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Winning*



FREE

Swan Supping



Issue 80

Oct/Nov 2010



COVER STORY
Get ready for the
Aylesbury Beer
Festival
October 29th/30th
See page 4



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Newsletter of the Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch of CAMRA

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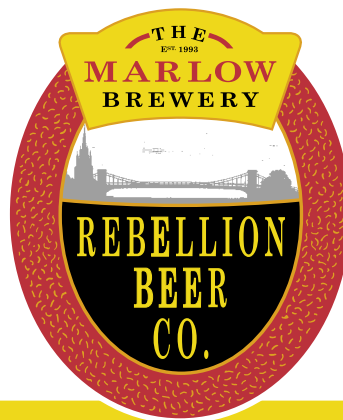
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NEWS FROM THE EDITOR



Like a lot of people, I can't believe that October is already here - where does the time go to!

This is always a special time for the branch as it means that we will be having to prepare for our annual beer festival that we hold to raise money for the Aylesbury Hospice. Run in conjunction with the 'Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity' it is held at the community centre in Stoke Mandeville over the last weekend of October.

This will be the 17th festival (our cover picture by Alex Wright shows a scene from last year's festival) and we hope that as many of you as possible can come along and 'Drink for Charity' as you help us get through the thirty real ales as well as a great selection of cider and perry. We are still looking for local CAMRA members who are willing to help with all aspects of setting up and serving etc. Free entry will be available to volunteers and you are guaranteed to enjoy yourself.

This time of year also sees the release of the latest *Good Beer Guide*. The standard of pubs in our branch area has improved steadily over the last few years and the choice of pubs to go into the guide gets even more difficult. We are limited to a set number of pubs that we can put in our section of the guide and there will be a lot of pubs who will be asking why they didn't get selected or why they have been dropped.

All the pubs are selected by the branch members and the final selection meeting can get quite heated, so if you don't agree with our choices, why not get involved with the branch and put forward your own suggestions. All pubs are judged on their beer and how well they have scored during the past year on the CAMRA beer scoring system, forms for which can be found on the branch website (www.swansupping.org.uk).

Real ale is currently enjoying a revival as the 'Cask Report' (which can be found on www.caskreport.co.uk) revealed recently. Younger drinkers and women are embracing a drink which may be shedding its traditional 'flat cap' image.

Despite declining total beer sales and pub closures, research shows that cask ale has outperformed the rest of the beer market for the third year running, increasing its share of beer sold in pubs and clubs and recruiting 100,000 new drinkers.

According to the report, the real ale market grew by 5% in 2009 to £1.4bn, against a 2% decline in the total UK beer market, which remains dominated by carbonated beers such as lager.

Food appears key to this renaissance, with sales of real or cask ales booming in pubs where sophisticated consumers are choosing ale in preference to wine with their meal.

Real ale now accounts for 15.2% of total beer volumes in pubs - about one in every six pints sold. More than 8.6 million people now drink cask beer and the number of younger drinkers aged 18-24 grew by 17%.

Lets hope this trend continues!

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

David Roe

Swan Supping Editor and Chairman of the AVW branch of CAMRA



NATIONAL CAMRA NEWS

CAMRA calls for Government rethink in Licensing Review response

In September, CAMRA issued a response to the Home Office's review on 'Rebalancing the Licensing Act', calling for a targeted, nuanced approach to tackling alcohol-related harm, which supports well-run community pubs and not-for-profit members' clubs.

After just a six week consultation process, the new Coalition Government is proposing reforms which are every bit as radical as the 2003 Licensing Act.

The Consultation contains a number of measures which would be beneficial to community pubs, such as allowing greater community involvement in licensing decisions, banning the sale of alcohol at below cost price and repealing the failed Alcohol Disorder Zones.

However, the review also considers measures which could cause significant harm to pubs, not-for-profit members' clubs and pub customers. Among the potentially damaging measures are:

- Allowing local authorities to determine a uniform closing time for licensed premises throughout the local authority area, which could potentially see a return to 11pm or even 10pm closing times.
- Introducing a late night levy on licensed premises.
- Further increasing licence fees so they are

based on full cost recovery, putting more pressure on pubs.

- Restricting the ability of magistrates' courts to hear appeals on licensing decisions, leaving appeals on bad licensing decisions in the hands of licensing authorities which will have an incentive to justify their original decisions.

CAMRA has highlighted the dangers and risks of unintended consequences in this approach. We have called for the Government to ensure their measures reflect the role of cheap alcohol in the off-trade, while focussing not just on punishing premises where irresponsible drinking takes place, but on encouraging and rewarding well-run pubs.

We expect the outcomes of this review to be in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill due to be debated in Parliament later this year.

Great British Beer Festival Round Up

It has been another record-breaking year for the *Great British Beer Festival* which was held in August at Earls Court. There was almost a 5% increase in attendance figures from last year's festival, which makes this year's festival the biggest ever.

The festival highlights were:

- 66,922 through the door - up from 64,000 last year, which is an increase of almost 5%.
- 6,700 trade visitors attended the Trade Session

on the Tuesday afternoon.

- Over 1,000 new members joined CAMRA.
- Over 200,000 pints were sold at the Festival at a rate of over 75 pints poured per minute.
- 1881 gallons of cider, and 855 gallons of perry were sold throughout the week.
- Over 1,000 volunteers pitched in to help out at the Festival, making it a massive team effort.
- *Champion Beer of Britain* went to *Castle Rock's Harvest Pale* (Nottingham).
- The *Champion Bottled Beer of Britain* was *St Austell's Admiral Ale* which as a result will feature in Travelodge bars and cafes as a result of their sponsorship of this competition.
- *Smuttynose Brewery's Big A IPA* wiped the competition clean in the Michael Jackson Award (American cask beer competition), coming out as the winner.
- CAMRA staged the longest and fastest beer trail from Land's End to John O'Groats. The trail was hosted by Official London Ale Taster and over 800 people tuned in.
- CAMRA and the *Beer Academy* combined forces at the start of the week to convey the message that drinking beer can be part of a healthy lifestyle.
- Around 500 visitors attended tutored tastings plus a further 75 attended Melissa Cole's Girls' Guide to Beer tours.

DRINKING FOR CHARITY



Aylesbury Vale Beer Festival

Halloween will again be celebrated at the **Aylesbury Vale Beer Festival** which is run in conjunction with the **Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity** who raise money for the Aylesbury Hospice.

The 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 will be held at the Eskdale Road Community Centre, Stoke Mandeville, over the weekend of Friday 29th and Saturday 30th of October. There will be around 30 real ales plus traditional ciders and perries. The festival will be open from 6:00pm - 11:00pm on Friday and 11:00am - 11:00pm on Saturday. Hot and cold food will be available both days.

Following the success of introducing live music last year, the group Dragon Drop will appear again on the Saturday evening

This is our 17th festival that we have raised money for the Hospice and the beer tends to taste better when you know that the money you have paid is going to a worthwhile cause.

All profits will go to the charity and if you wish to sponsor a barrel, please contact the editor (details on page 22) or Andrea Maggs on 01296 429975.

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

Haddenham Winterfest

Haddenham Winterfest will take place on Saturday 11th December from 12 noon to 5.00 p.m. at Banks Park, Haddenham HP17 8EE. It will occupy most of the Village Hall complex, the Scout and Guide Centre, and in marquees on parts of the Banks Park play area.

On offer will be 25 real ales plus real lagers and real ciders, and a selection of bottled beers. The wine bar will feature mulled wine, and a variety of seasonal foods will be available. Entertainment will include the Ian English Jazz Band, Christmas Carols and much more.

Visitors will be able to enjoy the entertainment and at the same time catch up on Christmas shopping – there will be some twelve stalls offering Christmas gifts and decorations, festive food and drink etc. For more details visit the festival website at www.haddenham-beer-festival.co.uk





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Jazz - First Sunday Night in the Month

ONE FAMILY, ONE PUB, 100 YEARS!

On September 10th 1910, Frederick Beauchamp took over the **Swan** in the village of West Wycombe. He had previously owned the **Wagon and Horses** in Chertsey, then the **Three Pigeons** in Long Ditton. He had left the latter pub because he had lost the income from the attached stables when the new A3 bypassed the village and he could no longer stable the horses for the horse-buses of the time.

The **Swan** had previously been run from 1860 to 1900 by a member of the Gerrard family from West Wycombe, but the start of the new century had seen six or seven landlords try to make a go of the pub, so the thought of a long dynasty at the **Swan** would have seemed totally unrealistic.

However, Frederick Beauchamp's granddaughter, Christine Barry, celebrated one hundred years of the family running the pub on September 10th 2010.

Frederick Beauchamp ran the pub until November 1940 when he passed away. His daughter, Doris had become a Barry by marriage and her husband took over the licence.

Doris was the only one of the family of seven who wanted to go into the trade as most of the rest of the family took up the local trade of furniture making. However, as this was wartime, Doris



had to run the pub with the help of her mother while her husband was away serving his country. Doris took over the licence in 1960 and she ran the pub for the next thirty-six years, alongside her daughter, Christine, for the latter years.

When Doris died in 1996 she was probably the oldest licensee in the country and is remembered fondly by the drinkers who visited the pub.

The hundred years were celebrated with a party for over a hundred people consisting of family, friends and customers. They were blessed with good weather so they could enjoy the drinks and food outside, accompanied by guitar music.

The **Swan** features in the **CAMRA National Inventory** which lists pub interiors of outstanding historic interest (Britain's true heritage pubs). It is a Grade II listed building which was originally built in the 16th century and it has always been a public house.

It was refitted and extended in 1932 in a simple style and has excellently preserved saloon and public bars. The saloon bar has a selection of comfy chairs which gives it that homely feel that saloon bars offered in the past.

This was before such bars were 'modernised', or, even worse, knocked though into the other separate areas in the pub to form one single bar, thereby destroying the different ambiances that were previously available.

Beer is still served by gravity, straight from the cask, and the current ones on offer are **Brakspear Bitter** and from nearby Marlow, **Rebellion IPA** and **Smuggler**. A roast lunch is available weekday lunchtimes, but booking is essential.

The **Swan** is located at the western end of this National Trust village, close to the West Wycombe Park. The park is open to the public, as are the church, mausoleum and 'Hellfire' caves on the hill opposite.

David Roe

Watergate Bay, Cornwall

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THE CASK BEER

LOCAL NEWS



AYLESBURY

The **Broad Leys** launched Aylesbury Duck on to the menu in May 2008, so it was easy to decide to take the latest *Vale* seasonal beer, which is called (you guessed it!) *Aylesbury Duck*.

Dayla, the local independent drinks supplier, has moved to Aston Clinton after having been on their Aylesbury site since 1851. Further details are given in the article on page 10,

The **Green Man** is in the middle of a refurbishment as it is being painted and new furniture is being added. Besides offering *Greene King IPA* and *Shepherd Neame Spitfire*, there is live music three nights a week. The new chef (ex. Kings Head) will be preparing a pre-theatre menu to coincide with the opening of the Aylesbury Waterside Theatre as well as themed children's parties being offered in the upstairs bar (out of earshot of the drinkers in the main bar) in the late afternoon between 4pm and 7pm.

The **Hobgoblin** is now under the management of Paul Wilkinson who has a wealth of experience of running pubs in the *Hobgoblin* chain. The beers on offer are still *Marstons Pedigree* and *Wychwood Hobgoblin*.

The **Hop Pole** has its autumn beer festival from Thursday 14th to Sunday 17th of October. They plan to have thirty real ales on offer alongside eight ciders and perries. A charity quiz will be run on the Thursday night to start the festival. The range of world beers has increased with the Belgian beers proving especially popular as they can be served in the appropriate glasses. Sky TV has also made a return to the pub along with ESPN for those who like their football as well as their ale!

Neil Pickles, **Chiltern Brewery's** manager of the **Kings Head**, left at the end of September. The pub will be run temporarily by Brewery partner George Jenkinson. Our thanks and good wishes go to Neil.

The **Millwrights** has been decorated inside and out and is now offering both lunchtime and evening food. Three beers are on offer, *Greene King IPA*, *Old Speckled Hen* and a guest beer which was *Bonkers Conkers* when visited.

The **Rockwood** has been refurbished and now has a new floor and new furniture. The outside has been repainted and the garden also has new furniture plus new lighting and heating. While checking those out, there is a choice of two rotating guest beers (*Batemans XB* and *St. Austell Tribute* when last visited) to enjoy.

DOWNLEY

Chris Vickers has called it a day at the **Downley Donkey** and the pub is currently closed and its future is uncertain.

FLACKWELL HEATH

The **Green Man** (pictured top right) has closed and rumour has it that the pub is being bought by a property developer. It could go the same way as the *Magpie* that also closed a few years ago and it's now starter homes.

The pubs in Flackwell still going are :-

The **Green Dragon** still goes from strength to strength. New landlords Gordon and Marian are doing various beers from the *Enterprise* range. *Everards Tiger*, *Mutiny* and *Pedigree* are regulars, with often one or more others. They've really changed the pub for the better over the past few years and are holding a Mini Winter Beer Festival on Saturday Nov 6th. This would be a first for this area to our knowledge.

The **Stag** which offers various *Rebellion* beers and good food.

The **Three Horseshoes** offers various *Rebellion* beers but also concentrates on the food side under the new landlord.

The **Cherry Trees** and the **Crooked Billet** are both still going but we've no up-to-date information on them.

FLAUNDEN

The Friends of Flaunden Church have organised a beer festival to mark 25 years of Flaunden Parish Council. The venue is the village hall (HP3 0PW) from noon until late on Saturday 9th of October with eight beers from *Tring* and *Rebellion* breweries,

HADDENHAM

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

At the **Green Dragon** fresh salad and veg from the resurrected kitchen garden can be washed down by *Sharp's Doom Bar* or *Rebellion Smuggler* along with a guest, currently the ever popular *Woodforde's Wherry*.

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

The **Red Lion's** 'Free-of-Tie Lease' is for sale. Their permanent fixtures have changed, and are now *Black Sheep Bitter* and *Sharp's Doom Bar*. The current guest is *Sharp's Cornish Coaster*.

The **Rising Sun** has had its makeover and offers free WiFi and food. Straight from the barrel is now strictly the order of the day here, with two *Vale* beers available and an ever-changing guest, recently *Brains SA*. A mini beer festival, a warm up for the WinterFest, is planned for 6th November.

The **Rose & Thistle's** friendly tenants, Geoff & Dawn are retiring as from 1st November. We wish them a long and happy retirement. Currently serving two beers, *Hardys and Hansons Olde Trip* and *Greene King IPA*. Daily menu for Senior Citizens.

HARDWICK

The **Jug** is rumoured to have been sold as a house with building plot and locals are opposing this. Can anyone give us more details?

HIGH WYCOMBE

We have heard that Harry (Roger) Lacey who for many years ran the **Bell**, Frogmore, passed away in August. Our condolences go to his family and friends.

The **Belle Vue** opened an art gallery in the pub on 15th September with a



series of Alan Hedgecock's photographs entitled 'The Smoking Ban' which were shot while he was running the pub in 2007 just before the ban came into pubs... One of the images has a headline from *Swan Supping 60* featuring an article on the Smoking Ban! The gallery is open for local artists to exhibit work as a solo exhibition for up to eight weeks at a time. The pub is still undergoing refurbishment since Alan took full control last December, but plans are for a real ale bar in the garden to expand the range on offer and dispense direct from the cask. This will first come into effect for the festival in October and will have subsequent use as and when events require the additional space. Plans are also to have annual Summer's End and Winter's End beer festivals (end of April and October), but this depends on the success of the first one. They also have extended their range of community activity to include a monthly book club and knitting circle and soon a film club.

The **Bootlegger** is extending into the area that was previously the kitchen to open a *Rebellion* Tap Room. This will feature twelve of the brewery's beers on stillage with gravity dispense. 10% discount will be available on pints of cask ale for card-carrying members of the *Rebellion Beer Club* and *CAMRA*, seven days a week, from noon until 6pm.

The **Gordon Arms** down the road from the **Belle Vue** is closed for refurbishment.

High Wycombe Rugby Club have invited all *Swan Supping* readers to their 'Rivals' themed beer festival on the Kingsmead. They play their closest rivals, Marlow RFC, on Saturday 20 November. This year's home derby match comes with a difference, where we have selected beers with a rivalry theme or quip about our rivalry based on our tongue in cheek rivalry in time honoured fashion and respect of each other, on and off the pitch. They have live music, fine food and offer a great Craic on the Kingsmead and the match kicks off at about 2.30pm. We have organised a social at the festival from 12 noon, so come and join in the fun.

Catherine has left the **Rose & Crown** and the new people in charge are Cedric and Elaine Booles who will be familiar to the regulars at the old **Carpenters Arms** in Marlow. They intend to run the **Rose & Crown** as a 'traditional pub

with a modern twist' with pub games and good beer. The beers on offer are currently *Fullers London Pride* and *Courage Best* and pub grub and Sunday roasts will be available.

Demolition work has finally started on the **Halfway House** in Wycombe Marsh. It's finally the end for this fine and historic building. It seems that the efforts of the Wycombe Society were in vain.

LANE END

The **Old Sun** is shut and boarded up and it seems that the land has been bought for housing. Lane End used to have five pubs and as the **Clayton Arms (Grouse and Ale)** and the **Osbourne Arms** both concentrate on food, it makes one wonder where all the drinkers have gone.

LITTLEWORTH COMMON

The **Jolly Woodman** is holding a Cider and Cheese Festival on the 9th and 10th of October.

MARLOW

The **Duke of Cambridge** has a Thai Evening on Saturday 9th October. Tickets are £15 per person and a deposit of £5 will secure a place for a meal at this popular pub. The rare and unusual beers making an appearance of late have included offerings from breweries as diverse as *Windsor & Eton*, *Golden Valley* and *Red Squirrel*.

We have heard that Ernest (Ernie) Gordon who for many years ran the **Hand and Flowers** passed away in August. Our condolences go to his family and friends.

The **Hare and Hounds** on Henley Road is currently closed as we go to press, but hopefully we'll have some positive news for the next edition of *Swan Supping*. The previous signs for the '**Cheerful Soul**' have been removed and the **Hare and Hounds** signs have been renewed.

The **Ship** in West Street will be holding an Oktoberfest beer festival from Thursday 28th to Sunday 31st October with beers mostly from local breweries. If you missed their previous beer festival held in September here's another chance to sample a few goodies unusual to the Marlow scene.

QUAINTON

A Harvest Auction will take place at the **George & Dragon** on Friday 15th

LOCAL NEWS

October at 7.30pm. All monies raised will go to local groups within the village.

STEWKLEY

The **Carpenters Arms** is holding its popular annual Bonfire Night party on Saturday 6th November. Hot dogs and burgers from 6pm, bonfire at 7pm, display starts 7.30pm. Outside bar. £4 pp. Proceeds to local schools.

Live music at the **Swan** continues with **Rondeau** (covers duo) on Saturday 23rd of October and on Thursday 11th of November **Palmerston** return again with their welcome mix of rock and blues covers and their own material – not to be missed. A Halloween party will be held on Saturday October 30th.

THAME

Owain has now left the **James Figg** and has been replaced by Ken Davidson and Pete Nicholas. Ken has previously been at the **Market Porter** in Borough Market, London, a well-known real ale watering hole. Regular beers are **Vale Best** (3.7), **Purity Mad Goose** (4.2), **Charles Wells Bombardier** (4.3) and a changing 4th pump (**Hooky Dark** at £3.2 was on when visited). One unusual thing at this pub, peanuts still in their shells available to nibble whilst drinking!

The **Birdcage** had **Oxford Gold** and **Charles Wells Bombardier** on at the last visit. Other beers rotating are from **Vale** and **Rebellion** breweries. This is the place to visit if you want to try meats such as crocodile, impala, camel,

kangaroo and ostrich. Oh, and also cow.

At the **Cross Keys**, the rampant hop has claimed its first victim – a starling. Beers still keep changing regularly and quite often there is a beer from the pub's brewery available. As expected, when they are put on, they don't last that long. November 13th and 14th there is a beer festival (to coincide with the first anniversary of the opening of the pub's brewery) with up to 24 beers available at some time during the two days. Twelve beers will be available in the upstairs function room and the other beers on the handpumps within the pub. Admission is free and there is no charge for the glass – unlike some places. At the end of October, and in early November, a 'Calendar Girls' style calendar will be on sale at the pub and various outlets in Thame. The models are all staff and regulars at the pub and the calendars will go on sale at £5 each with all proceeds going towards a local charity, the Thame and District Day Centre. The **Cross Keys** has had an amazing turnaround from what the pub was 18 months ago. It goes to show what can be done with an under-performing pub when the right product (kept well) and the right people are put in.

The **Falcon** continues to provide a range of **Hook Norton** beers in excellent condition. The current beers being **Hooky Bitter** (3.6), **Old Hooky** (4.6) and **Hook Norton Copper Ale** (4.8). The guest beer is **Everards Beacon** (3.8) which will be changing to **Everards Equinox** at some

time in the future. They are holding a fancy dress/halloween/karaoke night on 30th October and will be holding a curry night one Saturday night in November. Ring pub for details.

The **Old Nags Head** is a **Greene King** pub selling **Greene King IPA** whilst the **Swan Hotel** on the last visit was selling **London Pride** and **Spitfire**.

Brakspears Bitter and currently **Morlands Varsity** can be found in the **Rising Sun**, whilst **Vale Best** can be drunk in the **Spread Eagle**.

The **Six Bells** has **Fullers London Pride**, **Discovery** and **Gales HSB**, whilst the **Thatch** has one beer from **Vale Brewery** and one other changing guest beer, currently **Old Hooky**.

The **Two Brewers** is now being run by Peter and Chris who were formerly at the **John Kennedy** in Aylesbury. They are showing Sky sports and are expecting to hold events such as karaoke, race nights etc on the last Saturday in the month. 'Pub grub' is now being sold Monday to Saturday 12 – 3 and 6 – 8. It is a **Greene King** pub selling **IPA** and a changing guest beer from the **Greene King** stable.

Wenmans (previously known as the **Star & Garter**) remains closed since abruptly closing its doors during August. There is an 'A' board outside the pub saying 'Opening very soon' but no date as to when.

So, there is a good variety of beers to be had in Thame and for the Aylesbury/

Oxford drinkers the Arriva 280 provides a good service all week with the last bus to Oxford at 10.13 and the last bus to Aylesbury at 11.41. For Wycombe drinkers, the last bus back to Wycombe is 6.40 Monday to Saturday, although you can get back to Wycombe via Haddenham & Thame Parkway on the Chiltern line much later.

WHITCHURCH

As winter nears the **White Swan** is ready with real fires from now. There will be a Tapas menu every Wednesday from 29th September and a French menu on 22nd and 23rd October. Also, once monthly, Thursday night is Fish night. The Christmas menu is now ready for bookings.

WING

In addition to the **Wells/Youngs** range guest ales from **Slaters** and **Tring** breweries are becoming a more regular feature at the **Queens Head**, which is now open all day everyday.

WOOBURN COMMON

The **Royal Standard** will be hosting its 4th Beer Festival over the weekend 29th – 31st October 2010. Highlights include **GBBF** overall winner **Castle Rock Harvest Pale Ale**, **St Austell Proper Job**, **Downton Chocolate Orange Stout**, **Dark Star** specials and a surprise beer from the **Rebellion Brewery**. In total, well over fifty beers and genuine ciders from local and national brewers will be featured.

Constantine & Louise Lucas welcome you to

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29th September Pie & mash night

13th October Quiz night from 8pm in aid of MPS Society

Christmas menus now available

THE CROWN, GRANBOROUGH



At nine miles north of Aylesbury the **Crown** at the village of Granborough is one of the most northern outposts of our **CAMRA** branch as one mile further on, the small market town of Winslow lies in North Bucks.

Granborough was part of an endowment for St Albans Abbey given by King Offa of Mercia in the year 792. Farming was the main occupation right up to the industrial revolution. Then as mechanisation reduced the agricultural workforce so the population of Granborough gradually declined throughout the nineteenth century. The coming of the railway helped to get produce to markets but did not reverse the trend. Granborough Road Station opened one mile outside the village toward Botolph Claydon, on the line built in 1868 between Quainton and Verney Junction. Passenger services ceased in 1936 and after a brief respite in WW2, goods also in 1947.

Perhaps the fall in population was the reason for the early demise of the other two pubs of Granborough. The **Red Lion** was a pub from the seventeenth century until becoming a private house circa 1900. The **Sovereign Inn** and its

brewery were adjacent to the **Crown** and were demolished in the 1930s.

Fortunately the **Crown** remains, and after a fairly unsettled recent history, now seems to be going from strength to strength.

Situated centrally in the village on the main Winslow to North Marston road, on the corner with Hogshaw Road, the pub is thought to have originated in the seventeenth century and was run by one family, the Stonells, from the 1870s until 1967. They also ran a building business from here. Since then it has been an **ABC** pub, then a privately owned pub before becoming a **Marstons** tenancy as at present.

The building has been much altered and added to over the years as can be seen by referring to the two aerial views on display inside. One of the more recent additions is the rather excellent extension for the restaurant, with windows to three sides giving plenty of light and a feeling of space. A sturdy oak frame in the style of a barn conversion together with a wood burning stove in a brick built inglenook style fireplace at the far end add to the comfort and ambience. Other more

intimate dining areas have been made of smaller rooms in the older part of the main building while the comfortably furnished main bar is the largest room fronting the main road. A large car park is at the rear, on the site of the old **Sovereign Inn**, plus a large garden.

Landlord Rob Thornett took over the pub on April 1st 2009, previously having run the **Folly** at Towcester. After a month of refurbishment of both the kitchen and bar, the pub reopened in early May. Prior to his arrival the pub had been closed lunchtimes and food had ceased for some time.

Since then Rob has gradually and successfully rebuilt both the drink and food aspects of the business, especially the local trade. There are normally three ales on offer, from various breweries within the **Marstons** group and he plans to develop this as demand increases.

Currently **Brakspear Oxford Gold** is the regular ale, with **Marstons EPA** and **Pedigree** as guests. **Jennings Cragrat** and **Wychwood Hobgoblin** have been recently featured, **Marstons Wicked Witch** is imminent.

All food is freshly prepared by Rob himself from an extensive menu and is available from Tuesday to Sunday lunchtimes. Fish and chips have become a popular take-away item. The pub is open all sessions except Monday lunchtime. Rob is ably assisted by his team – Harriet Poulson, Hannah Wise, Emma Spacey and his son Josh.

Occasional live music is supplied by local band the **Scallys**, performing acoustically at the pub normally about twice a month. Quiz nights are held every month. Future events planned include a Halloween barbecue and a Sausage and Beer festival some time in the new year, with a good selection of both cask and bottled ales on offer. For more details ring Rob on 01296 670216.

Suprisingly for a village it is very accessible by both car or bus from Winslow or Aylesbury. Back in June a branch social used a no.60 bus to visit the **Crown**. Buses are hourly in either direction and stop outside the pub. In that way it was also possible to visit the pubs of North Marston, Oving and Whitchurch on the way back.

Mick White



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NEW BREWERIES



Despite the recession, microbreweries are booming with 78 opening in the last year bringing the total in the UK to 767 and Oxfordshire is seeing more than its fair share of these new breweries. **Thame Brewery** started in 2009 at the **Cross Keys** in Thame and has been such a great success that its parent company have taken on the **Swan** in Faringdon to open a second brewery. The pub is now open and the first brew of beer is imminent and we hope to feature the pub in our next issue.

The **Swan** is only just up the road from Coleshill where you can find the **Old Forge Brewery** at the **Radnor Arms**. This started at the end of August with bottle-conditioned beers as well as draught. The **Radnor Arms** is a family run pub in a beautiful National Trust village and was originally a blacksmith's, converted to a pub in 1949. Many of the Old Smithy tools remain as features and the brewery consists of a four barrel plant in an old out building (pictured in the photograph kindly sent to us by Ian Winfield).

There is also the **Compass Brewery** in Cotswold which has been mentioned in an earlier edition of **Swan Supping** and the **Shotover Brewery** in Horspath which began late in 2009, as well as the **Old Bog Brewery** at the **Masons Arms** in Headington. In addition, the **Loose Cannon** started brewing in May and this is the first beer to be produced in Abingdon since the closure of the Morland brewery in 2000.

DAYLA MOVE



Dayla and **James Pettit & Company**, the leading independent drinks distributor and wine merchants have moved their entire operations to a new distribution centre in

Aston Clinton after nearly 160 years at the foot of Aylesbury High Street. The new Centre boasts warehousing of more than 34,000 square feet and included within this is a new chilled cask ale store capable of holding more than 1200 casks at any one time.

Tim Cooper, Managing Director of **Dayla** and the 3rd generation of his family at the helm was delighted with the move and said 'It has been a very long time coming but well worth the wait. It will strengthen both our logistics as well as our overall drinks offering to the Licensed Trade and help to establish us further as the leading Drinks Distributor throughout the Home Counties'.

Dayla may be well known as a soft drinks supplier having been manufacturers and contract bottlers, but in more recent years they have expanded into an all embracing one stop shop for all drinks from keg beers and cask ales to a full portfolio of wines and spirits through its specialist division James Pettit & Company.

Dayla is the only distributor of cask ales in the U.K. to hold the exclusive **Cask Marque Distributor Charter** which demonstrates excellence in the handling of cask ale.

This shows a return to the family roots since both Tim's grandfather and great-grandfather were both brewers in Wendover owning the **Wendover Brewery** and brewing *Holland's Finest Ales*.

The old Aylesbury site is likely to become a car park in the near future before it is eventually redeveloped for housing.

<Prepared from a press release from **Dayla**. - Ed>

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CAMRA Good
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Listed

3 Regular
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Christmas Menu now available!



George & Dragon, Quainton

5 real ales. Good Beer Guide listed

*Food served at all sessions
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Winter opening hours:

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BEER AT CHARLIE & JAKE'S!



Nooooooooooooooooooooo!!!

Not another offer for a *Coors Light* – it's ready to drink when the mountains turn blue. (Note to self – the stuff is never ready to drink at any temperature! Dr Pepper has more taste and flavour.)

This is Florida, and unfortunately many areas in this State appear to be a real ale desert.

But just a minute – in a backwater along the East Coast lies Melbourne. Not necessarily high on the British tourist visit list; however, if anyone is looking for a veritable oasis of beer, look no further than **Charlie & Jake's Grill and Brewery**.

Perched at the end of a shopping mall, partly hidden by a branch of Bank of America, this small brewery provides a range of ales to satisfy many a dry palate.

So where do I begin? Obviously a trawl through the internet for microbreweries in Florida. While supping a beer in Palm Beach, I was reading a local paper called Southern Brew News. I chanced upon an article about this very same brewery. The combination of a barley wine and *Home Brewer of the Year* was too much – a visit was needed!

After a short drive (American Style) we arrived at our Mecca. There is a large board listing the beers on tap, and we were served by a knowledgeable barmaid. I was even offered a cold or normal glass – perhaps my accent was a give-away? We tasted *Anniversary Ale*, *Harbour City Gold*, *Indian River Red* and *Wickham Wheat*.

During this research session, we were introduced to the Head Brewer, Mark Heyward with whom we discussed the history and future aspirations of the business. He invited us to a pre 4th of July celebration beer tasting the next day. Despite staying in Orlando, the return visit was too good an offer to refuse.

To lay a foundation for the tasting, we decided to try the food. The lunch menu was plentiful, varied and extremely good value. Now ready to sample the beers selected and brewed to peak for the imminent 4th of July holiday. The actual brewery is at the side of the bar, in full view of the customers.

We met Patrick Payne, a regular guest brewer – crowned 'Florida Home-brewer of the Year 2008'. He has enhanced the range and strength of the beers, and has an undisguised passion for his craft. We were pleasantly surprised to find that the beer-tasting was an exclusive event – just the four of us!

We sampled several of the standard brews; however, the highlight was to try *Double Trouble* – a barley wine weighing in at a massive 15% - listed 53rd of the World's 100 Strongest Beers.

This was a warm, dangerously drinkable beer without the heavily oversweet flavour normally associated with a beer of this strength. It was to be the final appearance of a brew laid down and refermented to mature for the 4th of July – how special was that!

Sadly, time just flew by and we had to leave. So, dear traveller – if you feel overcome by thirst, try a trip to **Charlie & Jake's**. It will not disappoint!

According to their website, **Charlie & Jake's** has been serving fresh and award winning beers in Brevard county since 1996.

From the beginning, their goal has always been to brew beers that are both distinctive and a pleasure to drink. Their brewers handcraft many different styles of ales and lagers, each with its own individual characteristics to accommodate even the most discerning beer pallet.

While each of their beers is quite different, they are all made with the same enthusiasm and commitment to quality.

All of their brews are created using time-honoured traditions and with all natural ingredients to ensure that your favourite beer is always brewery fresh.

Location: 6300 N Wickham Road Melbourne Florida (just down the road from Brevard Zoo).

Ken Morris

Brill Beer

Award winning beers available direct from the brewery.

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- **SPECIALS** – A unique new brew each month named after local characters or landmarks plus the Hadda's Seasonal beer.

Our Brill brewed beers are available:

Bottled Real Ale. £21 a case, mixed to your taste.

Beer Boxes – From only £1.43 a pint. Polypins (35 pints) or Minipins (17 pints) of real ale ready to drink at home from only £26.

Please call in advance to order 01844 239237.

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Vale Best Bitter 3.7% ABV - Light copper hoppy bitter
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 Vale Pale Ale 4.2% ABV - Dry hoppy golden ale
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 Vale Special 4.5% ABV - Bronze Premium Bitter
 Grumpling Old Ale 4.6% - Ruby brown premium ale
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 Black Swan Mild 3.9% - Dark smooth rich mild
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A worldwide selection of wines are available, along with bottled Thatchers cider.

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

THE TOP TIP IS TO ASK FOR A TOP-UP!

When is a pint not a pint?

When it's poured in a pub – according to **CAMRA** the current law states that it's acceptable for drinkers to be served a pint that is only 90% liquid.

Imagine going into a supermarket and being sold a pint of milk that is in reality only 18 fluid ounces with the shop keeping the remaining portion back for themselves.

While the law means that only the worst offenders are prosecuted by trading standards, it also allows drinkers to demand that their pint be topped up. If a beer develops a lively head on pouring then it should be left a short while and then 'topped up' with another short spurt from the pump.

Good pubs will train their bar staff to do this whenever necessary and a request for a top-up is almost always granted in good faith. In fairness to most pubs it's probably the inexperienced bar staff who are most guilty of the practice although there are some pubs and pub chains where short measures seem to occur rather more habitually.



The difficulty for the **CAMRA** member is to decide whether the person serving their pint has made enough effort to ensure the maximum amount of liquid as reasonably possible has been poured into their glass. It is probably unfeasible to pour a complete pint of beer into a standard sized glass without topping up so many times that the beer loses condition.

That's why **CAMRA** would like lined glasses to be used in all pubs. These allow a full pint of liquid to be served

up to the pint line in the glass and any head to be contained within the glass. Unfortunately few pubs use lined glasses – it's not surprising when **CAMRA** estimate that the practice cost the consumer £4.5 billion over the past decade.

CAMRA lobbied the last government for increased protection for consumers over short measures and will continue to do so with the new coalition government. In the meantime, drinkers need to protect their own rights – don't be afraid to ask for a top-up.

Charlie Mackle

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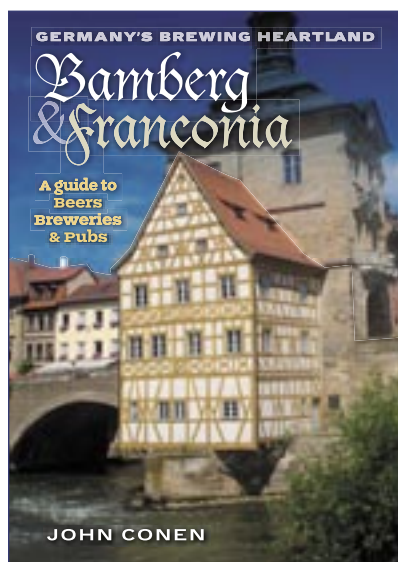
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Just good, honest beer &
great conversation

BAMBERG GUIDE



A new edition of 'Bamberg & Franconia: Germany's Brewing Heartland' has arrived to delight those many **CAMRA** members who have tested out the numerous breweries in the area.

First published in 2003, John Conen's account is recognised as the definitive English-language guide to the brewing culture of Franconia, which has the beautiful city of Bamberg as its 'capital of beer'.

This book will help visitors explore the fascinating local range of beers including the famous *Rauchbier* (smoke beer), and guide them to some wonderful old pubs.

For this second edition, information on pubs and breweries has been updated and expanded, with new photographs and illustrations. There is also background information on the outstanding local historical and cultural attractions for the tourist.

John Conen, who lives in Farnham Common, is a member of Britain's *Campaign for Real Ale* and a member of the British Guild of Beer Writers. He has been visiting Bamberg for over 25 years.

Bamberg & Franconia: Germany's Brewing Heartland. A guide to beers, breweries and pubs by John Conen

Second edition, June 2010 ISBN 978-0- 9544426-3-7

96 pages £9.99, €12.99

Available from **CAMRA** (www.camra.org.uk/books)



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CHEERS TO BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HEROES!



Buckinghamshire and the Chiltern's oldest independent brewery, **Chiltern**, have announced the launch of its new bottled *Monument Ale* in support of the fund for the much needed restoration of Coombe Hill Monument.

As part of their 30th anniversary year, this limited run beer has been specially developed as a not-for-profit production to support the project and is available from the brewery at Terrick, the **Farmers' Bar** of the **King's Head** in Aylesbury and selected stockists. Every bottle sold will provide 25 pence towards the restoration.

Monument Ale is a brew using the favourite ingredients from the past 30 years to offer new tastes to excite the palate. It is a rich golden coloured beer and is brewed with a balanced blend of fruity Goldings and Northdown hops and Maris Otter malt to produce a unique autumn flavour reminiscent of bygone days. Alcohol content is 3.8% abv.



The now weathered and damaged Coombe Hill Monument was originally dedicated in 1904 by public subscription to commemorate the lives of the 157 men from Buckinghamshire who died in the Boer War in South Africa between 1899 and 1902. It stands 852 feet above sea level on a prominent spur of the Chiltern Hills and is clearly visible from the brewery site in Terrick, near Wendover, Buckinghamshire.

The monument is owned by Buckinghamshire County Council and situated on National Trust land. The cost of restoration is estimated at

£55,000. The Coombe Hill Monument Appeal has been launched by Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher, Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, in order to help raise the necessary funds.

Pictured above at the launch in the brewery shop (from left to right) are Tom Jenkinson, Lesley Jenkinson, Major General Stuart Watson, Richard Jenkinson and Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher.

Tom Jenkinson was interviewed at the brewery on BBC South TV news on 10 September about the launch.

The Farmers' Bar, Aylesbury

Exciting and unique opportunities have now become available for the positions of Head Chef and Bartenders at The Farmers' Bar.

The Farmers' Bar is the delightful, historic, award winning pub run by the Chiltern Brewery in the charming King's Head in Aylesbury. Being a direct outlet for the Chiltern Brewery, the quality of the food, service and drink on offer is an absolute priority. We also pride ourselves on excellent customer service with a passion for friendly hospitality.



If you would like the opportunity to realise your potential as part of our team please download an application form from the King's Head section of our website at www.chilternbrewery.co.uk



LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

HOOK NORTON



Hook Norton Flagship, at 5.3 per cent ABV, returns to the bar for one month only in October after an absence of 12 months.

The beer was originally brewed in 2005 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar and is the perfect drink to toast the architect of the victory at Trafalgar, Lord Horatio Nelson who died on 21 October, in 1805.

Hook Norton managing director James Clarke said: 'Flagship is a true India Pale Ale style of beer. Pale in colour it is a fulsome and robust beer, full of hops it is infused one of the new dwarf hop varieties – which is called Admiral of course. The Admiral hops contribute to a full fruity mouth feel, and a sweet fruity aroma'.

Brewed using Flagship Maris Otter Pale Ale, Enzymic malts, Fuggles, Goldings and Admiral hops and goes well with strong cheddar cheese.

LODDON BREWERY

In our June/July issue we reported that ten pence for each pint of the monthly special for May, *Wilfred's Mild*, would be donated by *Loddon Brewery* to the nearby All Saints Church. The result was that in August, Chris and Luke Hearne were able to present the church with a cheque for £460 which will go a long way towards helping on-going maintenance to keep it looking its best.

Their monthly special for October is the 4.5% ABV *Boozy Floozy*.

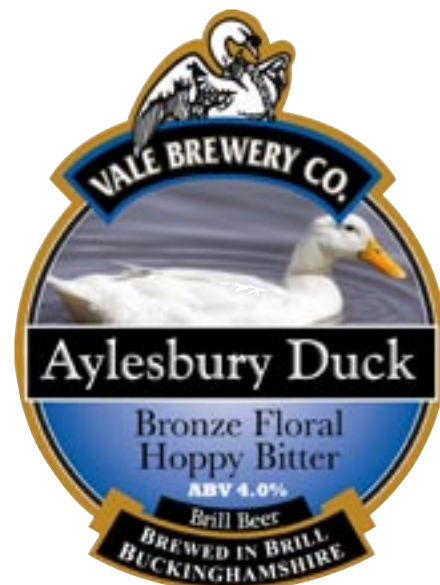
REBELLION BREWERY



The latest monthly specials from the *Rebellion Brewery* are both 4.3% ABV with the pale and floral *Upswing* in October and the amber and dry *Short Seller* in November.

Why not look for them in the brand new *Rebellion Tap Room* which is opening up at the *Bootlegger* in High Wycombe where a range of twelve *Rebellion* beers will be available on gravity dispense.

VALE BREWERY



The latest seasonal offering from *Vale* is the 4% ABV *Aylesbury Duck*..

This is another unique beer. Bronze coloured with a different maris otter malt combination and English and American hops, offering a floral hoppy beer with a hint of berries on the palate.

The branch is still planning a trip to *Vale Brewery* and despite a couple of postponements, we are hoping for it to finally happen in either November or December. Please check the website for up-to-date information.

High Wycombe RUFC v Marlow RFC

Rivals Winter Beer Festival 2010

Friday 19th November, 2010
Starts 6.00pm

Saturday 20th November, 2010
Starts 12 noon

Live Music

Beers selected from UK Micro breweries with a Rival theme

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SETTING SUN?



Swan Supping has recently reported bad news about pub closures in our area.

During the recession and credit crunch, we've noticed that the pubs which seem to have been hit hardest are those in urban areas, particularly those on estates such as Southcourt and Bedgrove in Aylesbury. The sad loss of such community pubs has been blamed on both the smoking ban and the availability of cheap loss-leading alcohol in nearby supermarkets.

This summer we discovered that a pub that is as far removed from an estate pub as is almost possible has suffered the same unfortunate fate. The hamlet of Little Hampden is located uphill from the Great Missenden to Butler's Cross road – from which a large brown signpost to the **Rising Sun** still stands.

The pub was located a mile along at the end of a single track road and was right at the edge of woods on Little Hampden common. It was smack bang in the middle of the most splendid Chilterns walking countryside and the pub was very popular with hikers, featuring on many Ramblers' Association walks.

At the end of September, according to two signs posted outside the property, the ex-pub was up for rent as a four-bedroomed house. A search of the letting agents' website revealed internal photographs showing that the bar had been removed.

A skip was still in evidence in the car parking spaces opposite containing assorted fixtures and fittings and pub detritus. There is now no pub within about two miles – the nearest being the **Firecrest** over the hill on the A413 or the **Hampden Arms** across the valley in Great Hampden.

The local **CAMRA** branch had been aware that the pub had been living on borrowed time as Wycombe council granted permission for change of use to a private house in 2006. A look at the

summary of the case notes for this application on the internet suggests that the local parish council actually supported the application. However, the pub continued trading for well over three years after permission for change of use was granted, which makes it more galling that the proprietors decided to finally call time on a pub which dated back to at least the 18th century.

The **Rising Sun** was never a magnet for real ale drinkers but on our last visit in 2009 served a couple of well kept ales, albeit on the expensive side. However, it was smart and well-looked after and was exactly the sort of pub that, given its idyllic setting, should have pulled in the pub-dining crowd. Unfortunately, that setting and the building's character were also able to generate interest in rent as a private house of an asking price in the region of £3,000 per month.



The looming rise in VAT will put up the price of beer and food in pubs at the same time as the public's disposable income will be hit. Anyone who may have complacently thought that upmarket country pubs were somehow safer than others needs to learn the lesson from the closing of the **Rising Sun**.

Swan Supping also reported in the last issue about real threats to locals in larger villages, for example the **Royal Oak** in Oakley.

The economic facts of life in a region with high property values always swing in favour of property speculators rather than publicans and breweries who work hard to provide a precious resource for a community. This is why the role of the local authority planning department is so crucial in preventing any expedient changes of use.

Several local communities have success stories where local people have banded together financially and preserved an endangered pub for the benefit of village life, such as the **Unicorn** in Cublington and the **Crown** in Sydenham.

There are rumours that locals in Bledlow Ridge are endeavouring to reopen the **Boot**, their village local, which became a restaurant and is now reported to be closed. These efforts would never have been possible had permission been given to make the building into a private house.

Given factors such as the rise in the number of endangered pubs and the recent change of government it would be interesting to consider whether Wycombe council would still agree to the closure of the **Rising Sun** were the planning decision to be made in 2010 rather than four years ago.

Please contact us if you have any further details on the **Rising Sun** or any other pubs that are under threat.

Remember: Use them or lose them!

Charlie Mackle

CROSS KEYS

THAME



BEER FEST

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& 5 ciders on offer over the Weekend.**

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Tony, Ian & Lynne welcome you to

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Four Traditional Ales!

We are in the GOOD PUB GUIDE!

Breakfast 9 - 11 Tuesday - Saturday (8 items plus tea or coffee for £5.25)

Lunches 12 – 2.30 Tuesday – Sunday

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Pub open all day Friday, Saturday & Sunday

Please note: The pub is closed Monday until 5pm

Sunday Lunch ~ £8-95 for two courses (Children under 6 free!)

Please book early to avoid disappointment

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THE GRAVEDIGGERS - PART SEVEN

With half an hour to go before opening time, James flicked through a copy of the new *Good Beer Guide* as he stood behind the bar at the **Gravediggers**. Since Mazz had got to work the bar had taken on a new, unfamiliar quality that it probably hadn't possessed in several dozen years: it was clean.

In fact, it was so polished that you could vaguely see your face in it and last night Old Pete had managed a fifteen minute drunken conversation with his own reflection as he slumped on the bar – which was much to his normal victims' relief.

'What a fascinating book,' James said. 'It's given me all sorts of ideas to improve the **Gravediggers**. I'm glad you lent me your copy, Mazz.'

'Good quality beer, welcoming smile, clean pub, maybe a bit of food – get those right and you can't go too far wrong,' Mazz said as she pulled on the handpump, flushing the beer pipes with water.

'I didn't know there was so much work involved in the good beer side,' said James. 'I mean, do you have to clean the pipes every week.'

'Depends if your regulars like drinking beer that's so flat, infected and vinegary that it may as well be fermented rhinoceros urine that's been left to stand for five years in a dirty oil barrel.'

'Oh. You must have drunk here when Tony was in charge. That's exactly how the regulars like it.'

'Ah. Then you might need to do something slightly more spectacular to restore the **Diggers**' reputation,' said Mazz. 'Good job you're seeing those **CAMRA** people later.'

James and Mazz sat with their two visitors at a table in the bar. Each had a pint of real ale to sample.

'I'm Trevor Ticker, how do you do?' said a scrawny man with a straggly beard shaking James's hand. 'I'm chairman of the local **CAMRA** branch.'

'And I'm Bea Belle Lea, editor of the magazine,' said a robust, ruddy-faced woman. 'I've heard you'd like to place an advert with us.'

'Yes,' said James. 'I've got great plans for the **New Gravediggers** but I haven't knocked up any artwork or anything yet.'

'Just reel off these plans and we can put something together at our end,' said Bea.

Trevor sipped some of his beer. His face contorted into a grimace, which he managed to convert into a polite smile.

'How's the *Fit Shaced*?' asked Mazz.

'Well, it's certainly an improvement over what was on offer before,' said Trevor. 'I've not had to rush to the toilet...yet.'

'Well, that's progress,' said James. 'Now the advert – something like rustic, characterful, country inn, thirty real ales –'

'Oh you're doing a beer festival, what a super idea,' said Bea.

'Not that I know of,' said Mazz, looking quizzically at James.

'No. Thirty real ales on all the time,' said James. He picked up the *Good Beer Guide*. 'I look through here and it raves about all these pubs that do ten, fifteen, eighteen real ales. **CAMRA** seems to love them – so I thought if I had thirty then it would knock spots off the others and I'd have queues of real ale lovers outside – you know people with sandals and birds nesting in their beards. And if I have thirty on at once then I maybe only need to get a delivery every three months – it'll save me a lot of work.'

'I take it you're not a member of **CAMRA** yet,' said Trevor.

'James, once you've opened a barrel of real ale, it only lasts a few days before it goes off,' said Mazz.

'How flipping stupid,' said James. 'Can't they irradiate it or put some chemicals in it to make it last forever?'

'Course they can but they sell that stuff far cheaper at the supermarket than you'll ever be able to sell it,' said Trevor.

'You make it sound like it's alive,' said James.

'In a manner of speaking, it is,' said Bea. 'But that's why it tastes so good



– if you keep it right.'

'So if I hadn't have cleaned up the mess that Tony left in the cellar then it might have mutated into some killer alien sludge monster from a horror film.'

'From how I remember his beer that might have been one of the least frightening possibilities,' said Trevor. 'Can't we just sell lager instead?' James turned to Mazz.

'If you want to be sweeping up the glass and hosing down the blood from the fights every other night. But your lager boys will want ear-splitting Gangsta rap, pool, big screen sports in 3D and a wall of flashing, noisy machines,' said Mazz.

'Sounds like a bit too much investment to me,' said James.

'Start with two or three ales from local breweries and build up your trade from there. Why not do that?' asked Bea.

The door burst open and Old Pete rolled into the bar. He staggered to the bar, clutching a tankard in one hand. He spread an enchanting aroma of stinking pig manure around the room.

Old Pete yelled 'Oi, James, boy. A pint of *Old Filthy* when you're ready. And in my special tankard too.'

Trevor and Bea held their noses as Old Pete approached closer with an indignant expression.

'I had to take this home with me, would you believe, to stop 'er washin' it.' He pointed at Mazz. 'Not been washed since 1976 – beer just don't taste the same out of anythink else.'

Mazz turned to the **CAMRA** visitors. 'Looks like we might need your help with some 're-education' first.'

Charlie Mackle

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7th – Quiz night main for £8. Bookings only – starts 7:15pm
9th – Oktoberfest: Pig roast, Rock'n Roll band & selection of German beers
10th - Redkites scooter ride out to the King William from 12pm & BBQ
13th – Jazz Night £15 per person. Starter & main course including jazz from Martin Hart

November:

6th – Bonfire Night. Tickets required, entrance from Speen playing field
10th – King Willy Steak Night £10 bookings only
12th – SSG Christmas Market opens at 10am till 4pm
28th- Porsche Club GB GT3 car meet. Come book in for lunch and look (or dream) at the beautiful cars

December: Christmas Menu now available – see website



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WETHERSPOONS

Our September branch meeting was held at the **William Robert Loosely** in High Wycombe. We had a healthier turnout than usual and welcomed some members from the local area whom we hope to see again soon and to help the branch with its objective of organising an annual beer festival in the Wycombe area.

The **William Robert Loosely** is one of two **J.D. Wetherspoon** pubs in the town and we must record our thanks for their very generous hospitality in addition to a good selection of beers – which included the very tasty **Loddon Check Mate** (a cask pilsner) and **Abbot Reserve** which, at 6.5%, was last drink of the night for most.

Our warm reception echoes the efforts that the **Wetherspoon** chain is making to build links with **CAMRA**. One current benefit of **CAMRA** membership is £20 worth of vouchers which can be used to buy pints of real ale at a discount of 50p during the year. Local **Wetherspoons** tend to price their ale very competitively in the first place (£1.89 a pint when I last bought a pint) which means **CAMRA** members can enjoy their ration of beer at the ridiculously low price of £1.39. (We shouldn't point this out but a pint of **Abbot Reserve** contains slightly over 3.5 government 'units' of alcohol and were a **CAMRA** member to buy a pint at £1.39 then it would come in at under 40p per unit – lower than **CAMRA**'s official policy of suggesting a 50p per unit minimum price to deter binge drinking.)

As we reported in the last issue, **Wetherspoons** have finally arrived in Aylesbury after a couple of decades when it was probably one of the few towns of similar size not to have a branch.

Both are conversions from other licensed premises. The **Bell Hotel** in the Market Square is a major refurbishment of a prominent building that had seen mixed fortunes in recent years. This is a traditional **J.D. Wetherspoon** format with the bar at the far end, curiously reached from the bulk of the pub via a passageway from which an enclosed courtyard smoking area can be reached. Like many **Wetherspoon** pubs, the walls feature some displays of local history and the area near the bar has some fascinating facts about the history of the local area.

The **White Hart** on Exchange Street was converted from **Chicago Rock Cafe**, a venue that won't be greatly missed by real ale lovers. It sits beneath the Odeon cinema in a modern unit that also houses the **Slug and Lettuce**, about thirty feet above.

The pub has large glass windows that look out on a pavement seating area and also across to Aylesbury's new Waterside theatre – which is due to open imminently in November. It might be no surprise that **Wetherspoons** snapped up the site so quickly after refurbishing the **Bell** as it could prove to be a very shrewd location – the **White Hart** is the nearest pub to the theatre and the area around the canal and Exchange Street is earmarked for long-term cultural and shopping development.

The **White Hart**, pictured above, tends towards the **Lloyds Number One** bar formula and is equipped with a sound system and lights and opens until two in the morning on Fridays and Saturdays – a time when most **CAMRA** members are likely to be tucked up in bed but it's good to know that real ale is available at a late night venue. It's open until midnight on other nights as is the **Bell Hotel**.

The **White Hart** has offered an interesting selection of beers with brews from **Salopian** and **Orkney** being spotted at the bar. The management at the **Bell** have spoken to us of their wish to promote local beers and they have served **Tring** and **Rebellion** to name a couple.

Both pubs also open at seven in the morning, as do the two in Wycombe. It's doubtful that much real ale is served at that time (apparently the company



serves 400,000 breakfasts a year), although some of our local branch have been known to have enjoyed a rare morning snifter with their bacon and eggs on the way to a session such as the Black Country Trip.

The long opening hours perhaps explain how **Wetherspoon**'s business model allows low prices. Once they have invested in opening a pub and paid fixed costs such as rates, heating and electricity then they can make maximum use of their asset with the marginal cost of opening at slack times making a valuable contribution to profitability. Their busy town-centre locations make this possible – contrasting with the market available to many country pubs, for example, which might be concentrated on a couple of nights a week and Sunday lunchtime.

Despite **Wetherspoons**' policy of promoting real ale and **CAMRA** membership it has to be said that many ale activists are, at best, ambivalent about the pub chain and the letters page of *'What's Brewing'* – **CAMRA**'s national newspaper – have often seen lively debate about the company's pros and cons.

It is true that a big pub chain with huge centralised purchasing power provides a challenge to **CAMRA**'s ethos which celebrates diversity, local distribution and small scale production. There's also a danger that the pubs might end up as High Street clones – being identical throughout the country. This seems a point that the company tries to address with its photographs of local history and its policy of allowing management to source some ales locally.

One habit that is universally detested by **CAMRA** members is the infamous 'Coming Soon' sign. Most real ale drinkers will have had the frustrating experience of approaching a **Wetherspoon** bar and spotting a particularly interesting ale only to see a little sign on the pump clip declaring that it is not yet available.

Similarly, beers that have run out have been known to have their pump clips left on display to the customers. If this is a deliberate policy it is presumably to give an impression of wide choice but **CAMRA** members know that a wide range does not necessarily mean better quality and turned round clips can indicate healthy turnover.

With over 750 pubs turning over large quantities of real ale it's difficult to generalise about the quality of the beer. However, the new **Good Beer Guide** lists many **Wetherspoon** houses so some are certainly attracting **CAMRA**'s seal of approval. It's probably fair to say that the keenness of the management team towards keeping real ale has a large bearing on quality and staff can move between pubs frequently. In recent conversations we've found the management at the **Bell** and the **William Robert Loosely** to be very enthusiastic, which has been reflected in the beer quality.

Other publicans may not be too enthusiastic about the effect of **Wetherspoon**, particularly their discount prices. However, many traditional pubs have attributes such as history, brewery ties, individuality and a personal touch that chain pubs can never possess. Price is not the main motivating factor for most drinkers. For **CAMRA** members beer quality and a pub's atmosphere are invariably more important.

Wetherspoon's low prices and long opening hours may be expanding the total market for pubs, particularly with their food offering. Their Wycombe pubs have been offering a hot meal for £1.99 recently. While their ham, egg and chips isn't of hugely generous proportions (noodles are also available) they can be enjoyed as a sober light lunch with a cup of tea for under £3. That's cheaper than many of the sandwiches sold by Marks and Spencer and other retailers. In this case **Wetherspoon** are taking market share from the supermarkets – something all ale lovers can drink to.

Charlie Mackle



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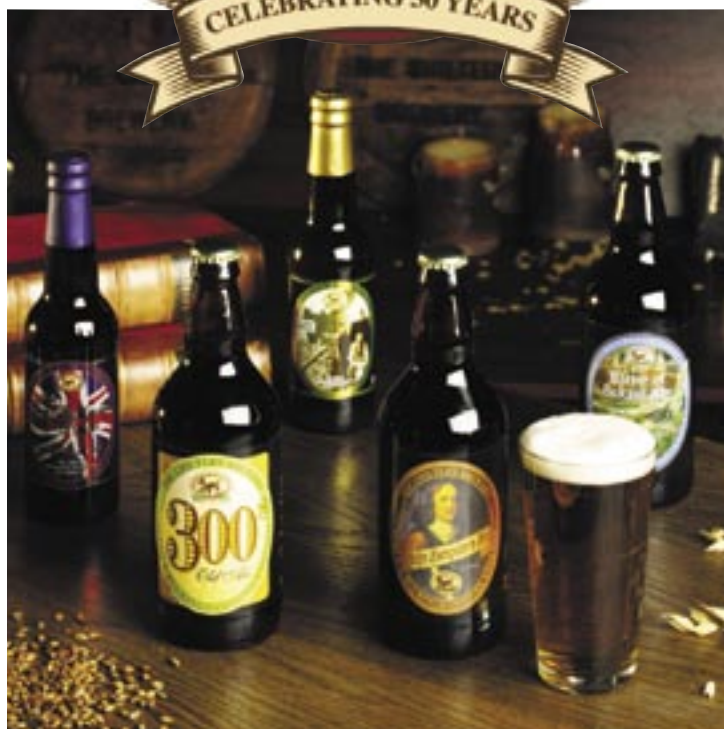
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Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

OCTOBER

Saturday 2nd READING CRAWL

12 noon The Lyndhurst, 88 Queens Road, RG1 4DG (meet here for food); 1.20pm, The Retreat, 8 St John's Street, RG1 4EH; 2.10pm, Hobgoblin, 2 Broad St, RG1 2BH, 3pm, Foresters Arms, 79 Brunswick Street, RG1 6NY; 4.50pm, The Nags Head, 5 Russell Street, RG1 7XD (joint pub of the year, 12 real ales); 6pm, Three Guineas, Station Approach, RG1 1LY (convenient last pub for trains and buses).

Wednesday 6th EVENING SOCIAL

8.30pm Chequers, Fingest, 9pm Frog, Skirmett, 9.45pm Bull and Butcher, Turville

Monday 11th BRANCH MEETING

8.30pm, Black Horse, Lacey Green (tbc).

Saturday 16th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

12 noon, Hop Pole, Aylesbury.

Wednesday 20th DOWNLEY SOCIAL

8.30pm Le De Spencer Arms, Downley

Thursday 28th BEER FESTIVAL SET-UP SOCIAL

9pm, Bull, Stoke Mandeville (after work setting up at the beer festival!).

Note: This date differs from the one in *Whats Brewing*

Friday 29th/Saturday 30th AYLESBURY BEER FESTIVAL

Eskdale Road Community Centre, Stoke Mandeville
Opening Times: Friday 29th 6pm - 11pm, Saturday 30th Noon - 11pm

This is our 17th festival raising money for the *Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity*. We require volunteers to help with all stages of the festival, so please contact the editor (details on this page) if you want to get involved and enjoy yourself whilst helping a good cause.

Further details about the festival are given on page 4 along with contact details if you fancy sponsoring a barrel for charity.

NOVEMBER

Monday 1st PUB BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

7.30pm, Belle Vue, High Wycombe

Monday 8th BRANCH MEETING

8.30pm, Whip Inn, Lacey Green

Sunday 14th PUB BEER FESTIVAL

12 noon, Cross Keys, Thame.

Friday 19th BRANCH DINNER

7 for 7.30pm Three Horseshoes, Burroughs Grove
Please book your place with the editor (contact details below).

Saturday 20th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

12 Noon High Wycombe Rugby Club, Kingsmead Road

Tuesday 23rd SOCIAL

8.30pm Three Crowns, Askett, 9.15pm Plough, Cadsden, 10pm Red Lion, Whiteleaf.

Further details can be found on our website

www.swansupping.org.uk

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Swan Supping

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Copy deadline for next issue, due out 1st December, is 14th November 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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Acceptance of an advertisement in *Swan Supping* by a pub or its availability there does not guarantee CAMRA approval.

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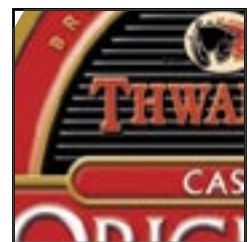
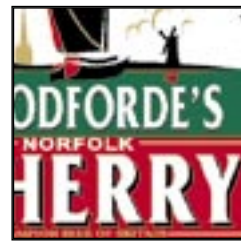
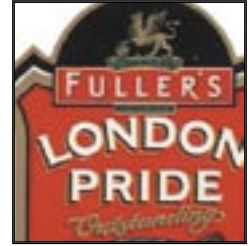
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