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Swan Supping



Issue 79

Aug/Sep 2010

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COVER STORY
Chiltern Brewery
celebrates thirty
years!
Page 16



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NEWS FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome to the largest edition of *Swan Supping* so far. A whopping 32 pages has taken a bit of filling and we don't expect to do that on a regular basis, especially as the poor souls who deliver the magazine to the pubs will probably be needing a long rest while their backs recover from carrying all the extra weight!

A lot of things are happening in the pub and brewery trade in the area. One of the good things is the 30th anniversary of *Chiltern Brewery* which we have celebrated with a feature in the centre of the magazine, plus a magnificent cover photograph, ably taken by Alex Wright.

Chiltern are one of the longest surviving micro-breweries in the country, which is testament to their dedication to the art and their sheer love of brewing. We have already enjoyed one of the special beers they have produced to celebrate, *Chiltern Pearl*, which we featured last issue, and their next one, *Golden Ale*, is due in the *Kings Head*, Aylesbury, as we go to press. Richard and Lesley Jenkinson really started something good in 1980, and now that the baton has been passed on to sons George and Tom, lets hope the brewery can continue for at least another 30 years!

Other local breweries in the news include *Tring*, who have moved to larger premises after outgrowing their original site, and *Vale Brewery* who have had to increase their brewing capacity due to the demand for their beers. This shows that the demand for real ale is increasing, especially when it is produced locally.

Aylesbury was one of the largest places in Britain without a *JD Wetherspoons* pub until this summer and now we have two! The refurbished *Bell* finally opened in June and the *White Hart* opening in July on the site of the old

Chicago Rock Café (which I doubt will be missed by very many discerning drinkers!). These two pubs have the potential for changing the drinking scene in Aylesbury dramatically, but it is hoped that this will be for the better as they make the town an even more of a drinkers' destination and bring more people in, to the benefit of all the pubs in the area. The town got another boost as we went to press, as the *Queens Head*, which has again closed, is to receive a major refurbishment by *Punch Taverns*.

The bad news is that despite the local branch having been largely spared the number of pub closures that the rest of the country has seen (*CAMRA* reports 39 closing every single week, a third of which are demolished without local communities given a chance to save them), things appear to be catching up. Estate pubs are being really badly hit! We learned as we went to print last issue that the *Duck* in Bedgrove had not only closed, but had been demolished. The Southcourt estate is now publess with the closure of the *Huntsman* and the sad sight of the *Steeplechase*, closed last year and now a constant target for vandals.

Even country pubs and local breweries are not exempt from the financial climate as the *Partridge Arms* in Aston Clinton is under threat and *Vale* have had to close the *Royal Oak* in Oakley and have been reduced to applying for change of use as they are unable to find a buyer. This is particularly galling for *Vale* as it is the closest of their pubs to the brewery.

Problems are likely to increase along with the VAT increase next year. Even if the government can find a way to stop supermarkets treating alcohol as a loss leader, the large disparity between the price of drinking at home as opposed to drinking socially in one of our pubs will continue to put a strain on the industry. Every pub in the country employs a lot of people, so the government should be doing all in its power to help the industry, perhaps with a differential rate of tax between on and off sales of alcohol, and not be part of the problem.

David W. Roe
Swan Supping Editor and *CAMRA AV & W Branch* Chairman

NATIONAL CAMRA NEWS

***CAMRA* hails Big Society Support for Community Owned Pubs**

Recently the Prime Minister gave a speech on the Big Society, endorsing pubs as local assets and promising Government support for communities wishing to save threatened pubs through community ownership.

Community ownership for pubs would not only be invaluable in saving pubs threatened with closure but there is clearly an appetite for it. *CAMRA*'s recent polling research shows that 63% of regular pub goers would be willing to join efforts to save their favourite local pub if it was under threat.

CAMRA has therefore welcomed this announcement, and has written to the Government seeking assurances that the Big Society will be backed up with adequate resources to provide business, legal and financial advice to communities wishing to save their pub by running it as a mutual, co-operative or social enterprise.

Pubcos are on Probation

In July the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills Vince Cable gave his first appearance before the Select Committee monitoring his Department.

During the meeting Brian Binley MP (Northampton South) asked Mr Cable to confirm

that the Government would revisit the Codes of Practice of the Large Pub Companies if the Pub Companies were not found to be acting properly. Mr Cable confirmed that the new Government will continue that policy.

The Business Secretary also said that he is actively monitoring the beer tie situation, including among licensees in his local area.

He said: 'They tell me that they're very frustrated with the tie arrangements and they do want reform but as you know because of your committee's recommendations they're on probation at the moment.'

'I think the commitment is to give them until June 2011 and if they haven't delivered a more satisfactory arrangement then there will have to be legislative action.'

Real ale can help beat recession!

CAMRA was delighted to read of a report revealing how Britain's beer drinkers can serve as role models for the nation as it struggles to emerge from recession.

The academic study, released by experts at the Nottingham University Business School, came up with the findings after examining the history of brewing in England.

The study praises *CAMRA* for its work in campaigning for quality and choice in the UK

beer market, and underlines the impact of an expanding sub culture of beer drinkers with a strong interest in quality and choice.

More widely, the study believes the beer industry's rebirth in the wake of *CAMRA*'s founding in 1971 has implications for much of the UK economy.

Professor Peter Swann, the author of the study, and a Professor of Industrial Economics, said: 'The fact is that the business world can learn an enormous amount from our beer buffs. The range of products and the number of centres of production in brewing in England declined dramatically between 1900 and 1970.'

'As is widely accepted, that process began to reverse with the formation of *CAMRA* and its fight against bland, mass-produced beers.

This has led us to the position we're in now, with hundreds of small breweries spread all over the country and making thousands of different beers. In technical terms, this represents horizontal product differentiation and a reduction in the importance of the economies of scale.'

'That's basically a clever way of saying variety is the spice of life and that more discerning tastes can be good for the economy.'

In conclusion of the study, Swann said: '*CAMRA* and the microbreweries should serve as an economic inspiration - and I say that as a man who doesn't even like beer.'

TASTED ON MY TRAVELS



The occasional jottings of an ardent real drinker

At the end of June, beginning July, I went to north Wales with three friends, Frank Butcher, Alan Purdy and Reg Saunders. We were off to see the little railways of Wales and to do some research regarding the availability and quality of the real ales. We stayed for part of the week at Penryn, which happens to be on the Ffestiniog Railway.

Inevitably, we travelled on the railway and as a fine rain was falling, we rushed for shelter in to **Spoooner's Bar (GBG)**! There they serve six or so real ales always in immaculate condition.

The only problem is if you find an ale which you like and you go back the next day hoping/thirsting for some more it is very likely to be gone, such is their throughput. And so it was that on inspecting what was on offer we selected our favoured brews and research commenced! I decided to go for the **Purple Moose** beers and went for *Dark side of the Moose*, a dark, malty beer followed by their *Snowdonia* – a golden, citrus, refreshing beer. As we were discussing our future itinerary dulcet tones addressed our ears with 'Fancy seeing you here'.

The words came from Pam Honeyman, the brewster of **Montys Brewery**. Pam and her husband Russ had come to **Spoooner's** to deliver some beer. We chatted for some time and then Pam mentioned that they had bought their first pub, the Sportsman in Newtown.

It so happened that we had planned some railway visits, which involved a return past Newtown, so we said that we would call in. We arranged to meet Pam and Russ one evening to have a swift pint.

We moved to our second B & B of the week at Forden, near Welshpool. In the evening we went to the **Lion Hotel** at Caerhowel where we found a hand pump indicating **Montys Mojo**. It was superb, well up to the standard we have come to expect from this brewery.

The new pub

The evening before our meeting we were passing Newtown so we called in to the **Sportsman** (featured in both the pictures).

It was a very good restoration of a pub that the pub co. had left the previous November needing much TLC.

Everywhere was now very clean and tidy, a vast wood burning stove in the fireplace and all the original features such as the leaded lights above the bar cleaned and polished.

We had a warm welcome from the manager and saw that on the bar were five beer pumps emblazoned with **Montys** clips and another hand pump dispensing cider with a couple of keg taps and a font for an Italian lager.

I espied **Montys Sunshine** which was Pam's first ever brew. It was in super condition and naturally I had to have a repeat order just to make sure I still liked it – and I did!



The holiday continues

The next morning saw us heading to Towyn to enjoy the delights of the Tal-y-llyn. The ride on the train done we were repairing to the café on the station where we met some friends.

In the café we found newly installed hand pumps so as we were honour bound to test what they were dispensing we had some **Purple Moose Madoc's Ale** and very good it was too!

The start of the brewery

That evening now we knew where to find the pub we went to meet the owners. Pam told us that there had been an article by Sharon Chilcott in 'Life in the Marches' Magazine.

The article went on to say that when she was training she did not know what was involved. 'I did my first brew and brought it back to the **Lion Hotel** at Caerhowell and it was nerve wracking. Four men came in whom I didn't know. One took a big sip and I closed my eyes and the room went really quiet. But it was OK. He liked it.

What I didn't know was that they were **CAMRA** members tasting beers. They are now fans. That was the icing on the cake. I went into work and handed my notice in! It is rather exciting to be in at the beginning of a successful brewery as the gents were the above quartet!

The following day we went on the Welshpool Railway. The rail journey over, we repaired to the **Black Lion** at Llanfair. There awaiting us was some **Wye Valley Butty Bach** a fine drop. We followed this with some **Purple Moose Snowdonia**, which was also in good nick.

The day after it was time to go home. As it is very dehydrating travelling on a warm day we decided to stop at on of our approved watering holes, the **Swan** at Chaddesley Corbett (**GBG**) where some **Bathams Bitter** was taken. So ended another fine holiday.

Mike Clemence.



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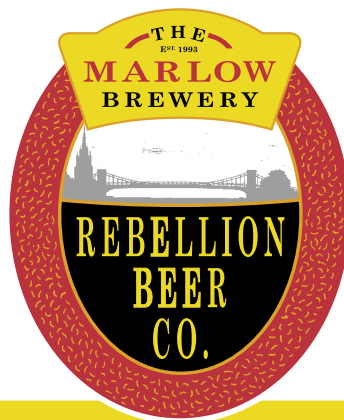
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LOCAL NEWS

ASTON CLINTON

The **Oak** reopened in early July with a new landlord offering both English and Thai menus (in competition with the Royal Siam (ex **Rising Sun**)).

It has been reported elsewhere that the **Partridge Arms** seems likely to have planning permission granted to be demolished and replaced by housing!

AYLESBURY

The **Bell** has reopened as a **JD Wetherspoons** pub. Many years ago this was one of the foremost pubs in Aylesbury but it has been in a steady decline recently with various attempts to revitalise it failing through a lack of the extensive refurbishment it was crying out for! Now, at last, it seems to have received it and the pub looks ready to regain its former position. As usual in a **Wetherspoons** there are beers from the **Greene King** stable, but these are complemented by a selection of guest beers including a selection from some of our wonderful local breweries

The **Broad Leys** made good use of their marquee during the World Cup, having two of their best days since the pub escaped from the clutches of **Punch**. While the summer lasts, the marquee will be used for functions and bands and you can also take advantage of the new garden furniture. Building work at the rear of the pub is due to start soon.

The **Harrow** is now opening at 10am Monday to Saturday and serving 'Morning Munchies' to customers

wanting to eat as well as taking advantage of their large range of beer. When last visited, this range included **Greene King IPA**, **Adnams Broadside**, **Hook Norton Hooky Bitter**, **Black Sheep Best Bitter**, and **Wells Bombardier**. If handpulled ale is not to your liking, there is handpulled **Westons Old Rosie Cloudy Cider**, a range of foreign bottled beers and a Czech imported lager, **Budweiser Budvar**.

The **Hobgoblin** is due to be closed on 12th of August for a day for redecoration, after which the real ale will be available at £1.60 per pint every day.

The **Hop Pole** will be running a beer festival 14th to 17th of October.

The **Huntsman** has closed as part of the refurbishment of the shopping centre, meaning that the whole of the Southcourt estate is without a pub and we understand that a pub does not form part of the plans for the new centre!

Various refurbishments and some improvements are being made to the **Chiltern** brewery tap, the **Farmers' Bar** at the **Kings Head**, including the installation of some solid oak furniture. The furniture is being made by a local cabinet maker, whose workshop is on the farm where the brewery's spent grains are used to feed cattle.

Last issue, we missed out the news that the work on the **Old Plough and Harrow** has been completed and it is now an Indian restaurant called the **Shensha**, which has moved from Cambridge Street.

The **Queens Head** has shut yet again. This 'Village Pub in the heart of Aylesbury' used to be a favourite real ale haunt but has steadily fallen further and further onto hard times. It will need a lot of work, and TLC, but we've learnt that it is to receive a major refurbishment and will hopefully regain its former glory.

Vandals have made repeated attempts to damage the **Steeplechase**. The whole ground floor of the pub seems to have been totally vandalised -- all the windows broken and so on, and it is doubtful whether it can be ever opened again as a pub without completely gutting the building.

Having been one of the largest towns in the country without a **Wetherspoons** pub they are like buses, as soon as we get one, we get another one close behind! The **White Hart** opened for business on Friday, 2 July, on the site of the former **Chicago Rock Cafe** in Exchange Street. The pub has undergone a £830,000 refurbishment programme and a total of 45 new jobs have been created. The **White Hart** falls under **Wetherspoon's Lloyds No.1** brand, offering music and will feature a dance floor and there will be music throughout the week, with a DJ on Monday, Friday and Saturday nights. The pub's name refers to the historic **White Hart Inn**, which stood on the site of the Exchange Leisure Park. It dated back to Tudor times, was rebuilt in 1814, and then demolished in 1864. The **White Hart** is wheelchair accessible and has a specially adapted toilet for customers with disabilities. There is a beer garden to the front of the premises, where smoking is permitted and photos and information boards relating to the history and characters of the town are also displayed.

BIERTON

At the **Red Lion**, the kitchen has been refurbished as well as the bar and restaurant, which have switched positions. **St. Austell Tribute** has proved so popular with the locals, that it has been made a standard offering alongside other changing ales such as **Black Sheep Best Bitter**.

BRILL

The seventh annual beer festival takes place at the **Brill Sports and Social Club** over the weekend of Saturday, Sunday and Monday, 28-30th of August.

CHINNOR

A beer festival will be held on the 28th August at the playing fields in Chinnor. Everyone is welcome although proof of age will be required if you are lucky enough to look under 25, and would like to sample their delicious ales and alcoholic beverages! The event is free, with the beer tasting opening at 11am and aiming to finish at 6pm. They will have over fifteen local ales plus cider, perry, Pimm's, and soft drinks. Breweries confirmed so far are **Vale**, **Rebellion**, **Tring**, **Chiltern**, **Compass** and **Thame** breweries with more to

come! A barbecue will be selling food along with a vegetarian option which will be available from 11:30 for those who get a bit peckish!

CROWELL

The **Shepherd's Crook** will be holding their eighth annual beer festival over August Bank Holiday (Friday 27th - Monday 30th). There will be twenty real ales available plus ferret racing and a live band.

CUDDINGTON

The **Crown** serves **Fullers London Pride** and **Adnams Bitter** supported by the **Fullers** seasonal offering.

DINTON

The **Seven Stars**' new owners, Kevin in the kitchen and Jenny front-of-house, are serving **Timothy Taylors Landlord** and **Black Sheep Best Bitter** along with one rotating guest ale. New revamped web site www.7starsdinton.co.uk. Tuesday night Fish & Chips £5.95, eat in or take away. Restaurant fully operational with fresh menu.

FORD

The **Dinton Hermit** specialises in serving local ales only, rotating **Vale Best**, **Chiltern Beechwood** or **Copper Beech** and **Rebellion Smuggler**, any two of which are usually available.

GIBRALTAR

The **Bottle and Glass** serves **Greene King IPA** and a **Greene King** guest.

HADDENHAM

At the **Green Dragon** fresh salad and veg from the resurrected kitchen garden can be washed down by **Sharpe's Doombar** or **Rebellion Smuggler** along with a guest such as **Woodforde's Wherry**.

The **Kings Head** serves **Adnams Bitter** and **Fullers London Pride** plus one guest which could be **Wadworths 6X**.

Red Lion's permanent fixtures are **Adnams Bitter**, **Tetley's Mild**, **Black Sheep Bitter** with one rotating guest.

The **Rising Sun** is having a make-over the first week of August which will result in food availability and free WiFi. Straight from the barrel is the order of the day here, with two or even three **Vale** beers available and an ever changing guest.

At the **Rose & Thistle Hardy and Hansons Olde Trip** is supported by **Greene King IPA** and the **Greene King** seasonal offering such as **Bonkers Conkers**. Daily menu for Senior Citizens. Brass Band event in the garden on 19th September.

HAMBLEDEN

Andy Stokes has left the **Stag and Huntsman** and is now running the **Chequers** in Watlington. The new manager at the **Stag and Huntsman**,

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LOCAL NEWS



Claire Hollis, will still be running the annual beer festival and this takes place over the weekend of Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th of September.

HAZLEMERE

The **Three Horseshoes** is being refurbished and repainted.

HIGH WYCOMBE

We have heard that the Wycombe Society are still fighting against the demolition of the **Halfway House**. It is a listed building, but parts of the roof have been removed and some doors are open, so the elements are undermining the structure. Parts of the **Friend at Hand** were listed and that didn't stop its destruction. Guess what - they left parts of the roof off and the building was pulled down when it became unsafe!

The **Golden Fleece** is now under the control of Eamonn Hanlon who also runs the **Four Horseshoes** in Stokenchurch.

High Wycombe Rugby Club will be holding a beer festival on Friday 19th and Saturday 20th of November. They are playing their rivals Marlow at home and as it is their biggest fixture so the festival is themed 'Rivals' and each brewery they are using spells the name of each club and beers named to suit our theme

The **Iron Duke** is shut and it looks like it will probably stay that way!

KINGSHILL

The new houses on the site of the **Royal Oak** are nearing completion. They look very nice, but they are not a pub. That pub was a huge loss for the area and for the locals who drank there. Support your local pub or you might end up with a building site instead!

LACEY GREEN

The annual joint beer festival between the **Whip** and the **Wheel**, Naphill, will take place on Friday 10th and Saturday 11th of September.

MARLOW

Brakspear's owned High Street public house the **Chequers** reopened on Friday 23rd July after two years closure and a major refurbishment. The lease has been taken by **Taylor Made Steaks** whose motto translates as 'Beyond Expectation' and Geoff Nell is the General Manager of their new Marlow establishment. The company already own other pubs in the Thames Valley area with the nearest to Marlow being in Playhatch and in Nettlebed, Oxfordshire.

On opening day the four real ales available were **Brakspear Bitter** (3.4% ABV), **Oxford Gold** (4.0%), **Hooray Henley** (4.0%) and **Wychwood Hobgoblin** (4.5%) and the range will alter slightly as the seasons unfold.

A big 'Welcome back to Marlow' for this popular town centre pub and kitchen.

NAPHILL

The annual joint beer festival between the **Wheel** and the **Whip**, Lacey Green, will take place on Friday 10th and Saturday 11th of September.

OAKLEY

The **Royal Oak** is closed and its owners, **Vale Brewery**, have been trying to sell it for quite a while and have now applied to the local planning authorities for a change of use. Naturally we hope that it can be proved that the village can support two public houses, the **Chandos Arms** as well as the **Royal Oak**, and that the change of use application will be rejected.

QUAINTON

The **George & Dragon** will be having a beer festival on Saturday 25th September 2010 (Noon - Midnight). There will be ten real ales and three ciders, and traction engines from Quainton Steam Fair visiting from 4pm!

SAUNDERTON

The **Rose & Crown** is holding their beer festival over the weekend of Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd of August. There will be over thirty real ales, ciders and perrys. There is a £5 entrance fee (£4 for **CAMRA** members) which includes a souvenir beer tankard. Why not join the branch their for the social on the Saturday?

SPEEN

On Sunday 8th of August the **King William IV** will be holding a beer festival with ten real ales and ciders with a barbecue and the Porsche GT 3 club will be coming along with to show off their cars!

THAME

At the **Cross Keys**, they have passed the 650 different beers mark. **Vale Best** is always available and quite often one of the **Thame Brewery** beers. A talking point at the moment is the rampant hop which is growing in the courtyard, up the walls, over the roof and will soon be halfway down Thame High Street devouring everything in sight.

The **Falcon**, since the **Star and Garter** changed to **Wenmans**, is holding the regular Thursday quizzes with cash prizes for the winner. They also have a snowball quiz, where five devious questions are asked and you win if you get all five right. On 6th August there is a karaoke night and on 7th August, they are holding a seafood feast with up to fourteen fish and seafood dishes. They are putting on **Hooky Gold** (4.1) and **Hook Norton Haymaker** (5.0) to compliment the food. Wines are also available. For the summer they are introducing a new Sunday lunch menu and will always - hopefully - be having three **Hook Norton** beers and one guest beer (**Fullers Summer** (3.9) in July).

The **James Figg**, is being managed by Owain Jones, a Welshman who is passionate about beer. In early July, they ran a successful 'meet the brewer evening' when brewers from **Vale**, **Purity**, the **Cotswold Lager Brewing Company**, **Hook Norton** and **Charles Wells** brought along samples for tasting and were available to answer any questions from those attending.

Currently on offer are **Vale Best** (3.7), **Charles Wells Bombardier** (4.3), **Purity Mad Goose** (4.2) and the guest beer **Hook Norton Cotswold Lion** (4.2). Each month, customers have the power to decide which guest beer to have, all done democratically on a blackboard. Choose any one from five on offer. The one with the most marks, wins. Quiz nights are starting again, every two weeks. Entry is £2 and there are cash prizes and a roast dinner for four people. There is also a booby prize for last place.

WENDOVER

Refurbishment continues at the **Marquis of Granby**, Worlds End, and a sign outside says it will reopen on 12th August (the Glorious 12th!).

WEST WYCOMBE

The **George and Dragon** is holding a beer festival on Saturday 28th of August. There will be a hog roast, a live band and ten real ales to enjoy.

Christine Barry will be celebrating 100 years of her family being at the **Swan**

during September, which is a fantastic achievement in these days when pubs seem to change hands every week. The pub was taken over by her maternal grandmother from the Beauchamp side of the family on 10th September 1910 and we hope to be there to help celebrate the centenary.

Further information about the pubs in the village can be found on a new website: <http://www.westwycombevillage.com>.

WING

The **Cock** reopened on Monday 12th July. Now leased by **Orchid Inns** the new managers are Aidan and Noreen Murphy, previously well known to the real ale drinkers of Hillingdon, near Uxbridge, where their former pub was the **Grapes**.

It will continue as a traditional pub restaurant featuring an a la carte menu as well as a carvery, both being available from 12 to 9.30pm seven days a week. They currently have three ales on handpump. **Wells Bombardier** is the mainstay, plus two ever changing guests - one from **Hook Norton** and the other from **Rebellion** at present - good to see the latter up in these parts.

Noreen tells us that they plan to make the pub more community orientated than it has been of late. They hope to soon be hosting quiz and games nights such as dominoes crib etc and are also intending to have quarterly gala charity events. Watch this space.

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Court House, Dudley

Memories of the Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe Branch of CAMRA's Black Country Trip.

July 2010



Beacon Hotel, Sedgley

If there was a World Cup contested by pubs for speed of food service then the **Coach and Horses** would probably be a finalist. Within ten minutes of ordering they can serve up perfectly cooked fish and chips or faggots – their speciality. It's well worth a detour off junction three of the M42 motorway in preference to stopping at the services – where you'd probably spend as much time queuing to pay as you would enjoying a pint in this pub.

The pub is the home of the *Weatheroak Hill* brewery (not to be confused with the *Weatheroak Brewery*) and serves a selection of their ales as well as many others. It made a great warm up for our annual venture into the depths of the Black Country on the second Saturday of July. The pub has a wonderfully verdant beer garden which we enjoyed along with the best weather for the trip in several years – with temperatures well into the 70s and a lot of sunshine. Our trip was delayed from its usual slot at the end of June in anticipation that England's assured progress from an easy group in the World Cup would see them playing on the last Saturday in the month. What foolish optimism.

There must also have been plenty of Germany and Uruguay fans in our normal Black Country trip contingent – our numbers were down a little on last year and the third-place playoff seemed to be the only rational reason why anyone would miss out on this highlight of the bibulous year.

After refreshment at the **Coach and Horses** it was back on the coach for 45 minutes until we kicked off the Black Country visit proper by arriving at the **Beacon Hotel**, Sedgley. This is the home of *Sarah Hughes* ales whose *Sedgley Surprise* and legendary *Dark Ruby Mild* scored highly.

The pub is a remarkable collection of Victorian rooms clustered around an island bar with a jungle-like conservatory attached – and a large garden. The brewery is housed in a tower towards the back of the pub.

Continued on page 10



Bull & Bladder, Brierley Hill

Constantine & Louise Lucas welcome you to

The Hampden Arms

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The range of beer at the Windsor Castle, Lye

'Black Country Memories' - Continued from page 8

From Sedgley we went on to a new fixture – the **Court House** in Dudley. This town-centre pub has recently been rejuvenated by **Black Country Ales** and was recommended by the local **CAMRA** branch. Some of our group likened the **Court House** to the **Hop Pole** in Aylesbury – being a no-nonsense boozier that is aimed squarely at the real ale drinker. When we visited there were an amazing 14 to choose from.

After the Dudley detour it was back to one of the timeless old favourites – the **Old Swan** in Netherton. Not only has the classic Victorian interior has earned a place on the **CAMRA National Inventory** but the pub also brews its own range of superb ales. These include *Dark Swan*, *Entire* and the very curiously named *Bumblehole*, which conjures up unfortunate images of a brewer suffering a bee sting in a very awkward place – or worse.

Next was the **Bull and Bladder** in Brierley Hill, another pub it would be impossible to omit from the itinerary. The pub is another architectural gem. It has the quotation from 'Two Gentlemen of Verona' emblazoned across its frontage: 'Blessing of your heart, you brew good ale.' As well as being a mecca for pork scratchings, the pub is also **Batham's** brewery tap – and plenty of *Mild* and *Best Bitter* washed down their perfect pork pies.

No Black Country trip would be the same without the walkabout, where the coach parks amid a haven of great pubs and we stroll between the alehouses. Perhaps staggerabout might be more appropriate, as at this point we'd been sampling ale for over six hours and it can feel like extra time is approaching.

This year we visited Lye, which is between Halesowen and Stourbridge and is home to two **Good Beer Guide** pubs. The **Windsor Castle** is the tap house for the **Windsor Castle Brewery** – makers of the **Sadler's** range of beers. It's a modern, comfortable pub and the spicily-named **Worcester Sorcerer** was buried in the corner before the keeper could move.



The handpumps at the Waggon & Horses, Halesowen



Windsor Castle, Lye

Just up the road is the **Shovel** – an old-fashioned, traditional pub that, yet again in this area, keeps a range of real ales that stretches well into double figures – 13 according to the **Good Beer Guide**.

As is the tradition, the somewhat by-now weary travellers, finished up at 8pm at the Halesowen real ale paradise – the **Waggon and Horses**. This is another pub that offers a stunning range of real ales – ten are usually on offer. With the coach leaving at 9.15pm some difficult decisions were required about what to choose for the last pint – or perhaps two or even three who wanted to round off the day with a quick fire penalty shootout.

While England's footballers may have put on a dreadful performance this summer, the Black Country trip shows that England still has plenty of classic pubs and superb ales that are well worth raising one's glass for. **Charlie Mackle**

< If you missed the trip this year, don't despair as we will be running it again next year. This will be in June as there is no clash with a major sports event. The date will be announced in Swan Supping next year. – Ed >

CHINNOR BEER FESTIVAL

Chinnor Beer Festival

Adjutant General's Marching Band

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*Only 50p per session

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Children's Entertainment

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Over 15 local Real Ales, Cider, Perrys and Pims

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28th August 2010

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A NEW HOME FOR TRING BREWERY



After many months of planning and hard work, **Tring Brewery** are proud to announce the opening of their new site on Dunsley Farm, Tring, which is situated opposite the Tesco supermarket. As part of the move, the brewery has also gone for an updated version of their logo (pictured above).

Spokesperson, Ben Marston commented, 'The current site in Akeman Street has served us very well over the last 14 years, allowing us to produce a number of great beers, many of them award winning. However, we are extremely fortunate that the increasing popularity of our product range

has left us struggling to meet demand. We have simply now outgrown the existing facility'.

Their new site (pictured below) provides them with the opportunity to further enhance our position within this exciting industry as well as increase our levels of service to all customers. Of equal importance is that it allows them to aim for greater levels of brewing excellence and possibly experiment with some new beers and bottled varieties.



The new facility boasts an impressive shop (pictured left) that also serves as a hospitality area for brewery tours and a great viewing point out onto the new brewing plant. As soon as the brewery is fully on stream, we will organise a brewery tour - keep an eye on the branch diary in future issues.

The shop and office opened from Monday 19th July with the brewery plant due to be up and running by mid August, after which the Akeman Street site will be decommissioned. More information can be found on their website (www.tringbrewery.co.uk).

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LOCAL BEER FESTIVALS

**Ascot Beer Festival**

Where can you enjoy both an excellent program of horse racing and get to drink load of traditional beer?

The *4th Ascot Beer Festival* will be held on Friday 24th and Saturday 25th of September at

the famous racecourse. There is even more beer available this year with over 200 real ales plus ciders and perries, all at £2.80 per pint. There will also be live music and hot and cold food is available all day.

Details: The bar opens Friday 11am-4.55pm; Saturday 11am-5.25pm. Prices are as follows: Friday from £11 (£5.50 for *CAMRA* members) and Saturday from £20 (£10 for *CAMRA* members). Accompanied children 17 and under are free. A limited edition commemorative glass is included. For advance tickets call 0870 727 1234 or visit www.ascot.co.uk (quoting *CAMRA10*). There is a £2 transaction fee if using credit card.

A bus trip from the **Hop Pole**, Aylesbury, on the Saturday has been discussed - please contact the editor for further details (contact information on page 30).

**St. Albans Beer Festival**

The *St. Albans Beer Festival* will be held at the Alban Arena, Civic Centre, which is a short walk from St Albans City or Abbey railway stations, from Wednesday 29th September till Saturday 2nd of October.

In the six bars, over 350 real ales, plus cider and perry, will be available, as well as bottle-conditioned beers and a large range of foreign beers (from all over the world).

There will be daily breweriana auctions and tombola plus a prize quiz on Saturday. there is also live musical entertainment with special guests the Climax Blues Band on Saturday evening.



The *7th Summer Haddenham Real Ale Festival* took place on 3rd July at Haddenham Community Centre. A perfect summer day brought out record crowds for the event, and they were greeted by 70 barrels of real ale and lagers, and 25 different ciders, in addition the Pimms and wine bars, and a great variety of hot and cold foods. Day-long entertainment included Appalachian Dancers, Morris men, a Jazz band, and groups playing into the evening. Despite continuing until 9.30 p.m. we did not quite run out of beer; only the Pimms bar could not quite last the distance.

The committee as always thank the gallant sponsors of the event, who make the whole thing possible, the army of helpers who keep the wheels turning, and the many visitors who attended, and enjoyed their day. We hope to see you all at next year's Festival on Saturday 2nd July, same place, same time.

Winterfest will be Saturday 11th December, from 12 noon to 5 p.m. It will take place in most of the Village Hall complex, the Scout and Guide Centre and part of the Banks Park play area. We are sorry to leave Manor Farm Barn, but very pleased that the event can take place in the festive season before Christmas. Further details can be found on www.haddenham-beer-festival.co.uk.

Doug Harrison, Haddenham Festival Committee member.

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at

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August Bank Holiday Weekend

27th - 30th August

Over **20** real ales from all over the country

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GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL



Britain's biggest beer festival
3rd - 7th August 2010
Earls Court, London

The *Great British Beer Festival* at Earls Court, Britain's biggest beer festival, once again brings together a wide range of real ales, ciders, perries and international beers.

There's plenty to occupy you at the festival, you can play on some traditional pub games, enjoy live music, sample some food, including good traditional pub snacks, and also attend tutored beer tastings.

At the 2010 Festival there will be twelve *CAMRA* bars. These bars contain beer from alphabetically sorted *Good Beer Guide* regions (starting with Aberdeen & Grampian and ending with Worcestershire), therefore good places to start if you want to find real ale from your favourite part of the country.

As this is the *Great British Beer Festival*, it has been decided to have British heroes as a theme and this year have named the *CAMRA* bars after British military heroes. In order to provide some practical support for British military heroes the Royal British Legion have been invited to be the charity of the festival and they will be fundraising to campaign for the serving and ex-Service community.

There is also a Young and Upcoming Breweries bar which offers some tasty brews from some of Britain's newest breweries, and the Real Ale in a Bottle Bar, offering a large number of the 1,300 currently available to buy in the UK at present. For lovers of real cider and perry a visit to the Cider Bar is essential with up to 100 ciders and perries available.

The main beer list for the festival is available live on the website and there are over 520 different real ales for you to browse through.

There is also the 'Create a Beer List' feature, which allows you to make a list of all the beers you want to try at this year's festival. You can update the list before the festival and then print it out and bring it with you.

Tickets for this year's festival are now available to purchase online at <http://gbbf.camra.org.uk/buytickets> or by calling 0844 412 4640.

By purchasing advance day tickets you will receive a £2 discount on the door price and will be able to avoid the main queue on arrival. Please note there is a £1 transaction fee per order. Tickets are priced £6 for *CAMRA* members and £8 for non-*CAMRA* members).



Brill Beer

Award winning beers available direct from the brewery.

- **SIBA GOLD Medal** – Gravitas our highly hopped premium ale was voted the best Premium Ale by the Independent Brewers Association this year.
- **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.

OUR BEERS:

Vale Best Bitter 3.7% ABV - Light copper hoppy bitter
 Wychert 3.9% - Rich malty auburn bitter
 Vale Pale Ale 4.2% ABV - Dry hoppy golden ale
 Edgars Golden Ale 4.3% - English golden best bitter
 Vale Special 4.5% ABV - Bronze Premium Bitter
 Grumpling Old Ale 4.6% - Ruby brown premium ale
 Gravitas 4.8% - Pale Premium hoppy bitter
 Black Swan Mild 3.9% - Dark smooth rich mild
 Black Beauty Porter 4.3% - Full bodied dark porter

A worldwide selection of wines are available, along with bottled Thatchers cider.

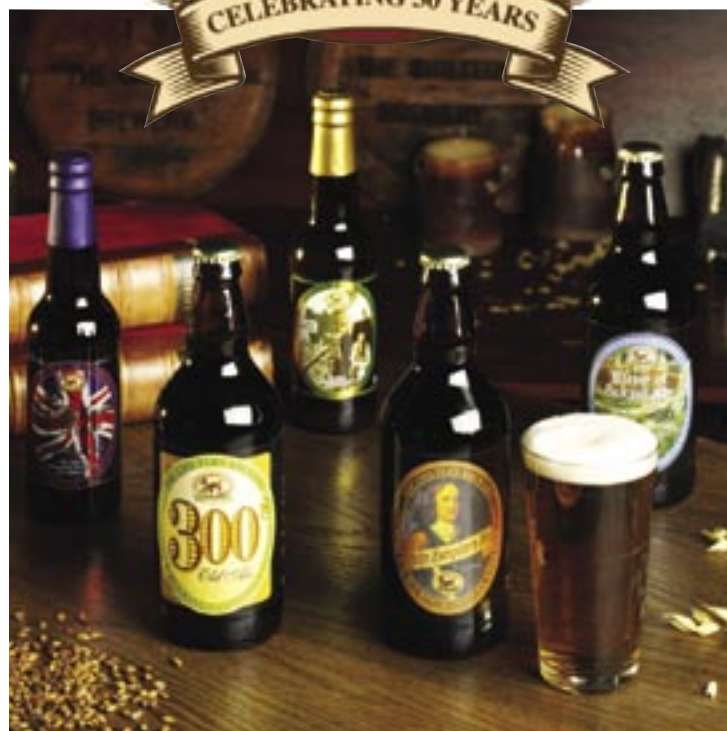
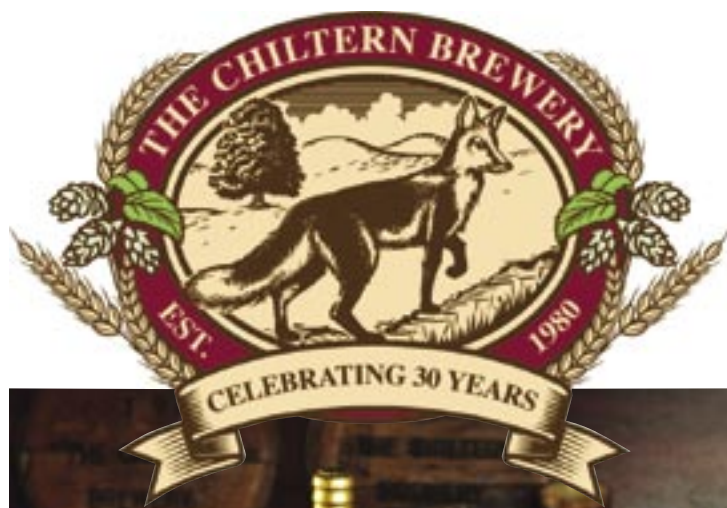


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Buckinghamshire HP17 0TQ
Tel 01296 613647



It was September 1980 when Richard Jenkinson proudly presided over the inaugural brew from his newly established *Chiltern Brewery*, vindication for his decision to swap his daily commute to a City of London job to concentrate on and make an alternative career out of his hobby; brewing beer. Later that morning an adult fox was spied moving through the undergrowth in the paddock at the back of the brewery buildings before it stopped in front of a majestic beech tree. It was a magical moment and to become the inspiration for the now famous brewery logo so familiar to lovers of real ales in Buckinghamshire and beyond.

That first brew was the start of a wonderful success story. The business started by Richard and his wife, Lesley, has grown from strength to strength. Now in its 30th anniversary year, and the oldest independent brewery in Buckinghamshire and the Chilterns, the *Chiltern Brewery* is run by their sons, Tom and George and Tom's wife Charlotte. The dynasty was recently extended to three generations, but only just, with the birth of Tom and Charlotte's baby, Rosie, in May this year.

Tom and George have inherited their parent's belief in hard work, their eye for detail and their passion for brewing fine English ales of the highest quality using natural wholesome ingredients including the best class A malt and hops sourced in England. Their brewing process mirrors age old methods, addressing sustainability and environmental issues as well. 'All our used malt is collected by our local farmer, who lives just a quarter of a mile away, to feed his beef cattle herd' says Tom. 'Also, the spent hops are dug out after each brew and emptied into spent malt sacks then sold to local gardeners as highly regarded mulch, from the brewery shop.'

The brewery sits on the site of an old working farm, just off the B4009 in the village of Terrick, near Wendover. The old cow shed for that farm, now unrecognisable with its wide polished boards and a counter created from barrels and old brewery equipment, is home to a major innovation to the business from 1987; the brewery shop. It sells the full range of draught and bottled ales, a huge selection of *Chiltern Brewery* chandlery products created with the beers and ales including cheese, sausages, chocolate, fruit cake, fudge and shampoo and also complementary foods sourced from fellow farmers' market stalls.

Whilst loyal customers enjoy the consistency and depth of the traditionally rooted recipes that have been perfected and developed over the past thirty years at the brewery, Tom and George also relish the opportunity to innovate and broaden the palate. The 30th year anniversary celebrations have proved to be just the inspiration they and their staff needed to give full reign to their creative skills and brew some wonderful new ale. *Bodgers Barley Wine*, a staple of the current range, was originally brewed to celebrate the 10th anniversary in 1990 and *Lord-Lieutenant's Porter* for the 20th. The *Battle of Britain* bottled ale launched at the Officers' mess at RAF Halton in 2001 was also a great success and still has a loyal following.

As to this year, *Chiltern Pearl* was the first of the special anniversary brews to be released and proved so popular that it sold out within three weeks of the launch! Next of the three special draughts for the occasion is *Golden Ale*.

CLASS AND SAY CHEERS TO THIRTY YEARS!

in August, to be followed by *Winter's Tail* in November. A special bottled ale due for release at the end of the summer is simply entitled *30th Anniversary Ale* and promises much: it is triple hopped and bottle conditioned. At the same time the release of seasonal non-celebratory beers continues. 'It has been a very exciting year so far' says George Jenkinson. 'We are immensely proud of what the family has achieved and we have relished the opportunity to celebrate this anniversary in style.' That is exactly what they have achieved.

Chiltern Brewery is a multi award winner too for its fine ales. At the highly respected Reading Beer Festival in May this year *Chiltern Pearl* won the gold medal in the bitter category while *Beechwood Bitter* came top in the Best Bitter category. A wonderful achievement. Last year George and Tom saw high recognition for their *300's Old Ale* at the *SIBA Midlands* regional competition in October. With over 500 beers from 240 breweries at the beer festival, the **Chiltern Brewery** was awarded silver medal in the 'porters, strong mild, old ales and stouts' category. That wasn't the end of the good news or accolades either as the *Glad Tidings* winter stout won a gold medal in its bottled beer category.

Brewery tours have been popular since the very early days of the business. Some readers may remember the wonderful *Swan Supping* feature to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the brewery, in 2005, entitled 'A home-brew kit that got out of hand', which featured the hugely amusing story of Richard Jenkinson's polite attempts to get a group of agricultural students to 'move on' after a tour when there was so much beer still to be drunk on the premises. Those difficulties are now behind them and the tours have become more sophisticated over the years as the facilities have added immeasurably to the experience. Tom and George are seeking to make yet more improvements to the format at the time of writing.



As if all this wasn't enough, for the last five years the brewery has run the **Farmers' Bar** at the **Kings Head** pub in Aylesbury.

'It's been wonderful to have a direct outlet for our beers' says George who is fascinated by the place. 'If history is your thing then this is definitely the right building.' Owned by the National Trust and dating from 1455 this charming beamed and very atmospheric drinking hole boasts Henry VI, Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn and Oliver Cromwell as previous guests.

It has strong associations with the civil war and is the oldest court-yarded coaching inn in Britain. More recently it was established as a hotel by the Rothschilds.

The ancient archway and cobbled passageway promise much and it doesn't disappoint. The bar stocks an excellent selection of the brewery's draught and bottled beers together with good quality wines from the Waddesdon Estate and excellent food. The **Farmers' Bar** has a

bill of fare which combines classic dishes using **Chiltern's** fine English ales and many locally sourced ingredients. The pub has won awards too. One of them is a 'Beautiful Beer' award which is basically 'a Michelin star for pubs' as Tom puts it. The **King's Head** is a real treat, hidden away at the top of the old market square in the town and well worth a visit.

Bringing the story right up to date, the latest innovation is a fantastic new website featuring an on-line store that has transformed sales and exactly captures the feel and spirit of the brewery.

Moving firmly into the 21st century the company's van has now been 'wrapped' to show you exactly what you are missing while you are out and about and wasting time by not drinking or eating the brewery's products at home, at the brewery shop or in the **Farmers' Bar**! Happy times!



CHILE, PERU AND MORE



Following High Wycombe Rugby Clubs Spring beer festival, the Buckinghamshire V Devon & Cornwall festival in March 2010, the touring party finally raised enough from past events to reach our target, so long over due after four years of planning, three years of raising of the funds needed we were off to Chile. First the capital Santiago, where we would play Stade France, COBS and then onto Arica way up in the Northern part of the Atacama Desert Chile.

I personally would like, with full support from HWRUFC, to thank all that contributed to assist us in achieving our tour and charitable donations for the two Schools and clubs in Santiago and Arica. The kind people who helped support us with funds and donations, unfortunately for this article are more than I can list without running out of type; however, I would like in this note to recognise two special couples who with their patrons, helped us tremendously towards achieving our goal. Thanks to Nick, Julie and patrons from the **Whip**, Lacey Green, and Mark, Claire and patrons from the **Wheel**, Naphill. All were hugely supportive of our quest, inspirational in helping me organise festivals these last three years and thanked by me in a recent personal themed presentation (top two pictures).

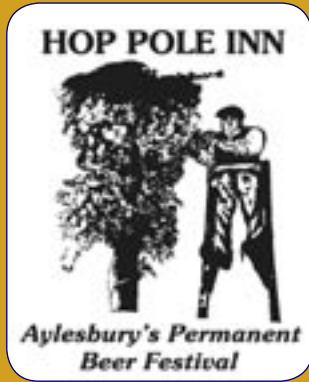
Traveling for three weeks away from home for me was helped by a supportive wife, Julie and family so I was lucky enough to have stayed on with four friends to achieve a life long ambition

of making it to Machu Picchu in Peru with Nick Collins, Gary Cannings, Mike Darvill and Mike Wilson (pictured). All there sampled the local beer 'Chicha' (inset in the picture), made from fermenting corn brewed in the Sacred Valley near Cusco. One for the acquired taste, though!

Well after popular demand and with my love of experiencing new tastes, I can announce that we will have another festival on the 19th and 20th of November. This time our theme will be based on 'Rivals' which, brings me to our closest, who over many years have been our fiercest rival! Many a battle we've had year on year, from Kingsmead to the Riverside, so for the uninformed and local Rugby enthusiasts we are theming this winter's festival at High Wycombe's home game between High Wycombe RUFC and Marlow RFC.

To celebrate this event against our old rivals, the theme will be based on breweries spelling the club name, with rival beers and quips about the clubs, obviously in the best possible tradition, taste of local banter, long standing respect and friendship. So come and try a taste of good old Rugby Hospitality, where we play our home league fixture against Marlow and enjoy competitive Rugby, Good Beer, Good Food, Music and the Local Craic....Cheers....

Nick Kidby, Beer Festival Organiser



The Hop Pole, Aylesbury

Autumn Beer Festival
Thursday 14th – Sunday 17th October

30 Real Ales 8 Ciders / Perrys

Food Available Live Music

Check our website closer to the date for more details
www.hop-pole.co.uk

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HP14 3AB

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BEER FESTIVAL

28th August 2010

10 real ales on offer
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Open all Bank Holiday Weekends!

TOWERSEY MORRIS



Towersey Morris are pictured outside the **Swan** in Great Kimble in early July. They danced with their guests on the night, Aldbury Morris Men, and were due to visit the nearby **Plough** at Cadsden on the same night.

Over the summer they planned to dance at many of the pubs in the Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe branch area, particularly those in picturesque rural areas.

By the time this issue of *Swan Supping* goes to press most of their engagements will be over but they can be seen at the **Crown** in Sydenham on Wednesday 25th August and at their spiritual home, the **Three Horseshoes**, on Friday 27th August at the opening of the Towersey Festival.

Like **CAMRA** members, the Morris dancers are traditionally partial to a drop of real ale to lubricate their terpsichorean pastime.

Mike Clarke

LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

Vale Brewery



August sees the launch of **SCRUFF Gold**.

This is a 4.3% brew and supports the ongoing work at the **Brill Sports and Social Club**.

The beer has Northdown and Chinook hops giving a grassy aroma, and complements the golden colour, creating a delightful summer bitter.

The pump badge features the logo and **SCRUFF Gold** along with another **SCRUFF** beer will be available at the Brill Beer Festival on August bank holiday weekend.

At the Reading beer festival *Gravitas* won the

LoCale Gold for Premium Bitter and was Bronze overall.

The new twenty-barrel plant is now in place and test brews have proved very successful. Our planned branch visit to the brewery to see the new plant at the end of July was postponed due to so many branch members being on holiday. With all the tempting beer festivals at this time of year no date has yet been agreed for the rearranged fixture, but details will be available as soon as possible on our branch website. We are hoping to get the **Hop Pole** in Aylesbury involved to get a few of their regulars to join in to reduce the costs of coach hire as it is impossible to get to Brill by public transport!

Local Real Ale Pub To Receive £110,000 Refurbishment

The **Queens Head**, situated on Temple Square in the Old Town of Aylesbury is to undergo a complete transformation after its Landlord, Punch Partnerships, announced their intention to invest £110,000 in the pub. The site has had a troubled history over the last 2 years and is currently closed.

However the investment, which will see vast improvements to both the internal and external areas of the pub will ensure it has the potential to be a superb mid market pub with a great lunch time offer.

Surrounded by offices and in the heart of the town it is perfectly placed to serve its local market and with a strong real ale offer it will have everything in place, except one thing – A Landlord.

If you know of anyone who would be interested in this fantastic opportunity and be a part of its transformation to bring it back to a great town centre pub, get in touch!



Call Jo on 0844 848 3260 for further details and to find out about the Open Day we will be holding soon!

George & Dragon, Quainton

5 real ales. Good Beer Guide listed

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STEWKLEY SWANFEST

The second weekend of June turned out to be quite a memorable one in Stewkley this year. The annual St Michaels School Fete coincided by chance with the first ever *Swanfest* to result in an unforgettable two days of pure fun.

The fete started with a grand parade through the village with a prize for the best float, followed by a fancy dress competition. The theme throughout was music and the many traditional stalls were supported by childrens entertainment and the Great Horwood Silver Band.

Meanwhile, not far away, at the *Swan*, in the huge back garden, a two day Beer and Music Festival was just starting.

A marquee housed the 23 ales on offer from 11 breweries and a full sized, covered soundstage erected at the far end to accommodate the four bands that had been booked. One outside bar provided soft drinks and another the wine and lager. A barbeque backed up the food aspect and three big screens – one in the marquee and two in the pub – so not to miss the World Cup, Grand Prix and other sports over the weekend.

So, as it seemed, as the fete goes started home, many discovered this new event and stayed awhile in the *Swan's* garden enjoying a drink and listening to the music whilst their children – still in fancy dress and face paint – had a great time as well. Some, more local, stayed longer or went home and came back for the evening. Some stayed all night – until closing.

Twenty three ales graced the Marquee bar and all but three had gone by the end of Sunday evening. Most were from micro or small regional brewers: *Adnams, Brains, B&T, Cottage, Exmoor, Hopback, Otter, Potbelly, Sharps, Tring and Vale.*



Landlord Jim Meadows and his wife Toni actually drove their van to the West Country to collect some of the beers to ensure they got them in good time. All were in good form at the event but worthy of special mention were: *Potbelly Pigs do Fly* 4.4%, – YES THEY DO, - *Hopback Summer Lightning* 5%, - first to go – *Cottage Cactus Jack* 4.1%, *Otter Ale* 4.5%, *Vale Two Bob Bitter* 4.4% and the aptly named *Exmoor Beast* 6.6% - an effective amnesiac. ‘They went so quickly we didn’t need to put the wet towels on them’ was one comment.

The four bands all went down well. The first at lunchtime Saturday was of a fairly gentle blues nature ideal for the time of day – the Ian Briggs Band, all the way from the West Country. Similarly, Late afternoon Palmerston played a mixture of rock and blues covers. A little later they were followed by landlord Jim Meadows own band, English Mustard, consisting of himself and sons Stacy Jimbo and Dax. In fact the whole event was a family affair. Daughters Alexa and Vicky both served food and drink, Toni ran the main outside bar and oversaw most things when Jim was on stage and son in law Russ did the disco. Musical finale on the Saturday was the well known rock cover band Maxwell Hammer and Smith, back by popular demand from earlier this year, who played until just after midnight.

The event was well attended throughout, many of the first time visitors have become more frequent and it is still the talk of the village. I am sure many are hoping for a similar occasion next year, and would like to join me in thanks to Jim, Toni and family for all the hard work it involved.

Perhaps worth a coach trip next year?

Mick White



THE GRAVEDIGGER'S ARMS - PART 6

Clive and James climbed the steps out of the cellar after their inspection of the keg beer section, disinfected with neat bleach, and the fluorescent, fungus-encrusted real ale barrels.

'Now,' said Clive. 'We new owners – that's Gordon, Will and myself – were thinking that what we always thought was lacking in this pub was a conceptual mime artist. Come and meet Mariela Meringue.'

'Mime artist? Surely what you need is friendly bar staff if you want me to make any money,' said James. 'Lisa smiles less often than Tony cleaned his real ale lines.'

'Can anyone avoid smiling in over twenty years?' asked Clive. He paused. 'Yes, you're probably right – Tony couldn't abide encouraging customers – he wanted them to know who was in charge.'

Smiling wasn't a problem for Mariela Meringue. She stood behind the bar in a tight red leotard, hair scraped back into a bun and teeth clamped together in a rictus grin. She mimed picking up a glass and then held the imaginary pint before her, flicking the top of an invisible tap then tilting her hand as if filling the glass.

James was agog at the spectacle, about to walk out on the absurd spectacle when he realised the advantage of mute bar staff – they couldn't insult the customers, verbally anyway. Instead, he decided on a test to throw this French freak. 'None of that keg lager rubbish for me. I'll have a pint of Fit Shaced – 7%.'

Mariela the mime-artist put down the pint she was filling, grabbed another imperceptible glass from a virtual shelf and bent her arm as if pulling hard on a handpump in a rather impressive dispensing action. She 'served' the drink to James.

'How is it?' asked Clive.

James took an imaginary sip, playing along grudgingly. 'Best pint I've ever had here,' he said. 'But you can't make money serving invisible beer – even if it *is* an improvement on that poison in the cellar.'

'I want a pub that supports the local arts,' said Clive.

'She's local?' asked James. 'From where?'

Mariela suddenly clutched her stomach as if doubled in pain. She then stopped and made a digging motion, like turning over soil with a shovel.

'What the?' James had almost had enough but then twiggled. 'Ah, erm, sick gardener...er, dig vomit... no, I get it...Ails bury!'

'Wonderful isn't she?' said Clive. 'We need to provide a cultural feast – enriching entertainment – mime, poetry, comedy, painting. Folks expect more from their local now than just food and drink. Have a chat with Mariela – you'll enjoy working together.'

'But don't we need *real* food and drink to sell to them...?' James called after Clive as he disappeared out of the door, barely suppressing a snigger.

'So he's given you a job here...to do *this*?' asked James, turning to Mariela, who nodded manically.

'I'm going to be a laughing stock, ruined before I've even started. Do those idiots *want* the pub to make money?' James sat holding his head in his hands but then felt a slap on his back.

'Seems crazy to me too...but how do you I think I learned to pull those pints?' said a female voice.

'You speak?'

Mariela unfastened her hair, which tumbled on to her shoulders, suddenly a normal, attractive woman.

'My name's Mazz.' She extended her hand. 'I'm an actress – 'between-jobs'. Answered his advert for a pub mime artist. I'll do whatever pays but I want a gig that's going to last – and I've worked a lot in pubs – enough to see you need someone who knows what they're doing around here.'

She slipped on a top and pair of jeans she had in a bag behind the bar.

'Tell him Mariela Meringue turned out to be a lemon...and you got yourself a pretty mean barmaid instead,' she said. 'Let's sort out that cellar. Then we can try that Fit Shaced.'



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Historic pubs, superb views, unspoilt villages, curious crops, leg-busting ascents, great real ale – this almost circular walk from Princes Risborough has almost everything!

The Ridgeway national trail passes along the scarp of the Chilterns through our branch – from Aston Rowant in the south to near Tring in the north-east – and it comes close to enough to many good pubs to form the basis of a few good bibulous walks. (However, apart from those on Wendover High Street, the only pub that the Ridgeway directly passes is the **Plough** at Cadsden.)

This walk uses a couple of miles or so of the Ridgeway in the hills overlooking Bledlow and Saunderton, which means a lot of the route is waymarked to a high standard. In fact, with one significant exception, the entire walk is well signposted and straightforward to follow.

The walk is about six and a quarter miles using the 300 the bus route back to return to Princes Risborough at Lacey Green or about eight miles if walked the whole way.



Bird in Hand, Princes Risborough

Some limited directions are given but walkers should use the Ordnance Survey 1: 25,000 Explorer Sheet 181 ('Chiltern Hills North') for navigation. A very small part of the route at Saunderton stretches on to sheet 172 but it should be possible to find the way without needing the second map.

We walked the route on a light evening in July at quite a brisk pace – completing it in three and a half hours – including time to drink three pints on the way. (We were both in training for the Wycombe Half Marathon, which we did two days later – I blame the beer for my time being slower than last year!)

It helped that the ground was firm after the very dry weather. Some of the lower stretches of the walk cut through arable fields, which may be muddy later in the year. Paths on the higher ground should be firm in all but the depths of winter.

The **Bird in Hand** on Station Road in Princes Risborough is our starting point. It is close to the railway station and the 300 bus stops only a few hundred yards away outside the **Poppy Seed** (the former **Black Prince**).

A range of well kept **Greene King** ales are on offer in this friendly Victorian pub – on our visit: **IPA**, **Tolly Cobbold Phoenix** and **Hardy and Hanson's Olde Trip**.

Head left out of the pub along Station Road. Follow the road downhill as it becomes Summerleys Road. Pass under the two railway bridges and turn left at the traffic lights, going under the railway again and into the Regent Park industrial estate.

On the left is Ercol's modern furniture factory. Along with Hypnos, the upmarket bedmakers, who have just relocated to a new factory on the edge of Princes Risborough, Ercol provide continuity with the historic Chilterns furniture industry.

Head straight for a gate and stile on the far side of the industrial estate and it is a short walk to Horsenden. Located in an isolated dead-end, this hamlet has some stunningly picturesque cottages, although it is now most famous for being home to the singer Jay Kay from pop group Jamiroquai who is said to own a large collection of expensive cars and has constructed his own go-kart track in his mansion's grounds.

Turn right and follow the lane around the church and then pass through a stile on the left of the roadside. Then follow a path along the edge of the manor house gardens for a couple of hundred yards. The path then continues in a straight line for about half a mile through the middle of arable fields, then to the edge of a further field.

The first field was planted with a crop I'd viewed from a distance with curiosity due to its distinctive purple appearance, being planted in several large fields around Bledlow. Seen close up it was apparent that the plant had bright blue flowers – the effect of the light catching its flower buds giving it a mauve sheen.

I later identified the crop as borage – I knew it resembled something in the garden. Apparently oil extracted from borage seeds has the highest concentration of super-healthy Omega-6 oils of any plant. It's odd to think the goodness of the Chiltern soil may well end up on the vitamin counter at Boots.

This section of the walk is within sight of the Chinnor and Princes Risborough preserved railway, which runs a variety of old steam and diesel locomotives most weekends.

Turn left when the path encounters a green lane and after a hundred yards or so turn right and continue across a field towards Bledlow. The path passes through a farmyard with a huge collection of decaying antique farm machinery, then reaches Bledlow Ridge Road.

Turn left up the road for a short while until a right turn, signposted towards the church. Bledlow is another chocolate box village and its distinctive church is said to be John Nettles' favourite Midsomer Murders filming location. The manor house is home to former foreign secretary, Lord Carrington, who occasionally opens the gardens for charity in the summer.

Fortunately the **Lions of Bledlow**, at the end of the road, is open every day. (Unlike other pubs on the route, however, it closes in the afternoon – bear this in mind when planning the walk.) A notice on the door provides an instance of pro-canine discrimination: it requests muddy boots to be removed but allows muddy paws.



Lions of Bledlow, Bledlow

The **Lions** is an archetypal rambling, ancient country pub. Parts of the building date back to 1570 and the interior is a sprawling collection of low-beamed rooms with large fireplaces. The pub oozes character – the games room at the far end of the pub is particularly idiosyncratic and is about as far from a faceless, corporate hostelry as one could imagine.

The large bar counter serves a good selection of real ales. On our visit were **Deuchars IPA**, **Theakstons Black Bull**, **Wadworth 6X** and **Jersey Liberation** (they'd better not hold their breath for a LocAle sticker for that one). The beers can also be enjoyed in the large garden at the back or on some tables on the green at the front. As it's in splendid walking country, the Lions can get very busy at peak times.

The section between Princes Risborough and Bledlow is so relatively

straightforward that in itself it could form a respectable there-and-back evening stroll. However, the main route ploughs on towards Saunderton. This is where it starts to get hilly.

Take the bridleway to the right of the **Lions**, which initially forms part of the Midshires Way. Continue straight uphill. This is a steep climb of about 225 feet in about half a mile, although the path is firm and wide.

The bridleway emerges on to a lane, where it meets the Ridgeway. Cross the lane and follow the Ridgeway sign slightly to the left and into an undulating field. Lacey Green windmill, close to our ultimate destination, can be seen on the hilltop at the other side of the valley.

The path ends up in the corner of a field where it passes through a stile to the left, which isn't well signposted. It then follows the edge of a field to emerge on Wigan's Lane.

From Wigan's Lane the path continues across a couple of arable fields, separated by a kissing gate, towards Lodge Hill, topped with woodland in the distance. At the foot of Lodge Hill the Ridgeway takes a turn to the right but this is all clearly signposted.

The top of Lodge Hill is another climb but it is well rewarded by spectacular views across Aylesbury Vale and Oxfordshire.

It's also an unusual vantage point for the Chilterns as the hill's southern edge drops away steeply rather than sloping gradually as most do elsewhere.

This provides a great aspect towards West Wycombe and way beyond. Given that the south-east of England is meant to be one of the most densely populated regions in Europe, the classic views of rural tranquillity from Lodge Hill are quite astonishing – not least due to High Wycombe being obscured behind Bradenham and Naphill.

Continue following the Ridgeway down the hill until reaching a kissing gate just before the line of pylons. Take a path to the right, which passes some

Continued on page 26

The Rose & Crown Beer Festival and Family Fun Day

August 2010

Friday 20th 12-11pm

Saturday 21st 12-11pm

Sunday 22nd 12-5pm

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The Rose & Crown, Saunderton

'Risborough Ramble' - Continued from page 25

paddocks of deer and farm buildings, emerging on to Lee Road. Follow the road for about a third of a mile over the railway bridge, turning right to arrive almost immediately at the **Rose and Crown** on the main road.

The **Rose and Crown** is now more of a hotel and restaurant than a pub but still has a pleasant, lounge-style bar for drinkers. *Brakspears Bitter* and *Oxford Gold* were the real ales on offer. In the 1970s, the **Rose and Crown** played a crucial part in supporting the founding of the local **CAMRA** branch, being one of the pubs that stuck steadfastly with real-ale.

A beer festival will be held here on the 20th/21st August. Last year's event was a well-organised, family-friendly affair with ferret racing, birds of prey and a bouncy castle.

More steep hills have to be climbed between Saunderton to Lacey Green. It's possible to walk the route by footpath but one of the paths has been allowed to degenerate into a shameful state so any walker who doesn't fancy pushing past nettles and brambles may want to take Little Lane towards Lacey Green (the minor road opposite the **Rose and Crown**).

Those up to pushing through vegetation need to walk a couple of hundred yards down the main road towards Risborough and look for a stile leading into a wheat field on the right. The path

crosses the field diagonally and is clearly marked across the field, leading to a couple of stiles adjoining some paddocks.

It's not immediately obvious but the path continues uphill between a hedgerow and a wooden fence. The vegetation here has been allowed to grow to an extent that it almost blocks the path and continues in this unkempt state for several hundred yards before emerging at Gommaes Forge on Foundry Lane in the village of Loosely Row.

Lacey Green, on the hilltop above, has two pubs at either end of the village – the **Black Horse** and the **Whip Inn**. Both are on the main road, about half a mile apart and convenient for the 300 bus route so can be tackled in either order from here.

To get to the **Black Horse** first, turn right up Foundry Lane, then double back a short distance on reaching Lower Road and follow the footpath uphill to the right, emerging eventually on Westlands Road, which then leads to Main Road – the **Black Horse** is a short distance to the right.

The pub is a friendly, family-run free house which usually offers four well-kept real ales which are *Brakspears Bitter* and three guests which were *Marstons Fever Pitch*, *Wells & Youngs Waggle Dance* and *SA Gold*, and has a pleasant garden at the back of the pub. In summer months the Aunt Sally pitch is a great draw.



Black Horse, Lacey Green

From Gommaes Forge, the **Whip** can be reached by descending Foundry Lane to the left then turning right to follow minor roads uphill – firstly Loosely Rise, then Lower Road and then a right onto Loosely Hill. From here the views towards Bledlow – the route of the walk – are breathtaking.

Last year's branch **Pub of the Year**, the **Whip** is renowned for its ever-changing selection of real ales – with five usually available at any one time.

On our visit *Shepherd Neame Whitstable Ale*, *Loddon Flight of Fancy*, *Rebellion Mutiny*, *Marston's Pedigree Diamond* and *Vale Wychert* were on offer with *Osset Big Red* also coming on during our visit.

It's about a mile and a half walk from Lacey Green back to Princes Risborough but the 300 bus runs at least hourly (and as frequently as every 20 minutes during the day) so why not have an extra pint or two in the **Whip** or **Black Horse** and let the bus take the strain?

Mike Clarke



The Whip Inn, Lacey Green

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RECENT LOCAL BRANCH EVENTS



Lashings of Noddy's favourite beer!

Most of Enid Blyton's books were written in Beaconsfield – at Green Hedges, her house on the outskirts of the town on the road to Penn and very near the **Red Lion**, Knotty Green.

We held a branch meeting in the pub in June in the snug, which is dedicated to the author. The room is on the right as you walk into the pub and is officially the Enid Blyton room.

There are various pictures on the wall, lots of her books around (apparently donated by the Enid Blyton society) and a fair selection of her stuffed characters sit in corners around the room.

Another pub that pays homage to a writer is the **Pink and Lily**, near Lacey Green that is

dedicated to the poet Rupert Brooke.

Unlike Brooke, who probably sold very few books in his lifetime (he died young during the First World War), Blyton is no doubt the biggest selling author from the local area — writing 800 books which sold a staggering 600 million copies.

Many modern editions of Blyton's books seem to remove some of the more extreme racial and, even gender, references. Therefore, here is an attempt to rehabilitate Noddy and Big Ears as contemporary blokes — enjoying a pint of the **Red Lion's Wells & Youngs Bitter**.

Another huge-selling author, though not in Blyton's league in terms of volume, was brought up around the corner from the **Red Lion** — Terry Pratchett (of Discworld fame).

He comes from Forty Green a village just outside Beaconsfield which is home to another pub — the **Royal Standard of England** which claims to be the oldest hostelry in the country.

Charlie Mackle

Aylesbury Suburban Pub Crawl

We recently organised a social to go to some pubs in Aylesbury that we don't visit as much as we would like.

The few that turned up started at the **Dairy Maid**, before we headed off to the **Horse and Jockey**, then finished at the **New Zealand**.

All three pubs offer traditional beer

The picture shows the barmaids at the **Horse and Jockey**: Amanda is behind the *Old Speckled Hen* and Kirsty behind the *London Pride*.



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Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

AUGUST

Tuesday 3rd - Saturday 7th GBBF
Great British Beer Festival, Earls Court
(see <http://gbbf.camra.org.uk/home>).
Full details on page 15.



Thursday 5th BRANCH GBBF SOCIAL
5.30pm, GBBF, Earl's Court, London.

Wednesday 11th AYLESBURY WETHERSPOONS SOCIAL
8.30pm White Hart, 9.15pm Bell, followed by King's Head at 10pm

Wednesday 18th 300 BUS SOCIAL
8.00pm Rose and Crown, High Wycombe, 9.00pm Beaconsfield Arms, High Wycombe, 10.00pm Wheel, Naphill

Saturday 21st BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL
12noon Rose and Crown, Saunderton

Wednesday 25th BRANCH SOCIAL
8.30pm Bell, Chearsley, 9.30pm Crown, Cuddington

Saturday 28th BANK HOLIDAY BEER FEST SOCIAL
12 noon Shepherd's Crook, Crowell then (using 40 bus route) join the end of West London CAMRA's social in Thame: 12.45pm Two Brewers, 1.30pm James Figg's, 2.30pm Swan, 3.15pm Falcon, 4.30pm Cross Keys.

SEPTEMBER

Wednesday 1st LOUDWATER-WYCOMBE MARSH SOCIAL
8.30pm Dereham's Inn, 9.30pm General Havelock.

Saturday 4th INTER-BRANCH AUNT SALLY COMPETITION AND BEER FESTIVAL
12 Noon, Mason's Arms, Headington, Oxford.

Friday 10th 100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY SOCIAL
8.30pm Swan, West Wycombe (tbc).

Saturday 11th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL
12 Noon Wheel, Naphill, then on to the Whip, Lacey Green
Please use public transport - the 300 bus serves both pubs

Monday 13th EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING
Meeting to ratify accounts and discuss future High Wycombe beer festival, 8.30pm, William Robert Loosely, High Wycombe

Tuesday 21st CHINNOR SOCIAL
8.15pm King's Head, 8.45pm Crown, 9.30pm Red Lion.

Wednesday 29th BIERTON-BROUGHTON SOCIAL
8.30pm Dog House, 9.00pm Red Lion, 9.45pm Bell.

OCTOBER

Saturday 2nd READING PUB CRAWL
Date and pub details to be confirmed.
Please check the website.

Friday 29th/Saturday 30th AYLESBURY BEER FESTIVAL
Eskdale Road Community Centre, Stoke Mandeville
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 can be found on our website
www.swansupping.org.uk

CATCH UP DURING BRANCH SOCIALS:-
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DON'T MISS OUT!

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

www.swansupping.org.uk/joinin

Swan Supping

Swan Supping is distributed free of charge to pubs in the branch area.

Circulation **6000** copies.

Edited by David Roe

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Tel : 01296 484551

E-Mail : editor@swansupping.org.uk

Advertising rates are :- 1/4 page £60, 1/2 page £120, full page £200.

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Copy deadline for next issue, due out 1st October, is 14th September 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.

Published by the Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe branch of the *Campaign for Real Ale* and printed by *Pelican Print, Unit 14, Aylesbury Vale Industrial Park, Farmborough Close, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP20 1DQ Tel: 01296 422100*

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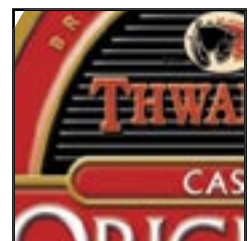
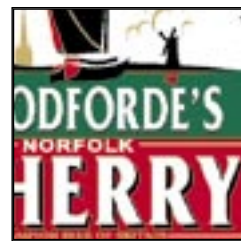
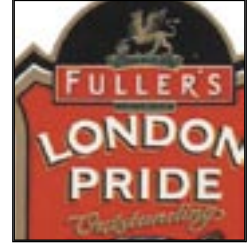
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