

FREE



Swan Supping



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

Issue 64

FEB/MAR 2008



2008 LOOKS LIKE IT WILL BE ROUGH ON PUBS!



As we start a New Year it is tempting to look forward with rose-tinted spectacles to the year ahead. However, with all the pressures mounting on the pubs and their hardworking landlords, these spectacles seem to have a much more sombre colour.

We have already seen the last major brewer in the country pass into foreign hands (see the article regarding the *Scottish & Newcastle* take-over by *Heineken* and *Carlsberg* on page three).

Pub companies continue to make their tenants pay way over the odds for their beer which in turn makes them uncompetitive in the fight to get customers through the doors. If you rent your home from someone, you don't expect to be forced to buy all your groceries from the same firm as well (at nearly double the market price).

The smoking ban which was introduced last year has changed the nature of a lot of pubs. The worst hit have been the non-food based pubs which rely purely on people coming out for a drink. Despite a lot of work being done, at a considerable cost,

on providing facilities outside for smoking, a lot of drinkers who smoke are staying away. The non-smokers who have always said that the reason they didn't go to the pub was because they hated smelling like an ash tray when they left have only taken up a bit of the slack. Perhaps they are not living up to their side of the bargain by staying at home and taking advantage of the ridiculously cheap drinks prices in the supermarkets with their 'Buy One Get One Free Offers' which if offered in a pub would be condemned as 'irresponsible'.

If we have the same terrible summer that we had in 2007 the pubs with gardens are not going to do well and all our pubs are going to suffer because England failed to qualify for the European Championships (both those with TVs and those without who would attract people trying to get away from the footy!).

All this doom and gloom is enough to drive one to drink.

In fact, the best thing we can do is support the pubs through this bad time and follow the oft repeated phrase, 'Use it or Lose it', until commonsense prevails about these national institutions.

REBELLION

BREWERY SHOP

REAL ALE FROM MARLOW

Drink Real Ale at home!

FREE tasting of all our beers available in the shop

FREE glass hire

Shop open 6 days a week



No need to pre-order. Real Ale from £1.20 per pint

**Mon-Fri 8am - 6pm
Sat 9am - 6pm**

Further information about our beers, map and prices, visit www.rebellionbeer.co.uk

Collect **fresh** from the brewery in 3 / 5 / 9 / 18 / 36 / 72 pint containers

Visit the shop see the brewery try the beers

www.rebellionbeer.co.uk

Rebellion Beer Company
Bencombe Farm
Marlow Bottom, SL7 3LT

01628 476594

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

Local News



ASKETT

The **Three Crowns** remained closed at the end of January – with evidence of building materials for the refurbishment in the car park.

AYLESBURY

The **Emperor's Lounge** is offering an Express lunch menu for £6 which includes a half pint of beer.

Our reference last issue to the **Ex-Servicemen's Club** was a bit sexist as it is, of course, the **Ex-Services Club**.

The **Hop Pole** has announced that there will be another Easter Beer festival this year. After the huge success of last year's Easter and Winter Warmer festivals they promise these will now be a regular occurrence. It will be held over the entire four day Easter Bank Holiday weekend (from Thursday 20th till Monday 24th March). There will be over 30 ales, some ciders, and entertainment every night (all day Saturday) and a few more surprises thrown in for good measure. Full details and listings for the weekend can found when they become available at www.hop-pole.co.uk.

The changes we announced last issue for the **Queens Head** fell through and

Bob Perez and Paula Hutchinson are taking over the lease at the beginning of February. They are still offering five real ales and lunchtime food from 12 till 4pm and they hope to start evening food in the near future.

We have heard that there is a temporary manager at the **Skinny Dog** and that plans to turn it into an Indian restaurant have been refused.

Regulars at the **Steeplechase** were taken by surprise by the strength of one of the Christmas treats available at the pub. Many of them found that their legs failed to work properly when trying to walk home after a few pints of **Hopback Pickled Santa** (mind you, it is a very drinkable 6% ABV brew!).

Theakstons Old Peculier was found at the **Watermead Inn**, Watermead in January. They also had **Flowers IPA** on draught.

BEACONSFIELD

The lease for the **Charles Dickens** is being offered for sale by **Fleurets**.

CROWELL

Oxon County Council has last week got round to putting up more official bus stops on Line 40 (Thame - High

Wycombe) including (at long last) a pair in Crowell just round the bend from the drive up to the **Shepherds Crook**. No more will drinkers be carried on to Kingston Blount. There is another new pair at the B4009/old A40 junction just up from the **Lambert Arms** in Aston Rowant.

DINTON

The **Seven Stars** reopened just in time for Christmas after major refurbishments. Chris Dyson took over in May and all the work took a lot longer than expected. Real ale is available in the form of **Timothy Taylor Landlord**.

EMMINGTON

The new landlord in charge at the **Inn at Emmington** is Dave Mclelland who was previously a landlord in London. There are two real ales but it is hoped to increase to three in the near future.

GREAT KIMBLE

The early Easter means that the traditional Easter Saturday Kimble races will be run on 22nd March. One real ale is usually available in the beer tent but many punters opt to have a post race drink in the local pubs. Last year it was estimated that about 15,000

people attended the event. Both the **Bernard Arms** and the **Swan** (which is close to the entrance to the races) do a galloping trade on races day.

The **Swan** will run further themed food nights during the year and its popular pub quiz continues on alternate Mondays.

HADDENHAM

The **Green Dragon** is shortly to have the leasehold put on the market by Peter and Sue; all enquiries to them.

The following Haddenham pubs news was missed from our last issue – many apologies.

The current three real ales at the **Red Lion** are **Vale Pale Ale (VPA)**, **Adnams Bitter** and **Youngs Bitter**, the latter two being their standard beers. They have very active darts, dominoes and crib teams – one of the last of the 'true boozers', one could say.

The new managers at the **Rising Sun** are Brenda and Joe Cleveland. They have redecorated the bars and their welcoming approach has already made a difference. Two real ales plus a guest are always on tap.

The George and Dragon Hotel

Set in the heart of historic West Wycombe village



Happy New Year to all our Customers

- *Warm and friendly atmosphere*
- *4 award winning cask ales*
- *Fine wines*
- *Excellent home cooked food*
- *Characterful accommodation*

Lunch and dinner served 7 days a week
Sunday Lunch Special - 2 course - £12.95
3 course - £15.95

For reservations call 01494 464414
www.george-and-dragon.co.uk



The Red Lion

3 High Street, Chinnor (☎01844 353468)

CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2008
listed with four real ales

Quiz 18th Feb

Live Guitar Jazz 24th Feb (from 6pm)

Home-Cooked Pub Food
Available Every Day

Special Offer

2 Steaks & bottle of wine £20

Monday to Saturday until March 2nd (you must pre-book by phone)

Cask Marque Approved

SCOTTISH AND NEWCASTLE TAKEOVER!

The announcement that *Scottish and Newcastle (S&N)* is to be acquired and divided between *Carlsberg* and *Heineken* has been condemned by *CAMRA*. *S&N*'s UK activities are set to be acquired by *Heineken* and *CAMRA* will be seeking urgent reassurances over the future of *S&N*'s real ale interests.

Mike Benner, *CAMRA*'s Chief Executive, said, 'The relentless obsession with pushing global lager brands is a failing strategy in the UK beer market and this is fueling consolidation and hitting profits hard. The inevitable result of consolidation is brewery closures, brand losses and less choice for Britain's consumers.'

Mr. Benner added, 'The deal raises many questions for real ale drinkers in the UK. What impact will this have on traditional real ales such as *John Smith's* and smaller regional brands such as *Magnet*? We will be seeking reassurances from the new owners that they will invest in their real ale brands and breweries to meet the demands of today's beer drinkers who are increasingly demanding real ale.'

CAMRA is concerned about the impact the takeover could have on *WaverleyTBS*, a major distributor of real ales, the contract brewing of *Theakston's Best Bitter* and the partnership with the *Caledonian Brewing Company*.

It is expected that the takeover will be considered by the European Commission and *CAMRA* is calling for an in-depth review of competition and consumer choice in the EU beer market.

Mike Benner continued: 'The lager-led approach of the global brewers has been flawed for years and consumers demand choice, quality and provenance. Fortunately the increasing number of small and independent real ale breweries in the UK are rising up to fill the void in the market where demand for local and regional beer continues to grow.'

Bob Stukins, *CAMRA*'s Director of Breweries Campaigning said, 'This

is a sad day for British brewing. *S&N* was the last remaining major brewer in British hands and the deal is unlikely to show any benefits for consumers.'

S&N's main real ale brand is *John Smith's cask*. However it also brews *Theakston's Best Bitter* on behalf of *T&R Theakston*, and owns 30% of Scottish brewery *Caledonian's* brands. *CAMRA* will be seeking assurances from the new owners that these enterprises will be preserved.

In September 2007 *CAMRA*, the *Independent Family Brewers of Britain*, the *Society of Independent Brewers*, the *Cask Marque Trust* and *Why Handpull*, jointly published an industry report - entitled 'The Intelligent Choice'. This report found that most of the top-line 5% decline in the ale market was due to the 'big four multinational brewers' - InBev, Coors, Carlsberg and Scottish & Newcastle - systematically withdrawing support for cask ale in favour of lager.

Yet regional and local brewers have seen strong volume and growth of late. The report shows that independent and local brewers are growing by an average of 7.5 % year on year.

- The cask ale market is worth around £1.4 billion a year and accounts for 11% of all on trade beer volume
- Approximately 2.4 million barrels of cask ale are drunk every year
- Cask ale is found in 40% of the nation's pubs
- There are 5.4 million people claiming to be cask ale drinkers (just over one in ten adults, or 15% of all pub goers)
- 8 out of 10 pints drunk in the UK are brewed by the four global brewers.

Tony, Ian & Lynne welcome you to
The Black Horse,
Lacey Green

Tel: 01844 345195



Brakspear's Bitter, Shepherd Neame Spitfire, Theakston Old Peculier

Lunches 12 – 2.30 Tuesday – Sunday

Evening Meals: 6.30 - 9.30 Tuesday to Saturday

Pub open all day Friday, Saturday & Sunday

Please note: The pub is closed Monday until 5pm

Sunday Lunch ~ £7-99 for two courses (Children under 8 free!)

Please book early to avoid disappointment

1st Sunday of month - evening Tarot session from 6:30pm

2nd Sunday of month - music night and basket meals until 10pm

Last Sunday of month - Quiz night

Car Park Friendly Atmosphere Outside Functions Catered For

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

BEER FESTIVAL

London Drinker

What better way to commemorate the linking of St Pancras with Europe then by celebrating with pint or two of European beer! And the **London Drinker Beer and Cider Festival** is providing the perfect occasion this March.

The **2008 London Drinker Beer and Cider Festival** is one of the easiest of all the London Festivals to get to, being 5 minutes walk from King's Cross and St Pancras stations.

The Festival will have nearly 100 different types of British beers, ciders and imported beers, guaranteeing whatever your palate is like, that you'll find something to your taste. Fruit beers and sour beers, sit alongside smoked beers and wheat beers and you may even find a black lager. The British real ales will be from all over the country and of sorts of styles including milds, golden ales, traditional bitters and strong ales.

The food is home cooked by **CAMRA** volunteers and includes two dishes of the day (one vegetarian), traditional Cornish pasties and British sausages (made with ale of course), salt beef rolls and onion bhajis and samosas.

The Festival is open 12th -14th March 2008 at the Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, WC1; two minutes from St Pancras and King's Cross. Opening times are Wednesday and Thursday: 12-3pm (free): 5-10.30pm (£3, £1.50 members); Friday 12-10.30pm (£3, £1.50).

LONDON DRINKER Beer & Cider Festival 2008

Camden Centre, Bidborough St, WC1H 9DB
(Nearest tube King's Cross St Pancras)

Wednesday	12th March	12 - 3	5 - 10.30pm
Thursday	13th March	12 - 3	5 - 10.30pm
Friday	14th March	12 -	10.30pm

Admission free Wednesday & Thursday lunchtimes, £3 at other times, £1.50 for CAMRA members. Last admission 10 pm. Organisers reserve the right to refuse admission.

Imported Beers
Food all sessions

CAMRA CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

www.camranorthlondon.org.uk/ldbf

BRIGHTON TRIP

The details of the Brighton pub crawl planned for Tuesday 5th February (see Branch Socials list on page 22) are as follows:

10.05 train from Aylesbury (to take advantage of any network card or groupsave ticket reductions that are available) arriving Brighton via London Bridge 12.54 or maybe earlier.

1. **Lord Nelson** (lunch), 36 Trafalgar Street, BN1 4ED
2. **Mitre Tavern**, 13 Baker Street, BN1 4JN
3. **Basketmakers Arms**, 12 Gloucester Road, BN1 4AD
4. **Waggon & Horses**, Church Street, BN1 2RL
5. **Evening Star** (see picture above), 55-56 Surrey Street, BN1 3PB
6. **Battle of Trafalgar**, 34 Guildford Road, BN1 3LW
7. (if still wanting/fit for/desperate for more...) **Prestonville Arms**, 64 Hamilton Road, BN1 5DN



Trains home run half-hourly from Brighton, say 18.49 - Aylesbury c.21.26

All pubs on the crawl appear in the **2008 Good Beer Guide** (pages 456 - 457).

LODDON BREWERY
DUNSDEN OXFORDSHIRE
EST. 2002

Award winning ales
brewed with pride and passion

LODDON DRAGONFLY
LODDON BAMBOOZZLE
LODDON HOPPET
LODDON HULLAHALOO
LODDON FERRYMAN'S GOLD

Tel: 0118 948 1111 www.loddonbrewery.com

The Loddon Brewery Ltd, Dunsden Green Farm, Church Lane, Dunsden, Oxfordshire, RG4 9GD

UNITS OF ALCOHOL

An imaginary conversation about how the government alcohol policy may have been developed.

Alan Crook, Secretary of State for Health is discussing alcohol with his senior spin doctor, erm, civil servant Jo King.

'Minister, Number Ten wants us to sort out alcohol,' said Jo.

'Mine's a large G&T, you know that Jo,' replied Alan.

'It's not opening time yet, minister. They want a policy announcement to make the plebs think we're doing something about binge-drinking booze Britain.'

'Are we?'

'Well, we're making a series of policy announcements that will encourage people to take responsibility for their own health agenda.'

'You mean feed them a load of scare stories to make them think it's all their own fault if they ever get sick.'

'Precisely minister but we do have another problem,' said Jo.

'Don't tell me – the inclusivity brigade?'

'Of course. We can't present any health message in a way that seems to stigmatise any minority.'

'Even if that minority is underage, binge-drinking hoodlums or Special Brew swilling winos.'

'Minister. You know better than to make judgements about disadvantaged youngsters or the socially underprivileged. We have to have a message that hits the cosy middle-class as well.'

'Is middle-class drinking a problem?' asked the minister.

'I'm not sure – but we can have a good crack at trying to make it look like that. I've arranged for the government's chief doctor to give you a briefing this afternoon.'

'Dr Gourd? I hope this meeting is late enough in the afternoon to give you more time to drag him out of the pub.'

The red-faced doctor had just finished delivering a Powerpoint presentation. Jo gave Alan Crook a dig in the ribs to rouse him from his stupor.

'Ahem,' said the minister. 'Thank you doctor but I didn't really get a clear message from all that scientific evidence.'

'There's a lot of conflicting evidence minister – certain studies indicate that moderate drinking is good for heart disease whereas there are others that suggest that the chances of other diseases are significantly raised – but there are all kinds of other influential factors. And, as for pregnant women, don't let me go anywhere near there,' explained Dr Gourd.

'I won't but this is all no bloody good. Number Ten wants a simple message,' said the minister. 'Booze: is it good for you and how much should we let you drink before we can say 'Tough luck, you're on your own mate'''

'Well, minister, it's impossible to say. Alcohol affects people in so many different ways – weight, age, sex, even what you've had for dinner affects one's ability to metabolise alcohol and genetics also plays a major role.'

'Sorry to interrupt, Dr Gould,' said Jo impatiently. 'We're not interested in your academic debates. We want an answer. We want a dossier from you that tells us how much alcohol anyone is allowed to consume before they might become a burden on the NHS.'

'Oh, we have a good idea about the level of alcohol consumption that will certainly do anyone harm – and that's pretty high – but certain types of people are vulnerable at much lower levels.'

'We're not interested in exceptions, we want an absolute limit,' said the minister.

'Ah, that's easy,' replied the doctor. 'Zero. Ban the stuff if you want to eliminate the risk for everyone. It would help us doctors' jobs immeasurably. Of course, in that case, I'm assuming that there would be some made legally available to doctors for, er, medicinal reasons'

'Doctor, are you completely stupid?' asked the minister. 'The Treasury makes billions out of taxing booze. Even if we could ban it then we'd be looking at having to raise income tax to meet the shortfall.'

'So why do you want a universal limit that can be applied to anyone regardless of weight, age, medical history and so on?' said Dr Gourd.

'Look doctor. In all your years seeing patients in your surgery didn't you realise that 90% of the country's population is completely thick. They react to soundbites. They can't handle complexity and ambiguity.'

'As far as declaring their alcohol consumption is concerned that's not my experience.'

'What do you mean?' said Jo.

'Patients are very good at dividing it by two. The doctor's rule of thumb is to at least double any estimate of drinks consumed by a patient. They are very prone to, er, underestimating.'

'So what you're saying is that our simple figure needs to be divided by two to compensate for this,' said the minister.

'Not necessarily – but if one does then it can't do any harm.'

'OK. We take a figure that you think a doctor could recommend to almost any patient as absolutely safe and, perhaps, reduce it a bit to compensate for the patients' tendency to underestimate.'

'You might think that,' replied the doctor. 'I couldn't possibly comment.'

Charlie Mackle

THE RED LION **WHITELEAF**

Nr PRINCES RISBOROUGH
TELEPHONE: 01844 344476
www.theredlionwhiteleaf.co.uk

The Hibbert Family welcome you to the 17th century pub situated in the village of Whiteleaf. 4 en-suite B & B rooms with TV and tea making facilities.

A new function suite that accommodates up to 40 people enabling us to offer a local venue for all types of functions.

Open all day Friday, Saturday & Sunday!
Food served daily 12 noon - 2 p.m.
and 7.00 p.m - 9 p.m.

Traditional Sunday Roasts 12 noon - 2.00 p.m.

3 real ales available together with a selection of lagers

OXFORD CRAWL - PART TWO



In the dog days of last summer, the first part of our literary-themed Oxford pub crawl had ground to a soporific halt in the courtyard of the **Turf Tavern**, leaving four of the scheduled dozen pubs still to complete. To complete the task, our doughty band re-assembled on the first Saturday of 2008.

Dave, Simon and I arrived at the **Turf Tavern** just after midday, fresh off the line 280; early enough to avoid the crowds and get served unusually quickly at this busy pub. We were looking forward to imbuing ourselves with the culture of the city of Oxford – by means, naturally, of its historic hosteliaries.

September's previous crawl was a painstaking forensic exercise worthy of Morse himself: our small but dedicated squad investigating the outlying **Good Beer Guide** pubs of Jericho and North Oxford.

Now we were swollen into a band reminiscent of the outset of the Lord of the Rings – a cheerful 'Fellowship of the Beer'. Our numbers were boosted by several other ale aficionados: a bunch of North Oxfordshire members with the landlord of their local, the **Bell** at Adderbury; beer writer Roy Bailey and his friend, Geoff Day, from West Berkshire; a local guide in Neil Hoggarth from Oxford branch; Dick Moore from our own; plus Antony from Reading and Andy from Twickenham. So eager were our companions that most had beaten us to the pub and secured a beachhead on the largest table in the place.

The **Turf Tavern** will be near the top of the list whenever **CAMRA** publishes a book called '100 Pubs To Get Drunk In Before You Die'. Its medieval character is one asset – the interior is a multi-roomed warren arranged around a central bar. (The pub currently holds the title of **Perfect Cask Ale Pub of the Year** awarded by the readers and listeners of the Daily Telegraph and Classic FM.)

That's all well and good for tourists but there is also a remarkable range of real ales – eleven are generally available (don't tell anyone, but the pub is now run by **Greene King**). I started with a pint of **White Horse** brewery's *Wayland Smithy*,

followed up with **Hop Back's Red Ember** – a good warm up for the day at 4.9%.

Next pub, the **Bear**, was a half mile walk there and back to the south side of the High Street. The discontinuous route prompted dissenting suggestions that the organiser (me) might have been well and truly dreaming up with the spires while devising the itinerary. Of course not – we were going to walk past the Bridge of Sighs, Bodleian Library and Sheldonian Theatre. Didn't the philistines appreciate the opportunity to drink in such history and culture? Maybe they just wanted to drink beer?

Minds enriched, we arrived at the **Bear** on Alfred Street. It is not currently in the **Good Beer Guide**, perhaps because it offers just the typical range of **Fuller's** ales (now extended to include **Gale's**). I had *London Pride*.

Dating back to 1242, the **Bear** is perhaps the most historic pub in the centre of Oxford (the **Turf** might disagree). The current building is 17th century and was formerly the ostler's house of a much larger coaching inn (the original **Bear**). The

distinctive bear and ragged staff motif can be seen on the pub sign and on the entrance to the gents' toilets.

The pub is well-preserved inside with several small, low-beamed rooms. It is infamous for its collection of ties. Over four thousand are displayed in cases on the walls and even on the ceiling. Since the 1950s, customers have been cajoled into 'donating' their ties – allegedly in exchange for a pint of beer. However, there is a story that the landlord who started the tradition would spontaneously snip off a customer's tie with a pair of scissors if it particularly took his fancy.

Suddenly we caught sight of the High Wycombe contingent, Tony, Alan and Noj, as they emerged from a back room into the bar. Being contrary folk, they had decided to visit the last pub first – the **Angel and Greyhound** on Magdalen Bridge. It was a wise decision, as it turned out. They were using the 737 National Express coach which ran its last service back to Wycombe at the devilishly late hour of 6.30pm. No



THE TRIP CONTINUES

sooner had they been spotted than they disappeared again.

The rest of us wound our way back past the colleges to the **King's Arms** on Holywell Street – a large *Young's* pub that was described on the previous crawl. I sampled the rare (for *Young's*) guest beer – the superb, citrusy *St. Austell Tribute*.

We heard a rumour that the Wycombe lot were in the **Turf Tavern**. This turned out to be true and they showed commendable self-restraint by swiftly exploring its fine ale selection in time to catch us up before we left the **King's Arms**.

The pub was packed, partly due to a heavy rain shower outside. Several of us now needed something to soak up all the liquid in our insides. The food service was quick, despite the crowds, and prices were reasonable. Pizzas plugged a few holes while Tony had the finest fish-finger sandwich imaginable.

The next pub, the **White Horse**, was well within staggering distance. The outside of the pub will be familiar to many as the backdrop to the most iconic image of the Morse television series – the Inspector's red Jaguar parked outside its narrow, traditional frontage. It is completely surrounded by Blackwell's bookshop: a most civilised conjunction. Its archetypical Oxford location still attracts film crews. The pub will feature in a new John Hurt and Elijah Wood film, 'The Oxford Murders', which is due to be released later this year.

Morse had great taste in pubs. The **White Horse** is a lovely little boozier. It has a long, wood-panelled bar with some photos of the man himself. There is an intimate raised area at the back of the pub, which is clearly the place to savour a pint puzzling over a complicated murder case. ('It's the good looking, posh widow that did it, Morse – the one you fancy!').

The pub is owned by *Mitchell's and Butler* but the real ales are free of any tie – and a good choice is available. I had a fine pint of *Timothy*



Taylor Landlord. Their fish and chips were apparently voted best in Oxford – by the pub's customers, it must be said. Nonetheless, mine were rather good.

A short stroll away, on St. Giles, were our next two pubs – both described during the first crawl. Again, the **Lamb and Flag** offered a wide selection of unusual ales. I had a beer named after an ancient English bastion – no, not Dave Roe Ale – but *Barbury Castle* from the **Three Castles** brewery in Pewsey. Unlike most pub crawls our happy band coalesced as we progressed and now we were even all together in the same pub!

We crossed the road to the **Eagle and Child** wherein we paid liquid homage (*Hook Norton Old Hooky* in my case) to the Inklings – J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S.Lewis' literary drinking club. We sat under the various commemorative plaques in the Rabbit Room itself, into which we were preceded by some very knowledgeable Norwegian ale lovers on a similar pilgrimage.

Far From the Madding Crowd is tucked down Friar's Entry (an alleyway leading towards the bus station) and describes itself as the only genuinely independent pub in the city centre. It is an Edgong Heath-like expanse of tables and chairs – quite the opposite of the small, historic rooms of the **Eagle and Child**. However, it has a great selection of six rotating real ales, mostly sourced from obscure breweries.

A pair of ales from the *Hidden Brewery* was prominent but I made my choice instead from two *Titanic* offerings, opting to sink a pint of their *Lifeboat Bitter*. I considered the *Stout* carefully but, being on my eighth pint, I wondered if its additional strength might have left me holed below the waterline.

Our hardy Wycombe natives now had to return and catch their coach and the North Oxfordshire contingent also headed for the train. The plan for the rest of the crowd was to catch a bus to Magdalen Bridge and do the last pub. However, two factors weighed against: we were behind

(Continued on page 8)



THE END OF THE CRAWL

(Continued from page 7)

schedule and, on BBC1, the greatest football team on the planet was playing Aston Villa in the third round of the F.A. Cup.

Surprisingly, I was sufficiently compos mentis to call the **Angel and Greyhound** to see if they might avail us of this televisual feast. Perhaps sensibly for the pub, but ruinously for our crawl, they had no TV screens. We despatched a volunteer, John, into the madding crowds of Gloucester Green to find a pub that did.

And so we ended up at the **Goose** at Gloucester Green. This anonymous pub, which later on had bouncers on the doors, is of a type to be found in almost any town in the country: a stop on 'the circuit' for young socialites out 'on the pull'. Antony made a persuasive argument that **CAMRA** members should particularly support real ale in pubs not specifically marketed at our demographic (although I recall his exact description was 'crap'). And it did real ale – one handpump of draught *Bass*.

The beer was ok but the football result was even better so our cultural quest culminated in celebrating Wayne Rooney's goal with some of the pub's stranger customers – an assortment of hairy, inbred yokels from deepest Oxfordshire – so actually not too dissimilar to the Lord of the Rings really.

By then the mesmerizing power of the beer had made wraiths of us all – our tired bodies feeling too incorporeal to travel to Magdalen Bridge. The complete crawl remained an unfulfilled mission.

We will try to return to the **Angel and Greyhound**, possibly in the summer when we visit the city's outskirts for our traditional pub games social at the **Mason's Arms** in Headington.



The Old Ship

At Cadmore End.....

Robert and Sara took over the Old Ship in August 2007 and brought with them a wealth of experience, running successful food led country inns in both England and Europe.

The Old Ship is a real traditional olde worlde inn serving cask conditioned ales direct from the cellar, and retaining its charming original features. We strongly feature produce from local smallholders to working farms, allotments to back garden, we specialise in rare breed meat and locally shot game and have a constantly changing blackboard menu,

We also have a small deli and wine cellar and from this we sell cheeses, our own sausages, breads etc

A sample of our current menu is

*Berkshire pork brawn with piccalilli and Chiltern organic bread
Sally's Red legged partridge with game juices and braised red cabbage*

Steamed syrup pudding with crystallised ginger and custard

For reservations please telephone 01494 883496

Under new ownership

JAN & MIKE

WELCOME YOU TO

THE CARRIERS ARMS FREE HOUSE

Hill Road, Watlington, Oxon OX49 5AD
Tel 01491 - 613470

Open All Day

Home made meals

Served daily

Sunday Roasts Served

12 - 4.30 PM

Excellent Choice of 4 Quality Real ales

*Large Beer Garden, with views to the Chiltern hills and
Watlington's red kites*

Tuesday night curry night

Thursday night quiz night - 8.30pm

HOBGOBLIN CHANGES



Hobgoblin, the ruby ale brewed by *Wychwood Brewery*, is aiming to build on its growing popularity in 2008 by reverting to its historic 4.5% abv (from 5.0%) on draught at the beginning of March to increase its 'sessionability'. The bottled version will remain at 5.2% abv.

Sales of cask *Hobgoblin* have grown almost 50% since the brand was last reviewed back in 2003. The beer's moreish fruity chocolaty character and unique image make it stand out as very distinctive beer and in a category of its own. But more recent feedback from customers has indicated that many lovers of the beer felt it slightly too strong to be sessionable in a sociable pub

environment. By returning the abv to its earlier strength of 4.5% whilst retaining the winning recipe a pint of cask *Hobgoblin* will widen the brand's appeal in pubs throughout the country.

Wychwood's head brewer, Jeremy Moss, will be using the same ingredients for both cask and bottle; but he has varied the proportions of crystal and roasted malts so as to give the cask ale's flavours a longer, more succulent finish. In addition, he has increased the quantity of *Hobgoblin's* signature Styrian Goldings hops added late in the boil to give the new cask *Hobgoblin* more hop/fruit aroma and

to add complexity and citrus flavours to complement the sweetness of the malts.

New Point of Sale material to support the move to 4.5% ABV includes a new cask pumpclip which refers to the 'Legendary Ruby Beer' rather than a 'Strong Dark Ale'.

With their advertising challenge, 'What's the matter, Lagerboy, afraid you might taste something', *Hobgoblin* is aiming for drinkers who are looking for more flavour satisfaction and taste in their pint. They are very confident this move in abv to 4.5% will encourage new drinkers, widen the brand's potential and drive sales of *Hobgoblin* in more outlets.

Wychwood Brewery has announced that *Dirty Tackle* (4% ABV), their seasonal cask ale is back and will be available during the Six Nations tournament.

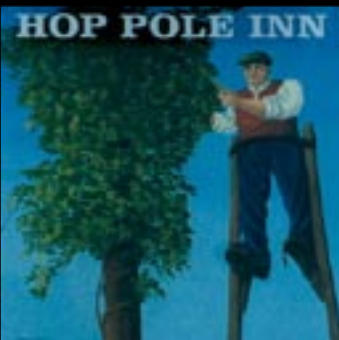
They suggest you avoid the scrum and make sure you score an early try as *Wychwood Brewery's* most popular seasonal ale of the 2007 season makes a winning return this February. A full-bodied malty beer with a clean citrus aroma, *Dirty Tackle* goes head to head with your taste buds and kicks its opponents into touch.

Dirty Tackle is a chestnut coloured, gloriously hoppy ale, combining a grand-slam of Crystal and Wheat Malts with Challenger and Northdown hops. *Wychwood Brewery* will be producing a selection of seasonal cask ales for 2008 with a variety of old favourites and some new ones to quench a hot summer's thirst.

'What's the matter, rugby-boy? Afraid you might taste something?'



AYLESBURY'S PERMANENT BEER FESTIVAL



The Hop Pole

83 Bicester Road, Aylesbury
Tel: 01296 482 129
www.hop-pole.co.uk
Email: info@hop-pole.co.uk



CAMRA listed Real Ale pub with 10 constantly changing traditional real ales from the UK's finest micro brewers.
Easily found on the A41 Bicester Road, a short walk from the town centre.
High standard B & B available. Live music every Saturday evening.

The Hop Pole Easter Bank Holiday Beer Festival!

Thursday 20th March to Monday 24th March (12 till 12 Daily)

A selection of over 30 real ales from every angle of the British Isles featuring seasonal specials, one offs and some of the best beers out there.

Live entertainment every night and ALL day Saturday

Freshly baked REAL Italian pizzas. Available from our delicious pizza menu.

THE ULTIMATE ALCOPOPS?

Germany is traditionally regarded as the home of the purest and least adulterated beer. For several hundred years the Reinheitsgebot was enforced by German law.

This stated that only water, barley and hops should be used in the making of beer (the role of yeast was not understood when the law was first drafted). It was repealed under European Union anti-competition laws in 1987 but nearly all German breweries continued to comply with the Reinheitsgebot in order to gain classification as a protected, 'traditional' product.

Bearing in mind this proud history, it was shocking to see this display on the shelves of an Edeka supermarket in Hanover. Proud German breweries, such as *Warsteiner* and *Becks*, were offering this grisly collection of flavoured beers for sale.

Note that the flavourings are described in English, even in the German



market, which might explain where they got the idea from. It could be argued that certain flavourings have a little tradition behind them, such as lemon and lime ('green lemon'). However, the newer flavours seem completely repugnant – 'Chilled Orange' and – heresy of heresies – Cola!

These are not attempts to replicate the few traditional styles of beer that use fruit flavouring, such as Belgian lambic fruit beer. Cola beer appears to be just as cynical a way of getting sweet-toothed young drinkers hooked on to

a company's products as the sugary alcopops that make such a huge contribution to teenage binge drinking in the UK. This adulteration is not just limited to Germany. In Portugal *Sagres* make a redcurrant flavoured beer.

Needless to say, these new products weren't sampled. There are still fortunately enough traditional beers left in Germany brewed from those curiously old-fashioned ingredients of hops, water and barley.



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

WINTER FESTIVAL FUN



The *Haddenham Real Ale Winterfest* was held on Saturday, 8th December in the magnificent tithe barn, at Manor Farm.

No one has a right to good weather in December, but we probably chose the foulest day of the month – very cold, very wet and very windy. But nothing

deters a real ale enthusiast, and well over 500 people came and enjoyed the festival.

The bells of St Mary's welcomed our visitors as they walked down to the barn, and soon they were enjoying the selection of 22 beers and 10 ciders. The hungry were catered for by the Haddenham Lodge barbecue, Parminers hot pie stall and by Val Young's cold snacks. For the traditionally minded there were hot chestnuts and mulled wine.

The varied entertainment through the day included the Ian English Jazz Band, the Wychert Chorale Carols, and the spine-tingling performances by the Haddenham Mummies.

In the midst of the enjoyment of fine winter ales, and the festive atmosphere, there was no doubting the star of the show; the beautiful old Tithe Barn. We hope to welcome you all there again next December. In the meantime, we are busy planning the Fifth Haddenham Real Ales Festival on 5th July – see you all there!!

Doug Harrison

The Cock Inn at Wing



Great Food!

Great Restaurant!

**Always a wide range of
Real Ale available!**

*Why not come
and see for yourself?*

**For further details phone
01296 688214**

THE THREE HORSESHOES

Burroughs Grove Hill, (Old Wycombe Road),
Marlow SL7 3RA



Large Garden and Car Park,

2 Log Fires

01628 483109

Six Rebellion Ales (including Mild)

*Quality Wines from Laithwaites/
Direct Wines*

Extensive Lunchtime menu

Sunday Roasts 12-3pm

*Fantastic Evening Menu
Tuesday-Saturday*

Monday Night Specials

Open all Bank Holiday Weekends!

NATIONAL PUB OF THE YEAR

CAMRA has announced the finalists for the prestigious title of *National Pub of the Year*.

Members from across the UK visited thousands of pubs before deciding on sixteen regional winners. However, only four of these pubs could be put forward for the national final. The overall winner will be announced on February 15th 2008, on the eve of *CAMRA's* Community Pubs Week (February 16th - 23rd).

The pubs up for the title of *CAMRA National Pub of the Year 2007* are:

MERSEYSIDE

Turks Head, 49-51 Morley Street, St Helens, Merseyside, WA10 2DQ, (01744 751289).



HERTFORDSHIRE

Land of Liberty, Peace and Plenty, Long Lane, Heronsgate, Hertfordshire, WD3 5BS. (01923 282226).



GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Old Spot, Hill Road, Dursley, Glos. GL11 4JQ. (01453 542870).



VALE BREWERY IS NOW LOCATED IN BRILL!



Vale Brewery

Tramway Business Park, Ludgershall Road,
Brill, Bucks HP18 9TY
Tel: 01844 239237

**If you can't get to the pub,
why not Take it Home!**

Award winning real ales,
direct from the brewery.

Polypins contain 35 pints, minipins 17 pints.

Buy a mixed case of 12 bottled beers
for only £20.

Also available by individual bottle or case:
wines, cider and selected whiskies.

To order telephone: 01844 239237
or email kate@valebrewery.co.uk

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



Beer	ABV	Polypin	Minipin	Bottles
Vale Best Bitter	3.7%	£47.00	£25.00	
Wychert Ale	3.9%	£48.00	£25.25	500ml
Black Swan Dark Mild	3.9%	£48.00	£25.25	500ml
Vale VPA	4.2%	£49.50	£25.70	
Edgar's Golden Ale	4.3%	£50.00	£26.25	500ml
Black Beauty Porter	4.3%	£51.00	£26.75	500ml
Vale Special	4.5%	£51.50	£27.00	
Grumpling Premium	4.6%	£52.00	£27.25	500ml
Gravitas	4.8%	£53.00	£27.75	500ml

Firkins are available, either bright or with sediment.

POTY FINALISTS

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY, SCOTLAND
Blue Peter Hotel, Kirkcolm, Dumfries & Galloway. DG9 0NL (01776 853221).



CAMRA's Director of Pubs, Julian Hough, said: 'There are around 60,000 pubs in the UK and to be named the very best is an incredible honour. Each of these pubs works tremendously hard to ensure the standard of their beer is matched only by their warm welcome. It will be exciting to see who emerges as the overall winner on February 15th.'

Each of the 197 CAMRA branches votes for their favourite pub. They are judged on criteria such as customer service, décor, clientele mix, value for money, and the quality of their real ale. The branch winners are entered into sixteen regional competitions and then the sixteen winners battle it out to make the Grand Final which consists of four pubs.

LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

Chiltern Brewery

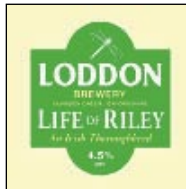
On their busiest day in December in the shop last year, Chiltern Brewery sold over one pint every minute all day in carryout containers. This may sound quite modest sales, but it excludes 'bulk' sales in 'pins and barrels and bottled beers. Their new barrel rack in the shop meant they were able to rack up 12 x 9's ahead of the day so that they could cope!

It is a record for them as they have never been able to sell this volume of beer direct from the cask.

Loddon Brewery

It will soon be possible to take a virtual tour of Loddon Brewery on their website (www.loddonbrewery.com). The photography has been done and the script is being finalised. Further news will appear in Swan Supping.

Their monthly special for February will be Sorry Not Available! (4.3% ABV). This is a refreshing blond ale with a satisfying spicy hoppiness. Contrary to the name, it's available all February!



During March their seasonal beer is Life of Riley (4.5% ABV). This is a multi-grain beer with a reddish hue. Brewed with Fuggles, East Kent Goldings and Cascade hops to produce a beer with a long lasting finish.

Forbury Lion IPA (5.5% ABV) will also be available during March and April. An IPA packed with a full malty flavour and a strong hop finish.



BEER FESTIVAL

Friday 29th February to Sunday 2nd March

15 cask ales from a selection of microbreweries with several local choices. ales include porters, stouts and a range of ABV's

Cider on tap!

Food available

Great music and comfy surroundings

Heated and covered outside area



Starts 4pm Friday 29th February and runs through till Sunday 2nd March!

CIAO BABY, 46B NORTH ST, THAME, OXON. OX9 3BH
TEL: 01844 260850 EMAIL: ciaoevents@googlemail.com

STATION PORTER STEAMS IN!



Wickwar Station Porter from Gloucestershire was named as the **Supreme Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2008** by a panel of judges at CAMRA's *National Winter Ales Festival* in Manchester which we previewed in our last issue. The festival showcased a wide range of beer styles, particularly those winter warmers which are so popular with beer drinkers during the winter months.

The 6.1% abv porter is described in the *2008 Good Beer Guide* as 'A rich, smooth, dark ruby-brown ale. Starts with a roast malt; coffee, chocolate and dark fruit then develops a complex, spicy, bittersweet taste and a long roast finish.'

At the announcement, Steve Prescott, Organiser of the National Winter Ales Festival congratulated *Wickwar* on its victory. He said, 'It's great to see a porter winning the *Supreme Champion Winter Beer of Britain* competition as this beer style has been in danger from disappearing from the British pub. I sincerely hope people will be inspired to try more porter on the back of *Wickwar's* victory.'

On hearing the news, Kevin Newbould, *Wickwar's* Key Accounts Director said, 'We are very pleased to have been voted the best winter beer in Britain and delighted that everybody feels the same way about this wonderful beer as we do. Let's hope we see a resurgence in people trying more porters in the near future.'

The Silver award went to *Robinson's Old Tom* and the Bronze to *Hop Back Entire Stout*.

A panel of CAMRA experts and beer writers at the *National Winter Ales Festival* (New Century Hall, Manchester) judged the competition. Drinkers at the festival, which ran until January 19th, sampled over 200 old ales, milds, stouts, porters, barley wines and bitters.

SUPREME CHAMPION

Gold - *Wickwar, Station Porter* (Wickwar, Gloucestershire)
 Silver - *Robinson's, Old Tom* (Stockport, Cheshire)
 Bronze - *Hop Back, Entire Stout* (Salisbury, Berkshire)

CATEGORY WINNERS

Old Ales & Strong Mild Category

(Most old ales are produced and sold for a limited time of the year, usually between November and the end of February. Usually a rich, dark, high-gravity draught ale of considerable body)

Gold - *Purple Moose, Dark Side of the Moose* (Porthmadog, Gwynedd)

Silver - *West Berkshire, Maggs Magnificent Mild* (Thatcham, Berks)

Bronze - *Highland, Dark Munro* (Birsay, Orkney)

Stouts

(One of the classic types of ale, a successor in fashion to 'porter'. Usually a very dark, heavy, well-hopped bitter ale, with a dry palate, thick creamy head, and a good grainy taste)

Gold - *Hop Back, Entire Stout* (Salisbury, Berks)

Silver - *Spitting Feathers Old Wavertonian* (Waverton, Chester)

Bronze - *Spire, Sgt. Pepper Stout* (Chesterfield, Derbyshire)

Porters

(Dark, slightly sweetish but hoppy ales made with roasted barley)

Gold - *Wickwar, Station Porter* (Wickwar, Gloucestershire)

Silver - *E&S Elland, 1872 Porter* (Elland, West Yorkshire)

Bronze - *Acorn, Old Moor Porter* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire)

Barley Wines

(Strong, rich and sweetish ale, usually over 1060 OG, dark in colour, with high condition and a high hop rate)

Gold - *Robinson's Old Tom* (Stockport, Cheshire)

Silver - *Durham, Benedictus* (Bowburn, Co Durham)

Bronze - *Mighty Oak, Saxon Song* (Maldon, Essex)

THE WHEEL

A Traditional English Pub

100 Main Road, Naphill, HP14 4QA
 01494 562 210



A guaranteed warm welcome from
 Mark, Claire and all the staff

WE ARE IN THE 2008 GOOD BEER GUIDE!

Four Real Ales

Traditional Pub Grub

Live Music, Quiz Nights and Curry Nights

BEER FESTIVAL 4TH - 6TH APRIL

Opening Times

Monday 4.30-11pm, Tuesday-Thursday 12-2.30/4.30-11pm
 12-12pm Friday and Saturday, 10-10.30pm Sunday

For our events list please visit our website
www.thewheelnaphill.com

EXCITING VACANCY

Exciting Vacancy! You Could Close This Pub!

Closum and Nockemdown are a leading pubco who have successfully delivered large profits for their shareholders through an innovative strategy of transforming underperforming assets into tangible cash flow – i.e. acquiring pubs which are invariably sold within a couple of years for private housing or demolished for development.

The company sees great growth opportunities in the current market and is looking to recruit a number of new managers. These individuals will be expected to possess the extraordinary ability to take over a viable pub business and completely destroy it within a short period of time. Outstanding applicants will be able to do this with such efficiency that the pubco will be able to obtain change-of-use permission within months.

The successful candidates will need to demonstrate specific competencies (cunningly disguised as incompetencies) in the following areas. A description of each of the desired skills follows below, along with some particularly outstanding examples of putting this behaviour into practice.

Customer Focus

Skill: Applicants have no aptitude for customer service. An ethos of ‘the customer is always wrong’ should be evident. Their pub will be expected to have a hostile and threatening environment which will deter all but the most hardened alcoholics or desperate underage drinkers from setting foot inside.

Example: This may be demonstrated by an innate genius for plain rudeness, especially if liberal use is made of foul and abusive language. Customers who complain about poor and slovenly service should naturally be barred – who do they think they are? On no account should the management ever demean itself by actually serving a customer.

Communication Skills

Skill: Poor communications skills are mandatory. Preference will be given to applicants who hold exceptionally offensive opinions – particularly on race, gender, religion, politics, football – and don’t give a stuff what anyone else in earshot thinks about them. It’s a free country. Grating, obnoxious and incomprehensible voices that carry through the pub like a foghorn are a particular asset.

Example: The pub’s ambience can be made absolutely intolerable if an ear-splitting voice is combined with playing the television at full volume – particularly if inappropriate and inane programming is carefully selected (e.g. the ‘Bass Hitz in Da Hood’ channel is ideal for a thatched village pub).

Business Skills

Skill: Candidates will be expected to have no general management skills whatsoever, especially in financial matters. The ability to compare income to expenditure is not a skill that is particularly highly rated.

Example: A poor credit history is no impediment. We value managers who have no intention of paying their bills – moving on to the next pub before being taken to court is great if you have the knack of getting away with it.

Management Ability

Skill: The ability to create, manage and motivate a highly performing team is not important at all. Staff turnover is a key indicator of a pub’s success – or lack of it. If many staff can’t last out the first day then so what? It’s just an example of how these wasters think the world owes them a living.

Example: A great way of losing regulars for good is to employ their 18-year-old daughters as barmaids and make lecherous and ribald

comments about their appearance at every opportunity – and encouraging your mates to do the same – all within the family members’ earshot. It will help with staff turnover and you might even cause a fight and then be able to bar the over-sensitive whingers.

Hygiene

Skill: No particular credit will be given for adherence to good hygiene policies – a relaxed attitude to minor details like lipstick on glasses will be encouraged. It shows that the pub appeals to women, after all.

Example: A thrifty attitude towards the provision of unnecessary luxuries like loo roll and soap in the toilets will be encouraged – don’t customers have homes to go to? It goes without saying that paying a cleaner is an unnecessary expense.

Kitchen Proficiency

Skill: Equal preference will be given to both extremely lazy and spectacularly talentless cooks.

Example: If a pub can’t manage on frozen, microwaved food then a long, pretentious menu of expensive dishes is to be encouraged, particularly if it features first round ‘Masterchef’ failure specials like prawns in chocolate sauce or steak in pomegranate jus.

Bar Knowledge

Skill: No expertise in the running of a bar is required. An ability to reduce turnover of real ale until it turns to vinegar would be viewed favourably.

Example: Try and fool those unwelcome *CAMRA* types. Merely keep adding extra handpumps to your range, ensuring that an increasing amount of unsold beer stays on tap. What a laugh it is when they sample each of your half-a-dozen month-old real ales and try not to spit it out. Some of them even politely say it’s ok – more fool them – the last thing we want is for our pubs to get in the *Good Beer Guide!*

General Motivation and Work Ethic

Skill: None required. Enthusiasm of the sort that might lead to opening the pub all day is definitely to be discouraged. The more irregular the applicant’s preferred working hours the better.

Example: An aversion to sunlight will help if this allows the pub to have its curtains shut all day, further reducing the chance that anyone might wander in.

References

References may be invented. We will rarely check them. However, if a candidate has a large bunch of criminal friends, possibly made in a young offenders’ institution, who can be persuaded to act anti-socially in the candidates’ pub it will be looked on positively.

Equal Opportunities

We are a true equal opportunities employer: we are proud to say we employ positive discrimination in favour of those who do not have the ability to do the job. Therefore, the many experienced publicans who have worked hard to make successes of their businesses may find their applications to be unsuccessful.

Applications are invited from both individuals and couples. Couples with marital problems that involve blazing rows in public are especially welcomed. Apply to Charlie Mackle at www.closeandnockemdown.co.uk.



FOOTBALL AND REAL ALE REVISITED



I usually have a day out seeking real ale between the Christmas and New Year jovialities, and this festive period was no different. I'd also wanted to snag a football match, as I hadn't been to a match so far this season (due to work commitments and, er, beer festivals).

So on Saturday 29th December, I caught the 9.14am Marlow 800 bus over the hill to High Wycombe and then the 9.59am train up 'to the

smoke'. Having purchased a £16 travel card, this gave me free access to all of the zones in the London area, right out to Barnet, my chosen destination, after a few ale samples along the way, purely medicinal of course and to keep out the chilly winter wind.

The Wycombe to Marylebone train was non-stop and after catching the tube, changing at Baker Street, I emerged at Euston Square

tube station to attend the 11am sabbatical at the **Doric Arch**, outside Euston mainline train station.

Being the first paying customer, I quickly chose the **Joseph Holt Bitter** (4.0), one of ten real ales on handpump. This was my first attendance here since the pub's name change from its heady '**Head of Steam**' days. Other beers on were such like **Castle Rock Harvest Pale** (3.8) and **Hop Back Summer Lightning** (5.0), but the **Holts Bitter** selection was a no-brainer. A superb beer!

Pit-stop en-route to the football was Hampstead, and with three **GBG2008** entries and a micro-brewery brew pub in the vicinity, a place that I have wanted to visit for a while now. Fourth stop on the Northern line from Euston, I made my way to the furthest port of call, **Spaniards Inn**, in Spaniards Road. Now when I say that it was a good stretch of the legs to the **Spaniards**, it would be the understatement of the decade. It would have been quicker to have walked to Spain from Scotland.

On arrival at the pub, my throat was as dry as the inside of a vacuum cleaner hose, and tasted like it as well, so the **Harveys Sussex Best Bitter** (4.0) didn't last long in my pint pot. A classy pub/restaurant with six well-kept ales alongside **Trappist** bottled beers and a popular lunch-time dining venue to boot. The

Spring Mild available from 1st March 2008

Open Monday to Saturday, 9.00 am to 5.00 pm

Terrick, Aylesbury, HP17 0TQ
Telephone: 01296 613647
www.chilternbrewery.co.uk

Established since 1980

Great British & World Beers
– delivered direct to your door!

20 Real Ales ... JUST £39.95 (plus £5.99 p&p)
PLUS 3 bottles of leading Continental beer absolutely FREE!

Now available... Second selection

Join the CAMRA Beer Club and discover a great way to enjoy a whole range of specialist bottled beers
www.camrabeerclub.co.uk

HAMPSTEAD PUBS

five other untried real ales consisted of *Courage Best* (4.0), *Adnams Bitter* (3.7), *Fuller's London Pride* (4.1), *Adnams Yuletide* (4.5) and *Theakston Old Peculier* (5.6). Henry Kelly of Saturday night 'Game for a Laugh' fame, DJ, and host of 'Going for Gold', was also enjoying his real ale in the bar.

After the arduous hike back to the town centre, the **Duke of Hamilton** was sited in a side-road just off the main drag, welcomed me with *Fuller's London Pride* (4.1), *London Porter* (5.4) and *ESB* (5.5), *Adnams Yuletide* (4.5) with *Adnams Tally-Ho* (7.0) on gravity dispense. I plumbed for the *Yuletide*, a new seasonal tangy brew from the Southwold brewery. A good solid enough pub.

Next on the agenda was the **Holly Bush**, not far from 'The Duke', tucked in a tiny side-street. This is a classic cavernous back-street local with wood-panelling, bucketfuls of character and not surprisingly romantically atmospheric. Five beers on view here, *Harveys Sussex Best Bitter* (4.0), *Fuller's London Pride* (4.1), *Adnams Broadside* (4.7), *Batemans XXXB* (4.8) and *Sharp's Pure Eden Ale* (4.3), the latter being my choice. A cosy pub, my favourite and well worth seeking out.

A stroll down to the bottom of the hill sourced the **Horseshoe** bar and dining establishment. This gastro-style bar doubles as a micro-brewery, so it was only good and proper to sample their brewing efforts. A steak and ale pie, mashed potato and sprout tops was duly washed down with *McLaughlin Hampstead Summer* (3.6) and then *McLaughlin Hampstead Christmas* (5.5). Two tasty, brewed on site beers, guest ale being *Adnams Yuletide* (4.5), a popular beer in Hampstead, accompanying fine cuisine, rounded off my pre-match ale exploits.

So in brief, four Hampstead alehouses of all different spectrums, from a fantastic Grade 2 back-street locals' pub in the *CAMRA* Inventory (**Holly Bush**), to the more minimalist modern contemporary pub/bar



(**Horseshoe**) serving good food and home-brewed real ale. All the beer that I tried was in very good nick and where applicable, rightfully in the *Good Beer Guide 2008*.

The highlight of the afternoons entertainment came to a pleasing conclusion with Chesterfield triumphing over Barnet 2-0, a good end to end affair with the correct scoreline on the balance of play. I'm a closet Spirerite by the way!

The day was put to bed with a couple of local ales back at the **Falcon (Wetherspoons)**, High Wycombe with cider guru Elvis Evans. A pint of the awarding winning *Vale Black Beauty Porter* (4.3) and seasonal brew *Twelve Days* (5.5) from the **Hook Norton** brewery was a satisfying finale to another footy and ale extravaganza.

Sgt. Sheppard (on Capital manoeuvres).

Pictures from *North London CAMRA*.

OLD LUXTERS

Farm Brewery
Est. 1980

CASK & BOTTLE CONDITIONED
REAL ALES from £1.50 per pint

Bitter 4% ABV
Special 4.5% ABV
Dark Roast 5% ABV

Also available in ½ gal carry keg,
36pt polypin and 72pt firkin

Come and taste before you buy!
Monday - Friday 9am - 6pm (5pm Winter)
Weekends 11am - 6pm (5pm Winter)

Old Luxters Farm Brewery
Hambleden, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire RG9 6JW
Tel: 01491 638330 Fax: 01491 638645
Email: enquiries@chiltenvalley.co.uk
Web: www.chiltenvalley.co.uk



The Queens Head

Temple Square
Aylesbury HP20 2QA
Tel: 01296 415484

Five Real Ales
all at £2.60 per pint

Lunchtime food
12-4 Seven Days a Week

Live music every Saturday
Jam Night - Last Sunday each month

Five minutes walk from
both Rail & Bus Stations!

A REAL ALE PAGEANT FIT FOR THE 'DUKE'



(covering beer styles, mild, bitter, stout and wheat beer), over the festive period. Landlord Mr. John Hudson sourced the beers from three breweries, *Coach House*, *Northern* and *Brimstage*, while in the area visiting relatives.

Awaiting their turn to accompany the *Harveys Sussex Best Bitter* (4.0), the pub's stalwart and regulars' favourite ale, were three *Coach House* ales comprising of *Gunpowder Mild* (3.8), *Innkeeper's Special Reserve* (4.5) and a very tasty *Xmas Pud* (4.4). A trio of *Northern* brewery ales constituted *Star* (4.3), *One-Der-Ful Wheat* (4.7) and their December 'Soul Theme' monthly special *Deep Dark Secret* (5.2), a rather moreish stout.

But the highlight of this northern breweries exodus was the micro-brewery *Brimstage*. All four of this Wirral based brewery's ales made the trip south and were well received by both regulars and general pub goers.

Rhode Island Red Bitter (4.0), *Scarecrow* (4.2) and *Oystercatcher Stout* (4.6), the stout particularly memorable, all featured. *Brimstage's* fourth on parade was arguably the best beer that I've tasted in 2007. *Trappers Hat Bitter* (3.8) was a superb golden, easy drinking, crisp, light brew, similar to the *White Horse Brewery Bitter* (3.6), when first brewed years ago, but the *Trappers Hat* being more pronounced.

All eleven beers were 'bang on' with the 'black beer' stouts proving popular. It just shows that there is a call for varied beer styles in the not so soft south, even in Marlow. Well done 'the landlord', looking forward to your next real ale consignment from deepest Dorset, for their local beers from the *Isle of Purbeck* and the newcomer *Dorset Piddle*.

The Marlow Maverick

New *GBG 2008* entrant the *Duke of Cambridge*, Queens Road, Marlow, featured no fewer than eleven Cheshire/Wirral real ales

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.

Your Details Applications will be processed within 21 days

Title Surname
 Forename(s)
 Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)
 Address
 Postcode
 Email address
 Tel No (s)

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title Surname
 Forename(s)
 Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

Please state which CAMRA newsletter you found this form in?

	Direct Debit	Non DD
Single Membership (UK & EU)	£20 <input type="checkbox"/>	£22 <input type="checkbox"/>
Joint Membership (Partner at the same address)	£25 <input type="checkbox"/>	£27 <input type="checkbox"/>

For Young Member and concessionary rates please visit www.camra.org.uk or call 01727 867201.

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

Save money by paying by Direct Debit!

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

Please fill in the form and send to:
Campaign for Real Ale Ltd.
 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To the Manager Bank or Building Society
 Address
 Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder

Bank or Building Society Account Number **Branch Sort Code**

Reference Number

Originators Identification Number 9 2 6 1 2 9

FOR CAMRA OFFICIAL USE ONLY This is not part of the instruction to your Bank or Building Society
 Membership Number
 Name Postcode

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society
 Please pay CAMRA Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with CAMRA and, if so will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s) Date

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

The Direct Debit Guarantee
 This Guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer.

● This Guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the Scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society.
 ● If the amounts to be paid or the payment dates change CAMRA will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed.
 ● If an error is made by CAMRA or your Bank or Building Society, you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid.
 ● You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us.

WINSLOW BEER FESTIVAL 2008

This year is the third time the Lions Club of Winslow and the *Milton Keynes CAMRA* branch have collaborated to hold this event. Primarily organised as a Charity Fund Raising event for the local Lions Club it raised over £ 4,500 the first year and last year nearly £ 7000, all distributed to local charities, but has now become a very strong social event!

The Festival is held in the Winslow Public Hall, off Elmfields Way with ample parking and on bus routes from Buckingham and Aylesbury, and has proven to be well suited for the purpose of this Festival. Last year over 40 beers, lagers and ciders were available at tip-top condition, from as far afield as Cornwall, Norfolk and Scotland.

Last year's festival saw an attendance of nearly 300 people amongst whom was the Rt. Hon. Iain Duncan-Smith who was seen to be pulling a pint of 'Thatchers' Cider, I am sure she wouldn't have minded. He has local family connections with the then recently built public house on Swanbourne the **Betsy Wynne** so was pleased to add his support.

This year's Festival is to be held over three sessions during the 14th and 15th March. Each session will cost £5 for entrance and includes a commemorative Pint Glass and Official Programme with Beer Tasting Guide; light refreshments will also be available. (card carrying **CAMRA** members will receive a complimentary Drink Voucher).

The session timings are: Friday evening from 6pm – 11pm, Saturday afternoon from 11am – 7pm and the Saturday evening session runs from 7pm-11pm.

This year, the final matches of the RBS Six Nations Rugby, the matches between Italy and Scotland, England and Ireland and Wales and France will be shown on a large screen during the Saturday afternoon session.

So why not go along and enjoy the Rugby and be surrounded by all that quality beer and cider!

Tickets are available from the **Bell Hotel** in Market Square, Winslow from the 1st February or visit the festival website (www.winslowlions.org.uk/beerfestival) for further details. Sponsors are welcome and details are also available from the website.



ENJOY LOCAL REAL ALE

With our recycleable **9 PINT MINI-CASK**

- CAMRA & SIBA Award-winning Ales
- Brewed using only natural ingredients
- Also in 2 litre, 3 litre, 18pt, 36pt and 72pt containers
- Available "bright" and ready to drink
- New BREWERY SHOP now open Weekdays 9-6* and Saturdays 9-12 * 9-5 Mon/Tue

APPROVED FOR HOME USE

Visit the new Brewery Shop or place your order by calling Lynne on **01442 890721**

info@tringbrewery.co.uk | www.tringbrewery.co.uk

WHAT MAKES A BEER FESTIVAL GREAT?

WINSLOW BEER festival 2008

Now in its third year, Winslow Beer Festival should prove once again that great beers, superb company and a bit of organisation produce a magnificent event, raising poodles for local charities whilst ensuring a great time for all those involved, including the Lions of Winslow, the MK CAMRA, all the excellent sponsors and the public who drink the beer!

We are building on our success year by year!

Cheers!! Hope to see you on the 14th and 15th March 2008!!

Visit www.winslowlions.org.uk/beerfestival.htm

PRINT SPONSORED BY PRINT QUICKLY 01235 712288

REAL ALE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Without the *Good Beer Guide* you'd struggle to find a real ale pub – let alone a *good* real ale pub, because perhaps of the domination of *Guinness* and the 'fizz' culture that pervades drinking Irish stouts and the associated ales and lagers. The chief brewery is *Whitewater* and you'll find a lot of their beers throughout the province. We couldn't find anything from *Hilden* until we got to the brewery tap in Lisburn just outside Belfast. You'll find quite a few British ales mixed with the *Whitewater* beers, and they become (sadly) a real option when you get a little fed up with *Whitewater*.

This trip with a friend was mostly Belfast, currently undergoing a large construction boom as the peace accord is now in place. The hotel of choice was the rather pricey (but was on 'offer') Radisson, which clearly catered for business travellers by pricing everything through the roof. For example, two double *Bushmills* (the pubs closed at 11pm in the main) were £11.60! Ouch! Never again.

One of the nearest pubs was the *Bridge House*, a *JD Wetherspoons* pub, a pub group committed to cask ale and Northern Ireland was no exception. There were four interesting beers of which *Titanic Steerage* was one. Incidentally the smoking ban had come into force a week earlier, initially it looked like the pubs were packed, people spilling out into the streets to escape the crush. Nope, no smoking in the pub – we dived in the pubs to get some fresh air, ah, the novelty!! A trip down the Falls Road had smokers out in the streets, if they can enforce the ban there, they can enforce it anywhere! Beer price was £3.18/pint. The highlight of Belfast was the *Crown*, an incredibly ornate pub (see the photograph on the opposite page) composed of small rooms for privacy, it's a shame the wooden panelling was often covered with graffiti. Each room had a bell (never tried) and a rough metal strip for striking matches. All three *Whitewater* beers were delicious, one was the 4.5% *Belfast Ale*, a rather heavy malty beer, not for a session.

The *Kitchen Bar* was north of the centre and difficult to get to (but easy to see) because of all the construction around it. The football match on, was Oxford v Exeter – interesting! (Sort of). The *Whitewater Mill bitter* was £2.75/pint, bland and out of condition. Oh dear.

Next to the pub was the *Bittle Bar*, not in the *GBG* but we gave it a go. Interesting, very ornate and dominated by a central painting. No real ale so we tried a double *Bushmills* (the distillery is near the Devil's Causeway in the north). £4.40 each!

The *John Hewitt*, was a listed *GBG* entry but we were turned away – too busy.

McHugh's, a listed *GBG* entry had no real ale. Towards the end of the evening we blundered into a bar (any bar) and made a pact with the devil and drank *Guinness*.

Outside of Belfast was the seaside resort town of Bangor, reached by the efficient railway system. I lost a ticket on the way back from one of our crawls, I explained this to an official and he radioed the ticket inspector to let me off paying a fine – which was nice. *Gillespie's Place* was a seaside pub and featured one hand pump of *Belfast Ale*.

What was interesting though is that it had a good range of *Strangford Lough* beers, only available (anywhere) in bottled format. Adjacent (and part of) to the pub was an off-licence which stocked them all. We tried *Legbiter*, a quaffable citrusy bottle-conditioned beer.

The *Dirty Duck Ale House* was located in Hollywood, another 'burb' of Belfast. Three beers were on offer here – all from *Tom Woods*. Initially



THE WHIP INN

TRADITIONAL ENGLISH COUNTRY PUB

OPEN ALL DAY EVERY DAY

◆ FIVE REAL ALES AVAILABLE ◆

WE ARE IN THE 2008 GOOD BEER GUIDE!

SOAK UP THE BEER WITH HOMEMADE PUB GRUB

Food Available lunchtime 12 - 2.30

Evenings Mon. 6pm - 8pm, Tue - Sat. 6.30pm to 9pm

SUNDAY LUNCH 12 - 3 pm

WHIP INN FOR A PINT!

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

DRINKING WITH RESERVATIONS



College Green Brewery is a small concern set up in 2006. A restaurant in the 'Botanic' (this is the university area) district of Belfast was located, well, actually we found it by accident. Hooray, we thought, some new beers! In we went, like newborn 'tickers' to demand our prize, 'do you have a reservation sir', 'no', 'well, you have to make a booking', 'we just want to have a beer', 'you can't have a beer without a food and to have that you need to make a booking'. Oh bother, we got away with our soup at *Hilden*, but here we were stuffed.

So there you have it, some pubs with real ale, not all good, some with 'mainland' beers and some where you have to have a meal to get the beer. Northern Irish beers are good, but you have to look – I suggest you shave your hair off, to avoid wanting to pull it out. And don't forget those reservations.
Lemon Snail

the pub was packed and we had to wait outside, I only had a t-shirt (doh!) on and drew some comfort from the patio heaters, the wind however continued to suck heat out of me. We eventually found a table and had a good session there, left, missed the train and came back for one more!

Hilden Brewery is based in another 'burb' called Lisburn. It's not easy to find as it's along a road lined with large houses and hedges, we overshot in the pouring rain and it wasn't fun. The brewery when we found it is also a restaurant – it's not for casual drinkers you have to eat something to enjoy the beer! We ordered a rather delicious soup to get the beer which was *Molly Malone's Porter*, beer of the holiday as far I was concerned, there was also *Hilden Ale*, but I was too busy in paradise for that. Even after closing the lady asked if we wanted another beer – and you can guess the rest....





The Harrow

4 Cambridge Street,
Aylesbury,
Bucks. HP20 1RS
Tel: 01296 336243

- *Historical 17th Century Building with a modern feel*
- *Five Great Real Ales*
- *Large selection of world beers and wines*
 - *Superb Homecooked food*
Served Friday - Monday 12 till 4
Tuesday - Thursday 12 till 7
- *Friendly and inviting atmosphere*
 - *Heated Courtyard Garden*
 - *Regular Live Music*

*The Harrow, 4 Cambridge Street, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP20 1RS
Tel: 01296 336243*



Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

FEBRUARY**Monday 4th BRANCH A.G.M.**

8.00pm Kings Head, Aylesbury.

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

Tuesday 5th BRIGHTON CRAWL

Full Details appear on page 4.

Monday 11th LONG CRENDON SOCIAL

8.45pm Chandos Arms, 9.15pm Churchill Arms, 9.45pm Eight Bells

Wednesday 13th PRE-GBG SELECTION MEETING

8.30pm, Bull, Stoke Mandeville

Tuesday 19th NORTH-EAST SOCIAL

8.45pm Boot, Soulbury, 9.30pm Swan, Stewkley

Saturday 23rd SOCIAL WITH MID-CHILTERN BRANCH

Noon Red Lion, Marsworth, 3pm Anglers' Retreat, Marsworth

Monday 25th TYLERS GREEN/FORTY GREEN SOCIAL

9pm Horse and Jockey, Tyler's Green, 10pm Royal Standard of England, Forty Green

Friday 29th HADDENHAM CRAWL

Start Green Dragon, 8pm, then Red Lion, Rose and Thistle, King's Head, Rising Sun.

MARCH**Saturday 1st CONCRETE COW BREWERY VISIT WITH MID-CHILTERN BRANCH**

Noon Milton Keynes. Full details will appear on the website.

Monday 3rd FINAL GBG SELECTION MEETING

8.30pm Whip, Lacey Green

Wednesday 12th BRANCH MEETING

8.30pm Three Horseshoes, Burroughs Grove

Friday 21st GOOD FRIDAY BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

Noon Hop Pole, Aylesbury

Wednesday 26th WOOBURN SOCIAL

8.30pm Old Bell, Wooburn Green, 9pm Eagle, Wooburn, 9.30pm

Falcon, Wooburn Moor, 10.15pm General Havelock, Wycombe Marsh.

Monday 31st TOWN CENTRE SOCIAL

8.30pm Falcon, High Wycombe.

APRIL**Monday 7th BRANCH MEETING**

8.30pm, Queen's Head, Aylesbury

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

Cardiff City Hall, Cardiff

**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.

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 April, is 14th March.

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 50p 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).

©Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe CAMRA 2008

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.

Published by the Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe branch of the *Campaign for Real Ale* and printed by *Driftgate Press, 12 Faraday Road, Rabans Lane Industrial Area, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP19 8RY Tel: 01296 484552*

ALL CHANGE

The **Bird in Hand** in Station Road, Princes Risborough celebrated a change of ownership at the beginning of 2008.

The pub was closed for a week for redecoration before a grand, re-opening on 11th January – with the Mayor of Princes Risborough, Cllr Alan Turner, cutting the ribbon.

A number of CAMRA members were tipped off and popped along later on the opening night – and had the most unusual experience these days of only being able to squeeze into the pub. It was standing room only, elbows tucked in, and an expedition to jostle our way to the bar.

The new landlady was a familiar face as she had moved only about quarter of a mile down the road. Mags has run the **Bell** in Princes Risborough for the last couple of years and achieved a very successful transformation in its fortunes.

In ale terms, it went from fizz only to a two real ale pub – and even staged two well-supported beer festivals in the May Bank Holidays. Mags says she intends to continue the beer festivals at the **Bird in Hand** – so watch this space for details.

The **Bird in Hand** has a good real ale pedigree, having been a frequent entry in the *Good Beer Guide* until 2007 when it had to be dropped due to change of licensee.

It is a *Greene King* house and features its *IPA* and *Abbot Ale*. On the opening night *Greene King's* seasonal *Fireside Ale* was also on offer.

The pub is a classic local and is well placed for commuters to enjoy a quick pint or two on the way back from the station. It also has a secluded beer garden at the back, which is very pleasant in the summer – and all year round for smokers.

More Local News



(Continued from page 2)

Geoff, the landlord at the **Rose & Thistle**, is active again following his knee operation. Four real ales generally available, including **Greene King Old Bob** when visited. They now have two rooms for bed and breakfast, newly refurbished, and are continuing their excellent food and regular events are held.

HAZLEMERE

The **Mayflower** has three real ales at the handpumps at present. **Courage Best** (4.0), **Directors** (4.8) and **Fuller's London Pride** (4.1) are available at the bar at this street-corner public house. The lucky landlord also owns a superb 1952 London single-decker green bus in full working order.

Greene King public house the **Queens Head** offers **Morland Original Bitter** (4.0) in this cosy roadside pub.

Enterprise owned local's local, the **Three Horseshoes**, parades **Flowers IPA** (3.6) and **Greene King Old Speckled Hen** (4.5).

HIGH WYCOMBE

Punch Taverns have taken on the ownership of the **Beaconsfield Arms**, and transformed, after a refurbishment, the pub back to a traditional public house with real ale, from that dreadful **McQ's** franchise. Landlady Maxine Chapman has been at the reins since April 2007 and serves hand pumped **Courage Best** (4.0) permanently, with **Youngs Bitter** (3.7) or **Greene King Old Speckled Hen** (4.5) making an occasional cameo appearance.

High Street **Wetherspoons** outlet, the **Falcon**, showcased some interesting guest ales over the festive period. **Vale Black Beauty Porter** (4.3), **Rebellion Santa's Surprise** (4.2), **Loddon Razzle Dazzle** (4.3) and **Twelve Days** (5.5) from the **Hook Norton** brewery, being just a few of the seasonal treats.

The recent refurbishment (October 2007) at the **Scottish & Newcastle** owned **Flint Cottage** has re-introduced real ale into the pub with **Greene King IPA** (3.6) when last visited (and in very good nick too). Lorraine Kececi is the new landlady of this tastefully refurbished pub which is well worth a visit if waiting for a train.

Another recently refurbished pub is the **Half Moon**. This and the re-introduction of real ale (**Timothy Taylor Landlord** (4.3) and **Shepherd Neame Spitfire** (4.5)) have regenerated the pub. Long standing landlords Alan and Doreen Heron have served for two decades at this family run street-corner establishment. The pub is now

turning over five casks of real ale a week and long may this continue.

High Street pub the **Hobgoblin** has had the legendary and infamous **Wychwood Dogs B*****s** (5.2) as a seasonal brew of late.

Sands sole pub, the **Hour Glass**, is to reopen late January/ early February under the leadership of Chris Martin, landlord of the 'Carps', Marlow, as reported in the last issue of the **Swan Supping**. The dotting of i's and crossing of the t's took a lot longer than expected!

A recent visit to the London Road pub the **King George V** surfaced **Fuller's London Pride** (4.1) and **Charles Wells Bombardier** (4.3). Pete Clarke is the landlord of this large refurbished, comfy watering hole with a separate room for pool and a further area for darts.

Another London Road re-opened public house is the **Nags Head** which has hand pumped local brewery beers from **Rebellion** at present. **IPA** (3.7) and January monthly special **Double Agent** (4.4) were reportedly available last month. A weekly Blues night is just one of the attractions staged at this fabled music venue.

KINGSWOOD

The local branch held a social at the **Plough and Anchor** in January for the first time since its upmarket refurbishment. It must be the only local pub to double as an art gallery – with interesting paintings from a Thame art dealer hanging in the entrance. Two real ales were available – **Young's Bitter** and **Fuller's London Pride**.

MARLOW

Spittal Street **Greene King** local the **Carpenters Arms (Carps)**, are to continue with their seasonal special brewery beers. After their festive **Rocking Rudolph** (4.5), January's **Fireside** (4.5) will be replaced with **Swing Low** (4.3) in February for the Six Nations rugby tournament. March sees the launch of **Ruddles Rhubarb** (4.2), a new brew from the **GK** portfolio. More seasonal beers will be available throughout the year!

Marlow's ever-changing real ale emporium the **Duke of Cambridge** (see article on page 18) are carrying on with their 'Steak Nights', on the first Saturday of the month, in 2008. The meal can then be washed down with a pint of **Harveys Sussex Best Bitter** (4.0) or one of their micro and independent brewery beers.

The **Marlow Donkey** has been

accredited with the **Cask Marque** award for serving their **Greene King** real ales at the correct allotted temperature.

The **Royal British Legion** offered two hand pumped real ales when visited in January. **St. Austell Tribute** (4.2) and **Courage Best** (4.0) were available, but these may possibly change. More news in the next issue.

The **Ship** in West Street has re-opened after a recent refurbishment. The pub's toilets are now located to the rear of the building. A fresh lick of paint has brightened up the pub which still serves the same three cask ales. **Brakspear Bitter** (3.4), **Fuller's London Pride** (4.1) and a **Rebellion** brew, **Roasted Nuts** (4.6) when visited, are at the handpumps. The pub's low beams are still present, just ask the lump on my temple, so beware!

MARSH

Horace King, long serving (over forty years) landlord of the **Prince of Wales** is back at the pub after having a triple heart bypass and receiving a new heart valve. We wish him all the best with his recovery.

MARSH GIBBON

On a recent social in the depths of winter we admired the excellent children's play area in the garden of the **Plough** in Marsh Gibbon. We plan to return there in the summer to hold a family social and enjoy the locally brewed **Oxfordshire Ales**.

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**.

PRINCES RISBOROUGH

The **George and Dragon** on the High Street continues to offer a changing selection of real ale. We sampled some excellent **Wychwood Hobgoblin** in January. The pub now has its own informative website: www.georgeanddragonrisborough.co.uk.

STONE

The lease for the last remaining pub in the village is up for sale. The **Rose & Crown** is being offered for sale by **Fleurets**.

THAME

Ciao Baby are holding a beer festival over the weekend of Friday 29th February to Sunday 2nd March. Fifteen cask ales from a selection of microbreweries with several local choices will be available. The ales will include porters, stouts and a range of ABV's plus real cider.

We recently visited the **Star and Garter** on a Thame social and noted the wide range and good quality of their real ale. Four were on offer: **Greene King IPA**, **Abbot Ale**, **Hook Norton Old Hooky** and **Morland Original Bitter**.

WESTON TURVILLE

The **Chequers** was closed for renovations in January, but it is hoping to reopen by St. Valentines Day.

An extensive estate of housing is being built on the former garden of the **Plough**. Amazingly the pub building survives, albeit still boarded up.

TOP BEERS AT THE WHIP

You may recall from **Swan Supping** that the **Whip** in Lacey Green ran a customers' vote for the most popular real ales of the past year with the objective of having the top 10 put on sale again in January.

When the results were counted it was decided to do a top 14 as a precise result was too close to call. The following won through and were available at the **Whip** in the second half of the month.

In ascending order of alcoholic strength they are:

- **Sharp's Doom Bar**
- **Bath Gem**
- **Rebellion Smuggler**
- **Loddon Hullaballoo**

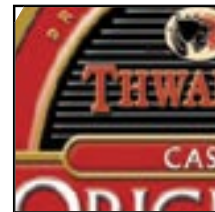
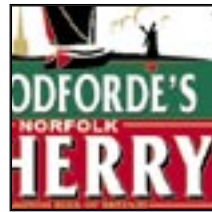
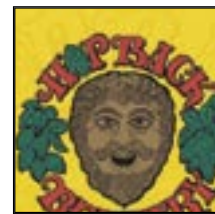
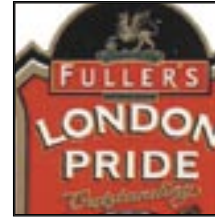
- **Charles Wells Bombardier**
- **Thwaites Lancaster Bomber**
- **Sharp's Own**
- **Shepherd Neame Spitfire**
- **Mole's Rucking Mole**
- **Rebellion Roasted Nuts**
- **Vale Grumpling**
- **Greene King Abbot Ale**
- **RCH East Street Cream**
- **Wychwood Hobgoblin**

It's an interesting mixture of well known ales (that probably were voted for by non-tickers) and some favourite smaller breweries - good to see local breweries well supported.

It was noted that the whole list was composed of traditionally coloured ales -- no golden ones.



“The Perfect Guests....that you want to stay”



Plus

COOPER'S CHOICE OF GUEST BEERS AVAILABLE MONTHLY

Formerly Brewers - Now the leading Independent Supplier of Cask Ales across the Thames Valley & beyond.

Dayla Ltd . 80-100 High St . Aylesbury . Buckinghamshire . HP20 1QZ

Tel: 01296 420261