

Newsletter of the Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch of CAMRA www.swansupping.org.uk Circulation 6000





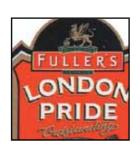


"The Perfect Guests....that you want to stay"











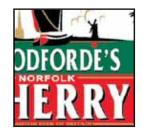




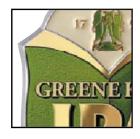






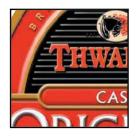














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NEWS FROM THE EDITOR



As another year draws to a close and we all ponder the age old question 'Where has the year gone to?'.

It must be a sign of age (or frequent pints) that time seems to speed up, but it has been an eventful year for the *Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe* branch of *CAMRA*.

Festival Success

We held our 18th *Vale of Aylesbury Beer Festival* in conjunction with the *Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity* at the end of October. We had a new venue in the Bucks CC Sports and Social Club and there is

always a concern when a successful festival is moved from its 'home'. However, we had no reason to worry as it worked out superbly and we came very close to selling out of beer! The final total of the money raised to help run the Aylesbury Hospice is over £7000, which is a magnificent total, especially in these days of austerity.

XT win Beer of the Festival

The drinkers at the festival voted for their favourite beers in the various categories that we offered and the overall winner turned out to be from a brand new brewery which had not even officially opened at the time of the festival. *XT Brewery* had kindly brewed two beers for us and it was their *XX* which won out.

The presentation of the *Beer of the Festival* certificate to *XT*'s Russell Taylor was made by our chairman, Alex Wright, and forms our front cover. Russell and Alex are pictured in the brand new brewery near Thame in the company of Gareth Xifaras from *XT* and three very happy *CAMRA* committee members and Karen Shardlow from the *Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity*.

It seems that breweries are a bit like buses - you wait for one then two come along at once!

Brewery at the Hop Pole to open!

On Friday 2nd December, Roger Protz, the editor of the *Good Beer Guide*, will officially open the *Aylesbury Brewhouse* at the back of *Vale Brewery*'s flagship pub, the **Hop Pole** in Aylesbury.

If a brewery opening was not enough of an incentive to get along, the **Hop Pole** will be holding a beer festival over the weekend with about 25 beers available (on handpump and on gravity from stillage at the back of the pub) including two brand new beers from the brewery.

As well as the brewery, the **Hop Pole** will be opening a shop to sell their freshly brewed draught beer for takeaway in containers of various sizes, plus a full range of bottles of beer from loads of breweries and wine. *Vale* intend to make the **Hop Pole** even more of a 'destination pub' and we hope that it turns out to be the success it deserves to be!

Good Beer Guide

We announced last issue that the *2012 Good Beer Guide* is now available. What might surprise a lot of people is that we shortly have to start work on the 2013 edition!

We have over 750 members in our branch area and it is important that as many as possible get involved with the selection of pubs for the guide. This can easily be done by sending in beer scores via our website for pints that have been enjoyed locally. These beer scores form the starting point for deciding which of our pubs have to be fully surveyed by local members before we have our final selection meeting which is open to all *CAMRA* from the *AV&W Branch* to attend. Please check the *Branch Diary* in each issue of *Swan Supping* for dates and times of *GBG* selection meetings (and socials, trips, brewery visits....).

Lastly...

My usual 'thank-you' to all the contibutors and deliverers for *Swan Supping* and especially for Colin Stanford for another superb cartoon (in colour this time - is there no end to his talents!).

David W. Roe - Swan Supping Editor

NATIONAL CAMRA NEWS

Government reforms are too weak to save Britain's pubs

CAMRA has criticised the Government for declining to address key failings in the pubs market in its response to a call for Government intervention from the Business Select Committee. The 130,000 strong consumer group claims the failure to take action to require pub companies to offer genuine free of tie and guest beer options to lessees will do little to re-balance the relationship between struggling licensees and large pub companies.

CAMRA has expressed serious concern that the deal announced recently between Government and the British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA) may not be realised given pub companies' history of broken promises and abandoned commitments and has questioned why there has not been a full public consultation to consider the agreed measures. The BBPA and the large pub companies have repeatedly promised fundamental change since 2004 but on every occasion have failed to deliver.

The reform package promises some small steps forward including a new arbitration service, a requirement to follow rental guidelines and to publish national wholesale price lists. These



small steps alone however will not be sufficient to avert the disaster facing many thousands of tied pubs being charged excessive rents and forced to purchase grossly overpriced tied products.

Mike Benner, *CAMRA* Chief Executive, said: 'The Government has been cavalier in rejecting the recommendations of the Business Select Committee and instead putting its faith in the ability of the very companies accused of malpractice to finally put their house in order. The lack of any formal public consultation on this package of measures is truly remarkable and suggests a failure of Government to listen to all interested parties including the consumer.

'We are pleased the Government has recognised

the serious problems of unfair practice in the relationship between the large pub companies and lessees but deeply disappointed that they are proposing only a weak package of reforms. Given repeated broken promises from the pub companies, consumers and publicans will no doubt be highly sceptical whether much of this will be delivered.

'Pubs are vitally important not just to the millions of regular pub goers but also to the health of communities and the overall economy. The failure of the Government to secure a more

substantial reform package is a massive blow to the Prime Minister's aspirations to lead a 'pub friendly Government'.'

Free up the British Pub Rally calls time on Pubco reform

12 MPs were joined by 80 *CAMRA* members and licensees at 'Time to Free up the British Pub' rally in Parliament on a Tuesday evening in November. The rally (pictured) urged the Government to take action on pubco reform which will result in better pubs, better value for money and fewer pub closures - ahead of the Government's announcement on whether it would act on the Business select committee's pubco reform recommendations.

18TH BEER FESTIVAL IS A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

This year marked a special point for the *Vale of Aylesbury Beer Festival*. We were first approached to run a beer festival to raise money for the Aylesbury hospice eighteen years ago. The branch was delighted to help such a worthy cause, and so our annual beer festival was born.

The first festival did not go as well as was hoped, but it was obvious that better advertising and more sponsorship, plus even more hard work from the volunteers involved, it could go on to be a success. We therefore had another go the following year and this

was more successful, and members of *CAMRA* have been running the bar ever since

Over the years many volunteers have helped out, the obvious job being serving pints, but others help with getting the barrels ready, and clearing up afterwards. This year was not my first festival, but was my first as branch chairman. To mark the 18th festival, we decided to thank our local breweries, who have supported us over the years, by having a local theme to the festival. Thus I spent a very pleasant day phoning around our local breweries ordering beer. It was a lovely reminder about how blessed we are for breweries in this area. We have many, both large and small, and I urge you all to support them by choosing their beer in pubs, and by visiting them in person!

With lots of beer on the way, with David Roe having completed the order with some lovely beers from further afield, it was up to the Hospice to advertise the festival around the town. This year we had moved venue to the Buckinghamshire County Council Sports and Social club, and we were a little worried about how many people would turn up! Moving any established event carries some risk, and it would be heartbreaking to end up with beer left over at the end of the festival.

Barrels started arriving on the Wednesday before the festival, and



throughout the day the stillage gradually filled up. In previous years, we have used large distributors, and so the barrels have arrived in a few deliveries, but this year, we had barrels arriving from around the county, and from further afield, in one case generously delivered from Sussex, and others delivered via intermediary breweries.

From Kent came some award winning cider from *Rough Old Wife*. Their raspberry cider *Blushing Old Wife* was especially popular, and both ciders were running out on Friday night, with more supplies ordered for Saturday.

The beers were tapped on Thursday, and then left for 24 hours to settle, and the result was some very fine beer for the opening on Friday evening. We were proud of the selection available, and through your responses, we are sure you were happy too! For the first time in a long while the bar was close to being drunk dry by the end of Saturday evening, raising over £7000 for the hospice. All the people who worked, both from *CAMRA* and those from the *Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity* would like to thank you all, both sponsors and drinkers, for donating so much.

Finally, we also have the results for the beer of the festival. This year was really close, with votes being spread over most of the available choices. The winner by one vote was *XT Brewing's XX*, a beer they had made especially for the festival, even as their brewery was being assembled. They were presented with their *Beer of the Festival* certificate at their newly opened site near Thame at the end of November as can been seen in our cover photograph. The rest of the votes were so close, that it was impossible to select a clear second and third, and this enthusiasm was reflected in the barrels pretty much all running out at once towards the end of the Saturday evening session. The cider and ginger beer had run out a lot sooner, and we will ensure we order more for next year! See you all next October!

Alex Wright. Many thanks to the Bucks Herald for the top photograph.



Constantine & Louise Lucas welcome you to

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Thursday 1st December - Switching on of Christmas lights at 6pm with mince pies & festive cheer!

Monday 19th December - Carol singing at 8pm

Boxing Day 26th December - Quiz in aid of the MPS Society from 8pm
The Hampden Arms is open all over the Festive Season!

Peter and Neuza welcome you all to the Horse and Jockey, Tylers Green HP10 8EG
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We have five regular Real Ales plus one Guest Ale
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Good Beer Guide Listed

Quiz Night 1st Thursday in the month

Christmas and New Year Bookings being taken



LOCAL NEWS

ASHENDON

The **Gatehangers**' active management team continues to be supported by an ever increasing number of locals returning to the fold, making the place buzz like it used to. *Greene King 1PA* remains ever popular with the villagers, plus one regularly changing guest. This tends to be from a local brewery but could come from a micro in Somerset for instance. Letting rooms available.

AYLESBURY

Broad Leys now The offers accommodation in the form of two newly added luxury, boutique-style rooms. Alongside king-size double beds and designer en suite bathrooms, the rooms, from £75 per night, feature 20% off food when dining in the restaurant, complimentary hospitality tray with continental breakfast, free parking, wifi access and other facilities. Besides offering a range of beers in the bar (Loddon Hoppit, Sharps Doom Bar and Shepherd Neame Spitfire when last visited), the pub held a wine festival at the end of November.

The **Hop Pole** will be holding a beer festival over the weekend of Friday 2nd to Sunday 4th of December as they celebrate the opening of the *Aylesbury Brewhouse*. Full details on page 13.

Besides seeing the recent launch of *Chiltern 300s Old Ale* from wooden casks, the **Farmers Bar** at the **Kings Head** will see the return of the *Winters Ale* on the 1st of December. A new lunch menu featuring regular pie and sausage

specialities will be launched at the same time

The newly reopened **Queens Head** seems to be proving popular with both drinkers and diners. Besides offering **Youngs Bitter** and **Sharps Doom Bar**, the pub will be trialling beers from **Hopping Mad** and **XT** breweries and it will be down to the customers which brewery's beer will feature in the future. Another beer tried recently was **Wolf Poppy Ale** which gave 10p to the Royal British Legion for every pint bought. Besides eating and drinking, you will also be able to exercise your little grey cells at their pub quiz every Tuesday night.

BLEDLOW

The **Lions at Bledlow** have five ever changing beers. At the last visit they had **Slaters** Original, **Cottage** SS Great Britain, **Wadworth** Swordfish, **McMullens** AK and **Wadworth** 6X.

BOOKER

After some time of being closed, the owners of the **Live and Let Live** have decided to close it. It has been given planning permission to change from A4 status (a pub) to A1 status (a shop). The change was opposed by the Booker Common and Woods Protection Society. Their main objection was that the change would increase car traffic on the track that leads past the building. They were also concerned at the loss of community facilities. These concerns were rejected by Wycombe District Council.

CHEARSLEY

The Bell's Sharon and Oliver, along with their band of regulars, continue

to celebrate the pub's entry in the 2012 Good Beer Guide. This Fullers house serves Chiswick, London Pride and HSB. Fullers' seasonal ales are also available.

CHINNOR

The **Kings Head** is under threat, as we understand that when the current landlord leaves, *Greene King* will not be looking for a new tenant.

The **Royal Oak** is closed and the site is likely to become a building plot for flats.

CUDDINGTON

The Crown's beer is always in good condition and the *Adnams Southwold Bitter* especially so. This is supported by *Fullers London Pride* and another *Fullers* beer such as recently supped, and rather tasty, *Bengal Lancer*, at 5.0%, a traditional India Pale Ale.

DINTON

On Wednesday 16th November, 64 local shareholders completed the purchase of the Seven Stars from the Punch group, bringing to an end seven months of reasonably intense activity. This included fundraising, community meetings, applying for grants, carrying out structural surveys and a seven week spell when a number of the locals actually ran the pub as tenants. The shareholders have agreed a lease with Dave Berry and Stephanie Guiraute. (previously at the Crown in Cuddington) and the pub is now fully open as a free house with traditional English food (albeit with a French twist). Stephanie confirms that she will offer three real ales and will support local breweries. Many thanks to Dick

O'Driscoll of Dinton for keeping *Swan Supping* informed of developments and good luck to all involved from all of us. See next issue for further details.

DOWNLEY

Drinkers were spoilt for choice at the **Le De Spencers Arms** in November with both *HSB* (strong dark bitter) and *Bengal Lancer* (strong IPA) on tap in addition to the usual *Seafarers* and *London Pride*.

EMMINGTON

The Inn at Emmington is making full use of food capabilities and its seven guest bedrooms, popular with business folk in the week and Chilterns ramblers and visitors at the weekend. Jerry and Paula, formerly active *CAMRA Ealing Branch* members, keep three real ales available, favouring local breweries as much as possible.

FORD

The **Dinton Hermit** is sticking with *Vale* beers. *Best Bitter* is always available with their latest offering in support.

GIBRALTAR

The **Bottle and Glass** keeps *Greene King Morland Original Bitter* on pretty much all the time. *Greene King* are being more flexible about allowing a guest ale. The food's good here too.

GREAT KIMBLE

The **Bernard Arms** ceased trading in early September and is now in darkness with its Inn sign removed. This is the closest pub to Chequers, so where now is our Prime Minister going to go for his evening pint?



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Open from 12-close every day over the Christmas period except Christmas day which is 12-2.30pm opening only.

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www.theswanandcastle.com

Last Friday of the month live music Acoustic Open Mic Night monthly (Thursday)

Monthly food events with menu and quiz from the featured country.



HADDENHAM

Diary Date: *WinterFest* will be Saturday 10th December 2011, 12 noon to 5 pm, at Haddenham Village Hall. See www. haddenham-beer-festival.co.uk.

At the **Green Dragon**, Claire and Darren are introducing warm winter berry cider to accompany their range of beers. All real ales are £2.90 through to the end of December with a *Vale* offering supported by *Sharps Doom Bar*, and another guest such as *Jennings World's Biggest Liar*.

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

The **Red Lion**'s 'Free-of-Tie Lease' is still for sale! Who could turn down an opportunity to run a traditional real-coal-fire village pub, with its numerous darts and cribbage teams, that caters for shooting parties with pre-shoot full English breakfasts and post-shoot drink-the-pub-dry sessions? Permanent fixture *Adnams Southwold Bitter* was supported by *Hadda's Autumn* at 4.3% (lovely) and *Wychert* from *Vale* when visited recently.

The **Rising Sun** continues to serve two ever rotating *Vale* beers, plus a third, or even a fourth real ale, which could be almost anything, from almost anywhere. All real ales are served straight from the barrel with pints still costing a reasonable £2.75. *Westons* ciders are on draught too. Regular live music nights are popular with visitors from far and wide, whilst the newly reintroduced pool table, the only one in Haddenham, ensures the pub's team does well both at home and away.

The Rose & Thistle serves *Greene King IPA* and *Hardys & Hansons Olde Trip* with, recently, London Glory which is an amber 4% beer. Spaz and his team have introduced a Winter Special Monday Night 8oz gourmet burger with hand cut chips for £5.

HENTON

The **Peacock Country Inn** gives you the opportunity to enjoy a pint of specially brewed *Pickled Peacock* courtesy of *Tring Brewery*, while surrounded by traditional countryside views.

HIGH WYCOMBE

Well known music venue, the Nag's Head on London Road is currently closed. Tom called last orders mid-November and a new leaseholder is being sought.

LACEY GREEN

The **Pink and Lily**, under new owner Steve Worrall, has had a successful summer following its re-opening after refurbishment in June. Alongside the locally sourced, seasonal fresh food menu, a series of special food nights have been held and a £12.95 lunch deal for two courses has been introduced from Mondays to Thurdays. The activity has not just been limited to food! On the 13th October the pub held their first charity quiz, raising over £100 for the Iain Rennie Hospice and the Pink will be holding regular quiz nights every second Monday in the month.

LANE END

The **Sun** has been closed and boarded up for many months. We understand that the owners have now put in planning application to turn the pub into one large house or to split it into two houses. Then they plan to build four small detached houses in the pub garden. These plans have been rejected by the council but the owners intend to put the submission in again

LITTLE MARLOW

The **Queens Head** has been included in the 2012 edition of the 'Michelin Eating out in Pubs Guide'.

MARLOW

The **British Legion** have a beer festival between Christmas and New Year.

The **Hand and Flowers** features in the new 'Michelin Eating out in Pubs Guide' with two stars!

The **Hare & Hounds** on Henley Road is advertising on a placard outside that they have six *Rebellion* beers available. Four are on handpump and the others are bottles behind the bar.

The **Plough** has changed its regular beer to *Theakstons Best Bitter*.

Rebellion Brewery's Roasted Nuts is now out in the pubs and for the first time a stronger version is available in the form of Roasted Nuts Extra at 5.8% ABV in bottles.

STOKE MANDEVILLE

The **Bull** is currently closed and its future is uncertain. It would be a tremendous loss if this pub is lost forever as it was a regular entry in the *Good Beer Guide* when it was run by Stuart Brierley. It was a popular place for drinkers and sports enthusiasts and could never work as a food oriented establishment which has seemed to be the intention of the owners.

STOKENCHURCH

The **Four Horseshoes** is still closed and securely boarded-up. There is no news yet on the future for this *Punch* pub.

STUDLEY GREEN

Demolition has started on the Studlev Arms. This pub has been closed and boarded-up for a long time but is now finally going. It was the only pub in the village, but there seems to have been little support from the local villagers for it to be reopened. It was built in 'Brewer's Tudor', a style that was once very common but is now getting very rare, the other notable pub in the area of that style was the Red Cow in Wycombe town centre which was demolished many years ago. The Studley Arms appealed to a relatively young clientele and was never a great real ale pub, but the certainty is that now it never will be. At least nobody can claim the smoking ban for the demise of this pub – it ceased trading long before the ban came in.

THAME

Chinnor RFC, on the Thame ring road, now serves *Vale Wychert* and *Brakspear Bitter* with a £2-a-pint guest straight from 'The barrel on the bar' on Saturdays. Chinnor are top of National League 3 South West, so you can watch a great game and enjoy a pint or two at the same time. Oktoberfest was great fun and is to be repeated.

The **Cross Keys** held a beer festival in November where the *XT Brewery*, from Notley Farm near Long Crendon, had their first brew (*XT4*) on offer. Coming soon will be *XT8*, a malty chocolate beer at 4.8 and *XT2* a fruity gold beer at 4.2. The **Cross Keys** is the first local pub to be taking the *XT2*! There are always seven beers, including *Vale Best*, plus one cider on handpump available at all times.

At the Rising Sun, you will be able to get Brakspear Best, Ringwood Boondoggle and Wychwood Dogs Bollocks.

The Falcon has Old Hooky, Hooky Best and Woodfordes Wherry. Hook Norton Twelve Days should be available during December. The Spread Eagle Hotel has Rebellion Smugglers and Rebellion Red, whilst the Birdcage had Rebellion Smugglers. The James Figg had Purity Mad Goose, Charles Wells Bombardier and Vale Best on offer. Coming shortly will be Timothy Taylors Landlord.

The **Thatch** is offering *Old Hooky* and *Vale Wychert* while at the **Six Bells** you can get *London Pride*, *HSB*, *Seafarers*, *Bengal Lancer* and the new addition

Black Cab. The Nags Head has Greene King IPA to drink while watching most televised football matches.

So, with the last 280 leaving Thame for Aylesbury at 11.41, there is no excuse not to come to Thame to try a varied selection of real ales (Note: the **Falcon** is closed on Mondays).

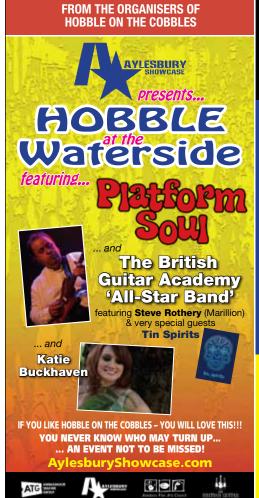
The **Two Brewers**, however, looks a forlorn site with all the downstairs windows and doors boarded up. The future of this historic pub does not look too promising. The **Swan Hotel** is also closed, but not boarded up. Its fate is also unknown.

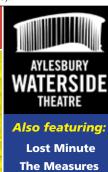
TWYFORD

Landlord Dennis Massey (Den) of the **Crown** died unexpectedly on Saturday 12th November. He had had heart problems for some time and went into hospital for a remedial operation from which he unfortunately did not recover. The funeral was held on the 25th of November at Milton Keynes crematorium and the family are continuing to run this popular free house. Our sympathies go to all his family and friends.

WENDOVER

The **Red Lion Hotel** was sold on Monday 7th Nov by *Marstons Inns* to *Fuller Smith & Turner*. The beers now on offer are *Chiswick, London Pride, ESB* and *Bengal Lancer.* This seems a shame really as this reduces the choice of ales in the village. Both the **Pack Horse** and the **Swan** are also tied to *Fullers* although it was a bit out of *Marstons* normal trading area (the nearest one now is the **Honey Bee**, Fairford Levs).





Gravity Blue
Lu Cozma

feat Steve Askew
(Kajagoogoo)

Zealey & Moore
Almost Midnight

Evaney

James Manders Bustin' Loose

Mike Carroll

*plus more artists to be announced

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TICKETS £14 4pm – 11pm

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(bkg fee)

atgtickets.com/aylesbury (bkg fee)

A WORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Campaigning

As you will have read in the National CAMRA News on page 3, we have all been let down by the Government's rejection of the recommendations of the Business Select Committee. You and I should be very angry. In our branch, we have many fine breweries, who produce great tasting beer in many different styles, yet many of our pubs, through no fault of their own, are unable to sell this fine, locally produced ale. Restrictive leases prevent otherwise successful pubs from sourcing directly from local breweries and restricting our choice.

While some of us can travel to pubs with more choice, it isn't an option for every one, and don't we deserve choice in every pub? In the UK, 840+ breweries produce 5,500 different beers in regularly, with many more seasonal specials. I am personally hopping mad (pun intended) that we see so few in our pubs.

You can help

Please tell us where pubs serve guest beers, where they don't, and what you have seen. Talk to your publican about the choice of ales they have access to. Write to your MP, expressing your anger. You can use the excellent 'Write To Them' website (type write to them into Google). Write to your pub's owner, and ask that they allow your pub to serve guest ales. Finally, support your pub by drinking guest beers when you see them.

Good Beer Guide 2013

The Good Beer Guide 2012 has only just been released, but it is time again to be thinking about which pubs are to be in the 2013 edition of the guide.

Due to the length of time it takes to produce and edit a guide with over 4,500 pubs and 840+ breweries, CAMRA branches need to start thinking about this process now, with the final selection made in late February.

This year, we are publishing the process we use to select pubs for the guide to encourage everyone to participate. The selection criteria will be available

on the branch website, and via post upon request. There are several things you can do to promote your favourite pub. Please note that you have to be a *CAMRA* member to vote, but we will take note of emails and letters from non-members in the selection process.

How you can help

The first thing you can do it to submit beer scores. If you have not done this before, the process is very simple.

Simply rate the pint you are drinking 1-5 with 1 being the worst, and 5 the best.

Either register your score on the web: http:// www.beerscoring.org.uk/ or send it in to us

mentioning the date, your membership number, and the pub you drank it in: scores@swansupping.org.uk.

You can just email us with your pub recommendation: contact@ swansupping.org.uk.

If you do not use email, write to us at the contact address in the back of this magazine.

Finally, please come along to the selection meetings. The dates are printed in the events section of **Swan Supping**, and are also available on the branch website.

Please do take part!

Alexander Wright Chairman Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe CAMRA www.swansupping.org.uk 07970 633952

Marlow Royal British Legion BEER FESTIVAL/NEW YEAR'S EVE WEEKEND

Thursday December 29th to Sunday 1st January

Station Approach, Marlow, Bucks. Tel: 01628 486659

FILTEN Y WARRIDS FOR COMMINIATE LOW STEATERON PILICANITY OF PARKING AVAILABLE

Thursday 29th December to 1st January 2012

Beer festival from 12pm no admission fee 16 different cask ales on sale **Members & Non**

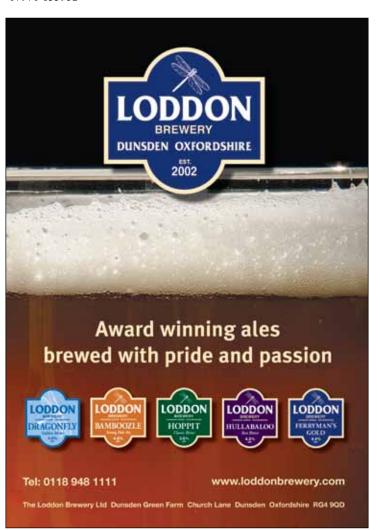
> All cask ales £2.50 per pint

> members welcome

Saturday 31st December 2011

Rock in the New Year with 'Cookie & the Bluejays' Doors open at 7pm til late Ticket price £8.00 **Members & Non**

members welcome Contact 01628 486659 website www.rblmarlow.co.uk





The Queens Head Wing

www.thequeensheadwing.co.uk

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Award Winning Pub

Aylesbury Vale Village Food Pub of the Year 2009/10



3 Permanent Real Ales plus a changing guest

Cask Marque Accredited

CAMRA approved

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A Traditional English Pub, Purveyors of Fine Ale

Local CAMRA pub of the year WINNER 2011
Good Beer Guide 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011

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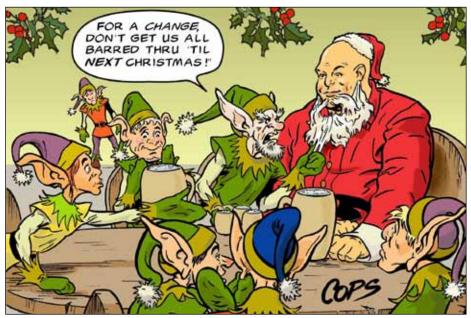
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The festive season was nearing and the Gravediggers was suffering a cash flow crisis. James and Mazz were doing a stocktake in the abandoned Mazz was about to whack Joe over the head with a beer bottle when James microbrewery.

'We've got barrels and barrels of our last brew left -' James said, looking at the casks piled up against the wall and wondering if he noticed an odd vibration.

'The Toxic Sludge Old Ale?' Mazz asked. 'If we don't shift it soon I think it's going to eat through the stainless steel in the casks.'

'But we can't pour it down the drain – the Environment Agency would trace back the dead wildlife all the way back here,' James said.

'Might be able to grab a few nets of fish for the freezer,' Mazz suggested. 'Although I'm not sure tadpoles and sticklebacks will help us get any Michelin stars.

'I'm more worried what we're going to do about Christmas.' James scratched his head. 'We ought to use the opportunity to broaden the pub's appeal beyond a handful of washed-up, semi-alcoholics—

'You mean recruit some new people?' Mazz asked.

'No. Not the staff – the customers. We can't make money just by pouring booze down the throats of a half-a-dozen die-hards, even if they do virtually live in the place.' James thought he'd tapped into some inspiration. 'What we need is to be more family friendly, more community orientated-

'And if we managed to get more local people involved then maybe they'd like the idea of local produce - reducing their carbon footprint and so on?' Mazz said, an idea developing in her mind.

'Wanted: reliable friendly old man person for secret, undercover job at Christmas party - must like children, long, white beard an advantage - ten pints of Toxic Sludge for two hours work.' The notice had hung in the bar for less than half an hour before a volunteer came forward.

'Thought Old Joe hated kids running round in the pub,' Old Pete said. 'The things people do for a bit of Toxic Sludge'.

On the day of the Gravediggers' Christmas party there had been a few complaints from the parents about Santa's unconventional questioning of their children. Jocasta was quite indignant.

'I know it's de rigueur for Santa to encourage the youngsters to behave themselves but does he really have to ask them to apologise for being selfish little brats all year who'll be lucky to get a tangerine in their stocking. It brought little Esme out in tears.'

'I'm sorry, I'd ask James to have a word with Santa except he's at a crucial stage in making our authentic, village-sourced Christmas puddings,' Mazz said at the bar. 'I'm sure little Esme will be cheered up when Old P-I mean, Pedro the clown, starts his magic show.'

'But I'm not sure the present that Santa gave little Tarquin was entirely appropriate,' said Thomasina. 'I was expecting a selection box, not a bottle of 12% ABV real ale, although Santa did suggest he kept it until his eighteenth birthday as an heirloom.'

'He'd probably need to keep it till the Queen sends him a telegram before it's drinkable, if it's what I think it is,' said Old Pete.

'And I've been waiting fifteen minutes outside the grotto and I can only hear this dreadful low pitched noise,' Camilla said.

'OK. I've heard enough,' Mazz said, leaving the bar and gatecrashing Santa's grotto. She found Old Joe snoring, surrounded by chocolate wrappers from the selection boxes he'd guzzled and a few bottles of Toxic Sludge wrapped in leftover Christmas paper and buried in the lucky dip barrel.

'Joe, the idea is to encourage the families – not to scare them away from setting foot inside the Gravediggers forever.' Then she realised that had probably been his cunning plan all along.

ran out of the kitchen shouting: 'Evacuate! Evacuate!'

A terrible grumbling noise emanated from behind the bar.

'It's the puddings. I added the Toxic Sludge to the dry fruit mixture, just as Delia recommended but there wasn't anything in the recipe to say what to do if they started to – well, I wouldn't believe it if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes - but they moved.'

'You don't mean...' Mazz said.

'I do,' said James. 'The Christmas puddings are alive!'

Charlie Mackle



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LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

Chiltern Brewery

Buckinghamshire's oldest independent brewery saw high recognition for its bottle-conditioned *Glad Tidings Winter Stout* at the *SIBA* Midlands region beer competition 2011. The *Chiltern Brewery* was thrilled to be awarded Gold medal in the 'Bottled Porters, Milds, Old Ales & Stouts' category

Glad Tidings Winter Stout is a real classic in the true tradition and a seasonal favourite. 'Brewed with four malts, spices and fruit, our festive star has done it again...we are thrilled' explained Tom Jenkinson.

Tom and his brother George took over the running of the brewery from their parents, Richard and Lesley Jenkinson, a few years ago and they have carried the strong family tradition.



Loddon Brewery

The family run brewery from Dunsden has won the 'Entrepreneur' category at the recent Pride of Reading Awards in November.

The glitzy award ceremony was held at the Crowne Plaza, Caversham, and celebrated the best of Reading and the surrounding area.

There were a range of categories marking the achievements of both individuals and businesses and it was hosted by TV presenter and Reading boy, Chris Tarrant. A number of other local celebs were at the awards including chefs Antony Worral-Thompson and Daniel Galmiche, X-factor star Danyl Johnson and Reading Football club chairman Sir John Madejski.

Vanessa Hearn, Director of *Loddon Brewery* said, 'We've been lucky enough to win a few awards over the years but this is far and away our best yet. What some of the other winners have managed to do is incredible, to be in the company of such amazing people is truly humbling.'

Vanessa's husband Chris, the other director of *Loddon*, said 'We have worked hard and taken a number of risks over the years, so it's really great to have this recognised. The Pride of Reading Awards are a fantastic thing and hopefully we can be involved with them in some capacity for years to come.'

Rebellion Brewery

For 2011 *Rebellion*'s range of monthly beers has been called 'The Cryptic Series' and for each month either the pump clip pictures or names are linked to a theme. Be the first to work out the link/theme and you could win one of two great prizes.

There have been two separate competitions for this year's Cryptic series, the winners of which will be announced on 23rd December.

Once all the beers/pump clips have been announced, you could then have another guess and enter the second competition. Obviously with all the beer/pumps clips available, the series should be easier to figure out and more correct answers are expected. The form for this competition allows you to put forward your suggested theme plus an explanation as to the clues relating to the four final beers of 2011 (September to December).

The last pump clip in the series is shown here and we look forward to doing an article on the competion in our next issue.



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MORE LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

Tring Brewery

Earlier on in the year *Tring* hinted at some big changes in the brewery, the biggest of these being the introduction of a 20 ton grain silo and milling plant which is now up and running.

This addition to the brewery allows them to get better extractions from the malt due to a shortened time between the milling and mashing in process - and something that is already helping further to improve the quality of the beers.

Their continued dedication to crafting the best beers they can has seen *Colley's Dog* and *Side Pocket for a Toad* each picking up a total of four Gold and Silver awards at the *SIBA* East Region championship. This is in addition to a number of regional beer festival awards including Beer of Hertfordshire for *Death or Glory*.

Hops and barley malt already ordered for 2012 and recipes have been drawn up for some interesting beers one of which is linked to a high profile charitable event that has been a few months in the planning.

The feedback suggests many of their customers have noticed a change in the 'hop impact' of their monthly specials over the last three months. Again this is something they have been working on and will continue to develop throughout 2012. The outlook is for some cracking beers which, in

number of pubs stocking them, means good times for all fans of *Tring Brewery*.

Their seasonal delights on offer are *Shepherd's Delight* at 4.2% abv and *Santa's Little Helper* at 4.8% abv. The first is described as having fruity notes on the initial aroma which are apparent in this festive ale. A combination of crystal and

chocolate malts ensure this amber coloured ale is perfect for the seasonal celebrations. The latter is described as a warming winter ale, a festive special which is the perfect balance of roasted malt and premium aroma hops. They say that this tipple would warm even the cold heart of Scrooge (despite the name reminding most people of Bart Simpson's dog).

Vale Brewery

Vale Brewery are all ready now for the *Aylesbury Brewhouse* opening and festival as they open the first new brewery in Aylesbury for nearly 75 years.

Two new *Aylesbury Brewhouse* beers will be available: *Alpha*, their first *Aylesbury* beer and their first use of the tettnang hop, which is a 3.8% abv pale and hoppy beer, and *Red Right Hand*

which has amber and chocolate malts creating a 4.2% abv beer, light chestnut in colour, with Green Bullet and Northdown hops adding a strong bitter finish.

The beer festival opens on Friday 2nd December at lunchtime (12 noon), then at 6.30 pm, Roger Protz, renowned beer writer and famed editor of the *Good Beer Guide*, officially opens the festival. The beer festival continues on the Saturday and the Sunday.

Music will be provided by Kevin Tait on Saturday night and on Sunday lunchtime, John Otway will be taking time out from his busy touring schedule, to draw the weekend to a close.

Festival beers will be split between the stillage in the brewhouse, available until the last drop is served, whilst the remaining beers will be available from the main bar.

They have a great selection of firm favourites contrasted with beers from small breweries that are very seldom seem in this area, including *Botanist*, a small brewpub in Kew, *Craddocks*, West Midlands, *Steel City*, a Sheffield brewery well known for hoppy and exciting beers, and *Thornbridge*, famous for their *Jaipur*.

Vale have also adapted a cask of *Gravitas* just for the festival. A spiced up version!

There will be food available all weekend, including a variety of sausages from a great family butcher in Royal Wootton Bassett, Hearty Stew or Chilli and selection of filled baps.

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KING AND QUEEN ROYALLY AWARDED!

The **King and Queen** in Wendover has been crowned the overall winner in Aylesbury Vale District Council's Village Pub of the Year awards.

This is an annual competition, set up in memory of ex district councillor Ted Payne, which marks the important role a village pub plays in the local community, particularly where there are few other meeting places in the village, such as a shop or post office.

With more than 600 nominations for over 30 pubs across the district, the judging panel had the difficult task of picking winners in the four different categories.

The presentation for the awards took place at the **King and Queen** on 27 October, where landlord Peter accepted the winner's trophy from Councillor Pam Pearce.

Councillor Pam Pearce, Cabinet Member for Community Matters, said: 'It was a pleasure to read all the glowing recommendations people gave their local pubs. We had an incredibly tough job selecting the winners from all the outstanding entries.



This competition really highlights the tremendous value village pubs bring to the community. Our pubs are a great asset to Aylesbury Vale and they deserve to be recognised and celebrated.'

The winners by category are:

Overall winner:
Winner: King and
Queen, Wendover,
Runner up: Betsey
Wynne, Swanbourne

Best Food Pub: Winner: Chequers Inn, Weston Turville, Runner up: Old Thatched Inn, Adstock

Best Family Pub: Winner: Old Swan, Cheddington, Runner up: Unicorn, Cublington

Best Community Pub: Winner: **Unicorn**, Cublington, Runner up: **Green Man**, Mursley

One to Watch: White Swan, Whitchurch

A further eleven pubs have been chosen to appear in a guide of the recommended village pubs of Aylesbury Vale. Copies of this guide are available from tourist information centres in Aylesbury, Buckingham and Wendover, and online at www.visitbuckinghamshire.org

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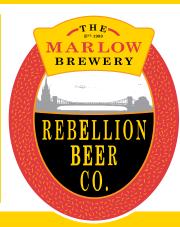
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A TALE OF TWO CITIES

For some the ideal British pub is a thatched country inn with the proverbial roses around an oak doorway. While these hostelries are to be cherished and celebrated – and we have a generous number of their type in our branch – *CAMRA* has equally championed the urban pub, both busy city centre destination pubs and community locals.

To sample some of the best urban pubs in the country, the branch set embarked on two intrepid expeditions this autumn – one to the netherworld just outside the City of London and the other to Birmingham – the capital of the beer Mecca that is the West Midlands.

First up was our trip round Shoreditch, Old Street and Hoxton. Shoreditch has been shaped for centuries by being just outside of City of London's walls — being the haunt of ne'er-do-wells like Elizabethan actors (Shakespeare's plays were first performed close to our first pub — the **Barley Mow**), vagabonds, prostitutes and, on the day of our visit, thirsty *CAMRA* members.

These areas are some of the least touristy parts of London and until recently were predominantly grimly industrial with dilapidated warehouses and bleak council blocks dominating the landscape. However, as other parts of London have become more gentrified and expensive, parts of these districts have recently become yuppie colonies.

How else could we explain the £3.70 a pint price for *Gale's Seafarer's Ale* at our first pub, the **Barley Mow** in Shoreditch, apart from speculating that its clientele must be hip-young-happening media and internet types? The next pub was the inappropriately named **Bricklayer's Arms** – we didn't see many hod-carrying types in there – maybe it should be renamed 'The Web-Designer's iPad'?

Shoreditch's denizens seem to prefer drinking in designer bars rather than pubs – Des de Moor's *CAMRA* London guide mentions some but we decided to head west to Old Street to the **Old Fountain** – a *GBG* regular where a wide range of excellent quality real ales can be guaranteed to spout from the hand pumps.

We became quite a merry band in the **Old Fountain**, meeting up with the branch's ex-chairman/secretary/regional organiser (have I missed anything?) Nick Holt, who'd come down from Suffolk for the occasion. Next up was the *GBG* listed *Shepherd Neame* house, the **Prince Arthur**,



The Barley Mow, Shoreditch



The Bricklayers Arms, Shoreditch

on the other side of the huge traffic island that circles Old Street tube station. This area houses so many internet start-up ventures that it is known as Silicon Roundabout.

However, the silicon we were most interested in familiarising ourselves was the mineral that is a significant part of ale's chemistry. This element has been associated with healthy skin and bone density. Note this is silicon without an added 'e' – and not a reference to ales with names like *Brewdog's Trashy Blonde* – a beer which, by co-incidence, I have enjoyed on a number of occasions at the next pub on our crawl – the legendary **Wenlock Arms**.

Located in a very nondescript area of Hoxton, well off City Road, the **Wenlock** is an old-fashioned street-corner boozer of a type that was once ubiquitous but is now increasingly rare. In fact, the **Wenlock** itself has been under threat of being redeveloped into a five storey, publess apartment block. Fortunately a vigorous campaign, aided by many *CAMRA* members, has seen the planning application turned down so the pub has been reprieved from the bulldozer – for now.

The **Wenlock Arms** has enjoyed a special place in many *CAMRA* members' hearts for its wide range of ales and its rough-and-ready charm. Like most of the other pubs on the crawl, it was bursting at the seams with enthusiastic drinkers on a Friday evening – obviously people in this part of London haven't been told that pub-going is meant to be on the wane.

Continued on Page 16



The Wenlock Arms, Hoxton

Swan Supping

'A Tale of Two Cities' - Continued from Page 15

One of the London 2012 Olympic mascots is called **Wenlock** and I'd like to think that, rather than being named after the Shropshire village (the official explanation), the name was hatched over a pint in the **Wenlock Arms**. The pub also shares its name with the Wenlock Basin on the Regent's Canal, which is nearby but obscured from the pub by industrial buildings.

We made our way towards the canal and followed the towpath to find the remaining pubs. This was perhaps not the wisest method of navigation after five or six pints on a pitch-dark night – but everyone managed to walk in a straight enough line not to fall into the water. We took in the *GBG*-listed **Baring** – a smart community local in a residential square in the north of Hoxton – before arriving at the **Narrow Boat**, a fascinating two-storey pub with the lower-floor opening on to the canal towpath level and the upper bar level with a road bridge.

The last stop, just off the canal, was the excellent **Charles Lamb** in the backstreets of Islington. This pub pulls off the unlikely combination of being a destination for both foodies and real ale lovers. It can be relied upon to serve interesting and well-kept ales from the likes of **Dark Star** and **Otter** and the food isn't restricted to gourmet platters — we had some affordable home-cooked snacks from their kitchen which did a good job of soaking up all the beer.

The **Charles Lamb** is a two-roomed pub – one featuring the bar, the other with a fascinating selection of old maps on the walls. Fortunately, we had no need to study these navigational aids to help us renegotiate our way back to the towpath at the end of a superb evening's drinking – as the Angel tube station was only five minutes' walk around the corner.

It was snow joke when our Birmingham crawl had to be postponed last December due to a blizzard, although had we ventured north that morning it was likely we wouldn't





have made it back down to Buckinghamshire for several days (which may not have been too bad had we been holed up in various of the city's fine hostelries, something for which our livers may not have forgiven us).

Due to weekend railway engineering works throughout most of this year, we weren't able to reschedule the trip until November, although Chiltern Railways made amends by running a £10 all-day rover ticket on their network which some of us were able to use.

With ten *Good Beer Guide* entries in the City Centre and two in Digbeth, near Moor Street Station, we would have to follow our itinerary with military style precision. Our party of six disembarked from our train at Snow Hill just past eleven in the morning to discover with horror that our advance scouts, Carl and Sandra, had found that the first pub on the list, the **Old Contemptibles**, didn't open for another hour.

In articles about walks in *Swan Supping* we often suggest calling ahead to check pub opening hours. Here we'd been caught out not heeding our own advice. The lesson is that, even *Good Beer Guide* advertised opening hours are not infallible. Fortunately, we weren't stuck miles up a mountainside but in the commercial district of a major city – so beer was not too far away.

Continued on Page 17

Swan Supping

'A Tale of Two Cities' - Continued from Page 16

We headed for the **Old Joint Stock**, a *Fuller's* house in a magnificently decorated old bank, and a pint of their gorgeous Black Cab porter. After playing with our assorted electronic gadgets (no, not Harry's probe this time) and consulting some pub websites, we decided to press on as quickly as possible and return to the **Old Contemptibles** later in the day.

A walk through the sights of scenic Birmingham beckoned - concrete flyovers over wasteland, underpasses, boarded up shops - as we headed out of the city centre towards Aston University. Slap bang in the middle of the campus is perhaps the best reason for a prospective student to put the university on their application form – a *Good Beer Guide* pub.

The Sacks of Potatoes is a student pub that doesn't assume its clientele exclusively swigs fizzy lager washed down by Jägerbombs - there was a range of at least six real ales, including a mild from the Aston Brewing Company and a brace from Black Country brewer Holdens.

Catering for students, the Sacks of Potatoes cuts a keen deal on food. A couple of us sampled their all-day breakfast, which could be had for the princely sum of £4.45 including a pint of ale (albeit the least interesting on offer - Marston's English Pale Ale).

Next was the **Bull**. This pub prominently displays its year of construction, 1800, when Birmingham was in the very early stages of its transformation into the workshop of the world. Whereas it now stands in a post-industrial landscape - makeshift car parks marking where the vestiges of industry have been demolished – on the inside the pub remarkably retains the air of a country village local.

It has some fascinating stained-glass windows and a back-room with sofas, which are the normal preserve of the pub cat. One of our number took such a fancy to the pub's pussy that the unlikely call of 'Can you tell me the name of your cat?' rung around the bar at a certain point.

The Shakespeare was a rather grim walk through a canyon of concrete offices and warehouses. A pub dominated by a long bar counter, it had a decent selection of ales although being close to the city centre it was rather

The next couple of pubs on the itinerary were near the redeveloped canal basin area around the convention centre. We were unable to sample the wares on offer at the Prince of Wales which was apparently closed for the day 'for technical reasons'.

Pressing on, we arrived at the **Brasshouse** – a *GBG* new entry but most of us couldn't fathom why. Perhaps the pub was too busy for us to form a fair impression but, on examining the beer selection, a couple of our party decided to head for a nearby Lloyds Number One bar instead. Enough said.

Birmingham's huge German Christmas market had to be negotiated to reach the next pub. It took a while to slip past the crowds at the gluehwein and bratwurst chalets but we eventually regrouped at the Wellington.

This pub serves so many real ales that it has airport-style screens listing the ales on offer - instead of departure gates the TVs list the many ales by one of the sixteen or so hand pump numbers. Harry may well have been on his way to a metaphorical departure lounge after ordering a half of a beer (which shall remain nameless) at 12%

ABV. It was so disgusting we all had to sample a bit to believe how out of balance it was – just a horrible burning alcohol character – obviously the Belgians still have something to teach us about strong beers.

Then it was back to the **Old Contemptibles**. Once they let us inside to buy their beer, we found a spacious but busy pub with a long bar and a good selection of beer. Almost over the road was the Pub du Vin - the cellar bar of the Hotel du Vin which, despite the vinous name, is an entry in the good book. It was a cosy little place, less oppressively busy than some of the previous pubs, but our modest CAMRA bunch seemed to overwhelm the one man-band serving staff and it took an age to get served. Dave Roe must have liked the place though as he felt so 'comfortable' that this pub was his last on the crawl.

The rest of us straggled on to the Old Fox where we found that Elvis (Evans, that is) was in the building – as it was the tenth pub on our list it was a remarkable achievement that we'd managed to arrive here vaguely on schedule. This pub is located in another of Birmingham's entertainment districts which was as colourful with its cinema and restaurant neon lights as the opposite side of town had been grey earlier in the day. By now there were a few ravenous appetites and the pub sticks in the memory more as a refuelling stop than for its beer.

Incredibly, we'd visited all of Birmingham's city centre GBG pubs in the day (at least those that were open) but the two Digbeth pubs, the Anchor and the White Swan, both not too far away from the Old Fox, were to be the icing on the cake. Speaking of sickly treats, one of the beers available at the Anchor was Downton's Chocolate Orange Delight. At 5.8% this proved a step too far for my constitution although, like Everest, it was consumed by some of the other branch members because - well - it was there. Happily some of the younger – and not so young – pub crawlers made it to the White Swan to make a legs-eleven of GBG pubs.

Travelling back on the train it seemed that the most remarkable thing about these city pubs was that virtually every one during the day had boasted a full house - but as our trips to the nearby Black Country have shown, the people of the West Midlands definitely know how to appreciate good beer.

Mike Clarke



A RETURN TO TRADITION ON CAMRA'S FORTIETH



In a return to a time-honoured tradition, *Chiltern Brewery* have decided that their winter seasonal favourite draught, *300s Old Ale*, will now be sold exclusively from oak casks for customers at the **Farmers' Bar** at the **Kings Head**, Aylesbury and those taking 2/4 pints away from the brewery's shop in Terrick.

Beautifully crafted by England's only Master Cooper, Alastair Simms, the firkins are made from puncheons that came from the Balgray bottling plant in Ayrshire and are between 60 and 100 years old. The heads are made from new English oak and the two pins are made from new oak from *Wadworths* and *Youngs* of London.

For those in the know, this season's first pint of draught 300s was pulled with style, panache and renowned *Chiltern Brewery* warmth by Richard Jenkinson, founder and father to Tom and George who now run the family business, whilst the Master Cooper was making his finishing touches to the casks. It is over 30 years since the brewery launched their first set of oak casks and these have now been decommissioned.

The first pint of 300s Old Ale 'from the wood' was drawn at the **Farmers' Bar** on Friday 25th November. This was drawn by gravity by the Town Mayor of Aylesbury, Councillor Mrs Jenny Puddefoot (pictured top right).



There was a big turnout for the launch which was well attended by *CAMRA* members, despite some of the usual suspects from the committee being absent due to prior arrangements. Mid-Chiltern's branch had brought a contingent and there a number of *CAMRA* member regulars in the pub. *Chiltern* had produced a special run of bottled-conditioned *Bodgers Barley Wine* (8.5% abv - 1080og) badged as *Original Gravity* for *CAMRA* members to celebrate forty years of the campaign, and had brought along as many as they'd been advised would be members turn up on the night. Giles du Boulay, *CAMRA*'s Brewery Liaison Officer for *Chiltern*, did the honours in terms of the presentation (pictured below) and all *CAMRA* members there who wanted one gratefully received their bottle of *Original Gravity*.







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ANOTHER BEER FESTIVAL SUCCESS



High Wycombe Rugby Club would like to thank *Swan Supping* readers, supporters and our Sponsors for making this year's beer festival so successful!

High Wycombe 1st XV played Swindon 1st XV on the Kingsmead pitch supported by a large crowd of eager festival goers on and off the field this Saturday 12 November. We narrowly beat Swindon who were sitting second in the South West 1 North league by one point. A very close

score of 24 against 23 to take a narrow victory on festival day, this closely fought match was followed by an evening of music, great beers and great entertainment headlined by South Side Wycombe's local Rhythm & Blues Band.

Many supporters then, buoyed by the challenge on the pitch, emerged in the bar to find the challenge off the pitch with the Buckinghamshire versus Wiltshire beer festival!

This sported superb brews from across both counties such as *Box Steam Chuffin Ale* v *Chiltern 300s Old Ale*, also *Hopback Hopfest* v *Rebellion Knock On* (our very own brew made by our local brewery). *Buckinghamshire Ciders Virtual Orchard Hard Core* (7%) and *Stony Stratford Medium Dry* (7%) made their débuts against *Moles Black Rat* (6%). I enjoyed them all after pre-tasting as someone has to check on the quality! At least I found 'One of your five a day' in an enjoyable format!

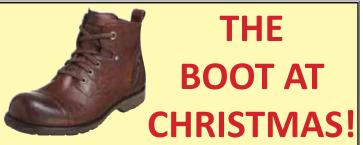
Hard Core Cider was the first to go, closely followed by Knock On, Roasted Nuts, as well as **Stony Stratford** Medium Dry cider. The result was that on consumed casks and cider barrels, Buckinghamshire narrowly won on the

responsible drinking battle off the pitch.

The Club want to thank all who attended helping us maintain our sports facility to the local community who without this type of support could not offer Rugby to so many! In the age-old tradition - Cheers.....

Hopefully next year's theme will enjoy the same success, so keep an eye out for our next festival. Until the time, keep safe!

Nick Kidby - Festival Organiser



Come to The Boot this Christmas and enjoy our festive menu, as well as a few pub favourites!

We cater for all parties, large or small. Fancy a buffet and a boogy? On the 10th and 17th

of December we are holding a disco for all to enjoy.

Thinking about what to do on Christmas Day? Why not let us do the hard work for you?

New Years Eve, we will be having music, food and drinks to go into the New Year with a bang!

Check our website for the Christmas day menu at www.thebootbledlowridge.com

Christmas Opening times: 24th Normal times 25th 12-4 Food - one sitting at 1pm

26th & 27th 12-5, 31st Normal Times, 1st January 12-5 For more information, please contact Maxine

> or a member of her team newsletter@bootbledlowridge.com The Boot, Chinnor Road, Bledlow Ridge,

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For news on the pub and our Christmas special beers check out our new website

www.theroyalstandard.biz
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Open all day every day

AND ANOTHER!



Coconut Crocodile from Ascot Ales, a speciality golden ale infused with coconut to leave a citrus and grapefruit finish and brewed specifically for the 2011 Ascot Racecourse Beer Festival, beat off 210 other real ales to scoop the Beer of the Festival award as voted for by racegoers.

Chris Gill, Managing Director and Head Brewer at Ascot Ales, said he was absolutely delighted that *Coconut Crocodile* won. 'I'm very proud to have won this award, which is voted for by the public, it's a real honour. I love using lots of hops in my beers and enjoy experimenting with different ingredients, in this case coconut!'

Bumper crowds, helped by the glorious weather, attended the two-day beer festival, which combines real ale with superb quality horseracing. On the track, the plaudits went to Pastoral Player, trained by Hughie Morrison and ridden by Darryll Holland, winner of the £150,000 totescoop6 Challenge Cup - the most valuable seven furlong handicap in Europe.

The 6th Ascot Racecourse *CAMRA* Beer Festival will be held on Friday 5th and Saturday 6th October 2012.



3 High Street, Chinnor (☎01844 353468)

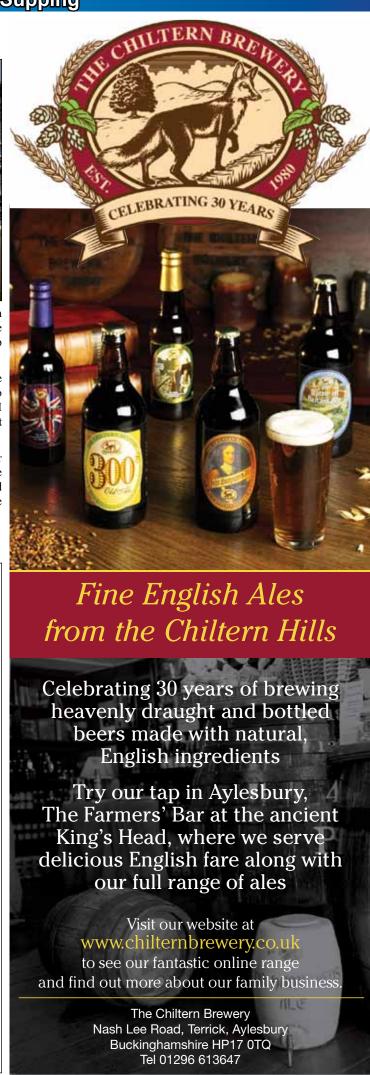
CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2011 listed with four real ales

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Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

December

Friday 2nd BREWERY OPENING & BEER FESTIVAL

6.30pm Hop Pole, Aylesbury

The official opening of the Aylesbury Brewhouse by Roger Protz, Editor of the Good Beer Guide

Saturday 3rd NEW BREWERY OPEN DAY

11.00am XT Brewery, Notley Farm, Long Crendon

Monday 5th BRANCH MEETING

8.00pm Red Lion, Whiteleaf

Friday 9th WYCOMBE MARSH/LOUDWATER CRAWL

7.00pm General Havelock, 8.30pm Derehams Inn.

Friday 16th AYLESBURY CHRISTMAS CRAWL

Start 7.30pm Hop Pole, then Harrow, Rockwood, Queen's Head, King's Head, Bell, White Hart (partying under the disco ball till late)

Saturday 24th CHRISTMAS EVE SHOPPING SOCIAL

12 noon, King's Head, Aylesbury

Take advantage of a few quiet moments before the full storm of the holidays starts to take effect!

Tuesday 27th WENDOVER CRAWL

Start 7.30pm Shoulder of Mutton, then King and Queen, White Swan, Red Lion, George and Dragon, Pack Horse



Buckinghamshire County Council Trading Standards County Hall, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP20 1UP t: 08454 040506 (Consumer Direct for advice) t: 08453 708090 (for business advice)

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e: trading.standards@oxfordshire.gov.uk

January

Monday 9th GBG PRE-SELECTION BRANCH MEETING

8.00pm William Robert Loosley, High Wycombe.

Wednesday 18th DOWNLEY SOCIAL

8.30pm Downley Donkey, 9.30pm Le De Spencer Arms.

Wednesday 25th COUNTRY SOCIAL

8.00pm Boot, Bledlow Ridge, 8.45pm Golden Cross, Saunderton, 10.00pm Red Lion, Bradenham

February

Monday 20th BRANCH AGM

7.30pm Cross Keys, Thame

All local *CAMRA* members should attend as we review the last year's campaigning and decide the priorities for the New Year.

October

Vale of Aylesbury Beer Festival - Dates to be confirmed

Further details can be found on our website www.swansupping.org.uk

CATCH UP DURING BRANCH SOCIALS:-PHONE 0792 215 8971

DON'T MISS OUT!

Keep up with the lastest 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

Swan Supping

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Copy deadline for next issue, due out 1st February, is 14th January 2012.

Subscriptions: - Swan Supping is distributed to over 250 pubs and many other locations in our area but if you would prefer to receive your copy by post we can mail it to you immediately it is published. All you have to do is send £1 for each edition you wish to receive to the Editor and leave the rest to us! This applies to single copies to UK addresses only.

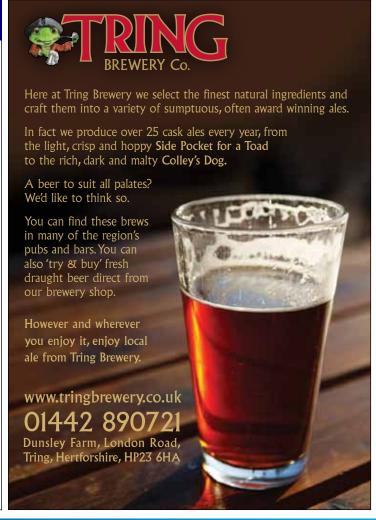
We can mail overseas, but the price will vary depending on the country to which it is to be delivered. Remember that most issues of *Swan Supping* can be downloaded from our website (www.swansupping.org.uk).

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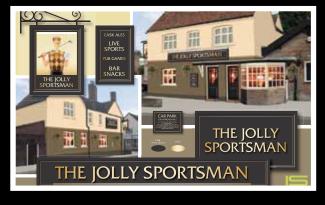




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