



Swan Supping

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

FREE

Issue 67

AUG/SEP 2008



SMOKING BAN - ONE YEAR ON!



A year on from smoking ban in England and Wales the volume of beer sold in pubs is down by 8%.

The impact of the smoking ban, the promotion of cheap supermarket alcohol and economic uncertainty mean that many pubs are under pressure. During 2007 *CAMRA* found that 57 pubs a month were bulldozed or converted into other uses.

Among this doom and gloom there is reason to be optimistic about real ale sales and by extension about the future of pubs that serve good quality real ale. Pub chain *JD Wetherspoons* has reported that in the wake of the smoking ban real ale sales are up and leading real ale brewer *Greene King* has reported a 6% increase in their beer volumes.



These figures reflect a general optimism in the industry that real ale volumes could be about to return to growth. It also reflects figures released by *CAMRA* in early 2007 that reported that only 25% of real ale drinkers smoke compared to 43% of lager drinkers.

The main pubs to be affected by the smoking ban are the ones that targeted the drinkers and have no history of food trade or are unable to provide it.

One of these was the *Steeplechase* in Aylesbury (pictured) which closed its doors at the end of May. Local support dried up with the smoking ban and the cheap booze from the supermarkets. Add to that the lousy summer last year, the credit crunch and England's failure at the football.....



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Local News



ASKETT

Various planning and licensing applications have been posted outside the **Three Crowns** so it looks as if it will be re-opening as a licensed business of some sort.

AYLESBURY

The new people in charge at the **Bell** are David and Nikki Mehsen who have been in the trade for a long time and have even worked in Jordan. David is a five-star chef and is introducing new menus for lunch and evening meals. Breakfasts are served from 9am and the popular Sunday carvery runs from 12-6pm. They are awaiting the fitting of a bank of five handpumps in the main bar (there will be two more in the lower bar). They intend to serve **Greene King IPA** and **Old Speckled Hen** plus three guest beers. The first ten of the twenty en-suite rooms should be available from September.

Patrick Carroll took over the **Emperors Lounge** on 17th July. He has been a relief manager in the past and he aims to raise the age profile of the only **Brakspears'** pub in Aylesbury to thirty plus. The only real ale available is **Brakspears Bitter** but it is hoped to add to this in the near future.

The **Harrow** will be holding a mini beer festival (with bands) over the August Bank Holiday.

The **Hobgoblin** is doing a special offer on Tuesdays when all their real ales are available at £2.10 a pint. They are also teaming up with the **Rockwood** and the **Litten Tree** to host the **Kingsbury Beer Festival** which will take place on Sunday 31st August. There will be a marquee, a Bavarian Brass Oompah Band and many other entertainments.

The **Hop Pole** will again be holding an autumn beer festival but no date has yet been arranged.

The awards keep coming for the **Kings Head**. Claire Bignell manager of the **Farmers' Bar** has gained both a **Cask Marque** and a **Gold Beautiful Beer award**. The team running the bar has also won the 'Team of the Year' at the Aylesbury Business Excellence Awards, which was presented to them by cricket personality, Phil Tufnell.

Their next beer festival will coincide with the **'Hobble on the Cobbles'** over the August Bank Holiday. They are planning to have twenty real ales and seven ciders available. There is live music every Saturday in the courtyard.

The **Plough** on Tring Road is closing for refurbishment (again) on August 3rd for two weeks. When it reopens it will be branded as a **Sizzlers** rather than an **Ember Inn** - still an **M&B** pub but now part of the **Sizzling Pub Company** which is a branch of **M&B**.

The whole of the **Steeplechase** site in Southcourt is now surrounded by an 8 foot high blue wooden fence (almost a wall as you can't see through it). The pub closed at the end of May and its future is uncertain. It was a victim of the smoking ban and the availability of cheap booze from supermarkets. It won't be the last!

Yates Wine Lodge has closed and become **La Tasca**, which is a Spanish Tapas restaurant and bar. **Yates**, despite being eagerly awaited when it was announced that they were coming to Aylesbury, has never served any real ale, so we can't class this as a loss. However, according to rumour, **Yates** will return in the near future. Watch this space!

BRILL

The **Pheasant** is currently closed and its future is uncertain. However you can drown your sorrows at the **Brill Beer Festival** over the August Bank Holiday.

BUTLER'S CROSS

A 'business for sale' sign has been put up next to the **Russell**.

CROWELL

The annual beer festival at the **Shepherd's Crook** will run from Friday 22nd to Monday 25th of August.

DOWNLEY COMMON

Fuller's tied public house the **Le De Spencer Arms** offered **Hampshire King Alfred's** (3.8) alongside brewery beers **Fuller's Chiswick** (3.5), **London Pride** (4.1) and **ESB** (5.5) in June.

FLACKWELL HEATH

Greene King owned pub the **Magpie** is still a sorry sight, boarded up and the once trim beer garden now resembling the Serengeti.

GREAT KIMBLE

The **Bernard Arms** has been hosting a number of live music evenings over the summer.

The **Swan** will be marking the start of the Beijing Olympics by running a Chinese themed food night on Wednesday 6th August.

(Continued on page 23)

The Shepherd's Crook

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NATIONAL NEWS



CAMRA Local Ale is a new initiative that promotes pubs stocking locally brewed real ale. The scheme builds on a growing consumer demand for quality local produce and an increased awareness of 'green' issues.

The **Local Ale** scheme was created in 2007 by **CAMRA's Nottingham branch** which wanted to help support the tradition of brewing within Nottinghamshire, following the demise of local brewer **Hardys and Hansons**.

Everyone benefits from local pubs stocking locally-brewed real ale...

- **Public houses** as stocking local real ales can increase pub visits
- **Consumers** who enjoy greater beer choice and diversity
- **Local brewers** who gain from increased

sales

- **The local economy** because more money is spent and retained locally
- **The environment** due to fewer 'beer miles' resulting in less road congestion and pollution
- **Tourism** due to an increased sense of local identity and pride - let's celebrate what makes our locality different.

Leaflets and further details can be obtained from the **CAMRA** website (www.camra.org.uk) or the editor (contact details on page 22).

CAMRA announces the best pub designs in the country!

CAMRA has announced the winners of its annual Pub Design Awards, which celebrate the very best in vision, imagination and restraint in Britain's pubs.

Refurbishment Award and CAMRA/English Heritage Conservation Award:-

The Weaver Hotel, South Parade, Weston Point, Runcorn, Cheshire

This jaunty former commercial hotel and bar has been through decades of neglect and decline, but has now been restored to

something like its Edwardian glory.

Internal archaeology revealed the original room plan, which was faithfully reproduced. 'Period' light fittings have been installed; genuinely Edwardian paint colours – and, encouragingly, even wood graining – applied.

Superlative stained glass windows restored; dado tiling and the old column radiators repaired; a new but harmonious bar counter inserted; the original ceilings uncovered; the double-leaf front doors retained, and copied for the former off-sales entrance; and real fires reintroduced. Outside, the brickwork and stone dressings have been sensitively reapointed, and the roof appropriately re-slatted.

Conversion to Pub Use Award:- The Tobie Norris, St Paul's Street, Stamford, Lincolnshire

This building originally dates back to 1280. The Norrises were local bell-makers, and several generations of 'Tobies' can be linked to the pub name.

Converted from a former private club, the building's original room plan has been largely retained or revived, creating a variety of enticing spaces, upstairs and down, each with its own individual ambience.

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TASTED ON MY TRAVELS



The occasional jottings of an ardent real drinker

All was misery and woe in the Clemence household. Why so you may well ask. Well, I put my Real Ale notebook in a safe place; in fact so safe it could not be located! Then, a few days ago, when looking for something else I found it – much joy and jubilation!

At the beginning of April, Giles du Boulay, Dick Moore, Bruce Seymour and I journeyed by train and bus to Dursley in Gloucestershire to sample what the **Old Spot (GBG)** had to offer. We could see why it had been awarded the **CAMRA Pub of the Year** accolade. It is a super establishment and pictured above. The beers on offer were in top condition and the ones that I tried were **Severn Vale Session**, **Cotswold Spring Rose** and **Wye Valley Golden**. I really would recommend that if

you are in the area you pop in to sample this fine pub, its beers and super food. <We heard recently that Ric Sainty, owner of the **Old Spot** died in July. He was a great character and will be a sad loss. Our condolences to his family and friends. - Ed.>

On our travel homewards we paused in Stonehouse and slipped into the **Woolpack** for a nice pint of **Uley Hogshead**.

A little later in the month, on St George's Day (yes, I was sporting a rose in my buttonhole), the four of us went to Dunstable by bus and paid a visit to the **Victoria (GBG)**. We had a very good lunch and I sampled some **Robinson's Dizzy Blonde** and some **Wadworth St George**.

We then wandered off to the **B & T** pub the **Globe** (pictured below) which also features in the **GBG**. Here the beers I savoured were **B & T**





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MORE JOTTINGS

Black Dragon Mild, Dragon Slayer and Edwin Taylor's Extra Stout.

Into June, Reg Saunders and I paid a visit to Bridgnorth where we stayed at the **Friars Inn (GBG)**. We had frequented the establishment before for a few 'swifties' and found the ale to be good. This occasion was no different and I sampled a pint or two of *Wye Valley Dorothy Goodbody's Golden Ale*. The pub is under new management but all was well with the beers and the breakfasts were really good!

In the evenings we found some dinner and then went to the **Railwayman's Arms (GBG)** which is on the Severn Valley Railway Station. There I partook of the *Archers Mild*, *Bathams Bitter* and *Beowulf Dark Raven*. All in good nick as usual.

The day after our return, I was rostered for a 'research' trip to Bristol, in the company of Dick Moore, Giles du Boulay and Bruce Seymour. We were joined in Bristol by Dave Thornhill.

Our first port of call was the **Grain Barge** where in addition to a nice lunch I sampled *Bristol Beer Factory Red Exhibition*.

We progressed on with our travels to the brew pub **Zerodegrees (GBG)** where I sampled the *Mild*. It was rather cool for my taste but the 'Good Book' did warn! At the **Colston Yard** I partook of a drop of *Butcombe Gold*. After this we paid a visit to the **Seven Stars** and I enjoyed some *Wickwar Old Arnold*. Our journeyings were not yet over as we called into the **Bridge** where some *Bath Ales Gem* was taken.

And so it was that we came to our final port of call, the **Cornubia**, where we sampled *Hidden Brewery's Hidden Depths*. That was the conclusion of a wonderful day out. Grateful thanks must go to Dick Moore who master minded these trips, found the train times and connections and worked out the most economical routes.

Mike Clemence



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LOCAL BEER FESTIVALS

5TH HADDENHAM REAL ALE FESTIVAL

Haddenham's annual tribute to the UK micro-brewing industry took place on 5th July at the Youth and Community Centre in Haddenham. With 48 barrels of different real ales, 3 of real lagers, and 20 real ciders, there was a lot of serious tasting to be done, and from opening time at 11.00 a.m. a steady stream of enthusiasts arrived to get stuck in.



Early morning rain dried up and before long the sun came out and stayed out for most of the day. The grounds of the Centre were filled with picnickers enjoying the varied food and entertainment as well as the beers, wines and the Pimms. Meanwhile, the serious business of tasting the beers continued indoors; the unofficial *Beer of the Festival* was *Gravitas* from *Vale Brewery* in Brill, and this was the first beer to run out. However, they did not actually run out of beer overall; supplies kept the day going to almost 9.00 p.m.!

The picture shows the committee celebrating another successful festival, which raised over £10,000 for charities and local good causes. Their thanks go to all who made the day possible; the generous sponsors, an army of helpers, the entertainers, and all the beer lovers, and festival wives and girlfriends who come to the festival.

Their second *Winterfest* will take place on 29th November and next year's festival will be on the 4th July 2009. Look for full details on their website: www.haddenham-beer-festival.co.uk.

FIRST CHOKO BEER FESTIVAL

An exciting new community event is being added to the Cholsey (near Wallingford) village calendar this year with the first **Choko Beer Festival** being held on Saturday September 27th at Laurence's Hall.

There will be a marquee with around 15 real ales, along with cider, lager and wine. The barbecue will be going all day, and snacks and soft drinks will also be available. There will be live music and activities for children so everyone is catered for!

Choko links communities in South Oxfordshire and South Africa, and raises funds for development work in the disadvantaged community of Kodumela. Details on www.chokobeerfestival.org.uk.



George & Dragon, Quainton

5 real ales. Good Beer Guide listed

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FREE BEER IN BRUGES!



In the context of a group expedition to Brussels earlier this year, I mentioned in *Swan Supping No. 65* that I was hoping to attain my second-level qualification in Belgian beer studies.

It is a staggered course by which the dedicated student may realistically hope eventually to attain an ABV (Hons.) of up to 12%.

The congenial surroundings of Bruges were to be my venue, in May, for this next stage in the Belgian beer experience.

Sadly I failed. The *GBG Belgium* training manual lists some sixteen beer cafés of particular note in Bruges, but we only managed, in the short time available, to visit about three. I say 'we', as the word provides a clue to my failure – 'we' had to make constant diversions to chocolate shops, and look at the charming old buildings and windmills, visit museums, 'we' had to go for nice walks...I'll say no more.

There was a great consolation prize, however. On a last tour of the town, we suddenly spotted the most attractive brewer's dray belonging to *Bosteels*, as pictured above. *Bosteels* is famed for their outstanding, rich amber and malty *Pauwel Kwak* (8%), usually served in a distinctive round-bottomed glass with a special holder. You may just be able to make out such a glass in the picture, in a holder to the side of the coachman (where else?).

The dray was stationary outside a café. We stopped to admire the magnificent horses when the coachman announced that if we would like a FREE beer all we had to do was go into the café and ask. Well, I didn't want to appear rude... so quick as a flash I took a seat. Within moments, I was supping a glass of *Tripel Karmeliet* (8%). It's a creamy, golden, three-grain beer brewed by *Bosteels* to an old Carmelite recipe dating from 1679 – slightly spicy with an orangey hop aroma. The waitress explained that once, sometimes twice, a year the brewery dray tours various Belgian towns, stopping for about half-an-hour each time outside cafés which sell their beer. As a special promotion the brewery then picks up the tab on any of their beers sold during that period.

What a great promotion! What fantastic luck that I happened to be in the right place at the right time!

British brewers take note – you don't need horses – a brightly painted 'retro' delivery van will do the trick. Even a transit van will do, at a pinch. Oh, and plenty of notice for *CAMRA* members so that they can just happen to be passing at the right time.

I realise this article is, in turn, rather becoming a promotion for *Bosteels*, but as you will see from what follows, they certainly deserve it.

Unfortunately we did not have our camera with us at the time so when we got home, I looked on their website to see if there was a picture of the dray as a reminder. It's a great little website, by the way. Not finding quite the picture I wanted I e-mailed the brewery, explaining that I would like to share my experience with readers of *Swan Supping*.

I received a reply within about twenty minutes flat, along with pictures of a number of different drays and historic coaches, as well as information about their beers. The picture above may not show the dray outside the actual café we visited (it may not even have been taken in Bruges) but it does convey the atmosphere very well.

I did of course manage to find some other beers during our stay. Of particular note was the award-winning *Brugse Zot*, the only beer still brewed in Bruges' town centre – by the *Huisbrouwerij De Halve Maan* – worth visiting but it can get crowded.

Apparently, the people of Bruges are known as '*Brugse Zotten*' which translates roughly to 'Bruges fools'. The *Brugse Zot Blond* (6%) is light and refreshing, very drinkable, with slightly peppery tones. The darker, more bitter *Brugse Zot Dubbel* (7.5%) is also well worth seeking out. You'd be a *Zot* not too.

I shall be re-sitting my exams in Bruges before too long.

Giles du Boulay

ARE YOU A BINGE DRINKER?

Not a day goes by without yet another anti-alcohol initiative being announced by the government. The latest initiative is to curb binge drinking. But how do you know if you're a binge drinker? The government's definition is more than eight units in a session for a man and six for a woman. That's a bit of a dry definition so why not try the following quiz devised by the Alcohol Responsibility Strategy Executive (ARSE). It aims to give the kind of balanced, thoroughly researched, sober analysis that we tend to see emanating from the government and being widely reported in the press nowadays.

1. **What is your favourite drink?**
 - a. Water with all the flavour filtered out.
 - b. Locally-brewed real ale
 - c. Anything luminous and full of chemicals, and the higher octane alcohol the better.
2. **Where do you like to drink?**
 - a. At home.
 - b. In convivial, sociable surroundings in my local
 - c. Anywhere and everywhere – the more people to annoy the better. Do you know any good street corners?
3. **What's a good night out for you?**
 - a. I never go out. I don't believe in socialising with people in case they pass on their germs to me.
 - b. Two or three pints in my local with friends.
 - c. Tanking up on super strength cider from five in the evening, hitting the pub about ten then going to get plastered at a nightclub.
4. **What would be your ideal pub?**
 - a. Closed and boarded up with the landlord swinging on a gibbet outside.

- b. A smart, thriving local serving its community but welcoming to all.
- c. Deafening noise, Sky TV, lots of machines, pool table and a good chance of a fight.

5. **What's your opinion of the government's anti-alcohol strategy?**
 - a. Far too soft. Alcohol should be banned. It's evil.
 - b. Was that yesterday's announcement on the sinfulness of alcohol or today's you're talking about?
 - c. Government? Is that what old people vote for?
6. **What do you do when you hear the latest government alcohol strategy?**
 - a. Feel a warm glow inside.
 - b. Ask myself why they concentrate on trying to stigmatise reasonable drinkers rather than those with a real problem, then yell obscenities at the radio/TV.
 - c. Listen to government advice. Are you having a laugh?
7. **How many units do you drink a week?**
 - a. None. What do you take me for, an alcoholic?
 - b. Whatever two or three pints, a few times a week is. I drink pints not units.
 - c. I've not been to school since I was 12, do you expect me to be able to count into double figures?
8. **Has the doctor ever warned you about your drinking?**
 - a. No. He's too busy writing out prescriptions for my neuroses and general stress levels.
 - b. Yes. He reminds me it's my round when we're in the pub.
 - c. No. When the doctor is stitching me up in A&E he knows he'd get a hiding if he tried to lecture me. I know my rights.

How did you score?

Mostly a's:

Well done. You show a balanced and reasonable attitude to alcohol. You think it's the drink of the devil. You hate it and you loathe the poor, fallen degenerates that are addicted enough to consume it. Good. You're a total abstainer of alcohol but make sure you don't overdo on sinful pleasures that may be on offer in other areas – for instance, smiling, having friends, etc. With regular self-flagellation you might qualify to become a government alcohol adviser.

Mostly b's:

You might delude yourself that having two or three pints every other night is a reasonable level consumption – but we know better than you. We know that behind your cosy, sensible, responsible exterior is a rampaging, abusive alcoholic who might have a small chance of becoming a parasitic drain in years to come on the health service. You pollute your body with alcohol in the most irresponsible way and you are setting a criminal example to impressionable youngsters. If you've got enough money to drink in the pub then the government is entitled to drain cash from your pockets – and try to make you feel guilty as hell while it's doing it.

Mostly c's:

You're a feral scumbag drinking huge quantities of get-drunk-quick alcopops and strong lager – but it's clearly not your fault. It's society's. You've obviously been oppressed by the wine and real-ale drinking majority and you feel the need to express yourself and your inner torment by the creative destruction of the urban space to which you have been exiled. Don't feel bad about it. Be cool. Smash something up. Please. Frankly, we know you never listen to health advice so we won't bother. We'd rather invent tales about middle-class binge drinking that will get us in the papers. Have a hug from us instead.

Charlie Mackle

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- ❖ 12 Railway themed beers
- ❖ 2 ciders
- ❖ food available
- ❖ commemorative glass
- ❖ special bus from Aylesbury

The website (www.bucksrailcentre.org) will be updated with beer list and bus service details!

CROWN DETHRONED

The **Crown** at Marlow (aka **R:Home, Market, Crown Hotel**), served its last drinks on Saturday 28th June and has now closed its doors, to be a bathroom shop/showroom. This the most renown pub in the town, a large stone building that stands proud at the top of the High Street with its clock tower, overlooking all of the town-centre shops and businesses.

Steeped in history, the **Crown**, then the **Crown Hotel** (as it once served as a stagecoach inn), had its windows broken in the 1880 Election Riots. In fact the **Crown Hotel** used to be in the premises next door, as the **Crown** (where it resides today), was the Town Hall (hence the clock tower). The **Crown Hotel** took over the Town Hall in the 1890's. The **Crown** was also used as a prison and held POW's in the war.

More recently in the 1980's, the **Crown**, with its then larger than life landlord, was an institution in its own right, as young professionals from near and far flocked to this number one venue for the 'in place' to be seen, to socialise and have a good time.

Scottish & Newcastle owned the **Crown's** licence during the 1990's, *Theakston's XB* (4.5) being a welcome sight at the hand pumps. The **Crown** in more recent years become the **Market** (named after the pubs address in Market Square) and latter day the **R:Home** (any ones guess?).

It will be sad to see the **Crown** not as a pub/bar any more and up for To(i)Let. As for a bathroom shop/showroom, any chance of products from *Bath Ales*, *Clearwater*, *Whitewater*, *Old Bog* or even *Wyre Piddle*. But as this bold new enterprise unravels, it will definitely be SINK or swim!

W.C. Fields

Tony, Ian & Lynne welcome you to

The Black Horse, Lacey Green



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Pub open all day Friday, Saturday & Sunday

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Check for further details on – www.aylesburyvale.net/risborough/blackhorse

THE ITALIAN JOB

Due to an unfortunate quirk of fate, I wasn't able to attend this years Black Country trip shenanigans, as I treated my long suffering wife to a weekend away, (the same weekend as the Black Country trip), for some overseas opportune in the unspoilt Italian city of Parma.

Our Friday lunchtime flight was unusually full, mainly due to the Annual Vintage Ferrari Car Rally, held on the fringes of Parma, over that weekend.

Staying at the Hotel Parma & Congressi, on Via Emilia Ovest, topping up our sun tans while recharging the batteries around the hotel pool in 34 C, engaged much of the sun filled daytime.

As Saturday night approached, it was only proper that ale, Italian ale, in the absence of Black Country ale, was imbibed as homage to my weekend exile in foreign pastures. **Tabarro** is a slither of a bar, on the Strada Farini, just off of the main Piazza Garibaldi, and I was somewhat lucky to stumble on this venue, I clocked a couple drinking on their outside table with some interesting bottles at hand.

Having inquired in the bar for some Italian ale, the knowledgeable barman conjured up various bottled brews from the local, (60 Km away), **Birrificio del Ducato** brewery. Situated in the small town of Busseto, their bottled delights that were gratefully consumed included *Via Emilia* (4.8), *Nuova Maltina* (5.8), both blonde beers, but my personal favourite, *A.F.O.* (5.2), a tasty red beer of great depth and full in flavour.

At this point, the barman dug out a 75cl bottle of *Chimera* (6.5) again from the Busseto brewery and would I be interested in trying some and if I could cope with the whole bottle at 6.5% ABV? I'll try, I promise, I'll try! So in the nature of research, of course, a pint glass was acquired to honour the fine premium strength brew. Well worth seeking out a bottle or two when in the Parma parish.

So as a footnote, nice city, pleasant people, decent architecture, very good food (save the veal), and some fine palatable local bottled ale, sourced by a small friendly outlet at **Tabarro**. Italian Job completed and the Busseto gold bullion safely stashed (my stomach), so it's back to Blighty to report to Mr. Bridger.

Charlie Croaker



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THE GREAT MARLOW MEANDER

Whitsun Bank Holiday Saturday was the date designated for our local **CAMRA AV & W branch** to attend field manoeuvres around town centre pubs in Marlow, and complete the arduous task of imbibing the various real ales on offer to us conscripts. (Tuff job).

As the duty sergeant on this particular operation, 'Sgt. Sheppard' (SS) hand picked five recruits to join him, regulars 'Corporal Coops' (CC) and Wing-Commander Williamson (WCW), alongside rookie soldiers 'Privates Allen and Willis' (PA & PW).

The sixth member of this covert team was the notorious 'Field-Marshal Roe' (FMR), drafted in from our Northern Sector, who was incognito during today's mission and only there in the capacity to observe and advise. This didn't stop FMR from pulling rank though and joining in



the chore of assessing the quality and variety of real ale in the Great Marlow province.

Rendezvous was agreed for twelve hundred hours precisely at the **Carpenters Arms (Carps)**, strategically close to the troops drop-off point, a **Greene King (GK)** tied pub, although small in dimensions, large in character. **GK** stalwarts **IPA** (3.6) and **Abbot Ale** (5.0), were 'guested' with **Tanners Jack** (4.4), which was due an imminent charge to a different beer, at the barrels end. After the mandatory 'two-pint starter for ten', the squad disembarked to our next port of call over the road.

The **Cross Keys (Keys)** is a large imposing mock-Tudor building that serves as a tollgate when entering Marlow from the Little Marlow end





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MORE MANOEUVRES



This spacious, rejuvenated street-corner public house is another owned by **GK** and has vastly improved in both furnishings and quality of their real ales. Usual suspects *IPA* and *Abbot Ale* were partnered with *Olde Trip* (4.3), originally from the once fabled *Kimberly* brewery, now closed and owned by our **GK** hosts, and everyone's chosen brew on our visit here. Round Two of the cribbage resulted in 'the youngsters' drawing level, as we changed gear from reverse to second in one clinical movement.

Pub four was the nearby **Prince of Wales (P.O.W.)**, a pleasant enough watering-hole, again three ales to choose from, this time *Brakspear Bitter* (3.4), *Fuller's London Pride* (4.1) and local brewery beer *Rebellion Top Secret* (4.4), their May monthly special from their 007 spy range
(Continued on page 14)



of town. This **Scottish-Newcastle** owned premises is Marlow's premiere Sky Sports pub and plays host to the legendary annual St. Georges Day weekend, with drinking contests, fun and joviality at a plenty.

At this point, Sgt. Sheppard and Corporal Coops laid down a gauntlet to the Field-Marshal and the Wing-Commander in the form of a cribbage doubles match. The offer was duly accepted, and as it was only Round One, the junior ranking officers let 'their betters' triumph! For the time being anyway. Beers available here comprised of *S&N Courage Best* (4.0), *Directors* (4.8) and guest ale *Charles Wells Bombardier* (4.3). After a 'soft defeat' in the cribbage, (SS) gave the roll call, rallied the troops for the route march to the **Marlow Donkey (Donk)**, our next pub for attendance.



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MARLOW

(Continued from page 13)

of beers. As the weather was unusually clement and sunny for once, the troops 'plotted up' for some alfresco drinking and consultation for future CAMRA manoeuvres.

Having navigated through the 'seven cornered alley', the picturesque **Two Brewers (Brewers)** awaited our arrival with four hand pumped delights (yes four), the largest array of permanently assembled real ales in any Marlow pub. **Brakspear Bitter**, **Fuller's London Pride**, **Rebellion IPA** (3.7) and **Rebellion Mutiny** (4.5), the latter being the most sort after beer at this quaint, olde-worlde traditional pub. Much of 'Three Men in a Boat' (1889) was written here by the English humorous writer Jerome K Jerome (1859-1927). This a satirical account of a boat trip up the River Thames from Kingston to Oxford.

Five pubs down, only five more to go! Six swift halves while on the hoof in the towns High Street at the **Slug & Lettuce (Slug Pellet)**, site of the once legendary 17 real aled **Hogshead**, now a fond and distant memory. Only one real ale forlorns here now, **Charles Wells Bombardier** on our particular visit, although this beer may change. **Charlie Boy** (4.3) is in desperate need of accompaniment and is very lonely as the sole real ale at the bar. Any requests please?

The other side of the High Street is the **Chequers (Cheqs)**, a **Brakspear** owned pub, serving **Brakspear Bitter** (3.4) and **Oxford Gold** (4.0). Again a quickie (steady), in the form of a half pint, as it was up to the top of the High Street for the **Coach & Horses (Coach)**.

It was time in this quest for a more solid subsistence in the form of food, (a soldier marches on his stomach) so the **Coach & Horses** Chinese cuisine was duly investigated. Their food is in eat-in or takeaway format, and they offer **Brakspear Bitter** and **Fuller's London Pride** on hand pump. A nice pop-in pub at the heart of the town, with fine Oriental cuisine.

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CONTINUED

Several doors down, our penultimate pub on the itinerary, is the recently refurbished **Ship (Ship)**. A traditional, low beamed town centre public house, and when I say low beams, the Sarge being 6ft 3' tall, I mean low, i.e. head crackers! **Rebellion IPA** (3.7), **Blonde** (4.3) and **Fuller's London Pride**, again, were the real ales available. It had reached that time for us to soldier on up to our final destination, the **Duke of Cambridge**.

This locals' local resides in the back streets, just off of the town centre and is Marlow's only ever-changing real ale haunt. Tonight we were enticed by **Best Mates** (a new regional micro) **Alfie's** (4.4) and **Scatter Rock Rock Steady Mild** (3.7), the first mild of the day and only chance of obtaining this style of beer in the confines of Marlow.

Landlord and landlady John and Tracy Hudson have taken on the mantle of Marlow's only real ale sweetshop, locally stationed troops SS, CC and WCW in particular, are grateful for their efforts in sourcing countless micro-brewery beers both near and far.

A decider in the cribbage was ordained with 'Corporal punishment' being welded from SS and CC. The result 2-1 was never in doubt really!

After viewing the shambolic Eurovision Song Contest, the voting as predictable as the England football team losing in a penalty shoot-out, the soldiers trooped off back to their pick up point, as they were subpoenaed back to barracks before 10.30pm and the lights out curfew.

All in all, ten town centre pubs visited while on Marlow manoeuvres, sixteen different real ales were available at the public houses, with the overall quality of the beers good to very good.

Mission accomplished! The Sarge is now due some R&R, before the next recon in High Wycombe for the Autumn patrol in September/October.

Sgt. Sheppard (AWOL)

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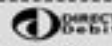
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CAMRA has combined its extensive knowledge of good pubs with the latest innovations in satellite navigation to produce a unique and exclusive **Good Beer Guide 2008** Points of Interest (POI) file for TomTom users.

Catering for techies and pub-goers alike, the file will allow users to pinpoint and explore over 4,500 pubs listed in the current edition of the **Good Beer Guide**. Simple to install and use, **CAMRA** hopes the file will encourage users to get out exploring and uncover some of Britain's best real-ale pubs.

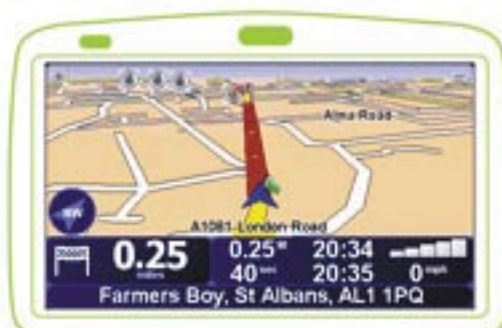
Simon Hall, **CAMRA** Managing Editor, said: 'For anyone tired of getting lost down country lanes, map in hand, while trying to find a pub for Sunday lunch, this is the perfect, stress-free solution.'

Hall continues: 'Recent research has shown that many people prefer to spend their evenings and weekends indoors, with modern technology allowing them to shop and socialise online. However, this latest application for a successful piece of navigational technology will encourage users to leave the confines of their living room and enjoy and support great community pubs!'



Priced at just five pounds, the file contains up-to-date information including pub names, addresses, phone numbers and locations. Although the file is only compatible with TomTom hardware at present, there are plans to create POI files for other systems in the future.

The **CAMRA Good Beer Guide** TomTom POI file is out now, and is available for immediate download from the **CAMRA** website at: <http://www.camra.org.uk/GBGPOI>.



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LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

CHILTERN BREWERY

The brewery has now taken delivery and installed a new custom built fermenter. This increases their fermenting capacity by 50%. They had originally planned one at double the volume, but because of the restricted head-height in the Fermenting Room, they couldn't fit it in!

The design of the new vessel will give them a lot more flexibility as they will be able to ferment small quantities, down to about five Barrels, which previously they haven't been able to do. This means they can brew specialist beers and brings them into line with the plans they have for new beers, both draught and bottled. This is all part of their ongoing investment within the Brewery that started in 2004 with the installation of a new Brew House opened by Roger Protz on their 25th Anniversary.

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A PINT TO DIE FOR

In the last issue of *Swan Supping* we played detective and unmasked several pubs in the north of our branch area that have been used as locations for filming the popular ITV drama series, *Midsomer Murders*. The tour now continues with a guide to those pubs in the south of the branch which have been associated with grisly televisual deeds.

We previously noted how surprising it might be that the programme makers had found so many idyllic and tranquil spots so close to the suburban sprawl of south-east England. This is even more true for the pubs below as they are all even closer to London, yet many are tucked away in the most bucolic, timeless Chiltern valleys.

The itinerary uses High Wycombe as a nominal start and end point but, being circular, can be embarked upon from anywhere on the route. As previously, rudimentary directions have been provided but use of a road atlas (or sat nav) is advisable.

Again, to the best of our knowledge, all the pubs listed serve real ale, some of outstanding quality. Some of the pubs are real gems – in beautiful locations and often with historic features – so making this a thoroughly enjoyable drive in itself, and being even more so with the help of an obliging designated driver.

The list is based on Joan Street's excellent *Midsomer Murders* website and a guide to Buckinghamshire locations produced by the council, which is available for download at www.visitbuckinghamshire.org.

From High Wycombe head towards Lane End and from there on minor country roads to Fingest.

Fingest is a tiny hamlet with a Norman church that is of note due to its enormous tower. The **Chequers** is an unspoilt *Brakspear's* country pub that dates back to the 15th century. It has had a relatively recent extension at the back of the pub to increase dining space and it is said that the landlord is an enthusiastic advocate of real ale. The pub featured in 'Country Matters' in the ninth series where it was disguised, sadly, as an antique shop.

Continue through Fingest following the signs to Dibley, oops, Turville.



The pretty village of Turville has proved irresistible to film and television producers over many years with its ancient, thatched cottages, pub and church dating back to the 10th century all arranged around the small green. It has been a favourite location since 1942, when the war film 'Went the Day Well' started it all off.

Turville is known to millions of BBC TV viewers as the village of Dibley as the exterior scenes for Dawn French's eponymous sitcom 'The Vicar of Dibley' were filmed here – although whether this series is dead and buried is anyone's guess as it has been resurrected on a number of recent occasions.

The village has also featured in 'Foyle's War', 'Miss Marple' and, perhaps less predictably, it has come out as being the village in which the 'Little Britain' character Daffyd Thomas is supposedly the only gay.

Once the *Midsomer Murders* film crews managed to elbow their way into Turville ahead of all the above, the **Bull and Butcher** featured in 'Murder on St. Malley's Day', an episode in series five. The pub is another *Brakspear's* house and serves the full range of the brewery's beers. Unusually for the area, it has often served mild. The Well Bar is built over a brick well several feet deep. Fortunately the top is covered by tough glass, no doubt frustrating any aqueously murderous plans being hatched by the homicidal locals.

From Turville, head back to Fingest then turn towards Skirmett and follow the minor road to Hambleden

Hambleden is another quintessentially English village. Its state of near perfect preservation owes in large part to the village's ownership by the Hambleden Estate. Until last year the estate had been in the possession of the W.H.Smith family, whose founder lived in the village. It is now owned by a Swiss financier based in nearby Henley. The 14th century church and flint cottages arranged around a water pump in the centre of the village have featured in many television and film productions, including 'Rosemary and Thyme' and 'Poirot'.

The **Stag and Huntsman**, the village pub pictured left, is similarly



MORE KILLER PUBS

uncorrupted by modernity. It has three separate bars, including a small snug, and serves a good selection of real ales, usually with a changing guest beer. The large garden stages a beer festival the weekend after the late August bank holiday (we have a social organised there on 30th August). The village has appeared in several episodes of Midsomer Murders, including 'Down Among the Dead Men' in the ninth series and 'Who Killed Cock Robin' in the fourth.

From Hambleden head towards the A4155, the main road by the Thames, turning left towards Marlow. The next pub is in Marlow town centre: on St. Peter Street near the River Thames which can be reached by first turning off the High Street at the mini-roundabout towards the station.

The **Two Brewers** (pictured left) is a smart pub, dating back to 1755, which caters for the well-heeled residents of Marlow. Being close to the river, it is a good place for refreshment if watching the traditional Swan Upping festivities. The pub is also associated with the river in a literary way as Jerome K. Jerome wrote large portions of 'Three Men in a Boat' in the **Two Brewers**. The poet T.S. Eliot also lived up the road at one time but it is not known whether he ever came to the pub to get wasted.

It is not known who the original two brewers were but the pub currently serves ales from the local **Rebellion brewery**. The interior of the pub is split on several levels with various nooks and crannies. The **Two Brewers** featured in 'Sauce for the Goose', an episode in the eighth series.

Take the A4155 out of Marlow, crossing the A404 bypass and, on entering Little Marlow, turn down a minor road to the centre of the village (this is quite easy to miss).

Little Marlow has two pubs – the **King's Head** abuts the main road and **Queen's Head** is hidden away on Pound Lane, describing itself as



'Marlow's Little Secret'.

The **Queen's Head** is a picturesque, rambling building that was used as a location for last Inspector Morse episode, 'The Remorseful Day'. The good inspector would no doubt enjoy the **Brakspears** and **Adnam's Bitters** currently on offer. Filming for Midsomer Murders has also taken place both inside and outside the pub.

Little Marlow has featured in the episodes 'Faithful unto Death', 'Tainted Fruit' and 'Sauce for the Goose' in the first, fourth and eight series respectively.

Continue on the A4155 to Bourne End, then take the A4094 to Wooburn Green. The quickest route to the next 'official' pub on the tour in Forty Green is to take the B4440 over the motorway and then the A40 to Beaconsfield.

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MIDSOMER MURDERS CONTINUED

However, the route below offers a short detour to take in a couple of pubs out of the branch area before continuing on from Beaconsfield.

Follow the minor road from the corner of Wooburn Green towards Wooburn Common and Littleworth Common (there are signposts to Odds Farm Park). You will go up a very steep hill on the way.

Nothing to do with Midsomer Murders, but well worth a visit anyway, is the **Royal Standard** at Wooburn Common. This was **Branch Pub of the Year in 2007** and usually has ten real ales.

Continue to Littleworth Common.

You are now out of the safety of the local branch area so be even more aware of strange characters with murderous intent – but be assured you can take refuge in two good pubs.

The **Jolly Woodman** was featured in ‘Shot at Dawn’ in the eleventh series, which was shown on New Year’s Day 2008. The nearby **Blackwood Arms** has also been used for filming although we are unsure which episode. The Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead branch rate the beer at both pubs highly and the **Blackwood Arms** is noted for serving mild.

Head towards Beaconsfield, joining the A355 and crossing the M40 at junction 2.

Being close to Pinewood Studios where studio scenes for Midsomer Murders are shot, many locations in Beaconsfield Old Town have been used for filming. However, these have mainly been shops. The production team need to head elsewhere to find pub locations as there aren’t many pubs left in the town to choose from.

Take Aylesbury End (the B474) out of the Old Town, continuing through the New Town and towards Penn. About half a mile after the railway

bridge there is a turning on the left signposted for the Royal Standard of England in Forty Green. Follow the minor road to the pub.

Fans of the Discworld novels might be interested to know that the books’ author, Terry Pratchett, grew up in Forty Green. On a slightly different historical note, The **Royal Standard of England** is not shy about its claims to be the oldest free house in the country – the pub sign proclaims this as well as a separate sign by the front gate. It is said that the pub originated as a Saxon alehouse and has a long history, including Civil War connections. The pub is an atmospheric, rambling collection of many bars and rooms, all of historic character. It does a good trade in food, especially at weekends, but also has a good selection of beers. Usually around five real ales are available which are predominantly sourced from local breweries, such as **Rebellion** and **Tring**.

Both the pub’s interior and exterior were used for filming – Inspector Barnaby has a meal here. It features in ‘Death in Chorus’ from the ninth series and ‘Blood Wedding’ from the eleventh series – an episode first shown on 6th July this year.

As the **Royal Standard of England** (pictured on page 19) is the last pub on the Midsomer Murders tour, it is appropriate that the pub is said to have a ghost – although with over 200 murders in the series to date, one ghost might be considered a modest total in these parts.

You can return back to High Wycombe by either continuing along the minor road towards Penn and Hazlemere or go back through Forty Green to Beaconsfield.

Both these articles have only featured pubs in the Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe branch area. Several nearby pubs that are outside our branch boundaries have also been used for filming – notably in The Lee, Great and Little Missenden, Amersham, Chesham.

Mike Clarke

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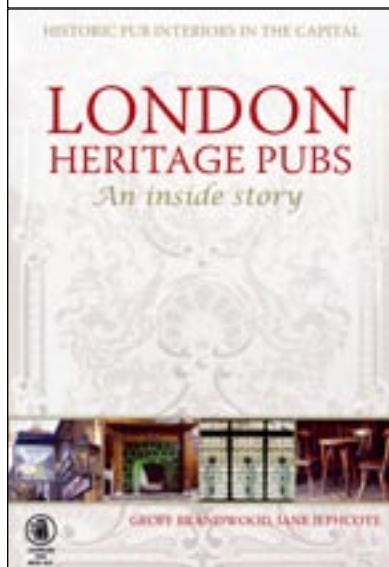
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South Oxfordshire CAMRA’s Pub of the Season for Spring 2008

LONDON'S MOST UNSPOILT PUBS!



CAMRA has launched the definitive guide to London's most unspoilt historic pubs - *London Heritage Pubs - An Inside Story*.

Despite **CAMRA's** recent research showing 57 pubs close every month, *London Heritage Pubs - An Inside Story* features 150 of the oldest, most distinctive, and renowned pubs in the capital that are still thriving today.

To accommodate the far-reaching locations of the public houses, the book is divided into seven sections reflecting Greater London postal districts.

While explaining the historical context and layout of each individual pub, the book also raises issues surrounding the sustainability of the public house, and its changing face in the twenty-first century.

There are also features about the evolution of London pubs, what's distinctive about them, historic brewing in the capital, and London beer styles.

The book is a product of over seven years' research by co-authors Geoff Brandwood and Jane Jephcote.

Geoff Brandwood said, 'With all the bad press surrounding pub closures and the increase on beer tax, we do still have many marvellous, genuine historic pubs in the capital and it's great to see them making something of their heritage and offering value within the community.'

There's been so much drastic change to our traditional pubs in recent decades it's important to preserve what we have left.

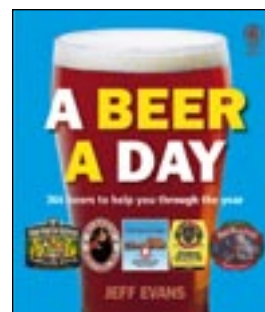
The pubs in this book are all part of our national heritage and a great unique British institution. Enjoy!

It may be a tall order for pub lovers to visit all 150 pubs but the authors have therefore highlighted the following 'Ten pubs not to miss':

- **Princess Louise**, Holborn
- **Cittie of Yorke**, Holborn
- **Red Lion**, St James's
- **Black Friar**, Blackfriars
- **Eastbrook**, Dagenham
- **Forester**, Ealing
- **Salisbury**, Harringay
- **Prince Alfred**, Maida Vale
- **Falcon**, Battersea
- **Olde Cheshire Cheese**, Holborn

London Heritage Pubs - An Inside Story can be bought in all good book shops or ordered online at www.camra.org.uk/shop.

Price £14.99 (£12.99 for **CAMRA** Members).



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To be reviewed in our next issue.

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 Vale Special 4.5% ABV - Bronze Premium Bitter
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 Black Swan Mild 3.9% - Dark smooth rich mild
 Black Beauty Porter 4.3% - Full bodied dark porter
 Wychert 3.9% - Rich malty auburn bitter
 Edgars Golden Ale 4.3% - English golden best bitter
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Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

AUGUST

Tuesday 5th Saturday 9th GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL Earls' Court, London.

Thursday 7th BRANCH SOCIAL AT GBBF

5:30pm onwards GBBF, Earls Court

Thursday 14th WADDESDON/QUAINTON SOCIAL

8:45pm Lion, Waddesdon; 9:15pm Bell, Waddesdon;

10:00pm George and Dragon, Quainton.

Wednesday 20th HIGH WYCOMBE SOCIAL

8:45pm Half Moon; 9:45pm Rose and Crown.

Saturday 23rd PUB BEER FESTIVAL

Noon, Shepherd's Crook, Crowell.

Saturday 30th PUB BEER FESTIVAL

Noon, Stag and Huntsman, Hambleden.

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 6th AUNT SALLY MATCH AND BEER FESTIVAL

Noon Masons Arms, Headington, Oxford

Monday 8th BRANCH MEETING

8:30pm Falcon, Thame

Saturday 13th BRIGHTON CRAWL

Start noon at Lord Nelson, 36 Trafalgar Street, BN1 4ED.

This will be followed by Mitre Tavern, Basketmakers Arms,

Waggon & Horses, Battle of Trafalgar and ending at the

Evening Star. See the Good Beer Guide for full details of the

pubs and the website for any changes.

Wednesday 17th BRANCH SOCIAL

9:00pm Gate, Bryant's Bottom; 10:00pm Harrow, Hughenden Valley.

Tuesday 23rd LONG CRENDON SOCIAL

8:45pm Gurkha Tavern, 9:30pm Eight Bells, Long Crendon

Saturday 27th AYLESBURY ALTERNATIVE CRAWL

Start noon at Queen's Head, then Hobgoblin, Harrow, Bell and who knows what will follow.

OCTOBER

Wednesday 1st NAPHILL/LACEY GREEN SOCIAL

9:00pm Black Lion, Naphill; 10:00pm Black Horse, Lacey Green.

Tuesday 7th BRANCH MEETING

8:30pm George and Dragon, West Wycombe.

Friday 31st/Saturday 1st Nov AYLESBURY BEER FESTIVAL

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 ON BRANCH NEWS AND ACTIVITIES, CHECK THE BRANCH WEBSITE:

www.swansupping.org.uk

Swan Supping

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Copy deadline for next issue, to be published 1st October, is 14th September.

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)

HADDENHAM

The **Green Dragon** has changed hands again following its dropping out of the 'Restaurant' TV series (as the **Welsh Wok**). We understand that it is to shortly reopen as a pub restaurant - more details as they become available.

The **Rising Sun** is having the rock band 'Van Demons' on Saturday 30th August. In late September, they are holding a 'Beer Feast' in the garden, with a number of local beers, plus one or two from **Goldfinch**, their owner's brewery.

The **Rose and Thistle** have just started having a feature film every Saturday night at 8.00 pm, sometimes a double billing; the main film is usually one that has just been on general release.

HANDY CROSS

The **Miller & Carter** bar/restaurant (aka **Blacksmith Arms**) has shut and has been replaced with a **Harvester**. The keg beers available have changed, but they still serve no real ale.

HIGH WYCOMBE

Totteridge **Greene King** tied pub the **Dolphin** is divided into two areas. One side offers the culinary delights of a carvery, while the other side is a local's lounge bar. Real ales from **GK** are **IPA** (3.6), **Abbot Ale** (5.0) and a 'guest beer' from the **Greene King** stable was **Tanners Jack** (4.4), when last visited.

Gordon Road pub, the **Gordon Arms**, again has three **Greene King** brews on hand pump, since their recent change of ownership.

The **Hogshead** closed some time ago 'for refurbishment'. There seems to be no refurbishing going on at all and the pub looks more abandoned than anything else. It makes you wonder if this place will ever again open as a pub, which would be a shame as its location is now excellent - across the road from the new Eden shopping centre and next door to the big new Sainsbury's. In its heyday, when both the downstairs and the upstairs rooms were in use and full, both bars were open for serving drinks and there was anything up to ten real ales available and a real cider too. They often had a couple of the beers on gravity dispense, and all run by a landlord who seemed to know what he was doing. Well, if **Wetherspoons** can take over one abandoned pub in Wycombe and make a success of it, maybe they would like to do it to another one. Here's hoping anyway!

Street-corner London Road pub the

Pheasant paraded **Courage Best** (4.0) and **Fuller's London Pride** (4.1), during June.

The **Turnpike** (previously the **Hungry Horse**), Cressex, is shut and boarded up. It seems unlikely to ever open as a pub again.

The **Wendover Arms** has submitted planning permission to turn from being a pub to being a 39 room hotel. This will mean extensive enlargement and remodelling of the building.

IBSTONE

The **Fox** reopened in May. It has been fully refurbished and has 18 rooms available for letting and has two real ales on handpump.

LACEY GREEN

The annual joint beer festival between the **Whip** and the **Wheel**, Naphill, will take place over the weekend of Friday 3rd to Sunday 5th of October.

MARLOW

Brakspear tied pub the **Chequers** is closed at present and is to be refurbished.

The **Duke of Cambridge** held a successful mini-beer festival during the Summer Solstice weekend. Eight brews on gravity (including three from the **Dorset Piddle** brewery), and three more on at the bar hand pumps. Two live jazz sessions entertained the music enthusiasts amongst the drinkers. They will be holding an Oktoberfest featuring German beer on Friday 3rd of October.

Renovation work is still ongoing at the **George & Dragon** in its transformation into a Premier Inn.

The **Hare & Hounds** is back trading, after weeks of sabbatical as the 'Galley', opening only for the filming of the TV show 'The Restaurant'.

Some good news to report for once, the **Plough** (ex-**Plough Masala**, an Indian restaurant), has re-opened again as a public house. Bravo! The new owners are Mr. & Mrs. Duncan and Shakira Englefield of the **Pink & Lily**, Parslows Hillock, Lacey Green. The **Plough** re-opened its doors on Thursday 3rd July with a free pint for the lucky punters in attendance. The new **Plough** will be run by bar manageress Rosie Newell. Two hand pumps served **Brakspear Bitter** (3.4) and **Vale Gravitas** (4.8) when visited on 13/07/08. Pubs 1 Restaurants 0!

The **R: Home** (aka **Market, Crown, Crown Hotel**), has now closed and is to become a bathroom shop. Last orders were on Saturday 28th June. This large, imposing building, top of the High Street, and probably the

towns most famous pub, has been reduced to selling WCs and bidets. Talk about taking the pee!

PRINCES RISBOROUGH

The **Bird in Hand** will be holding a first annual beer festival over the weekend of August 23rd and 24th (although Mags has held festivals before when in charge at the **Bell**).

The **Black Prince** has become the **Poppyseed**, but it will remain a drinkers' pub with food. In charge is Abdul Munim who intends to add to the **Brakspears Bitter** as custom allows. There are nine bedrooms available and the motto outside is 'Eat, Drink, Relax'!

SPEEN

The **King William IV** was due to return to being a pub after a few years as an Indian restaurant. Full details next issue.

WELL END

Sole Well End pub the **Black Lion** is reportedly 'Lease for Sale'. Let us hope for some good news about this pub soon.

WEST WYCOMBE

The **George and Dragon** will be

holding a beer festival over the August Bank Holiday.

WOOBURN MOOR

The **Falcon** held their summer beer festival during July. **Grindleton Old Fecker** (4.0), **Phoenix Tennis Elbow** (4.5) and **Lady Lemon** (4.3) from the **Tring** brewery were just some of the ales on the beer menu.

WYCOMBE MARSH

The **Derehams Inn** staged their 2nd **Fag & Firkin** beer festival in early July. An amazing twenty-seven real ales were available during the weekend event. **Stonehenge Eye-Opener** (4.5), **Cottage Western Arches** (4.3), **Hart Dishy Debbie** (4.0) and **Buffy's Mucky Duck** (4.5) were a few of the real ale delights imbibed. Plaudits to the landlords at the **Derehams Inn** and to festival bar manager Julian Myrers. Looking forward to next year.

The **High Wycombe RUFC** staged their 2nd beer festival in July. Twenty-six real ales were on stillage and included **B&T Fruit Bat** (4.5), **Great Orme Celtic Dragon** (4.5), **Beartown Ginger Bear** (4.0) and **Cropton Monkman's Slaughter** (6.0). **CAMRA** members were also treated to a free half-pint of beer of their choice on entry.

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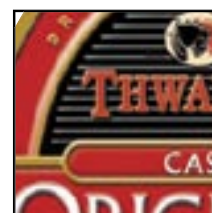
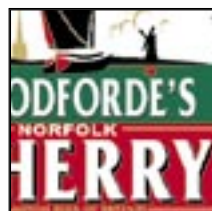
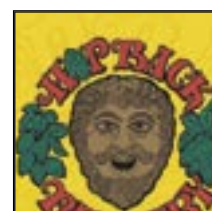
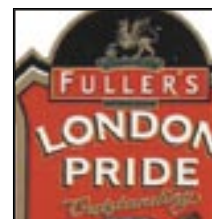
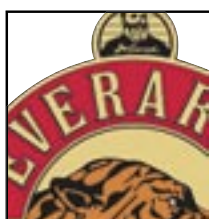
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