

**FREE**

# Swan Supping



**Issue 92**

**Oct/Nov 2012**



**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**

**COVER STORY**  
**Fortieth Good Beer Guide**  
**celebrated at the Kings Head**  
**See page 16**

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

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## NEWS FROM THE EDITOR



### E-Petition

The **CAMRA** E-petition which has featured in our last two issues has reached the 100,000 signatures that were required to get a debate in Parliament about the beer tax escalator which is unfairly taxing responsible drinkers. This is a fantastic response from concerned drinkers and we must make sure that the Government takes notice and does something about the tax. To emphasise the point, **CAMRA** are planning a mass lobby at Westminster on Wednesday 12th of December when we can raise the issue with our Parliamentary representatives. Details are given in the National **CAMRA** News below.

### 40th Good Beer Guide

How many guides have ever celebrated a ruby anniversary? Well, the **Good Beer Guide** has joined this select list with the publication of the fortieth edition. **Chiltern Brewery** have produced a special beer to celebrate this occasion.

The limited edition *Ruby Anniversary Ale* blends five grains, reflecting the five decades that the **Good Beer Guide** has appeared, with a fine selection of English hops both modern and traditional. This has resulted in a creamy smooth rich balanced malt base with hints of roast barley, full flavoured and hoppy, and claret red in colour. A £1 royalty is made to **CAMRA** from each pack sold. Full details of the celebration and how to buy the presentation pack are given on page 16.

Our cover picture shows the launch of the beer at the **Kings Head** in Aylesbury at the end of September. Tom Jenkinson from **Chiltern** welcomed us to the celebration and introduced the beer before the brewer of the beer, Roger Protz, who has edited the **Good Beer Guide** for many years, talked about the forty years of the guide and the fantastic amount of work that **CAMRA** has done since it was formed.

A further guest was David Lidington, MP for Aylesbury who also spoke in praise of **CAMRA** and our local brewers. He was then very happy to take questions as we took the opportunity to put forward **CAMRA**'s campaigning points, most especially about the reduction of tax on beer.

It was a fabulous evening and many thanks must go to all those involved, especially all those at the **Kings Head** and **Chiltern Brewery**.

### 19th Aylesbury Vale Beer Festival

Halloween will again be celebrated at the **Aylesbury Vale Beer Festival** which is run in conjunction with the **Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity** who raise money for the Aylesbury Hospice. The festival will once again be held at the Bucks County Council Sports & Social Club, Lower Road, Aylesbury. This is opposite the Ambulance Station at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. Regular buses (4, 9, 300) run past the venue.

The festival takes place over the weekend of Friday 26th and Saturday 27th of October. There will be about 30 real ales plus traditional ciders and perries. It will be open from 6:00pm - 11:00pm on Friday and 11:00am - 11:00pm on Saturday. Food will be available both days.

You can buy a ticket from all **Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity Shops**, by contacting the Charity directly or through Aylesbury Tourist Office. All profits will go to the charity, which needs to raise half a million pounds each year, and if you wish to sponsor a barrel, please contact the **Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity** on 01296 429975.

Local **CAMRA** volunteers are required for the festival. Please get in touch with me (contact details on page 22) if you wish to help either in the setting up, serving or helping to take down the barrels at the end. We can guarantee a great time (plus free entry!) and the more people that help, the less arduous the work will be.

This is our 19th festival that we have raised money for the Hospice and the beer tends to taste better when you know that the money you have paid is going to a worthwhile cause. Drinking for charity! Wonderful!

### Swan Supping Subscriptions

For those readers who can't get to one of our many outlets to pick up **Swan Supping**, we operate a subscription service. Details are given on page 22, but it now works out at £1.50 per issue. We held the price at £1 for as long as we could (we probably held it too long), but the recent increases by the Post Office have forced us into the change. Existing subscriptions will be honoured! Back issues can also be ordered at the same price (most issues are still available), but if you let us know in advance that you are attending a Branch Social, then we can arrange for requested issues to be brought along for you for free!

Thanks once again to all the people who have given their free time to contribute to the production and circulation of **Swan Supping** and many thanks to Colin Stanford for the cartoon.

Cheers!

David W. Roe - Swan Supping Editor

## NATIONAL CAMRA NEWS

### E-petition tops 100,000!

**CAMRA** was delighted to celebrate with other members of the beer and pub industry as the Government e-petition calling on the abandonment of the beer duty escalator exceeded the 100,000 signatures needed to trigger a Parliamentary debate. The petition is only the 12th Government e-petition - out of over 16,000 submitted - to have ever reached the 100,000 landmark.

The beer duty escalator, introduced by the last Government in 2008, and continued by the coalition, has successively penalised Britain's beer drinkers by automatically increasing duty levels by 2% above inflation every year. As a result, tax on beer has increased by over 40% since 2008, with a third of every pub pint now being swallowed in tax. Over 4,500 pubs have also closed over this same period.

**CAMRA** has invested significant resources into campaigning against the beer duty escalator, and major breakthroughs in the lead-up to the petition securing 100,000 signatures included over 15,000 beer drinkers adding their names to it over the course of the **Great British Beer**

**Festival**, held at London's Olympia at the beginning of August (7th-11th).

With a Parliamentary debate now in prospect, **CAMRA** is ramping up the pressure on Government by announcing it is to hold a Mass Parliamentary Lobby in Westminster on Wednesday December 12th, with over 1,000 people expected to attend from all corners of the UK to voice their discontent at punitive tax increases on Britain's National Drink. Attendees will be asking to speak to their respective local MPs, and seeking their support to protect the nation's historic beer and pub industry.

Colin Valentine, **CAMRA** National Chairman, said: 'Joining a very small minority of e-petitions to have ever reached the 100,000 landmark is a mammoth achievement, and it's been fantastic to witness the beer and pub industry uniting to fight back against this issue.'

'Over the last six months, **CAMRA** has been collecting signatures at beer festivals, organising local campaigning events, as well as supplying pubs with petition material. On **CAMRA**'s part, we have devoted a great amount of resources to this campaign, so we are delighted it has paid off.'

'**CAMRA**'s next step is not to rest on our laurels but to maintain the impetus with our Mass Parliamentary Lobby, which will reinforce to MPs the groundswell of support for this campaign. With all the battering it has taken, the beer and pub sector still manages to contribute over £21 billion a year to the UK's GDP, and supports one million jobs, so it's about time the Government honoured its pledge to be pub friendly.'

### Good Beer Guide 2013

The **Good Beer Guide**, which came out in September, is celebrating the perfect 40th anniversary as its research finds there are now more than 1,000 breweries (1,009) operational across the UK, the highest number for over 70 years. Exhaustively compiled by **CAMRA**'s 143,000 members, this anniversary edition of the **Good Beer Guide**, jointly sponsored by industry bodies **Cask Marque** and **SIBA (Society of Independent Brewers)**, reports a record shattering 158 breweries have opened up in the space of just twelve months, the highest rate of new openings ever recorded in the guide's 40 year history.



## ANOTHER WELL-LOVED LOCAL PUB UNDER THREAT

A way of life is under threat. It is being endangered by pubcos and property developers who pursue the bottom line with no respect for people and communities.

We hear about pubs closing and we wonder why. We hear all sorts of reasons from the ban on smoking to the ever-rising price of a pint. We don't particularly worry about it because that's the way it is.

Until it happens to you!

If you are fortunate enough to enjoy a 'local', imagine what your life would be like if it wasn't there? You'd have to travel further afield. You'd miss some of the regulars you enjoyed chatting to over a drink. And you'd be furious at the property developer who bought the place and turned it into flats, houses or a restaurant.

Now the **Garibaldi** pub in Hedsor Road, Bourne End is under threat. The owner, **Punch Taverns Ltd**, has temporarily closed the pub and put it up for sale.

No local pub has ever been woven into the fabric of the local community more than the **Garibaldi**. This traditional 19th century pub, named after Giuseppe Garibaldi's visit to nearby Cliveden in 1864, has been the centre of this local community for more than a century. The '**Gari**' as the locals call it, is the meeting place



*The locals are determined to keep the Gari local and are determined to fight its sale to property developers*

for friends and neighbours as well as a regular stream of passing walkers, cyclists, tourists, shoppers and other enthusiasts who have been lucky enough to discover this cosy little hostelry that fits so snugly into the lane.

With **Punch Taverns** putting the **Gari** on the market, we are seeing yet further erosion of the social fabric of our community. While an interim manager will be brought in to run the place until a buyer is found, this is just a stop-gap for **Punch** who are hell-bent of realising the profit from the sale of the freehold.

The result will almost definitely be acquisition by a property developer who will convert the site

to flats, housing or a restaurant.

This is not what the local community wants or needs so it is their intention to do everything they can to prevent this scenario.

As a result, a group of Bourne End residents and loyal customers from the surrounding area are launching a campaign to keep the **Gari** open as a proper pub. The campaign has two aims, firstly to oppose any change of use of the site (ie: to residential) and secondly to gather support for a community purchase of the freehold of the pub.

This isn't unprecedented. There are many successful examples of 'community-owned' pubs including

the **Jolly Farmer** in Cookham Dean, the **Boot** at Bledlow Ridge and the **Russell Arms** at Butlers Cross.

All it needs is a collective will to challenge corporate greed and the funds to purchase the freehold. The **Garibaldi** campaign is well on the way to achieving these objectives but it needs more support and financing.

If you are interested in keeping open one of our few remaining truly 'local' pubs, whether by opposing re-development or helping with a community buyout, then please visit the **Garibaldi** website ([www.garibaldipub.co.uk](http://www.garibaldipub.co.uk)) and learn how you can help.

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## LOCAL NEWS

### ASHENDON

The **Gatehangers**, a free house, has settled on serving **XT 4** which has proved to be a firm favourite of the locals and of course the other favourite of the locals, **Greene King IPA**.

### AYLESBURY

The **New Zealand** featured on the front of our October/November issue last year when it was closed, we thought forever! However, Arnold Homes, the property company that now owns the pub, are looking for a tenant so that it can reopen as a free house! The kitchens and bathroom are due to be refurbished and there is plenty of space within the pub and good size living accommodations. We look forward to this uniquely named pub reopening its doors to drinkers!

The **Queens Head** has closed after a team carried out an eviction. It is sad that the early promise when it reopened last year was not upheld, but as we have often said, use them or lose them.

### BIERTON

The **Bell**, a **Fuller's** house, is offering a two-course Sunday roast for £9.95. There are live bands on the second Sunday of each month.

The **Red Lion** offers eat-in or takeaway 'jumbo-sized' fish and chips at £7.95 on Tuesday nights. Ales from **St. Austell**, **Hook Norton** and **Timothy Taylor** feature regularly.

### BOVINGDON GREEN

The **Royal Oak** has been named as Buckinghamshire's Dining Pub of the

Year for the third successive year by the **Good Pub Guide**. Might be something to do with the **Rebellion** beers on offer!

### BRADENHAM

Great news that the **Red Lion** has reopened. New proprietor Jackie Coleman, supported by Peter Clarke and her son Jamie, has taken on a twenty year lease and is offering exclusively **Rebellion** ales. Starting ales have been **IPA** and **Mutiny** but the plan is also to offer some seasonal ales as alternatives from time to time. **Rebellion** have provided help in getting the facilities up and working and Jackie and the team are taking a softly softly approach to their early months and will review their future plans for business after Christmas. They hope, however, to be there for the duration of the lease.

### BUTLER'S CROSS

The **Russell Arms** reopened in August under the management of Nicola Grant, of the wine shop and delicatessen '2 Pound Street' in Wendover. The menu at the pub is innovative and of high quality, either light bar meals or à la carte in the restaurant. There are four handpumps focusing on local brewers - so far noted have been ales from **Vale**, **Rebellion**, **Chiltern** and **XT**. Opening hours are from 11-11 (food 12-10). The Redline 321 bus running between Aylesbury and High Wycombe via Princes Risborough stops directly outside the pub albeit only during the day/early evening, Mon-Fri only, with broadly a two-hourly service.

### CHEARSLEY

The **GBG** listed **Bell** serves **Fullers** **Chiswick**, **London Pride** and a third

**Fullers** product - no **Locales** here yet.

### CHINNOR

The **Kings Head** is closed and looks likely to be converted to flats.

### CUDDINGTON

The **Crown** serves **Adnams Southwold Bitter**, **Fullers London Pride** and also a non-**Fullers** guest on the third pump. Recently **York Brewery Guzzler** at 3.6%. Might we see a **Locale** here too?

### DINTON

At the **Seven Stars** you will always find at least one **Vale** beer plus two others. One is likely to be a well-known branded product whilst the other will be another **Locale**. Real ales on offer, or in the offing, include **Vale Wychert**, **Vale Red Kite**, **Shepherd Neame Spitfire**, **St Austell Tribute** and either **XT 4** or **XT 5**.

### EMMINGTON

The **Inn at Emmington** is celebrating its listing in the 2013 **GBG**. It is sticking with its clientele's favourites, namely **Fullers London Pride** and **Brakspear Bitter**. As an alternative a **Rebellion**, **Vale** or **XT** ale is on the third handpump.

### FORD

The **Dinton Hermit** serves **Vale** beers. **Best Bitter** is always available and **Brill Gold** was on when visited recently.

### GIBRALTAR

The **Bottle and Glass** has **Greene King Morland Original Bitter** as a permanent fixture with one other handpump, usually from the **Greene King** stable, such as the suitably autumnal **Bonkers Conkers @ 4.1%**. **Greene King** now has some **Locales** on their list to choose from.



### GRENDON UNDERWOOD

The festival (picture above courtesy of chrisblizzardphoto.com) in September was a huge success with approx 3000 attending over the weekend. The real ale tent featured nearly 60 different ales and all bar a couple of the darker ones were drunk to the bottom of the barrels. They are now looking forward to distributing the profit to the worthwhile causes.

### HADDENHAM

Next beer festival is the Haddenham Winterfest on Saturday 8th December 2012, 12 noon to 5 pm, in the Village Hall. Event also comprises a Christmas Fayre with a wide range of stalls selling Christmas gifts, food and other enticing goodies. Don't forget you can reach the festival either by train on the Chiltern Line alighting at Haddenham and Thame Parkway which is a 15 minute



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walk or come by bus on the Arriva 280 line with a bus-stop only 200 yards from the Village Hall. In keeping with all good festivals at this time of the year, mulled wine will also be available.

**GBG** 2012 and 2013 **Rising Sun** continues to serve all the Locales and other intriguing offerings from around the country straight from the barrel at £2.85 a pint. Darts, Poker evenings and even Aunt Sally, as well as live music evenings, all add up to make the **Risey** a fun place to visit.

At the **Green Dragon**, Adam and Emma serve three real ales from their proper underground cellar. They have signed a five-year tenancy agreement with **Enterprise** and are free-of-tie on one handpump. They are keen on the **Vale** and **XT** ranges with **Sharps Doom Bar** a permanent fixture.

The **Kings Head** serves **Fullers London Pride** and **Sharps Doom Bar** plus one off **Punch's** Finest Cask List.

The **Red Lion** is still closed with planning permission approved for redevelopment as private housing.

Amazingly the **Rose & Thistle** was serving **Vale Gravitass** when visited for this report. Apparently **Greene King** now include some **Locales** on their permitted listing. The other two pumps were **Greene King IPA** and **Hardys & Hansons Olde Trip**. Listen to or join in with Haddenham Shamrocks second and fourth Tuesdays. Spaz is planning a singer once a month and a disco night on the last Saturday of the month and recently held a free pig roast to thank his regulars for their support.

## HIGH WYCOMBE

The **Belle Vue** is holding a 'Summer's End' beer festival over the weekend of 26th-28th of October. The theme for the ales of the festival is 'Myths and Legends'.

A sign outside the **Golden Fleece** shows that it is 'To Let'.

The beer festival at the **High Wycombe Rugby Club** on Friday 16th and Saturday 17th of November will feature beers from Tintagel and Hartland in the West Country. Seven beers not tasted in our region have been collected for the event (a couple of barrels of which will also be delivered to the **Whip**, Lacey Green, and the **Wheel**, Naphill). For their 10th Beer Festival anniversary, they have a surprise ale for the event, plus the usual craic with music, food and the First XV Rugby Team playing Reading in a league match.

We understand that **Admiral Taverns** have sold the **Nags Head** to another pub company. Further news next issue.

The lease is available at the **Rifle Butts**.

The **Terriers** (formerly the **Black Boy**) now has three real ales including a **Rebellion** ale.

## MARLOW

Hertfordshire's oldest brewery, **McMullen & Sons**, which is celebrating 185 years of brewing, will have a pub in our branch! They have bought the **Britannia** in Little Marlow Road, which has been up for sale for a few months. Further news next issue.

The news is not so good for the nearby **Plough** which is likely to be demolished and to be replaced by flats.

## STOKE MANDEVILLE

The **Bull** now offers four beers on handpump, **Chiltern Beechwood Bitter**, **St. Austell Tribute**, **Brains SA** and **Adnams Southwold Bitter** were on offer when we visited recently for a branch social.

## THAME

**Chinnor RFC**, at OX9 3JL, a 15 min walk from the town centre serves **Vale Wychert** and **Brakspear Bitter**. Come and support Chinnor who play the next highest level of rugby in the area to Wasps at High Wycombe, namely Level 4, National League 2 South. Did you enjoy their 2nd Octoberfest on 29th September?

The **Cross Keys** are holding a beer festival over the weekend of 9th and 10th November, when as well as the eight beers in the bar, there will be another eight upstairs and a further eight on standby. It is rumoured that there may be two **Thame Brewery** beers, **Splodge Mild** and **Hoppiness**.

Although the **Falcon** continues to have three beers on handpump, they have stopped selling **Hooky Best**. They had **Speckled Hen** and **Old Hooky** and were awaiting **Hook Norton Lemon Head**, a seasonal brew at 4.0.

A former **Good Beer Guide** entry, the **Swan**, has finally reopened. It is being run by Richard Graydon and Nicola Macfarlane. Richard's previous lives have been in hotel management and the building trade while Nicola worked in Health and Safety, so running a pub is going to be a bit daunting and a steep learning curve (says Richard). Wonder if he knew it was Thame Fair when he

decided on the opening date? They will primarily be selling **Rebellion** beers and a guest beer. On opening night it was **Doom Bar** and in the future they are looking at the **Locale** possibilities. They have a breakfast and all day menu and the restaurant will be opening shortly. We wish them good luck and good fortune and it is encouraging to see a pub reopened instead of closing and being turned into flats, offices etc.

## TWYFORD

The **Crown** has an ever changing guest beer which happened to be **Butcombe Bitter** on a recent visit. This was found to be in excellent condition with a most welcoming atmosphere in this justly popular village pub. A wide range of activities and events were also in evidence with Aunt Sally being played in the garden, many games available inside and a notice-board crammed with future happenings.

## WING

New landlord at the **Sportsmans Arms** is Gary Harding. Having previously run pubs in Potton Bedfordshire and Brackley in Northants Gary has been in the trade for twenty years. He shows a very positive outlook for this popular yet oppressed pub which **Punch** are trying to sell as a freehold, pub or otherwise. Before entering the door new signage asserts that this pub is now back on the map. Inside are now two regular cask ales, **Sharps Doom Bar** and **Fullers London Pride** when visited but **Adnams Ghost Ship** 4.5% is imminent (all are £2.80/pint). Quiz nights are coming soon on Sunday evenings and monthly Race Nights are planned.

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## WINGRAVE'S HUB



Roger Dimmock and Soo Dixon took on the tenancy of the **Punch** owned **Rose & Crown** at Wingrave in January of this year. This is their first pub and both are new to the trade, Roger having been an engineer for Monarch Airlines for 16 years whilst Soo's background is in the IT industry. Previously living in Kings Walden, near Hitchin, they are both delighted with their new challenge and have had a promising start with a positive and favourable response from village regulars and new customers alike.

Close to our north-east border with Mid-Chilterns (and Bedfordshire), Wingrave is a hilltop village of under 2000 persons. Listed in the Domesday Book as Withungrave, in old English this apparently translates as 'the grove of the people of the heathen temple'. A fine 13th century church overlooks the village which is close to the Rothschild estate at Mentmore. As a result there are many mock-Tudor red brick cottages each bearing the logo 'H de R' 1876, being built by Hannah de Rothschild for workers on the estate together with the village school. Famous local residents of past and present include late comic Peter Cook, musician Ian Dury, ex politician and TV presenter Michael Portillo and holder of many odd Guinness world records, Perry Watkins. One of his recent achievements was to drive his Queen Anne dining table set for dinner with six chairs to a record 113mph at Santa Pod Raceway. This easily beat the previous record for furniture, held by a sofa at a mere 92mph.

In 1956 the population was only circa 800, yet there were four pubs still open. The **Carpenters Arms** at Nup End subsequently closed leaving three until the mid-eighties, which saw the demise of the **Anchor** in Moat Lane. The **Bell** in Winslow Road made way for housing in 1992. The **Rose & Crown** remains, well situated near the Leighton Road junction to Ledburn and just past the duck pond on the Long Marston Road. Built in 1754 it became licensed as an ale-house in 1767 with the first landlord Harvey Paine who in 1774 was replaced by Eustace Pitty. Two years later it was taken over by John Mortimer and became known as the **Rose & Crown** in 1777. The pub remained in the Mortimer family for more than a century until 1890 when taken over by George Higgins who ran it for the next 40 years. A list of all landlords remains in the pub and judging from the numerous entries from the early 1930s, it was probably at this period that it became part of the **ABC/Ind Coope** and latterly **Allied Breweries** empire. With the break-up of this it went through the hands of several pubcos in the 1990s, eventually passing to **Punch Taverns** as it remains today.

The pub retains its original three room layout, consisting of flagstoned public bar at one end, extended lounge/restaurant bar at the other and a comfortable snug bar in between, always favoured by the regulars. In

addition there is a large games room with pool table situated in what was originally an entrance lobby. Outside next to the car park is an excellent new patio area with tables and seating in a sunny (sometimes hopefully) location overlooking open parkland. This was done when Roger and Soo took over as part of a major refurbishment which necessitated a fortnight's closure. The pub was redecorated throughout and refitted with new lighting, new carpets, new curtains, new furniture and, most importantly to some of us – new handpumps.

Three ales are available at all times but this rises to four from Thursday through to Sunday. Of these two are regulars, the rest ever changing guests. Roger plans to review all the ales on a regular basis and looks toward local breweries where the tie permits. Ales at the time of visit were: - **Sharps Doom Bar** and **Timothy Taylor Landlord** as regulars plus **Brakspear Bitter** and **Hook Norton Hooky Bitter** as guests. Roger plans to hold occasional beer festivals, the first of which was at the end of September with seven ales and two ciders in addition to those already on the bar.

There are two full time employees; Jake Dixon, Soo's son is trainee manager and Nial Hayward is the chef. Ten part time bar and kitchen staff ensure smooth running and complete the picture.

The large restaurant seats up to about 70 persons and there is a wide range of popular and traditional fare. Meals and bar snacks are available all days (except Monday when the pub is closed) from 12-2pm and 6-9pm Tuesday to Saturday and 12 noon to 6pm Sunday. Special Curry nights are held fortnightly on Tuesday evenings at £6.95 for three courses and there is a Lunch Club for the over 50s at lunchtime on the last Tuesday of each month. Watch out for 'Challenge Our Chef', an open kitchen event currently being developed between Roger, Soo and Nial.

On the games front there are a regular pool team on Tuesdays and a dominoes team on Thursdays, both compete in local Leagues. Golf club events are held here twice annually and the pub participates in the annual Village Barbecue and Scarecrow Festival in early July, followed by a Fete the next day.

Future plans include Quiz Nights and also Open Mic Nights for budding entertainers. Live music is held on the last Saturday of each month with 'The Forgiven' appearing on Saturday 27th October, 'One Way Out' on 24th November and 'Portly Fat + Schneider' booked for the New Year. A Halloween and Bonfire Disco will be held on the 10th November and an outdoor Christmas film show is scheduled for the 21st December. Classic old favourite 'White Christmas' will be shown by projection viewed from the patio area together with another seasonal gem yet to be confirmed. This will be supported by heating from chimera and plenty of hot chilli, jacket potatoes and hot-dogs.

Since Roger and Soo took over the pub has gone from strength to strength and has regained the 'buzz' I always remember it for. I hope all their effort continues to be rewarded in their future here. A new website is currently being developed, meanwhile any enquiries can be answered by phone on 01296 708414.

**Mick White**

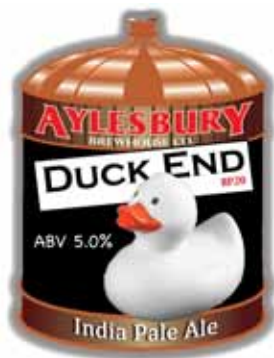




## LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

### Aylesbury Brewhouse

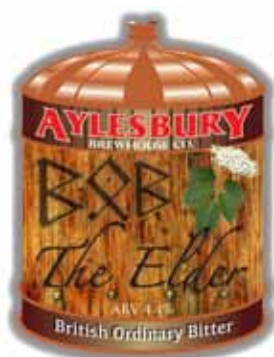
After a limited release in cask, the remainder of the one and only brew of *Sink or Swim*, a 6.8% India Pale Ale which was brewed with Roger Protz back in February, has finally been bottled (bottle-conditioned so it will continue to mature). It will be released in time for the brewery's first birthday on December 1st.



They have launched a new website at [aylesburybrewhouse.co.uk](http://aylesburybrewhouse.co.uk) and are happy to announce that brewery tours are now available for individuals and groups. Please visit the website for further details.

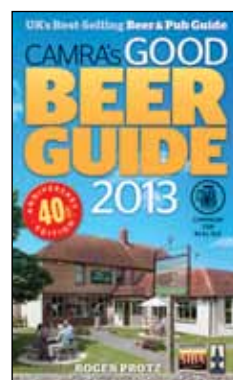
They have now passed the milestone of twenty-five different limited edition beers. Their latest releases are *Duck End IPA*, a 5.0% English IPA, *Bob the Elder*, at 4.4% is a bitter with a hint of elderflower, and *Boggling Fertle*, a 3.8% mild based on a 1953 northern recipe...by eck.

You can follow the brewery on Twitter @AylesburyBrewCo.



## CREATING THE GBG

The release of the *Good Beer Guide 2013* is the culmination of effort of thousands of volunteers from all over the country. Every *CAMRA* branch visits as many pubs in their branch as they can several times a year. This is a tall order in the Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe branch, with over 350 pubs to visit! No one person, or indeed small group of people can give this many pubs the attention they deserve, so we rely on reports from YOU, the reader of this magazine!



It is your reports that go into the local news section in *Swan Supping*, and help choose which pubs are considered for the guide. But we need more. *Good Beer Guide* pubs are those that are the best over the whole year, and not just one or two visits.

If you are a *CAMRA* member, please score your beer! All you need to do is go to [www.beerscoring.org.uk](http://www.beerscoring.org.uk), log in using your *CAMRA* membership number without any leading zeroes and password (this is your postcode without the spaces if you have not changed it). Simply select where you drank the beer, and its score from 0 to 5 where 0 is undrinkable and 5 is perfect. Alternatively, email your score, pub name date of visit and *CAMRA* number to [scores@swansupping.org.uk](mailto:scores@swansupping.org.uk) and we will enter it for you.

If you are not a *CAMRA* member, we still need you! Your reports about your local are just as vital for the your local's chances for inclusion! Please tell us about events, interesting beer, changes of landlords. Email [editor@swansupping.org.uk](mailto:editor@swansupping.org.uk), phone me on 07970 633952, or write to us using the address in the back of this magazine.

If you are a publican, please tell us when you are organising an event. We will do our very best to publicise it here, and on the branch website, but we can't if you don't tell us about it! Please encourage your locals to report on the excellence of your beer, and to submit scores if they are *CAMRA* members.

Alexander Wright, Branch Chairman



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## CASK MARQUE REAL ALE TRAIL



Over the last twelve months I have been taking part in a new initiative introduced by **Cask Marque** termed the 'World's Biggest Ale Trail'.

The concept began in September 2011 to coincide with **Cask Ale Week** in order to encourage people to visit more pubs and try real ale. The scheme involves using a smart phone to scan QR codes on the bottom of the pub's **Cask Marque** accreditation certificate. The name and a running total of the pubs visited are stored on your phone and prizes are gained for reaching certain thresholds.

As we approach this year's **Cask Ale Week** (28th September – 7th October), I have now visited 400 different pubs that have achieved **Cask Marque** accreditation. During this period of time I have been sent prizes such as a bottle-opener magnet for surpassing 25 pubs, a **Cask Marque** Polo shirt for surpassing 50, and was given the honour of becoming **Cask Marque**'s first ambassador for surpassing 100 pubs.

Becoming an ambassador entitles me to a free brewery tour, a day visiting pubs with a **Cask Marque** assessor and a free place on a cellar management training course worth over £100. So far 27 people have become **Cask Marque** Ambassadors with many more on the verge of achieving this landmark.

My tours of **Cask Marque** pubs have taken me to all corners of the UK and have involved some amazing weekend bar crawls in some very ale conscious cities such as Birmingham, Edinburgh, Nottingham, to name just a few. Along the way such gems ranging from traditional country pubs to 'trendy' town centre bars have been found serving a wondrous array of real ale in tremendous condition. My favourite find has been the **Nook** in Holmfirth, West Yorkshire. This tiny brewpub, home of the **Nook Brewhouse**, dating from 1754 is hidden away in a small square in the centre of the town made famous as the setting for the BBC comedy *Last of the Summer Wine*. Offering a great range of their beers, from *Blond* through to *Oat Stout*, this pub is worthy detour if you're exploring this area of Yorkshire.

Many of my tours have involved my ale-loving wife, Sandra, who has enjoyed drinking ale since first trying our national drink after moving to the UK from lager-only Bosnia two years ago. The ale trail has also encouraged us to discover more of our wonderfully beautiful group of islands.

It is worth mentioning that we have many pubs within our district that have achieved **Cask Marque** accreditation including eleven in Aylesbury and six in High Wycombe, along with many of our small town or village pubs. I would encourage you, especially as **Cask Ale Week** is upon us, to visit these pubs that you may have not tried before and partake in the **Cask Marque** initiative. You will not be disappointed by the beer quality and may even find a rare gem of a pub or even a new favourite ale along the way.



For a pub to achieve **Cask Marque** accreditation, it must pass two unannounced visits by qualified assessors whom are all qualified brewers. All beers on offer are tested for temperature, appearance, aroma and taste. If both visits reach the required standard **Cask Marque** accreditation is awarded. The award is renewable every 12 months subject to satisfactory annual inspections. Look out for the tell-tale handpump sign on the outside of the premises or signs attached to the bar's handpumps themselves.

If you are interested in discovering more about the scheme, or want to join the ale trail, visit <http://www.cask-marque.co.uk/biggest-ale-trail/ale-trail>.

**Carl Griffin** (pictured above in the **Bell**, Aylesbury, with his wife, Sandra).



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On August 1st, the day of Bradley Wiggins gold medal at the Olympic time trial, I flew 5,300 miles to San Francisco, a ten and a half hour journey. The flight was somewhat pleasurable with a number of films I could see, music I could listen to, and ample leg space as I was by one of the exits – sleep therefore wasn't an option! This was my first trip to the States, and a three-weeker, and came about by short notice as my mother (Mags) 'decided' to get married there, specifically southern Oregon actually. I flew on my own and met Mags and her beau, Harry in blue sunshine at SFO (San Francisco).

This wasn't a beer tour as such, more of a slow marriage procession but I/we took every opportunity to indulge. They whisked me to Half Moon Bay (pop 11,300ish) some 30 miles to the south where we stayed for a couple of days and which seems to be perpetually under cloud/fog which rolls off the Pacific.

After a quick check-in I was treated to a visit to the **Half Moon Bay** brewery and restaurant, a few miles outside the town. Ironically I have had the brewery t-shirt for years as a present but now I could actually claim to have been there. The beers were the 'Maverick' range and consisted amongst others of *Pale ale*, *Brown ale* and *Amber ale*. The standard US serving was 16fl oz or 455ml – a rather short UK pint. Beer samplers are common in the places we visited with sample sizes up to 5fl oz and in this case I had a ten-beer sampler here of about 3fl oz each. We followed this up after with a visit to Taqueria La Mexicana – as you do and some bottled Modelo Negra black lager. In the course of our stay there we visited two other beery outlets – **San Benito house** and **It's Italia** restaurant for you know what, but it did have a functioning bar, which proved to be useful during the return trip when the **San Benito** was closed. The common beers in these bars were *New Belgium*



### *Sudwerks Riverside Restaurant and Brewery*

*Brewing Fat Tire* from Colorado and *Deschutes Mirror Pond Pale Ale* from northern Oregon.

The following day we made the drive to Oregon (but returned to California in the last week) via Davis and Redding. All of us were slowly grilled by the heat which oscillated between 85 and 102f. Davis (pop 66,000) is best known for its university and lies just west of Sacramento and 101 miles from Half Moon Bay. It has a very good restaurant called the **Bistro** and a bar called the **City Hall Tavern**, whose beer list ran to nine and comprised of California and Oregon beers, from 5% Pale ales to 9% Stouts. It was so hot we stayed in the large seating area and as we ate I slowly drank my way through (some) of the list; *North Coast Rasputin*, *High Water Hop Riot*....

One thing that strikes me about US ales is the sheer variety of styles, most are common in the UK but they also have Hefeweizen and Kolsch which show a strong European/German influence.

The following day we made a non-beery excursion to Napa Valley vineyards, visiting Stags Leap, Clos Du Val and Luna wine cellars, a very pleasant experience but rather expensive since the tasters were from bottles in the \$40-\$150 dollar range. Nonetheless two bottles came back with us and are now residing back home in Aylesbury. In our final evening in Davis we visited **Sudwerks Riverside Restaurant**, with German-themed beers: *Pilsner*, *Hefeweizen*, *Lager*, *IPA* and *Marzen* amongst others. Again I tried the beer sampler and finally settled on the *Dry Stout* with my meal. The brewery itself occupies the central bar area with seating all round with eating areas to the side. Here you can buy t-shirts and mugs and things to remind you of your visit. I took the t-shirt at about \$15 for maximum advertising at home, and was duly rewarded with a bottle of one of their beers at the **White Horse**, Parsons Green some three weeks later, for wearing their t-shirt of course!

After two nights in Davis we then drove to Redding on interstate 5 though the Sacramento valley, a distance of 154 miles through the nut orchards and rice fields. Not really a beery stop as the **Alehouse** pub handily opposite our hotel was 'unhandily' closed. **Chevy's**, a recommended Mexican restaurant had shut for good and the hotel staff recommended **Casa Ramos**, and something of a steep learning curve as this was far more Mexican than anything in the UK – it was another language entirely. The highlight was the Margaritas in large bowl like glasses, very nice indeed – although swimming in lime juice how much Tequila do they add? Would you fall off your stall after a couple of glasses? This was also the hottest part of the holiday with temperatures in the low 100s. Fortunately our hotel La Quinta had a Jacuzzi (hot, but, oh well, I



*Wild River Brewery*





went in it) and a swimming pool. In the evening I managed to obtain a bottle of **Bison Chocolate Stout** from Berkeley in California as my nightcap.

After one night here we made our way into Oregon, specifically a homestead near Selma which is close to the Rogue River national park near Grants Pass. It is difficult to pinpoint where this place is, but it's pretty isolated and that is where the wedding would take place. The route beyond Redding was far more interesting with the big hills, eroded lava domes and the snow capped 14,300ft Mount Shasta.

Over the border in Oregon the I5 reaches its highest point the Siskiyou summit at 4,310ft. We reached Grants Pass after a drive of some 180 miles and made our first stop at the **Wild River Brewery** which has several outlets in southern Oregon and seems to be best known for its Pizzas. I counted seven brews available here including a *Kolsch*, *IPA* and a 9.5% imperial stout amongst others - and oh sampler trays are available. I found out

several days later while on a 'session' at this place that they only do one cask-conditioned ale, which is rotated amongst the beer range. However it was from an unlabelled pump-clip, and the waitress simply asked if I wanted to try the 'cask' version - I'd already had this beer from the labelled pump-clip so obviously the other beers were kegged. I was lucky as this was the *Imperial Stout*!

Statistically Oregon rates as one of the best places for brewpubs in the USA with 15% or so of the beer produced there actually drunk there - the national average being around 5%. Portland itself has upwards of 40 breweries making it possibly the brewpub capital of the world - alas I didn't make it there so another trip is required.

Finally we reached the homestead where we stayed at the invitation of one of Harry's friends and we were to spend ten days here. We stocked up on beer with visits to Fred Meyer supermarket which is more of a hypermarket really. Aylesbury has a population of around 80,000 and Grant Pass 34,000 yet this supermarket was far bigger than anything I had ever seen. Size counts really here! For the wedding itself we stocked up on beer packs of **Bridgeport** and **Widmer Brothers** breweries, both from Portland, as well as wine including English Sparkling - glad the bottle I bought across from the UK didn't explode during the plane flight!

The following day we visited the giant redwoods at Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park and toured the Oregon coastline, with a lovely seafood meal at the Whalehead restaurant on the coast and some **Deschutes Black Butte Porter** to wash it down.

Our final part of the holiday was to get back to get my plane at SFO, but not before we spent a few days in northern California. We based ourselves at Cupertino (pop 59,000) on the outskirts of San Jose and the HQ of Apple Inc - I kept my Samsung phone well hidden. We stayed at the Hilton and were within 300 metres of a very curious bar, actually an English pub, the **Duke of Edinburgh**. The interior is all England, transported from said country then assembled here. It even had a place for playing darts in a separate area. Some well known English beers were here - I tried the **Fullers London Pride** and very nice it was too - however it didn't taste like the *Pride* I was used to though.

The highlight of our evening here was a trip to **BJ's Brewhouse**, a vast emporium of food and beer filled to the rafters with people - perhaps over 500. A nationwide chain with most bars in California and Texas, they brew an enviable portfolio of about eighteen ales. The **Firkin** pubs in the 1980s would be an equivalent. We made our reservation at the door and received an electronic device



**BJ's Beer samplers**

that lit up when a table was available. We sat at the bar and wondered how many beers we would sink before we got the call - thankfully only a few minutes, most of the crowd were here for the beer only. I got a six 5fl oz beer taster containing an *IPA*, *Hefeweizen* and a *Porter* amongst others. The food was gorgeous and as usual extremely filling.

Our final brewery visit was almost by accident, we came to Santa Cruz to try some wine at the **Bonny Doon 'Le Cigare Volant'** restaurant and tasting room. However immediately opposite was the **Santa Cruz Mountain Brewing Company** with yet more stouts, porters and brown ales on a tasting tray - and most importantly they had t-shirts! We sat outside looking at what was actually a large of cluster of wine-tasting places representing different vineyards. Residents living next door must surely be blessed!

Sadly there was no time for bars in SFO but we did pay a visit to Buena Vista cafe near Fishermans Wharf and tried some really good Irish coffee.

A good trip was had by all - we tried so many different beer styles with many of them well hopped and very flavoursome. Most breweries had at least six beers to try, all available on tasting trays and despite the searing heat, Stouts and Porters which perhaps we would regard as warming winter beers were quite common. All in all a beer lovers' paradise - I shall go back.

## Lemon Snail



**Santa Cruz Mountain Brewing Beer List**



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## LOCAL BREWERY NEWS



### Malt the Brewery

Our latest local brewery, *Malt the Brewery* in Prestwood, has started brewing and we are hoping to have a barrel from them at our festival in October. More photos and an article about the brewery will appear in our next issue.

### Rebellion Brewery

The membership club for *Rebellion* has its 15 months for the price of 12 deal starting in November! Members can now set up a rolling Direct Debit for convenience. Also, free 'Join the rebellion' car stickers are available for *Swan Supping* readers from the brewery shop!



The seasonal beer at the moment is *Red* with the ever popular *Roasted Nuts* returning in November and available through to 2013.

Upcoming monthly beers include October's offering of *Cabin Boy*, a golden beer with a citrus hop character.

The nautical theme is continued into November with *Hornpipe*, Amber in colour, this 4.2% premium ale combines traditional Golding and Kent grown Bramling Cross hops to provide a distinctive spicy/blackcurrant flavour.

### Vale Brewery

*Wetherspoons* are running *Vale Special* from September through to November nationally. *Ember Inns* have selected *VPA* for a festival winners beer festival. *Vale Pale Ale* was selected after receiving a Bronze at the *Great British Beer Festival*. Continuing the winners theme, *Greene King* selected *Gravitas*, the *SIBA* Gold medal winning beer, to feature as one of just four guest ales in September.

*Vale's* focus on cask beer meant that they fell behind with bottling, but by late September they were back in stock of their bottle-conditioned ales. These are available at the brewery shop in Brill or from the *Aylesbury Brewhouse* shop behind the *Hop Pole* in Aylesbury.

A very successful brew over the summer was *Brill Gold*. This was a low strength brew at 3.5%, but it was packed with flavour and very well received in the local free trade. Following this will be a special for the autumn period.

The monthly special brews continue with *Reilly's Red* in October. The pump badge is pictured and those more familiar with *Vale* staff may recognize



a passing resemblance to a certain character. This ale is a ruby red coloured Irish style ale, one to look out for as the nights get darker.



In November they have *Northern Lights*. At 4.2% this beer named after the colourful light display also known as the aurora borealis.

### XT Brewery

*XT* are celebrating their first year of brewing with an open evening at the brewery on Thursday 6th December from 6pm until 9.30pm. Why not join us there for our branch social and sample their beers for Christmas. More information can be found at [xtbrewing.com](http://xtbrewing.com) or by phoning 01844 208310.

Beer made with fresh from the bine hops forms a *Fresh Hop 1*, a variant based on *XT 1* (4.2% abv). Both forms of *XT 1* are currently available, so see if you can tell the difference.



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## COVER STORY - 40 YEARS OF THE GBG

**CAMRA and the Chiltern Brewery announce new Ruby Anniversary Ale Gift Packs to celebrate 40 years of the Good Beer Guide.**

Last Thursday I attended the branch's launch of the *Good Beer Guide* alongside the launch of CAMRA's Celebratory Ruby Ale. The beer, available in gift packs, was brewed by the oldest brewery in the branch, *Chiltern*, as a celebration of the *40th Good Beer Guide*. Tom Jenkinson, Head Brewer, had worked on the concept of the Ruby Ale with the help of Roger Protz, pictured right in his *Chiltern Brewery* Brewer's coat.

As we gathered for the event in the Gatehouse Chamber at the *King's Head*, we wet our whistle on *Chiltern's WheelPower*, brewed to commemorate the Paralympic Games, a



light hoppy beer that was to contrast nicely with the *Ruby Ale* that we got to sample later.

The evening was opened by Tom Jenkinson, who described his ambition in creating the beer, 'I have taken my inspiration from the history of brewing, using ingredients both ancient and modern, and the chance to showcase the best of British hops and grains to create a fabulous rich *Ruby Anniversary Ale*'. I loved seeing Tom's passion for his job, as of course, it is a passion I share! He stressed that while the beer was really good now, it would only improve with age.

Special guest David Lidington MP then gave an introduction, praising both the efforts of CAMRA and our local brewers. As he spoke, I could tell he shared our common feeling of relief that we are not left with *Watney's Red Barrel*, and have, instead, the fabulous choice that we do. We were able to put forward CAMRA's campaigning points, most especially about the reduction of tax on beer. This point was most appropriate as the launch coincided with the day the CAMRA E-petition reached the magic number of 100,000 which will trigger a Parliamentary debate about the tax on beer and the totally outrageous escalator which results in a third of the price of every pint being paid to the government!

Roger Protz then talked about his longtime involvement in the Guide, and gave us younger members an impression of how far brewing, pubs and CAMRA have come since the Guide's first issue. I have to say it was an honour to be part of the 40th guide.

Finally, we all got to sample the beer, as *Chiltern* had brought a single unbottled barrel for us to try. It is a lovely ruby red colour, with a balanced malty flavour. As you might imagine for a beer with five grains, I found a lovely sweet flavour, balanced with a generous hoppy flavour. I sampled quite extensively!

The limited edition *Ruby Anniversary Ale* blends five grains including Maris Otter malt, widely used in the 1980's and still the preferred grain of many craft brewers, with a fine selection of English hops both modern and traditional, including Fuggles, Goldings, Whitbread Goldings Variety, Challenger and Pioneer. The result is a creamy smooth rich balanced malt base with hints of roast barley, full flavoured and hoppy, and claret red in colour. It can be preordered in gift packs of five bottles from Chiltern's website: <http://www.chilternbrewery.co.uk/GBG40>. It is also available at £24.95 per gift pack for collection from the Brewery. A £1 royalty is made to CAMRA from each pack sold.

*Alexander Wright*

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# GLIMPSES OF RECOVERY, MR CAMERON?

In our June issue our pub-loving tour guide took the Prime Minister for an imaginary tour from the gates of Chequers through the heart of the **CAMRA Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe Branch** to inspect the effects of successive governments' policies – a succession of closed pubs.

Four months later are there signs of any turnaround?

Just a whistle stop tour this time, Prime Minister. Yes, I know that one of your whips might have warned you that pubs have 'plebs' drinking inside them – so we won't venture through any doors. But, sad to say, you're going to have to persuade more than a few of the beer drinking common folk to vote for you in under three years' time. So, as Boris's American friend Mitt might say, 'listen up'.

If you look out of the window and listen hard you might even detect a few green shoots – but better keep quiet about these to Boy George. On past form he'd probably want to tax them until the hops squeak even more.

First, down the hill into Butler's Cross. We mentioned before that the villagers had clubbed together to save the **Russell Arms**, their local pub, from 'rationalisation' by its previous pubco owner (i.e. potential closure). As we said then, the splendid efforts of the community in pulling together to keep the pub open might be one of the few examples of your otherwise baffling Big Society that the electorate can understand.

All summer a band of dedicated volunteers and investors has worked to make the fabric of the pub spick and span – and the pub's village owners have entered into an innovative tenancy agreement. The proprietors of No.2 Pound Street, the wine shop and delicatessen in Wendover, reopened the pub in August and are on a mission to promote local food and drink. Beef is sourced just down the road in Terrick, as is the beer on one of the four handpumps – from **Chiltern Brewery** less than a mile away – along with other **LocAles**.

**Chiltern Brewery**, being good neighbours, gave the villagers informal support when they first started campaigning to save their threatened pub. The **Russell Arms** even features a small village shop – please pass on your apologies for this extra competition to your friends, the chief execs of our huge superstores. Maybe they'll compensate for the loss of sales of the odd loaf of bread by running another tinned fizz promotion?

When I popped into the **Russell Arms** and sampled a pint of smooth, dark **XT 8**, I happened to flick through of a copy of a book that might interest you. It was written by the wife of your predecessor as Conservative Prime Minister – Norma Major's history of Chequers. Towards the back of the book there's a photograph of John Major sitting in the lounge of the **Bernard Arms** enjoying a convivial drink or fifteen with Boris Yeltsin. Sadly, as



we'll observe if we head towards Great Kimble, that's not currently an option for you should your friend Vladimir Putin wish to follow in Boris Yeltsin's wobbly footsteps.

The only change at the **Bernard Arms** since our earlier tour is the removal of the huge skip into which many of the pub's fixtures and fittings had been dumped. Over the summer countless ramblers and visitors must have been disappointed to arrive at this historic pub and find it firmly closed for business – a travesty in this beautiful part of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We are still none the wiser as to what might happen to the **Bernard Arms** in the future but it's certainly not contributing to pulling the economy out of its double-dip at the moment.

Fortunately, half a mile down the lane, past St. Nicholas's church, the **Swan** tells a more cheerful story. This free-house on the village green was taken over during the summer by a local family. Their investment in the business is clearly evident – amongst other things the exterior of the pub boasts several smart new signs – advertising that they're well and truly open for business. That's a welcome change from all those 'Business for Sale' or 'You Could Run This Pub' boards that, in some parts, seem to have replaced the British traditional inn sign.

On through Princes Risborough, we pass the newly renamed **Chiltern Hotel**. Until recently this was the **Rose and Crown** and a stalwart of the local real ale in **CAMRA's** early days.

On to Bradenham. Like most of the rest of the village, the pub is owned by the National Trust and has been shut since early in the year. The boarded up windows have been a disconsolate sight throughout the summer months. As another pub in fine walking country, its closure must have frustrated many who who'd set out from home to enjoy a traditional British weekend pint in beautiful countryside.

But at last there's good news – the **Red Lion** has finally reopened – and, what's more, the pub is making a determined show of supporting local beers. We've heard it features a selection of four real ales from Marlow's **Rebellion** brewery. Let's drink to that.

I promised this tour would be shorter so we'll take the A40 through West Wycombe and Stokenchurch and into the village of Kingston Blount where the previously closed **Cherry Tree**, a **Brakspear's** house, has also reopened for business.

Unfortunately, just up the road in Crowell, the **Shepherd's Crook** ceased trading earlier this summer and has been closed since. This atmospheric country pub has been an enthusiastic supporter of real ale, featuring many unusual beers and holding a popular beer festival. The pub's fortunes can't have been helped by the difficulty of getting to this area by public transport. The number 40 between Thame and High Wycombe does come past – but only during working hours and nothing on Sunday – not times that are going to encourage pub users. Not all country drinkers have chauffeured limousines or 4x4s.

We'll head back through Thame town centre – noting that the historic **Swan Hotel** has also recently reopened after an extensive refurbishment. Making our way swiftly towards Aylesbury, we pass close by the **Seven Stars** at Dinton. While this pub has been open under its new ownership for some



time, it's worth pointing out that it's another example of villagers coming together to save a treasured local amenity by buying the freehold from the pub company.

Enjoy our peaceful drive through the back lanes near Stone and Bishopstone on the edge of Aylesbury. Some philistine wants to destroy this countryside by running a 250mph railway through it – perhaps you can ask George how much beer tax will need to be levied to pay for shaving a few minutes off an already fast train journey?

If you'd read the last edition of *Swan Supping*, you'd already know the welcome news that the last stop on our previous tour, the **Bull** in Stoke Mandeville, has also reopened. It's an increasingly rare example of a traditional two-bar pub serving different sections of its community – a public bar where locals can watch sport on satellite television and a back bar for quieter drinking.

So a few tentative steps forward and a couple backwards. Despite the economic climate you should surely admire the determination and optimism of those opening pub businesses in the current climate – they seem to be rolling up their sleeves and getting the economy moving far

more effectively than your friend in Number Eleven whose taxation regime is hardly helping.

Remember that each British pub employs staff, stocks many British made products and contributes in many intangible ways to the benefit of its local community. Those benefits are well-known to the 102,000 or so **CAMRA** supporters who signed the 'Save Your Pint' petition that urges you to scrap the punitive and disingenuous 'beer escalator'. So, Prime Minister, should you choose to take these tours in real life, at least you'll be better informed when you hold the parliamentary debate that **CAMRA** and British beer lovers have forced on the government – and you might have a slightly better inkling about why you've made it so damned hard for pubs to make ends meet.

Note that all the pubs mentioned were either open or closed to the best of our knowledge at the time of going to press. However, in the current economic climate, businesses' circumstances change very quickly. Keep informed via future *Swan Suppings*. **Charlie Mackle**



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## GRAVEDIGGERS - PART NINETEEN



James proudly polished the pump-clip for *Diggers' Right Royal Ale*. Copious quantities of the robust 6.5% brew had lubricated festivities in the bar over the last few weeks. He reckoned the microbrewery's best beer yet (well, only drinkable one) was equally as responsible as the Olympics and the Jubilee for the past summer being no more than a happy, hazy glow in the regulars' memories. And what's more, he was going to use a few pints of it to show Randy Hopper what was the Best of British.

Randy was Mazz's American brother and had just flown in from Filthy Creek, California, where he ran the *Body Snatchers' Bar* – a place where the locals showed their appreciation of the latest brew by riddling the cask with a hail of bullets.

'Jeez, James,' Randy said after slugging back a pint of *Right Royal*. 'So if that's the soda you give the minors, let's see what you serve the big guys. Are they still rationing hops over here in England?'

'It's our most popular ale, Randy,' Mazz said. 'We even managed to get Carl the environmental health officer to drink a pint and he didn't close the microbrewery down afterwards.'

'He only condemned the kitchen,' James said. 'Though he did suggest we use the beer in place of industrial strength disinfectant.'

'You still kickin' that real ale can along the sidewalk?' Randy said. 'You Brits always are behind the times – you need to follow the boys from the Body Snatchers' and get into the craft beer revolution. Here take a nip of this – it's our *Turbo Hopped Sierra Steam Packet Crankshaft Rocket Fuel IPA*.'

Randy pulled out a beer bottle from his enormous suitcase and poured a small amount into glasses for James, Mazz and Old Pete. They each downed the beer in one swig and then gasped, choking and holding their throats.

'You call that beer?' James spluttered.

'That's bloomin' undrinkable,' Old Pete groaned, picking himself off the floor.

'And if Old Pete says that, then it's really saying something,' Mazz said, tears running down her cheeks.

'You've put more hops in one glass than we'd put in a barrel,' James said. 'No-one's going to drink even half-a-pint of that.'

'Holy Kölsh. You Brits don't get it, do you, with your old-fashioned measures?' Randy said. 'In the U S of A we sip our craft beers in small measures. No more pitchers of Bud. Our beer is so goddamn distinctive we savour it in small measures – arrange a row of tasting glasses into flights to be sipped over the course of a night...'

'Flights?' asked Old Pete, puzzled. 'Suppose drinking here usually ends up with my feet off the ground.'

'Y'know, you ought to try it. Might help you with your binge drinking problem here in the U.K. When the next bar is a hundred mile drive away in Coyote Crack, you're kinda glad you can only drink a few fluid ounces

before all your teeth feel like they're gonna drop right out of your mouth.'

'Well, we do have a beer festival coming up next month,' Mazz said. 'About the time you're back from your sightseeing tour round Europe.'

'Swell idea,' Randy said. 'You know I thought a fortnight might be a little too long to see what's worth seeing in Europe. I'll come back here and James, buddy, I'll lay you down a bet,' Randy said. 'I'll e-mail my West Coast craft beer dudes and get them to send you out a swell selection of craft beer – only it's to be drunk in your English halves. I'll tell you, when you Brits get a taste of proper craft beer you'll be sipping and savouring like the rest of us – getting' an education, sitting around talking 'bout the malt and the hops instead of, what is it you say you normally do, getting outta your skulls?'

'If you're sending free beer, you're on,' James said.

'Oh and if you're worried you can't take our craft beers like men I'll leave you the recipe for our wild green-hopped craft beer – gentle boys' stuff we only make in the fall. All you need to do is send a few guys off and bring a bunch of fresh hops and fling 'em in the mash tun. I'm sure you guys will find some growing around the hedgerows. I mean it's not a hundred degrees like Filthy Creek, you've got to have some payback for this lousy weather.'

'Oh yes, I knows where the wild hops been growing since I was a boy,' Old Pete said. 'Down on Old Boggins's farm.'

\*\*\*\*

Next month the *Gravediggers* duly set up its first craft beer festival. Crates of beer bottles were shipped in from the US – all a minimum of 10% alcohol. But rather than being sipped and analysed, the stuff hardly touched the sides of the third of a pint glasses before slipping down the raucous drinkers' throats.

Randy arrived halfway through the evening from his vacation around Europe. He had to clamber over a huge pile of empty bottles of *Skunk Squirt Stout*, *Blastemadnukem Crazy Hopped Porter* and *Chuck's Chucky Chuck Up* to make his way into the barn at the back where the festivities were taking place. Old Pete and Old Moses danced a jig while Mazz and James furiously washed the small measured glasses.

'Gee, I guess when I said these beers should be sipped I didn't expect you to do forty of the critters in one go,' Randy said.

'This is the third time round,' Mazz said 'But we've been waiting for you before serving up the green-hopped ale. After all, it's your recipe.'

James ceremonially opened the barrel of the special ale, which emitted a faint purple gas as he turned the tap to fill Randy's glass.

'OK, listen up you guys. In the spirit of the special relationship, I'm going to sink the first pint of green-hopped ale in true English style – how do you say it? Down in one!'

Randy glugged the beer, his face gradually turning green as the hops it contained, until he collapsed to the floor holding his stomach as he finished the last dregs. As Mazz rushed over to tend to her brother, James's suspicions grew.

'Pete. These wild hops? You don't have any left over that I can take a closer look at?'

'There's loads of 'em here, James,' Old Pete said. 'We used the leftover flowers to decorate the barn.'

James inspected the 'hops' that had been garlanded around the barrels.

'How long have you lived in the countryside, Pete? Even I know these are deadly nightshade.'

'That'll explain our sore heads in the morning. Cheers!' Old Pete said. He grabbed a pint glass and filled it from the barrel as Mazz dragged Randy out of the festival by his feet.



## Branch Diary

*Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!*

### October

#### Monday 1st BRANCH MEETING

8.00pm, King's Head, Aylesbury

#### Saturday 6th LINE 300 PUB CRAWL

A pub crawl for National Cask Ale Week! Using the line 300 bus we will travel through the branch celebrating cask beer at the following pubs: 12noon, Falcon, High Wycombe then 12.30pm William Robert Loosley, 1.45pm Naphill: Wheel/Black Lion; 3.15pm Lacey Green: Black Horse/Whip; 5.20pm Bird in Hand, Princes Risborough; 6.30pm Bull, Stoke Mandeville; 7.00pm Broad Leys, Aylesbury; 7.45pm White Hart, Aylesbury; 8.30pm King's Head, Aylesbury, 9.45pm Hop Pole, Aylesbury. Timings coincide with the bus timetable but later stops are approximate – confirm timings on day via social phone.

#### Thursday 11th EVENING SOCIAL

8.30pm Boot, Bledlow Ridge, 9.30pm Crown, Radnage

#### Wednesday 24th SETTING UP SOCIAL

9.00pm Bull, Stoke Mandeville (after setting up at the venue below).

#### Friday 26th/Saturday 27th AYLESBURY BEER FESTIVAL

Vale of Aylesbury Beer Festival, Bucks County Council Sports & Social Club, Lower Road, Aylesbury (opposite the Ambulance Station). This is our annual festival raising money for the Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity. If you want to sponsor a barrel, please ring 01296 429975. Help is also required, both for setting up and serving - please contact the editor (details below).

### November

#### Saturday 3rd EAST LONDON & GREENWICH CABLE CAR SOCIAL

Meet 12 noon, Tap East, Stratford Westfield (the Waitrose/John Lewis end near the International station); then DLR and optional cable car trip to North Greenwich

(otherwise tube); 2.30pm Pilot Inn, North Greenwich, SE10 OBE; 3.30pm Pelton Arms, SE10 9PQ; 4.15pm Plume of Feathers, SE10 9LZ; 5.15pm Gipsy Moth, SE10 9BL; 6.30pm Greenwich Union, SE10 8RT.

#### Thursday 8th EVENING SOCIAL

8.30pm Red Lion, Bradenham, 9.30pm Golden Cross, Saunderton.

#### Saturday 10th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

12 Noon Cross Keys, Thame

#### Monday 12th BRANCH MEETING

8.00pm, William Robert Loosley, High Wycombe (venue tbc).

#### Tuesday 20th OXFORDSHIRE SOCIAL

8.30pm Cherry Tree, Kingston Blount; 9.00 pm Crown, Sydenham; 9.45pm Inn at Emington.

#### Wednesday 28th WENDOVER EARLY EVENING SOCIAL

7.15pm Shoulder of Mutton, 7.45pm King & Queen, 8.15pm White Swan, 8.45pm Red Lion, 9.15pm George & Dragon, 9.45pm Pack Horse.

### December

#### Thursday 6th BREWERY OPEN EVENING

6.00pm XT Brewery, Notley Farm, Thame

#### Wednesday 12th MASS PARLIAMENTARY LOBBY

Westminster. Speak to your respective local MPs, and seek their support to protect the nation's historic beer and pub industry (<http://www.saveyourpintlobby.org.uk/>).

Further details can be found on our website

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

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# Swan Supping

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We can mail overseas, but the price will vary depending on the country to which it is to be delivered. Remember that most issues of *Swan Supping* can be downloaded from our website ([www.swansupping.org.uk](http://www.swansupping.org.uk)).

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