



Swan Supping

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

FREE

Issue 65

APR/MAY 2008



BEER TAX HIKE HITS THE WRONG TARGETS!



The Chancellor's decision to increase beer duty by four pence a pint in the recent Budget, together with annual increases of 2% above inflation for the next four years, is totally unjustified.

The increase will lead to at least twenty pence on a pint over the bar, fuelling pub closures and increasing unregulated drinking as more choose to drink at home or on the streets. This is the first time ever that beer tax has increased by four pence - a rise of 13%!

CAMRA recently announced that 57 pubs are lost permanently every month as the price differential between pubs and supermarkets widens. Pubs provide a regulated environment for people to enjoy alcohol socially and responsibly.

Well-run community pubs are the solution to Britain's binge drinking problems. This budget will do nothing to stop binge drinking, but it will lead to pub closures on a huge scale, widen the gap between supermarket and pub prices and encourage smuggling and cross-border shopping. It's a great big nail whacked ruthlessly into the coffin of the British pub.

Beer sales were in decline before the increases were announced and the price is already due to go up because the cost of raw materials has increased due to demand from other parts of the world and bad harvests.

The announcement that beer tax will increase above inflation for the next four years, despite what happens to UK pubs and the beer market is especially worrying. Pubs are defined as local services, yet this tax rise alongside other market pressures will accelerate closures to unprecedented levels. The budget shows a disregard for our national drink and for the 15 million people who enjoy it responsibly.

CAMRA actually called for a cut in beer duty in the Budget to help pubs compete with supermarket prices. **CAMRA** believes that supermarket prices of beer are unlikely to be affected significantly by the tax increase, but pubs as small businesses, will have no choice but to increase prices at the bar.

The tax increase is merely a money raising exercise, will do nothing to curb binge drinking but will hit the poor very hard.

THE WHIP INN

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WHIP INN FOR A PINT!

PINK ROAD, LACEY GREEN, BUCKS HP27 0PG 01844 344060

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

Local News



ASKETT

Work on the refurbishment of the **Three Crowns** appears to have stopped, at least from what can be seen from the outside of the pub.

ASTON ROWANT

The **Lambert Arms** has closed for a massive refurbishment. The building work will keep the hotel closed until November, although it is hoped that work on the bar will be completed earlier to allow the hotel to serve as a pub before that.

AYLESBURY

It is all change again at the **Bell**! The pub is currently closed for further refurbishment and is due to reopen on April 4th. The new people in charge also run the **Bell** in Stoke Mandeville, so as Leslie Phillips might say – Ding Dong!

The **Grapes** is now under the management of Mike Connell who also runs **Weavers**.

The **Harrow** has won the 'Best Drinks Experience' category of the annual Shine Awards which is run by their owners, **Punch Taverns**. More than a 1,000 of the pub company's 8,400 UK

pubs were nominated including 120 nominations in this area.

The pub was praised by the judges as a 'vibrant city outlet with friendly staff, promoting both food, drink and events'. A good opportunity to judge this for yourselves would be during their planned beer festival for the first weekend in May.

The **Hen and Chickens** (it should never have changed its name to **Big Hand Mo's!**) is now the subject of a public inquiry as the powers that be decide what should happen to the site. Why don't they knock it down and turn it into a car park, which seems to be the standard procedure, instead of leaving it as an eyesore?

The **Hop Pole** held a very successful Easter Beer festival this year. There were over 30 real ales on offer from all over the British Isles plus the award winning *Gravitas* from **Vale Brewery**. They plan to hold another Winter Warmer festival later on in the year.

The **Queens Head** has had some beers recently at a very reasonable £1.50 a pint. When last visited these were *Archers Bobs Your Uncle* and *Wychwood Hobgoblin*.

The **Rockwood** has replaced the **Greene King IPA** with **Adnams Bitter** to accompany the **Wadworth 6X**.

The **Ship** has been demolished to make room for a car park as part of the Aylesbury Waterfront building project.

Since the original plans for the project were produced, the future of the **Ship** was in doubt, despite many reassurances to the contrary. See the article on page 16 for some memories of a pub that will be missed and can never be replaced.

The **Square @ Aylesbury** has been taken over by Paul Phillips who used to run the pub in 2005.

He took over on February 13th and is offering **Greene King IPA** on handpump and is hoping to increase to two beers in the near future.

The food available is now traditional pub food instead of Thai, including full English breakfast which is available from 9am (the pub opens at 8.30am).

Perhaps the new landlord might consider getting the pub renamed to a more traditional name such as the **Market Tavern** or the **Green Man** (but not **Butlers** or **Saints Wine Bar**!).

GREAT KIMBLE

A Six Nations themed guest beer was available in the **Swan**, in addition to **St. Austell Tribute** and **Adnam's Bitter**, during some of the recent international rugby matches. The successful fortnightly quiz continues with several pub regulars recently setting the three rounds of questions.

HIGH WYCOMBE

A rotating 50 real ale National beer festival is taking place March 27th to April 14th at **Wetherspoons** pubs around the country. The **Falcon** will be attended on our social there on March 31st (the editor's birthday). Beers include brews from Belgium, Germany, Japan, Poland and the USA. Enjoy!

Sands sole pub the **Hour Glass** has finally reopened as we went to press, under the leadership of Mr. Chris Martin. Further news in the next issue.

LACEY GREEN

The **Whip** will be holding one of their very popular beer festivals over the weekend of Friday 9th to Sunday 10th of May. We will be holding a social

THE THREE HORSESHOES

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NATIONAL PUB OF THE YEAR

The **Old Spot Inn**, Dursley, Gloucestershire has been voted *National Pub of the Year* by **CAMRA**.

The *National Pub of the Year* competition analyses all the criteria that makes a good pub including the quality of the beer, atmosphere, décor, customer service, clientele mix and value for money.

The **Old Spot Inn** is described in the *Good Beer Guide 2008* as 'This 100 year old free house, named after the Gloucestershire Old Spot pig, has been sympathetically restored by its owner, Ric Sainty. The intimate atmosphere is enhanced by log fires and brewery memorabilia. As well as *Uley's Old Ric*, named after the owner, it offers five guest beers, mainly from micro-brewers, served in five separate drinking areas. The wholesome menu is available 12-8pm on week days and 12-3pm at weekends. On the Cotswold Way, this convivial local is a popular watering hole for walkers. The secluded garden has a boules piste.'

Julian Hough, **CAMRA**'s Pubs Director and one of the final judges said, 'The **Old Spot Inn** is a great example of how successful a well-run community pub can be. Steve and Belinda are dedicated to maintaining the local character of the pub within the community and realise that quality real ales are an important factor in offering their local choice at the bar.'



'I would like to congratulate everybody at the Old Spot Inn on being judged Britain's finest pub.'

Steve Herbert, licensee of the **Old Spot Inn** said, 'I am overwhelmed at winning the *National Pub of the Year* award. To be judged the best pub in Britain is a dream come true. Belinda and I would like to thank all the staff for their hard work over the last year, and the locals for their loyalty to the **Old Spot Inn**. Without them this wouldn't be possible.'

Mr Herbert continued, 'Being born and bred in Dursley means a lot to me and to be able to bring this award to this wonderful pub gives me a

great sense of achievement.'

Ric and Ellie Sainty, owners of the **Old Spot Inn**, began the transformation in 1993 when they bought the run-down *Whitbread* pub, then called the **Fox & Hounds** and turned it into a local pub where people from all walks of life could feel at home and enjoy a superb pint in very friendly and convivial surroundings. Ric and Ellie retired in 2001 and Steve and Belinda Herbert took over as licensees and have built on Ric and Ellie's success.

The *National Pub of the Year* award was presented in the run up to Community Pubs Week in February. The aim of this campaign is to encourage more people to visit pubs more regularly at this traditionally quiet time of the year for the pub trade.



The Red Lion
public house and restaurant

Bradenham Village, Bucks HP14 4HF
01494 562212

THE RED LION BRADENHAM

A friendly warm welcome waits for you here in this newly refurbished establishment. The management pride themselves on the provision of high quality home cooked lunches and evening meals.

They offer a good selection of real ales, draught lagers and cider complemented by a wide choice of wines.

Sunday lunches are a speciality with food being served until 4.30pm.

DINNER - JAZZ
on alternate Sundays
Food from 6pm
Music from 7pm
£5 Entrance

BRANCH PUB OF THE YEAR

As *Swan Supping* went to press, the local branch was choosing its *Pub of the Year*. The winner of the local competition then goes forward to a regional selection and regional winners are then eligible for the accolade of national *CAMRA Pub of the Year*.

The winner will be announced on the branch website (www.swansupping.org.uk) and we will organise a presentation of the *Pub of the Year* certificate.

Details of the winner and pictures of the presentation will appear in the next *Swan Supping*.

All four candidates on the shortlist are excellent pubs and are well worth visiting – all hold regular beer festivals and, it goes without saying, serve excellent ale.

They are in alphabetical order:



The **Hop Pole**, Aylesbury – *Vale Brewery's* 10 handpump 'permanent beer festival'



The **Stag and Huntsman**, Hambleden – an unspoilt inn in a historic Chilterns village (now eligible again for voting after its previous win).



The **Unicorn**, Cublington – a great example of a community pub that was rescued from closure by villagers.



The **Whip**, Lacey Green – serving a staggering (no pun intended) range of over 700 guest beers in 2007.

The branch excludes recent winners of the award from consideration. These include: The **Shepherd's Crook**, Crowell; The **Three Horseshoes**, Burroughs Grove; The **Kings Head**, Aylesbury; and the **Royal Standard**, Wooburn Common.

Voting for the *Pub of the Year* is done by active *CAMRA* members in the *Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe Branch*. If you want to help decide the award next year, why not get involved.

If you are not yet a member, a membership form is always available in every issue. If you are a member and not an active one.....!



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MORE CLOSURES!

Beer Museum

Brewing giant **Coors** has announced that the Burton's famous Beer Museum will close at the end of June.

The **Coors** Visitor Centre is costing the company more than £1 million a year to keep open and is suffering from dwindling numbers. The company also cited a steady fall in profits - down to £40 million in the last financial year - and said that the smoking ban and Chancellor Alistair Darling's 'beer-bashing budget' had not helped the firm's financial situation.

The UK beer market is extremely tough for all brewers, not just **Coors**, and the visitor centre costs around £1 million annually, which cannot be sustained.

There are no firm plans for the site, but the company confirmed that historical artefacts may be spread around other **Coors**-owned sites, and that the centre's much-loved Shire horses will be sold.

Areas that will close include the main museum, the **Brewery Tap**, the gift shop and all meeting rooms, the company said. However, the award-winning **White Shield** micro-brewery will remain open on the site.

Artefacts at the museum which belong to **Coors** will be distributed around other company sites - including Alton, in Hampshire, and Tadcaster, in Yorkshire - but may no longer be available for the public to view.

Other items, including artefacts belonging to former Bass owner Interbrew, will be returned, the company said.

The museum was opened in 1977 as the **Bass Museum of Brewing** - but the name was controversially changed in 2003 after **Coors** took over.

Reading Brewery

Scottish & Newcastle have confirmed that they are to close their largest UK brewery, near Reading in Berkshire, with the loss of 362 jobs, before the business is acquired by rivals **Carlsberg** and **Heineken** as we announced in our last issue.

It is the 48th major brewery to close since 1990, according to figures from the **Beer and Pub Association**. The decision will leave **S&N** operating just three UK breweries - **Federation** in Dunston, Gateshead; **John Smith's** in Tadcaster, Yorkshire; and **Royal** in Manchester - as well as a small joint venture site in Edinburgh. By contrast **BBH**, the group's joint venture business in eastern Europe, has expanded to 18 breweries, producing more than 44 million hectolitres.

Courage's Reading brewery was opened in 1978 and when their Anchor Brewery was closed in 1981 all brewing was transferred there. **Courage** was sold to **Elder's IXL** in 1986, becoming part of the **Foster's Brewing Group**, when the parent company, Imperial Tobacco, was acquired by the Hanson Trust.

In 1991 the **Courage** section of **Foster's** merged with all the breweries of **Grand Metropolitan** and its pubs became part of **Inntrepreneur Estates**. **Scottish & Newcastle** purchased **Courage** from **Foster's** in 1995, creating **Scottish Courage** as its brewing arm.

As of January 2007 the rights for the production, marketing and sales of the **Courage** brands have been sold to **Wells & Young's Brewing Company**.

The site of the brewery, which is situated alongside the M4 is likely to fetch over £100 million and will become yet another housing estate in the 'Silicon Glen'.

Tony, Ian & Lynne welcome you to

The Black Horse,

Lacey Green

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

BRIGHTON & BRUSSELS STUDY GROUP DAYS

There were many occasions during my working life when I had to attend training courses, workshops and study group days. They were usually fairly intense affairs, and many seemed utterly pointless. The pre-course reading notes were often boring. The residential courses were the worst, the tedium only relieved by an escape to the bar, rarely to find real ale but occasionally some interesting bottled beers.

My perspective on life has changed since retirement. I have been able to devote so much more time to *real* study. The extended courses I have been on have almost seemed like *festivals* of learning, and I enjoy my regular attendances at convivial public workshops all over the UK. Even the training manual is interesting, its title **Good Beer Guide** being printed on the cover in large, friendly letters, one of the most remarkable of all books to come out of the great publishing corporation of **CAMRA** minor.

I have become conscious of late, however, of a serious gap in my knowledge: the appreciation of Belgian beers. I jumped at the chance therefore when my friend, *le complète imbibier*, Dick Moore offered a one-day induction course in Brussels. Two other willing students, Mike Clemence and Bruce Seymour also immediately signed up.



one of the trainers masquerading as one of the trainees checking up on us hopefuls, or was she just there for a piss-up? It was difficult to be sure. Clearly we had to be on guard. Teamwork was essential.

The intensive day started at the **Lord Nelson** where a good selection of **Harveys** beers were tested, the *Sussex XX Mild Ale* (3%), *Hadlow Bitter* (3.5%) were good but the *Kiss* (4.8%) scored heavily. The **Harveys Old** (4.3%) at the **Mitre Tavern** was in great nick. At the **Basketmakers Arms**, I turned my attention to **Fuller's Old Winter Ale** (4.8%) – I felt it was important to concentrate on the stronger beers in case I was marked down as a doubtful for the Belgian trip. Nigel then bowled a fast ball – he claimed that he was off to the **Prestonville Arms** and would join us later – were we meant to follow him or stay on course? Dick kept ominously quiet (or was he just *trappiste*?) and Kathy was inscrutable. I suspected a trick but it was becoming just a little difficult to stay focused, being in the heart of **Harveys** territory as we were, so I followed the others to the **Waggon & Horses** and opted for a pint of their *Sussex Best Bitter* (4.0%). I also succumbed to a sneaky cask-strength single malt whisky from their staggering selection to bolster my courage for the last, and most challenging, task.

I approached the **Evening Star** with some trepidation. This is a star pub indeed. Their own **Dark Star** beers are superb – the golden *Hophead* (3.8%) refreshing and flavoursome, the *Pale Ale* (4.5%) had real bite. The **Eastwood & Sanders (Elland) Shot in the Dark** (9.3%) was... well... dark, dark, dark. The time had come to try one of their many bottled Belgian beers. Nigel was waiting for us. Somewhat diffidently, he offered a bottle of **Cantillon Gueuze** (5.0%) – it assails the real ale tutored nose, at first, and the taste can be daunting for some; but more of that later...so far as I can recall we never got to the **Battle of Trafalgar** or the **Prestonville Arms** for that matter....



There was a catch though. We had to take part in a tough pre-course qualifier, which involved a tour of **GBG** pubs of Brighton, ending up with a tasting of selected Belgian beers under the watchful eye of both Dick and two other experts, Nigel North and Dave Thornhill, specially drafted in for the occasion to sort the wheat from the barley.

We were also joined by Kathy Mulraney (she, of the 'spray-on jeans', as a certain member of our party wistfully put it); was she, a local teacher,



OFF TO BELGIUM



Imagine our relief when a few days later Dick presented Mike, Bruce and me with Eurostar tickets for our introduction to the Belgian beer experience on 26 February. We had qualified! A special return fare, and a discounted 'Euro add-on' ticket for the early morning train to St. Pancras, made it very affordable.

Mandatory reading as preparation for the day was the *Good Beer Guide*

Belgium, by Tim Webb, another publication from planet *CAMRA*. Read and learn. On *Oude Gueuze*, Webb writes: 'Your first encounter can be astonishingly awful. It may make you want to send it back immediately, but then persuades you to hold on for just another mouthful. Having soldiered through the bottle and awarded yourself a gold rosette for adding painfully to your knowledge of brewing history, it should make you vow never to try it again. Then order another just in case you got it wrong...and after your third you will never think about beer in the same way again.' Spot on.



A short train ride from the Eurostar terminal at Bruxelles Midi to Centraal, and a bracing walk in the cold wind, took us to our first café, the *Poechenellekelder*, adorned with an extraordinary range of puppets



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SUDDEN DEATH



(Continued from page 7)

and dummies all over the walls and ceiling, and even sitting, I think, in some of the chairs.

The sign outside permanently wishes the world 'Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year' – actually you could easily drink your way round from Christmas Eve to the New Year without noticing the days go by, such is the superb selection of beers on the menu. We started our training gently with *Verhaeghe Duchesse de Bourgogne* (6.2%) – nectar. The time allocated was basically only an afternoon, so we hurried on to the brewery café *Brasseurs de la Grand'Place* – the brewery coppers can be seen through the front window,

Dick and Mike each ordered a *plaquette* of three small taster glasses. It was a little difficult to relate the beers served to the menu or to the listing in the *GBG Belgium*. A 'tripel' included in each sample tray was declared *magnifique* by

Mike (it's remarkable how Gallic he became as the day progressed). Bruce and I had an *Ambrée normale* (I thought it was a bit like the old *Newcastle Amber Ale*). Braving the rain we pressed on to the *Bécasse* for a spot of lunch - it's a small café with a panelled interior, which reminded me of some of the little restaurants around the City of London twenty years ago. We washed our light lunch down with a very satisfying house *Lambic Doux* (5.0%) served from an earthenware jug.

Next on the curriculum was the delightful *Toone* café. Its old farmhouse kitchen feel and a puppet theatre imbued the place with great character and atmosphere. It was there that we all had the popular, almost obligatory for the 'beer tourist', *au fût* (draught) *Bosteels Pauwel Kwak* (8%) served in the distinctive 'stirrup cup' round-bottomed glass in a wooden stand.

It was a pity to leave *Toone* after just one beer each, but the training had to be rigorous, time was slipping by, and delirium was just around the corner. The *Delirium* beer café stocks over 2000 beers. It was almost impossible to make a reasoned choice so with true team spirit we all went for the draught *Huyghe Delirium Nocturnum* (9.3%), a chocolatey and smooth, triple fermentation ale. Our mentor, Dick, now had to make a difficult decision. We had to drop some cafés from the list as time was short. We opted for the *A la Mort Subite* as it was more on the way back to the station, it's a sort of restaurant at the end of the universe - bright lights, mirrors and high ceiling, a select list of beers and a slightly sour waitress, not unlike their superb *Gueuze sur Lie* (6.0%). After that I felt as spontaneously fermented as the beer.

We made a quick dash to the amazing *De Bier Tempel*, to stuff our bags with booty to take back to Blighty (Dick insisted on setting homework you see). We made it to Bruxelles Midi with a quarter of an hour to spare before latest check-in. What better way to fill the time than to nip into the nearest bar, where a very acceptable



Westmalle Tripel (9.5%) slipped down, albeit rather too quickly to savour. It's no wonder the Trappists take a vow of silence, they must be rat-arsed every day.

We rushed over to the check-in only to find, once 'rail-side', that the Eurostar to London had been delayed by fifty minutes – what a waste of drinking time. Dick and I made up for it though on return to Aylesbury, with a quick pint in *The Kings Head*.

It had been a long day, but immensely educational. I have already booked another visit in the hope of attaining my second-level qualification.

Giles du Boulay

Thanks to Mike Clemence for the super pictures.



Bucks bucks the trend

Fleurets prides itself in actually selling pubs and not just listing them which gives us an enormous sense of achievement and most importantly satisfaction of delivering the desired result for our clients i.e. a sale.

The other benefit of course is with every sale that completes, it provides us with strong data which can be later analysed to provide better advice to our new clients to ensure they get the best results from the market. In 2007, the London Sales Team sold approximately 100 properties and we know from analysing this data that the average sale price for leasehold properties was 24% of turnover. Analysis of net profits is far more difficult and less accurate as licensees legitimately have their accountants minimise the bottom line net profits. As this figure is taxable income.

Buckinghamshire licensed leasehold properties however sold for approximately 28% of turnover which although is slightly down from the previous year (34%), is still higher than the average multiple of turnover for licensed properties in the London & Home Counties region.

*If you would like further information on sale prices, then please download a copy of our Survey of Prices 2007 from our website www.fleurets.com. If you are looking at buying or selling in the Buckinghamshire area, please contact **Cameron Campbell** on 020 7280 4700.*

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 London Ref: LS-815153/C

A BUSY SOCIAL LIFE

February and March are busy times in the local branch social diary with several important activities coming thick and fast. Here are some highlights from the past couple of months.

At the start of February we held our Annual General Meeting at the **Kings Head** in Aylesbury. We were given use of the historic Gatehouse Chamber, which dates from the 15th century, and was used in the 17th century for Aylesbury's Assize Courts. The historic fireplace is said to have graffiti inscribed on it by soldiers from the English Civil War. There is no truth to the rumour that historians in the future are going to have to puzzle over a new inscription of 'down with keg beer'.

With excellent Chiltern beers available in the Farmer's Bar downstairs to lubricate proceedings, the AGM proceeded very smoothly. The **Kings Head** provided some nibbles in the bar later to round things off nicely.

With selection of pubs for the 2009 edition of the **Good Beer Guide** looming, we organised a few more socials than usual in February to ensure we got out and about across the branch and see some possible candidates for the guide. Only a few years ago Long Crendon could be said to have five pubs but two of these have now effectively been converted to restaurants. Our Long Crendon social started on a sad note as one of the three remaining pubs in the village, the **Chandos**, was found to be dark and closed – a state of affairs that has persisted for a



few months.

Fortunately we received a warm welcome and good beer at the two remaining pubs. The **Churchill Arms**, like many pubs nowadays, offers Thai food within a traditional pub setting.

Further down the road, the **Eight Bells** offered some very interesting and unusual real ales, including (though I may be mistaken) a beer from the **Abbeydale Brewery** in Yorkshire. The pub also shows its commitment to real ale by organising beer festivals throughout the year.

The Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe branch covers a large geographical area and we try to get to all the extremities. We ventured into our north-east corner on a social in mid-February. The **Boot** in Soulbury can now be reached a little more quickly from the new A4146 Linslade by-pass, which has cut the journey time from Aylesbury to Milton Keynes.

Treasurer Alan Sheppard deserves great credit for making the trip up from Marlow up to the environs of Concrete Cow city to sample the **Boot's** hospitality. After the **Boot** we visited Stewkley – a village where the two pubs are at opposite ends of a long high street. We enjoyed some of the **Swan's** good beer at the northern end.

To mark Community Pubs Week we held a weekend joint social with the mid-Chilterns branch in Marsworth, on the Grand Union Canal. This

The George and Dragon Hotel

Set in the heart of historic West Wycombe village



Now open all day Saturday and Sunday for food and drinks

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MORE SOCIALS

is actually close to Aylesbury but in 'their territory'. The social started at the **Red Lion**, which boasts a bar billiards table, and then continued at the **Angler's Retreat**.

The mid-Chilterns connection continued on the 1st March with a joint visit to the aptly named **Concrete Cow Brewery** in Milton Keynes – which is now much more accessible by public transport using the Line 100 bus that goes up the aforementioned by-pass. An excellent time was had by all with plenty of ale sampled at the brewery (pictured above) and later in the **Victoria** pub nearby.

The day before the brewery visit, we visited Haddenham, a village which is fortunate to still have five pubs and, perhaps not coincidentally, hosts an increasing number of beer festivals throughout the year. Joined by the Haddenham real ale diehards, we crawled to all five pubs, starting at the **Green Dragon** by the village green. We then visited the **Red Lion** and the **Rose and Thistle**, where we were given a very hospitable welcome by the landlord – as well as some good beer. Sampling of good beer continued at the **Kings Head** and the **Rising Sun**. The inhabitants of Haddenham are fortunate to have five real ale pubs to choose from. They should note the example of villages not too far away and use them or lose them.

Speaking of warm welcomes, we are again hugely indebted to the **Three Horseshoes** at Burroughs Grove for their exceptionally generous hospitality for our March branch meeting. Both the pub and the nearby **Rebellion Brewery** should be congratulated on the excellent range of five real ales that were available on the night, including their superb *Mild*.

A full list of future socials is given on page 22 and anyone who enjoys real ale is welcome to join us at any of them.

Mike Clarke

BEER FROM M&S

Here is a close-up look at *Marks and Spencer Bottle Conditioned Buckinghamshire Ale*, brewed, as mentioned previously in *Swan Supping*, by our local **Vale Brewery** in Brill.

Marks and Spencer selected only four styles of ale for their bottle conditioned range: Norfolk, brewed by **Woodforde's**; Yorkshire, from **Cropton Brewery**; Scottish, from **Black Isle**; and, of course, Buckinghamshire.

The beer is currently available locally even in the smaller M&S Simply Food outlets, as well as the larger stores.

For the benefit of its well-heeled, wine-drinking customers the back label of the bottle compares the secondary fermentation process of bottle-conditioned ales to that of Champagne (the only difference being that the sediment is removed from Champagne before final sale).

Bearing in mind M&S's famous advertising, which promotes its commitment to quality foods, we can say that this is not just real ale in a bottle, it's **Vale** and M&S real ale in bottle.



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LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

TRING BREWERY



Until recently it has only been available on draught to local pubs and friends over Christmas and New Year.

By special appointment to the Queen's Royal Lancers, the brewery now offers *Death or Glory* ale in 330ml bottles. The Queen's Royal Lancers was formed in 1993 by the amalgamation of the 16th/5th and 17th/21st Lancers and the regiment's Colonel-in-Chief is Her Majesty the Queen.

The beer is a dark aromatic, estery strong ale brewed using the finest Maris Otter malt and premium aroma hops. Once fermented it undergoes a prolonged storage allowing a complexity of flavours to mature and it is extremely drinkable for its strength. It is currently packaged in cases of twelve and is available in the brewery's recently opened shop which also provides beer, merchandise, mustards and pickles etc. to the public.

Chiltern Brewery

Chiltern Brewery featured in a leading article in the Bucks Business Herald in February, in which George Jenkinson said that 'Real Ale is the new wine, and the old wine for that matter. We are rediscovering the fact that our national menu goes with our national drink.'

It is reported that the family-owned brewery is upgrading capacity to help meet a new contract with the National Trust to supply their beer at a national level.

On Thursday 13th March, *Chiltern's* seasonal beer, *Nut Brown Mild*, was launched for 2008 at the **Kings Head** in Aylesbury. It should be available until the end of May. The beer is described as luxuriously smooth, dark and slightly sweet mild with a beautifully balanced hop aroma, just right to 'Make May a Mild Month'!



Death or Glory takes its name from the regimental motto of the Queen's Royal Lancers.

It has traditionally been brewed by *Tring Brewery* every year on October 25th to commemorate the anniversary of the Charge of the Light Brigade, when in 1854 the 17th Lancers made their fateful charge into the Valley of Death.



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MORE LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

Loddon Brewery

A beer brewed by the **Loddon Brewery** will be the only regional beer available when the new Terminal 5 building opens at Heathrow Airport. The beer which has been brewed exclusively for the two **JD Wetherspoons** bars in the terminal is called *Crown Rivers Ale* because during the construction of the terminal, two rivers had to be diverted. It is a 3.9% session beer with the unique hoppy taste that has made **Loddon** so popular. It has already been delivered in time for the Terminal's opening on the 27th March.

Loddon Brewery owners Chris and Vanessa Hearn said, 'We are extremely proud and excited to have our beer in the new terminal and hope it makes any waiting time that little bit more enjoyable'.

Vale Brewery

A beer brewed by the Brill based **Vale Brewery** has won a major national brewing award. On the 8th March in York, **SIBA (The Society of Independent Brewers Association)** announced the national winners for the beers of the year and *Gravitas*, a pale but strong bitter, was announced as the best Premium Bitter.

Ian Mackey, General Manager of **Vale Brewery**, pictured receiving the award (he is in the centre, to the right is Keith Bott Chairman of **SIBA** and owner of **Titanic Brewery**, and on the left is Nigel Gibbons from the sponsors Muntions), commented, 'To be judged by our own peers is a superb accolade, *Gravitas* was first created in August 2007, and to win an award after only seven months is a fantastic tribute to our dedicated and innovative brewery team.'

Gravitas is full of hop flavours with additional hops added near the end of the brew to give a fragrant and heavy hop aroma. At 4.8% it is a



strong premium bitter, but a really refreshing drink.

'This is a real boost to all the **Vale** staff, but also should provide a springboard for further growth and increase employment prospects in Brill,' added Mackey. 'We now need more local publicans to take our beers. As well as supporting local companies, there is an environmental benefit. Buying beer from **Vale Brewery** in Brill, rather than the national brewers reduces the miles your pint has had to travel!'

Old Luxters

A major story will break at the end of March when it looks like the sale of Old Luxters brewery, which we featured on the cover of **Swan Supping** recently (the October/November issue 62), will take place. Full details will appear in our next issue.

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CLIMATE KEGTASTROPHE

Climate change is potentially one of the greatest issues to face mankind. There is incontrovertible evidence that carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere are rising rapidly and most governments have instituted action based on the theory that this rapid increase is due to human activity.

Most environmental protesters have focused on industries such as aviation and transport in their efforts to urge a reduction in man-made carbon emissions. However, recent research has identified a much more obviously wasteful source of carbon emissions – and one which could easily be eliminated by a small change in consumer behaviour. This is the artificial addition of carbon dioxide to drinks – notably keg beer and lager.

Most consumers of keg beers are probably unaware that the product is artificially carbonated. This is done after fermentation, when a brewer will force carbon dioxide under pressure into a cask to artificially increase the concentration of the gas in the beer. Keg beer dispense systems in pubs also use pressurised gas, usually carbon dioxide, to eject the beer from the keg and into the beer glass. (Some beers served with a 'creamy' head, such as *Guinness*, often use a combination of nitrogen and carbon dioxide.)

Dr Ella Mira Check of Milton Keynes University explained the science behind artificial carbon dioxide production. 'There are a number of ways that carbon dioxide is manufactured but the majority involve the unlocking of carbon deposits that have lain inert for millions of years. Burning fossil fuels is one well-known method but chemical companies also capture the gas from pouring strong acid over carboniferous rocks, such as chalk and limestone. This directly increases the level of the gas in the atmosphere.'

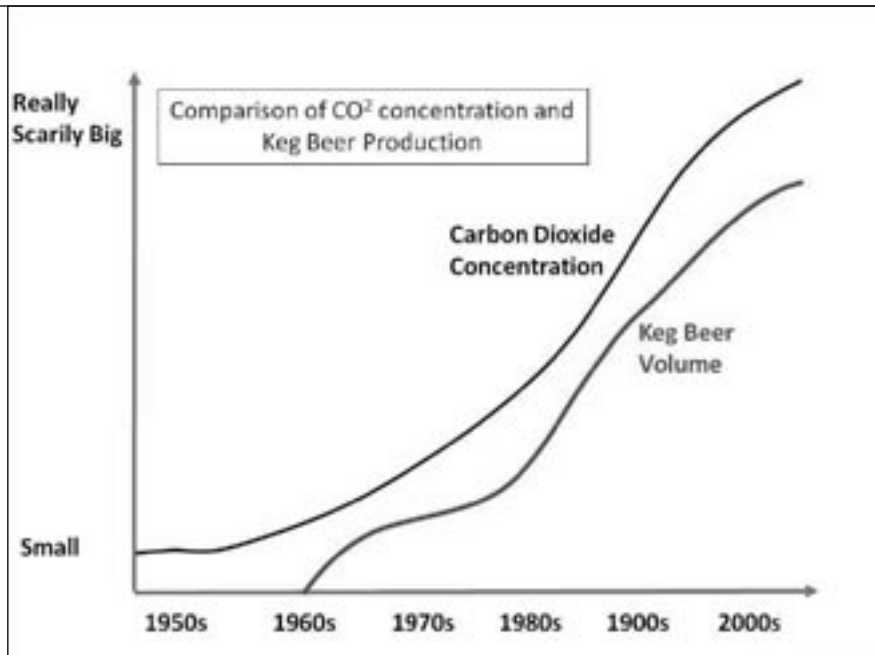
There is good news, however, for discerning beer drinkers. Traditionally brewed drinks, such as real ale, also contain carbon dioxide but its presence within the drink is largely carbon neutral. Dr Check says 'Fermentation creates carbon dioxide but the carbon comes from natural sugars. These come from crops, such as barley or grapes, which absorb their carbon from the atmosphere as part of the natural growing cycle. Only carbon that was in the atmosphere previously is released back during the production and consumption of such traditional drinks.'

'Real ale is a natural product with no gizmos or adjuncts used to adulterate the product after it has left the brewery. So there are no such ethical issues at all,' she adds.

So much for the theory, what about the actual effect of keg beer on global warming? Maria Heck Cell of action group Carbon Reduction Action Protest says this is incontrovertible. 'Anyone looking at this graph can see how carbon emissions started to accelerate when keg beer was introduced. It's obvious that this unnatural beer spells disaster for us all unless we act now.'

The climate campaigners are outraged about the morality of artificially adding a greenhouse gas into drinks. Ms Cell said 'The use of artificial carbonation should be outlawed immediately by the United Nations. How can it be permitted to industrially produce these vast quantities of a greenhouse gas which have no other use than to give the illusion of fizziness to bland and sterile products? It's immoral and we call for a campaign of civil disobedience against these drinks and their grossly irresponsible drinkers – most of whom are, of course, men.'

Of course, not just keg beer in the pub but canned carbonated drinks of all sorts are implicated in this artificial carbon scandal. Ms Cell says 'It's no surprise to see the evil hand of big business – the breweries and



the purveyors of sweet, sugary fizzy drinks – behind this desecration of the planet.'

There are rumours of some pre-emptive action being taken by the large American fizzy drink companies. Bearing in mind the need to remove carbon from the upper atmosphere, one large corporation is planning to build a 10,000m high 'reverse chimney' near one of its largest bottling plants. This will suck carbon dioxide created by aircraft emissions at high levels and use it to carbonate its products – theoretically making the process carbon neutral.

Governments are already taking action against non-regulated use of carbonation equipment. For example, in Belgium, the new offence of unauthorised possession of a soda siphon carries a maximum penalty of death.

Of particular concern to the climate protesters is the consumption of such drinks in aircraft. Dr Check suggests that a keg beer consumed at 35,000 feet would cause twenty times more damage to the higher reaches of the atmosphere than that consumed at sea level. In response to these concerns, it is said that a leading international airline will ban carbonated beer and instead install a number of real ale handpumps in its new A380 superjumbos – recreating a traditional English pub in the air (although the most buxom barmaids will be reserved for the First Class lounge bar).

In the case of beer drinkers, drastic action may be required at the point where the artificial carbon dioxide escapes into the atmosphere – in the pub. Dr Check explains 'The extra gassiness of the carbonated beer usually enters the drinker's body and then needs a means of escape – usually through either end of the digestive tract. If we can trap these human emissions then we may have a solution to the problem. Drinkers of these beers may be required to use special devices, similar to oxygen masks, to trap the eructation or to wear special gas trapping undergarments. The trapped carbon dioxide can then be recycled into the pub's drinks dispensing system. We don't think they'd notice the difference.'

Ms Cell has a simpler solution – ban them. She says 'Twenty years ago it was unthinkable that we would have clean air in pubs. In another twenty years it will be similarly unthinkable that we allowed the planet to be destroyed for the sake of livening up bland beer. Our direct action campaign starts on 1st April. Watch out lager drinkers.'

Charlie Mackle

BUDGET CELEBRATIONS??

Jo King, the senior ministerial advisor to the Secretary of State for Health met her partner, Ivor Leach, a ministerial advisor to the Treasury for a celebratory drink in a House of Commons bar after the budget.

‘Jo darling, that went so well, the Chancellor was so pleased with your campaign,’ said Ivor, planting three French style kisses on his partner’s cheeks. ‘I insist on buying you a very large Pinot Grigio.’

‘Good move, before it goes up a whole 14p a bottle!’ replied Jo. ‘You know I think that extra duty is really going to break the bank for us. Ha,’ she added sarcastically.

‘Surely not, Jo. You’re in line for a rather big bonus after all that hard work. A nation of hazardous middle-class binge-drinkers! A stroke of genius! You couldn’t open a paper or turn on the TV without hearing about indulging in the evils of booze. You star,’ added Ivor. ‘Especially as the scientific basis for what you were saying was a load of old...’

‘Don’t you mean a selective highlighting of the most salient facts, Ivor?’ Jo interrupted with a glare.

‘Who cares anyway? We softened up the media and presented a whacking great tax increase as concern for the health of the nation. I could give you a huge kiss’

‘Darling, no, that’s so unhygienic.’ They both giggle uncontrollably.

An overweight, middle-aged man, holding a glass of bitter, spotted the two canoodling advisors.

‘Oh no. It’s that dreadful Arthur Salt,’ said Jo.

Arthur Salt walked over to the two unsteadily. ‘So, spin doctors, what do I say to my constituents about my party putting 4p on their pints?’ he asked in a broad northern accent.

‘Arthur, it’s simple. You tell them that if they remain under their weekly limit of 21 units then it should cost them no more than 40p. A fraction of the price of a cappuccino,’ said Jo.

‘You lot and your cappuccinos. We all know that with the VAT, the price of raw materials going up, utility bills through the roof, that your 4p is going to be more like an extra 20p a pint,’ said Arthur.

‘Well, so what, Arthur?’ said Ivor. ‘It might stop your constituents drinking so much and being a burden on the NHS.’

‘It’s the culture of the working man to go to the pub after work and share a few pints with his mates...’

‘Arthur, do we really want to encourage such self-abuse? I expect these unreconstructed, working men also used to kill themselves and others with cigarette smoke before we put a stop to that,’ said Jo.

‘They’re still smoking but they’re doing it at home. The pubs were struggling even before you decided to tax them out of existence.’

‘Arthur, don’t exaggerate. There are any number of bars on Upper Street in Islington where you can get a designer beer and a healthy bite to eat. Things are booming. You’re off message. Glass half full and all that,’ said Ivor.

‘My constituents’ glasses will be empty because they can’t afford to go out and buy the beer and then, as night follows day, they’ll have no pub to drink it in. They’ll all be buying crateloads of cheap lager from the supermarket at 50p a pint. Is that going to improve their health?’ asked Arthur, his face reddening.

‘Arthur, for a man of your experience, you are terribly naïve. The supermarkets are not only so big they are virtually laws to themselves but they have very rich chairmen who might see their way to donating to party funds for the next election,’ explained Ivor. ‘Far more than your average pub landlord...’

‘Who’s probably a Tory anyway!’ sniggered Jo.

‘And as if we’re actually really bothered about health and anti-social behaviour!’ sneered Ivor, pushing his spectacles further up his nose. ‘Though, of course, we recognise the great contribution made to the public debate by my health department colleague here.’

‘I’m not wet behind the ears. I’ve campaigned in more elections than you’ve been in trendy wine bars. People aren’t as daft as you think. They know this is just a roundabout way of getting money out of their pockets but we’ll never be forgiven if we destroy the British pub...’

‘Arthur. So what? Who’s going to miss smoky dives full of sexist men propping up the bar, eating ghastly pies then probably going home to commit domestic violence on their long-suffering wives. These people don’t know what’s good for them but we’ll sort that out,’ said Jo.

‘And you think they’ll vote for that?’ asked Arthur.

‘Arthur, who the hell else will your northern, working class demographic vote for? Cameron and his bunch of Eton toffs?’ asked Ivor?

‘You won’t have seen *them* ferret racing in the Dog and Duck recently!’ added Jo.

‘Enjoy your expensive wine you Champagne socialists, you’re the only ones who are going to be able to afford to go out and drink it,’ said Arthur, walking away.

‘Horrible man,’ said Jo. ‘Does he really think the Labour party should be associated with working class men, drinking their awful warm real ale in some grotty industrial town? That’s so twentieth century.’ She clasped her bony hands round her empty wine glass. ‘Another large Pinot Grigio please, Marisa.’

Kim Leach Clear



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THE PASSING OF THE SHIP

On 11 December 2007, David Holdaway passed away after suffering with an illness for the previous 10 years.

He was well known for being the landlord of the **Ship**, Aylesbury from 1985 to 2003.

During that time the **Ship** was known for its good food, live music, charity events and fancy dress parties. There was never a dull moment and David and his wife, Angela, worked hard to maintain the friendly happy atmosphere that prevailed.

David was also known for his keen love of flowers and before he became ill one could often see him in the **Ship** beer garden, lovingly tending to his flowers. Wo betide anyone who dared to pick or damage them! Many a passerby would stop to chat to him and ask him questions about the different species of plants. He even won awards for his wonderful displays.

Once David became ill and unable to carry out the duties of a landlord, Angela took over the running of the pub, helped by her two children, Ben and Lucy in the beginning and then later, by a very good friend, Andy Park.

Now that the **Ship** has been raised to the ground, many will reflect upon the happy times that young and old spent supping there. It will be sorely missed. It was a special place.

Angela Holdaway



The **Ship**. I think I once called the regulars an eclectic bunch and there were probably times that we deserved the title. It was the pub where everyone knew your name and didn't care what you did for a living or what you earned. You were a regular and that was all that mattered.

Memories? Ken sitting on his usual stool in the corner playing chess against all comers and winning more often than not. Aussie Ben teaching my wife to surf on a bar room table. Ken lending me his bike to cycle round the car park as I'd never ridden one before and only had one afternoon to learn. Postman Matt who could get you

any tune ever recorded within 24 hours. Going in one Saturday for a quiet couple of pints to find the pub was home to 100 Civil War soldiers, camp followers and children and spending a pleasant afternoon getting drunk and learning how to repel a cavalry charge with an eight foot pike.

Dave and Angie Holdaway as landlord and landlady were two of the best publicans and nicest people it has been my pleasure to meet. Who else but Dave could get a group of respected landlords and landladies from Aylesbury so drunk that they ran naked from the **Ship** to the centre of the dual carriageway and back. Yes it happened and yes they are still serving pints in Aylesbury.



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DEMOLISHING THE IRREPLACEABLE

Big Mark coming into the pub one evening and noticing a *Caffrey's* promotion '10 Pints and get a free sweatshirt' so he drank 10 pints. In 55 Minutes dead. Tom Waddham having his beard shaved for charity



old-fashioned boozer. Barbeques, bouncy castles, fat suit boxing, live bands and skinny dipping in the canal, the **Ship** saw them all, but alas no more.

Keith Vance



and then touring the gyratory in a popemobile reading from the *Good Beer Guide* rather than a bible. Seeing Irvine Welsh the author sitting at the bar with Chris Needs chatting about music and life.

Some people thought the **Ship** was an unfriendly pub, but when 'Beano' Dave came in shivering and wet because his boat was leaking he was found food, alcohol and accommodation.

In latter years it may have gone down hill and the beer may have been variable but it never pretended to be anything than what it was, a good

THE WHEEL

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ALTBIER IN DÜSSELDORF

In recent years I have visited Germany most Decembers to enjoy the Christmas markets, practise my German and, of course, to sample German beer.

Until this year, my emphasis had been on Southern Germany – where most of the good beer comes from, including Bamberg, die Bierhauptstadt (capital) of Germany where I have more than once sampled the *Rauchbier* at the famous **Schlenkerla** pub. This year, however, on the recommendation of an English friend of mine who lives in Zurich, but whose family originated in Düsseldorf, I decided to try that city, famous for its *Altbier* (literally old beer).

So off I headed on the 17th December 2007 to Düsseldorf's Altstadt – described by the tourist office as 'the longest bar in Europe' because of the volume and density of bars in the area.

I sampled the *Altbiers* of all four small local breweries, as well as the larger **Frankenheim** brewer. I didn't manage to try the biggest brewer of *Alt* in the world, **Diebels**. See the table below for details of all six breweries and their *Alt*.



The logo on the front of the pub makes interesting reading: Iss was gar ist, trink was klar ist, sag was wahr ist (Eat what's cooked/done, drink what's clear, say what's true). Eminent good sense I would suggest!



Brewery	Alt Beer	Outlet (* in the Altstadt)	2006 volumes
Hausbrauerei zum Schlüssel	Original Schlüssel Alt (5%)	Hausbrauerei zum Schlüssel*	17,000hl
Brauerei Ferdinand Schumacher	Schumacher Alt (4.6%)	1. Goldener Kessel* 2. Alter Bahnhof (in the suburbs)	40,000hl
Uerige Obergärige Hausbrauerei	Ueriges Alt (4.5%)	Uerige*	20,000hl
Brauerei im Fischen	Fischen Alt (4.5%)	Fischen*	15,000hl
Privatbrauerei Frankenheim	Frankenheim Alt (4.8%)	Im Weissen Kiren*	500,000hl
Diebels	Diebels Premium Altbier (4.8%)	Diebels Fasskeller*	1,500,000hl

The first *Alt* I sampled was *Original Schlüssel* at its Altstadt outlet (both beer and pub pictured in the article). This, slightly stronger *Alt* was my favourite by a short head.

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Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm
Saturday 9.30am to 11.30am



Beer	ABV	Polypin	Minipin	Bottles
Vale Best Bitter	3.7%	£48.50	£25.75	
Wychert Ale	3.9%	£49.50	£26.00	500ml
Black Swan Dark Mild	3.9%	£49.50	£26.00	500ml
Vale VPA	4.2%	£51.00	£26.50	
Edgar's Golden Ale	4.3%	£51.50	£27.00	500ml
Black Beauty Porter	4.3%	£52.50	£27.50	500ml
Vale Special	4.5%	£53.00	£27.75	
Grumpling Premium	4.6%	£53.50	£28.00	500ml
Gravitas	4.8%	£54.50	£28.50	500ml

Firkins are available, either bright or with sediment.

NOCH EIN BIER!



My second *Alt*, *Schumachers*, was sampled at **Goldener Kessel**, almost directly opposite **zum Schlüssel**. The beer is to the left of the meal pictured and the brewery advert is shown on the previous page.

The customers in the advertisement are either showing their enthusiasm for the *Alt* or the effects of too much of it! The waiter with his tray of foaming glasses of ale is typical of the pubs I visited where before I could say 'noch ein Bier bitte' a waiter was offering me a freshly filled glass.

In the **Goldener Kessel** the *Altbier* was an ideal accompaniment to one of my favourite traditional German meals - Schweinshaxe (pictured below) - crispy-roasted (usually rotisserie) pork knuckles.

Next, I visited the **Alter Bahnhof** (Old Station), which is located 4 km from the city centre at Oberkassel. This Brauhaus ceased brewing in 2003 but has now re-opened and is another outlet for *Schumacher Alt* and other beers.



It is a pleasant pub and restaurant serving traditional German fare. An item of its old brewing equipment is located in the bar next to 'Santa Claus.'



My final destination was **Im Weissen Bären** (white bear) just down the road in Bolkerstrasse from the Hausbrauerei zum Schlüssel and Goldener Kessel. Somewhat different from the other quiet pubs visited in the Altstadt – more akin to a Karaoke bar. It was quite noisy but enjoyable. The *Frankenheim Alt* was quite pleasant, as was the waitress behind the bar. Not the one pictured below, hanging over the bar though.



I now have some months to decide where next to sample further German ales.

Peter Hoade

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The Loddon Brewery Ltd, Dunsmen Green Farm, Church Lane, Dunsmen, Oxfordshire RG4 9QD

BEER FESTIVALS

Winslow's Third Beer Festival



The Lions Club of Winslow held their third beer festival over Friday 14th and Saturday 15th of March and according to their Beer Festival Chairman, Keith Hofgartner 'It was the best ever!'

Over 40 beers were enjoyed and most of the barrels were dry by the end of the festival on the Saturday evening. *Thwaites Lancaster Bomber* was the star of the Festival again with both barrels being drained in quick time.

The event will have raised well over £9,000 for various local charities when all the pledged sponsorship monies are collected. The raffle run for the Florence Nightingale Hospice specifically raised over £ 500.

The Lions would like to thank all that supported them and look forward to seeing you all again next year.

Banbury Beer Festival



The Banbury beer festival at the Territorial Army Centre from May 8th - 10th will feature one third of its beers from the North-West, an excellent range of cider and perry and souvenir glasses. Food will be available at all sessions, including a pig roast on the Saturday.

Admission is free at all time for **CAMRA** members. Non-members admission prices: Thursday: £1, Friday (until 5pm): £2, Friday (after 5pm): £3, Saturday (until 5pm): £2, Saturday (after 5pm): Free. Under 21s will be required to provide I.D.

North Oxfordshire CAMRA have hosted their annual beer festival in Banbury since 2000. The 2007 festival attracted over 1,100 visitors to sample the 80 beers, eight ciders and two perries on offer. It celebrated the 300th anniversary of the Act of Union between England and Scotland. The theme of this year's festival, kindly sponsored by **Hook Norton Brewery**, will be Beers from the North-West.

It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale

Join CAMRA today...

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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I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

I enclose a cheque for Mem Form 0108

Signed Date

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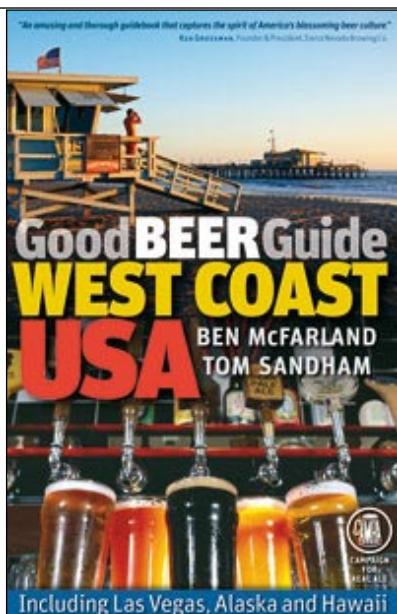
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BOOK REVIEW



British journalists have proved that there's more to American beer culture than the big brands.

The *Good Beer Guide West Coast USA*, has been written by two young British beer writers, Ben McFarland and Tom Sandham, who have captured in print an infectious enthusiasm for the USA's exciting beer and brewing scene.

'We felt inspired to write the book as so many people are unaware of the joys of American beer,' said Ben McFarland, the youngest ever British Guild of Beer Writers' 'Beer Writer of the Year'. 'Fun, fanatical, cutting edge, joyful, often outrageous and bridled in envelope-pushing zeal - America is 'beervana', it's 'brewtopia', it's beer-drinking heaven. And the West Coast is the best place to discover this.'

America is now home to more beer styles than anywhere else in the world and its flourishing brewing industry has a growing reputation for quality and innovation. In 1988 there were 46 micros and brewpubs. That figure has now risen to 1390 micros, brewpubs and regional craft brewers, proving that not all American beer begins with *Bud* and ends with *Miller*.

Tom Sandham adds, 'Any beer fan worth his/her salt should be aware of every international pocket of beer excellence and the West Coast currently boasts some of the most innovative and enthusiastic brewers in the world. The book is a guide to the very best of them and adds to this with comprehensive coverage of the phenomenally successful brewpub scene and the very best beer bars up and down the coast.'

This lively and humorous, full-colour, illustrated guide details over 500 hundred breweries, beers and great places to find them on America's West Coast plus Las Vegas, Alaska and Hawaii. The book also includes recommended beers and tasting notes, sections on the history of beer in America and US beer styles. It has all the information, and inspiration on travel, accommodation and beer festivals for the independent traveller and drinker.

The broad appeal of the title has generated interest on both sides of the pond. Ken Grossman, Founder & President of *Sierra Nevada Brewing Co.*, said the title was 'An amusing and thorough guidebook that captures the spirit of America's blossoming beer culture.'

Good Beer Guide West Coast USA, - featuring Las Vegas, Alaska and Hawaii is priced £14.99 and published by **CAMRA Books**, on 3rd March 2008.

Available in all good bookshops or direct from the **CAMRA** website (www.camra.org.uk/shop) and distributed in the USA and Canada by Trafalgar Square publishing from April 1st 2008. ISBN 978-185249-244-1.

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Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

APRIL

Saturday 5th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

12.30pm, Wheel, Naphill (on line 300).

Monday 7th BRANCH MEETING

8.30pm, Queens Head, Aylesbury

Wednesday 16th NORTHERN SOCIAL

8.30pm Bell, North Marston; 9.15pm Black Boy, Oving; 10pm White Swan, Whitchurch

Friday 18th - Sunday 20th MEMBERS' WEEKEND & A.G.M.

Cardiff City Hall, Cardiff

Thursday 24th OXFORDSHIRE SOCIAL

8.30pm Cherry Tree, Kingston Blount; 9.15pm Shepherd's Crook, Crowell; 10.00pm Red Lion, Chinnor

Monday 28th ARRIVA 280 SOCIAL

9.00pm Seven Stars, Dinton; 10.00pm Rose and Crown, Stone.

MAY

Wednesday 7th RADNAGE/BENNETT END SOCIAL

9.00pm Crown, Radnage, 10.00pm Three Horseshoes, Bennett End.

Saturday 10th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

12.30pm, Whip, Lacey Green (on line 300)

Monday 12th BRANCH MEETING

8.30pm, Lions of Bledlow, Bledlow

Tuesday 20th ASTON CLINTON SOCIAL

8.30pm Crow's Nest; 9.00pm Rothschilds Arm; 10.00pm Oak.

Saturday 24th MARLOW PUB CRAWL

Start 12 noon Carpenter's Arms, Marlow (further details will appear soon on our website)

JUNE

Saturday 28th BLACK COUNTRY TRIP

The legend returns - full details are given below.

Estimated cost £25 per person (limited to 35).

Demand is usually high, so booking early is recommended.

Tickets and information can be obtained from the editor.

OCTOBER

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

All **CAMRA** members and potential **CAMRA** members (and anyone else who enjoys real ale) are welcome to join us at any of our socials.

We always need help with *Swan Supping* so if you have any news or an interesting beer related article, please get in touch. Also, if you like going to pubs, why not help with the distribution of the magazine.

Swan Supping

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

Circulation 5000 copies.

Edited by David Roe

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

Tel : 01296 484551

E-Mail : editor@swansupping.org.uk

Advertising rates are :- 1/4 page £35 (Colour £60), 1/2 page £70 (Colour £120), full page £115 (Colour £200). 10% discounts for payment in advance. Add 10% for front page adverts. We can even create the advert for you at no extra charge! All bookings are taken as run-of-paper and colour adverts are on a first come, first served basis. Please make all cheques payable to **CAMRA AV & W.**

Copy deadline for next issue, to be published 1st June, is 14th May.

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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BLACK COUNTRY TRIP



The date has been set for our annual coach trip to the Black Country as Saturday 28th of June.

We will be visiting a lot of old favourites including the **Vine** (also known as the **Bull & Bladder**) which is pictured above and we will also try to add a few different stops which have included brewery visits in the past.

The cost is expected to be about £25 per person and the number of tickets will be limited to 35 (we don't want to totally overwhelm the pubs), so it is advisable to book as early as possible.

Tickets and further information can be obtained from the editor (contact details are shown on the left) and an itinerary will be posted on the website when it is finalised.

More Local News

(Continued from page 2)

there on the Saturday afternoon so why not come and join us.

LONG CRENDON

Village local the **Eight Bells** staged their Easter beer festival in March. Ten real ales on gravity in the rear barn and three more on handpump in the bar awaited attendees. **Rother Valley Smild** (3.8), **Ascot Ales Shagadelic** (3.8), **Irving Frigate** (3.8), **Howard Town Bleaklow** (3.8) and **Highgate Irish Whiskey Ale** (4.4) were just some of the ales highlighting the festival. The Long Crendon Morris Men contributed with a Sunday lunchtime rendition for the local ale drinkers.

MARLOW

The long-established Marlow Jazz Club have moved their gigs to the **British Legion Hall**.

The **Claytons Lounge** bar (ex **Clayton Arms**) has had an internal makeover. Still no real ale as yet though. Teddy Paige would surely have had something to say about that!

The landlord of the **Duke of Cambridge**, Mr. John Hudson, threw a birthday bash on February 29th to

celebrate his 44th (11th) coming of age. **Harveys Sussex Best Bitter** (4.0), **Black Country Ales Pig on the Wall** (4.4) and **Breconshire Ramblers Ruin** (5.0), along with a pig roast provided nourishment for the pub full of friends, family and lucky pub goers. Music was supplied by the excellent Rock n Roll band **Cookie and the Blue-jays**.

Real ale from northern breweries **All Gates** and **Spitting Feathers** have featured of late. A couple of dark milds are to grace the handpumps for the May is Mild month promotion.

The **George and Dragon** is closed at present undergoing renovation work. More news in the next issue of **Swan Supping**.

Craig and Elaine Edwards have left the **Marlow Donkey** for pastures new. The new manager is Geri Hishin at this **Greene King** owned public house.

NAPHILL

The **Wheel** will be holding a beer festival over the weekend of 4th to 6th of April. This will feature the **Champion Beers of the Year** from last year's **Great British Beer Festival**. Why not join in with the branch social to be held at the festival on the Saturday afternoon (see page 22).

QUAINTON

The **George & Dragon** is holding a beer festival on Saturday 24th May. There will be ten real ales and two real ciders available.

The **Swan & Castle** is currently closed.

STONE

Eddie Ball (ex landlord of the **Waggon and Horses**) died suddenly on Wednesday 5th March. The funeral took place on Thursday 13th March at Amersham Crematorium with family flowers only and donations to the British Heart Foundation. Eddie is well remembered in the branch and when he ran the pub it featured in the **Good Beer Guide** for many years and he was renowned for serving the best pint of **ABC Bitter** in the Aylesbury area. He always said that he did nothing special when serving the beer, he just left it for four days, tapped it, spiled it and served it. He always had a smile and a friendly word for his customers and he was always popular when he made his visits to the **Aylesbury Vale Beer Festival** which we run every October. He will be missed.

WENDOVER

The **Red Lion**, which has undergone an extensive refurbishment re-opened in

March. The brewery claims, possibly contradictorily to some minds, that 'the pub itself remains the heart and soul of the **Red Lion** and food is our speciality'. Wendover residents on the website have speculated why the pub sign now shows fruit and vegetables (two tomatoes, a pear and an onion) rather than an old-fashioned red lion.

WYCOMBE MARSH

The **King George the Fifth** has food available again. This takes the form of a Thai restaurant in the back room, which used to be the games room. Still the same two beers here: **Fullers London Pride** and **Wells Bombardier**. But there may be something a bit more interesting along later. The move of the pool table into the main bar area seems to have been a success.

The **Rifle Butts** is now open again. Since the last visit, several years ago, the dividing wall has been removed making the two areas in one. The left side of the pub is dominated by a pool table. Two beer engines have been put back in, but no beer at the moment.

The **Swan** is under new management. It now has food available in the form of Thai cuisine. The **Swan** is now down to one beer; **Courage Best** when visited.




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2008

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(Beer, Spirits and Drink Related Collectables)

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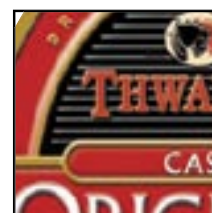
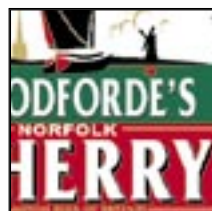
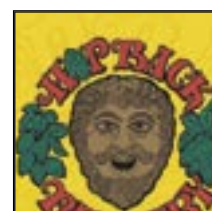
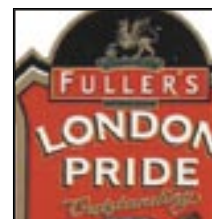
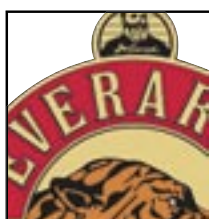
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