

FREE

Swan Supping



Issue 81

Dec 2010/Jan 2011

COVER STORY
The Return of the
Boot, Bledlow Ridge
See Page 16



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Newsletter of the Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch of CAMRA

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NEWS FROM THE EDITOR



As I'm writing this editorial, we are a few days into a very cold spell and I'm still waiting for this much vaunted Global Warming to take effect. The only thing that consoles me is the fact that this is the time of year that we get some lovely strong winter beers in the pubs.

There has been a lot of mixed news for our pubs recently. The **Boot** in Bledlow Ridge has been bought by local villagers and is due to reopen in early December. This is a fantastic result and lets hope the pub gets the support it deserves and it is a success.

The other side of the coin is the fact that we are seeing more closures, especially at this time when the pub trade tends to make a lot of money over the Christmas and New Year period. Just check out our 'Local News' section which uses the phrase 'Pub Closed, Future Uncertain' far too often for the good of anyone except property developers!

The problem is going to get worse when the rate of VAT goes up in January! The temptation will be there for even more pub goers to forsake the joys of properly served traditional ale served in a convivial atmosphere for some cans of 'stuff' from the supermarket to be consumed in front of the TV. As they will probably spend just as much money, they will end up drinking even more alcohol, which is the opposite situation that the 'powers that be' desire! So much for price rises being implemented 'for the good of our health'.

We are planning to do a full review of the year in our next issue and we will be concentrating on the pubs that have closed. We were as a branch, bucking the national average for losing pubs, but this is no longer the case. Please contact us if we haven't mentioned the demise of your local in our 'Local News' section in a previous issue.

Branch Pub of the Year

Enough of the doom and gloom. Let's take the chance to celebrate the best of our pubs.

It is time for **CAMRA** members to vote for the **Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Pub of the Year (POTY)**. Please email me (contact details are on page 18) with your name and **CAMRA** membership number and your vote for one of the following:-

George & Dragon, Quainton.

Kings Head, Aylesbury, which won **POTY** five years ago.

Packhorse, Wendover.

Royal Standard of England, Forty Green.

Shepherd's Crook, Crowell - Previous **POTY** winner.

Wheel, Naphill, the runner-up for the past two years.

You may not agree with our selections, so please let me know which pubs we have unjustly left out!

Please note: Previous **POTY** winners are not eligible for inclusion in the competition for five years. This is why the **Royal Standard**, Wooburn Common, **Hop Pole**, Aylesbury, **Whip**, Lacey Green, and the **Eight Bells**, Long Crendon, are not included in the list.

A presentation to the winner will take place next year which will then be entered into the regional heats for the **National CAMRA Pub of the Year**, which has been won for the last two years by the **Kelham Island Tavern** in Sheffield (where the **CAMRA AGM** is being held in 2011).

My usual thanks to all our contributors and a special thank-you to Colin Stanford for another of his wonderful cartoons.

I wish you all a very merry Christmas and hope you and all our pubs and breweries have a very happy and prosperous New Year!

David Roe

Swan Supping Editor and Chairman of the **AVW** branch of **CAMRA**

NATIONAL CAMRA NEWS



In November, Tom Stainer, editor of **CAMRA's BEER Magazine** (and of course, '**What's Brewing**') was voted Editor of the Year in the Customer Magazine (consumer readership) category of the British Society of Magazine Editor awards.

BEER, which was launched in August 2008, is **CAMRA's** membership magazine and is produced quarterly.

Tom Stainer said, 'This is a tremendous accolade for not just the **BEER** team, but **CAMRA** and real ale as a whole. To recognise beer and pubs as such a vital and exciting subject matter among extremely high-quality and high-profile

competition makes it even more rewarding to pick up the prize.'

Mike Benner, **CAMRA's** Chief Executive congratulated Tom and his team and said, 'This is fantastic news for Tom and his team and for all involved in the wonderful **BEER** magazine. It's great to see a magazine about beer, our national drink, win such a prestigious title. **BEER** has been a huge success for **CAMRA** and its very satisfying to see all the hard work get its just rewards.'

The award was presented to Tom by TV's 'Pub Landlord' Al Murray (both pictured)!

OFT Fails Again to Tackle Pub Company Abuses

In October the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) once again announced that it does not intend to take any action to prevent pub company abuses of the beer tie.

In June 2009, **CAMRA** submitted a super-complaint to the OFT arguing that serious competition failings in the UK pub market were leading to higher prices, reduced amenity and pub closures. In October 2009, the OFT responded that it would take no action.

Following a legal appeal by **CAMRA** to the Competition Appeals Tribunal (CAT) the OFT agreed to reopen their investigation and look at the matter again and **CAMRA** then sent a raft of new evidence to them.

This new decision from the OFT will not stop **CAMRA** from continuing its campaign to secure reform of the beer tie, which has the support of all political parties, the Government and the Commons Business Select Committee.

Commenting, Mike Benner said: '**CAMRA's** initial reaction to the OFT's decision is that it is based on a blinkered and selective consideration of the evidence. The OFT has squandered an opportunity to support a process of industry self regulation to improve competition and benefit consumers. However, the Business Secretary, Vince Cable MP, has publicly stated that the pub companies are on probation and that they face legislative action if don't reform by June 2011.

'The OFT recognises the concerns of tied pub landlords but has failed to recognise the impact of these on consumers. It is extraordinary that the OFT appears to have dismissed as irrelevant the treatment of tied pub landlords by the large pub companies. A balanced and fair relationship between tied pub landlords and the large pub companies is crucial to ensuring the pub market works well for consumers.

'The OFT's own analysis recognises that tied pub landlords on average pay around £20,000 more for their beer every year as a result of being tied and unable to purchase beer on the open market. **CAMRA** recognises that higher costs imposed upon tied pub landlords will inevitably be passed onto consumers through higher prices, under investment and pub closures.'

CHARITY FESTIVAL SUCCESS



17th Aylesbury Vale Beer Festival

Halloween was once again celebrated at the *Aylesbury Vale Beer Festival*, run in conjunction with the *Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity*.

The aim of the Hospice is to provide a first class specialist palliative care service which is accessible and free of charge to those with a life-limiting illness. Hospice care is all about the person being more than a patient and finding ways to improve quality of life through symptom

control, pain relief, emotional and spiritual support. Families and close friends are also involved as they are often central to the well-being of those in their care.

The festival this year has once again raised over £4,500 and thanks must go to all the volunteers involved, from the *FNHC* and *CAMRA*, who gave up their time and worked hard to make the festival a success.

Thanks must also go to the loyal drinkers, many of whom have attended most of the seventeen festivals, the suppliers of the beers and the ciders, *Dayla, Vale, Chiltern* and *Millwhites*, and the sponsors of the barrels.

As usual, we ran a 'Beer of the Festival' competition and asked the customers for their favourite beers and ciders. The results of this were as follows:-

Milds/Light bitters (less than 4% abv)

Castle Rock Harvest Pale

Bitters and Special Bitters (4 - 4.5% abv)

St. Austell Bucket of Blood

Strong Beers (over 4.5% abv)

Leeds Midnight Bell

Ciders/Perry

Westons Country Perry/Millwhites Whiskey Cask (tied in first place)

OVERALL BEER OF THE FESTIVAL

Leeds Midnight Bell. A certificate will be delivered to the brewery in the New Year, so if you fancy a social in Leeds.....



Haddenham Winterfest

If you like the idea of drinking for charity, then don't forget the *Haddenham Winterfest* will take place on Saturday 11th December from 12 noon to 5.00 p.m. at Banks Park, Haddenham.

On offer will be 25 real ales plus real lagers and real ciders, and a selection of bottled beers, which branch members will enjoy at a social there..

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RIVALS FESTIVAL

My sincere thanks go to all those *Swan Supping* readers and guests who attended the long awaited 'Rivals Beer Festival' at High Wycombe Rugby Club down on the Kingsmead on the 19th and 20th of November, with the added excitement of a derby rugby match, where High Wycombe entertained their local rivals Marlow RFC in the first derby of this years 2010/11 rugby season.

The match was in fact a very close affair with Marlow 1st XV taking the early points with two counter-attack scores taking them in at the half time break 0 v 12 up; however the second half started as the first finished with High Wycombe putting on most of the attack pressure deep into Marlow's half. This finally resulted in High Wycombe 1st XV scoring all their points in the final 25 minutes once pressure tolled to nudge ahead as victors in this very hard fought derby 20 v 12 up at the finish, High Wycombe celebrating as winners but honouring gallant losers Marlow, on this occasion.

I would personally like to thank Marlow for really taking us on upfront in this match offering our team a really fierce challenge, suitable of any of our former match derbies between the two sides. Both teams over the years have similar records against each other which is why we respect them



and they us to this end we all re-convened to the bar, to sample the beers still on offer at the Rivals Beer Festival to celebrate our derby friendship.

Obviously in the true tradition of local banter we both look forward to our next encounter when our next skirmish will be performed on 12 March 2011 at Riverwood's Marlow RFC ground.

I'm sure we will receive a rival's welcome and hope to sample more delights from the *Rebellion* brewery who supply the club with its fine ales.

Thanks to all who contributed and sponsored our Rivals Festival, now

our eighth because it was a huge success, again drawing in many from across our region to enjoy the hospitality from both sides. It cannot be put on without you. Everyone enjoyed the festivities, good food and music - which now leads me onto our ninth? Look out for the next offering soon to be announced.

The above picture shows Marlow's and High Wycombe's Men of the Match: Eddy Smyth (on the left) and Gavin Bunker (on the right) respectively.

Nick Kidby - Beer Festival Organiser

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LOCAL NEWS



ASHENDEN

The **Gatehangers'** active management team is being supported by villagers only too aware that many local pubs have suffered from not supporting a 'Use me or Lose me' philosophy. Currently serving **Brakspear Bitter**, and at least one other such as a **Vale** beer as well as food and weekend events.

ASTON CLINTON

After some ten years of being called the **Duck Inn**, the former 'Bell Hotel' has been refurbished and had its name partially reinstated to the **Bell**. The original metal bell has also been restored to a position at the front of the pub. The pub reopened on Friday 19th of November and the new landlord is Mark Jackson. The beers on offer to start off with are **Fullers London Pride**, **Greene King Morland Old Speckled Hen** and **Wells Bombardier**.

Malcolm Ripley will be retiring in January after working for **Dayla** for over forty years. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Malcolm for all his help with arranging a lot of the beers for our annual beer festival over all the years since we started and for all the other times he has helped us. Lets hope that he enjoys his well-earned rest!

AYLESBURY

There seems to be a lot of work going on at the **Dairy Maid** which is currently closed. It is being converted into a **Hungry Horse** pub!



The **Harrow** was the runner-up in the 2010 **Bucks Herald Pub of the Year Award** and is going back to offering two beers on gravity from the back of the bar. The planned beers are **Wickwar Rite Flanker** and **Harviestoun Haggis Hunter**, with **Stonehenge Pigswill** to follow. If the beers prove successful, the gravity beers will continue over Christmas. The usual suspects, which are **Hook Norton Hooky Bitter**, **Wells Bombardier**, **Shepherd Neame Spitfire**, and **Black Sheep Best Bitter**, will also be available. For the cider drinkers there is **Westons Old Rosie** on offer as well as 'Home-Mulled' scrumpy cider.

The **Kings Head** are allowing children in the pub if they are having a meal with an adult present. A shame that they won't

be able to take advantage of the beer matching which is offered on the menus, but they will be able to appreciate the fare from the new head chef. The launch of the **Chiltern Winter's Tail** took place in November both that and bottles of the **Monument Ale** will be on sale until they run out. Customers can now request their choice of guest beers and **Orkney Dark Island** has featured with **Orkney Northern Light** and **Naylors Sunset Ale** to follow. A new cellar system should cut down the waiting time between changes of barrels when a beer runs out when the pub is busy.

The **Queens Head** is still 'Closed until further notice'.

The **Rockwood** has won the **Bucks Herald Pub of the Year Award** for

2010 following voting by hundreds of readers and the presentation to landlady, Amy Close, is pictured left. It was an exceptionally good week for the pub as they were also awarded their **Cask Marque!** The beers currently on offer are **Brains Reverend James** and **Sharp's Doom Bar**. Live music is available every first Sunday and last Friday of each month.

BIERTON

The **Bell** has recently been refurbished inside and they have some great new 'Healthy Options' choices on their menu. **Fuller's (Gale's) HSB** is usually one of the ales on offer – which at 4.8% is good for a cold winter evening!

BOOKER

The **Live and Let Live** is currently closed and is up for sale. Yet another pub with an uncertain future!

CHEARSLEY

The **Bell** serves **Fullers Chiswick**, **London Pride** and winter warmer **Jack Frost**. To go down with their Christmas menu, **ESB** will be available. Sharon & Oliver will be celebrating five years at the **Bell** on 14th December.

CUDDINGTON

The **Crown** has **Adnam's Bitter** as well as **Fullers London Pride** and **Jack Frost**.



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LOCAL NEWS



DINTON

At the **Seven Stars** you can choose between *Sharp's Doom Bar* and *Black Sheep Best Bitter* plus a guest such as *Brains Rev James* or *Tring Side Pocket for a Toad*. Sunday carvery £10.95.

FORD

The **Dinton Hermit** serves *Vale Best Bitter* or *Rebellion Smuggler*. Landlady Mary O'Hara is moving on, handing over to a new manager, Alex, on 5th December.

GIBRALTER

The **Bottle and Glass** has moved away from *Greene King IPA* to keeping *Greene King Morland Original Bitter* plus a guest such as *Greene King Old Speckled Hen* or *Black Country Fireside*.

HADDENHAM

Diary Date – Haddenham WinterFest – Saturday 11th December – see www.haddenham-beer-festival.co.uk.

At the **Green Dragon** there's a choice between regulars *Sharpe's Doom Bar* and *Rebellion Smuggler* along with another guest, such as *Woodforde's Wherry* or *Ringwood Best*.

The **Kings Head** serves *Adnam's Bitter* and *Fullers London Pride* plus a guest.

The **Red Lion's** 'Free-of-Tie Lease' is for sale. Their permanent fixtures have changed, and are now *Black Sheep Bitter* and *Adnam's Bitter* supported by one or two guests. Recent appearances by *Beartown Bear Ass* and *Vale Hadda's Winter Solstice*.

The **Rising Sun** has a new winter menu to be washed down with beer straight from the barrel. One or two *Vale* beers are always available and an ever changing, and usually interesting guest.

Greene King holding tenants are on duty at the **Rose & Thistle**. Currently serving two beers, *Hardys and Hansons Olde Trip* and *Greene King IPA* and a guest such as *Hook Norton Old Hooky*.

HIGH WYCOMBE

C Rowan Jones reports that the **Belle Vue** held its first '*Summer's End' Beer Festival* during the week 29th October to 5th November. The event was a great success according to customers both old and new and also pub staff. The twenty ales ranged across the full spectrum of strengths, brewing styles, taste and colour – from *Grainstore Rutland Panther*, a dark mild at 3.4%, and *Kelham Island Bitter*, a straw-coloured hoppy beer at 3.8%, through *Wylam Haugh*, a porter at 4.6% and *Cottage Goldrush* at 5% up to *Spectrum Old Stootwobbler* at a strong, dark, luscious 6%. There were also four ciders of varying strengths plus a perry. High attendance levels filled this small corner local to capacity, but stocks held out and service was efficient, thanks to the ticketing system in place at the temporary beer festival bar. The landlord, Alan Hedgecock, said that the stillage he had built in the former kitchen enabled the beer to be dispensed from



the cask by gravity. This had the dual benefit of speedy yet gentle glass-filling under cool, not cold, conditions thereby avoiding 'cellar haze' and delivering a bright beer in the peak of condition. A full programme of events accompanied the festival, featuring live music for which the **Belle Vue** is well known, plus a topical quiz. Alan is already planning to hold a '*Winter's End' Beer Festival* in late April/early May 2011.

The **Downley Donkey** is closed with an uncertain future.

The **Hobgoblin** was closed for a while but has now reopened as an **Oak Taverns** pub. Dean and Karen from the **Kingsbury** in Aylesbury took over the running of the pub at the end of November. The beers on offer have yet to be decided but after the success of the **Cross Keys** in Thame, talk of a possible micro-brewery cannot be far away!

LANE END

The **Old Sun** is still boarded up and its future is uncertain.

NAPHILL

The **Black Lion** closed its doors on Monday 15th of November – possibly permanently.

NORTH MARSTON

The **Pilgrim** has had a change of management. Peter and Anne Jones took over on 2nd September and certainly seem to have made a positive impact so far.

OVING

The **Black Boy** now has a locals' night featuring 15% discount on food on Tuesdays. Jazz and Quiz nights are on alternate Thursday nights. The pub will be open Christmas Day Lunchtime. A blues and soul band – The Black Boys will perform on New Years Eve. Now closed on Mondays.

PIDDINGTON

The **Dashwood Arms** has been refurbished and has reopened under the tenancy of Wayne Mitchell who lives in the village. The beers on offer are *Rebellion IPA*, *Fullers London Pride*, *Vale Wychert* and *Good King Senseless*.

festival during November and the launch of their 'Calendar Girls' calendar. All profits from this are going to the local Day Care Centre.

Wenmans (aka the **Star & Garter**) has reopened, but as yet there is no one permanently in charge. John Mifsud, from Manchester, is custodian at the moment. It seems that the owners are trying to turn it back into a pub and have reintroduced a pool table – free 5 to 6 Mon/Fri – and a dart board. All real ales are priced at £2.50 (the cheapest in Thame) and on offer at the time were *Morlands Original* and *Old Speckled Hen*, both in good condition. They will be opening the restaurant in the near future serving English food lunch times and evenings.

WING

Continuing with its programme of improvement the **Queens Head** will be closed from Tuesday 4th Jan whilst the toilets are refurbished and a new disabled facility is installed.

WOORBURN COMMON

The **Royal Standard** will be stocking a number of special beers throughout the second half of December including *Imperial Stout* 10.5% and *Critical Mass* 7.4% from *Dark Star*, *Snowflake* 8% and the *Dark Ruby Mild* from *Sarah Hughes*, *Thornbridge Jaipur IPA* and *Hopback Winter Lightning*.

STOKE MANDEVILLE

Stuart Brierley has left the **Bull** after being one of our longest serving landlords in the branch area and having appeared in the *Good Beer Guide* from 2001 to 2011. Stuart will be sadly missed and is pictured with his family above. We wish them all well for the future. Peter Purvis has reported that the **Bull** has reopened and is currently being run by Grahame Ball. If the pub gets the trade it will stay open and he's looking after beer well with the same choice of ales as before.

THAME

The **Cross Keys** held a successful beer

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Good Beer Guide
2011



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45 Gordon road
High Wycombe
HP13 6EQ

tel: 01494 524728
email: pub@thebv.co.uk
Web: www.thebv.co.uk

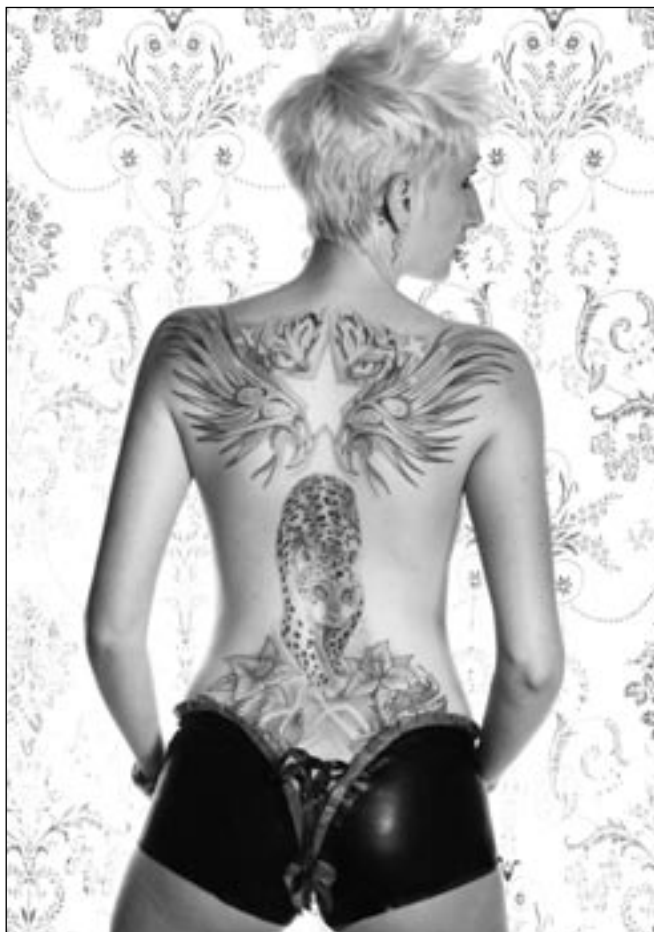
TATTOO CULTURE AT THE BELLE VUE

It's often said that in the current tough climate that pubs need to provide something extra beyond the traditional call of duty to bring in the punters and at least one hostelry in our branch is properly serving the genuine artistic community and not the alternative sort often found in pubs.

The **Belle Vue**, near High Wycombe railway station, has certainly embraced diversity. Our local news section in the last issue mentioned some of the fascinating and unusual activities that the pub is hosting. This is in addition to its good reputation for beer – it's been in the *Good Beer Guide* for a number of years and its recent successful beer festival is reported elsewhere in *Swan Supping*.

With the second photographic exhibition in the pub's snug bar having opened at the end of November, landlord Alan Hedgecock shared some of his thoughts about his vision for the **Belle Vue** with *Swan Supping*.

'Originally I had looked into exhibiting art works in pubs as an artist and it was a natural thing to write an art space into the business plan. Having worked as a part time picture hanger in a London gallery I had an idea of how to set out the room and had great advice from my old gallery boss, who's a regular at the **Belle Vue**.'



He feels that the pub is well suited to host a gallery as it has a reputation as a place for the arts – it's a live music venue and many of the best local musicians play – and drink – there.

Named 'The Snug Gallery', the exhibition space has been located in the former snug bar, which has the advantage of being somewhat separated from the rest of the pub. Alan describes the welcome opportunity to renovate what had previously been an underused part of the pub. 'The floor was replaced with old boards and fresh, new Roman blinds have been put up in the beautiful, old south-facing bay window. This now fills the room with light and the walls and ceiling have been painted white with a few spot lights fitted to the ceiling to direct light at the artworks.' The bright decor and quiet atmosphere appeals to business people and commuters popping in to use the pub's free wi-fi.

As mentioned in the last *Swan Supping*, the first exhibition in the Snug Gallery was of Alan's own work – 'The Smoking Ban'. This was a series of photographs Alan had worked on while working as a barman at the **Belle Vue** in the weeks leading up to the smoking ban.

Alan added 'this set of images tied in nicely with the pub – most images were taken in the **Belle Vue** and the pictures featured most of the regulars from 2007 (*Swan Supping* also featured in one photo). It also suited the topic, as a white-wall art gallery would be absurd in a smoke-filled pub.'

The aim of the gallery is to exhibit and promote local talent. 'I know full well that it is tough to get your work shown to the public especially if you're short of money. I am always on the lookout for other practising artists in and around Wycombe who would like the chance to show off their art, as most spaces charge for the privilege. Shows will run from around four to eight weeks each.'

The second exhibition started on 23rd November and runs until 28th December. It's called *Tattoo Culture* and features the work of photographer Mark Page, who is one of the UK's most sought after erotic/fetish/alternative photographers.

The black and white photograph of the attractive young lady with the spectacular tattoos on her back, titled 'Wild Thing', that accompanies this article is the original artwork from the exhibition's publicity material. While Mark's work has an adult theme he has assured *Swan Supping* that there is nothing very shocking on display at the **Belle Vue**. The exhibition is open 12-11pm, free entry.

Alan says the **Belle Vue**'s impressive range of artistic and cultural activities also make good use of the Snug Gallery. 'There is a monthly book club where members are able to read poems from the comfort of the armchairs. The knitting club make good use of the bright light. The monthly folk acoustic club from Marlow play foot-tapping rhythms and sing songs of olde.' Future plans may include a monthly film club – featuring foreign and independent cinema classics.

The improved ambience of the room has an unexpected benefit for beer lovers – Alan says the real ale can be appreciated better too! 'The Snug Gallery offers a contemporary place for the younger and ever-growing new cask ale fans. They can see the beer's clarity better in a lighter room – as was evident at the recent beer festival when it was filled with a younger clientele sipping the variety of ales and teaching each other the finer points of beer tasting.' *CAMRA* HQ would surely approve! **Mike Clarke**



The Red Lion

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CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2011
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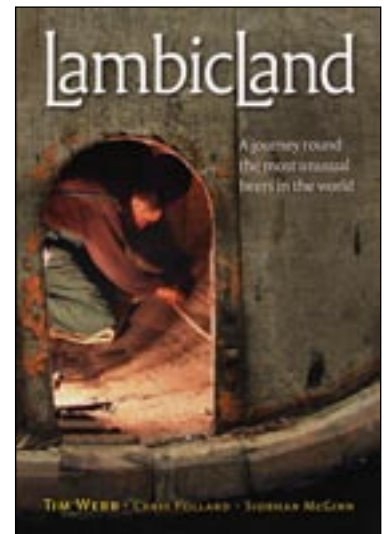
BOOK REVIEWS


Around Amsterdam in 80 Beers by Tim Skelton (Cogan & Mater £9.99)

This is the latest book in the Jules Verne inspired series from specialist publishers Cogan & Mater. Forget its reputation for sex tourism (although this book does make some amusing allusions to this topic), Amsterdam has always been a destination for beer tourists as it has wonderful cafes, and in fact the **Gollem**, its most famous speciality beer cafe has been going for over thirty-five years! Tim Skelton presents a selection of 80 recommended cafes and bars in the city and nearby Haarlem with a different beer featured at each. Don't despair if the featured beer does not appeal, as all the cafes in the book have a selection of bottled and draught beers on sale. Some of them, including the **Gollem**, match the best of Belgian cafes in terms of beer selection. Tim's book give

all the expected information regarding opening times, food and transport access.

The brewing scene of Amsterdam is rather limited, although the famous **IJ** brewery with its famous windmill continues to shine. This otherwise comprehensive book is not a guide to Dutch beers and breweries and in fact many of the beers featured are Belgian, but it has an overriding objective: to avoid the big **H (Heineken)**. Even our old friend **Schlenkerla** from Bamberg makes an appearance – it apparently has a following locally. Tim includes a brief guide to the styles of beer you will encounter, and useful tips on the food featured in local cafes. In all, an excellent guide for all visitors to Amsterdam, with plenty of good photographs.


Lambicland by Tim Webb, Chris Pollard & Siobhan McGinn (Cogan & Mater £12.99)

Lambic beers, produced by spontaneous fermentation and blended to make Gueuze, Kriek and other beers, are highly sought after by those in the know, but have a reputation for being a 'challenging' beer style. This comprehensive and learned book cannot be bettered as a guide to this unique beer and may tempt even doubters to rush for the Eurostar to Brussels. Beautifully designed by Dale Tomlinson who also designed the Amsterdam book, and illustrated with many photographs, there's information on all the current Lambic blenders and brewers, and a guide to the pubs of Payottenland, the district to the south and west of Brussels, where spontaneous fermentation happens.

The success of the first edition in 2004 has led to this second edition which updates the reader with several significant changes to the Lambic brewing scene. A growing interest in the style amongst brewers and drinkers alike is welcome news.

A copy of the Royal Proclamation of 1993 is included - this is the *Reinheitsgebot* of Lambic, although its provisions clearly have not entirely met the expectations of the authors! Highly recommended.

Both books are available from the website www.booksaboutbeer.com

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LOCAL BREWERY NEWS



Vale Brewery

The brand spanking new twenty barrel plant is now fully operational and working exceptionally well. Everyone will have the chance to visit Brill and see the brewery on the 4th of December, as Vale has an open day. From 11.30am to 4pm the brewery is open to all, with free guided tours, free tasters of their beers and pints available at a very reasonable £2 a pint.

We are having a branch social at the Vale open day from 11.30 onwards, to which all branch members and other interested parties are welcome. This social replaces the proposed branch visit to the brewery which was met by an underwhelming response!

On the day several beers will be available. The December special, another of David Renton's unique creations, is *Long Dark Nights*. This is a 4.3% smooth bitter, dark mahogany in colour and with a selection of malts and four hop varieties offering a warming winter ale with subtle spicy notes.



A special 'special' available just on the day is also being produced. Also available will be *Good King Senseless* the 5.2% regular, but very special Christmas beer, *Hadda's Winter Solstice* along with a number of the other favourites.

October saw *Vale Brewery* win two awards. The first was *VPA*, winning Silver at the *SIBA (Society of Independent Brewers)* Midlands beer competition. The judging took place at Nottingham Castle and *VPA* was selected in a blind taste test from all the best bitters available in the large Midlands region. Then the same week *Gravitas* was voted as joint best local beer at *Oxford CAMRA* beer festival. Both *Gravitas* and *VPA* have won awards before and illustrate the appeal of this golden and hoppy style of English bitter. Presentation of this award will take place at the *Vale Brewery* Open day.

A wide range of international bottled beers are available at the brewery shop in Brill but of special interest are the *CAMRA* backed 'RAIBs' (Real Ale in a Bottle).

Currently *Vale* have a wide range from *Frog Island*, *Hop Back*, *Maggie*, *Downton*, *Westerham* along with the *Vale* range. This range is growing all the time, so it is worth checking out the website for additions. There are many examples of beers from many other breweries whose bottles are termed brewery conditioned.

CAMRA have honoured the *Vale Brewery* by including bottled *Gravitas* at 4.8% in its next monthly club selection. This *SIBA* Gold award winning golden beer has a dry malty background with a subtle citrus edge and being bottle conditioned is true to the ethos of *CAMRA*.

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Opening hours:
 Mon to Fri 9.30am to 5pm, Sat 9.30am to 11.30am.

LOCAL BREWERY NEWS



Loddon Brewery

Staff at the **Loddon Brewery**, were celebrating in November after picking up two major awards at the **SIBA (Society of Independent Brewers)** Brewing Business Awards. They won the 'Best E-Business' Category for their original use of social media.

Judges said, 'For innovative development and use of their Facebook page to stand out in an increasingly popular medium of communication. It was a bold decision to use Facebook as the primary news feed, before the brewery website – realising exposure to more 'traffic' would be achieved. An impressively personal weekly blog by the sales manager helped create a traditional feel of community through a very modern medium. Imaginative development of method: competitions, photos, car sticker promotion, important collation and use of customer feedback, resulting in over 600 fans.'

The brewery were also given a Highly Commended award in the 'Best Overall Business Category' putting them amongst the three best breweries in the country. This was due to the high standard of entries across a number of award categories.

Sales Manager, Luke Hearn (pictured above), who submitted the entries to the awards, said, 'We are really, really chuffed to win these awards! We recognised the importance of social media as a way to promote our business and have dedicated a lot of time and effort into our Facebook and Twitter pages. At the beginning of the year, we set ourselves the target of winning the 'E-Business' category at the SIBA Business Awards and are obviously delighted to have done this. However, the Highly Commended in the 'Best Overall Business' category came as a complete shock but was, of course, a lovely surprise.'

The awards took place at the Crown Plaza hotel in London on the 16th November and were part of the **SIBA Pub Retail Conference**.

Rebellion Brewery

The **Rebellion Brewery** will be expanding in the New Year!

They are taking an extra unit at the brewery site and putting in an entirely separate brewing line which will allow two brews to be done simultaneously. The new tanks etc. will be sourced from both China and Holland and test brewing is due to start in February.

Rebellion White which is a classic 5% abv wheat beer, brewed in the style of a Belgian Witbier, won a Silver Award in the 'Bottled Beer Category' at the recent **SIBA (Society of Independent Brewers)** Midland Brewing Awards.

The December beer in the 'Recession & Recovery Series 2010' is the 4.2% crisp and pale **Stocking Filler**.



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OUR EIGHT PUBS OF CHRISTMAS

To get into the festive season here's a seasonal pub-based Christmas carol based on the famous 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' – as the pubs are all in our branch we couldn't quite make it to twelve but eight isn't too bad.



On the first day of Christmas my true love took me for a pint in the (very aptly named) **Partridge**, Aston Clinton.



On the second day of Christmas my true love took me to Thame to the **Two Brewers**.



On the third day of Christmas my true love took me for a meal at the **Three Crowns**, Askett.



On the fourth day of Christmas my true love bought for me a pint at the **Four Horseshoes**, Stokenchurch.

On the fifth day of Christmas – **Five Elms**, Weedon.

On the sixth day of Christmas my



true love took me back to Thame – to the **Six Bells**.



On the seventh day of Christmas my true love bought for me a pint at the **Seven Stars**, Dinton.



On the eighth day of Christmas my true love took me to the branch **Pub of the Year 2010** – the **Eight Bells** in Long Crendon.

Incidentally, a bit of research reveals a few pubs with the number nine in their name – the closest being the Nine Elms, Swindon and there are quite a number of Ten and Twelve Bells across the country. Pub names containing eleven are quite tricky – unless they're bars recycling their street number – a bingo-themed bar in Birmingham called Legs Eleven seems closest to the mark. Any better suggestions gratefully received.

Before anyone writes in, we do know that the **Partridge** in Aston Clinton is under threat, but we couldn't think of a suitable replacement - not even a Pear Tree!

Charlie Mackle

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BEER LAUNCH



The launch of Chiltern Winter's Tail at the King's Head

The third in the series of the *Chiltern Brewery's* limited edition 30th anniversary ales, *Winter's Tail* (4.0% ABV), was launched at their 'brewery tap', the Farmers' Bar of the **King's Head** in Aylesbury on Thursday 25 November 2010.

The first pint was pulled by Giles du Boulay, *Chiltern's CAMRA Brewery Liaison Officer (BLO)*. Giles brought along especially for the purpose a commemorative pint pot made for the brewery by the potter Christine Bull

of Askett, which he had bought in the brewery shop in Terrick some years ago, possibly at the time of the brewery's 20th anniversary.

Although his memory was a little hazy of the time when he was preparing to move to Aylesbury, Giles felt sure the clinching factor must have been that Lesley and Richard Jenkinson had recently founded the brewery at Terrick, rather than the quite incidental tempting job offer he had received to work in the town...

Giles paid tribute to the *Chiltern Brewery's* fine record of excellence over thirty years, fondly remembering their first 'brewery tap', an 'off-licence with attitude', the **Frothy Firkin**, established in December 1983 at 38 Kingsbury. Sadly it was only a short-lived venture, but renowned at the time for the fine and unusual bottled beers, ciders and wines on offer, as well as draught ales and scrumpy available for take-away – a facility we might now take for granted from brewery shops, but not so easily found in those days.

Their always consistently flavoursome *Chiltern Ale* and *Beechwood Bitter* could be had for 53p or 59p a pint respectively as Giles showed from an original **Frothy Firkin** brochure. Happy days indeed!

Giles went on to say that the brewery has gone from strength to strength. We now have not only those original brews still going strong, including the incomparable, gold award-winning *300s Old Ale* and *Bodgers Barley Wine*, but four superb seasonal beers in *Nut Brown Mild*, *Cobblestones*, *Copper Beech* and *Oatmeal Stout*.

To cap it all in celebration of their 30th anniversary we have been treated to three outstanding limited edition special ales: *Pearl*, *Golden Ale* and now *Winter's Tail* – one for each decade.

Giles had noted from the *Chiltern Brewery* website that *Winter's Tail* was promised to be an ale 'bristling with character' – surely an apt description of all their beers and of the brewery itself.

Many thanks to Bruce Seymour for the photograph.

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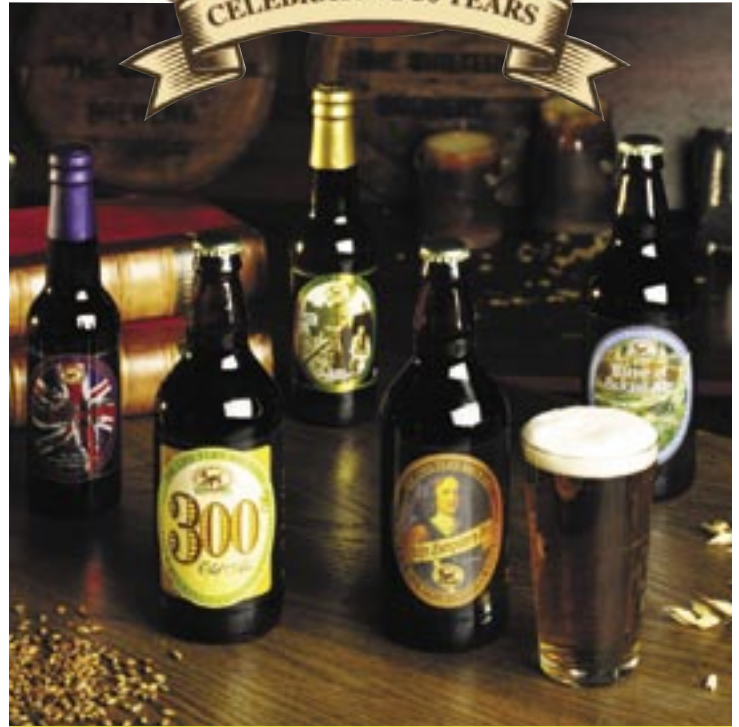
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Evening News

Come in from the cold and grab some winter warming

BLEDLOW RIDGE IS REBOOTED!

The residents of Bledlow Ridge are celebrating after joining together to buy their village pub and save it from being developed. The **Boot** will be returned to its former status as a pub after it became an Italian Restaurant called **Darusso** in 2003.

A planning application was put forward to Wycombe District Council a year ago to become a four bedroom house but was thrown out by councillors in April after a passionate fight from villagers.

Now after months of planning and fundraising the villagers have bought the pub and it is currently being refurbished.

Marcus Angell, Trevor Jones, Nigel Cox and Ben Lawrence got together and created 'The New Boot Ltd' to make a business plan to buy the premises and get it up and running again.

Mr Lawrence, 40, from Bledlow Ridge, said: 'I think it is a really important social part of the village. The village hasn't got a great deal left now. It is a project to work on with people and it brings the community back together.

'It's somewhere the associations can meet up and have a drink.'

The four men created prospectuses and sent them out to everyone in Bledlow Ridge, followed by a launch meeting in June where they received 'tremendous support.'

There are 150 shareholders who each gave a minimum of £500, with some giving up to £10,000. They managed to raise £278,000, with an anonymous benefactor contributing £280,000, which they will pay interest on.

The father of two said: 'That was the most amazing day when we discovered that.'

John Reeves did a lot of work securing the sale of the pub which cost £495,000.

Mr Lawrence, who is a software sales director, said: 'We held an extraordinary general meeting just before we bought the pub and whether to go ahead with the plan.



'About 140 people came into the village hall and 99 per cent voted yes.'

A tenancy agreement is currently being put together with Simon Crawshaw from the **Three Horseshoes** at Radnage. He had cooked at the **Connaught**, **Chez Nico**, **Garroche**, and the **Sloane Club** before going to Radnage in 2005. He will be in charge of the day to day running of the pub, but there are fifteen principles which they want him to use, including to keep the name and for it to be a pub that serves food rather than a restaurant. It will sell a range of food.

He added: 'We have had people in the village say they think we are mad. I think we are absolutely determined to make it work. There is great support in the village. It is just a great community spirit and has brought all age groups in the village together.'

The **Boot** is the last remaining public house in the village of Bledlow Ridge. This is sad when you consider that during the early part of the 20th century there were as many as five pubs in the village.

The **Boot** dates back to the mid 1800's, when it replaced an original pub which was set back further from the road. Since at least the mid part of 19th century the **Boot** was tied to a brewery. For a long time this was **Simmonds** of Reading, which later became part of **Courage** through various mergers and who eventually sold it to **Morlands** of Oxford around the late 1980's. As **Morlands** slid ignominiously into receivership in 1998, support for its landlords dwindled and its outlying properties were sold off.

The 'new' building had remained largely unaltered and essentially only a straight forward drinking house without lodgings until it was bought around 2000, when a lot of work was done including modernising the toilets and the kitchen. Despite three managers, the last of whom concentrated on bringing in village custom by offering good food and hospitality, it was decided to sell the pub and **Darusso** restaurant was created in 2004.

Public bar trade was discouraged in an attempt to make the restaurant an up-market eatery. This didn't work out and hence the attempt to convert it to housing before the villagers stepped in to save the **Boot**.

The picture shows a local shareholder putting back the **Boot**'s pub sign on Sunday 24th October after the purchase was completed at 4pm Friday 22nd October. Now all those who were involved in saving the pub are looking forward to a pint at the bar when it opens in mid December.

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THE GRAVEDIGGERS - PART EIGHT

It was seven o'clock on a Friday and the Gravediggers' was quiet. James leaned against the bar whilst Mazz polished the glasses with a tea-towel for the third time that night. Even Old Pete had left his residence at the bar, wheezing outside for a fag.

'You know, what they're saying about all these mobile phones, internet and stuff seems to be coming true,' said James.

'You mean everyone's at home playing games on their iPhones instead of coming out down the pub?' she said.

'Some of these people have hundreds of friends on Facebook – they're never going to keep up with that many down the pub,' said James. 'Even though it's all virtual.'

'Virtual has its advantages,' said Mazz. 'Look at the regulars here – red-nosed, breath like a brewery sewer, teeth stained with nicotine and reeking of fags and body odour.'

'And that's just the women,' agreed James. 'I read an article in the paper about how young people had started getting into real ale in a big way – if we could just connect with that market in the sort of way that's relevant to them.'

A blast of the David Bowie's 'Heroes' as massacred by this year's X-Factor contestants echoed around the empty pub's walls. Mazz picked up her phone and fiddled with the buttons, staring at the screen.

'Sorry, text from my mum about Katie. What were you saying?' Mazz asked.

Suddenly the penny dropped in James's mind. It was so obvious.

'Mazz, you know how there are some pubs where they actually ban mobile phones?'

'Me and my mates wouldn't be seen dead in that sort of uncool place,' she said.

'Exactly,' said James. 'Why don't we make the Gravediggers' the first mobile-phone only pub?'

The next Saturday night Mazz stood behind a prominent sign over the bar of the Gravediggers that read 'TXT n TWEET n FB ONLY TN8 – WKD INIT x.'

There was no conversation but the pub drummed with the sound of tapping keyboards. Throughout both bars people sat in silence with laptops open, luminous screens reflecting off their blank faces. But they were all drinking away at a furious pace.

James and Mazz were rushed off their feet – with orders popping up via e-mail, Twitter and Facebook on the computer on the bar.

'I never realised how much drinking time was wasted when people opened their mouths to talk in pubs. It's like how they drink faster when they're watching Sky Sports but this goes on longer than ninety minutes,' he said. 'This is the way of the future. We'll make a mint.'

Mazz employed her professional mime artist skills by cupping her hand against her ear then pointed at her mobile phone. 'Text me,' she mouthed.

A loving, tactile couple walked together through the door and then headed for opposite ends of the pub from where they texted each other on their mobile phones. James delivered a half-bottle of champagne to both.

'This is the best anniversary night I've had in years. We all know women



are so better at multi-tasking than men so this way I can exchange amorous messages with Jeremy while browsing the designer fashion online. What a super idea,' the woman cooed.

The bar was thronged with young professionals, wordlessly exhibiting the latest technology. The occasional mumble of words like app, Android and Symbian could be heard over the karaoke cacophony of polyphonic ringtones.

It was so busy that James didn't notice the phalanx of bearded misfits until they squeezed their colossal beer bellies hard against the

crowded bar counter.

'Three pints of your best *Old Ratarsed* please,' said the grizzled ringleader.

Mazz pointed at the sign silently. The ringleader grabbed an iPad from a suited yuppie on his left and cracked it over the man's head.

'Hey. What's going on?' yelled James.

'Haven't you heard sonny,' the man said as pandemonium erupted in the bar. The air was thick with mobile devices being flung as missiles. 'We're the Campaign for Real Acquaintanceship – Militant Wing – and this is direct action.'

Charlie Mackle

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Swan Supping

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Circulation **6000** copies.

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Copy deadline for next issue, due out 1st February, is 14th January 2010.

Subscriptions :- *Swan Supping* is distributed to over 250 pubs 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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Opinions expressed in *Swan Supping* are not necessarily those of the editor, or the *Campaign for Real Ale*.

Acceptance of an advertisement in *Swan Supping* by a pub or its availability there does not guarantee CAMRA approval.

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Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

December

Wednesday 1st WYCOMBE SOCIAL,
6.30pm Belle Vue, 7.30pm Bootleggers, 8.15pm Hobgoblin, 9pm Falcon, 9.45pm William Robert Loosley

Saturday 4th VALE OPEN DAY SOCIAL
11.30am Vale Brewery, Brill

Friday 10th AYLESBURY CHRISTMAS CRAWL
Start 7.30pm Hop Pole

Saturday 11th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL
12 noon Haddenham Winterfest, Banks Park, Haddenham

Saturday 18th BIRMINGHAM CRAWL (Travel by train, see website)

Friday 24th CHRISTMAS EVE SOCIAL
1pm King's Head, Aylesbury

Monday 27th CROYDON TRAMLINK CRAWL (date tbc- see website)

Wednesday 29th WENDOVER SOCIAL
8.30pm White Swan, 9.15pm Pack Horse

January

Thursday 6th GREAT MISSENDEN RAILALE EPIPHANY
(see website for details)

Monday 10th BRANCH MEETING
8.30pm Wheel, Naphill

Wednesday 19th AYLESBURY GYRATORY SOCIAL
8.30pm Millwrights, 9.15pm Aristocrat, 10pm Broad Leys

Wednesday 26th THAME SOCIAL
8.30pm Falcon, 9.30pm Cross Keys

February

Monday 21st BRANCH AGM. 8pm Hop Pole, Aylesbury (to be confirmed).

Further details can be found on our website:- www.swansupping.org.uk
CATCH UP DURING BRANCH SOCIALS:- PHONE 0792 215 8971

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Tel No (s)

Partner's Details (if joint membership)

Title Surname

Forename(s)

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

Please state which CAMRA newsletter you found this

form in? Direct Debit Non DD

Single Membership (UK & EU) £20 £22

Joint Membership (Partner at the same address) £25 £27

For Young Member and concessionary rates please visit www.camra.org.uk or call 01727 867201.

I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

I enclose a cheque for 0709

Signed Date

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

Please fill in the form and send to:
Campaign for Real Ale Ltd.
230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To the Manager Bank or Building Society

Address

Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder

Bank or Building Society Account Number Branch Sort Code

Reference Number

Originators Identification Number 9 2 6 1 2 9

FOR CAMRA OFFICIAL USE ONLY This is not part of the instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Membership Number

Name Postcode

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay CAMRA Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with CAMRA and it will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s) Date

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of accounts.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

This Guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer.

This Guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme.

The efficiency and security of the Scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society.

If the amount to be paid or the payment dates change CAMRA will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed.

If an error is made by CAMRA or your Bank or Building Society, you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid.

You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us.

CROSS KEYS

HOME OF



Serving an ever-changing choice of 6 cask ales, from a wide selection of independent micro breweries including our own

(Over 1,000 firkins sold in the last 12 months)

Cross Keys - 1 Park St. - Thame
01844 218202

KING WILLIAM IV

Pub & Restaurant

Set in the heart of the Chilterns Hills in the picturesque village of Speen, The King William has been restored to a traditional village pub where everyone is welcome.

Coming events at the pub are:

December:

- 2nd - Quiz night main meal £8 bookings only, starts-7:15
- 16th - Christmas Quiz Tickets Only
- 22nd - Martin Hart Jazz Night bookings only for this event (please note jazz has changed from the 21st)
- 24th - Good old village Christmas Eve, Family menu
- 25th - Christmas Lunch Bookings only see website for more detail (bar open 12pm-2pm)
- 26th - Boxing Day Drinks bar open 12pm - 3-pm (sorry no food)
- 30th - Quiz Night by Geoff & Claire Smith (TBC)
- 31st - New Year Party



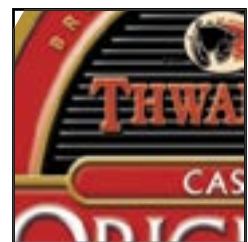
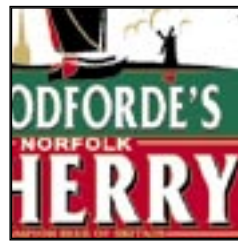
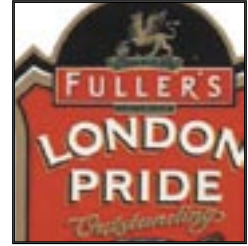
- Range of fine local cask ales
- Ample car parking
- Wide selection of gluten & wheat free dishes on our menu
- Great for countryside walks & cycling routes
- Family & dog friendly children's play area
- Beechdean Ice cream & Milk Shake Parlour
- Large party dining
- Music night & suppers
- Friendly service and an informal atmosphere.

Please visit our web site for forthcoming events www.thekingwilliamivspeen.co.uk

Tel:01494 488329 Hampden Road, Speen, Bucks HP27 0RU



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