

FREE

Swan Supping

Issue 95

Apr/May 2013



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

COVER STORY
The Garibaldi
at Bourne End

owned by its community
See page 4

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NEWS FROM THE EDITOR



Beer Tax Victory

Obviously the main news is the fact that in the recent Budget the despised Beer Escalator has been stopped and we even got the reduction of a penny off a pint as well. We should be pleased that the Government has finally realised that adding even more tax on beer, especially when a third of the price already goes to them, had reached the stage where any increase is counter-productive.

Since the duty escalator was introduced in 2008, 5800 pubs have been forced to close for good with the consequent loss of jobs

and revenue plus the damage to local communities. This news is covered in more detail elsewhere in the magazine, but I'd just like to add my thanks to all those **CAMRA** members who took part in the mass lobby of Parliament in December or wrote to their MP, especially those from our branch and to Jackie Parker, the Regional Director who organised the whole shebang. The lobby was a great influence on the Chancellor's decision and shows that ordinary members of the public can make a difference.

We still have a lot more work to do, especially trying to counter the damage caused by cheap beer from supermarkets and expensive beer from pubcos. If you feel that the pub is an institution worth preserving, then why not get involved!

Branch Activities

At the beginning of February we had a very enjoyable brewery visit to **Tring**. We were made very welcome and everyone enjoyed the beer and the informative tour of their new premises.

It was just a bit of a shame that we had spare places on the trip which went begging. Perhaps the appeal of free beer isn't as attractive as it used to be. However, we did have a few new faces and we all hope that they will be

back for more! Many thanks to all at **Tring Brewery** for their hospitality.

The brewery visit was followed by a mini tour of the town's pubs and it was great to see Stuart Brierley at the new **Vale** pub, the **Castle Inn**, as he was well known for his many years at the **Bull** in Stoke Mandeville, which featured in the **Good Beer Guide** for many years..

The branch has also been setting up a database for all our public houses (past and present) and clubs. As this covers hundreds of establishments we need help in getting all the required data together. Please contact me (details on page 22) if you are a local **CAMRA** member and fancy collecting information about your local pubs and haven't got involved already.

Pub of the Year

Over the last two issues we have been asking for votes for the **Pub of the Year**. Five pubs had been short-listed and each of them received votes, but the eventual winner was the **Kings Head** in Aylesbury. This is the second time the **Kings Head** has won (the previous time was in 2006) and has been consistently popular since it has been run by **Chiltern Brewery**.

A presentation of the **POTY** certificate will be made on Wednesday April 3rd at lunchtime (so we can hopefully get the press involved) followed by a social in the evening.

John Bazin

John Bazin, well-loved member of the branch, is currently gravely ill and is in Wycombe Hospital. We all send him, his wife Mary, friends and family, our best wishes for a swift recovery. John has been involved with **CAMRA** since the seventies and despite his advancing years has been taking part in as many ways as he can manage. Get well soon John. The branch isn't the same without you.

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 once again to Colin Stanford for the cartoon.

Cheers!

David W. Roe - *Swan Supping* Editor

NATIONAL CAMRA NEWS



Converted Hardware Store judged Britain's Best Pub!

The **Baum**, Rochdale, Lancashire, has been crowned the best pub in Britain by **CAMRA**.

CAMRA's National Pub of the Year competition recognises all the criteria that make a great pub, including atmosphere, decor, welcome, service, value for money, customer mix, but most importantly, the quality of the beer.

The building, which sits next door to the Pioneers Museum, which is the original Co-op store, has only been a pub for around thirty years and was converted from Morris's Hardware Store in the 1980's.

Simon Crompton, one of the owners, started work in the **Baum** in 1993 and became manager in 1994. In 2005, Simon and his wife Heidi, who co-owns

the business, bought the pub just two days after having their first child.

On hearing the news, Heidi Crompton said, 'We were ecstatic to hear that we had been voted **CAMRA's National Pub of the Year**. We are very proud of the team that have played an important role in the **Baum's** success and it is a testament to their hard work that the consumers have recognised our pub with this prestigious award.'

Heidi continued, 'We are a family run pub with our values influencing every aspect of the business in relationships with our staff and suppliers. We are dedicated to the 'buy local, shop local' initiative, always willing to support independent businesses. The support from the regular customers and local **CAMRA** members is valued and we would like to thank everyone for their continued support.'

CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2013 describes the pub as 'A split-level hostelry with old world charm next door to the world's first co-operative store. The **Baum** has eight handpumps, one dedicated to cider, and a large variety of continental bottled beers. Excellent food includes vegetarian dishes, with a tapas menu available throughout the week. There is an upstairs dining / function room. The large rear garden, over looked by a conservatory, contains two full-size pétanque pistes.'

Peter Alexander, Chairman of **Rochdale, Oldham and Bury CAMRA** said, 'Clearly we are absolutely thrilled that the **Baum** has been chosen as **CAMRA's National Pub of the Year**. While we locally know how good a pub the **Baum** is, it is fantastic to have this confirmed by senior judges who have never visited it before.'

'Given that the **Baum** was up against some tremendously fierce competition, Simon and Heidi have done a tremendous job. There is no higher accolade in pub awards and we in the local **CAMRA** branch are very proud to have Britain's best pub in our area.'

The other finalists were: **Bridge End Inn**, Ruabon, Wrexham, **Conqueror Alehouse**, Ramsgate, Kent, and the **Tom Copley Tavern**, Spreyton, Devon.

GARIBALDI TAKES THE BISCUIT



Our cover picture is of the interior at the newly saved **Garibaldi** in Bourne End. Featured behind the handpumps is the wonderfully named Paul Newman, who is the temporary landlord who is in charge until a full-time appointment is made. The hope is that a couple will take over the pub which would enable them to offer food on a regular basis.

This traditional 19th century pub, named after Guiseppe Garibaldi's visit to nearby Cliveden in 1864, has been the centre of the local community for more than a century. The **Garibaldi** was rescued from probable conversion into a house as its previous owner, **Punch Taverns**, had put it up for sale. A consortium of local villagers started a 'Save the **Garibaldi**' campaign and together raised £376k out of a target of £400k and bought the pub. They are still raising funds and if you are interested in supporting, or running the pub, please email: info@garibaldipub.co.uk.

As soon as you walk in the pub you can see that it was worth saving. That is not just due to the three handpumps that greet you (serving two beers from **Vale** plus **Sharps Doom Bar** when visited) but the general feel of the place

which is traditional and welcoming. Although it is open plan and is still awaiting refurbishment, it was obvious that there are different areas to cater for the whole community, not just one section of it.

Bourne End, Wooburn Green and neighbouring villages used to have a large choice of pubs for local drinkers to enjoy. However, the situation has changed drastically over the last few years with many having closed, been converted into a Gastro Pub or turned into yet another restaurant.

The **Firefly**, (previously the **Station Hotel**) is currently boarded up and there are many rumours as to its future. The **Heart in Hand** on Cores End Road, which used to feature regularly in the **Good Beer Guide** in the Seventies and early Eighties when it was a **Wethereds** outlet, is now a Thai restaurant. The **Red Lion** (also called **Masons** when it was more of a wine bar) was an Egyptian restaurant (now closed)! The **Spade Oak** still continues to operate but is reported to have lost a lot of its character and is more of a restaurant than a pub. The **Walnut Tree**, is more of a Gastro Pub, and seems to have lost its sense of community along with many of its regulars as they feel unwelcome if they are not buying a meal.



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LOCAL NEWS

ASHENDON

The **Gatehangers** regularly serves **Tring** and **XT** ales alongside the ever popular **Greene King IPA**.

ASTON CLINTON

There will be a beer festival at the **Hub** over the weekend of Friday 12th to Sunday 14th of July. Thirty real ales plus cider will be accompanied by a hog roast and live music.

The **Oak** is holding its second Cider Festival on Sunday 5th of May. There will be a selection of at least ten ciders plus two real ales on offer. There is also a barbecue, a hog roast plus music hosted by Mark Scobey.

AYLESBURY

There is a 'Meet the Brewer' evening on Tuesday 16th April from 8pm at the **Bell**. The head brewer from **Hopping Mad Brewery** will be there to discuss his various brews, four or five of which will be available for the festival price of £2.15 a pint.

The mystery beer bringing the recent celebration of porters and stouts at the **Kings Head** to a glorious close was a pin of **Champion Beer of Britain** winner **Coniston No.9** matured in one of **Chiltern's** oak casks - in effect a world first for this acclaimed barley wine.

The landlord changes continue at the **Queens Head**. A pub group have taken on this **Punch** owned establishment and are taking their time as they try to steadily build up the trade. This pub is very much a work in progress, so be

patient, it will eventually get back to somewhere near the classic it was.

BIERTON

Amanda and Martin at the **Bell** have introduced an authentic Thai food (only) menu offering locals a change from the usual 'pub grub'. They are also taking over the 'barn' at Bierton Golf Club promoting it as a conference centre and party venue. They plan to offer real ales from local breweries only and a beer festival at the end of May.

BRYANTS BOTTOM

On a snowy, Saturday 23rd of March, Wendy and Graham celebrated their first anniversary at the **Gate**. Probably the highlight of the year was the Jubilee Day in June, when the pub was literally swamped by villagers and visitors alike, enjoying the bonfire, hog roast and Morris Men and, of course the ale!

This free house, in a delightful rural Chilterns setting, serves four cask ales: currently **London Pride** and **Doom Bar** (the regulars); plus **Greene King IPA Reserve** and **McMullen's Country Bitter**. Local breweries are also regularly featured, including **Malt the Brewer**, **Vale** and **Rebellion**. The large garden, recently extended to include extra seating also has a large children's play area. We wish them continuing success in the years ahead.

BUTLER'S CROSS

Local ales recently enjoyed at the **Russell Arms** have included **Chiltern Beechwood** and **Chiltern Ale** and two from **XT** including **13** - their simply superb 'Pacific Red Ale' special - an ideal accompaniment to one of the pub's

delicious 'light bites' from their bar menu.

CUBLINGTON

A beer festival will be held at the **Unicorn** over the bank holiday weekend, 3rd, 4th and 5th of May. This will include a beer and sausages event on the Saturday. Live Folk music nights are held on the second Tuesday of each month from 8pm.

DOWNLEY

Allie Hill took over ownership of the **Bricklayers Arms** four months ago. She is also owner of **Scorpios** in High Wycombe, which has real ales on offer. The **Brickies** is currently offering three **Rebellion** 'bright' ales - **Mutiny**, **Zebedee** and the monthly special **Infiltrator**. If sales increase cask ale may be an option. Offering bright ales is probably a sensible option for this pub for now as it has struggled to sell sufficient cask ale in the past.

EMMINGTON

The **Inn at Emmington** serves **Fullers London Pride** and **Brakspear Bitter**. Guest ales tend to be from **Rebellion**, **Chiltern** or **XT**. **Chiltern 300 Old Ale** (4.9%) will be available as spring materialises.

FARNHAM ROYAL

Farnham Royal Cricket Club are holding a beer festival from Friday 5th to Sunday 7th of April. Free entry for the Friday night session!

GREAT HAMPDEN

2013 is a truly momentous year for the **Hampden Arms** as Louise and Constantine have been there ten years.

Time really has flown by when they think back to their first weekend when they met nearly all the village at the unveiling of the Golden Jubilee tree on the grass outside the pub. Ten years and two children later plus some tough times but also some great times and they are still there and very much looking forward to many more years at the **Hampden**! They could not have done it without their loyal customers, villagers, staff and great friends and for this they say a big thank you to them from the bottom of their hearts.

HADDENHAM

Don't miss **Haddenham Summerfest** on Saturday 6th July 2013, 11 am to late. You can reach the festival either by train on the Chiltern Line alighting at Haddenham and Thame Parkway which is a 15 minute walk or come by bus on the Arriva 280. Check out the website.

At the **Rising Sun**, recent offerings have been **Aylesbury Hop Bine** and **Tring Moon Gazer**. There are always at least two interesting ales to sample with a third lying in wait for when one of those is finished. **Vale Gravitass** makes regular, albeit brief appearances - catch it while you can. Now a **CAMRA** Local accredited pub, in addition to **Aylesbury**, **Vale** and **Tring** beers, **Loddon** and **XT** are regular visitors. All ales served straight from the barrel at under £3.00 a pint. Darts, Poker evenings and pool, as well as live music evenings, and shortly Aunt Sally in the garden, all add up to make the **Riser** a fun place to visit. A mini beer and cider festival is planned over the bank holiday weekend of 30th May to 3rd June.



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At the **Green Dragon**, Adam and Emma keep an **XT** ale to accompany **Sharps Doom Bar** and another **Enterprise Inns** guest. **Woodfordes Wherry** was on recently.

The **Rose and Thistle** now has **Morland Old Speckled Hen** at 4.5% to accompany **Greene King IPA** and **Hardy & Hansons Olde Trip**. Two film evenings and numerous live music evenings on every month. Get Spas to text you on updates. Spas and his family have signed a tenancy agreement for the next six years. A fairly major refurbishment of the bar area starts in April with the removal of the snug bar as a snug – the main entrance will be through that mostly unused area, and a single long curving bar will be formed. A new timber floor will replace the carpet.

The **Kings Head** serves **Fullers London Pride** and **Sharps Doom Bar** plus a guest when it gets busy.

HAZLEMERE

Punch Taverns are seeking a new leaseholder at the **Three Horseshoes**. The temporary leaseholder, Leigh Brunson, is currently offering three **Greene King** ales: **IPA**, **Ruddles** and **London Glory**.

HIGH WYCOMBE

A new, leaseholder is being sought for the **Beech Tree**, Terriers, by owners **Star Pubs & Bars**. John and Claire are currently managing the pub and will be offering **Courage Best** as the regular ale plus two rotating guests/seasonal ales.

The **Belle Vue** are celebrating 'Winter's End' with a beer festival over the weekend of 26th to 28th of April. Lets hope winter has finally finished by then!

O'Neill's in Paul's Row started selling real ale during the latter part of last year, and they are currently stocking **Fullers London Pride** and **Sharps Doom Bar**.

LACEY GREEN

The **Black Horse** has the go-ahead to hold two beer festivals per year and the first of these is planned for the weekend of the 2nd and 3rd of August.

The **Whip** will be holding a beer festival on Friday 17th and Saturday 18th of May. Thirty real ales from microbreweries both local and from across the UK, plus cider. The beer tent opens 12-11pm both days with Jazz on offer during the Saturday afternoon. Whereas George Osborne took a meagre one penny off a pint Nick will be taking 30p a pint off for the beer festival with all ales and ciders at £3 a pint.

LEDBURN

The **Greene King** owned **Hare and Hounds** remains closed as it has been since last autumn.

LITTLEWORTH COMMON

The **Blackwood Arms** are holding their second St Georges beer festival from Friday 19th to Tuesday 23rd of April when twenty real ales will be available.

MAIDENHEAD

A 'Festival of Beers' will be held at **Maidenhead Conservative Club** from Friday 12th to Sunday 14th of April.

MARLOW

A recent visit to one of the two new **McMullens** pubs in the town, the **Britannia**, was enjoyed by two members making a rare visit from Aylesbury. The pub, saved from becoming a possible supermarket, was bought and renovated at a total cost of about three million pounds. It has been refurbished with a nautical theme, complete with an expanse of decking which will prove popular in summer (if we have one!). Four real ales were on offer, three from the **McMullens** stable and a guest beer, all at a reasonable £3 a pint. Food looked reasonably priced and was proving popular. Worth a visit just to look round and perhaps someone could write to us and explain the display of paint tins!

The **Plough** on Little Marlow Road/Wycombe Road junction has been demolished to make way for more flats - so another one bites the dust, RIP the **Plough**. As you can see from the above picture, not even the rubble remains. How many more do we have to lose...

The **Royal British Legion** is holding a beer festival over the May Bank Holiday from Friday 3rd to Monday 6th. Sixteen ales will be available and future festivals are planned for August and December.

Marlow Museum at Court Garden in Higginson Park have a **History of Brewing in Marlow** exhibition from early March through to the end of May. Open each Saturday and Sunday until 5pm and admission is free.

The **Three Horseshoes**, famed for its massive selection of **Rebellion** beers, will no longer be open on Sunday evenings. This is after they extended the time for Sunday lunches when they now close at 6pm (last orders at 5.40pm).

NAPHILL

The **Wheel** is celebrating St George's Day with a beer festival from Friday 19th to Saturday 20th of April.

OVING

The **Black Boy** is now under new management. Lorraine Northen took over the lease on this privately owned freehouse in October. Up to three ales will soon be available, one from Vale plus two other independents. (Yorkshire **Daleside** when visited). An outside bar will be ready for the summer and events.

PRINCES RISBOROUGH

The licensees of the **George and Dragon** in Chesham are adding the Princes Risborough one to the group of pubs they manage. In Chesham they serve real ale, real cider and are **LocAle** accredited.

QUAINTON

A new larger kitchen has just been completed at the **George and Dragon**. New menus are planned over the coming weeks. Five ales are currently on offer including **XT13**.

The **Greene King** owned **Swan and Castle** closed in February and nothing is known of its future.

STEWKLEY

The Happy Hour at the **Carpenters Arms** is proving extremely popular - not surprising! All beers wines and spirits are £2.60 (mixers extra) between 5pm and 6pm on Fridays. Another growing feature is the Quiz Night held on alternate Thursdays from 8pm. Entry is £1 and free nibbles are provided. A beer festival is planned in August at a date yet to be confirmed.

The **Swan** is holding its third June Beer and Music Festival on the weekend of the 15th and 16th June. Twenty ales will be available with an outdoor bar (weather willing) in the huge rear garden. Food will be available throughout and music by popular request from Finn and others to be confirmed.

THAME

Chinnor RFC serves **Brakspear Bitter** and **Vale Falcon**. **Falcon** is **Vale's Red Kite Bitter**, with the addition of dry hops in the cask. **Red Kite** is a malty

beer brewed with four different malts and four hops from the USA, Germany and good old English Fuggles. **Vale** then chose to dry hop with Calypso a new American hop developed in 2011. Come and support Chinnor (become a member) who are currently lying mid-table in National League 2 South.

Congratulations are in order at the **Rising Sun** following the wedding of Jay and Patsy on March 3rd – in Thailand. They are so well thought of by their regulars, eighteen of them actually travelled to Thailand for the wedding – and survived. We counted eighteen out and we counted eighteen back, although not all at the same time.

WING

The **Cock** has had a recent change of management. Garry and Karen Rayner took over this **Orchid** owned village pub and restaurant in late January. They plan to build on the existing format of restaurant with carvery and village bar and further encourage the ales. Two regular ales – **Fullers London Pride** and **Sharps Doom Bar** will be accompanied by guests from the likes of **Cottage, Vale, Tring** and **XT**.

WOOBURN COMMON

The **Royal Standard** will be holding a Bank Holiday beer festival from Friday May 3rd to Monday May 6th.

WYCOMBE MARSH

The **Rifle Butts** has a new landlord, Chris, and he has reinstalled a hand-pump and reintroduced real beer to the pub. It is currently **Wells Bombardier** but he is intending to try a few different ones.

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A FEW WORDS FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

If you have heard anything about the budget, it is probably about the surprise scrapping of the beer duty escalator (see page 12 for details). This was just as much a surprise to us as after our lobby of parliament last December (reported in issue 94), we were left with a feeling that our point had been made, and some things would be done, but the escalator had to stay. Indeed we received a letter from the treasury that said:

‘... at Budget 2012 the Government announced no further changes to alcohol duties, beyond the increase pre-announced at Budget 2008 by the previous Government. As part of a fiscally neutral Budget it was not possible to proceed without these inherited measures.’

We are all very glad that they have changed their minds! And don't think that your campaigning doesn't achieve anything.

Early this year, the government announced a policy to counteract another threat to our pubs, the relationship between pub companies and licensees. Vince Cable as Secretary of State for Business Innovation and Skills released a statement that said:

‘... I wrote to the industry last October to gather evidence as to how the self-regulatory approach was working, I found that although there had been a small amount of progress, overall the changes had not been sufficiently far-reaching and the required culture shift in the industry had not taken place. We were therefore left with no other choice than to consult on legislative action in order to maintain a level playing field in the industry and help protect thousands of small businesses from hardship and bankruptcy. Although some pub companies have behaved fairly, the majority of the evidence I have received makes it clear that in too many cases, licensees are being exploited and squeezed, by a combination of unfair practices, lack of transparency and a focus on short-termism at the expense of the long-term sustainability of the sector. This behaviour, alongside the many other challenges facing the sector, risks seriously damaging the British pub industry, which not only employs hundreds of thousands of people across the country but also contributes substantially to community spirit and cohesion.’

The minister went on to propose a Statutory Code with an independent Adjudicator. The proposed Code would have as a fundamental principle:

‘A tied licensee should be no worse off than a free-of-tie licensee.’

This is a strong statement and it is to be backed by an independent Adjudicator with:

‘... tough powers to hold Pub companies to account if they breach the Code, including arbitrating individual disputes between pub companies and licensees; carrying out investigations and imposing sanctions, including financial penalties for serious breaches.’

At the time we thought this was the result of our campaigning. We now know differently(!), so this gives us another opportunity to campaign for a more viable local. We must ensure that this is set up as soon as possible, and that the Code and the powers given to the Adjudicator are as strong as possible.

To that end, we recently met with MP for Aylesbury, David Lidington. The meeting had been arranged some time ago, and definitely pre-budget, to campaign further on the beer duty escalator, so with the happy news from the Budget, we were able to tackle the pub company issue.

Mr Lidington put to us that weren't the existing measures that have been put in place sufficient to protect pubs as they are, given the recent announcements on reducing tax for small businesses?

While these all help, it doesn't change the unequal relationship between pub companies and licensees. In particular, the cost of obtaining beer and wines through the pub companies is grossly unfair. On a recent branch

social we were told by a licensee that a 100% mark-up on his costs was typical. This is simply not acceptable given that the pub company is contributing nothing to the transaction. Indeed, they use their bulk buy powers to reduce the cost to themselves, while boosting the cost to the publican.

When put like this, Mr Lidington was very sympathetic to our views. He offered much advice on how to campaign effectively as a branch, and we will be leading that campaign shortly.

What you can do now:

If you are a publican: Are you tied? Please tell us who to. Consider writing to your MP telling him how the cost of obtaining beer through your tie affects your business. In particular, if you could obtain beer on the open market, how many people could you employ?

If you are a customer: Consider joining **CAMRA**! We do this campaigning on your behalf, and having numbers strengthens our argument. A **CAMRA** membership form can be found in every issue of *Swan Supping* (in this issue, it can be found on page 20).

Consider writing to your MP about how important your local is to you, and how it contributes to your community.

If you are a **CAMRA** member: Great! Please consider taking a slightly more active part, if you don't already. Submitting reports of the pubs you visit, submitting beer scores and writing letters to councillors and MPs really does help!

Alexander Wright - CAMRA A V & W Branch Chairman



Lynn and Nigel welcome you to **THE BULL**

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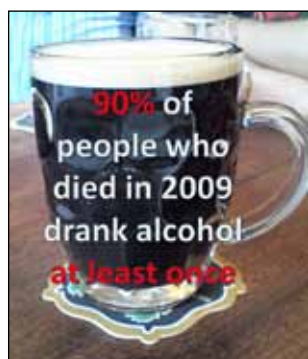
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APRIL ALCOHOL HEALTH CAMPAIGN



CAMRA members may have cheered as George Osborne abolished the beer duty escalator and remarkably cut beer duty by a penny a pint but this hasn't diluted the government's steadfast message on the evils of the demon drink.

The latest poster campaign highlights the statistical work that has been carried out by Professor B. Lee Dingobvious at the University of Buncefield. He believes that his findings may change the debate on alcohol consumption in this country by

stating unchallengeable insights into the pervasive influence of alcohol in modern society.

For example, a longitudinal study of several hundred thousand people who died in 2009 established that only 10% of the total had never drunk alcohol in their lives. That means that alcohol is a factor in the deaths of 90% of the population – a shocking conclusion that may have policy makers running to the statute books.

Similarly, in a study carried out by his researchers at considerable personal risk to health and safety in booze-crazed city centre late-night drinking dens, A&E departments and police stations, it was found that a staggering (in both senses) 98% of men arrested for being drunk and disorderly admitted to having consumed alcohol at some time during the previous 24 hours.

Chief Superintendent E.C. Life of Central Scotland Constabulary said 'This supports my strongly held belief that we can reduce drunkenness by the simple measure of outlawing the sale of alcohol forthwith.'



The epidemic of binge drinking was also chronicled by the study. Some apologists for so-called social drinking, such as that recklessly seditious organisation, **CAMRA** have suggested that pubs may actually promote responsible drinking in supervised surroundings.

Professor Dingobvious's work exposes this as wishful thinking. A full 93% of those who term themselves locals in a pub have exceeded the generally accepted definition of binge drinking – a full three units of alcohol in a calendar year. 'Take that as proof and stick it up your beer guts,' said a government spokesperson.

So, having established the extent of this epidemic, what may be done to reduce this destructive level of alcohol consumption? It has been mooted that David Cameron favours minimum alcohol pricing by unit. This researcher interviewed thousands of consumers to discover if this strategy might change their wanton, self-destructive, sinful behaviour. The results are stunning. A full 92% of shoppers agreed with the statement that 'if the price of alcohol was increased then they'd find it more expensive'.

The Department of Health says that this research underpins their proposals that a £5 minimum price per unit would therefore be regarded as extremely expensive by consumers and should be enforced forthwith – from the 1st April onwards.

Charlie Mackle



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CONGRATULATIONS WE DID IT!

**THE BEER DUTY
ESCALATOR IS SCRAPPED**



*Beer drinkers 'ale' the Chancellor
for first Beer Duty cut in decades!*

The recent Budget's end to the hated beer duty escalator plus a surprise cut in beer duty of one penny was a huge vote of confidence in beer and pubs.

Nearly half a billion pounds has been set aside to fund this duty reduction over the next couple of years. The last time beer tax went down was in 1959! This massive investment will mean fewer pub closures, fewer job losses and lower increases in the price of a pint. **CAMRA's** submission to the Treasury and economic argument around this campaign showed that the beer duty escalator was a failing policy with the heavy increase in duty since 2008 causing a fall in beer duty revenue due to falling sales. This campaign win is a small step to get more people back into pubs and drinking real ale paying back the Government investment through beer and pubs market growth.

A planned 5% increase in beer duty this year was replaced by a 2% cut. In addition, next year beer duty is planned to rise only by inflation not by inflation plus 2%. This excellent news will help keep the lid on beer prices in pubs and avert the necessity for a 10p a pint increase. Many brewers and pub companies have already increased their beer prices this year to reflect increased costs in line with inflation. Yesterday's Budget news will mean that many pubs will now be able to hold prices for the rest of this year – meaning the full benefit will be passed onto consumers. We are delighted that both Heineken and Enterprise Inns immediately promised to pass on the penny duty cut to customers.

Of course, the campaign against the escalator was not about securing price cuts for consumers. **CAMRA's** overarching aim in this campaign has been to stop tax killing beer and pubs. Yesterday, we came a lot closer to delivering that aim. If the benefit of the Budget's beer duty change was evenly distributed to each pub it would be worth around £5,000 per pub between now and the next election.

CAMRA (working closely with the **BBPA** and **SIBA**) have led a huge year long consumer campaign to secure the end of the Escalator. This campaign has involved getting over 108,000 signatures on the beer tax e-petition. Over the year more than 8,000 **CAMRA** members have written to their local MPs and as a result of **CAMRA's** Mass Lobby day over 200 MPs held meetings with their constituents where they heard directly about the harm being caused by the duty escalator.

The duty escalator remains in place for cider, wine and spirits meaning that regrettably real cider was hit by a 5% duty increase.

Our challenge now is to maintain our campaigning momentum and to ensure that Budget 2014 contains more good news.

Mike Benner, **CAMRA** Chief Executive said on the day of the Budget, 'This is a momentous day for Britain's beer drinkers, who will tonight be raising a glass to the Chancellor for axing this damaging tax escalator and helping keep pub-going affordable for hard-pressed consumers. This decision will keep the lid on the cost of a pint down the pub.'

'Since the duty escalator was introduced in 2008, 5800 pubs have been forced to call last orders for good. What could have been the final nail in the coffin for our pubs has been decisively avoided by the Chancellor in a move that will spark celebration in pubs across the UK.'

'Scrapping the beer duty escalator, combined with a 1p cut, is a massive vote of confidence in British pubs and will lead to an increase in pub going and more money in the Chancellor's coffers.'

'Today's decision is a huge triumph for **CAMRA's** pub campaigners who have been building overwhelming public support for a fair deal for beer and pubs, pub by pub and beer festival by beer festival.'

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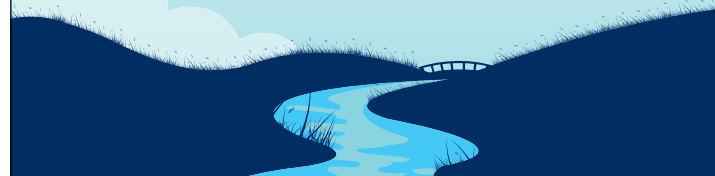
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LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

Aylesbury Brewhouse

A quick reminder that this Easter sees the **Hop Pole** and **Aylesbury Brewhouse** beer festival. Over thirty different craft beers from across the UK have been selected by Eric and Kate at **Vale Brewery** and there will be something to suit all tastes.

The festival starts with a beer club member's preview evening between 7pm and 9pm on Wednesday the 27th March. If you are not a member, you are welcome to come along and join up on the night to join in.

Then the festival gets into full swing

on the Thursday 28th at 12 noon finishing on Sunday at 10.30pm. A selection of twelve different ciders and hot food is also available.

Limited Edition Beers from **ABC** coming up over the next month or so include: *Beta*, a 4% golden ale, *Spring Heeled Jack*, a 4.2% chestnut bitter, *Quark*, a 4.3% golden bitter with six different hops used and *Hop Press* 3.9%, the next in the **ABC** hop production line!

Brewery tours at the **Aylesbury Brewhouse** are now a regular event. Individuals can sign up for tours taking place Tuesday evenings and Saturday afternoons. Please make contact on 01844 239 237 to arrange at a mutually convenient time. See the website for more details (www.aylesburybrewhouse.co.uk)

Chiltern Brewery

The last few months have been very busy for **Chiltern**. Their bottled **Lord Lieutenant's Porter** won a bronze medal in the International Brewing Awards held in Burton on Trent. The awards, held on Friday 15th February and known as the 'Beer Oscars', are considered the pinnacle of brewing achievement. **Lord Lieutenant's Porter** won bronze in the Class 4 Dark Beers 5.8% to 6.9% ABV category.



Chiltern have also been awarded winner of the Best Individual Beer Bottle Label at the **SIBA** 2013 Business Awards in Burton-upon-Trent on 15th March for its **CAMRA Ruby Anniversary Ale**. **Chiltern** worked closely with Bristol based design agency, Dirty Design, to create a very special beer bottle label. Dirty Design took their inspiration from the beer itself and the significance of the landmark occasion of the 40th edition of **CAMRA's Good Beer Guide**. Dirty Design have also created a series of fresh modern pumpclips for the brewery.

Rebellion Brewery

Rebellion have introduced a new, all singing, all dancing website which is now live with up-to-date beer availability in their shop, current news and videos describing their Membership Club, beer production and

tour news at the brewery. There is also a beer finder section which will display all their trade customers that take their beer full time on a map with a link to their website. Soon the site will also offer a trade section offering their full range of services from staff training to cellar services.

Their bottled beer now comes in new-style eco-friendly cardboard boxes, replacing old style plastic wrapping, including **24 Carat** which is back in 500ml bottles and hits the shop on 19th April.

Available in freshly filled one litre and twenty litre polypins, the cider range includes *Rum Cask* from **Mr Whiteheads**, *Burrow Hill Cider's* 'alf n' alf and *Farmhouse Cider* from **Cornish Orchards**. The shop has also recently taken on two new full-time members of staff, Kevin and Matthew who are fantastic beer enthusiasts.

The beer for April is *Sparko* 4.2% and the seasonal is *Zebedee* (full tasting notes are on the new website!!)

Vale Brewery

The last two special monthly brews from **Vale** proved very successful and both sold out before the end of the month.

As T S Eliott said, 'April is the cruellest Month' and linked with his poem **Vale** will be brewing a 3.9% beer called *Checkmate*. However as they are optimists this will be a pale beer, to refresh drinkers as we all mark the bright sunshine we anticipate with the true arrival of Spring!

In March 1913 the first Morris Oxford was produced, at the time costing £175 on the road. To commemorate this anniversary **Vale** are brewing *One Ton Morris* – a copper-coloured bitter at 4.1%.

The brewery shop in Brill remains busy with the range of bottled beers, mainly from abroad, increasing. On offer are unusual brews from far away such as Norway.

**XT Brewery**

Look out for **XT-99 Roast Cacao** 5%. A new beer available for April in cask and bottle. A collaboration between **XT** and chocolate chef Will Torrent, a stout made with roasted cocoa nibs.

XT-13 Pacific Red Ale 4.5% has been selling extremely well and they have had to plan extra brews for it to keep up with demand.

Palomino, a 4% golden pale ale brewed with American hops with **Barnet Brewery** and available in **Oak Taverns** pubs including the **Rising Sun**, Haddenham, the **Cross Keys**, Thame and the **White Horse**, Wheatley.

Open evening: Thursday 28th March and Open Day: Saturday 27th April.

THE WENLOCK ARMS - AN UPDATE



In a recent *Swan Supping* we featured an article about the legendary **Wenlock Arms** in Hoxton, north London, which is well-known in the branch for its championing of microbreweries and down-to-earth atmosphere.

At that point, we reported that it had been acquired by developers, looking to cash in on its location right next to the much-hyped Tech City or Silicon Roundabout at Old Street tube and demolish the Victorian boozer in favour of yuppie flats.

At the last minute, the efforts of a campaign by locals and on Facebook came to fruition and Hackney Council extended a conservation area to include the Wenlock, preventing its demolition.

Since the building's stay of execution there has reportedly been a split of opinion. Many of its locals want the **Wenlock** to stay as the spit and sawdust basic boozer it's famous for being (although some argue that since being bought by developers, it has been allowed to edge more on the side of

being run-down than characterful).

Others, including, it is reported, the local **CAMRA** branch, have supported a compromise planning agreement that keeps the exterior of the pub intact but converts an upstairs function room to two self-contained flats.

As often happens with pubs in these circumstances (see plenty in our own area) it's difficult to know exactly what the current position is regarding the ownership of the **Wenlock** and its redevelopment. However, what is indisputable is that the pub closed for refurbishment work on 3rd March (see photos of locked up pub).

However, unlike some pubs that close for 'refurbishment' that never happens, there is actually work going on inside the **Wenlock** (although it appears, from the outside, that this doesn't extend to converting the upstairs into flats just yet.)

A new twitter account @wenlockarms has been created to update new customers on the progress of the refurbishment. Several photos have been posted on the account of the work in progress and we have been given permission by Heath from the **Wenlock** to reproduce the picture of the refurbished bar (top left) in *Swan Supping*.

It appears that as well as an overdue deep clean, some features from times gone by might be restored, partly due to planning conditions imposed by Hackney Council. Therefore the original doors on the corner of the pub will be reinstated after being closed since a mini apparently crashed into them ten years ago. An old fireplace is also being reinstated.

Whether the place will be merely spruced up with a few cobwebs removed or more radically changed should be known sometime in April when the **Wenlock** is promised to reopen.

The Twitter feed promises a rotating selection of real ales, which is encouraging enough for us to think about visiting soon on a social and see how the **Wenlock** is adapting to its rapidly changing neighbourhood.

Mike Clarke

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NEARBY CAMRA BEER FESTIVALS



19th Reading Beer and Cider Festival

The 19th Reading Beer and Cider Festival will be held from Thursday 2nd to Sunday 5th of May.

It takes place at Kings Meadow, Reading, RG1 8BN, a five-minute walk from Reading train station (by train: 30 minutes from London Paddington, Newbury, Basingstoke, Oxford and Swindon).

Over 550 real ales (including *LocAle*) plus more than 150 ciders and perries, a large selection of foreign beers and English wines.

A variety of food concessions will be available on site.

Friday/Saturday: Live music and national cider and perry awards. Sunday: Family friendly day with children's entertainment provided.

Open: Thursday 4.30pm-11pm, Friday 11am-3.30pm and 5pm-11pm, Saturday 11am-4.30pm and 6pm-11pm, Sunday 12pm-7pm. New for 2013 advance tickets are available: £18.90 for Friday evening and all Saturday sessions, £15.90 for Thursday, Friday lunchtime session and Sunday. Advance prices include entry, festival glass, programme and six 1/2 pint vouchers (3 pints).

CAMRA, **EBCU** and **RURAC** members receive an additional 1/2 pint voucher.

Tickets will be available on the door, however advance purchase recommended.

Please check website: www.readingbeerfestival.org.uk for more info.

CAMRA branch socials and large groups catered for, please e-mail rbfestival@outlook.com for more info.

Volunteers are required, please e-mail: staffing@readingbeerfestival.org.uk or visit website to register interest in helping.



Banbury Beer Festival

The **Banbury Beer Festival** takes place at the, TA Centre, Oxford Road, Banbury OX16 9AN (5min walk from Banbury Cross) from Thursday 9th to Saturday 11th of May.

Ninety real ales will be on offer plus around twenty ciders and perries. There will be a Cumbrian theme this year, so expect ales from this area to feature strongly.

Open times: Thursday 5-11pm; Friday and Saturday 11-11pm (last entry 9pm on Friday). New for 2013: local beer and cheese tasting event during Friday.

Cost of Entrance: Free to **CAMRA** members at all times. Non-**CAMRA** members: Thursday £1 all times; Friday 12pm-5pm £2, 5pm to 12am £4; Saturday 11am-5pm £3, 5pm to 11pm £1 (last entry 9pm).

Deposit for festival glass (refundable): £2. Tokens required to purchase beer are available in sheets of £5.

Any unused tokens are refundable (or can be donated to charity).

Food and soft drinks require payment in cash.

Further details contact press@northoxoncamra.org.uk or see the festival webpage: www.northoxoncamra.org.uk.

Volunteers are required and if you wish to help, please get in contact via: secretary@northoxoncamra.org.uk.

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15th May - Quiz in aid of the MPS Society (Starts 8pm)

BOTTLED BEER LAUNCH



On Tuesday 5th of March leading beer writer, taster and renowned professional beer 'drinker' Jeff Evans of Inside Beer (<http://www.insidebeer.com>) was welcomed to the **Farmers' Bar** at the **Kings Head**, Aylesbury, for the official launch of *Bodgers Reserve*, the latest limited edition beer from **Chiltern Brewery**.

Head Brewer, Tom Jenkinson, who is pictured above with Jeff (left) said 'It is a great honour to have someone so knowledgeable and so highly respected within the industry to visit this historic pub to launch this very special new bottled beer. Jeff's very positive comments and tasting notes were very welcome too. We have taken our ever popular and sumptuously smooth *Bodgers Barley Wine*, matured it in old whisky puncheons (barrels) for five months and let the bottled ale rest for a further seven months in our cellars. This allows the flavours to mellow and mature'.

Limited to just 500 numbered bottles, the new *Bodgers Reserve* is 8.9% by volume, so each 500 ml bottle will need to be savoured and respected.

Jeff Evans described the *Bodgers Reserve* as 'a dark golden ale with abundant aromas of strawberry and creamy oak. Ripe berry fruits (strawberry in particular) shine through in the generally sweet, warming taste, contrasted by a dry, creamy oak character and hints of orange zest. Fruity sweetness lingers a while in the dry, tangy, oaky finish which leaves a pleasant glow and rounded bitterness. This is a complex, delightful beer that is not at all heavy or cloying for its strength.'

This beer is bottled at the brewery unpasteurised, with its original yeast. It should be stored upright and cool, and served lightly chilled (optimum serving temperature 12°C/55F) and poured with care leaving the natural sediment in the bottle. Available through www.chilternbrewery.co.uk.

Jeff Evans drinks beer professionally. For more than twenty years he's been tasting the best beers in the world and then writing about them in books and magazines, providing tasting notes for brewers and retailers, and hosting beer tasting events for groups and organizations of all sizes.



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GRAVEDIGGERS - PART TWENTY TWO



Charlie tried to sneak surreptitiously into the public bar at the **Gravediggers** and hand over his copies of the local **CAMRA** magazine, *Guts and Glugging*. Mazz spotted him trying to retreat to the door.

'Oh, Charlie. We've got a new beer on from our microbrewery – *Old Nitrate Run-Off* – fancy a quick pint – 9.8%?'

'Er, sorry Mazz, got to drive and, er, my stomach's a bit dodgy,' Charlie said, running to his car.

'Definitely would be dodgy after a pint of this *Nitrate*,' Old Pete said, slurping one down and flicking through *Guts and Glugging*. 'Aren't this here **CAMRA** lot the ones who make this *Good Beer Guide*? How come we never get in?'

'Good point,' James said, fishing out a lump of mysterious slime from a pint he'd just poured. 'I mean we tick all **CAMRA**'s boxes – a two-bar free-house, microbrewery, local beers, beer festivals.'

'Yeah,' Old Pete said, 'And no lager, no keg rubbish, no piped music, no video games, no fancy restaurant, no food at all actually, no mobile phones, no Wi-Fi, no customers with any money, no students, no kids, no families, no young people, no women, except behind the bar – just intelligent conversation with blokes like me – perfect, just like that pub that George Orwell wrote about.'

'Room 101?' suggested Mazz.

'No. I think it was a *Wetherspoon*,' James said, flicking through his copy of *Guts and Glugging*. 'There's all kinds of stuff in here about how **CAMRA** want to get their members more active and involved.'

'And it must be the active members who pick the pubs for the *Good Beer Guide*,' Mazz said, looking at James.

'Are you thinking what I'm thinking?' James said, with a conspiratorial grin.

'OK. If we're going to infiltrate the local **CAMRA** branch then we need to get our cover sorted out,' James said, addressing his espionage volunteers in the bar.

Old Pete, Old Moses and Old Joe slumped against the bar, Mazz prodding beer guts periodically to wake them.

'Looking at some of the photos in the magazine, it appears that the ideal disguise for a **CAMRA** volunteer is wild hair, a beer gut large enough to hold a microbrewery's fermenter, a natty line in faded T-shirts from 1980s beer festivals and facial hair of some description,' James said. 'Are you sure you three aren't members already? But Mazz you're a problem – I don't see many photos of women in leopard-skin leotards at any of *Guts and Glugging*'s beer festivals.'

'Apparently they're very keen to encourage fashionable young women,' Mazz said, reading her copy.

'I bet they is,' Old Joe chipped in.

'As serious volunteers,' Mazz said.

'Women and real ale, pah! Your cover'll be blown straight away,' Old Pete said.

'Right we'd better start filling in our application forms,' James said.

'Application forms? Don't be stupid when you've got a master forger on your staff. I faked everything when I was a student. Leave the IDs to me.'

The five arrived at the **Millionaire Farmer's Tractor**, the snooty pub where the local **CAMRA** branch was debating entries for the next year's *Good Beer Guide*. The bow-tied barman initially refused to serve the **Diggers**' infiltrators until they'd produced their convincingly-forged **CAMRA** membership cards. Old Joe tried to return his pint on the grounds that it was 100% liquid, trying unsuccessfully to argue that it couldn't be real ale without lumps in it.

The local **CAMRA** branch seemed so pleased to have five new active members turn up they failed to detect both James and Mazz's false beards. However, one

slightly younger member took an interest in the extremely threadbare *Tour of Destruction* T-shirt into which Mazz had squeezed her ample chest. With his jam jar glasses about two inches from her chest he declared 'No, *Ratleys* was definitely closed in June 1977 NOT July.'

When they came to the serious business of the guide, the meeting was so boring the five fell asleep, only being stirred into life by the name of the **Gravediggers**' village.

'Oh there's that great pub there called the, er, oh, it's slipped my mind,' Mazz jumped up to declare.

'That's it – the **Gravediggers**. Very authentic place,' James added while, after some kicking under the table, Old Joe, Old Pete and Old Moses muttered agreement.

'The same **Gravediggers** that was voted worst pub in the whole of our **CAMRA** region for ten years running?' queried the chairman. 'That the environmental health department had to give a negative mark to for its kitchen hygiene?'

'Under new management,' Mazz lied.

'We love authentic spit and sawdust boozers,' said the bespectacled committee member, still checking brewery closure dates on her T-shirt.

'But we've already chosen the **Disembowelled Fox** and the **Poacher's Hangman** so close by. What about the geographical spread?' the chairman argued.

'Don't matter where the pub is. If it's fine enough to go in the good book, it should go in,' Old Joe muttered.

'So, in your view, should it replace a pub at the far end of the branch, like the **Rogered Ferret**?' the chairman asked.

'Dunno. I never drunk in any other pub in my life,' Old Joe replied.

James felt like tearing his beard off in frustration. The infiltration had been going so well.

'Well, we'll look at our beer scoring data – and the **Gravediggers** is a pub we have had some feedback on nationally, I believe.'

The branch beer score co-ordinator stared at his spreadsheet. 'Yes. We had to extend the number of decimal points to accommodate the **Gravediggers**' score of 0.00001 out of 5 for *Suicide Sludge*.'

'Better than I thought,' Old Pete said.

'Hey, that was the one I used my best cow slurry in,' Old Moses protested, standing up.

'What's going on here?' the chairman said, wising up. 'Have we been infiltrated again?'

'No. Look we're proper members,' James said as they all proffered their membership cards.

'Good try – but this particular brand of ink went out of production on the 31st March 2010,' said the member with the thick glasses, scrutinising the cards closely. 'We must force feed the traitors with *Stella Artois*!'

Charlie Mackle

Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

March

Friday 29th GOOD FRIDAY BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

1.00pm Hop Pole, Aylesbury

April

Monday 1st CAMBRIDGE TRIP

Coach trip in honour of our editor (and ex-chairman, ex-secretary, ex-treasurer etc.)'s birthday as he starts his dotage. All places have now been booked.

Wednesday 3rd PUB OF THE YEAR SOCIAL

8.00pm Farmers Bar@Kings Head, Aylesbury

Tuesday 9th PRINCES RISBOROUGH SOCIAL

7.30pm Bird in Hand, 8.15pm Bell, 9.00pm George and Dragon, 10.00pm Whiteleaf Cross

Friday 12th SLOANE SQUARE/CHELSEA CRAWL

Meet 6.00pm, Antelope, Eaton Terrace, SW1

Monday 15th BRANCH MEETING

8.00pm, Three Horseshoes, Burroughs Grove

Friday 19th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

6.00pm Wheel, Naphill

Tuesday 23rd COUNTRY SOCIAL

8.00pm Eight Bells, Long Crendon, 8.45pm Bell, Cheersley, 9.30pm Crown, Cuddington

Friday 26th PUB BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

6.30pm, Belle Vue, High Wycombe

Saturday 27th LONDON OVERGROUND SOCIAL

2.00pm Prospect of Whitby, Wapping, then overground to Denmark Hill, Clapham High Street, Clapham Common.

May

Friday 3rd BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

6.00pm Royal Standard, Wooburn Common.

Thursday 9th COUNTRY SOCIAL

8.00pm Cook and Fillet, Kingswood, 8.45pm Long Dog, Waddesdon, 9.30pm Lion, Waddesdon.

Monday 13th BRANCH MEETING

8.00pm Swan, Great Kimble

Friday 17th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

7.00pm Whip, Lacey Green

Tuesday 21st RURAL PUBS SOCIAL

8.30pm Hampden Arms, Great Hampden, 9.15pm King William IV, Speen, 10.00pm Gate, Bryant's Bottom.

Friday 31st LONDON REFURBISHED PUB SOCIAL

6.30pm Wenlock Arms, Hoxton, 8.00pm Old Fountain, Old Street.

June

Saturday 29th BLACK COUNTRY TRIP

Join us for the best trip of the year. Full details next issue

July

Saturday 6th HADDENHAM BEER FESTIVAL

Sunday 7th REBELLION OPEN DAY

Help celebrate their 20th anniversary (See next issue's article!)

Further details can be found on our website

www.swansupping.org.uk

CATCH UP DURING BRANCH SOCIALS:-

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DON'T MISS OUT!

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

www.swansupping.org.uk/joinin



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Swan Supping

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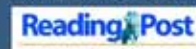
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152 High Street, Chesham HP5 1EF

Key Attributes

- Situated in the busy pedestrian high street of Chesham
- Punch Taverns investment under consideration
- Fantastic opportunity to run a community led site
- Open plan bar, and external children's play area



Three Horseshoes

329 Amersham Road, Hazlemere, High Wycombe HP15 7PX

Key Attributes

- Quality community local in an affluent area
- Established existing trade and a good reputation
- Situated on a busy road with huge levels of passing trade
- Great garden with a small covered decked area



Queens Head

1-5 Temple Square, Aylesbury HP20 2QA

Key Attributes

- Intimate and lively town centre pub in Aylesbury
- It boasts a stunning interior, complete with a library room and an attractive patio
- The external area of the pub is complete with a pleasant beer garden



George & Dragon

74 High Street, Princes Risborough HP27 0AX

Key Attributes

- High street bar and restaurant in Princes Risborough
- Capitalizing on food and drink offers becomes easy with such close contact with passer's by
- The Site boasts 45 dining covers, a public bar, an open plan trading area, a restaurant and a lounge area

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