

FREE



Swan Supping



Campaign for Real Ale
Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch
www.swansupping.org.uk

Issue 72

JUNE/JULY 2009



ON THE VERGE OF A REAL ALE BONANZA!



A quick glance at this magazine will reveal the great number of pubs, social clubs and others running beer festivals.

This is part of a resurgence in interest in real ale which is reflected in the boom in sales from local breweries, most of whom have recently been extended to deal with the demand, or are planning to do so.

Promotions like *Cask Ale Week* which featured Melanie Sykes (pictured), famous for being the face of *Boddingtons*, have also helped raise the profile of our national drink.

So despite the credit crunch and the ever increasing tax burden that beer seems to attract along with diatribes against binge drinking in the newspapers, there is still demand for good quality traditional cask ale in traditional British pubs.



Could it be that this interest in real ale is also down to the fact that people still want to go out and enjoy themselves in good company, but feel that they might as well get something that supermarkets can never offer.

The local beer festivals will give people the opportunity to try more of the seemingly endless variety of tastes of beer that are available.

The number of seasonal beers from our local breweries will also feature at many of these festivals so it is possible to feel virtuous as the beer miles travelled by your tittle are reduced!

So, even if the weather lets us down, get out there and support as many festivals as you can - you never know, they might be tempted to hold them again next year!



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Find us in the 2009 Good Beer Guide

A newsletter with a print run of 5000 for the discerning drinkers of Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe

Local News



ASTON ROWANT

The **Lambert Arms** has been voted one of the top twenty pubs in Britain by the Morning Advertiser.

AYLESBURY

The **Hobgoblin** is currently sticking with *Wychwood* beers and the two on offer recently were *Rye Smile* and *Hobgoblin*, both at a very reasonable £2.10 (after 7pm it goes up to £2.80). It is still planned to offer food in the future and to have a seating area in Kingsbury Square.

The **Hop Pole** was voted one of the top twenty pubs in Britain by the Morning Advertiser and is now being managed by Richard Prest and his partner Lisa Dunbar. They used to run the **Goat & Tricycle** in Bournemouth which was a regular *Good Beer Guide* entry, so as expected the pub's ten beers are in good hands! We enjoyed a superb buffet there after our recent trip to *Vale Brewery*, so many thanks to Richard and Lisa.

Amy Close, landlady of the **Rockwood**, gave birth to a baby boy, Patrick Dennis, on the 24th of May. We wish both mother and baby well!

CADMORE END

The **Tree Hotel** (formerly the **Blue Flag**) is offering a wide range of foods from all over the world along with their cask ale *Marstons Pedigree*. The pub is now part of a small group which includes the **Tree Hotel** in Iffley.

GREAT KIMBLE

The **Bernard Arms** continues its occasional evenings of live music with another session on 26th June.

The Towersey Morris Men will be performing outside the **Swan** on 1st July. The **Swan** will also be holding an Italian evening on 24th June and will be re-instating its summer ball on 29th August, after an absence of three years.

HIGH WYCOMBE

The **Bell** is closed! This *Fullers* pub shut suddenly with no explanation about in early May. Its web-site says that it has closed 'due to the economic climate' which doesn't make much sense as the town centre pubs appear to be doing reasonably well at the moment!

LACEY GREEN

The **Black Horse** has now joined the Cellarmans Reserve guest ale programme and serves three such guest ales, changing monthly, plus its usual *Brakspears Bitter*. Recently the three guest ales were: *Camerons Nimmos XXXX*; *Bath Ales Golden Hare* and *Brains Rev James*. They now also serve excellent breakfasts (sampled by the local *CAMRA* rep) from Tuesday to Saturday 9 till 11:30.

LANE END

The **Old Sun** was closed for nearly a week during May, but this *Enterprise Inn*'s pub is now being run by Lee Hulstaert who is a temporary manager. *Tring Jack O'Legs* was on offer there when last visited.

LOUDWATER

The **Derehams Inn** will be holding its third 'Fag and Firkin' beer festival from Friday 3rd to Sunday 5th of July. There will be entertainment this year as well as some ace beers and the theme for the festival is 'An independent pub supporting independent local breweries on Independence Day'. They also have a brand new website with all the details of the beers at the festival as well as the usual information about

the pub on www.derehamsinn.co.uk.

MARLOW

The refurbished **Carpenter's Arms** reopened in April as **O'Donoghue's Irish Ale House**. No sight yet of any Irish Craft microbreweries beers but the three handpumps have been retained, thankfully, with *Greene King IPA*, *Abbot and Hardy & Hanson Olde Trip* spotted on a recent visit.

A 'Celebration of Local Beers' was held at the **Crowne Plaza Hotel** over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend towards the end of May. A choice of ten beers were available, some draught and some bottle-conditioned, from local breweries *Chiltern*, *Loddon*, *Lovibonds*, and *Rebellion*. Here's to their next beer celebration!

Summer Solstice weekend will be beer festival time again at the **Duke of Cambridge** so make a note in your diary now for Friday 19th to Sunday 21st June and we will have our social there from noon on the Saturday. Expect more than one or two goodies rare to the usual Marlow imbibing scene.

(Continued on page 23)

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THE WHIP INN: BRANCH PUB OF THE YEAR 2009

The **Whip Inn** is a worthy winner of the branch *Pub of the Year 2009*. Over the last few years, Nick Smith, the landlord, has steadily built-up a dedicated following of real ale connoisseurs. A blackboard in the pub shows how the number of different real ales has steadily risen from 199 in 2005, through 452 in 2006, 700 in 2007 and a phenomenal 770 in 2008 – which works out at an average of two different real ales changing per day. 2009 has seen 321 so far, which matches the 2008 rate. Maybe the *Pub of the Year* accolade might help push the total over the 800 limit?

A few years ago, the pub featured a choice of well-known brands of ale with a few microbrewery beers for variety. However, in the last couple of years, the selection has become ever-changing with beers from micros and small regional and family brewers



predominating.

The pub holds two beer festivals per year, usually in May and October (the alternative Oktoberfest) which are popular events in the local branch calendar. Some festivals have been held in association with the **Wheel** in Naphill down the road (also a finalist in *Pub of the Year*).

While the beer is superlative, the pub does a good trade in food, including fish brought

directly from the port.

The **Whip** is located next to a rare example of a working smock windmill and is positioned on the top of the Chiltern ridge in great walking country, with great views down to Oxfordshire and Aylesbury Vale. However, it can easily be reached by public transport as the 300 Aylesbury to High Wycombe bus stops right outside. The bus service runs until 11pm on weekdays and Saturdays so there's

plenty of reason to stay longer to sample each ale from the five handpumps.

The picture, taken by Alex Wright, shows the presentation of the *POTY* certificate by the chairman of the *Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe CAMRA* branch, David Roe (right) to the landlord, Nick Smith.

The **Whip** will now enter the Central Southern *Regional Pub of the Year* competition.

THE WHIP INN

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Please contact the editor if you would like to help distribute *Swan Supping*

AYLESBURY RING (PART TWO)



Great Kimble to Dinton

A previous *Swan Supping* featured the first part of the Aylesbury Ring, a 31 mile circular footpath that encircles the county town. This next instalment starts where the first walk finished in Great Kimble and continues to Dinton.

Both ends of this section have an unusually good bus service – the 300 runs through Great Kimble and the 280 Aylesbury-Thame-Oxford

service runs along the main road at Dinton. Both buses operate a minimum hourly service on Sundays and in the evenings but are more frequent at other times. Little Kimble station is also close to the start of the walk and the 280 connects with the Chiltern Railways line at Haddenham so this walk is easily accessible by rail.

This five mile walk passes through largely flat farmland. With only a few small villages on the way, it provides a great sense of ‘getting away from it all’. However, there are four country pubs on the way to provide restitution – all of which should provide a good lunch, although it is advisable to phone ahead to check opening times.

The route is mostly adequately signposted with Aylesbury Ring waymarkers but there are certain points when these seem to disappear. Therefore some basic directions are given below but it is assumed that walkers are using an appropriate Ordnance Survey Map. The 1:25,000 series Explorer 181 ‘Chiltern Hills North’ covers the route. The walk crosses many arable fields. These are dry in summer but can become muddy at other times of the year

We start on the A4010 in Great Kimble at the **Bernard Arms**. Walk down Church Lane past St. Nicholas’ Church, reportedly scene of John Hampden’s refusal to pay the ship tax – an event which helped to precipitate the English Civil War.

Turn right past Great Kimble School and descend down several meadows towards the Princes Risborough-Aylesbury railway line. A footpath linking Little Kimble station joins the Aylesbury Ring here.

Descend the steps and cross the single-track railway line. Pass to the left of a wheat field and head towards the B4009. The route continues over the road but detour a couple of hundred yards to the left to find the first pub.

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FROM A SWAN TO A HERMIT

The **Swan** in Great Kimble overlooks the village green with tables on the grass outside and an enclosed garden to the rear. It is a genuine two-roomed pub with an area to the left predominantly used for dining, although it usually hosts the thriving fortnightly quiz. To the right is the flag-stoned tap-room with rustic benches and, in winter, a log fire. The **Swan** serves two very well-kept real ales, *Adnam's Bitter* and *St. Austell Tribute*. Every Easter Saturday the **Swan** is inundated with drinkers attending the Kimble point-to-point races, an event held half-a-mile or so away that can bring in a staggering 15,000 spectators given good weather.

Return to the footpath and cross a large arable field. Cross the minor road and head down the driveway towards Kimble Wick Farm. Just before the farmhouse take a stile to the left and follow the waymarkers, keeping to the sides of several fields, heading towards the hamlet of Kimble Wick. This is a very tranquil area and skylarks can be heard hovering over the fields.

Pass to the side of a couple of newly built houses on the approach to Kimble Wick then follow the waymarkings to join a drive, heading for the minor road that passes through the village. Cross the road and head down a tarmac no-through road almost opposite. At this point the walk shares the route with the North Bucks Way, which seems to be slightly better signposted.

Go past a couple of farms and a few houses. The road becomes a well-defined farm track after passing Poplar Farm. We were recruited by the farmer as stand-in shepherds on this stretch of the walk as we chanced upon the flock of sheep being driven down the lane. When the track turns to the right pass over a stile on the left and head straight ahead through some pastureland. On the other side of the field cross the footbridge.

At this point the waymarking appears to break down and it becomes difficult to find the way. It is also on the fold of the Ordnance Survey



sheet so extra care needs to be taken reading the map. On leaving the footbridge the path goes to the right of the field but then veers left. It then crosses the next field diagonally left towards Ford. This path is through crops and wasn't easy to find.

To complicate matters, a community woodland and nature reserve has been planted on the hill to the right of the path so recently it didn't appear on my map. Details of the woodland, known as Michael's Peace, are fixed to the wall of the next pub, the **Dinton Hermit** (pictured above). The planting was designed to give views of six local churches from a large glade in the centre. The wood could be well worth a detour as it is open for public access.

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FROM DINTON TO GIBRALTAR

The route continues across a few more fields, eventually emerging at a stile on Water Lane in Ford, right opposite the **Dinton Hermit** (curiously located in Ford not Dinton). This is a 16th Century inn that also has Civil War connections: one story is that the hermit mentioned in the pub's name was Charles I's executioner.

The **Dinton Hermit** is a well-appointed hotel but has also retained the character of a traditional hostelry. The bar and restaurant are formed from a series of inter-connecting, stone-floored, low-ceilinged rooms. There is a huge garden to the front of the inn. There are two hand-pumps behind the bar but on our visit there was only one real ale available – *Vale Best Bitter*, with *Chiltern Beechwood* 'coming soon', both are local breweries.

The *Vale* bitter was good, demonstrating the principle, as with the **Swan**, that a smaller selection of real ale can often mean better quality as the beer is turned over quickly – rather than become old and tired if too many ales are offered at the same time.

From the **Dinton Hermit**, join the main road out of Ford for a short time, turning right at the waymarked sign down a farm track. Go through a gate and into some pastureland. Follow what appear to be some ancient earthworks studded with a double row of trees as they bend towards the left. The path emerges at a gate on the busy Aylesbury-Haddenham road. There is a stile to the right of the gate but it is completely surrounded by nettles.

Turn right and walk a short distance down the road. The Aylesbury Ring continues over a stile across the road. From here it is about half a mile to Dinton. The path crosses a few fields but navigation is fairly obvious – with Dinton Hall a prominent landmark on the horizon. The area is rich in wildlife, with butterflies finding the fields a fitting habitat.

Approaching Dinton we found a temporary electric fence had been



placed across the path in a horse paddock. Fortunately the animal's owner was there to show us there was actually a way we could safely unhook the fence at one point and use it as a gate. Otherwise we could have been even more charged up for the next pint.

Turn left opposite the school to reach the minor road. The Aylesbury Ring route follows this uphill through Dinton to the A418. However, two more pubs are a short detour away.

Instead of taking the road to the right, turn slightly to the left, cross the road and pass through the stile, taking the footpath that runs past the grounds of Dinton Hall. This impressive 16th century building also has Civil War connections. It was the residence of Simon Mayne who signed King Charles I's death warrant and was apparently a mate of the Dinton Hermit.

REBELLION

BREWERY SHOP

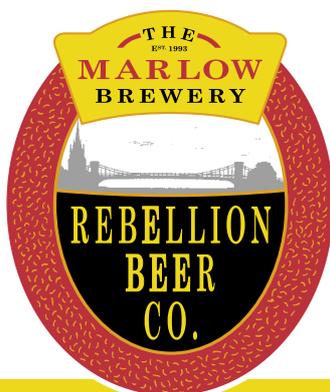
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END OF PART TWO!



Follow the footpath behind some gardens and eventually emerge onto the road on to Dinton High Street. Turn right and then left to find the **Seven Stars**. This is a multi-roomed village local that serves real ale but unfortunately we were unable to sample it as, surprisingly, it was closed when we visited at 2.30pm on a Saturday lunchtime.

The final pub is only a short walk away. Turn right from the **Seven Stars** along New Road to reach the main A418. The **Bottle and Glass** is a couple of hundred yards to the left in the hamlet of Gibraltar. This thatched pub was restored in 2007 by its owners, *Greene King*, after a devastating fire in 2003. It is primarily aimed at the dining market but has tables in the bar for bona fide drinkers and does two real ales – *Greene King IPA* and *Olde Trip*.

The 280 bus passes the **Bottle and Glass** and will take the weary walker back to either Aylesbury in one direction or Haddenham and Thame in the other.

Mike Clarke

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LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

Chiltern Brewery

Chiltern's summer ale, *Cobblestones*, will be available from June 1st at their brewery shop, the *Farmers' Bar* and other good pubs, locally.

It is a golden, light and refreshing beer with a summer berry aroma and a hint of thirst-quenching tang, brewed with low strength of 3.5%vol.

The beer is named after the ancient cobblestones at the brewery's pub, the **Farmers' Bar** in Market Square, Aylesbury. The keen eyed will spot the new pump clip design which draws its influence from the **King's Head** and its cobbled entrance.

The first brew of *Cobblestones* has 'Christened' their new fermenting vessel, so you could say it's paving the way for their beers! The planned development and expansion that was started in 2004 is continuing and this is another milestone along the way.

A series of bespoke tables are being handmade specifically for the **Farmers' Bar**, and the wood the tables are being made from is the old malt bin floorboards from Nottingham's ex-brewery, *James Shipstone & Son*.

A couple of tons' worth of planks was collected from *Shipstone's* years ago and over the years they have turned it into all sorts of interesting things. This is some of the last of it and they have found a local cabinet maker who is turning the floorboards into tables. Keeping the wood



within the brewing family, so to speak, seems a very suitable use for it.

The planks are individually marked and it is thought that the numbering was to help *Shiptone's* brewers identify the malt in the bins. The floor throughout their brewery shop is made from the same planking and all the floorboards are marked.

Customers of the **Farmers' Bar** may already have sat at the first table without realising it - the cross-braced tavern-table inside the pub's front door. This was the first to be made, the others will follow as they are completed.

When the tables are finished, you could say that customers will be able to eat their food off the floor!

Chiltern also won a Silver Medal for their **Chiltern Nut Brown Mild** (3.9%vol) - at the recent **CAMRA** beer festival held in Reading.

Tom Jenkinson, partner at the brewery was there with his father (Richard Jenkinson, the founder of the brewery) when they heard the announcement that we had won Silver in the hotly contested Mild category.

Chiltern Brewery were delighted with the result, especially as *Nut Brown Mild* won the same category two years ago with a Gold Medal.

Chiltern Nut Brown Mild is described as a luxuriously smooth, dark and subtly sweet mild with a beautifully balanced hop aroma.



Penn Street Village Beer Fest

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MORE LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

VALE BREWERY

Vale's brewery tap in Aylesbury, the **Hop Pole**, has been voted as one of the top 20 pubs in the UK.

Trade publication the Morning Advertiser asked '200 leading lights of the industry' for their top pubs. The vote delighted new managers Richard Prest and partner Lisa Dunbar who took over from Stuart Royan and Monia Quadrelli.

Also in the Top Pubs list were *Vale Brewery's* two other pubs the **Royal Oak** in Oakley and the **Victoria** in Northampton.

Partner Phil Stevens commented. 'This is a fantastic accolade, all our pubs in the country's top 200. It is terrific to see all the hard work put in at the pubs and brewery to get this recognition.'

Additional good news for the Brill based brewery came as the magazine 'Taste' did a feature on the country's best beers in the Mild style as part of the **CAMRA** 'Make May a Mild Month' promotion, and *Black Swan Mild* was heavily featured.

Success in their own pubs and more free trade outlets featuring *Vale* beers had put production right up to full capacity. In response to this, the brewery have invested in expanding the capacity and a larger brew will be possible from early June.

Ian Mackey, General Manager of *Vale Brewery* commented 'It is great news to be at full capacity, but even working at weekends we have not been able to keep up with demand. The increased size will enable further growth.'

'This is a real boost to all the *Vale* staff, but also should provide a springboard for further growth and increase employment prospects in Brill.' added Mackey.

Each month this year *Vale* have produced a monthly beer. All have had themes related to their home village of Brill and information on the June and July beers has just been released.

The June beer will be called *Full Throttle*. Muswell Hill in Brill was the site of regular motorbike scrambles. *Full Throttle* is brewed to mourn the loss of this regular event that stopped in the 1980's. The beer is a golden best bitter, 4.3% in strength with a pronounced grapefruit character.

The July beer will be 4.1% in strength, and called *Nixey's Mill*. Named after the last miller at the Brill Windmill, and brewed to coincide with the Windmill's reopening after refurbishment.

June also sees the return of *Vale's* seasonal brew *Hadda's Summer Glory*. This 4% straw coloured beer is easy drinking with a citrus hop aroma.



Brill Beer

Award winning beers available direct from the brewery.

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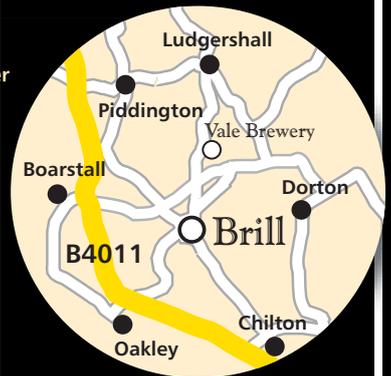
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- Edgars Golden Ale 4.3% - English golden best bitter
- Vale Special 4.5% ABV - Bronze Premium Bitter
- Grumpling Old Ale 4.6% - Ruby brown premium ale
- Gravitas 4.8% - Pale Premium hoppy bitter
- Black Swan Mild 3.9% - Dark smooth rich mild
- Black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

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BLACK COUNTRY TRIP



Our annual trip to the Black Country takes place on Saturday 27th June. This is renowned as the best day of the year for the branch and this year will be the nineteenth time this event has taken place.

The cost has been held at last year's price of £25 and there will be pick-ups (and drop offs!) from Aylesbury, Princes Risborough, High Wycombe and Stokenchurch. The pubs visited will (as every year) include old favourites such as the **Bull and Bladder** (featured above), which is the *Bathams* brewery tap, the **Beacon Hotel** in Sedgeley where you can partake of the *Dark Ruby Mild* and many others.

Tickets are limited to 35 and can be obtained from the editor (contact details are given on page 22). Book now to avoid disappointment!

A BISTRO NO MORE!



After its brief spell as a bistro, the **George and Dragon** has been operating as a traditional pub since earlier in the spring.

The local branch had a social in Princes Risborough a couple of months ago and enjoyed some very welcome hospitality from the landlord, Keith Everest.

The new management is keen to build up the pub's real ale offering -- *Flowers IPA* has recently been available among others.

The pub's restaurant was due to be relaunched at the end of May, being advertised as 'Richard's Restaurant'. Any further developments will be covered in future issues of *Swan Supping* in our Local News section which welcomes contributions from all local drinkers!

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BREWERY WARS



The so-called 'Chinese curse' - *may you live in interesting times* - could very well apply to the present age of global economic meltdown, unchecked world population increase, and impending doom from climate change.

Commentators are now openly predicting that within the next 25 years we shall witness major wars fought over that most precious of commodities – water.

But what does that mean for our favourite tittle ? A secret recording made at a recent BNP meeting (the Brewers National Party) caught their rabble-rouser-in-chief, Neil Prickles (the drinking woman's Richard Armitage) delivering these chilling words: *'British water for British breweries! Kick out the global giants! Save Burton-on-Trent from the Colorado plague! Down with watery weasel pee!*

Even the more moderate voices in the brewing industry are warning of acute water shortages, hinting that if the Government will not take protectionist action, then they will.

One local Buckinghamshire micro-brewer with connections in high places, is thought to be mounting a legal challenge, exploiting a loophole in the Water Regulations, to stop a well-known Danish fizzy lager conglomerate from operating in the UK on the grounds that, self-evidently, their products pollute good British water.

Concerned over the possibility that marauding English brewers might siphon off water from their network of lochs, an alliance of Scottish brewers has recently commissioned a feasibility study into the rebuilding of Hadrian's Wall at double its original height. They may get a little bitter & twisted when they find out it'll cost more than 80/-.

Welsh Water recently discovered an underground pipe illegally feeding water from the Severn Estuary directly to a brewery in Cardiff. You don't need any brains to guess who was behind the scam.

It has now become clear that one of the driving forces behind certain brewery takeovers of recent years has been a predatory desire to secure their traditional wells and boreholes, in order to reduce reliance on mains water supply.

One West Country brewer has even turned to water divination and drilling for water with rigs cunningly disguised as telegraph pole installation vehicles. One can only pay tribute to their initiative and hope they do a proper job.

The controversy over water shortages has been stoked by a recent Green Paper, backed by the PM. The proposal is that in future, in order to retain water for essential use only (i.e. the all-expenses paid, House of Commons bar, and MPs bath-plugs, moats and swimming-pools), water extraction for the purposes of brewing will be subject to punitive taxation. Furthermore, on health and safety grounds, it is proposed that all pint mugs should be withdrawn and replaced with dram-sized glasses and that beer rationing be introduced. The Chancellor, however, has said that the

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BEER DRINKERS UNITE!

new proposals are unnecessary, as his plans for year-on-year inflation-busting rises in beer duty will force so many pubs to close that many breweries will go out of business for lack of outlets.

Sensationalist reports in the media have led to an alarming rise in beer hoarding. One of our undercover 'snapparazzi' recently caught this greedy guzzler adding yet another barrel to the stash in his Aylesbury garden.

The man next door, fed up with the continual clanking and other noises, said 'I blame beer drinkers for the shortage of water', but his argument was quickly defeated when it was pointed out that responsible drinkers always filter and recycle their beer into the approved receptacles.

Beer drinkers unite – drink more ale and save the environment !

Louise Dugalby



PITCH FOR FUNDS

The first Beaconsfield RFC Real Ale Festival will take place on the 3rd & 4th July 2009 and Peter Miles, the club chairman, promises that it will be a lot of fun for beer aficionados' and families alike, as well as supporters of rugby in general.

Alongside the Champion Ales and Ciders from all over the UK, a full service bar will be available. They will be serving American BBQ throughout the event, to coincide with the date, and will have Hog Roasts in the evenings with music and entertainment, making this a fantastic event for everyone to enjoy!

Why are they fundraising? Their Minis' and Junior section, at Beaconsfield RFC, is one of the most successful in the country and, as a result, their player numbers are burgeoning - therefore they need more space.

They have negotiated the use of a nearby field, which they now plan to turn into two rugby pitches, which has huge costs associated with this endeavour.

Hence, they are kicking off the fundraising with a Real Ale Festival and a Social 7's Tournament at the Club and supporting some local charity projects too, including the SignHealth Charity, amongst others, because after all, they feel that they are a huge part of the community and they are a huge part of them.

The beer festival will be held at the Beaconsfield Rugby Football Club, Oak Lodge Meadow, Windsor End, Beaconsfield, Bucks HP9 2SQ.

Further details of this and other fundraising events can be found on their website www.brfcevents.com.

A beer list for the festival will be sent to all our members who have registered their email addresses as soon as it becomes available.



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CIDER AND PERRY AWARDS

CAMRA announced that *Gwatkin's Yarlington Mill* cider of Abbey Dore, Herefordshire, and *Broadoak Perry* of Clutton, Somerset, won Gold medals at CAMRA's *National Cider and Perry Championships 2009*, held at the *Reading Beer and Cider Festival* over the May bank holiday weekend.

24 ciders and 20 perries were featured, selected from different regions throughout the country, and assessed on aroma, flavour, finish and personal enjoyment by a judging panel including award-winning producers and publicans.

In the National cider category, *Gwatkin* of Herefordshire won the Gold for *Yarlington Mill*, which judges described as a 'smooth and rich cider with a spirit aroma and taste that resonates with the taste buds to surprise and delight.'

Gwatkin are a family firm, which have been producing cider and perry for generations but began selling commercially in 1991. The fruit used in their winning products is produced locally, with their apples coming from a neighbouring farm.

The championships proved a doubly special occasion for *Gwatkin* cider, after also picking up the Bronze medal in the perry category for their *Blakeney Red* perry.

In the perry category, *Broadoak Perry* from Somerset won Gold for what is described as a 'lovely, drinkable perry with a true pear aroma that starts with a medium sweet taste and is followed by a dry finish.'

Brian Brunt, *Broadoak's* producer, started making cider and perry as a hobby 30 years ago. Mr Brunt moved to his present location in Clutton Farm, in Clutton, Somerset, after interest in his products helped turn the *Original Cider Company* into one of the country's biggest independent producers.



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INDEPENDENT'S DAY



Haddenham's annual tribute to our independent small brewers of real ales, will take place on American Independence day, Saturday 4th July, 11a.m. to 8p.m.

It will be held once again at the Youth and Community Centre, Woodways, Haddenham, HP17 8DS. This venue offers the Community Centre Hall itself,

the quadrangle of Haddenham Junior School, and the spacious grounds with plenty of room for the five marquees planned.

There is also ample car parking, the 280 bus stops nearby, and Haddenham and Thame Parkway (London to Birmingham Chiltern line) is just down the road.

The hub of the festival will be 50 barrels of real ales, brewed by Independent Brewers from all over the country, plus 20 real ciders and three lagers. Also on offer will be a range of wines at the wine bar, and also a Pimms Bar, plus an assortment of soft drinks. There will be plenty of food on offer, with traditional pub snacks (cold), an all-day barbecue and a curry tent.

The Ian English Jazz Band will be back again to entertain, and there will be performances by the Towersey Morrismen, Owlswick Morrismen and the Haddenham Hoofers, Appalachian Dancers. For full and up to date details visit the festival website: www.haddenham-beer-festival.co.uk.



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WOOLPACK FIRE



Real ales usually available were *Fuller's London Pride* and *Timothy Taylor Landlord*.

Our second picture shows the massive amount of work going on at the site (behind the fence!), and you can see that the two chimneys have been removed. We have no news yet as to the plans for the **Woolpack** but all the references on the site to building contractors as opposed to demolition firms gives us cause for optimism. We would be grateful for any information about the future of the pub and will feature what happens in later issues of *Swan Supping*.

The two other thatched pubs to burn down in our area in recent years were the **Bottle & Glass** at Gibraltar and the **Rising Sun** at Ickford. Both these pubs have been rebuilt as thatched pubs and both are doing well. Lets hope that the resurrection of the **Woolpack** will meet with the same success.

Early in the morning, about 3.30am, on Sunday 26th of April, the **Woolpack** in Stoke Mandeville became the third thatched public house in our branch area to burn down!

Ten fire crews from Aylesbury, Winslow, Princes Risborough, High Wycombe, Great Missenden and Amersham attended the scene. However the building was described by Bucks Fire and Rescue as 100 per cent damaged by the blaze after it took more than four hours for the fire to be extinguished, and the crews were at the scene for some considerable time after that.

The **Woolpack** was an upmarket gastro country pub with a large, light and open plan interior. Emphasis was placed on the food side of the business but it still catered for bona fide drinkers with a roaring fireplace and simple seating by the bars, which were nice touches for those that just want a drink.



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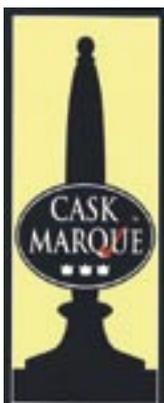
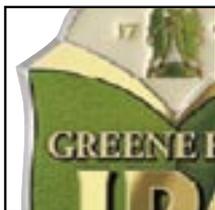
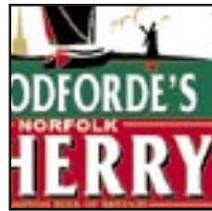
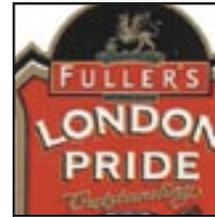
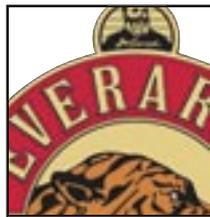
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BEER IN THE LAKES

I think pubs in the Lake District are a great credit to the area - high levels of tourism means a good turnover of cask ales and a lot of them are local with 21 breweries in Cumbria - as listed in the *Good Beer Guide (GBG)*. A lot of pubs are out in the sticks but with nearby campsites and people quite obviously prepared to walk there these pubs do a thriving business.

This was my fourth visit in as many years to the Lakes and the Langdale area this recent Easter - because the cottage there is cheap and that means it's difficult to go anywhere else (unless you walk, ha ha). Our cottage, effectively a youth hostel with bunk beds, but plenty of facilities to cook/store/serve food was based not 50 foot away from the **Old Dungeon Ghyll hotel (DGH)**, situated at the bottom of Raven Crag, a large rock buttress which climbers find attractive. This pub is no comfort zone, it's a bit 'sparse' but it's warm, does food and has about six ales on tap including *Theakstons Old Peculiar*, *Black Sheep Bitter* and best, *Yates Best* and guests - this is an institution well worth visiting and plenty of outdoor seating too. A large campsite was some 300 feet away and so thirsty walkers made this their last port of call after a long walk (or first port of call when going out for the evening). The highest peaks are the Langdale pikes rising to some 2,500 feet and access to them was via the ghyll's watercourses, tremendous sight after any rainfall from the valley sides, alternatively our proximity to the head of the valley was useful for trips to Bowfell, Great Gable and Scafell/Scafell Pike (7-8 hours walking mind you).

Nine of us arrived in drips and drabs throughout the day with my friend and I arriving in the dark on the Thursday just before closing time, so time for a pint, I bought two *Lancaster Blondes* but he didn't turn up, so I had his, fair enough!

In light of the weather on the Friday which was gloomy and rain was



Watermill Brewery

threatened (when it came, it was but drizzle) we decided to avoid the fells and the possibility being above the cloud base and stick to a lowland route through the Langdale valley to Ambleside some 8 miles distant. A pub but I had not a hand in this was enroute - the **Britannia** at Elterwater and it opened at 10am! Some six ales were on offer here - the breweries *Dent*, *Coniston*, *Theakston*, *Jennings* and *Tirril* were represented. I must admit, after the beer last night and this visit at 1035 this pint didn't quite agree with me. I could have had coffee like some of us but I needed to write an article!

We ambled through the countryside to Ambleside where we proceeded to have our pack lunches in the park. I wasn't new here but I had never actually been to any of the pubs, so with a couple of hours of roaming

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MORE BEER IN THE LAKES



Wainwrights Pub

for large numbers of people and serving no nonsense filling meals. Beers were pretty good too with local brewery *Barnegates* represented as well as the usual suspects - *Old Peculiar* and *Black Sheep*.

The place next door is called the **New Dungeon Ghyll** hotel and only about 100 metres from the **Stickle Barn**; I'd heard the beer range was not particularly 'expansive' so I wasn't expecting much. Indeed, there were only two beers on, the bar was small and there was a queue of people putting in food orders. When it came to my turn (for a beer order) the *Theakston Wainwrights* had gone off so I had a choice of one beer whose name escapes me, the cost was £3.20, some 40p more than the local pubs in the area. Worth a visit just to get that tick but that's it!

The following day was pub brewery day, well, for me that is, everyone else was on for a long walk but eventually I had two of my companions for company. The bus stop was outside the **DGH** pub and frequency was every hour or so, I took the Cumbrian version of a day explorer ticket for the princely sum of £10.50(ish). This took me to Ambleside where we changed for the Kendal bus, this then took us through Windermere to Staveley where the *Hawkshead* brewery is located - no, it's not located in nearby Hawkshead, that's where the *Cumbrian* brewery is located! It's all very well visiting a brewery, but you can't go up to them and ask if you can drink direct from the barrel, you need a brewery tap. You can visit the outside of the *Orkney* brewery in er...Orkney but you can't actually buy anything, you have to go to a pub to drink it. *Hawkshead* had a brewery tap called the '**Beer Hall**' which is mentioned in the *GBG* and it is part of the brewery itself (some brewery taps can be a little distant). The brewery is located in what appears to be a small industrial estate, well I think it was a shopping precinct pretending to be an industrial estate, but nonetheless after a very brief search we came upon a café which was served only soft drinks but was a front for the pub/brewery itself - the real stuff was in the building behind, and up

around before we convened (and got the bus back) I decided to take a look at a couple of the pubs. First up was the **Golden Rule**, a terraced pub in a long line of similar houses so it didn't stand out much. This traditional pub had no music, a roaring fire (really) and was pleasantly quiet on a Saturday afternoon, with the 'full' range of *Robinson's* beers. A couple of hundred yards or so away was the **Unicorn**, another *Robinson's* pub with a slightly smaller range of beer. This was a little busier and the scattered furniture was a bit of a hazard, but a good pub to be in nonetheless.

It was then time to get on the bus to the Dungeon Ghyll stop for a well earned shower and the rest of the evening. The **Stickle Barn** was a 10 minute walk away from our cottage and a major food enterprise designed

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A WRUFF NIGHT!

the stairs we went to be greeted by diagrams of the brewery process in a very neat modern interior. The ales were in front and the brewery behind, a nice place to be in. There were two stouts, one had damsons in it which interested me not and the rest ranged between a lager, pale ale, red and dark ales. They also had a good range of their own bottled beers and even some foreign beers. Wandering outside with my beer I observed Staveley weir on the river Kent running by the brewery and also a 'fish ladder' allowing Salmon to swim upstream to spawn - benefiting anglers and local wildlife. The **Beer Hall's** hours are 12-5, but in the evening the bus service is almost non-existent so personally what did it matter.

After an hour and a half drinking we got the Kendal bus again towards Windermere, this time to the village of Ings, the home of the **Watermill** microbrewery - found on the main road which we travelled on to get to Staveley. A much smaller operation than the previous brewery but it had a greater range of beers plus the added bonus of a beer festival - a mere 24 ales. I was there for the local stuff, all of them had a 'doggy' theme with names such as a *Dog'th Vader*, *Collie Wobbles* and *Wruff Night* to name but a few - and they had a policy of letting real dogs in. This is a complicated pub with lots of rooms and bars, visible brewing quarters (through a glass screen) and I even got myself a brewery t-shirt (with a dog-beer on the front). What a great pub, loads of people but not crammed, food, quick service, a must for a visit. I think we screwed up on the bus timetables as the bus never arrived - unless it was a few minutes early. After 20 minutes we were resigned to another 40 minutes waiting (more beer of course) but a couple who I'd spoken to in the pub were waiting for the traffic to clear - I tapped on their window and they took us to Ambleside which was nice of them. On the way back to Langdale on the bus, I got off (I made sure it had stopped first) and said goodbye to my one remaining comrade who'd probably had enough beer, and dived into the **Wainwrights** pub in the village of Chapel Stile, a pub I'd been past countless times but never been able to stop there. The sun was out and so was everyone else, so the pub was pretty deserted, the handpumps weren't - eight ales on offer including brews from *Ulverston*, *Barngates*, *Derwent* and *Loweswater*. It was worth drinking outside for the stupendous views, I didn't as I had a 2.5 mile walk back (couldn't be bothered to wait for the next bus) and had plenty of time to use my camera.

Our final day took us on a walking trip towards Little Langdale with its picturesque tarn (small roundish lake). Here was the **Three Shires** pub situated at the foot of a hill on the other side of the Langdale valley. It was rather isolated and not quite where you would expect to find a pub, but welcome it was. A small but pretty pub with a small beer garden right by the small car park but with a longish wait waiting for people to put



Three Shires Pub

their food orders in! (**New Dungeon Ghyll** comes to mind). There were I think four beers on including *Coniston Old Man* and *Theaksons Old Peculiar*. I'd been here on previous visits but this is a pub very much on the walking route and it's difficult to spend any time here unless you tell your colleagues you'll catch them up later (a lot later).

A high proportion of beers drunk on this trip were produced in the Lake District with the obvious exceptions of the *Thwaites* and *Black Sheep* breweries, and all were good quality well kept brews. Bus services are pretty regular throughout the day and non-existent in the evening, so make sure you can find a pub to walk to in the evening and bring a torch too, it gets pretty dark in these parts.

Lemon Snail 18/05/2009



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



Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

JUNE

Tuesday 2nd BRANCH SOCIAL

8.30pm Three Crowns, Askett, 9.15pm Red Lion, Longwick, 10pm Lions of Bledlow.

Monday 8th BRANCH MEETING

8.30pm, Three Horseshoes, Burroughs Grove, Marlow.

Thursday 18th SOCIAL EVENING

8.30pm Pheasant, Brill, 9.15pm Red Lion, Brill, 10pm Royal Oak, Oakley.

Tuesday 23rd HIGH WYCOMBE SOCIAL

8.30pm Half Moon, 9.30pm Falcon, 10.15pm William Robert Loosely

Saturday 27th BLACK COUNTRY COACH TRIP

The price has been held at £25 and tickets can be obtained from the editor (details below). Book now as numbers are limited to 35 for the best day of the year. Further details on page 11.

JULY

Saturday 4th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

12 noon, Haddenham Beer Festival.

Sunday 5th OPEN DAY SOCIAL

12 noon Rebellion Brewery, Marlow Bottom

Tuesday 14th BRANCH MEETING

8.30pm Cross Keys, Thame (Date and venue to be confirmed, please check the website for up to date details).

Saturday 18th AUNT SALLY PRACTICE

12 noon Black Horse, Lacey Green

Wednesday 22nd AUNT SALLY PRACTICE

7.30pm Carriers Arms, Watlington

Wednesday 29th AYLESBURY SOCIAL

8.30pm Hop Pole

AUGUST

Tuesday 4th/Saturday 8th GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL

Earls Court, London

Thursday 6th BRANCH GBBF SOCIAL

5.30pm Earls Court, London

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 5th INTER BRANCH SOCIAL

Join in for Aunt Sally and a beer festival!

12 noon Masons Arms, Headington, Oxford

OCTOBER

Friday 30th/Saturday 31st AYLESBURY BEER FEST

Eskdale Road Community Centre, Stoke Mandeville

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

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

FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION - PLEASE CHECK THE BRANCH WEBSITE: www.swansupping.org.uk

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.

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Editorial Address : 16 Jasmine Close, Aylesbury, Bucks HP21 9SH.

Tel : 01296 484551

E-Mail : editor@swansupping.org.uk

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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 75p 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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More Local News



(Continued from page 2)

Marlow FM Radio on frequency 87.8 was scheduled to go live from the **Two Brewers** pub in St Peter Street with an official launch party there at the end of May as we went to press.

The **Hare & Hounds** on the Henley Road has been closed for refurbishment and is scheduled to reopen soon. Michele English and Russell Clement were winners of the BBC Two programme 'The Restaurant' and plan to open their new restaurant to be called the **Cheerful Soul** in the **Hare & Hounds** by mid-June.

Rebellion Brewery are holding another of their biennial open weekends on Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th of July.

This is to say a big 'Thank You' to all their customers and they hope to raise more than the £10,000 they raised the last time for the Wycombe Scanner Appeal.

QUAINTON

The Buckinghamshire Railway Centre celebrated their 40th Anniversary over the weekend of Friday 15th - Sunday 17th May with their second Rail Ale Festival. Ten real ales with a

railway theme were racked beside the station buffet ranging in strength from Rev.Awdry's Ale at 3.8% ABV from Box Steam Brewery up to **Wickwar Brewery's Station Porter** weighing in at a hefty 6.1%. **Westons Country Perry** and **First Quality Cider** were also in attendance.

Entry was free to the whole of the railway centre complex including the beer festival with all beers and ciders priced at a very reasonable £2.50 per pint. A most enjoyable day out for the family to visit all the exhibits, take trips on the trains, have a few great beers and even a souvenir etched pint glass to take home. More of the same again, please.

SPEEN

We visited the **King William IV** at the end of May for a branch social and were amazed with the transformation of the pub. It has been extended and now has a large bar as well as a restaurant plus an ice cream parlour featuring locally made products. The local theme extended to the three beers on offer which were **Rebellion Mild** and **IPA** and **Vale Castle Bitter**.

THAME

The **Cross Keys** has served 100 different real ales in the three months

since Peter and Trudi took over. On a recent social there we were offered **Crouch Vale Essex Boys Bitter**, **Chiltern Nut Brown Mild**, **Vale VPA** and **Golden Jackal** and **Granny Wouldn't Like It** from **Wolf Brewery**. We were also impressed by the idea of having a small glass of the ales in front of each handpump to show the customers exactly what each beer looked like before they try it. Real ale forms 80% of their sales as they are not doing food.

The pub seems like it has been totally renovated since the take-over, but, in fact, it has only been tidied up and given a bit of TLC. The only music there these days is some gentle background music or a sing-along when someone starts playing the piano. The pool table is long gone and the games played now are more likely to be crib or shove-halfpenny.

Tring Round Table will be holding a beer festival in the old barn/stables at the back of the **Cross Keys** on Saturday 25th July.

The **Falcon** held a very successful beer festival in May when they had ten beers on offer. Lets hope they do it again next year. As well as their regular menu, they are now offering pizza at all times to help soak up their

range of **Hook Norton** beers.

The **Six Bells** are holding a one-day beer festival on Saturday 20th June.

WENDOVER

The **Marquis of Granby** is now being run by David Smith who has taken over the **Punch Taverns** lease. Bar food is being offered until the restaurant reopens which will take place after the recruitment of an extra chef. The food is home-made from locally supplied products and can be enjoyed with a choice of **Fullers London Pride**, **Greene King IPA** and **Shepherd Neame Spitfire**.

The **Red Lion** will be holding a bungee jumping event from 4-6pm on Saturday 13th June. Their selection of **Marstons** ales is probably better enjoyed after a plunge than before. However, many ale lovers may be disappointed that there is a weight limit of 26 stones.

WOOBURN MOOR

The **Falcon** will be holding a beer festival over the weekend of 24th-26th of July.

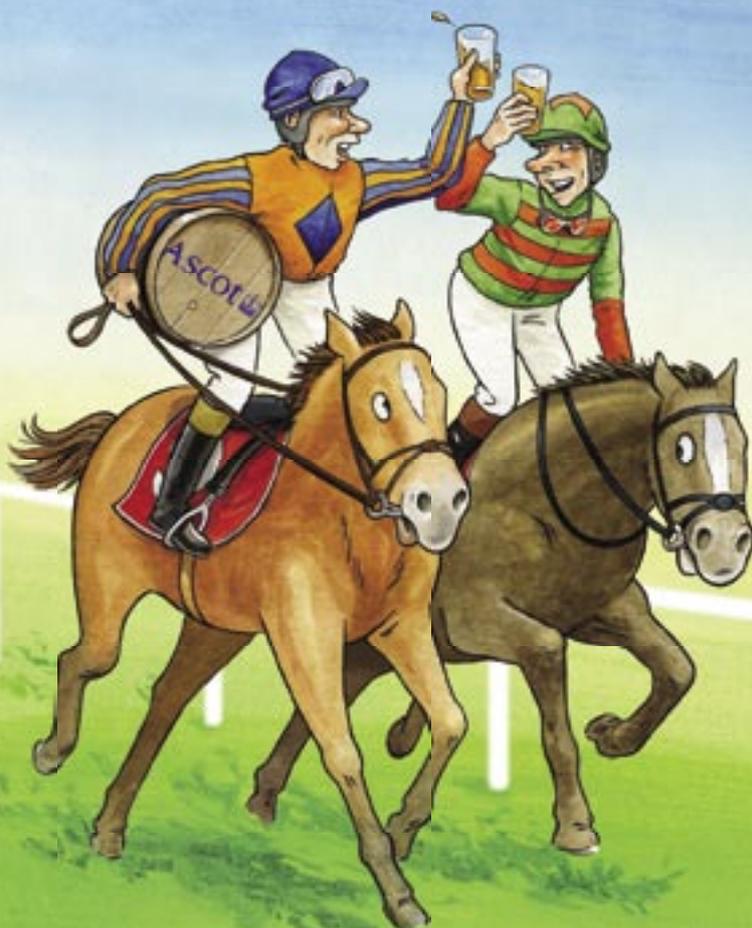
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(FREE HOUSE)

Now Serving an ever-changing choice of 6 cask ales, from a wide selection of independent breweries

100 Different Ales served in the last 3 months

BEER FESTIVAL 25th JULY
Cross Keys - 1 Park St. - Thame
01844 218202

“LAST ONE BACK GETS THEM IN.”



THE 3RD ASCOT RACECOURSE BEER FESTIVAL

Friday 25th and Saturday 26th September 2009

- Exclusive HALF PRICE admission for CAMRA members – prices from just £4.89 on Friday and £9.79 on Saturday.
- Excellent programme of racing.
- Over 150 real ales, ciders and perries to sample supplied predominantly from local craft brewers. All at £1.25 per half pint and £2.50 per pint. Free tasting notes provided.
- Hot and cold food available all day.
- Gates and Bars open at 11am. Last orders 4.55pm on Friday and 5.30pm on Saturday.
- Live music on both days.
- Free parking or a 7 minute walk from Ascot Railway Station.

To book tickets, call **0870 727 1234** or visit ascot.co.uk quoting **CAMRA09**.



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