

FREE

Swan Supping



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

Issue 70

FEB/MAR 2009



PUBCO REVOLT



Tenants of leading pubcos, *Enterprise Inns* and *Punch Taverns*, have taken their grievances directly to their big bosses.

At the end of January, pubco licensees' pressure groups Fair Pint and Justice for Licensees organised marches on the companies' head offices in a move reminiscent of the famous protests in the depression of the 1930s.

According to trade newspaper, the Morning Advertiser, coaches full of unhappy licensees headed for *Enterprise Inns*' head office in Solihull, where managers did not want to meet with the protestors, and then on to *Punch Taverns*' HQ where the welcome was somewhat more friendly with regional managers available to discuss problems with individuals. *Enterprise Inns* owns approximately 7,700 pubs and *Punch Taverns* over 8,400 (way over the maximum 2000 allowed to a brewery).

The protestors planned to serve beer from two separate barrels outside the companies' headquarters with two nominal prices – one representing the cost of a pint of beer in a chain pub, such as *J.D. Wetherspoon* and the other at the price that the pubco

tenants feel they are forced to charge. The difference between the two prices was around a pound. One of the protestors' main beefs is that they are often forced by the terms of the lease to buy their beer from the pubco or its preferred supplier.

Tim Martin, founder and chairman of *J.D. Wetherspoon*, which has famously been selling *Greene King IPA* at 99p a pint, was reported as saying the pubcos had 'lost control of their tenants' as their wholesale pricing policies would make it very difficult for their tenants to compete with outlets such as managed chains, brewers tied pubs and free houses.

The pubcos have said they recognise that many tenants are finding trading difficult in the current economic climate and say that they are offering financial assistance to many to help them through current difficulties.

The share prices of the pubcos themselves have recently tumbled due to their exposure to debt and the poor state of the property market. However, some pubcos have hinted that they may absorb some of a planned future price increases in the cost of beer.

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Local News

ASHENDON

Cul-de-sac public house, **Gatehangers**, offers **Brakspear Bitter** (3.4) and **Greene King IPA** (3.6) at their sole village pub outlet.

AYLESBURY

The **Bell** is now offering **Wadworth 6X**, **Old Speckled Hen**, **Greene King IP** and **Deuchars IPA**. Five of their proposed nineteen ensuite rooms are now available.

The **Broad Leys** is one of six finalists for the 'Leasehold Pub of The Year 2009' award run by the Publican magazine.

Patrick Carroll, who took over the **Emperors Lounge** in July has now left and the new person in charge is Cressida Lucas. They are still serving **Brakspears Bitter** on handpump.

The **Hobgoblin** is still pricing their real ales (**Wychwood Hobgoblin** and one from **Archers**) at £1.50 a pint from noon until 7pm every day (it then goes up to £2.75). This will change in the near future when the full effect of the **Wychwood** Tie-up with **Marstons** takes affect. The **Hobgoblin**

will then be joined by two beers from the **Marstons** stable and the prices will change to £2.10 per pint all the time. Lunchtime food will also be available.

The **Hop Pole** will be holding their annual Easter Bank Holiday Beer Festival over the Easter weekend. There will be thirty beers available plus traditional ciders. We will be holding a branch social there on Good Friday and everyone is welcome to join us.

When a regular customer and enthusiast for **Chiltern 300's** reports that a friend claims to have found a beer that matches it, how should the manager respond? Neil Pickles at the **Farmers Bar** (at the **Kings Head**) decided to hold a 'taste-off' between **300's** and the rival brew, **Fuller's Jack Frost**. On 16th January a group largely keen on the challenger arrived to compare the two beers: regulars were also invited to take part and vote for their preference. On the night the local favourite scored a resounding victory – **300's 25**; **Jack Frost 4**. The second cask of **Jack Frost** sold out quickly and Neil may well be persuaded to arrange another challenge in the future.

MyPlace, formerly the **Lantern**, closed shortly after Christmas and the lease has reverted to **Admiral Taverns**.

The **Queens Head** is now under the management of Martin Nolan who has taken over from Bob Perez. The pub is running a regular FIFA 09 competition on the X-Box on alternate Wednesday nights. This has proved very popular as all 32 teams are snapped up very quickly. Beers available are **Bass**, **Shepherd Neame Spitfire**, **Courage Best**, **Black Sheep Bitter**, **Brakspear Bitter** and **Theakstons Old Peculier**. We visited the **Queens Head** as part of the Aylesbury Christmas pub crawl and Martin laid on a load of sandwiches for us which were very welcome and helped soak up some of the beer. Many thanks!

BRILL

The **Pheasant** reopened at the end of last year under new manager Kelly. It is open all day, seven days a week. Food is served 12:00-2:00 and 6:30-9:00 Mon-Sat and 12:00-8:00 Sunday. It is currently serving two real ales, **Courage Best** and a local ale, which was **Oxfordshire Ales Triple B** when visited.

CHEARSLEY

The **Bell** is currently serving their winter menu featuring home cooked local produce and will be offering a special meal on Valetine's Day for which booking is essential. The beers they had available recently were **Fullers London Pride**, **London Porter** and **Gales HSB**. The pub recently featured on 'Drama Trials' for their appearances in 'Midsomer Murders'.

CUDDINGTON

The **Crown** holds a pie & pudding night on Wednesday evenings, and you can wash them down with **Fullers London Pride** with either **Castle Rock Harvest Pale** or **Fullers Jack Frost**. As a special offer to **Swan Supping** readers, you can receive a free pint with each main course if you mention **Swan Supping** when booking! The offer runs Monday - Thursday from 1st February to 31st March.

HADDENHAM

The **Green Dragon** has been awarded a Bib Gourmand from Michelin. The **Green Dragon** now appears in the 2009 issue of the Michelin Red Guide for Great Britain & Ireland; this guide

(Continued on page 23)



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PUBWATCH AWARD

Aylesbury Pub Watch has beaten off nationwide competition in the Responsible Drinks Retailing Awards 2008 to win Pub Watch of the Year.

The awards recognise those businesses that do not just exist within the law, but are going out of their way to make sure that the products they distribute are sold in an appropriate and responsible way - thus reducing the antisocial impact they can have in communities.

Helen Wood, licensee at the **Broad Leys** in Aylesbury and representative of Aylesbury Pub Watch, accepted the award at a prestigious industry awards lunch held at the **Landmark Hotel**, London on 11 November 2008. Prizes were presented by Gerry Sutcliffe Minister for Sport, Gambling and Licensing.

The picture shows the presentation with (from the left) Gerry Sutcliffe, Helen Wood, joint winner Lorraine Cheney from the Isles of Scilly pub watch which runs a successful scheme across five islands, and J.D. Wetherspoon's senior licensing solicitor Melinka Berridge.

The Aylesbury Pub Watch is a proactive scheme run by licensees and supported by Thames Valley Police and the local authority and is directed at reducing violent crime and drug misuse in members' premises.

Aylesbury Pub Watch was set up in 1994 following a serious incident in the town centre in which a doorman was set upon and stabbed by a local gang and he in turn pulled out a gun and shot six of his assailants. The Pub



Watch scheme was set up in August 1995. Since that date, Pub Watch has been extremely successful and many of its initiatives have been replicated at a national level.

Aims and objectives

- To improve communication between the pub trade, the Police and other local organisations.
- To set standards of behaviour and thereby reduce and prevent

crime and anti-social behaviour.

- To ensure a safe and secure environment for staff and customers.
- To exclude persistent troublemakers, violent persons and drug dealers from members' premises.
- To protect staff and customers from acts of physical violence.
- To protect property from acts of criminal damage.
- To reduce the incidents of crime and the fear from crime for the benefit of staff and customers.

There are 62 premises involved in the scheme. Membership is not confined to pubs and bars in the town centre as many local neighbourhood pubs are involved in the scheme.

Membership is open to and encouraged towards all licensed premises in the Aylesbury area.

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LOCAL BREWERY NEWS



The **Chiltern Brewery**, in Terrick near Aylesbury, has had its best ever year since it first started brewing in 1980.

Bucking the High Street trend, the brewery ended 2008 in good form as the December trade was the best since the first pint was brewed nearly 30 years ago.

'It was touch and go right until the last few hours of 2008' said George Jenkinson, son of the founder, Richard, 'We knew it was going to be close, and at the start of the day, we had a target that we had to achieve. It wasn't until a couple of hours before the close of business that we knew we had done it.'

George's brother, Tom, added 'It was a terrific end to the year, especially with all the news that is in the papers each day. What's even more encouraging, is that so far this year we are ahead!'

By way of proof, the brewery has just installed its first new fermenting vessel since 1983, which has increased fermenting capacity by 50%. The vessel, engineered specifically to fit the brewery's buildings, also doubles as a conditioning tank for its bottled beers, such as *Bodgers Barley Wine*.

2009 is going to be an exciting year for **Chiltern** and at their brewery tap, the **Farmers' Bar** in Aylesbury. They have a number of projects that they have been planning for a while that will start to come to fruition throughout the year. They don't want to give too much away at this stage, but customers should notice developments in new lines and changes on the brewery site and at the pub too.

What do the brewing brothers put this success down to? 'Prayer, grit and possibly something in the water!'

Prepared from a Chiltern Brewery press release.



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NORWICH BEER FESTIVAL 2008



On the 28th October 2008 I spent a very enjoyable midday session at the 31st Norwich Beer Festival with my cousin and nephew. My cousin is a master (home) brewer and his son a master home (and pub etc) imbiber. The picture shows my nephew sampling one of the local brews.

First held in 1978 and arranged by the Norwich branch of **CAMRA**, the week-long Norwich Beer Festival is held at St Andrew's & Blackfriars' Halls, celebrating over 200 British cask-conditioned real ales as well as bottled brews. The festival is second only in size to the **GBBF**, with its wonderful venue in the heart of Norwich. I would recommend it to you all!

The festival also incorporates the Cider & Perry Exhibition, first held in 1999, which boasts over 25 varieties from East Anglia and the West Country (what apples are to cider, pears are to perry). Every year there is a competition for a festival logo and this year's is shown below.

During my visit I sampled the following six ales, three of which were subsequently voted top of their category.

The first was **Batemans** (Wainfleet, Lincs) *Mild* 3%. A classic mild with orchard fruit nose and ruby black in colour. This proved to be an excellent starter for the session.



Buffys (Tivetshall St. Mary, Norfolk) *Bitter* 3.8% followed. A deep amber coloured traditional bitter, slightly nutty in flavour. This was ok but suffered from comparison with then richer flavour of the preceding mild and subsequent old/porter.

A pint of **Wagtail** (Old Buckenham, Norfolk) *English Ale* 4.2% was next. A cross between an old and porter. Slightly bitter but good toffee malt flavour. I thought this was excellent and it was voted best in its class.

The fourth was **Tipples** (Acle, Norfolk) *Topper* 4.5%. A traditional stout, deep in colour, with a good chocolate flavouring. A very good stout to my mind

The penultimate was **Winter's** (Norwich, Norfolk) *From The Ashes* with an ABV of 5.2%. The name, however, has nothing



to do with a cricket competition! A satisfying, strongish bitter – also voted best in category and it took second place in the champion beer competition.

The last beer should have been **Green Jack's** (Lowestoft, Suffolk) *Mahseer IPA* 5%. A classic IPA; very drinkable for its strength. So popular, it had run out; much to my chagrin.

So, instead I was recommended to try **Elmtree's** (Snetterton, Suffolk) *Nightingale Mild* 5.7%. A new beer for those dark autumnal evenings. It proved to be excellent and, ironically, turned out to be the overall 'Champion Beer' as well as first in class!

My emphasis throughout had been on local, East Anglian brews and I was definitely impressed with the range and quality of ales on offer.

Peter Hoade

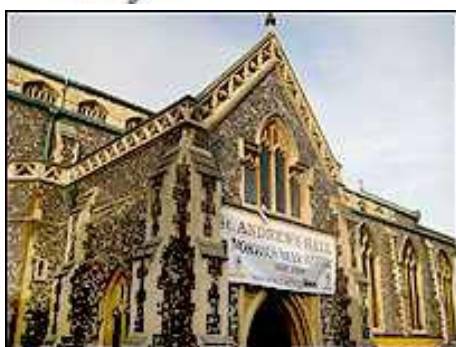


George & Dragon, Quainton

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ST. ALBAN'S VISIT



The Six Bells

St. Albans is renowned as a city steeped in history. Legend has it that back in the mists of time within its city walls grizzled ancients met in mysterious circumstances to embark on a hallowed quest for authenticity and purity that still resonates resolutely now in the 21st century – yes, the first meeting of the *Campaign for Real Ale* was held here.

And the City has a few other spurious claims to liquid historical fame – a race called the Romans apparently stopped off her for a few centuries to sip their wine around these parts and the ecclesiastical occupants of St. Albans' Abbey no doubt brewed copious quantities of ale.

Such is St. Albans' drinking ancestry that it vies with a few other cities, including Edinburgh and Nottingham, for the esteemed honour of having most pubs per square mile in the country. With its *CAMRA* links (the national headquarters is still in the city), a pub crawl around the ancient Roman settlement of Verulamium seemed a particularly good way to 'Caesar in' the New Year.

A legion from the local *CAMRA* branch therefore marched upon the city in early January. In a pincer movement, the Aylesbury contingent approached directly from the north by Arriva chariot. They were able to establish an early beachhead by noon on the western fringes of the city centre by the River Ver. Here lies the *Good Beer Guide* listed **Six Bells** – a 16th century hostelry, which is apparently the only licensed premises within the walls of Roman Verulamium. Five real ales were available – including some well kept *Timothy Taylor Landlord*, *Black Sheep Bitter*, *Deuchars IPA* and *Fullers London Pride*.

Other centurions, from the Risborough area and a Reading reinforcement, simultaneously approached the city from the south – via Londinium. They faced a long march across the city from the station in hostile conditions – it was the coldest day of the early January cold snap; the daytime sub-zero temperatures being cold enough to freeze the Caligulas off from under a legionnaire's tunic.

The rearguard delayed arriving at the **Six Bells**, the advance party sallied forth past several inviting pubs on Fishpool Street to the next stop – the **Lower Red Lion**. This is a traditional two-roomed pub which hosts regular beer festivals and had a very interesting selection of five real ales on handpump, comprising *Springhead Cromwells's Hat*, *Burton Bridge Bitter*, *Oakham JHB*, *Fullers London Pride*, *Milton Brewery Sparta* and *Tring Mansion*. We decimated the excellent mild from *Tring*. Displayed in its window is an impressive array of *Good Beer Guide* stickers, dating back many years.



The Old Enemy



The Lower Red Lion

Our two parties finally converged at the **Lower Red Lion** and we were finally able to move in formation together in search of the city's beers. On a back street close to the centre is the **Farrier's Arms** – but this is not just any old back-street boozier.

A blue plaque on the wall marks that on 20th November 1972, the first branch meeting of the *Campaign for Real Ale* was held at the pub. We, of course, had to pay our respects in the traditional way – by sampling the pub's range of *McMullen's* ales, which included *AK*, *Country Bitter* and *Cask Bitter*.

Inside, the pub seems to have altered little since the days when it was the only pub in the city that always kept faith with real ale. It has two distinct, interconnected drinking areas: a public bar type area around the bar counter and a raised seating area at the back. There were also a couple of very welcome gas fires around which we defrosted our chilled limbs. The gents' toilets remain of the rustic outdoor stall variety – something that would sort out the gladiators from the boys in such weather.

THE BIRTHPLACE OF CAMRA



First Branch Meeting Commemorated

Next stop was the 15th Century **Boot** in the busy Market Square. This is an ancient and well-worn pub, with exposed beams, a fire and many other historical features. Some warming soup was on offer as well as a decent range of ales, including draught **Bass**, **Ruddles County**, **Black Sheep Bitter** and **Harviestoun Bitter and Twisted**, the latter being quite a rarity in these parts.

We then headed slightly to the south of the city centre to Sopwell Lane. Many a drinker might exchange his prized amphorae for a villa on this residential road as it is lined by with four pubs, two of which are in the good book.

The **Goat** is an old coaching inn. The pub's frontage belies its Tardis-like interior with large seating areas behind the bar. The beer range was a little underwhelming compared with that promised in the **Good Beer Guide** with **Deuchars IPA**, **Shepherd Neame Spitfire** and, our selection, **Potbelly Brewery Pigs Do Fly** on offer.

A short stroll down the road was the **White Lion**. The licensee obviously has a dry sense of humour as a prominent fixture on the bar is a historical *bête-noir* of the real ale fraternity – a large **Watney's Red**



The Boot

Barrel keg dispense pump. Fortunately this is as much a historical relic (from the battles of the old days of the 1970s) as are the Roman artefacts on display in the Verulamium museum. Never fear, the dreaded brew had not re-emerged like a Centurion's ghost. Instead there was a well-kept selection of **Young's Special**, **Deuchars IPA** (yet again) and **Brain's Reverend James**. The pub is a friendly, multi-roomed local and was doing a good trade on this late Saturday afternoon.

Just around the corner was our next stop – the **White Hart Tap**. This is a large, open one-bar pub with another interesting selection of beer, including **Timmy Taylor's Landlord**, **London Pride**, **Shepherd Neame Canterbury Jack** and **Deuchars IPA** (we were starting to feel that this beer was mandatory in all of St. Albans' pubs). We opted for the microbrewery ale on offer – **Goff Brewery's Joust** – which was one of the best beers of the knight.

Seven pints down and the legions were starting to weary. Next pub was the **Farmer's Boy** on London Road. The pub is home to Verulam Brewery and the central bar featured two of their beers, **Clipper IPA**, **Farmer's Joy**, with **St. Austell Tribute**, **Timothy Taylor Landlord** and **Fuller's London Pride** also on offer. The interior was furnished in minimalist style with lots of wood but our chilled bodies appreciated the radiators hidden behind the bench seating at the right of the bar.



The Farrier's Arms

In keeping with St. Albans' historic ale associations, Dave Roe spotted that one of our fellow drinkers was a **CAMRA** dignitary, the only one to have been honoured by Her Majesty the Queen, Iain Dobson MBE. Over a pint, he recounted various scurrilous alternative meanings for the MBE acronym that have been suggested by **CAMRA** members.

After this eighth pint, I sadly had to withdraw to the railway station and start the long expedition home. The more steadfast of our legion continued on to the remaining **Good Beer Guide** pub – the **Mermaid** on Hatfield Road.

St. Albans is named after the first English Christian martyr. He was beheaded on a site near the abbey and he is apparently depicted in art as carrying around his severed head under his arm. By the end of the crawl we could well imagine how he felt.

Mike Clarke

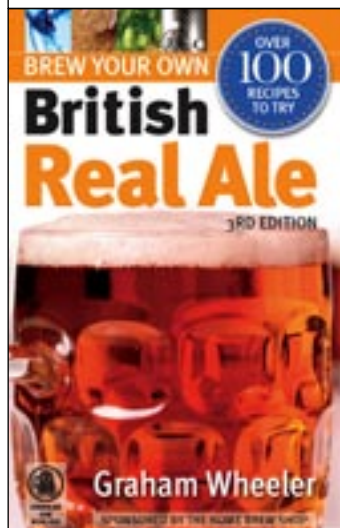
CROSS KEYS, THAME



Local pub company Oak Taverns have taken over the management of the Cross Keys, in Park Street, Thame. The pub has been empty for six months and **Oak Taverns** in partnership with **Vale Brewery** of Brill have reopened the pub with the intent of supplying a broad range of real ales in a relaxed atmosphere.

Oak Taverns director, Simon Collinson explained 'Being a local company, it has long been our ambition to run a pub in Thame. The opportunity exists to create something different – a pub that supplies local real ales and quality beers from similar minded breweries across the UK. There is never a good time to invest in a new pub venture, but there is definitely potential for a Thame pub that offers a strong range of beers, hence the link with **Vale Brewery**.

BREW YOUR OWN!



The perennial favourite of home brewers, *Brew Your Own British Real Ale* is a **CAMRA** classic. This new edition is rewritten, enhanced and updated with new recipes for contemporary and award-winning beers, as well as recipes for old favourites no longer brewed commercially.

Written by home brewing authority Graham Wheeler, *Brew Your Own British Real Ale* includes detailed brewing instructions for both novice and more advanced home-brewers, as well as comprehensive recipes for recreating some of Britain's best-loved beers at home.

Recipes are grouped by beer style, allowing home brewers to recreate popular and classic Milds, Pale Ales, Bitters, Stouts, Porters, Old Ales and Barley Wines, and it includes full brewing instructions for both malt extract and full grain brewing.

Graham Wheeler is a leading authority on home-brewing and the author of *Home Brewing* and *Brew Classic European Beer at Home*, also published by **CAMRA**. He has written extensively on the subjects of home brewing and recreating British and foreign beers at home.

Brew Your Own British Real Ale by Graham Wheeler
UK Price: £14.99 ISBN: 978-1-85249-258-8 208 pages

THREE CROWNS, ASKETT



One of the longest pub refurbishments in the branch area's history finally came to a conclusion at the turn of the year when the **Three Crowns** in Askepp reopened after a 14-month refit. The historic pub has clearly had more than a lick of paint applied with such substantial work as electrical rewiring being carried out.

The pub retains its previous layout with a large seating area to the left of the bar, where tables are set out for dining, and a pub-style room to the right as one enters. Food is an important element of the pub's business – an a la carte menu is offered in the evening but traditional bar food is also provided.

Drinkers are also well provided for – two real ales are available. The regular ale is **Adnams' Bitter**, which is joined by a rotating guest. This was **London Pride** at the end of January but **St. Austell Tribute** was due to replace it in early February.

The **Three Crowns** is being run by Christian Wioland who was lately at the **Chequers** in Weston Turville.

REGIONAL BOTTLES



Local supermarket ASDA at Cressex, High Wycombe has taken a welcome initiative to promote local bottled beers and ciders at a separate display stand, sited near the check-outs, at their store. Locally produced bottle beers showcased include South Oxfordshire **Loddon Ferryman's Gold** (4.4), East Bedfordshire **Potton Shambles** (4.3), and **Village Bike** (4.3), Essex brewery **Saffron Foxfield Finest Best Bitter** (4.3), (bottled-conditioned) (RAIAB), and **Tring Death or Glory** (7.2).

Alternative 'Cobbledick's' ciders are also represented on the display, from the local **Millwhites** cider farm in Boxmoor, Hertfordshire. Three bottled **Millwhites** ciders **Premium Organic** (7.5), **Yarlington Mill** (7.5) and **Dabinett** (8.0) are on view on the lower shelves.

Sarah Danppless

NATIONAL PUB OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

CAMRA has announced the four finalists in its prestigious **National Pub of the Year** award for 2008.

Since early last year, the judging has been ongoing, with thousands of pubs across the country assessed by **CAMRA** members. Last year, the **Old Spot Inn**, Dursley, Gloucestershire won the 2007 title, and was hailed by one judge as 'a great example of how successful a well-run community pub can be.'

The finalists this year (by regional area) are: -

Greater Manchester



Crown, Stockport, Greater Manchester, SK4 1AR Tel. 0161 480 5850

Lee Watts, bar manager of the **Crown**, said: 'We are both surprised and delighted to be in the final, and it's a real testament to the good work everyone's put in.'

South West



Tom Copley Tavern, Spreyton, Devon, EX17 5AL Tel. 01647 231314

Roger Cudlip, landlord of the **Tom Copley Tavern**, said: 'We are simply over the moon to be in the final. We're a proper country pub serving twenty real ales, and we're bucking the trend.'

Surrey/Sussex

Royal Oak, Friday Street, Ruspur, West Sussex, RH12 4QA Tel. 01293 871393

Sarah Blunden, landlady of the **Royal Oak**, said: 'Getting this far is all down to our wonderful local support. We serve a good range of beer



from local brewers, and their beer is of such good quality all I need to do is to get people to drink it!'

Yorkshire



Kelham Island Tavern, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S3 8RW Tel. 0114 272 2482

Lewis Gonde, pub manager of the **Kelham Island Tavern**, said: 'We are very proud to be in this position in such a prestigious award. We are a small, humble pub and we endeavour to serve the best real ale we can.' Branch members can attest to this fact as we visited the pub a few years ago when we visited Sheffield. We are looking at having another visit to the Steel city later on this year. Due to the number of great pubs there, this will require an overnight stay!

CAMRA's Director of Pubs, Julian Hough, said: 'The final four pubs are of the highest standard in terms of quality and presentation, and to get this far after so many months of judging is a true testament to their efforts. It will be difficult to pick a winner, as they are all further examples of how successful well-run pubs can be.'

The **National Pub of the Year** competition is judged by the **CAMRA** membership. Each **CAMRA** branch votes for their favourite pub. They are judged on criteria such as customer service, décor, clientele mix, value for money, and the quality of their real ale. The branch winners are entered into 16 regional competitions and then the 16 winners battle it out to reach these final stages.

The winner of the **CAMRA National Pub of the Year 2008** is to be announced in mid-February and details of the winner will be published in our next issue.

THE RED LION **WHITELEAF**

Nr PRINCES RISBOROUGH

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South Oxfordshire CAMRA's Pub of the Season for Spring 2008

PUBCO INVESTMENT SECRETS

Amid the recent huge falls in the share prices of certain pubcos, there has been some frantic activity at the huge Screwem Pub Company where staff have been spotted working late into the night shredding huge piles of documents.

Our intrepid reporter rifled through the bins outside Screwem Towers and managed to piece together the following highly sensitive document: 'Pubco Investment Secrets: The Screwem Strategy'. It's an executive training manual that is thought to date back to the good old days of the middle of the decade when, as we all remember, money grew on trees.

Secret One: property is everything. With prices rising at 30% every year, buying property is a sure-fire way to make masses of money by doing absolutely nothing useful at all. That's right – just get your company's name on the deeds and money will come out of nowhere. No need to really worry about concepts like a business trading profitably – the market thinks that's so old-fashioned. The paradigm has shifted and, of course, it really *is* different this time.

Secret Two: make sure you make your company finances so impossibly clever that no-one without a Nobel Prize in Economics can understand them. Make use of ingenious tax vehicles like declaring the pubco a Real Estate Investment Trust – after all running a property empire is a lot more sexy than pulling pints. Also, why wait until your pubs actually earn anything before you coin in all that lovely lolly? If you securitise the rent income then some sucker out there will offer you a big wad of readies in exchange for the right to be your rent collector ad infinitum. Sounds like it's your birthday and Christmas rolled into one doesn't it?

Secret Three: pay for it all on the never-never. There's so much money sloshing around the international markets that it would be, er, criminal not to grab a share of it. Take out the biggest loans you can from private investors – they're not as bothered as the stock market

in tedious formalities like transparent accounting or ethics. Anyway, the debt is secured against infinitely rising property prices anyway – what could go wrong?

Secret Four: sweat your business. Not only get your tenants to sign up on expensive long leases but put in lots of restrictions about where they can buy their beer – like only from you at the prices you want to charge. Your mates at the Big Bully Brewing Co will be pleased to find a captive market for their bland brews at prices way over the odds. They may even offer you a nice, well-paid place on their board in the future – a few million a year for turning up to a couple of meetings doesn't sound like it will spoil the golf handicap.

Secret Five: make sure your genius and bold risk-taking strategy is properly rewarded. Entrepreneurs are thin on the ground who can transform staid, sensible businesses into complex hedge funds that happen to have a couple of thousand pubs on the side. Ensure some adroit accountant advises your remuneration committee to divert plenty of that cash into your performance bonuses and share option accounts. Just make them so complicated that you'll have retreated to a Caribbean beach in your luxury yacht before the forensic accountants start to crawl all over them.

Charlie Mackle

(Please note the Screwem Pub Company has absolutely no relation or connection in its ownership or business practices with any real-life pubcos – perish the thought!)



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LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

HOOK NORTON



It is with great sadness that **Hook Norton Brewery** have announced the death of its Chairman, Richard Gilchrist.

Richard, 57, died in a riding accident while riding with the Cheshire Hunt on Saturday 24th of January. Richard had been a director of **Hook Norton** since 1977 and was appointed Chairman in 2005.

We learnt the news as we were going to press and it very sorry news for the brewing industry.

We wish to send our condolences to his family and friends, and all at the brewery.

REBELLION

The current financial crisis is not all bad news when it inspires a series of seasonal beers.

Rebellion launched *Weary Banker* (care had to be taken when ordering it!) in January which was a 4.4% ABV golden and citrus ale.



February gives drinkers the chance to welcome Alistair Darling into the pub as he features on the pumpclip for *Bailout*, which is a red and malty beer. Any chance of a tax reduction for this one Alistair?



In March we have the brown and fruity *Credit Crunch* (4.3%).

What are the chances for a *Financial Recovery* set next year?



OXFORDSHIRE ALES

Oxfordshire Ales, which is based in Marsh Gibbon, has won two silver medals for its real ales in the British Bottling Institute Competition.



They won for its ales *Triple B* which is a 3.7% session bitter which is well hopped with Styrian & English Golding hops, and *Marshmellow* which is a classic strong beer.

Many congratulations to John Lovett, owner of the brewery, who is delighted with the win!

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MORE LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

VALE BREWERY



Vale Brewery have started a series of seasonal beers and their first, which was available in January was *Bernwode Forest* (ABV 4.0%).

This was a lovely, rich warming mahogany ale named after the Bernwode Forest, an ancient Royal forest surrounding Brill. It has been actively maintained for Royal hunting parties dating from the 10th century.

Vale described it as a vibrant warming ale crafted from pale, crystal & chocolate malt. Fuggles, Willamette & Styrian Goldings hops gave it a smooth rich ale with a bitter finish and a subtle floral aroma.



The beer for February is the 4.4% ABV *Tramway Bitter*. It is named after the Tramway in Brill which was the end of the London Metropolitan line before it closed in 1935.

According to *Vale*, hints of early spring can be found on this fragrant hoppy copper coloured bitter.

March will see the welcome return of *Notley Ale* which is a 3.3% ABV beer whose taste belies the low gravity.

Vale's bottled *Gravitas* won a Silver award in the *Midlands SIBA* bottled beer competition.

Their labels have also won a competition as the *Labologists Society* (Label collectors) voted *Vale's* set as the best Label set of 2008.





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BRANCH SOCIALS (OCTOBER - JANUARY)

There are now so many beer festivals arranged in better weather (a comparative term!) around bank holidays that people could be forgiven for thinking there is a real ale 'season' that runs from Easter until the end of August. Far from it: the local branch organises a busy schedule of activities throughout the year. Here are some of the highlights of what we did in the dark days from October last year to the start of 2009.

At the start of October we visited Naphill and Lacey Green. We started at the **Wheel**, where we sampled the seasonal **Greene King** ale *Bonkers Conkers*. Next was the **Black Lion**, where we recalled *Brakspear's Bitter*, *Rebellion IPA* and *Fuller's London Pride* being on offer. We finished by sampling the four ales at the **Black Horse**, Lacey Green.

Our October branch meeting was held at the **George and Dragon** hotel, West Wycombe where we were provided with some excellent hospitality and very good beer. Unfortunately, as mentioned in Local News, the proprietors of the hotel ceased trading early in the New Year which shows the effect of the credit crunch has extended to blight even pubs which have achieved a place in the *Good Beer Guide*.

Also in October we visited Wendover, starting off by partaking of the *Fuller's* ales in the **White Swan**. We then moved on for our first social at the refurbished **Red Lion** hotel where we learnt a valuable lesson – don't casually hold pieces of paper at pub tables lit by exposed candles. The beer list for our Stoke Mandeville festival became hotter stuff than we even thought and almost entirely disappeared in smoke. We were able to extinguish it without resorting to using our *Marston's* sourced real ales. We then went on to the **Packhorse** to enjoy their range of well-kept *Fuller's* ales.

Little Marlow is blessed with a pair of royally good pubs and we sampled real ale in them both. The **Queens Head** is tucked away by the church. It is a very old hostelry which has been refurbished in a modern style,



mostly open plan but with a very atmospheric side room that appeared to be mostly devoted to dining. The **Kings Head**, on the main road to Bourne End, is also a historic building, decorated in a more traditional pub style and has a selection of three or four real ales.

At the end of October we had our annual beer festival in Stoke Mandeville which we covered in our last issue.

We visited the environs of Marlow for our annual branch dinner – this time held at the **Three Horseshoes** in Burroughs Grove. The pub has become legendary within the local branch for its good food, served up in the portions so generous that even the most gluttonous of members have trouble cleaning their plate. The **Three Horseshoes** did not disappoint and neither did its selection of ales – six handpumps featuring the whole *Rebellion Brewery* range.

On a dark November night we ventured into the deepest Chilterns to the two Hampden pubs. The **Rising Sun** at Little Hampden is tucked away

The Cock Inn at Wing



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MORE SOCIALS

at the end of a narrow lane off the Butler's Cross to Great Missenden road. Being very isolated it shuts at 10pm on weekdays in winter but up to then offers two well-kept real ales, including the seasonal *Marston's Blazing Ale* on our visit.

The **Hampden Arms** lies deep in Chiltern woodland at Great Hampden. It is a small but friendly pub with a huge garden and we received a warm welcome. It has two real ales, *Adnams Bitter* and *Vale Best Bitter* on our visit and also, unusually, real cider on handpump.

At the beginning of December we gathered at the **Rose & Crown** in Saunderton to celebrate 35 years of **CAMRA** in Buckinghamshire. A few old faces joined the usual suspects to enjoy the beer (pictured).

Our socials range from the rural to very urban and in early December we visited pubs in central High Wycombe. We started at the **Belle Vue**. This is a great pub to visit if you ever have time to kill at the station as it is a two minute walk from the London-bound platform. It is a bare-boarded local that features several well-kept, changing real ales. On our visit we had a varied selection including *Thwaites Nutty Black*, *Rhymney Bevan Bitter* and *Wychood Hobgoblin*.

We had hoped to pop to the **Sausage Tree** on the other side of the railway to sample their range of bottled beers but found the pub closed for a private function. Undaunted we walked on to the **Gordon Arms**, catching the end of a Chelsea game in the Champions League. It is a community local that has a choice of real ale. We had an extra stop at the **Pheasant** on London Road where we partook of *Courage Best*.

The Friday before Christmas saw the legendary Aylesbury pub crawl. We started by sampling the extensive range of ales in the **Hop Pole** before moving into the town centre. The **Harrow** was so packed there was hardly standing room (the credit crunch must have been on hold for the night). We moved on to the **Rockwood** and the **Hobgoblin**

before arriving at the **Queens Head** where we received such a friendly welcome and enjoyed the *Theakston's Old Peculier* so much that a few of us didn't make it to the final pub – the **Kings Head**.

However, the **Kings Head** was the venue for our Christmas Eve lunchtime social – handy for those working in Aylesbury who knock off early and for those out doing a last-minute spot of Christmas shopping. The pub puts on an extensive, all-you-can-eat buffet lunch at a reasonable price which is excellent for accompanying the superb range of **Chiltern Brewery** ales. It made a great start to the festivities.

The first branch meeting of 2009 was held at the **Red Lion** in Bradenham. This is an unspoilt country pub in a perfectly preserved village, which is largely owned by the National Trust. The pub had three well-kept real ales, including the remarkable, spicy *Bit O' Posh* from **Butt's** brewery. Their beers can often be found at the **Red Lion** as the brewery shares its name with the landlord's surname.

Later in January we visited the **Dereham's Inn** at Loudwater. There was a tempting selection of five real ales of offer including a couple from **Loddon Brewery** – their seasonal brew *Chantry Cheer* was excellent and a repeat pint was swiftly ordered. Our greedy bunch made short work of the excellent, home-made free cake which was on offer at the bar. We moved on to the **Falcon** at Wooburn Moor. The interior of the pub is an atmospheric collection of low-beamed, interlocking, separate drinking areas arranged around a central bar with three real ales..

In mid-January we headed to a pub at one of our north-western extremities – the **Royal Oak** at Oakley. This *Vale* house organises successful beer festivals in more clement weather and is keen to promote real ale. We enjoyed their *Vale Wychoert Ale*. We then moved on to the lively **Eight Bells** at Long Crendon. They had their usual five real ales on offer – two on handpump and three guests, as well as a real cider on gravity.

For details of forthcoming socials see the Branch Diary on page 22.



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LET'S HOLD A BEER FESTIVAL....

This was the resounding cry from Jimmy Tame, one of our members from the Lions Club of Winslow back in 2005 as we were discussing new fund-raising activities for the upcoming year. 'We can't possibly do that, it takes far too much organising and we have not got the expertise' was the lacklustre response from other members of the club. But Jimmy was not to be stumped and continued to push the idea.

Eventually, with the Lions Club of Farnham holding their successful event, we decided to 'assist' them and pick up the ropes for further consideration. Well, what a decision! To see a festival run as successfully both in revenue generated and the popularity, it was difficult not to get enthusiastic about Jimmy's idea. So we decided to venture forward...

We were lucky to get enthusiastic members of Milton Keynes branch of **CAMRA** to assist and they in turn were able to introduce us to the logistics and various key contacts to enable us to move forward with our plans. Crucial to these were the involvement of **Frog Island Brewery** as the main coordinator for advising, sourcing and ultimately delivering the beers required for the festival.

So it was decided that 2006 would be the inaugural year for the **Winslow Beer Festival**. Much planning and marketing ensued and the dates were set for the middle of March to avoid other local festivals and events. All we needed would be the 'punters'. We need not have feared as the event, opened by Rt. Hon. John Bercow, was extremely well attended and we were able to fill the two sessions on the Friday and Saturday evenings and more importantly with the attendance and the sponsorship of the beer we raised over £4,500, not bad for a first attempt!

Moving into 2007 we continued with the successful formula and raised over £7,000 by adding an extra session on the Saturday afternoon and with increased sponsorship for both the event and the beers with particular thanks to our continuing Prime Sponsor Bright Nails Ltd. and the Rt. Hon Iain Duncan Smith (pictured above) made an appearance.



Last year we added another dimension to the Saturday afternoon session and we 'screened' the last of the live Six Nations Rugby matches on a huge screen to the delight of the festivalers! This was certainly popular and has now become a major component of this year's festival. We raised over £9,500.

We are now into the final stages of planning for the **Winslow Beer Festival 2009** and pleased to confirm that all the successful elements have been included, and more – around 50 Beers, rugby on the Saturday afternoon, live jazz on the Saturday evening (a new element) and of course the welcome attendance of the Winslow festivalers!

The festival will be held at the Winslow Public Hall, on the 20th/21st of March and details are available on the website (www.winslowlions.org.uk). We look forward to seeing you there, drinking for Charity!

Keith Hofgartner

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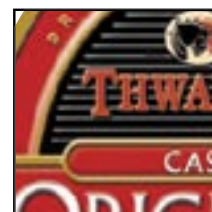
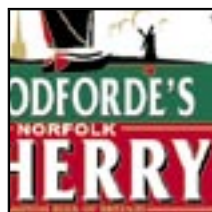
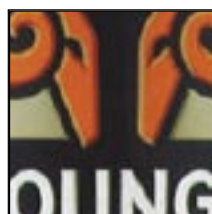
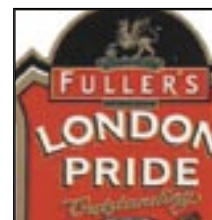
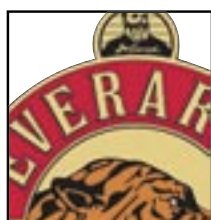
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THE BEST PUB IN BUCKS!

The **Hop Pole** was the winner of the local *Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe CAMRA* branch 'Pub of the Year' competition in April 2008.

Following this the pub represented this area in the county competition and the **Hop Pole** beat pubs from both *Mid Chilterns* and *Milton Keynes and North Bucks* branches to win the prestigious award for being the best pub in Buckinghamshire (a total of well over 600 pubs!).

With a constantly changing selection of 10 cask-conditioned real ales always available the **Hop Pole** proudly promotes itself as Aylesbury's Permanent Beer Festival. The beer selection and quality along with the informal relaxed atmosphere was key to the judges' decision.

Phil Stevens, Partner at *Vale Brewery* said 'This is recognition of a real team effort, the team at *Vale Brewery* in Brill, and Stuart and Monia who work so hard to ensure the beers are in best condition and a warm welcome is given to all customers.'

The **Hop Pole** then went on to compete in the final of the '*Regional Pub of the Year for the Central Southern Region of CAMRA*' where it narrowly lost out to the **Royal Oak** at Wantage.



The pub was presented with the **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE PUB OF THE YEAR 2008** certificate on Friday 19th December 2008 which marked the start of the annual 'Aylesbury *CAMRA* Christmas Pub Crawl' which is one of many events organised by the local branch.

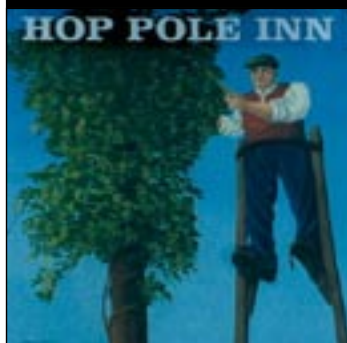
The picture (taken by Alexander Wright) of the recreation of the presentation on the following Sunday (the pub was so packed on the Friday before Christmas that a picture was not possible) shows (from the left) Monia and Stuart being presented with the award by David Roe (*AV&W* Branch Chairman and editor of

Swan Supping).

The **Hop Pole** will be holding their annual Easter Bank Holiday Beer Festival over the Easter weekend. There will be thirty beers available plus traditional ciders. The local *CAMRA* branch will be holding a social there on Good Friday and everyone is welcome to join us.

We are now looking for the '*Pub of the Year 2009*' for the branch and if you have any nominations, please contact the editor. As we have so many pubs in the branch, winners for the past five years are not eligible. These are the **Hop Pole**, **Royal Standard**, **Wooburn Common**, **Kings Head**, Aylesbury, **Three Horseshoes**, **Burroughs Grove**, and the **Shepherd's Crook**, **Crowell**.

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DRINKING IN THE BOROUGH OF LONDON

In mid-January, a Regional Social was arranged around the London Bridge/Borough area of London, with its varied drinking haunts. John and Sue Thirlaway (*SE Berkshire CAMRA* branch), kindly produced an itinerary, which commenced at the ever-popular **Market Porter (GBG 2009)**, a great champion for real ale. Two breweries had their beers showcased when circa forty *Central Southern CAMRA* disciples descended on its premises at high noon on Saturday 17th January.

Wentworth WPA (4.0), *Best Bitter* (4.1), *Oyster Stout* (4.8) and a very enjoyable *Black Diamond* (3.9) alongside *Hanby* ales *Black Magic Mild* (4.0), *Cascade* (4.5), *Scorpio Porter* (4.5) and *Premium* (4.6) were on offer to the *CAMRA* throng. This street-corner watering hole is a long standing *GBG* entrant and well worth seeking out when 'in the parish'.

Due to the nearby **Wheatsheaf** being closed with its future uncertain, next on the agenda was officially the **Rake**, allegedly 'the smallest boozer in London'. But while 'on the manor', a visit to the gastro brew-pub **Brew Wharf** (pictured) was a must for some of us, with their brews *Best* (4.2) and *Winter Ale* (4.5) being available on hand pump. Pricey, but worth a pop-in!

Around the corner resides the **Rake (GBG 2009)**, a pint-size bar that offers a couple of hand-pumped ales from independent breweries amidst a large array of bottled foreign beers. I snared a *Halcyon* (7.7) from *Thornbridge*, and a *Blue Moon* beer from the USA via font dispense. Can't remember the ABV of the American brew, but I wasn't 'Over the Moon' about the price of the 'Blue Moon'. £4.20 a pint, stop it!

Next up was the **Horniman at Hays (GBG 2009)** at the Hay's Galleria. Dave Roe and myself got waylaid (lost) en-route to this pub, an extra pub, the **Mudlark** I think, was entered to ask directions. Two halves of *Nethergate Dirty Dick* (5.2) were imbibed double-quick while the directions sank in.



The **Horniman at Hays** is a large Thames Wharf frontage pub, the three standard beers on offer weren't that impressive, especially after the ales that we had encountered beforehand. If the beer range was uninspiring, the quality of the pints was far less.

The **Bunch of Grapes** was a welcome distraction from the last pub, not *GBG* approved, as yet, but well worth an attendance. A 'swiftly' here as I was eager to make the pilgrimage to the **Royal Oak (GBG 2009)** in Tabard Street, *Harveys* sole tied pub in the capital. A classic two-bar Victorian gem, that has many admirers from far and wide. Brewery ales *Armada Ale* (4.5) and *Porter* (4.8) were two of the beers that I'd tried, if my memory serves. The scribblings in my notebook had by this time turned into shorthand cum Morse code. A fantastic public house, to end a great London jaunt.

Many thanks again to Mr & Mrs Thirlaway for their involvement in the day's entertainment and for pointing the way to Borough tube station for my train home.

The Marlow Maverick

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A CHRISTMAS TREAT



Christmas came early to Haddenham on 29th November in the shape of the *Real Ale Winterfest*. It was held once again by very kind permission of Tom Bucknell and his family, at the beautiful old Tithe Barn at Manor Farm.

The day dawned cold, but dry, and soon a stream of enthusiasts were making their way down Church End, to sample the 17 different real ales, and 10 ciders on offer. With over 450 tickets sold in advance everyone knew it would be busy, but nobody expected a total of 870 people, over double last year's number!

The attendees were all well entertained by the Haddenham Mummers, carols from Witchert Chorale, and the Ian English Jazz Band. Haddenham Lodge provided a splendid barbecue, and for the non-beer drinkers there was plenty of warming mulled wine.

The festival committee thanked everyone who helped to make the festival a success, and all those who attended especially for their patience and good humour when the sheer number of people resulted in queues at the bar, and the eventual running-out of beers one by one, and of wine and even of food. At least the pubs of Haddenham profited from the early closure! There are plans to rectify the problems of numbers next year, and of course have more beer and cider on offer! However, everyone was delighted to have raised £5,600 for Florence Nightingale Hospice and local good causes.

As an example of sheer dedication our picture shows Pete Summerskill combining the duties of head barman and chief mummer!

The summer festival will be held at the Haddenham Community Centre on Saturday 4th July. Full details are available on the website: <http://www.Haddenham-beer-festival.co.uk>.

Doug Harrison

It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale

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Complete the Direct Debit form below and you will receive three months membership free and a fantastic discount on your membership subscription. Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit www.camra.org.uk or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

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REAL ALE DRINKER'S GENOME PIECED TOGETHER!

Recent reports that scientists are close to being able to resurrect the woolly mammoth, have overshadowed a breakthrough of potentially even more gigantic benefit to mankind – the genome of a true Brit real ale drinker has now almost been re-assembled.

Analysts at a secret Aylesbury-based laboratory have managed to extract DNA from the severed hand of a real ale drinker, found entombed in an ice-bucket dug up on the site of the Ship in Walton Street. Extraordinarily the hand was still gripping a half-filled pint mug dating from the late pewter age.

The native British species *Hoppusmaltybarlimus cognoscente* – or just plain old real ale drinkers to the man in the street – became extinct towards the end of the new labour age. A number of factors took their toll – primarily their normal watering holes had dried up at an ever-increasing pace and many others had become contaminated with weasel pee.



An imposter

There had also been an alarming rise in crossbreeding with the more common species such as *Laargherloutus bibulensis* and *Alcopopulus vomitupitus*. The demise of the real ale drinker has now led to a rash of impostors coming in from foreign parts.

Neil Prickles, a spokesman for the British Beer and Pub Group said 'Predation in the early 1990s by ravenous wolf-like packs of vulpinus torypubcos was what really started this – I mean, they would attack pubs

indiscriminately, putting up rents and beer prices, then biting off the heads of tenants for no reason other than to satisfy their bloodlust. Not a pretty sight I can tell you. Then for ten years we had a plague of Caledonian bloodsuckers, a sudden 4 degree increase in temperature, and finally the Brown Death.'

A man in the street said, 'I blame Greene King' – a woman in the same street said she didn't know what all the fuss was about – 'real ale drinkers were mostly male anyway and suffered from erectile dysfunction so they were bound to die out'.

A member of staff of the Aylesbury research company, whom we can't name for fear of reprisals by human rights activists, said 'until we made this discovery all we had was the manky old skull from some piss artist Tudor monarch to work on. This has been a breakthrough, once we've pieced together the real ale genome, we can preserve it for future more enlightened times when cloned real ale drinkers could be recreated with ease.

The pint mug was a bonus too, we've been able to date it accurately by counting the lacework rings around the inside, and there should be enough preserved ale to enable us to identify the exact ingredients.'

The same man in the street butted in at that point saying 'well I hope it wasn't bloody Greene King IPA'.

Louise Dugalby



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Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

FEBRUARY

Wednesday 4th DOWNLEY SOCIAL

8.45pm, Downley Donkey; 9.30pm Le De Spencer Arms.

Monday 9th BRANCH A.G.M.

8.00pm Kings Head, Aylesbury.

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

There will be a bottle raffle, so please contribute to the prizes available and free 'nibbles' will be available.

Wednesday 18th PRINCES RISBOROUGH SOCIAL

8.30pm Whiteleaf Cross; 9.00pm Bell; 9.30pm Bird in Hand.

Monday 23rd BRANCH MEETING

8.30pm, Bull, Stoke Mandeville

MARCH

Monday 2nd GBG 2010 SELECTION MEETING

8.30pm Wheel, Naphill

Wednesday 11th ASTON CLINTON SOCIAL

8.30pm Rothschild's Arms; 9.00pm Duck In; 9.30pm

Partridge; 10.00pm Oak.

Wednesday 18th MARLOW SOCIAL

8.30pm Hare and Hounds; 9.30pm Duke of Cambridge

Wednesday 25th BRANCH SOCIAL

8.30pm, Gate, Ashendon; 9.15pm Bell, Chearsley; 10.00pm

Crown, Cuddington.

Tuesday 31st CHAIRMAN'S BIRTHDAY SOCIAL

8.30pm, King's Head, Aylesbury.

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'.

TO BE ARRANGED:-

Saturday lunchtime brewery visit to Vale Brewery, Brill.

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

**FOR THE LATEST ON BRANCH NEWS AND
ACTIVITIES, CHECK THE BRANCH WEBSITE:**

www.swansupping.org.uk

DON'T MISS OUT!

If you want to be kept up with the latest local pub news, be given beer festival information including the up to date listings of the beer available 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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Copy deadline for next issue, due out 1st April 2009, is 14th March 2009.

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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BRANCH AGM

The **Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe** branch of **CAMRA** will be holding their Annual General Meeting at the **Kings Head** in Aylesbury on Monday 9th of February. The meeting is due to start promptly at 8.00pm, so it is suggested that you get there earlier so you have no reason to rush your first pint(s).

If you are a local **CAMRA** member, it is important that you should attend! This is the meeting that sets the direction for the branch for the coming year and therefore this is your chance to have your say!

We are always looking for help for the branch, but as this mainly means going to pubs, we are not asking for anything too arduous. We always need information on our local pubs, especially during these credit crunching times. This information will be useful for the local news section of **Swan Supping**, future local bus guides (including the Line 40 guide which has been delayed until this year) and deciding which of our pubs go into the **Good Beer Guide**.

The meeting should last less than two hours as long as the Chairman doesn't ramble on for too long!

As the evening will not be all business, there will be plenty of opportunity for conversation over some superb beers from the local **Chiltern Brewery!**

Some food (nibbles) will be provided and we will be running a bottle raffle. As the raffle proceeds go towards branch funds, we would be grateful for donations of bottles to be raffled!





More Local News



(Continued from page 2)

includes only 135 Bib Gourmand establishments, with only two in Buckinghamshire.

Their beers remain **Sharp's Doom Bar**, **Taylor's Landlord** and a guest beer.

The **Rising Sun**, part of the **Oak Taverns** group which also now runs the **Cross Keys** in Thame in conjunction with **Vale**, have two of their beers currently on offer. When we visit on our Haddenham crawl on Friday 30th January, they should have **Vale VPA** and **Bernwode Forest** available.

The **Rose and Thistle** will be holding a quiz night on Wednesday 4th of February, once again in aid of the air ambulance. Beers available are **Greene King IPA**, **Hardy & Hanson Olde Trip**, and **Batemans XXXB**.

HIGH WYCOMBE

Sole High Wycombe **GBG 2009** entrant the **Belle Vue**, continues to showcase beers from their tied **Punch Taverns** monthly real ale portfolio. **St. Austell Dartmoor Best Bitter** (3.9), **Rhymney Bevan's Bitter** (4.2) and **Mordue Wallsend Brown Ale** (4.8)

were among a few of the beers that have been imbibed in the last couple of months.

Greene King tied pub the **Gordon Arms** had brewery offerings **IPA** (3.6) and **Abbot Ale** (5.0) on at a recent social there in December.

High Wycombe Rugby Club are holding a beer festival over the weekend of 28th/29th of March. The beers available will be rugby related, so that should be interesting!

Newest pub in the town, the **William Robert Loosley (Wetherspoons)**, offers among their five hand pulled ales, a local brewery beer from the **Loddon** brewery. A recent visit unearthed **Hocus Pocus** (4.6), other seasonal ales from **Loddon** have already been on at the handpumps, since their grand opening, late last year in 2008.

LACEY GREEN

The **Whip** will be closed for a couple of days starting Monday 2nd March as they are having their cellar refurbished and an extra handpump put in! This will help them beat the number of beers served last year!

LOUDWATER

Regular beers **Brakspear Bitter** (3.4) and **Fuller's London Pride** (4.1) are joined by a **Loddon** brew, plus two further guest ales at the **Derehams Inn**. Débutantes have included **Rebellion Overdraft Ale** (4.3), **Weary Banker** (4.4) and **Loddon Chantry Cheer** (4.2).

MARLOW

New micro-brewery **Art Brew Barn**, based in Chideock, West Dorset, have ushered two of their beers from their brewery to the **Duke of Cambridge**. **I Beer** (4.0), a vanilla flavoured bitter, and **Art Brut** (4.3) have 'painted a pretty picture' at the **Duke** of late. Duke Two new **Dorset Piddle** beers are nestling in the cellar:- **Silent Slasher** (5.1% blonde beer) and **Thunder Box** (4.5% stout) as well as **Salem Porter** and **Hook Norton Double Stout**.

THAME

It's happened. The **Cross Keys** has been given a new lease of life! **Oak Taverns**, based in Thame, have recently taken over the management of the pub. This is good news for the real ale drinkers of the area as the previously keg only pub is now serving real ale for the first time

in many years. All beers are being supplied by **Vale Brewery** and they started off with two ales, **Vale VPA** and **Idle Dog** from the **Idle Brewery** in South Yorkshire, both at 4.2% and £2.50 a pint. The next offerings will be **Vale Hadda's Winter Solstice** and **Molennium** (4.5) from **Moles Brewery** in Wiltshire. They are hoping, if space permits, to increase the choice to three ales – possibly more. The impressions are that the ales will be frequently changing with a **Vale** beer and beers from other micros being supplied. This is a bold venture and it is good to see a previous keg pub being converted, so the message to real ale drinkers is – use it or lose it. Good luck to Joe and Brenda, licensees of the **Rising Sun** at Haddenham, who are managing both pubs at the moment.

WEST WYCOMBE

Sue and Allan Raines were forced to cease trading at the **George & Dragon** early in January following the downturn in the hotel side of the business due to the current economic climate, despite the fact that the beer and food sales were still good. We wish them well for the future and thank them for their support of **Swan Supping**. The last we heard was that the pub is still boarded up.

Constantine & Louise Lucas welcome you to

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