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Issue 76

Feb/Mar 2010

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NEWS FROM THE EDITOR



Calling all Members!

In the last issue I said that membership in the branch was rapidly approaching 700. I'm very pleased to announce that it has now passed that mark and let's hope that the increase is maintained.

We would like as many as possible of the 700 to turn up at our Annual General Meeting which will be held at the **Kings Head** in Aylesbury at 8pm on Monday 15th of February. This is your chance to have your say on how the branch is run and how we will progress for the coming year.

We will do our best to get through all the necessary business of electing a new committee etc. and get on with the important side which will include enjoying the **Chiltern** beers on offer and the 'nibbles' that will be provided.

Election Year

This year is an election year and we are interested in how our local parliamentary candidates feel about our favourite tipple. We would like to invite as many of them as possible to contact us with their views on beer, pubs, under-age and binge drinking, continuing pub closures and tax. If any rise to the challenge, we will publish their thoughts in the next issue.

As we, hopefully, come out of a prolonged period of recession, pubs still have to deal with what many landlords consider to be a regressive, unsupporting and unsympathetic government who seem hell bent on making life almost impossible for publicans to operate at a profitable level.

Pubs need nourishment, not punishment, as they are the lifeblood and backbone of many communities. Most of them have had a good time over Christmas, but all would have had a better time without major competition from the supermarkets who are allowed to offer 'Buy One Get One Free' on their beers during most advert breaks on television. If pubs did this, they would be deemed irresponsible, yet they still have to bear the brunt of the campaign to 'improve our health' by reducing the amount we imbibe. It's enough to drive you to drink!

It's not all gloom!

Despite the huge pressure on pubs, there are still breweries and pub companies willing to invest in the trade.

We now have a brand new pub built on the outskirts of Aylesbury, Fairford Leys, by **Marstons**. The **Honey Bee** is a large pub which now serves a community that has been crying out for one for many years. Let's hope it is not the last new pub in our branch area.

Aylesbury, which has been one of the largest towns in the country without one, will soon have two **J.D. Wetherspoons** outlets. We understand that they have taken over both the **Bell** and the **Chicago Rock Cafe** (further details in the Local News section). What this will do to the rest of the town centre pubs, many of them struggling to survive under the terms and conditions of their pub companies we will cover in future issues.

Swan Supping Snippets

A big 'thank-you' as always to all our contributors and advertisers, without whom we could not create **Swan Supping**. Also, special thanks to Colin Stanford who provided the cartoon on page five - please feel free to send another!

In our October/November issue (page 14) we ran an article in 'Midsomer Murders', about which Joan Street has kindly contacted us with a correction. The URL for the 'Midsomer Murders' website that we mentioned should be **www.midsomermurders.org** and the URL to obtain copies of the 'location book' is **www.midsomer-murdersonlocation.com**.

David W. Roe

Swan Supping Editor and CAMRA AV&W Branch Chairman

NATIONAL CAMRA NEWS

BBPA's Code fails to address competition concerns

The **British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA)**, the trade body for the major brewers and pub owning companies in the UK, have issued their long awaited Code of Practice for tied tenanted and leased pubs. But any one hoping for a fair deal for pub goers will be sadly disappointed.

The Code has no legal authority and ignores the principle that lessees should be no worse off as a result of being tied.

There is no mention of any guest beer right and no requirement for pub companies to stop using restrictive covenants on pub sales.

And if member companies transgress the code what happens? Very little it would appear. There is a lack of serious sanctions and when there is a dispute the **BII (British Institute of Innkeeping)** or the **FLVA (Federation of Licensed Victuallers Association)** will merely pass the complaint to the offending company and use their good offices to make sure there are no misunderstandings.

There is nothing in the Code that seeks to rebalance the power between pub companies and their tied licensees and give a fair deal for consumers.

All in all the Code is too little too late and illustrates the Industry's failure to respond to

legitimate concerns of consumers and reinforces the need for action by Government and Competition Authorities.

Consumers v. OFT Pub Market Ruling

CAMRA is calling on pubgoers to donate to its 'Consumers v. OFT Pub Market Ruling' Campaign Fund to assist in campaigning for a sustainable future for UK pubs, through reform of the beer tie.

The beer tie, as currently operated by large pub companies, forces publicans to buy beer at around 50 pence a pint more than they would pay on the open market. These inflated costs are passed onto pub goers through higher prices, poor facilities in pubs and the closure of seven pubs a day. Reform of the beer tie to allow effective competition between pubs is long overdue.

On December 22nd 2009, **CAMRA** issued a legal challenge to the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) via the Competition Appeals Tribunal after the OFT rejected **CAMRA's** super-complaint in October, which focused on high prices, pub closures and restricted choice. Having lodged the appeal, **CAMRA** is relying on donations from pub goers to fund its ongoing campaign, and has set up a new website to receive donations at **www.camraappeal.org.uk**.



Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2010

1872 Porter from the **Elland Brewery**, West Yorkshire, has been crowned the **Supreme Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2010** by a panel of judges at the **National Winter Ales Festival** in Manchester. Graham Donning, the festival organiser, praised the beer for its quality. He said: 'A timeless classic well worthy of this accolade. It has won many awards at **CAMRA** beer festivals in the past, and it's great to see this small brewer achieving such success. A perfect winter warming remedy to the snowy weather in recent weeks!'

Winning is especially sweet for the brewer, Dave Sanders (pictured above), after finishing second overall in the 2009 competition.

Also in the overall awards, Silver went to **Breconshire's Ramblers Ruin**, whilst the Bronze medal went to **Acorn's Gorlovka Imperial Stout**.

LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

CHILTERN

Glad Tidings (bottle-conditioned) won a double gold at the **SIBA Midlands Region Bottled Beer Competition** 2009, first winning its category and then winning the overall bottled beer of the competition.

It has now gone forward to the SIBA National Beer Competition 2010 in February. Three Hundreds Old Ale (draught) also won silver in the same Midlands competition.

2009 was a record year for **Chiltern Brewery**, so that is nearly nine year-on-year increases, in a row. The Brewery has bought (and are buying) more new cask stocks - so far they have increased their stocks by 40%, to cope with demand.

For this, the brewery's 30th anniversary year, they will be brewing a new draught beer for each of the three decades as well as a new bottled-conditioned beer. News of these will be on their website and in *Swan Supping*.

LODDON

The recent snow proved a particular problem for **Loddon** brewery and only the four-wheel drive car belonging to owner Chris Hearn could manage to get into the brewery. However, the brewery maintained their sales and supplied all their customers.



They are adding to a bumper crop of monthly specials this year and the first was *Firsty the Snowman*, a 4.2% ABV copper coloured beer brewed with Fuggles and Goldings which appeared in January.



The February beer is *Penny Pond Porter* which is a 5.5% ABV, liquid tar coloured beer brewed with pale, crystal, brown, black and wheat malts, hopped with Goldings and First Gold.

We are planning to visit **Loddon** brewery in May - full details next issue and on the website.

REBELLION

The theme for the **Rebellion** monthly specials this year will be 'Recession and Recovery' and the January beer was *Bankers Bitter* which was a 4.4% ABV amber and floral ale.

This will be followed in February by *Kick Start* which is an amber and floral 4.2% ABV ale.



VALE

2009 was **Vale Brewery's** best year ever as additional capacity added in July enabled more beer to be produced and sales were higher than the previous best in 2008. Increasing demand means a larger brewery is being installed this spring and as this is a complete new brewery there will be no interruption in supplies.

Vale are continuing with a fresh range of monthly special beers. The January beer is called *Ale-Conner*, a 3.8% light amber bitter. Named after an officer appointed by the British Courts whose role was to confirm the quality of ales, it is created from Pale and Crystal Maris Otter malts plus four hops: Fuggles, Mount Hood, Willamette and Northdown giving this brew a spicy bitterness and a floral hop note.



The February special is a rich mahogany coloured 4.3% bitter called *Inklings* made with Willamette and Celeia Goldings hops for bitterness and a smooth flavour. The Inklings were an informal literary group who met in Oxford's pubs in the 1930's and 40's and included J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis.



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THE WHIP INN, PINK ROAD, LACEY GREEN, BUCKS. HP27 0PG 01844 344060

GRAVEDIGGERS ARMS (PART 3)

The three men sat around a dusty table in the cold, unheated function room.

‘When will we three meet again?’ asked Gordon, the grey-haired doctor.

‘When we find some sucker who’s deluded enough to think they can take this place on,’ cackled Clive the estate agent.

‘Are you sure we need to go through with this plan,’ asked Will, the solicitor. ‘I reckon I could have a word down the lodge, pull a few strings.’

‘Very true, Will,’ said Gordon. ‘I don’t want my hundred grand tied up too long.’

‘Sorry gents. It’s the last pub in the village,’ said Clive. ‘Got to prove to the council that it’s completely unviable before we realise our asset.’

‘And what do you think again that our asset might be worth, Clive’ asked Will.

‘Nice plot like this – maybe half a dozen family commuter pads at half a million or fifteen starter shoeboxes at two hundred grand.’ He traced the figures £3,000,000 out in the dust on the table top.

‘Take away the developer commission and construction costs and we’ve still tripled our dosh,’ Gordon chuckled.

‘Yeah but I’m worried if we’re not careful we might get landed with a viable pub,’ said Will.

‘You really think so – after the disaster that Tony made of this place. It’s guaranteed to fail,’ said Clive. ‘Look at the state of the place. It’s ready to be condemned.’

‘But there’s quite a few pubs in other villages that the locals have bought and turned around – taken what the pubcos had given up on and revived them as proper community pubs that actually make money,’ said Gordon.

‘That’s other pubs and villages. This is the Gravediggers. Even the best intentioned couldn’t make this work. It’s the biggest dive in the county. The beer lines are so gunged up it’s a wonder liquid comes out, the kitchen uses more rat poison than salt and if you added up the IQs of the regulars you still wouldn’t get to three figures,’ smiled Clive.

‘So we’ve got to make sure it stays that way. We need to pick our landlord



“Tell me again why we gave up smoking.”

very carefully,’ suggested Will.

‘We need a plausible idiot, preferably someone local with no experience or business sense and who’s likely to drink away any profits that he might make by chance,’ said Gordon. ‘Then when he goes bust the council will have no choice but to let us flatten the place.’

‘Right, let’s find him,’ said Clive. The three men downed their gin and tonics in celebration.

Gordon, Clive and Will entered the main bar of the Gravediggers and slammed their empty gin glasses on the bar.

James was leaning on the bar, draining another pint glass and waving a piece of paper at Lisa the surly barmaid.

‘Redundancy money. What am I going to do with it, Lisa? I’ve only ever worked at a desk in the city,’ James said, slurring his words and collapsing off his stool.

‘Ever thought about running a pub?’ asked Clive.

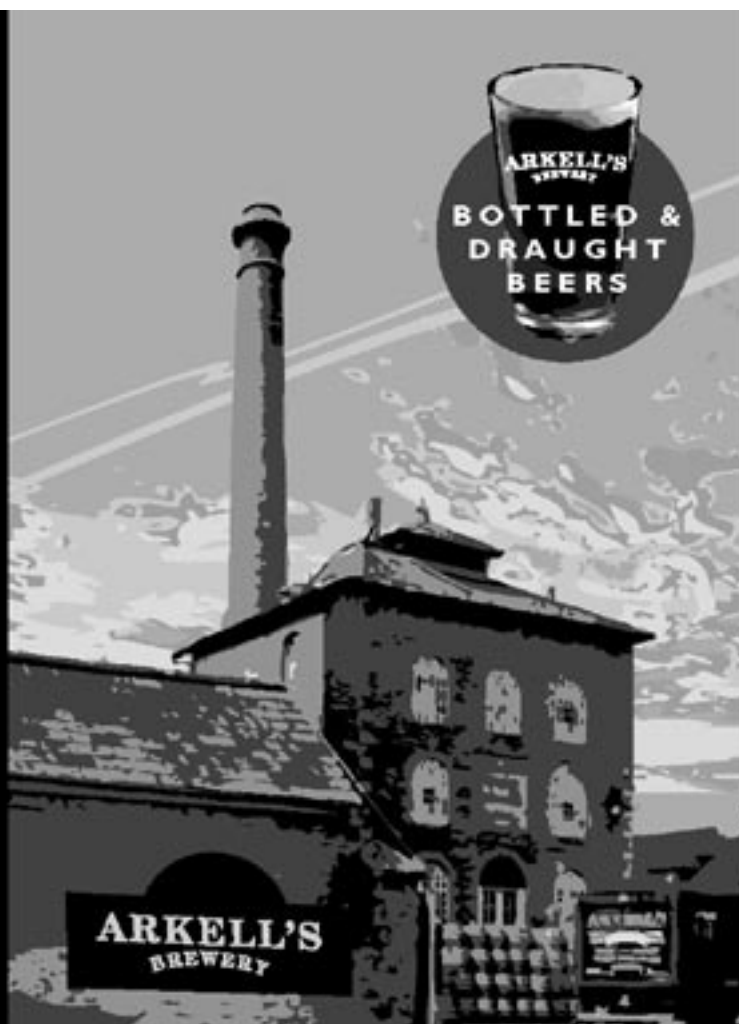
Charlie Mackle

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LOCAL NEWS

AYLESBURY

We heard that **J.D. Wetherspoons** had taken over the **Bell** as our last issue was being printed (timing is everything!). A lot of building work has been carried out inside, but we have heard that there is currently a hold-up due to objections to the changes to the hotel which is a listed building. Aylesbury has been probably the largest town in the country without a **Wetherspoons**, but as is always the case, when one turns up, another follows close behind! The pub group has also taken over the **Chicago Rock Café** which will be turned into a **Lloyd's No.1** bar. More details next issue.

The **Broad Leys** has obtained planning permission for a new toilet block which will include disabled facilities. The continuing excellence of their **Loddon Hoppit** and their two guest beers (recently **Bateman's Miss Scotland** and **Skinner's Heligan Honey**) will help customers get over the fact that Aylesbury Duck is not on the menu currently as the suppliers have to wait for the birds to fatten up at this time in the breeding cycle!

A new sign outside the **Emperors Lounge** (or is it now called **Emperors** as the second word on the main sign has disappeared) says that its opening hours are 6pm till late every day, not 4pm till late as we stated in our last issue.

The **Green Man** is offering a special menu featuring aphrodisiac foods from the 5th to 21st of February as part of their St. Valentine's Day celebrations. While you enjoy the food, why not

try the aphrodisiac properties of the **Shepherd Neame Spitfire** and **Greene King IPA** they have on handpump.

The **Hobgoblin** is continuing their price deal every day of the week until midnight with **Marston's Pedigree** and **Wychwood Hobgoblin** available for £1.50 a pint.

The **Harrow** now has four real ales as they have added **Greene King IPA** on its own branded font which has the choice of a standard handpull, which is clean and crisp, or on the turn of a lever it becomes smooth and creamy (you pay your money and make your choice). The other three pumps serve in rotation **Black Sheep Best**, **Shepherd Neame Spitfire**, **Adnams Broadside**, **Hobson Best Bitter**, and **Charles Wells Bombardier**. They also have a different guest ale very week, and have **Old Rosie** scrumpy cider on handpump too. **Cask Marque** approval was obtained in September last year.

Aylesbury's new pub, the **Honey Bee**, which is featured on our front cover (courtesy of Simon Allen) opened in early December. It is a large **Marston's** pub on the edge of Fairford Leys (most easily found by taking the link road from the A418 through to Rabans Lane) and fills a large gap in the western side of Aylesbury which is very short of pubs. Inside, it is a large open plan building with distinct areas which can be used for either drinking or dining. Families are welcomed and the offer of two main meals for the price of one will ensure that

it will tend to be food oriented, where people can come and relax anytime. Open all day, every day, the **Honey Bee** serves **Marston's Pedigree**, **Brakspear Bitter**, and a changing guest beer.

The **Hop Pole** will hold their latest beer festival over Easter (Thursday 1st – Monday 5th April). Adding to the usual ten real ales available in the front bar, the function room will offer around twenty more with a selection of traditional cider and perry.

The **Kings Head** is holding a St. George's Day beer festival in April – full details next issue. Also look out for the **Chiltern Nut Brown Mild** in March.

Stars (previously the **Grapes**) is now regularly ringing the changes by offering a guest beer alongside their standard **Fullers London Pride**.

CADSDEN

According to the Bucks Herald, the **Plough** is to be forced to demolish its £20,000 smoking shelter as Wycombe District Council has refused retrospective planning permission. While the rustic summerhouse-style shelter meets government regulations regarding smoking, the local council maintains that it breaks green belt planning codes. The pub's customers have overwhelmingly approved the shelter. The landlord would be forgiven for thinking that he's damned if he does and damned if he doesn't such is the weight of bureaucracy imposed on the pub business.

CHINNOR

Following the success of the first ever **Chinnor Beer Festival** held last summer, a second event will be on Saturday 27th February. Combined with the grand opening of the new extension of the Village Hall, you will be able to sample up to 10 local ales, plus ciders, perry, wines, etc. plus food. The event, which aims to close at 7pm, features music from local bands and is being run to raise money for the youth in the village.

CUDDINGTON

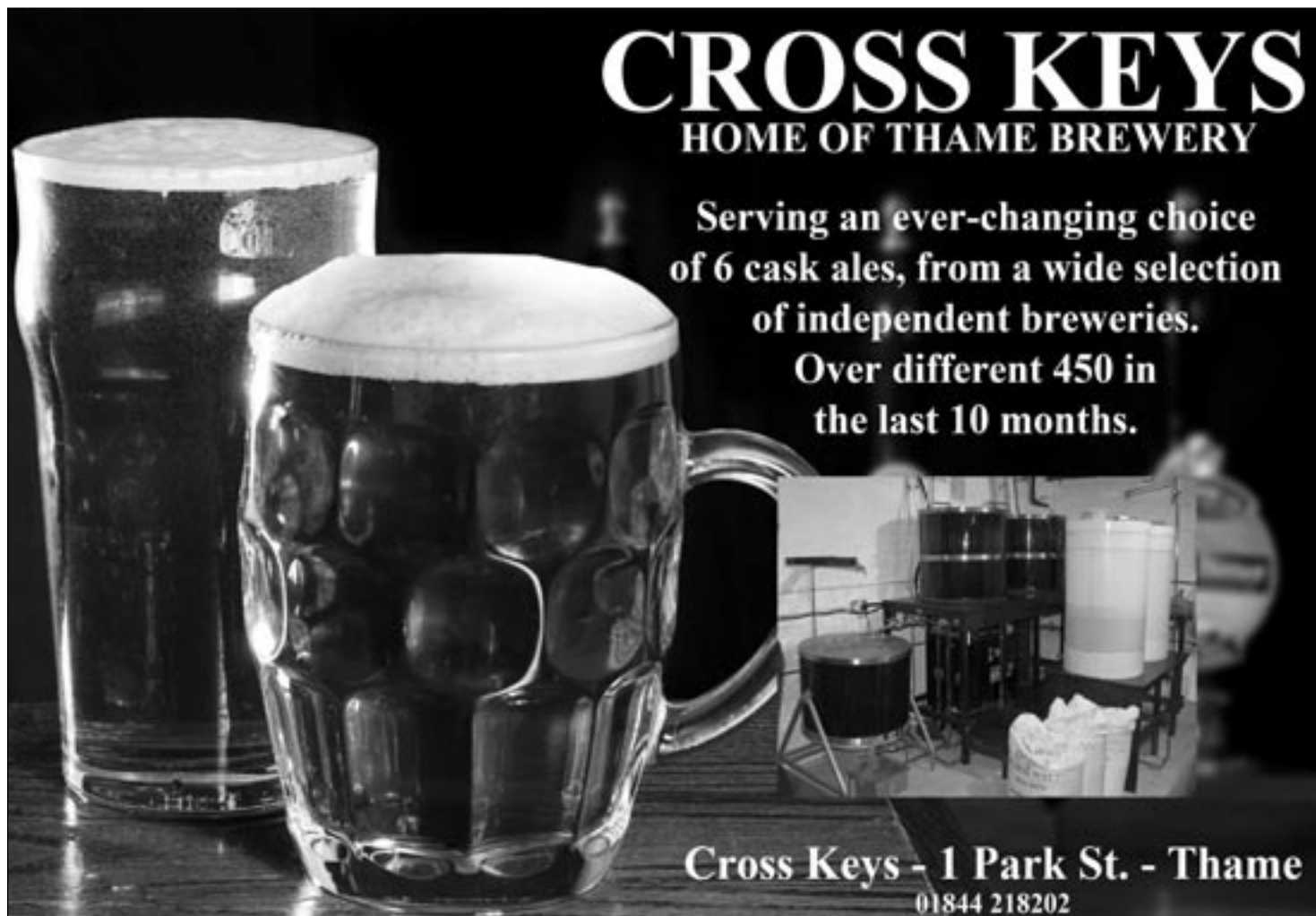
The **Crown** is doing fish and chips on Friday nights at £20 for two including two small drinks, and Wednesday nights a pie and pudding for £10. **Fullers London Pride** and **Adnams Bitter** feature, with the guest usually another **Fullers** beer such as **Fullers IPA** or their seasonal offering.

DINTON

Justin & Sandra did a moonlight flit from the **Seven Stars** at the end of December leaving the New Year's Eve event hanging in the balance. New people stepped in and hope to do better and last longer. More details next issue.

FLACKWELL HEATH

Brian Nash reports that the very hard working landlady Marion along with her husband Gordon have at long last



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LOCAL NEWS



personalised their public house the **Green Dragon**. After taking over the public house they found that there was no licence for them to renew. It took five weeks to go through the process of obtaining a licence to sell alcohol. During this time Marion and Gordon along with daughter Liz rolled up their sleeves and completed a refurbishment bringing the pub up to their standard. This work also included the cellar with Gordon having all the say on what he wanted for his beers. Gordon has now probably one of the best cellars in the area serving up some of the best beers, in particular real ales - Gordons speciality, and this is very much appreciated by the locals.

FORD

Landlady of the **Dinton Hermit**, Mary O'Hara, has completed her TukTuk drive for charity from Nepal to southern India, covering 2,500 km in 14 days during January. She has **Vale Best** at all times, supported by a **Chiltern** beer such as **Beechwood** or **Copper Beech** and B&B is available with 13 rooms from £90 to £130 for four posters.

GREAT KIMBLE

The **Swan** had a very successful Burns' Night when vast quantities of haggis were consumed. Given the choice of celebrating Chinese New Year or St. Valentine's Day the **Swan** has opted for the latter which you can enjoy on Saturday February 13th. **Adnams Bitter** and **St. Austell Tribute** continue to be the traditional ales on offer. There will be a special menu for Mothering Sunday on March 14th and the landlord is praying for fine weather on Easter Saturday for the annual Kimble Races.

HADDENHAM

The village holds a permanent beer festival with over 12 different real ales on offer all year around in the village's five pubs.

Cask Marque scored the **Green Dragon** 100% during a recent judging. **Sharp's Doom Bar**, **St Austell Tribute** and **Rebellion Smuggler** were on tap recently which can be enjoyed in front of one of the two open log fires.

The **Kings Head** serves **Adnams Bitter** and **Fullers London Pride** plus one guest which could be **Wadworth's 6X** or, as found recently, an interesting **Titanic Stout**. Two steaks for £11 on Wednesday evenings.

Mick's new leg at the **Red Lion** is doing fine and Cilla's off getting new knees! Permanent fixtures are **Adnams Bitter**, **Tetley Mild**, **Black Sheep Bitter** plus one rotating guest. Regular darts and mixed dominoes matches, summer and winter.

The **Rising Sun** regularly serves up to four real ales, two from **Vale** and one or two ever-changing guests. Frequently Ray & Katie serve the beer straight from the barrel. Sandwich menu Noon-1.45pm.

At **GBG** featured **Rose & Thistle** the permanent beers are **Olde Trip** and **Greene King IPA** plus a guest, recently **York Terrier** which was dispensed with almost overnight.

HARDWICK

The **Olde Jug** is still closed with no information on its future known. Please let us know if you know anything.

HIGH WYCOMBE

Alexis and Steve Sydenham at the **Beaconsfield Arms** are offering guest ales from local breweries such as **Chiltern** and **Vale** alongside the ever popular **Courage Best**.

Alan Hedgecock has taken full control over the **Belle Vue** in December following six years working the bar and cellar there as a sideline to his photography career. He has every intention of continuing to provide a good range of ales as well as pushing **Punch Taverns** to supply him with two more handpulls. Future plans also include a food offer, guest ciders, wine/ale tasting evenings and more.

The **Flint Cottage** reopened at the start of December as the **Bootlegger** and now boasts seven cask ales. There are over 250 bottled beers available including beer from around the world and a large selection of bottle-conditioned ales.

The **Dolphin** is now called the **Chameleon** and is styled as a 'music bar and restaurant' and serves **Greene King IPA**, **Abbot** and **Old Speckled Hen**.

High Wycombe Rugby Club's next beer festival is based on the theme Buckinghamshire Beers V Devon & Cornwall Beers and is to be held at the club on Friday 26th and Saturday 27th of March.

In early December, Ian and Sarah Goulding took over from Nick and Janey, the previous licensees at the **Le De Spencer Arms**. Their new manager is Grahame Marston and the other bar staff will remain the same. They now do food every day from Monday to Saturday - lunchtime and evenings, plus Sunday lunch. To drink, they offer **Fullers Seafarer**, **London Pride** and **HSB** regularly and plan to add a guest beer to their 4th pump later.

Terriers is now run by Matthew Winn who has previously worked at the **Rose & Crown**. The beers on offer are **Greene King IPA**, **Abbot** (which rotates with a guest ale) and **Old Speckled Hen**.

LACEY GREEN

The four real ales at the **Black Horse** are doing really well with the choice changing around every two weeks.

Last year the **Whip** sold 864 firkins of ale. This is approximately a 12% increase (from 770) on 2008 which is in line with previous years increases in real ale sales since Nick Smith took the pub over in 2004. This total breaks down into 668 different ales, nearly

all microbreweries and 196 repeated, mainly local brews such as the range of **Rebellion**, **Vale**, **Chiltern**, **Tring** and **Lodden**.

NAPHILL

The **Wheel** will be holding a beer festival in April, but dates have not yet been confirmed. Ale sales last year were up on the previous year despite the recession, and the recent snow actually brought in extra trade and was not a hindrance to the **Wheel** as it could have been to others.

NORTH MARSTON

The **Bell** is still closed - rumoured to have been sold at auction but to whom is not certain.

OAKLEY

The **Chandos** earned **Cask Marque** accreditation last autumn and our apologies for not mentioning it in either of our last two issues (all complaints to the Editor, please!).

OVING

The **Black Boy** was taken over by new tenants Craig and Amalia Hoptrough early in January. Although it is their first pub they are not new to the entertainment industry, each having run different casinos in central London. Plans include improving and redecorating the popular restaurant and to make more use of the large garden as the summer progresses.

There is plenty of room for parties, pig roasts and events with an outside bar (hopefully Beer Festivals) - all with a fantastic view over the Aylesbury Vale.

As a real ale drinker himself Craig is particularly keen to earn recognition for his ale. He will be concentrating on getting the quality and choice right in order to increase throughput before any increase in range. Currently the regular ale is **Brakspear Bitter** on handpump, alongside a guest, **Rebellion Roasted Nuts** - in fine form when visited.

QUANTON

The **George & Dragon** featured **Bank's Original**, **Hook Norton Bitter**, **Vale Best Bitter**, **Marston's Pedigree** and the seasonal **Christmas Steps** from **Butcombe** when we battled through the snow to visit the award-winning pub for a **CAMRA** social.

On the same night, we popped into the **Swan & Castle** and were delighted to find four beers on offer: **Greene King Flanker's Tackle**, **Old Speckled Hen**, **Morland Original** and **Hook Norton Old Hooky**. The open fire was just as welcome.

RADNAGE

The **Crown** now has two beers from local breweries dispensed by gravity, **Lodden Hopbit** and **Rebellion Smuggler**.



SOULBURY

The **Boot** has recently achieved **Cask Marque** accreditation. On last visit the **Ruddles County** was particularly good. Also on handpump are **Adnams Bitter** and **Greene King IPA**.

STEWKLEY

Last July an Indian restaurant opened in the saloon bar side of the **Carpenters Arms**. Called the Lasso it has proved such a success that a Thai chef has now joined the team and full ranging menus of both are now available (highly recommended). A major refurbishment of the kitchen, saloon/restaurant and the toilets took place prior to the original opening.

The old public bar remains as a totally separate drinking area and has three ales on handpump:- **Greene King IPA**, **Fullers London Pride** plus a guest, recently **Bateman's Rosey Nosey**, **Wychwood Hobgoblin** etc. Nice to be able to enjoy a couple of pints in front of the fire whilst awaiting a takeaway.

The **Swan** was taken over in early December by Toni and Jim Meadows. Not new to the trade they previously ran another **Enterprise** pub in Taunton, Devon for five years. They aim to keep this 17th century village local much as now but with the emphasis on it becoming a family pub.

Jim has also been in the building trade and has been busy putting his skills to refurbishing the kitchen and putting right many of the ailments that befall pubs of this age.

The intention is to provide a non elaborate menu of pub meals home made from local produce wherever possible. It is hoped that this will have started by the time we go to press and will be available Wednesday to Saturday plus Sunday lunchtime.

Over the spring and summer they intend to make more use of the huge gardens with barbecues, beer and music festivals and old-fashioned games.

Three ales on handpump consist of the regular favourite **Courage Best** plus two ever-changing guests, currently **Tring Jack O' Legs** and **Jennings Cocker Hoop**.

WHITCHURCH

The **White Horse** remains boarded following another attempt to obtain planning for housing, the result of which is unknown.

WOOBURN COMMON

The **Royal Standard** will be hosting a special beer event over the Easter weekend (2nd-5th April). As well as over 30 real ales and ciders from local and national breweries they will also feature the full range of beers from the **Dark Star** brewery (of which there are over ten!), which have proved so popular at the **Royal Standard** in recent years.

A REBELLION BREWING IN MARLOW

My third and final *Rebellion* brewery membership night, that I'd been saving for December, was allocated to Thursday 17th due to popular demand for this Christmas month, and the fact that my surname begins with the letter 'S'. In house brews *Mild* (3.5), *IPA* (3.7), *Smuggler* (4.1), *Frozen Assets* (4.2), *Blonde* (4.3), *Recession Ale* (4.3), *Mutiny* (4.5) and the hugely favourable *Roasted Nuts* (4.6), were primed for the 7pm commence, as my good self alongside other hardy real ale buffs amassed at the *Rebellion* brewery in sub-zero temperatures. Snow was imminent and in-bound, but it was going to take more than 'a cold snap' to dissuade us off our beer intake.

Mr. Tim Coombes, co-owner of the *Rebellion* brewery, was on hand at the helm to lead proceedings at the brewery shop counter, as members and guests acquired their pint pots before having the 'arduous' chore of selecting their preferred tipple. Predictably the *Roasted Nuts* and the 'appropriately named tonight' *Frozen Assets*, were the first ales 'to bite the ice' by the beer brethren. Food freshly cooked on the barbecue was doing a roaring trade as burgers, hotdogs and chicken were consumed to soak up the beery imbibes and replace forfeited dinners.

An alluring festive aroma was also present in the night air, as a hot mulled cider could be scented amid the barbecue fumes and the snow. *Millwhites*, a local cider producer, from the Hemel Hempstead vicinity, were offering free samples of their *Organic* cider (6.5) in the mulled variety, complete with orange and nutmeg infusion. Now, I am not the greatest cider lover on gods earth, half a pint of *Woodpeckers* at Christmas when in my teens a quarter of a century ago, was the last time that I had encountered alcoholic pressed apples. The odd perry (pear cider) as a 'palate cleanser' at a metropolis beer festival was the nearest I have come to drinking orchard alcohol in the last decade.

So, here was I at my local *Rebellion* brewery enjoying cider. Whether it was the weather, or the sweet mulled fragrance, or both, but the cider was absolutely gorgeous. Maybe I've finally come out of the cider closet (apple store), I don't know, but steaming mulled cider on a freezing Arctic night in December was indispensable.

Well done *Rebellion* for inviting Simon White and John from Mr. *Millwhites* along to your little soirée. The 9.30pm curfew arrived all too soon as usual and the hardy souls drifted home in the blizzard wind from another satisfying *Rebellion* members' night. Long may this continue. I don't know if it was the *Millwhites* or the *Roasted Nuts*, but I'm sure I saw a yeti on the homeward journey to my welcoming warm abode.

Sarah N Appled



Alan Sheppard and 'Mr. Millwhites' (right)

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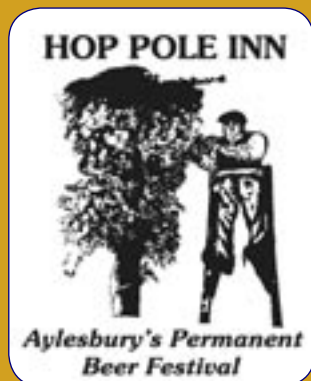
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Late last year as I was wandering about the Internet, ostensibly making links with other **CAMRA** branches, I stumbled across #BeerSwap. Beer Swap is one of those mad ideas that has sprung up on social networking sites, that appear to be all the rage at the moment. Not just the province of teenagers, these networks allow like minded people to exchange news, views and gossip. Surprising eh?

Beer Swap was started on Twitter, where friends following discussions about real ale decided to share their local brews that were hard, or impossible to get in other parts of the country. The idea is simple, people are arranged in loops, and given the name and address of the person they are to send their beers to. Each person then picks four bottled beers, with at least two of the coming from local breweries, packs them up, and posts them. The Collect+ (<http://www.collectplus.co.uk>) service is used to transport the packages at the very reasonable price of £4.49. Yes, that does add an extra £1.12 per bottle of beer, but the idea is to experience new beers, not get cheap beer!

I packaged off **Vale Brewery's** *Grumpling Old Ale*, **Chiltern Brewery's** *Bodger's Barley Wine* and their *Glad Tidings Winter Stout*, and **Batemans'** *Rosey Nosey*. The Collect+ service collects from and delivers to local shops, so I signed the package in on their website, and dutifully dropped it off at the shop. I was a little nervous, as they seemed rather surprised that I had a parcel to deliver!

And then we waited...

When I was emailed that our parcel had arrived at our local shop, I was excited, though this turned into dread as I was handed a rather soggy cardboard box. I rushed home and gently prised the box open to reveal three intact bottles and a pile of crushed glass. I later found out that this was the only casualty out of forty deliveries. The surviving bottles more than made up for the loss though!

The Reviews

Fullers Brewer's Reserve

First past the palate was the very tempting **Fullers Brewer's Reserve**. At 7.7% it was stronger than bottled beers I normally drink, but not the strongest of my swaps. Matured in oaken 30-year-old single malt casks for over 500 days, it was very different from any beer I'd drunk to date. The beer was surprising fizzy for a bottle-conditioned beer, though poured easily into the glass with out foaming too much (maybe I'm just good at pouring!). Light brown in colour, the beer had an aroma reminiscent of calvados. The spicy flavour continued on the tongue, the oak barrel contributing to give the beer a pleasant 'aged' flavour. It was slightly sweet, almost sherry like. I'd sum it up, by describing it as **Fuller's Reserve** is to beer as sherry is to wine. Something I'd certainly like to try again, if only I could find another bottle!



George Gale - Prize Old Ale

The strongest of my swaps at 9%, I was expecting this beer to have a heavy punch. Again pouring easily, the foaming head

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collapsed very quickly, a sign, perhaps, of its two years maturing in the bottle (it was dated 2007). The beer was a dark chestnut brown in colour, a touch of red making the beer pleasingly attractive in the glass. Raising the glass, I noticed a pleasing malty aroma, though the taste was quite unexpected. The beer has a tangy fruity flavour, almost sour, and not at all the sweet maltiness I was expecting. The liquid also lacked body, surprising for a strong beer; it did not satisfy the palate with its texture. Also lacking was a continuity of flavour. The aromas did not linger in the mouth, and, indeed, seemed to disappear even before the beer had reached the throat. Disappointing.

Mersea Island Brewery - Island Oyster

I was looking forward to the last of my beers, as dark rich beers are generally my favourite. *Island Oyster* was much more of a struggle to pour, and its rich foam hinted at a thick full body. In the glass, it was as you might suspect, a very dark brown, almost black, in colour.

Raising it to the nose, I was immediately hit with a strong coffee aroma from a generous helping of chocolate malt included in the recipe. The malt's strong burnt overtones gave this beer a flavour punch that matched its thick full body. The beer, as you might expect, filled the mouth with texture and flavour. A flavour that lingered long after the swallow, with a pleasingly dry hoppiness. Reading the label, I learned that the full body originated with the inclusion of oats in the brew, together with local Mersea Island Oysters. A fine brew!

My favourite of the three was definitely the *Island Oyster*, with the *Brewer's Reserve* coming in second. I was dissatisfied with the *Prize Old Ale*, though maybe I'm not used to that style of beer, as others rate it highly. I'm certainly looking forward to the next round of swaps!

Alex Wright



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The Loggerheads

The local branch decided to start the New Year with a bang by heading out for a pub crawl on the first Saturday of January to the Tudor town of Shrewsbury.

Shrewsbury is blessed with twelve pubs that merit an entry in the *Good Beer Guide* – phenomenal for a town with a population of around 70,000 – and we discovered that it has a brewpub that hasn't made it into the guide yet.

Such a wealth of great alehouses made the 150 mile trip up to Shropshire seem eminently reasonable, especially as we were able to travel, by changing at Banbury, on the excellent Wrexham and Shropshire Railway service.

Their trains have been whizzing straight through our branch for a couple of years on their way from Marylebone to North Wales and the Marches. The service is in some ways a throwback to the old days of Inter City (coming back our coaches were even adorned with the old Inter City logo): proper locomotives top and tail the carriages.

However, the excellent service and reasonable prices are a huge step forward from both British Rail and the majority of the current railway franchisees (our own Chiltern Railways being an honourable exception to the generally terrible standards). Wrexham and Shropshire have been picking up fans such as the great Python rail aficionado, Michael Palin, who is a user of the service and presided over a recent ceremony at



The Three Fishes

Marylebone to mark their excellent refurbishment of the old BR carriages.

Even though the service was convenient and we were speedily transported through the frozen wastes of the Midlands, the timetable only allowed us slightly over six hours in the town – that's only half an hour per pub, not including walking time or time to linger to do something as time-wasting as eat a meal. Some of our group were more determined to complete the full house than others.

Fortunately Shrewsbury town centre is quite compact, although surprisingly hilly. On leaving the station we headed up the slope past the castle to find our first port of call. The **Loggerheads** is an unspoilt gem of a pub. Its interior is listed in the *CAMRA* national inventory.

There are four small rooms, arranged around a central serving area; most seem as if they have remained unchanged for centuries. The room to the left of the entrance is marked as 'Gents Only Until 1975' – when clearly the feminists of Shrewsbury must have made a stand and beaten down the door in a frenzied riot.

A sign on the wall of the bar suggests that the pub is named after the loggerhead variety of turtle (which begs many further questions).



The Admiral Benbow

The **Loggerheads** is a *Banks* pub and offered six excellent real ales on our visit: *Banks' Bitter*, *Draught Bass*, *Wychwood Hobgoblin*, *Brakspear Oxford Gold* and two from *Jennings* – *Sneek Lifter* and the seasonal *Redbreast*. The last was so good I had a second half to wash down my excellent pork and stilton pie.

The next pub was just across St. Alkmund's Churchyard, through the medieval quarter of town, which includes the infamously named Grope Lane.

The **Three Fishes** is one of many half-timbered buildings and dates back to the 15th century. The pub had a splendid selection of eight real ales including: *Bath Gem*, *Hobson's Twisted Spire*, *Sharp's Doom Bar*, *Timothy Taylor Landlord*, *Oakham Bishop's Farewell*, *Shire Redneck*, *Blue Monkey Evolution* and, everyone's favourite, *Salopian Ironbridge Stout*.

Unsurprisingly, given the great ale selection, we bumped into members of the local branch *CAMRA* committee in the **Three Fishes** – a band of discerning ale drinkers we'd encounter in several



The Coach

other pubs as we worked our way round town.

Next was the **Wheatsheaf** – a comfortable and friendly pub at the top of one of the main shopping streets. It would be a great asset to most towns but was a slight anti-climax after the **Three Fishes** as it only offered six real ales—we were getting spoilt! These were mainly from the *Marston's* portfolio: *Banks' Best*, *Marston's Ugly Sister*, *Jennings' Cumberland Ale* and three from *Ringwood*, their *Best*, *Old Thumper* and *XXXX Porter*. The *Porter* went down very nicely.

The **Nag's Head** is down a busy street with the curious name of Wyle Cop. It's another very historic pub with parts of the building dating back to the 14th century – the front of the pub has a gallery that projects above the street. The pub is set on such a steep slope that it has a very unusual shaped access door to the cellar on the pavement outside. The interior of the pub is long and narrow with bare boards in the front bar and steps up to a seating area at the back. Our choice was restricted to a mere five real ales: *Deuchars IPA*, *Young's*



Montgom

URY PUB CRAWL



and Horses

Bitter, Courage Directors, Timothy Taylor Landlord and the more unusual, *Titanic Anchor*.

Back up Wyle Cop and hidden in the back streets of the town centre was another real ale paradise – the **Admiral Benbow** – which made up in variety for what it lacked in half-timbering.

The *Good Beer Guide* reports that under-30s are only served at the management's discretion in this pub, which seems rather extreme, but perhaps it's to ration all the interesting beer. Contrary to popular preconception of *CAMRA* booze-ups there was actually someone in our party who was in his twenties – but he obviously proved to be a most sensible chap and must have passed the discretion test with flying colours.

The pub is a comfortable free house with welcoming real fires on our visit and nautical paraphernalia in keeping with the name. However, the main attraction is the range of beers – most of them very local to the area. They comprised: the pub's own *Benbow IPA*, *Six Bells Cloud Nine*, *Ironbridge Gold*, *Severn Valley*, *Shropshire Pride*,



ery's Tower

Ludlow Gold, Wye Valley HPA, Gertie Sweet New World Pale and *Salopian Darwin's Origin* (Shrewsbury being Charles Darwin's birthplace). It was **West Midlands CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year** in 2007.

We liked this pub so much that we stayed for more than one drink and the schedule started to slip.

Almost literally next door is the **Coach and Horses**. It has another distinctive interior with a large front bar with a roaring fire and a snug area enclosed by wooden panelling. More mostly local beers were on offer including: *Salopian Shropshire Gold* and *Ironbridge, Three Tuns XXX, Wye Valley HPA* and *Slater's Premium*.

The next couple of pubs were down by the River Severn, which almost encloses the town centre in a large loop. **Montgomery's Tower**, unlike all the other pubs, has no history whatsoever. It's a huge, new *Wetherspoon* pub in a modern steel and glass building.

But this is no ordinary *Wetherspoon*, it's a Shrewsbury *Wetherspoon*. Its beer range compared favourably with the pubs we'd previously visited. On offer were: *Greene King Abbot Ale, Salopian Shropshire Gold* and *Hop Twister, Saltaire Rye Smile, Oakham Bishop's Farewell, Woods's Shropshire Lad* and *Titanic Captain Smith's*.

Curiously the pub had run out of many basic items on the menu, such as burgers, but that might have been due to Dave Roe having arrived at the pub first and ordered a massive mixed grill. This probably emptied most of the fridges in the kitchen and the demolition of the plate of meat was a wonder to behold. I managed to polish off a ham, egg and chips for a very reasonable £2.99.

Swan Supping readers who followed the national news in early January might remember reports of the huge gas explosion that ripped through the centre of Shrewsbury. Our route from **Montgomery's Tower** to the next pub, the **Salopian**, took us within a few yards of the scene of the blast. In fact, the BBC website showed photos of the devastation with the **Salopian** in the foreground.

This happened the morning after our visit and some have unfairly speculated that our consumption of real ale may have critically contributed to the build up of methane gas in the vicinity. We were genuinely lucky, however, as the explosion was no laughing matter. It caused a couple of serious injuries but, very fortunately, no fatalities.

So, having walked past what would 16 hours later look like a scene from 1980s Beirut, we arrived at the **Salopian**. Its proper title is **Salopian Bar** but the *Good Beer Guide* and contributors to the beerintheevening.com website are quick to disabuse ale drinkers of the notion that this is a bar of the trendy wine variety. The decor is nothing like what would be found in the ancient side of town but the beers on offer were equally interesting, including what had now become a few old friends. They included: *Salopian Ironbridge Stout* and *Aurora World Series, Six Bells Room 101, Stonehouse Brewery Kingston Flyer* and *Station Bitter, Oakham Ales Bishop's Farewell* and *Dark Star Hophead*.



The Nags Head

The **Salopian** was the eighth pub but time was drawing in and a couple of our party had broken ranks and accelerated away to try and complete the whole list of pubs. The **Dolphin** is a brewpub and was visited by a couple of our more mobile drinking comrades. Unfortunately, none of their own beers were available on the day but there was a decent selection from other breweries.

Sadly the majority of us only made it to nine pubs in our brief six hours. The last of these was a short trek up the hill over the other side of the River Severn. The **Woodman Inn** was a welcome place for the invading force to regroup with its wood-panelled bar and six real ales. These included: *Salopian Shropshire Gold, Wye Valley Butty Bach, Dark Star Best, Townhouse Celeia, Oakham Bishop's Farewell* and *Thornbridge Kipling*. In honour of our guest crawler from the Reading branch we ended up in the public bar watching the first half of the FA Cup third round tie between the Royals and Liverpool.

But tempus fugit: our train departure beckoned and we had to leave the three remaining *GBG* pubs for another day. The Wrexham and Shropshire train had plenty of space on the return journey which allowed most of our number to sit back for a couple of hours and dream (to all appearances as moribund as Michael Palin's dead parrot) about the next visit to this real ale heaven. *Mike Clarke*



Salopian Bar Beer Selection

'A PROPER PUB'



Lynda and Stuart Johnson describe their pub, **The Prince of Wales** at Foxfield in Cumbria, as 'a proper pub'. We stayed there for a week last October and I soon found out why – without doubt, it is true. The question is: what is 'a proper pub'?

It seems simple to me, but then others may have different criteria. Why not contact the editor and let him know what you think? The key ingredients to me involve the appreciation of good quality real ale, a warm welcome, shared enjoyment, and no distracting 'jangle-noise'.

Simple maybe, but it takes hard work and dedication to achieve – and, my goodness, Lynda and Stuart have done that in spades, turning a once very run-down pub into a multiple award-winning one in just a few years. Not only has the pub been voted 'Cumbria Pub of the Year' in 2005 and 2007, but their own beers have also won many accolades.

Shoe-horned into old stables at the back of the pub there is the three-barrel **Foxfield Brewery**, but also supplying the pub is the **Tigertops Brewery**, in Wakefield, established in 1995, by Lynda and Stuart, now run on their behalf by Barry Smith.

Lynda told me how, when they had started **Tigertops**, they thought the next logical step would be to buy their own pub where they could sell their own beers – although Foxfield turned out to be...er...a little bit further away from Wakefield than they had envisaged. So, having taken that mad challenge on, the next logical step, of course, was to set up another micro at the pub itself. Impeccable logic!



Both breweries turn out a constantly changing range, including a number of superb Belgian style beers. Besides their own brews, there are guest beers. At least one mild, carefully selected Belgian beers, bottled barley wines, cider and perry, and single malts to die for, are always available at the bar.

Although it may seem a pity, from a selfish drinker's viewpoint, that the pub is not at present open every day, being closed Mondays and Tuesdays (see **GBG** for full details), it must be sensible that those who strive to provide such delights, have at least some time to themselves. Mind you, over the four evenings during the week we stayed there (in a very comfortable room at reduced rates for **CAMRA**), I had nothing to complain about, having sampled at least all of the following, in ascending order of ABV:

Foxfield Sonic Mild (3.7%), **Wapping 'Baltic Fleet' Magna 800** (3.7%), **Beckstones Black Gun Dog Freddy Mild** (3.8%), **Hop Back Odyssey** (4.0%), **Whim Hartington Bitter** (4.0%), **Cambrinus Endurance** (4.3%), **Foxfield Mount Hubbard** (4.3%), **BrewDog The Physics** (5.2%), **Kirkby Lonsdale Jubilee** (5.5%), **Tigertops Vicar of Millom** (7.2%), **Samuel Smith Strong Golden** (10.2%) (a bottled barley wine with attitude), **Trappistes Rochefort 10** (11.3%) and other Belgian bottled beers. There were a few others, but my notes, for some reason, are illegible...just as well I had Monday and Tuesday to rest...although, I have to admit, I took the opportunity to visit the superb **Manor Arms**, and other pubs in nearby Broughton-in-Furness on my nights off....



Being 'a proper pub' there is no 'a la carte' gastro-pub menu – no pancetta, char-grilled sirloin or noisettes of venison with saffron mash – instead, subject to availability, there are some wholesome 'beer blotters' in the form of pasties large, medium and small, with a number of tasty fillings. Besides these, Lynda does occasionally rather spoil her locals later in the session, with impromptu plates of home-cooked loveliness.

And that's the point – the place is full of happy locals, all almost part of the family. The pub being situated directly opposite a 'request stop only' railway station, those 'locals' also come from places both up and down the line – but, be warned, don't go by the clock in the bar if you want to be sure of the last train back!

Giles du Boulay



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NEW LOOK UNICORN



From the outside it is difficult to tell and on the inside at first glance it looks much the same as before but the **Unicorn** in Cublington has been significantly extended over the last few months.

Completed in early December, the work included building a new kitchen, a new function room, opening out the old kitchen to form part of the new restaurant, new shelving behind the bar, new toilets and the installation of a wood burning stove in place of the fire on the left hand side of the bar, and openings to both sides of the chimney.

As a result the restaurant is much more inviting with a warmer atmosphere and has increased its capacity from about 25 to 60, so it no longer needs to intrude into the drinking area.

The new bar and the shelving behind it have been carefully thought out to provide more efficient use of space. Again more room for bar equipment and stock storage has been achieved with more room for staff and customers.

The new function room is between the new kitchen and the old barn and seats up to 20. This will be a very welcome facility for the many clubs and societies from near and far who meet at the **Unicorn** regularly.

New toilets complete the transformation and the overall impression is of great improvement benefiting staff and customers alike. It also shows that with care old pubs can be improved without destroying the character of the place.

This privately owned freehouse has gone from strength to strength over the last few years and has appeared in the *Good Beer Guide* many times as well as winning AVDC's best village pub competition. Five ales are available on handpump, *Brakspear Bitter*, *Greene King IPA* and *Shepherd Neame Spitfire* are the regulars with *Everards Beacon* and *Tiger* the current guests.

Mick White



THE THREE HORSESHOES

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SNOW FUN!

The recent snows caused a lot of problems in the area and pubs were obviously affected, although some village pubs reported that trade improved during the worst of it as locals proved that they could master the conditions and then swap stories of how they did it over a cool pint in a warm pub, often in front of a roaring log fire.

We received a few pictures of snow-bound pubs, but we thought that the best one was from the **Green Dragon**, Flackwell Heath.



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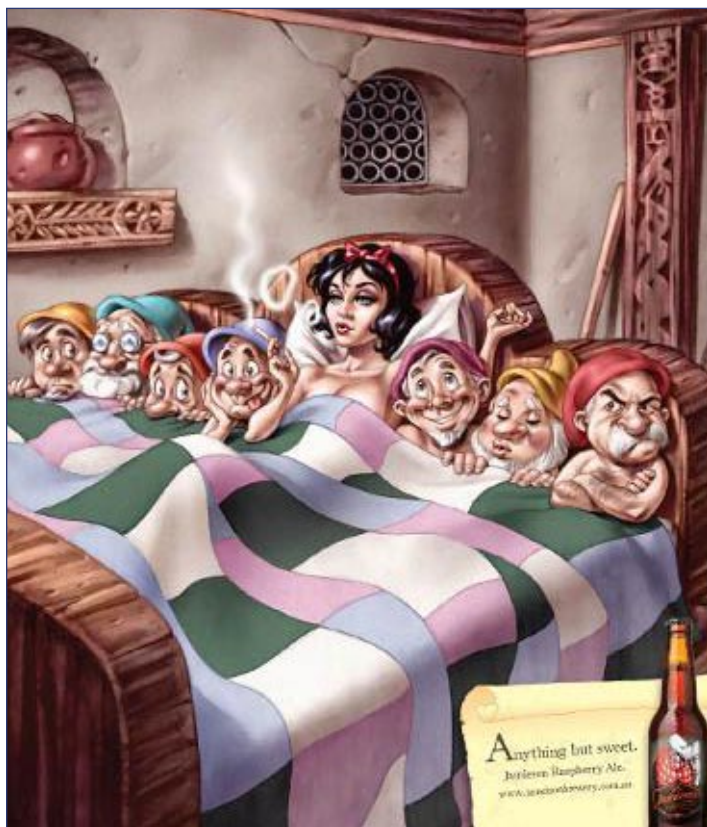
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THE WIZARDS OF OZ



My sister, the lovely Samantha from *I'm sorry I haven't a clue*, has just got back from Australia with her boyfriend, Sven, with whom she regularly likes to go down under. She tells me the really hip place to stay is Woolloomooloo Bay, on the edge of Sydney Harbour. They stayed in the ultra-cool Blue Sydney Hotel, overlooking Finger Wharf, but be warned, for some strange reason the staff, who are very friendly and helpful, don't always knock

before entering the room, which poor Sven found rather deflating once just as he was getting up.

There's been a bit of push lately to boost the popularity in Oz of Belgian-style fruit based beers. A recent advertising campaign for **Jamieson Brewery's Raspberry Ale**, in its efforts to convince Australians that the fruit-flavoured beer is 'anything but sweet', has raised eyebrows and attracted much welcome publicity. It's a risqué version of Snow White called 'Ho White'.

The x-rated advertisement depicts the fairytale heroine, Ho White, in a bordello, blowing smoke rings while lying in bed with seven naked dwarfs (shades of *Psychoville* there) who have names like Filthy, Smarmy and Randy portraying different types of drinkers. Apparently, and here's the good news, it's really got up the noses of certain people at Disney. Coincidentally, the campaign's 'anythingbutsweet' website has been blocked. Of course the ad wouldn't be allowed by the Pommies either, because it's now illegal to smoke in a brothel, being a public place.



Australia, a place where men are men and the sheep are nervous, does of course have a great tradition of humorous beer ads. In 2008, **Coopers** angered supporters of the Royal Family with their billboards urging drinkers to 'Forget the monarchy, support the publicans' – the ad was pulled after complaints, during the election, that it favoured the republicans.

One beer that's got many Aussies' votes though is *Skinny Blonde* (5.0%) by rock n' roll brewers **Brothers Ink** who have used the latest disappearing ink technology on the bottle label. Daisy, the blonde, gradually loses her red bikini as the bottle warms up once the cold beer inside empties. Crystal Lee, a barmaid at Bondi's Beach Road Hotel, the first pub in Australia to serve *Skinny Blonde*, said that it was one of their most popular 'low-carb' beers. But *Woman's Forum Australia* spokeswoman Melinda Tankard Reist (I kid you not) slammed the beer and its advertising as degrading and inappropriate.

Samantha, who had to leave early for her bricklaying course (at least I think that's what she said), disagreed strongly with Ms Reist, saying that it was just a bit of harmless fun, and that any girl would want to take off for warmer parts.

Louise Dugalby



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POTENTIAL HEALTH BENEFITS FOR BEER DRINKERS!

New research shows the potential health benefits of moderate beer drinking! Please note that this is not one of our famous 'spoofs'!

Recently, Dr Jonathan Powell (pictured) presented new research at an international conference of leading scientists in California showing potential benefits of beer drinking on bone health. Dr Powell is Head of the Biomineral Research Section at the Medical Research Council Collaborative Centre for Human Nutrition Research (HNR) in Cambridge.

Dr Powell said 'Beer is one of the richest sources of silicon in the western diet. Historically silicon has not been seen as an essential nutrient, but our research suggests that it could play an important role in bone health.'

'We have shown that silicon appears to have a beneficial effect in increasing bone mineral density. Epidemiological work has identified a positive association between drinking beer in moderation (2 units per day) and increased bone mineral density. Our results suggest that this is, at least partly, due to the high silicon content of beer.'

'In a separate study published earlier this year we showed that moderate ethanol consumption has an acute, specific effect in reducing bone loss. The combination of the silicon and alcohol intake obtained from moderate beer consumption appears to promote both bone and connective tissue health'

However Dr Powell warns 'drinking alcohol in high amounts is detrimental to health and consumption of beer, or any other alcoholic drink, in anything other than moderation, will far outweigh any potential benefits related to lower intakes. High consumption should be discouraged as it can greatly accelerate disease and result in early death'.

Further research into the effects of silicon on health are needed, but work at HNR points towards it being beneficial to health, and beer (in moderation) is just one source of silicon that could be included into a healthy and balanced diet.

Mean (range) silicon contents of alcoholic beverages (mg/L):

Beers-
Can lager = 20.7 (15.4-26.4)
Draft lager = 21.5 (11.7-39.4)
Can bitter = 14.5 (9.59-20.1)
Draft bitter = 21.0 (13.5-30.1)
Ciders = 3.7 (2.72-5.53)
Wines = 7.67 (6.61-9.24)
Spirits = 1.26 (0.56-2.06)

The MRC Collaborative Centre for Human Nutrition Research (HNR) was established in 1998 following the restructuring of the Dunn Nutrition Unit, so as to progress the Medical Research Councils portfolio of strategic and applied nutrition research. HNR was set up with a collaborative remit: to pursue research in partnership with national and international stakeholders.

HNR's mission is to advance knowledge of the relationships between human nutrition and health by providing a national centre of excellence for the measurement and interpretation of biochemical, functional and dietary indicators of nutritional status and health. HNR also acts as an independent, authoritative source of scientific advice and information on nutrition and health in order to foster evidence-based nutrition policy and practice.

Further details can be found on their website (www.mrc-hnr.cam.ac.uk).



Many thanks to Ian Mackay from *Vale Brewery* for passing on the information which came via *SIBA (Society of Independent Brewers)*.

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.

VISIT US AT OUR BREWERY SHOP
Tramway Business Park, Ludgershall Road, Brill, HP18 9TY
Tel: 01844 239237 e-mail: info@valebrewery.co.uk
Opening hours. Mon to Fri 9.30am to 5pm, Sat 9.30am to 11.30am.

LOCAL BEER FESTIVALS



Fifth Winslow Beer Festival

Following the first *Winslow Beer Festival* in 2006 the Lions Club of Winslow has been able to raise over £30,000 from the last four festivals. They hope to increase their takings again for charity from nearly £8,000 they raised last year. Already they have commitment from their prime sponsor Kelvin Willis of Bright Nails Ltd. together with many of the sponsors from previous festivals continuing their support for this popular event.

As for the past few festivals they will continue to add to the Saturday afternoon session with 'screening' two of the live Six Nations Rugby matches on a huge screen. This has certainly been popular and adds an interesting distraction to the Saturday afternoon session.

The Lions are now into the final stages of preparation and all the successful elements have been included, and more – around 40 beers, rugby on the Saturday afternoon and all the good nature and welcoming atmosphere that has

become synonymous with this well run event.

The 2010 *Winslow Beer Festival* will be held as usual at the Winslow Public Hall, Elm Fields Gate, Winslow, MK18 3JA. on the 12th and 13th March and the Festival will be officially opened by the Speaker of the House of Commons and local MP - John Bercow at 7:00 pm. after a special session for the sponsors and guests before hand.

Details of the Festival are available on the website www.winslowlions.org.uk. Tickets will be available from the **Bell Hotel** in Winslow from the 1st March. The Lions Club of Winslow is looking forward to seeing you there, drinking for charity!

Keith Hofgartner

High Wycombe Rugby Club 'Bucks v Devon & Cornwall' Beer Festival

Our next beer festival is based on the theme Buckinghamshire beers v Devon & Cornwall beers and is on March 26th-27th 2010 at the High Wycombe Rugby Club.

The theme was basically decided in August of last year on my summer holiday in rural sunny North Devon and Cornwall, where I stumbled upon a brand new brewery in Hartland, North Devon. This was the *Forge Brewery* (www.forgebrewery.co.uk) which had been recommended by John Williamson (known to local **CAMRA** members

as 'Noj'). Anyway, cutting a long story short the beer was fantastic as are most of the West Country ales, some of which I sampled whilst on holiday.

So I decided that I would get some with a friend in early March 2010! Steve Fez of Chiltern Lifts, armed with my list and several borrowed empty barrels (care of the *Rebellion Brewery*) went to pick up three or four different beers from the *Forge Brewery* to headline at our festival.

As we were bringing these back in Steve's van, it seemed only fair to bring a few back for our supporting pubs in High Wycombe. The *Wheel*, the *Whip* and the *Derehams Inn* are each serving one of the *Forge Brewery* beers while the festival is on, plus our very own *Knock On* ale, which is kindly supplied by the *Rebellion Brewery*. Once my tasting notes are ready you can then access these on our website (www.hwrufc.com).

After the deliveries from *Rebellion*, *Vale*, and *Concrete Cow* breweries and *Flying Firkin* arrive, I expect we shall have about 22 barrels and three ciders to get through, so you should pencil this date in your diaries as there is plenty to look forward to and all are welcome.

Price of entry will be £5 which will include two half pints of your choice. **CAMRA** members will get an extra free token on arrival if they show their membership card, so they have no excuse not to attend the Saturday social at the festival.

Nick Kidby

HWRUFC BEER FESTIVAL

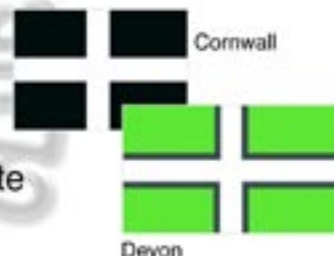


Buckinghamshire V Devon & Cornwall Beer Festival



Buckinghamshire

Beers selected from across these Counties
challenge your taste buds choose your favourite



Devon

£5 entry includes presentation glass and 2 half pint tokens

Beer Tokens sold at £1.25 per half all Beers & Ciders £2.50 a pint

Friday 26th March, 2010 starts 6.30 pm until midnight
Saturday 27th March, 2010 starts 12 noon until midnight

High Wycombe Rugby Union Football Club

Kingsmead Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP11 1JB

Telephone (01494) 524407

Bus routes : 1, A40, 35, 37

Good Food

Good Music

and a

Good Craic.....

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Chile Tour 2010

LONDON BEER FESTIVALS



London Drinker Beer & Cider Festival
Wednesday 10th - Friday 12th March

2010 sees **CAMRA's London Drinker Beer & Cider Festival** celebrating its 26th event. Based at the Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, WC1H 9AU, near King's Cross St Pancras, it is the longest running festival in London in the same venue and one of the easiest ones to get to - just a 5 minutes walk from the tube station.

Needless to say, there is a great range of drinks to choose from with around 70 real ales and 70 imported beers plus real ciders and perries.

Food is cooked by **CAMRA** stalwarts and features O'Hagan's real ale sausages, onion bhajis, samosas with two dishes of the day (including vegetarian) and huge cheese or ham baps.

The festival is open Wednesday 10th and Thursday 11th March: 12-3pm free; 5pm-10.30pm £3.50 (£2 members); Friday 12th March: 12-10.30pm £3.50 (£2 members).

20th Battersea Beer Festival 10th-12th February

The 20th Battersea Beer Festival will take place at the Grand Hall, Battersea Arts Centre (BAC), Town Hall Road, Lavender Hill SW11 5TN (near Clapham Junction station) from Wednesday 10th to Friday 12th of February.

It will feature 140 beers from around the country,

plus traditional ciders, perries, country wines and continental beers.

Hot and cold food and soft drinks will also be available.

Open daily from 12noon-11pm.

Admission £3 (£2 before 5pm Wednesday), £1 discount for **CAMRA** members on Wednesday and Thursday.



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Sunday Lunch ~ £8-95 for two courses (Children under 6 free!)
Please book early to avoid disappointment

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or email: lynnecomley@btconnect.com

Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

FEBRUARY

Monday 1st GBG PRE-SELECTION MEETING

8.30pm, Cross Keys, Thame

Tuesday 9th DOWNLEY SOCIAL

8.45pm, Le De Spencer Arms, Downley Common

Monday 15th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

8:00pm King's Head, Aylesbury

All local **CAMRA** members should attend in order to have their say on how the branch is to be run for the next year.

Free 'nibbles' available.

Saturday 20th MARLOW AND BEACONSFIELD CRAWL

Start 12pm Charles Dickens, Beaconsfield, then via Beaconsfield Old Town pubs to 5pm Three Horseshoes, Burroughs Grove, then Duke of Cambridge and Marlow Town Centre – see website for further details

Monday 22nd GBG FINAL SELECTION MEETING

8.30pm, Wheel, Naphill

MARCH

Friday 5th AYLESBURY EARLY EVENING SOCIAL

6pm King's Head, 8pm Hop Pole (via new Wetherspoon, if open)

Tuesday 9th WADDESdon/KINGSWOOD SOCIAL

8.30pm Plough and Anchor, Kingswood, 9.15pm Bell, Waddesdon, 10pm Lion, Waddesdon

Thursday 18th WEST WYCOMBE AND BRADENHAM SOCIAL

8.30pm Red Lion, Bradenham, 9.15pm George and Dragon, West Wycombe.

Monday 22nd BRANCH MEETING

8.30pm Whip, Lacey Green

Saturday 27th CHARITY BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

1pm High Wycombe Rugby Club, Kingsmead Road

Tuesday 30th DINTON/FORD SOCIAL

8pm Seven Stars, Dinton, 9pm Dinton Hermit, Ford.

APRIL

Friday 2nd GOOD FRIDAY BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

1pm Hop Pole, Aylesbury

Friday 9th RIVER FLEET PUB CRAWL

Start 5pm Blackfriar, Blackfriars, EC4V 4EG, then follow the course of the submerged River Fleet from pub to pub to end up at the Euston Flyer, St. Pancras (see website for details).

MAY

Loddon Brewery visit. Date to be arranged - please check the website.

OCTOBER

Friday 29th/Saturday 30th AYLESBURY BEER FESTIVAL

Eskdale Road Community Centre, Stoke Mandeville

Our annual charity beer festival held in conjunction with the 'Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity'.

Further details can be found on our website

www.swansupping.org.uk

**CATCH UP WITH THE MEMBERS DURING
BRANCH SOCIALS WITH THE BRANCH MOBILE
PHONE 0792 215 8971**

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

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Tel : 01296 484551

E-Mail : editor@swansupping.org.uk

Advertising rates are :- 1/4 page £60 (B & W £40), 1/2 page £120 (B & W £80), full page £200. 10% discounts for payment in advance.

We can even create the advert for you at no extra charge! All bookings are taken as run-of-paper (colour adverts take precedence). You can now pay for a year of adverts in advance and avoid any possible price increases! Please make all cheques payable to **CAMRA AV & W**.

Copy deadline for next issue, due out 1st April, is 14th March 2010.

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

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

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Opinions expressed in *Swan Supping* are not necessarily those of the editor, or the *Campaign for Real Ale*.

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

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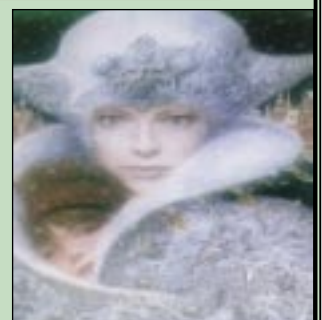
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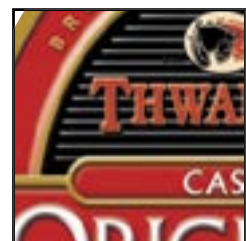
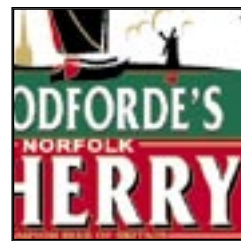
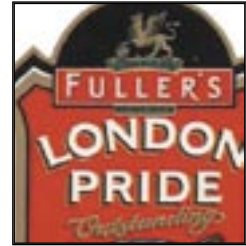
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