old Ale; not sampled by me I'm afraid.

Seating was also available in a marquee where I, with my companions, usually manage to find a seat. The ales I sampled were: **Trawler Boys** from **Green Jack**, a 4.6%, excellent bitter, named after the local football club, **Dark Mild** from **Bathams**, W Midlands, a 3.5% dark brown, fruity and malty ale, **XXXX Old** from **Harveys**, Sussex, a 4.3% pleasant old style mild, **Teakettle Stout** from one of our local breweries, **Tring**, a 4.7% and excellent traditional stout, **Black Jack** from **Cliff Quay**, Suffolk, a 4.2% porter with a very pleasant malty finish, **Liliths Lust** from **Horncastle brewery**, Lincolnshire, a very tasty 4.1% reddish bitter, **Saddle Black** from **Purity**, Warwickshire, an excellent 5.8% strong, dark bitter, **Dark Island** from **Orkney** brewery, a 4.6% dark mild, very good as usual from this brewery, with **Legacy** from **Lacons**, a 3.8% and excellent bitter to finish off with.

Yes, I liked them all and to whet your appetite here is one of those I sampled. Trouble is, amongst the many dark ales, I can't remember which one it is. Doesn't it look good though!

Peter Hoade



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STABLES BAR IN ASKETT



Over the last few years, the **Three Crowns** in Askett, near Prince Risborough, has built a considerable reputation for its food.

A recent refurbishment of the outbuildings attached to the pub has created the Stable Bar, a brand-new venue that's aimed at drinkers and informal diners, while the established pub building focuses on its restaurant trade. While always featuring real ale on the bar, the **Three Crowns** had recently been more gastro than pub, which makes the development of the Stable Bar such a welcome move.

The bar is run by Charles Ansell, who is keen to develop the local trade, as well as to appeal to ale drinkers from further afield. The pub is only quarter of a mile from the



300 and X30 bus routes between Aylesbury and Princes Risborough and a half-a-mile stroll from Monks Risborough railway station.



Light and airy with full-length windows, the bar is slightly larger than a micropub but still cosy in its proportions. It has been featuring two real ales, usually a combination of one national brand (such as **Fuller's London Pride** or **Greene King IPA**) alongside a beer from a local brewery. However, there are plans to expand the range to three handpumps, with one permanent national brand and two rotating **LocAles**.

The bar is closed on Mondays but currently open all day Tuesday to Saturday, 12 noon until 10pm, 12 noon until 6pm on Sunday.

Mike Clarke



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ALL CHANGE AT THE RISING SUN!

The **Rising Sun** is a beautiful 15th century thatched public house in the village of Ickford, in the Aylesbury Vale district of Buckinghamshire.

The pub has changed management after 17 years with the same landlord. Paul Honour along with Jan are going to be a hard act to follow as they made the pub a great part of the community.

They featured in the **Good Beer Guide** for many years and even got the pub back up and running after a disastrous fire closed the **Rising Sun** for many months. As far as we know, Paul is not taking on any other pubs, presumably taking a well-deserved rest, but he is moving to a house in Worminghall so he will still be around.



Sarah and Phil will be moving in and offering a warm welcome with a new menu and brand-new play equipment being put up in the large pub garden (see inset in the photograph below). The background is space they have cleared by taking the old climbing frame down.

and started a family.

Sarah has two young boys and the family will all be moving into the pub when everything is finalised. Sarah's husband Phil has worked in several pubs in the local area over the years and even used to work for Paul around ten years ago!

For beer, they intend to maintain Paul and Jan's standards and it's great for them to be able to showcase four different ales and feature a guest ale every week. The current beers are **Black Sheep Best Bitter**, **Adnams Southwold** and **Broadside**, with **Marston's EPA** and a new guest ale every week.

We all wish them every success! **David Roe**



Sarah is originally from West Yorkshire, near Wakefield and she moved to Ickford in 1997 and her family have lived there since then. She used to work in the **Old Fisherman** in Shabbington, operating front of house for around three years before she went to the University of Reading to study Graphic Design and Typography. After graduating she has been a self-employed freelance designer



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TWENTY YEARS OF 'SUPPING'



Early in 1997 Bryan Spink and I started compiling and editing a small branch newsletter. This was not the first for the branch as one had been prepared using a battered old typewriter which was ritually included in the branch assets for many years afterwards at every AGM! Don't know what happened to it though!

We needed a name for the new magazine and the blame for calling it *Swan Supping* is entirely due to me as I thought it was a nice play on words with the county symbol being a swan (in chains)

and the practice of Swan Upping in the south of the county is well known!

Having decided the name we needed a logo and this was provided by the mother of brothers Mark and Phil who are much better known for founding and running *Vale Brewery*.

The magazine was produced as camera-ready pages using an early version of Microsoft Publisher on Bryan's computer. Now we needed to get it printed! We hadn't any money as a branch so we took advantage of an offer from the *Hogshead* in Marlow who offered to print 1500 copies of the (only) six pages as part of their advertising budget as we included an advert for the pub. The second issue was increased to eight pages and again printed by the *Hogshead*.

We couldn't continue taking advantage of this arrangement and decided to chase for adverts to fund further issues and get the magazine printed professionally.

Twenty years later we have now printed over half a million copies of *Swan Supping* at a cost of over £170,000! And advertising has meant that we have also made a profit to go towards campaigning! We have steadily increased the number of copies over the years and the



current print run is 6000 copies. With the help of our current printers (Pelican) we made the transition to InDesign, a more professional desktop publishing system, and since issue 37 we produce files which are ready to be loaded into their computers to go straight to the presses. The turnaround time is now amazingly short which means the Local News section is as up-to-date as our information as the magazine hits the pubs and has only been a maximum of one day late on two occasions!

We introduced colour pages with issue 46 and did our first full-page cover photograph with issue 75 which was a major factor in our winning of the 'Most Improved *CAMRA* Magazine' shortly afterwards.

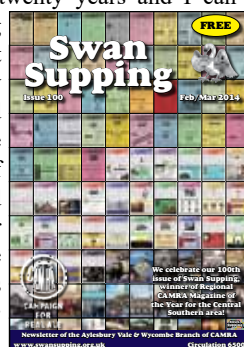


Unlike many other branches we have steadfastly clung to doing all the preparation work ourselves and refused offers from many firms to produce the magazine. This would mean that no profit could go to *CAMRA* (although no losses either).

It doesn't seem like twenty years and I can't promise to keep going for another twenty, but I'll do my best. By the way, I've included two of my favourite

covers: issue 92 where I put Big Ben in front of the title and issue 100, the one that I get asked about the most, which had a very glossy cover and showed the front of every issue we had done to that date. My thanks to everyone who has helped over the years!

David Roe



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CHAIRMAN'S THOUGHTS

**CAMRA
2017 AGM**

**&
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Bournemouth International Centre
7th - 9th April 2017

The *CAMRA AGM and Members Weekend* is approaching and it is being held in Bournemouth

on April 7th-9th where the revitalisation project will be discussed in great depth. Besides the meeting and the discussion groups there will be plenty of time to try loads of new pubs in the area.

Also with the lighter evenings we can look forward to some longer daylight to enjoy the pubs in our area. Maybe you have a walk that takes you to some of your favourite pubs — do let us know. Again looking forward to August the *GBBF* celebrates its 40th year, and returns to Olympia running from the 8th to the 12th - get your tickets which are now available online. If you are going to volunteer to help (many people enjoy doing this so much that they come back year after year) then the registration for volunteering opens I believe during or just after the AGM/members weekend.

As you will have seen in this issue the *Cross Keys* in Thame is our *POTY* and *Cider POTY*, with the *Royal Standard*, Wooburn Common being the runner up in the *POTY* competition



Our club of the year is the *Royal British Legion*, Marlow. If your favourite pub or club isn't featured, then remember that it is up to *CAMRA* members to put loads of beer scores into What Pub so it is in with a chance for next year. Please remember if they don't get scores throughout the year they can't be considered for the *Good Beer Guide*. Many thanks to all of those that beer scored not only the *Cross Keys*, but also all the other pubs in our branch area and to those that subsequently voted in the branch pub of the year competition. It is only through beer scores that pubs are considered for the pub of the year award and *Good Beer Guide* entry.

Simon Isted, AV&W Branch Chairman.

A new website for Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe branch of CAMRA

No doubt some members of *CAMRA* and the public at large have noticed that our website — swansupping.org.uk — is in a pretty sorry state; both deficient in up-to-date and meaningful information, and no longer really in a maintainable state.

The good news is that we are in the process of moving to new *CAMRA* software, with hosting, that is in use by many other branches. We will attempt to manage the move and ongoing content management with the very limited, and largely non-IT literate, resources available to us amongst the committee and a few active members.

However, in order that this should be a success it requires, ideally, some help from one or more of our branch members, with some experience of administering and/or maintaining websites, who would be prepared to assist in finalising the content and, perhaps, support ongoing maintenance.

We'll do the best we can with our existing resources but to make this a really successful venture it needs this additional input.

I will be familiarising myself with the new platform in the weeks ahead and would be happy to meet with anyone interested in becoming involved. I can be contacted by email to peterwh@sky.com

Peter Hoade

<Please note: The existing website and email addresses referred to throughout the magazine will continue to be valid until the new website is in place. Keep heading to your local pub, brewery or beer festival to pick up future copies of Swan Supping for further details as we progress though what is a major project for the branch and its limited number of active members. - Ed.>

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SOUNDING (OFF) BOARD

PULLING THROUGH AT THE START OF A SESSION:

'THE FIRST PINT OUT OF THE PIPES'

*This is the first of what I hope may be a regular feature in **Swan Supping** in which readers' thoughts and opinions on issues concerning pubs can be aired for comment by others. Please send your comments to editor@swansupping.org.uk.*



I do get irritated when I am offered a pint of warm, stale or oxidised beer at the start of usually a lunchtime session when it has been sitting in the lines overnight and has not been pulled through or even checked for quality. Sometimes this only becomes evident once say half of the pint has been drunk as only the first half dispensed first into the glass is of poor quality.

Many good pubs ensure that the beer is checked and if necessary pulled through so that their customers are always served beer in the best condition. But sadly there all too many pubs where pulling through does not happen as a matter of daily routine usually on mistaken, cost-saving grounds in my view.

Drinking a pint of poor quality beer is hardly the way to encourage a drinker to order another or even to come back to that pub. Real ale needs looking after – some wastage is inevitable. In some cases pulled-through beer might be suitable for use in cooking.

Below are some recent case studies.

1. A community-owned pub between Aylesbury and Haddenham

In early February I visited this pub for lunch. I arrived at about 12.30 and asked for a pint of **Rebellion IPA**. It soon became evident that it was slightly oxidised and rather unpalatable. At first as there was someone sitting at the small bar I felt disinclined to raise the matter with the bar staff so I resigned myself to scoring the beer 1 (poor) in the **What Pub** beer scoring system (see top right) which is used for deciding on entries for the **CAMRA Good Beer Guide**.

I also decided not to have another beer in there but to go on to another pub straight after lunch. An opportunity arose, however, to raise the matter quietly with the two bar staff. I asked whether the pint was the first out of the lines that session and they said it was. They also said that the **IPA** cask was 'fresh on yesterday'. I expressed my disappointment that oxidised beer should be served and asked whether the pump had been pulled through whereupon they explained that the licensee had expressly forbidden them to do so, on cost grounds. We had a most constructive and friendly discussion about this subject and the barman obligingly changed my remaining half-pint for a full one in much better condition. Needless to say I went on to have another and scored it much higher in **What Pub**, disregarding the first pint I had.

Later that day, having first checked with the bar staff that they would not be embarrassed by my taking the issue further, I e-mailed the licensee setting out the above facts. I concluded by explaining that I understood that pulling beer through at the start of each lunchtime session potentially can be very costly but I invited her to consider that beer consistently offered in optimum condition and temperature is highly likely to result in more sales. On the other hand serving slightly warm/flat/oxidised beer, typically beer which has sat in the handpump lines overnight could well have the opposite effect.

She replied promptly thanking me for my comments, assuring me that she took them very seriously, but then wrote 'I wish you had said something as soon as you had your first pint even if there was a customer at the bar, my staff would have change it immediately and all of this would have been avoided. We do try to provide beer in good condition. We will take your comments on board and review our procedures'.

My reply to this was 'Thanks for your positive response. I think you misunderstand however. Nothing would have been avoided if I had spoken up immediately in front of another customer rather than wait until I was able to have a quiet word without embarrassing anyone.

Either way I would have been served a poor pint unnecessarily. But what

would have prevented all this would have been an automatic check on the quality of the beer before it was served, being the first out of the lines for some 13 hours. This is basic real ale management and I am surprised indeed that you do not permit your staff to pull through if they discover that is what is needed. When you have reviewed your procedures would you be willing please to let me know the outcome?' I heard no more from her. I haven't been back yet to find out the outcome.

2. A recently reopened pub in Wendover

As I arrived through the door, again at about 12.30, for lunch one day in mid-March, the new licensee happened to be standing behind the inviting four handpumps facing me. He welcomed me in and offered me the information, unsolicited, that he had completed a course in cellar management and that all the beers had been pulled through ready for the lunchtime session.

I ordered a pint of **Tring Side Pocket for a Toad** and it was perfect – as were the other two pints of **Rebellion IPA** and **Chiltern Beechwood** I had to follow. The beers I had were great, the licensee was clearly committed to serving it in tip-top condition, his staff were trained to do the same and the food was good – definitely a pub to go back to soon and support.

What do you think ? Do you agree or disagree with my views or have experiences of your own to share ? Are you a licensee wanting to put your side of the story ? Do get in touch.

Giles du Boulay

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.

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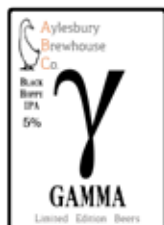
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LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

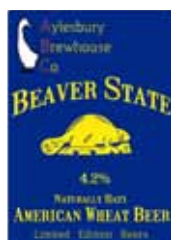
Aylesbury Brewhouse Co.

After a short absence due to a change in personnel, new brewer Ben Amos is now at the helm and the **Aylesbury Brewhouse** is up and running once again. Very little else has changed, with the brewery still focused on producing single batch limited edition craft beers that are both interesting and enjoyable to make and drink, taking inspiration from different brewing cultures and styles from across the globe.



Gamma - 5.0%. The first outing for the new brewer! Once seen as a contradiction of terms, Black IPA has become one of the most recognised styles to come out of the craft beer boom.

Beaver State - 4.2%. An American adaptation of a classic Bavarian hefeweizen. First brewed by Widmer brothers in the mid-80's in Portland



Oregon, the beaver state.



Supernova - 4.8%. A rye pale ale. Supernovae are amongst the most spectacular cosmic events. This supernova is an explosion of flavour with spicy rye malts balanced with tropical and citrus American hops.



City of Gold - 4.6%. A British golden ale named for the mythical city of Eldorado. Made with Maris Otter malts and heavily hopped with British Fuggles and American Eldorado hops.

Chiltern Brewery

Chiltern Brewery launched a new limited edition ale – *Pride of Bucks*

and *Berks* (4.2% vol) in March, celebrating a top award won by the brewery. 'Pride of' is a charity ale too. Every pint of the ale sold raises 5p for registered charity Horatio's Garden and specifically for the project to create and care for an accessible garden sanctuary in the spinal injuries unit at Stoke Mandeville, that will provide solace for patients.



Dark amber with a smooth roast malt taste and a citrusy aroma, the ale uses the best Class A Maris Otter, Crystal and Roast Barley malts combined with Goldings, Fuggles and Cascade hops to produce a classic English best bitter that matches beautifully with a Ploughman's lunch, chicken, pork, salads and stews. It is available to Click & Collect online at www.chilternbrewery.co.uk and at their brewery shop in Terrick. You will also spot the beer on tap at many pubs in the area and it has been enjoyed in the **Kings Head**, Aylesbury.

Brothers George and Tom Jenkinson and the **Chiltern Brewery** team were voted 'The Pride of Buckinghamshire and Berkshire Life' last year and we featured the award in issue 115.

Malt The Brewery



Malt The Brewery's new shop and tasting room (pictured above) is worth a visit following some big recent changes. In addition to the range of real ales they produce on site in Prestwood, there is also a range of carefully selected local produce, including ciders and wines also made here in the Chiltern Hills.

There's still a 'direct from the source' feeling at the brewery and the new large gallery window overlooking the brewing hall means visitors can enjoy a view of the 'brew-house' whilst shopping or enjoying an 'Ale Flight' at the Tasting Station (pictured above).

Malt The Brewery launched their all new 'Shop, Taste and Tour' offer in January this year. You no longer need to wait for the monthly tour date to go round. **Malt The Brewery** is now open seven days a week. See their website for more details at www.maltthebrewery.co.uk



In addition to the brewery's core ales, the month of May will see two additional brews. **Malt The Brewery's** award winning *Dark Ale* will be available for those celebrating Mild May and the ever popular **Malt Summer Daze** will be ready for the May Bank holiday.



Rebellion Brewery

Zebedee and *Roasted Nuts* are now being brewed full time by popular demand. Their 5% Hoppy American IPA style golden beer, *24 Carat*, is back in stock.

The monthly specials continue with:



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MORE LOCAL BREWERY NEWS



April – *The Bard* 4.2% – Amber & Citrus
May – *Angel* 4.2% – Red & Floral
June – *Monarch* 4.2% – Tawny & Fruity

As part of the ongoing brewery development, work has now started on the cask cleaning and racking area (pictured above). They have moved the cask cleaner and the cask racker (filler) to make space for a kegging line they'll need for the new lager due later in the spring.



Tring Brewery

Tring Brewery continue to experiment with their small batch specials with the release of an *India Stout*, a *Pilsner* (both featured last issue) and a *Breakfast Stout*. These beers are the results of experimentation on their pilot kit and are available on draft through the brewery shop. With the great feedback on all small batch brews to date and the imminent commissioning of a new eight barrel kit to complement the existing 30 barrel, there's likely to be a lot more hitting the pumps in the coming months. Keep an eye out.

Beer aside, the brewery continue with their incredible charitable work. Having donated £2400 to the de Havilland Aircraft Museum, the brewery are now working to raise money for Herts Air Ambulance.

And finally, after over eight years, starting with a year of brewing before moving onto marketing activities, Ben Marston, who provides these updates is leaving *Tring Brewery* to apply himself full time to a business he launched with his wife in 2016, Puddingstone Distillery, the home of Campfire Gin. We thank Ben for all his contributions and wish him luck for the future!

Vale Brewery

Just Like That 3.9% - Fez Red.

April sees *Vale's* tribute to the great Tommy Cooper. Roasted malt character with a combination of spicy, floral English hops make this a classic beer for a classic comedian: Just like that!

Fork Handles 4.2% Blonde.

We doff our caps to another British comedy classic with this blonde ale brewed with pale English malt. The hops are all English too.

One More Thing 4.0% Amber.

Vale fly across the pond for their June special. Lieutenant Columbo is a long time favourite with their head brewer, and he has created this fantastic American amber ale, with ultra citrusy American hops. Marking the immortal detective and the onset of spring: the case is solved.



XT Brewery

XT have completed the refurbishment of their brewery shop and tasting room. The new look is designed for the beer lover who wants to sample a selection of draught *XT* and *Animal* beers where they are brewed. The improved tasting room will have longer opening hours and a wider range of beers and other drinks for you to try and buy.

XT is a founding member of the *Oxford Brewers Alliance*, which is a group of 14 local breweries. The *Alliance* is promoting Oxford Beer Week from 30th April to 6th May which is a series of events to be held in pubs in and around Oxford. The Beer Week aims to promote the wide range of wonderful locally produced beers and the breweries behind them. Look for updates on oxfordbrewers.org or on their facebook page: /oxbeerweek or twitter @oxbeerweek



May 6th is the date for the *XT Brewery* Spring Open Day – from 10:30am to 4:30pm – free entry, a wide selection of beers at very reasonable prices to try along with local food and music. A great family day out and the closing event of the Beer Week.

New beers for spring will include: *XT 666* – the number of the yeast beast, weighing in at 6.66% South Seas Black Magic, a dark and moody beer heavily hopped with Green Bullet, Wakatu, and Dr Rudi hops from New Zealand. They say the Devil finds wort for idle hands.



The National Trust Waddesdon estate commissioned *XT* to brew another batch of the *Quince Ale* – made with quince from the famous Rothschild estate. This special ale will only be available from the Waddesdon shop.

The *Animal* range is joined by *ORCA* – a 4.6% 'SMASH' beer: Single Malt Single Hop – pale English Maris Otter malt paired with Wakatu hops highlighting a perfect pair!

THE HOP POLE

EASTER BEER FESTIVAL

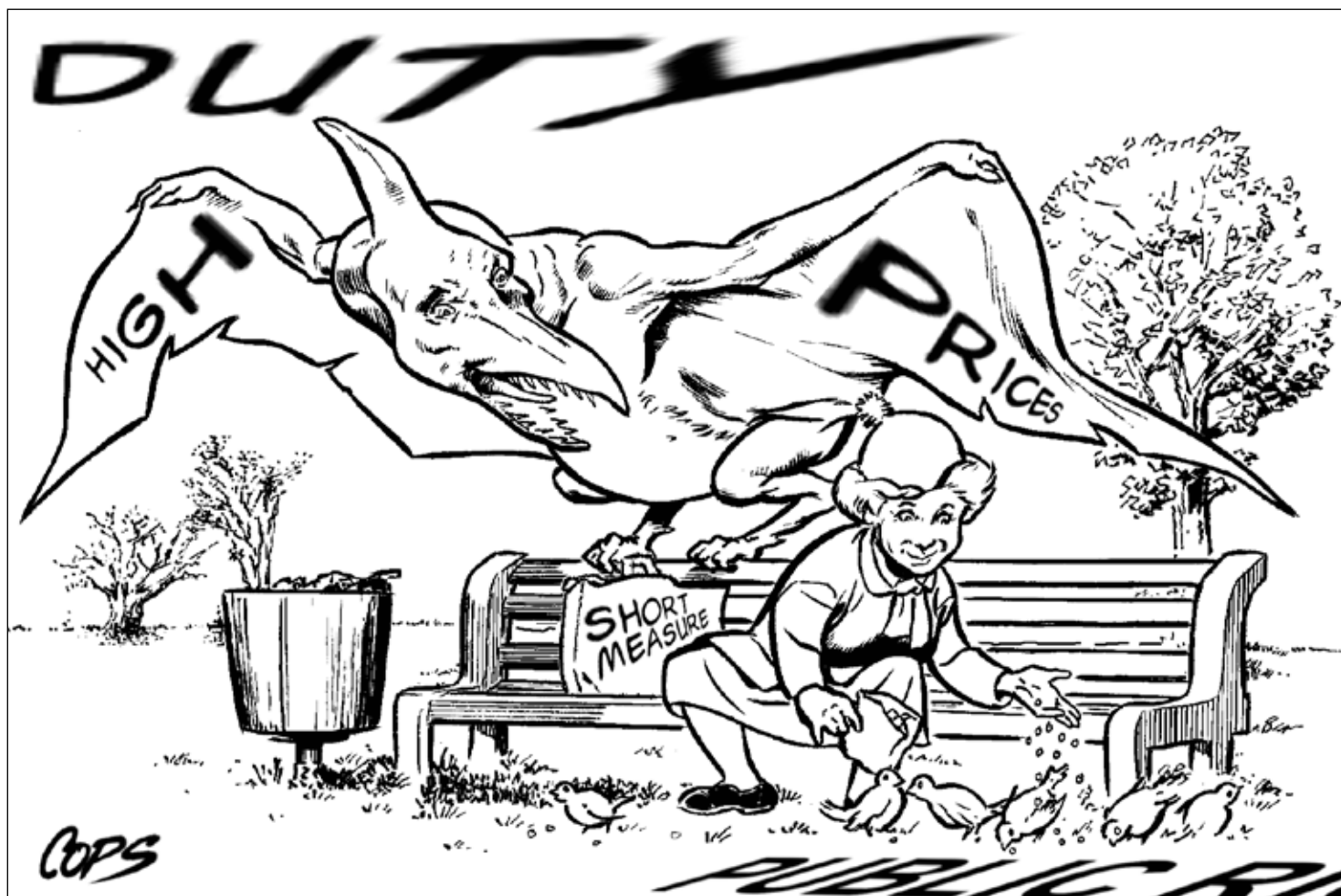
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GRAVEDIGGERS - PART FORTY-FIVE

Spring 1997

It was a chilly, April evening in the public bar of the **Gravediggers' Arms** and Old Joe had a spare cigarette at the ready and his lighter ready to flick into action as the cigarette dangling from his lips was perilously close to burning out. With the skill of over sixty years' expert practice, he swapped the dog-end for its newly-lit replacement without missing a wheezing breath.

Old Joe inhaled deeply, threw the extinguished fag on the pub floorboards and doubled over in a thirty-second coughing fit. 'Your good health,' Old Pete toasted him, downing a rancid, flat pint of *Lemmings Bitter* – a beer found ubiquitously all over the country supposedly brewed by old beerage firm *Coward's* but, in reality, concocted in a chemical works in Port Talbot by *Coward's* new owner – *Dingo's Dipstick* of New South Wales.

As the smoke cleared, the outline of a man with a clipboard and a beard appeared at the bar.

'I'm looking for the Old family,' the man said to Sharon, the brassy blonde barmaid. 'Er, Pete, Joe, Moses. I need to settle up with them.'

'You'll have trouble seeing 'em in here darling but you might find 'em by smell.'

'Is that because of the job I gave them draining the sewage works in the valley?' he asked.

'Nah. They always smell like that.'

Hearing a mention of money, the locals descended on the man like locusts. It was the first paid work they'd done in the past twenty years.

'Now, you understand that you did this job in strictest secrecy and that not a word of this is to be breathed to anyone who might go anywhere near London?' the man asked.

'London?' Old Moses muttered, confused.

'It's this big place, Old Moses,' Sharon said. 'Two pounds a pint there, people say.'

Old Moses fell off his bar stool in shock.

'The chances of this lot going anywhere near London are about as high as any new decent beer coming out of the place,' Sharon said. 'Or them having the Olympics there.'

Satisfied, the man handed over a wad of brown envelopes to the locals. Before they could get their hands on the money, Sharon immediately grabbed a wad of notes from each. 'That takes care of the last six months of your *Filthney's Best* debt.'

Old Pete was left holding a handful of coins. He trudged over to the cigarette machine to dispose of the majority while Very Young Duwayne managed to pick up a few ten pence pieces that had dropped out of Old Pete's shaking hand, which he used to put the Spice Girls' latest single on the jukebox.

The pall of smoke from the bar drifted across the pub to settle over a party of strangers who'd inexplicably been booked into the mouldy, pest-infested guest bedrooms above the **Gravediggers**.



Even more recklessly, the four guests had decided to eat in the pub. Sharon had told them that the night's 'special' was a trendy sharing platter of Mexican enchiladas and burritos. In reality, the dish was sludge Sharon had scraped out of the bottom of the kitchen fridge salad drawer and wrapped up in pieces of shredded mouldy dishcloth.

One of the party, an exceptionally tall man who was wearing a Union Jack waistcoat, approached the bar, ostentatiously gyrating to the sounds of the Posh, Sporty, Baby, Scary and Ginger.

'Yeah, baby, this Cool Britannia is so groovy, man,' he declared. 'I'll have two pints of *Honest Tony's* and another of *Dodgy Dossier*, good serving woman. Here's five pounds, keep the change.'

The locals stared at the man incredulously. 'Are you from Lon—Lon—London?'

'Oh, yeah, baby. Don't mind me. I'm an ac-tor,' he replied. 'My darling friends and I are just about to start shooting a mega-series for the BBC in a purpose-built outdoor set just down the road.'

'So what part are you playing?' Old Moses asked.

'Erm, it's a metaphorical trope that pushes the boundary of gender identity and offers a subversive take on the encroachment of televisual culture,' the actor replied, ambiguously.

'Definitely from London – or I've had way too much *Filthney's*,' Old Pete said.

As the actor delivered his drinks to his friends, a rather tiny woman in the party suddenly stood up, holding her stomach. The other two in the party started to grimace and they all made a run for it into the toilets.

After much groaning and wailing, which the regulars couldn't decide was the sound of terrible food poisoning or the actors reciting their lines, the man in the Union Jack waistcoat crawled towards the bar.

'Is there a payphone in the pub?' he asked, desperately proffering a twenty-pence piece. 'Filming starts tomorrow morning and I need to tell the director that he must find understudies immediately.'

'Understudies?' Sharon asked. 'The **Gravediggers** is in the middle of nowhere. How on earth will he find anyone?'

'Who'd have thought they'd build a house like that on the old sewage works?' Old Joe asked early next morning, surveying the structure the television company had built on the site they'd previously cleared.

'I suppose the filter bed was round,' Old Pete replied.

'But to have no windows and make it dome shaped with all that grass on the top?' Old Moses added, puzzled.

'And the big windmill? Don't they realise there's a beautiful nuclear power station around the corner?' Old Pete said.

'These furry costumes aren't half warm, though – and this very fetching shade of purple means I can vomit down it without anyone noticing – much,' Old Joe said.

'Good they decided to get rid of the script when they gave us the job,' Old Pete said. 'I'd never have remembered my lines – even if I was sober.'

'You'd have had to learn to read first to have learned 'em,' Old Moses said.

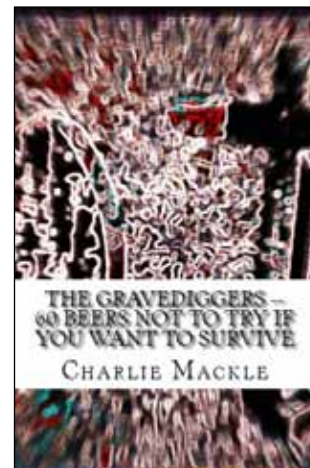
Sharon appeared on the set with a barrel of *Dipsomaniac La-Lager* as the regulars swilled a last few pints before putting their costumes' heads on for the next take.

'Drink up, understudies!' the director yelled into his megaphone. 'Time for you to you improvise as much complete gibberish as possible!'

'These understudies are well and truly typecast,' Sharon said as the locals repeatedly bumped into each other and fell over.

Charlie Mackle

An updated edition of the collected **Gravediggers** instalments up to part 40 will imminently be available as a paperback book with profits contributing towards **CAMRA**. It will also have as an appendix a list of all the foul brews mentioned in the text plus notes on the beer styles - especially for the tickers.



Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

April

Monday 3rd BRANCH MEETING

8.00pm, Whiteleaf Cross, Princes Risborough.

Friday 7th - Sunday 9th CAMRA's AGM & MEMBERS' WEEKEND

Bournemouth International Centre, Exeter Rd, Bournemouth.

Tuesday 11th HIGH WYCOMBE UPDATED PUBS SOCIAL,

7.30pm Three Tuns, 9.00pm William Robert Loosley.

Friday 14th GOOD FRIDAY BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

12 noon, Hop Pole, Aylesbury

Sunday 16th SUNDAY LUNCH SOCIAL

2.00pm, Swan, Great Kimble.

Tuesday 18th REFURBISHED PUB SOCIAL

8.00pm, Crown, Radnage.

Wednesday 26th OVER THE BORDER SOCIAL

6.30pm Jolly Cricketers', Seer Green.

May

Wednesday 3rd NEW BAR SOCIAL

7.00pm, Stable Bar, Three Crowns, Askett.

Monday 8th BRANCH MEETING

8.00pm, Wheel, Naphill.

Wednesday 17th SOCIAL

8.00pm, Seven Stars, Dinton, 9.00pm Bell, Chearsley,

Tuesday 23rd May, SOCIAL

7.00pm, Golden Cross, Saunderton, 8.00pm, Boot, Bledlow Ridge

June

Saturday 10th TIM DAWE MEMORIAL PUB CRAWL

Pub crawl of Rugby in memory of one of our former committee members, starting at 12 Noon. Full details next issue.

July

Saturday 8th BLACK COUNTRY COACH TRIP

The best day of the year. Full details next issue

Further details can be found on our website

www.swansupping.org.uk, facebook
and [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com)

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Swan Supping

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Copy deadline for next issue (due out 1st June) is 14th May 2017.

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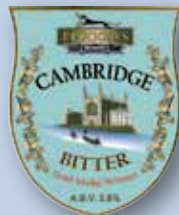
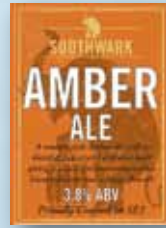
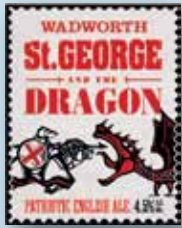
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