



Swan Supping

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

FREE

Issue 63

DEC 2007/JAN 2008



LOTS OF WINNERS FOR FOOD PUBS!



As we reported in our last issue, we had two pubs who were finalists in various categories in the **Publican Pub Food Awards** for 2007.

Amazingly the two pubs have won three prizes between them!

The **Royal Standard of England** in Forty Green managed to pick up two awards. The pub was voted **Sunday Lunch Pub of the Year** and chef, Paul Dorehill, who was also a finalist in the **Newcomer of the Year** category, won the **Pub Food Champion of the Year** award.

The pub, which is believed to be the oldest freehouse in England, is renowned for its Sunday lunches and serves an unbelievable number every week and overall food sales have quadrupled over the last two years.

Chef/owner, Paul Dorehill, has helped build up a strong following for traditional British food by using quality ingredients in dishes sympathetic to the pub's history. Paul and co-owner Matthew O'Keefe source the ingredients locally and are willing to try unusual meats and try to use as much of the animal as possible.

The **Beer with Food Pub of the Year** award was won by Claire Bignell of the **Kings Head** in Aylesbury. Claire introduced beer and food matching in the **Farmer's Bar** of the **Chiltern Brewery** pub. The pub runs regular beer and food matching evenings and banquets.

The awards were announced at an evening ceremony held at the Hurlingham Club, London on Wednesday 7th November. Further details of these awards are given on page 4.

The **CAMRA Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe Branch** area also confirmed its foodie status as the last two teams of couples on the Raymond Blanc series 'The Restaurant' were from within our area.

The winners were based at the **Yew Tree** in Frieth while the runners up ran what is now the restaurant **Thirty One** in Kingsbury Square, Aylesbury. In November, the winners, Jeremy and Jane Hooper, opened a gastropub in Thame, in conjunction with Raymond Blanc. Previously the **Old Trout**, it is now known as **Eight at the Thatch**.

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Local News



ASKETT

The **Three Crowns** is currently closed and undergoing some major refurbishment work which is not expected to be completed until the New Year. The good news is that, according to sources close to the work, the building will remain as licensed premises. It may, however, concentrate much more on food than drink, so the extent to which it retains its pub character remains to be seen. It is rumoured, though, that it will still continue to serve real ale. More news next issue, perhaps.

ASTON ROWANT

The **Lambert Arms** will close early in the New Year for a major refurbishment.

AYLESBURY

The **Aylesbury Duck** on Jackson Road, a **Greene King** pub which is one of their '**Hungry Horses**', has been renamed the **Cotton Wheel** after being closed for three weeks while it was being refurbished at a cost of £225k. No, we have no idea why it is now called that either!

The **Bell** is under new management again! We announced in the last issue that the pub had reopened, but

the couple running it packed up after about two months. This **Punch** owned pub is now run by Mike Connell, the landlord of **Weavers**, who took over on November 15th. He is intending to start with one real ale (possibly on gravity) to test the market and food will be available from December.

The new **Ex-Servicemen's Club** opened on the 12th October. It is CIU affiliated and if you are not a member you will have to be signed in by one. They had **Greene King IPA** on offer when visited and the club is currently open from 12-2, 7-11 during the week and all day at weekends. Besides a spacious bar downstairs with darts, pool and a large TV on offer, there is a large function lounge upstairs offering regular family nights and entertainment every Friday.

The **Grapes** is doing well and the difficulty with no smoking cited by the previous landlord seems groundless as customers are happy to wander outside to indulge their habit. Ian Wallace is no longer the manager as Nick Clough, who was trained by Ian, took over at the beginning of November. The only real ale on offer is still **Greene King IPA** and no food is available although it is hoped that the

kitchens will be ready soon. The pub is open from 11am every day, closing at midnight Monday to Wednesday, 2am Thursday to Saturday. The Sunday hours are 11am to 11.30pm.

The **Hobgoblin** will be one of the few pubs open for Christmas day lunch in Aylesbury. They are still offering beer at £2 a pint from Sunday to Friday from noon until 7pm. They always have at least one beer each from **Vale** and **Archers** breweries.

The **Hop Pole** held a very popular Winter Warmer Beer Festival in November. They had a selection of over thirty real ales from all over the British Isles which quite a few local branch members enjoyed at our social there.

The **Plough** has been taking part in the **Ember Inns** promotion called **Caskfresh Festival 2007**. It ran from 12 Oct to 25 Nov; and over the six weeks of the festival they had some 36 different guest ales on offer. The idea was to collect a sticker to place over the logo of the Ale just purchased, as shown on a card, collect six stickers and you get... wait for it... a 'free Limited Edition **Caskfresh** tankard'.

We think the drinking of the beers is more enjoyable than winning the prize, particularly as the card indicated a really good selection available, ranging from **Harviestoun Bitter & Twisted** in the first week to **Kelham Island Easy Rider** in the last week.

It is also all change at the **Queens Head**. Just when the real ale trade had taken off, Bob Perez and Paula Hutchinson are due to leave on the 17th of December. We will have full details of the new incumbents in our next issue.

BOURNE END

Local regional brewery **Butlers** have their bottle-conditioned (RAIB) beers showcasing at the recently opened **Bertrand and Nicholas** delicatessen. **Millers Ale** (4.8) and **Whittles Ale** (5.0) are amongst a myriad of bottled ales available in Furlong Road.

CHINNOR

The new landlord at the **Wheatsheaf** is Roger Romyn who was previously at the Lambert Arms in Aston Rowant. This **Greene King** pub will be refurbished and will then specialise in Italian cuisine.

(Continued on page 23)



The Old Ship

At Cadmore End.....

New licensees Robert and Sara would like to welcome you to the Old Ship, 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 which features

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DARTS AND A DRAY AT THE DAYLA SHOW



Darts fans also had a treat this year as they had the chance to play against two of the most famous names in the sport.

John Lowe and Eric Bristow played single games of 501 against the winners of a draw made on the *Carling* stand (its not all real ale there!) and managed to beat all their opponents.

The main game was an exhibition match between the two ex World champions. After lots of cries of 'ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEE' and 'GAME SHOT', John Lowe emerged as the winner.

Many thanks to Tim Cooper of *Dayla* (pictured behind the driver on the dray) for his kind invitation and his continued support.

David Roe



In November we were kindly invited once again to take part in the *Dayla* Trade Show which was held at the Civic Centre in Aylesbury. This show gives *Dayla*'s suppliers a chance to show their wares to the licensed trade.

Among the many traditional ale brewers there this year was *Hook Norton* from Oxfordshire. They are regular attendees, but this year they managed to stop the traffic in the town centre as they brought their brewery dray with them.

A transporter unloaded the horse and dray in the car park at the **Broad Leys** and then the Aylesbury public were given the sight of how things used to be before the cult of the motor car took over (although any drivers stuck behind it might argue with me!).

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PUBLICAN FOOD AWARD WINNERS



The **Farmers' Bar** at the **Kings Head** in Aylesbury was proud to announce winning the 'Beer with Food Pub of the Year', the national award competition of the Publican, in its Pub Food Awards 2007. Winning the award was announced at an evening ceremony held at the Hurlingham Club, London on Wednesday 7th November.

Mrs Claire Bignell, manageress of the Farmers' Bar, is shown above at the ceremony accompanied by senior bartender Owen Llewellyn and bar manager Neil Pickles.

Claire said that she was 'thrilled and delighted to win. Everyone put in so much hard work to gain the knowledge necessary and ensure the pub was well represented.'

'The pub's classic English meals lend themselves perfectly to being enjoyed with beers, so it is a natural combination. Our customers enjoy being offered something a bit different too.'

Matching the beers and food is quite a skill, but is something not seen these days as concentration has been focused on wine instead.

To win, the pub's staff had to show that they were able to match beers with meals on the menu and also offer informed recommendations to customers thereby helping to improve customers' eating experience. Competition was stiff for this national award and entrants that were short-listed were visited by mystery judges and staff were quizzed by journalists on separate occasions.

The **Farmers' Bar** is the **Chiltern Brewery's** first pub and this award is the second that the **Farmers' Bar** has won in under three years. The first award came within a year of opening the doors when it became our branch *Pub of the Year* for 2006.



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TASTY TRIUMPHS

The second photograph shows chef/owner, Paul Dorehill, and co-owner Matthew O'Keefe of the **Royal Standard of England** in Forty Green. Paul is in the top hat and Matthew is the other guy - the brace of pheasants was bartered with a local for lunch as is their policy for anyone bringing them local game - 'you catch it we cook it'.

The pub was voted **Sunday Lunch Pub of the Year** and Paul, who was also a finalist in the **Newcomer of the Year** category, won the **Pub Food Champion of the Year** award.

The British pub has over the centuries kept with the traditions of using local suppliers. At the **Royal Standard of England** they cook the traditional classics that have been passed on from generation to generation as the favourites which unite families.

By keeping the tradition of buying locally and eating together we are able to keep in touch with our roots. The owners Matthew O'Keefe and Paul Dorehill know that in the pub business this is best way for keeping pubs full of life in the centre of community life.

Food is an emotional journey for the owners of the pub and they believe in cooking simply in the British tradition and sympathetic to the pub's history.

The **Royal Standard of England**, one of the oldest pubs in the country has been selling locally produced food for centuries and these national Publican food Awards recognise the work that has been going on within the pub over the last two years.

The pub has been building up a food experience for its customers which respects good ingredients and simple food presentation. The pub's menu has created a loyal and supportive food following amongst its customers, who appreciate real food not found in the big chain pubs. There is no silly stacking and or 'with a twist'.

The owners source their food supplies locally and directly and the difference shows. Large pub chains cannot deal with small suppliers on an individual basis. Supermarkets today can dictate to the producers what to grow, and at what price. The economies of scale place pressure on the big retailers and large suppliers to import food from further afield, thus burning fuel on unnecessary 'food miles'.

It is the independent pub or free house, like the **Royal Standard of England**, which can bypass these reluctant supply chains and deal with the farmers directly.

Farmers can personally supply their local pub and offer a little personal support and knowledge in how to prepare it. Pubs can help the farmers and the environment by taking the meat cuts and products that others do not want.

We can mutually benefit with small local producers who love what they do and who care about their products so that they can pass on their passion about their food quality to our customers. The independent pub or free house needs the farmer as much as the farmer needs to market their goods. Across the country their futures are linked.

Congratulations must go to both pubs on their awards which we consider to be well deserved!

We intend to have our Annual General Meeting at the **King's Head** in February. This has not been confirmed at the time of going to press, so please check our website (www.swansupping.org.uk) for up-to-date information.

We will organise a social at the **Royal Standard of England** next year. We may well wait until the weather warms up so we can take advantage of the garden there. We could even be persuaded to go there for Sunday lunch!

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OXFORD'S REAL ALE MORSELS



The Eagle and Child

Your local **CAMRA** branch recently turned detective and investigated a suspicious, but persistent, rumour that the city of Oxford had almost a dozen **Good Beer Guide 2008** pubs within walking distance of its centre. We attempted to visit as many of these as is possible during a Saturday afternoon in September.

We started at the **Eagle and Child** in St. Giles. This famous pub dates back to 1650 and is long and narrow inside with two small, but cosy, wood panelled rooms at the front. The bar is towards the middle of the pub. This is useful because the many foreign tourists who visit when it is busy like to form an orderly queue for the bar – which can stretch out towards the front door.

The pub is on the tourist trail partly because of its many literary associations. It was Colin Dexter's local when he was writing the Morse novels. On the wall of the Rabbit Room (as the room nearest

the bar is puzzlingly known) hangs a framed letter signed by some literary noteworthies. The document, written on the 11th March 1948, commends the then landlord on his excellent hospitality. The instigator was C. S. Lewis – not to be confused with DS Lewis, Morse's sidekick, also a frequent drinker at the pub.

The Lewis who wrote the letter was the author of 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' and the other Chronicles of Narnia. Another signatory was a certain J.R.R. Tolkien, whose monumental 'Lord of the Rings' was published six years after the letter was written. These two Oxford dons were regulars at the pub and enjoyed the odd pint of ale or three while incidentally dreaming up some of the most enduring and influential fictional creations of the twentieth century. Anyone who tries to disparage the central role of the pub in English culture should take note.

'The Lord of the Rings' features several fictional pubs and the **Eagle and Child** (or 'Bird and Baby' as Tolkien and Lewis nicknamed it)



The Old Bookbinders

has more similarity to the Prancing Pony in Bree than one might think of a city centre pub. It certainly serves some good beer. I had a pint of **Exmoor Gold**. This is a magic pint – the pioneer of the blonde beer style that has become extremely popular. The **Eagle and Child** lost its place in the **Good Beer Guide** in 2008 but this may be due more to the strength of the competition than any specific fault. All our beer was good.

The **Eagle and Child**, like a lot of Oxford, is owned by one of the colleges – St. John's in this case. Our next pub, the **Lamb and Flag** across the road, is under the same ownership. This is a much larger pub, still with many university associations. It has an extensive range of real ale to choose from – at least half a dozen – and thoroughly deserves its **GBG** entry.

I plumped for a pint of **Best Bitter** from **Palmer's** of Bridport – unusual in this area. Our now quorate foursome of Simon, Dave, Noj and myself left the **Lamb and Flag** about thirty minutes behind schedule for the long-ish walk to Jericho. Our ambitious schedule of doing all the city centre **GBG** pubs was already under threat.

Jericho is Oxford's 'alternative' district. The odd seedy character can be seen rubbing shoulders on the streets with the many cool and trendy wine bar types. We were accosted by a pregnant beggar who peddled some tale about a lost bus fare. The story was barely credible but the imminent baby was certainly authentic. I gave her a bit of cash in exchange for practical information – the directions to our next port of call – the **Harcourt Arms**. (Let's hope she didn't use the money to engage in hazardous drinking!)



The Lamb & Flag

MORE FROM OXFORD

The area was built in the nineteenth century as Victorian workers' accommodation and it seems as if almost every street corner in Jericho has a pub on it (lucky residents). The **Harcourt Arms** is a typical example. We arrived at this **Fuller's** house just before 2pm to find it almost deserted with the landlord on the point of closing up and not particularly excited to see us. Of the standard **Fuller's** selection I opted for a perfectly acceptable pint of *London Pride*. The pub has interesting arty prints hung on the walls and one suspects the atmosphere thaws out a little when the Bohemian evening crowd arrive.

A more convivial atmosphere was offered around the corner at the **Old Bookbinder's Arms**. The pub is close to the Oxford Canal and its exterior featured extensively in the first TV episode of Inspector Morse – 'The Dead of Jericho'. The pub is remembered as a real ale stalwart by some of our branch but has had its ale ups and downs of late.



The King's Arms

the '*Good Book*', we had to admit that Sunday was the only day listed with mid-afternoon opening (Saturday wasn't).

Failing to get a drink at the **Gardener's Arms** we headed onwards to pubs that actually wanted to take our money. Next stop was to be the **Rose and Crown**. As the pub loomed into view along North Parade Avenue my brain went into meltdown on seeing the **Gardener's Arms**

(Continued on page 8)



The Rose and Crown

It has made a welcome re-appearance in the 2008 *Good Beer Guide* – as it's a **Greene King** house that means it must be good! Guest beers are also available. Casks are ranged on a stillage behind the bar but all beer is actually served from the cellar at the side. I enjoyed a pint of my favourite ever Northern beer – *Timothy Taylor's Landlord*.

The **Old Bookbinders** was a very pleasant place to while away a Saturday afternoon. When feeling particularly relaxed one can gaze with interest at the range of unusual objects attached to the ceiling. I recall a train set. Noting that we were starting to become ravenous for a few morsels of food, the landlord rustled up some bowls of cheesy chips, even though the kitchen was officially closed.

This hospitality wreaked havoc with our planned schedule. Next stop was to have been the **Gardener's Arms** on Plantation Road, a little north of Jericho. The pub looked open but when we walked in the landlord refused to serve us – prompting cross words. On re-checking



Notice at the Turf Tavern

NOT THE END OF THE CRAWL!

(Continued from page 7)

on the other side of the road. I headed straight into this other **Gardener's Arms** and ordered a drink, perhaps in a subconscious effort to erase unpleasant memories of the previous beer ordering malfunction. Maybe this **Gardener's Arms** was a hallucination but surely I wouldn't fantasise a **Greene King** pub – and the pint of *IPA* pleased the senses too realistically.

When we eventually reached the **Rose and Crown** over the road, it was Simon's turn to think he was becoming delirious. This pub has entered local **CAMRA** branch legend for its £3.20 pints of *Old Hooky*. The look on Simon's face as his round of four pints came to nearly £13 was priceless.

The pub is painted bright pink but not due to embarrassment at its prices. The landlady explained 'This is North Oxford, you know'. Nice pub with good beer and a pleasant smoker-friendly patio to the rear – but even the tourist traps in the city centre weren't charging that much.

We retreated back down Parks Road towards the cheaper end of town! The **King's Arms** is a huge and prominent **Young's** pub on the junction of Broad Street and Holywell Street. It offered a full range of **Young's** beers – joined by some from their new friends from **Charles Wells**. I sampled the 'Ordinary' *Bitter*. This is generally thought to have survived its move from Wandsworth to Bedford better than its *Special* stablemate.

The **King's Arms** was packed with jolly, bright and optimistic youngsters and their families following a graduation ceremony. On at least our seventh pint, we were certainly jolly too.

Down an alleyway off Holywell Street, close to the **King's Arms**, is the **Turf Tavern**. The pub is completely hidden from the street and tricky

to locate, even after several visits. So how do all the tourists find it so easily? Perhaps they don't have a seven pint disadvantage?

It is a large pub with a central servery that always seems to be too busy and crowded. Nevertheless it has a great deal of historical character and is a champion of real ale – holding many beer festivals. Even the normal selection can often approach double figures.

I enjoyed a pint of *Pale Rider* from **Kelham Island** – the **Champion Beer of Britain 2004** – which slipped down nicely. The patio drinking area has helpful blackboards to explain to the tourists the reasons why they've come to visit the pub. One spells out in detail the pub's association with the World Famous Inspector Morse – though, as our sojourn had showed, this is hardly unique for an Oxford pub.

We had only reached number eight on our hit list of twelve pubs but time was catching up with us – most specifically time to make arrangements to travel home on public transport. Despite being a historic destination city, Oxford is not particularly easy to reach on public transport from most of our branch. The 280 bus from Aylesbury, Haddenham and Thame is practically the only regular connection.

We decided to pause at the **Turf Tavern** and to endeavour to do the remainder of the pubs during the forthcoming university Christmas holidays.

Mike Clarke

< The date for the continuation of the crawl will be Saturday 5th of January 2008. A list of the pubs and the approximate times we intend to visit them can be found in the Branch Social Diary which can be found on page 22. Everyone is welcome to come and join us on the trip and we suggest you use public transport as although there is no obligation to have a pint in every pub, the temptation will be great! -ED>

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REBUILDING AT THE PLOUGH



The **Plough** at Cadsden, which features in the *Line 300 Real Ale Trail*, is currently undergoing a major rebuilding and refurbishment programme.

Planning permission from Wycombe Council was eventually obtained for an extension to

the original pub building which comprises five letting rooms and an extended restaurant/bar area.

As can be seen from the photograph, the previous extension which housed the eating area and toilets has now been demolished.

Work to replace this with the new buildings will be completed during 2008, possibly as early as the end of March.

Fortunately, the pub is continuing to trade during the building works, even though space is limited.

The bar and kitchen remain intact but imaginative use is being made of the pub garden opposite the entrance to provide additional seating.

Post smoking ban, it is fairly common to find more customers outside than inside a pub but it is not often one finds more seats outside. This is less of a disadvantage to the **Plough** than most other pubs as, being located directly on the Ridgeway Long Distance Trail, it continues to provide a welcome refuelling stop to outdoor types.

The **Plough** has always successfully catered for the dining pub market while still maintaining a traditional pub atmosphere so we have high hopes for the completion and unveiling of the new building work in time for the summer season.

The building work has had no ill effect on the beer quality as an excellent pint of *Abbot Ale* testified while compiling the above research.

NEW!!!

AN APPETITE FOR ALE

Fiona Beckett & Will Beckett

A beer and food revolution is under way in Britain and award-winning food writer Fiona Beckett and her publican son, Will, have joined forces to write this lavishly-illustrated, hardback cookbook celebrating beer as a culinary tour de force. This collection of more than 100 simple and approachable recipes has been specially created to show the versatility and fantastic flavour that ale has to offer. With sections on snacks, spreads and dips, soups, pasta and risotto, seafood, chicken and other birds, meat feasts, spicy foods, bread and cheese and sweet treats, it provides countless ideas for using beer from around the world. With an open mind, a bottle opener and a well-stocked larder, this exciting book will allow you to enjoy real food, real ale and real flavour.

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Appetite for ALE
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BRANCH ACTIVITIES

The local branch held its November meeting at the **Pink and Lily** – which is located in the hamlet of Parslow's Hillock on the road between Lacey Green and Great Hampden. We had use of the pub's wonderfully atmospheric Brooke's Bar.

This is a room that has been charmingly preserved in the style of a pre-World War I country pub in honour of a famous visitor – the poet Rupert Brooke. There are various pieces of Brooke memorabilia placed around the bar. Brooke, who died in military action in Greece in 1915 at the age of 27, used to walk regularly in this beautiful part of the Chilterns, finding inspiration for his poetry.

The Brooke Bar also shows healthy testament to the pub's commitment to traditional games: score-sheets from the local cribbage league are posted on the walls. Cribbage boards are also stored around the room. The bar even boasts a historic game – Ringing the Bull – in which a ring suspended on a string from the ceiling must be aimed at a hook on the wall (the bull's horns).

The **Pink and Lily** provided an exceptional range of five real ales on the night of the meeting. Two of these were the regular **Brakspear's Bitter** and **London Pride**. Three special beers were also available: **Tring Old Charlie**, **Loddon Boozy Floozy** and **Vale**



Gravitas. All were sampled and all were of uniformly excellent quality.

With five good real ales on offer it would be a shame for anyone to have to drive to the pub – and there is an alternative. The **Pink and Lily** is within a 20 minute walk of the Line 300 bus route and features in the recently published guide produced by the local branch.

Branch Dinner

We held our annual branch dinner at the **Green Dragon** in Haddenham.

Eleven members and wives once again enjoyed the food in this award winning pub and washed it down with ample helpings of **Caledonian Deuchars IPA** and **Wadworth 6X**.

Many thanks to Pete and Sue for another great evening.

Branch Trips

We are already planning trips for next year but we would welcome your input.

We are heading to Brighton in early February and we will be making our annual pilgrimage to the Black Country at the beginning of July (it looks like our usual concern about clashing with the football won't be too much of a problem!). We intend to go on a few brewery visits and we will organise a few more pub crawls either within the branch or up in London.

However, we have done all these things before and no matter how much we enjoy them, it tends to be the same people doing the enjoying.

The other 90% of the branch must want to go somewhere! Please contact us and tell us!

The George and Dragon Hotel

Set in the heart of historic West Wycombe village



A very merry Xmas from the team at the George and hope to see you over the festive period

- 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
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Open All Day

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Traditional Sunday Roasts
Served From Noon Until 10pm
Booking Advisable

Cask Ales (with a regularly changing guest ale)
a wide selection of Beers, Wines, Soft Drinks
and Hot Beverages

Quiz Night every Tuesday — Free Buffet Included
Private Functions, Buffets and Parties catered for
BOOKINGS STILL BEING TAKEN FOR CHRISTMAS
FREE NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY - ALL WELCOME!

LINE 300 GUIDE UPDATE



Our comprehensive guide to the pubs along the Arriva Line 300 bus route between Aylesbury and Wycombe is still available.

It has so far proved to be very popular and we are considering doing further guides in the future. One possibility is the Line 40 between Thame and High Wycombe. This has the same advantage as the Line 300 in that it lies entirely

within our branch boundaries, so we already have all the pubs on our database. A lot of updating will have to be done, so if anyone wants to help us visit some of the pubs...

UPDATES

However, as is the case with all guides, some changes take place and mistakes are found!

The telephone number for the **Broad Leys** in Aylesbury is no longer 423727 but is 01296 399979. Further details of the pub can be found on their website www.thebroadleys.co.uk.

The **Three Crowns** in Askett (pictured) is currently closed and undergoing some major refurbishment work which is not expected to be completed until the New Year. The good news is that, according to sources close to the work, the building will remain as licensed premises. It may, however, concentrate much more on food than drink, so

the extent to which it retains its pub character remains to be seen. It is rumoured, though, that it will still continue to serve real ale.

Work is also going on at the **Plough**, Cadsden, and full details appear on page 9.

Copies of the guide can be obtained by sending an A5 stamped and addressed envelope to the editor (address details on page 22) or by joining us on one of our branch socials (also on page 22) and it will cost you precisely nothing!



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

LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

Vale Brewery

Vale Brewery has received four awards at the *Society of Independent Brewers Association Midlands Beer Competition*.

The competition judged at the Nottingham *CAMRA* Beer Festival had 158 entries. *Vale* collected awards for:-



Gravitas – Gold: Premium Beers

Gravitas – Silver: Overall Champion Beer

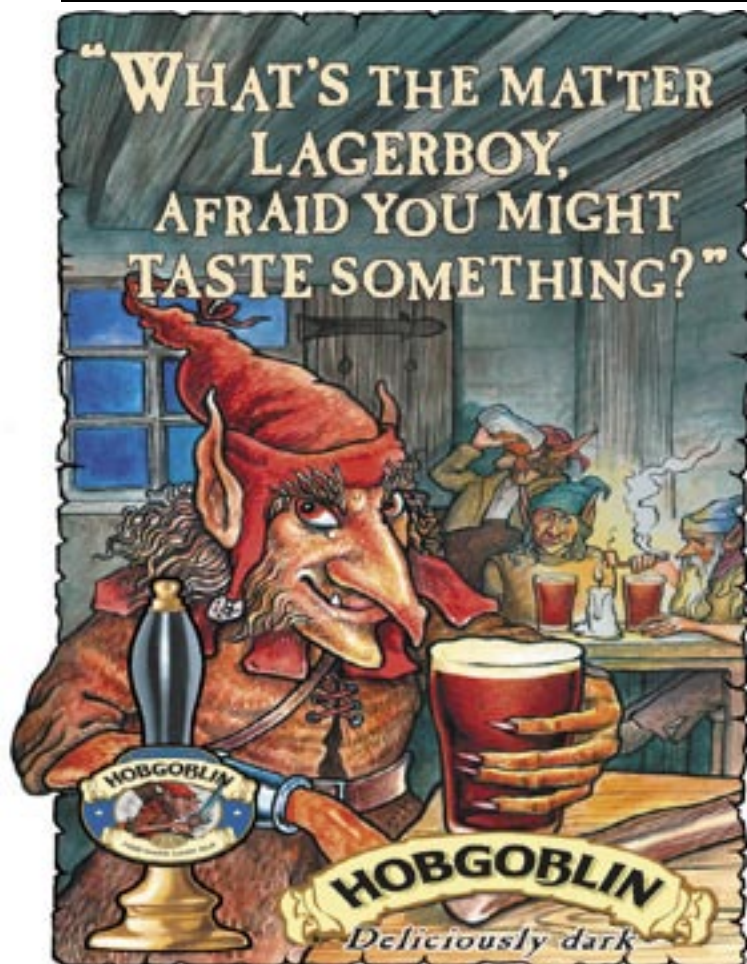
VPA – Silver: Best Bitters

Black Swan Mild – Bronze: Mild

These follow recent awards at the Reading and Peterborough *CAMRA* Beer Festivals.

Mark Stevens of *Vale Brewery* was 'delighted to hear the exceptional news' and pleased 'that three different styles of beers won awards at such a prestigious event.'

Vale beers are available and can be ordered direct from the new brewery in Brill as either polypins or minipins. The shop there has been refurbished and is now fully stocked with wine as well as beer.



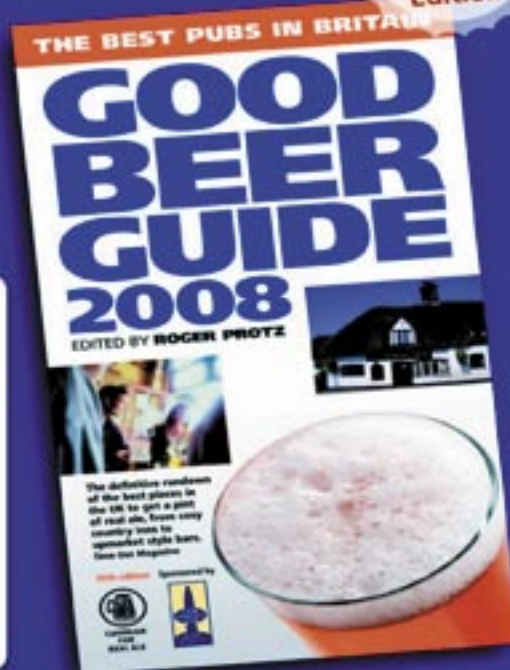
THE GOOD BEER GUIDE 2008

The Good Beer Guide is the long-established pub guide beloved by beer enthusiasts. Featuring 4,500 of the UK's top real ale pubs, it contains details of the beers they serve, opening hours and addresses and additional information on food, amenities for families and atmosphere.

As well as being a pub guide, the book contains information on all of the country's breweries from the largest company to the smallest microbrewery. Tasting notes for the vast majority of beers brewed in the UK are also included. *This Guide is indispensable for beer lovers and features a selection of articles on beer, brewing and pubs.*

You can buy the Good Beer Guide from bookshops, but if you purchase it directly from CAMRA we make more money that can then be ploughed back into campaigning. The new edition will be published in September and you can place your order now.

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Only 250 available

Limited edition, individually numbered 35th anniversary tankard priced at £19.95

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- For CAMRA members only
- RRP £19.99 – but available to CAMRA members at a special price of £14.99
- Features two ribbon bookmarks
- Special binding
- Exclusive limited edition print run
- Not available in bookshops
- Order your copy now before they sell out!

HOW TO ORDER

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Phone: To order by credit card please phone 01727 867201 during office hours.

Online: Please visit www.camra.org.uk/shop

14TH VALE OF AYLESBURY BEER FESTIVAL

At the end of October we held the 14th Vale of Aylesbury Beer Festival at the Community Centre in Eskdale Road, Stoke Mandeville.

As before it was held to raise money for the **Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity** (the new name for the **Friends of Florence Nightingale House**).

We had 29 different beers, three traditional ciders and two perries and the total raised was nearly £4000.

Branch members gave up their time to help set up the festival and then serve the beers to the eager punters. The people serving looked especially good in the T-shirts that had been kindly provided for them by **Vale Brewery**.

The visitors to the festival had the chance to vote for their favourite beers and the results are as follows:-



CIDER/PERRY WINNER

*Mr Whitehead's
Cirrus Minor*



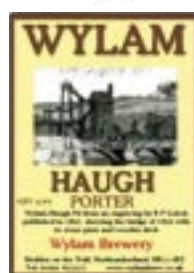
MILD/LIGHT BITTER WINNER

*Nottingham
Rock Ale Mild*



BITTERS AND SPECIAL
BITTERS WINNER

*Tring
Headless Pedlar*



STRONG BEERS WINNER &
BEER OF THE FESTIVAL

*Wylam
Haugh Porter*

A *Beer of the Festival* certificate will be presented to **Wylam Brewery** in the new year. A trip up to Heddon on the Wall in Northumberland seems to be in order!

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New Year**

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FREE glass hire

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Sat 9am - 6pm**

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pint containers

**Visit the shop
see the brewery
try the beers**

www.rebellionbeer.co.uk

Rebellion Beer Company
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Marlow Bottom, SL7 3LT

01628 476594

TOP TEN LIES TOLD BY LANDLORDS

1

A Warm Welcome Awaits

Mass-produced, 'olde worlde' pub signs often proclaim a 'warm and hearty welcome' or similar. They usually use a particular type of inane and meaningless phraseology beloved of pubco branding departments when they have run out of properly descriptive statements to use about a pub.

Naturally, this type of identikit pub is the sort where staff read a head office manual to instruct them in 'appropriate welcoming behaviours'. The manager may even have been sent on a 'welcoming workshop'.

Of course these efforts end in spectacular failure when managers get long service awards for staying in the job longer than a fortnight and the cost cutting pubco employs dysfunctional, eighteen-year-old bar staff whose communication skills begin and end with text messaging – 'a wrm n hr8e wlcme'? One thing is for certain, this type of pub ought to welcome new customers because hardly anyone who has visited it before ever wants to go back.

This phrase is often used, with unintended irony, by the most unfriendly of pubs. Any stranger walking through the door actually receives the special sort of welcome that plain clothes police receive while the local dodgy geezers hide away their knocked off loot.

Pubs that *do* have warm welcomes are successful enough through being genuinely hospitable that they don't need to advertise the fact. Frankly, any pub that doesn't give a warm welcome is not worth going to.

2

'Home Cooked Food'

'Home Cooked Food' isn't actually a lie – but it's such a meaningless phrase that it may as well be. It means that any food that is served hot has actually been heated up ('cooked') on the premises. Often the heating up will be done by the microwave and the gourmet 'home cooked' meal will have been made in a huge factory and have been deep frozen for months.

There's nothing wrong with cheap, honest pub fayre being prepared like this – and it's less likely to poison you if the dish has been nuked in the microwave first. However, the impression that 'home cooked food' tries to conjure up is of teams of perfectionist chefs taking pains to visit farms to ensure that vegetables are grown and meat is raised to their exacting requirements. If freshness is what you're after then in many cases you would be better going to Marks and Spencers instead and 'home cook' yourself one of their chilled ready meals.

Nevertheless, we do have some excellent food pubs in our branch that have received awards for their outstanding cuisine. However, they will tend to describe their food with the same sort of enthusiasm and imagination as they use to cook it. By all means enjoy 'Big Steak Nite – 2 meals for £4.99' but don't count on it being a Michelin starred experience – even if it *is* 'home cooked'.

3

Opening Hours

The advertised opening hours of some pubs should be entered for the Man Booker prize as they are truly great works of fiction. To many landlords opening hours are used entirely to their own advantage – they won't contemplate opening before the publicised hour and they will not entertain staying open past the displayed closing time (even if they have a licence to do so). Yet they have no compunction in opening up later than they advertised or shutting early if they think the amount of custom is not worth their while.

Even phoning ahead cannot yield any guarantee of landlords keeping hours beyond their personal whim. On a walk earlier this year, a landlord assured us that he would be open until 3pm on a Bank Holiday. When we turned up at 2.30pm we found the pub was locked up and empty. The landlord later explained that we should have specifically told him we were planning to turn up during his advertised opening hours – and then he might have stayed open for us. Maybe we should have told him that phoning up and making a booking is what you do with restaurants – or perhaps that was his point?

4

'There's No Demand For It Round Here'

This defeatist refrain is usually reserved for rather new-fangled things like food or, unbelievably, real ale (it's only been around for about 10,000 years – or 700-800 in its hopped form). It is the sort of false negative hypothesis that is, almost by definition, unprovable.

If applied to a pub's attempts at selling real ale or food, there may have been more plausible but troubling explanations for the lack of trade – like it being rubbish. However, the sort of landlords who utter this sort of lame excuse have usually never tried to find out if there really *is* any demand for 'it' – they just can't be bothered.

This argument is particularly irritating when it is applied to opening hours. 'We don't open in the afternoons. There's no demand for it.' Maybe they tried it once for a week and gave it up as a bad job when the door wasn't instantly

beaten down by vast hordes of rapacious drinkers. Again, it can be a coded way of saying they just don't want to make the effort.

All credit to pubs that try something different – some ideas might not work out but a lot of surprising innovations do. A great strength of the pub is its ability to adapt to the times – many pubs that may have struggled now thrive on a diet of TV sport.

And after all, what were the big six brewers telling us about real ale in the 1970s? 'There's no demand for it round here'.

5

'Coming Soon'

Question: 'When is a pub with ten real ales not a pub with ten real ales?' Answer: 'When half of the pump clips have a tiny little sign attached saying 'Coming Soon'.

Again, this isn't actually a lie as such but it is clearly meant to mislead the customer into thinking there is more choice than is actually on offer. A certain pub chain that otherwise gives good support to the real ale cause is particularly guilty of this practice.

It is also self-defeating. Real ale deteriorates quickly after a cask is tapped and a barrel that has been on sale for more than a few days becomes undrinkable. The clued-up real ale drinkers would rather see four or five handpumps on most bars, as opposed to ten, because those beers on sale will be turned over more quickly.

A few pubs that sell vast quantities of real ale are honourable exceptions to this less-is-more principle but, in general, the vast majority of pubs can only justify far fewer ales on sale – so don't try and fool us.

Why not do as some pubs do and write the names of beers to look forward to on a blackboard? In this way no customer will try to order a pint of something that is still settling in the cellar.

And pubs that display the pump clip for beers that have finished are just beyond the pale.

6

'It's A New Barrel'

This is often the lame excuse given when a rancid, vinegary pint is returned to the bar. If a pub only turns over a barrel of real ale in a month then this statement might be true in purely relative terms – 'It's only been open 10 days, it must be fine as I can't see any mould in it. Err, hold on'.

Often the bar person doesn't have a clue how long the barrel has been opened. They then try by the might of their rational logic (that is, barefaced lying) to convince a poor customer to swallow a pint of something that is only

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU HEARD THEM?



really fit to be used as industrial drain cleaner. Anyway, the point is that even if it is a new barrel it shouldn't taste bad.

Good publicans will also know that a very new barrel of real ale should not be served anyway. All ales need to rest in the pub cellar and each beer takes a subtly different length of time to settle once it has been 'spiled' (when a secondary fermentation takes place in the barrel). Real ales that are served too young are usually palatable but not at their best and have a 'green', yeasty taste.

7

'That's What It's Meant To Taste Like'

The oldest lie in the book, usually attempted by someone behind the bar who doesn't know or care what real ale *is* actually meant to taste like.

Occasionally there may be deliberately unusual flavours in ales – like subtle additions of spices in seasonal brews – and hops can impart distinctive flavours, such as citrus. These are meant to make the beer more drinkable and interesting – not taste vile.

Admittedly, there is a masochistic tendency within *CAMRA* who take a macho pride in consuming over-oxidised, lifeless, flat beer (especially if it's one they've not 'ticked' before). However, these are in the minority and most brewers do not deliberately try to produce this sort of disgusting brew just to please the tickers – though it may happen by accident.

Customers who order real ale usually know more about what it's meant to taste like than the sort of loathsome idiot behind a bar who routinely trots out this line. If the taste isn't acceptable then there's nearly always something wrong with it.

As ale faults are most often caused through untrained handling in the pub, it might be true that it always tastes bad in that pub – but it's not what the brewer meant it to taste like.

8

'The Lines Are Being Changed On Monday'

This is a lie resorted to in panic by a landlord who has suddenly realised that the person they are talking to is not actually a complete beer ignoramus.

The fault for their beer being absolutely disgusting is, naturally, not theirs but is down to the last incumbent (or many of them). It was they who left the beer lines uncleared for the last 20 years, causing every customer's pint to be drawn through 30 feet of mouldy, yeast-encrusted filth.

Of course, the new landlords are on the case already. The very next Monday they have arranged for the whole set of pipes to be ripped out and sacrificially burned by 'Technical Services' from the brewery. New and pristine lines will then be installed and blessed by the local vicar.

And once this is done then they will clean them every week – honest! Funny then that when the next landlord arrives in the pub a few weeks later he comes out with the same 'lines changed next Monday' story.

9

'The Locals Like It Like That'

Like the 'no demand' line of reasoning, no argument can brook the accumulated wisdom and tastes of The Locals. The problem is that at most pubs where this is heard, the local sages are either extremely thin on the ground or non-existent.

This reasoning can be applied to almost anything. Huge heads on the beer? 'The locals like it like that.' And the landlord also likes serving them 20% of fresh air in their pint too.

Loud, blaring music when the only customers in the pub are eating the pensioner's special lunch. 'The locals like it like that'. The pub is shut on Monday to Thursday. 'The locals like it like that' – an easier argument to make when the locals are non-existent and the landlord wants to turn the pub into a million pound property development.

Everyone stares daggers when someone that hasn't been propping the bar up every day for the last twenty years walks in. 'The locals like it like that.' Actually, that's probably true for a lot of pubs.

Any landlord who has to resort to this argument to defend the indefensible is probably doomed anyway. He or she is either in thrall to a bunch of misanthropes who will never keep him in business or has invented fictional locals in order to justify being as bloody minded as he or she likes.

10

'We're Not Going Anywhere'

In all seriousness, we know that the licensed trade is a precarious profession – long, unsociable hours for meagre rewards mean that many good licensees are nothing short of local heroes. Because of the general hard work for low rewards, turnover of licensees can be understandably brisk. It is apparently a truism in the industry that almost every pub in the country is up for sale – at the right price. The books of specialist hospitality property company *Fleurets* show that a surprising number of pubs are discreetly on the market.

Sometimes word gets out that a licensee may be moving on. While there might be commercial sensitivities, many landlords still tend to blatantly lie about their movements and intentions to their customers – particularly when they might be narks like active *CAMRA* members. Are they worried their grubby beer lines will be exposed or are they intending to chop the plugs off all the electrical appliances before they go (as happened in one local pub)?

Even when the removal van is pulling up outside the landlord is telling his locals 'Oh we'll be here for the next five years. Trade is going so well, there's no chance of us leaving here'. But the next time you go in there's some hapless ingénue behind the bar desperately mugging up in the pubco 'warm and hearty welcome' manual.

Charlie Mackle

COMMUNITY PUBS WEEK



It's a frightening reality that at least 56 pubs are closing in Britain each month and early indications of new research being carried out by **CAMRA** suggest that this figure could actually be significantly higher.

Worse still, the majority of these pubs are not high street chain bars or theme pubs, but community pubs, recognised by most people these days, as important community amenities. The local pub, after all, is often the heart of the community.

CAMRA has successfully run *National Pubs Week* for four years in an attempt to convince more people to visit more pubs more of the time.

CAMRA members across the country have worked hard to promote pub-going in response to the growth in home drinking. Despite low

supermarket prices, nothing can match the British pub for its service and atmosphere.

In light of the increased threats to community pubs **CAMRA** is changing the focus of its week of action to help raise the profile and importance of pubs in the community and encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to use community pubs more. *Community Pubs Week* complements a range of **CAMRA**-led initiatives including the *Community Pubs Foundation*, launched in 2005 to support campaigns to save local public houses by offering assistance to community groups, as well as a whole range of local campaigns by **CAMRA** to save and promote community pubs.

Community Pubs Week celebrates and promotes all community pubs - not just village locals, but urban gems too.

The Community Pubs Week website (www.pubsweek.org) is divided into three areas:-

Licensee Area – here the licensee can order *Community Pubs Week* promotional packs and inform **CAMRA** of the events they have planned.

Pub-goers Area – here the pub-goer can Adopt a Pub by ordering a promotional pack and taking it down to their local. There will also be a Hall of Fame for those that Adopt a Pub.

Lists of *Community Pubs Week* events will also be regionalised in this area to help pub-goers find events to attend during the week.

We intend to hold a couple of Traditional Games evenings in community pubs in the North and South of the branch. Full details will appear in our next issue but it is fairly certain that both cribbage and darts will feature and if we can organise a quiz....

WINTER BEER FESTIVAL



The *National Winter Ales Festival* will be taking place at the New Century Hall, Manchester from the 16th - 19th January 2008.

The *National Winter Ales Festival* is organised by **CAMRA** to showcase a wide range of beer styles, particularly those winter warmers which are so popular with beer drinkers during the winter months. With a selection of 200 beers, real ale in a bottle, ciders and perrys you will be able to find something which suits your tastes.

The festival also plays host to the *Champion Winter Beer of Britain* competition, and the winners will be announced on Thursday January 17th.

Opening Times and Prices

Wednesday 16th January 5.30pm - 10:30pm £3 - NUS, OAP & other concessionary £1

Thursday 17th January 5pm - 10:30pm £3

Friday 18th January 12 noon - 5pm £3 (Note - no access to downstairs bar)

Friday 18th January 5pm - 10:30pm £4

Saturday 19th January 12 noon - 10:30pm

CAMRA members £1 off at all times.

Please visit the *National Winter Ales Festival* website at www.winteraless.co.uk



The Red Lion

3 High Street, Chinnor (☎01844 353468)

CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2008
listed with four real ales

Quiz 17th December

Home-Cooked Pub Food
Available Every Day

Special Offer

2 Steaks & bottle of wine £20
Monday to Saturday only (you must pre-book by phone)

Cask Marque Approved

HAZARDOUS DRINKING

Over the last couple of months, it seems that a new report on the dangers of drinking has appeared in the newspapers every other day, often immediately followed by another report disputing the claims.

A report from Liverpool John Moores University attracted much publicity when it identified with surprising precision that the inhabitants of Runnymede or Guildford were the most 'hazardous' drinkers (a shocking 25% of the adult population).

There are various problems with these types of studies. One is that the definitions of 'harmful' and 'hazardous' are made based on volume of alcohol consumed and not on any direct causal relationship in any individual between this consumption and consequent health problems.

It is also clear the effect of alcohol on an individual is subject to countless complicating factors – both physical (weight, age, sex, state of health, genetic predisposition to metabolise alcohol, etc.) and behavioural (speed of drinking, consumption with food, even time of day). Also, many other lifestyle factors affect an individual's health – such as diet and fitness. This complexity means that a definitive 'safe' limit of alcohol is impossible to define for the general population – or even consistently for an individual. The Times reported that the doctor who set the well-known male 21 units

a week figure 20 years ago remembers that it was 'plucked out of the air' by a committee in the absence of any scientific data.'

Nevertheless, there is a level of drinking at which doctors are generally agreed will probably create significant health problems for a typical individual if sustained over a period. This is 'harmful' drinking – which was defined in the John Moores study as over 50 units per week. Then there is a 'safe' level of drinking at which doctors believe will directly cause no health problems for most individuals – the study used the 21 unit limit quoted above.

'Hazardous' drinking is defined as consumption between these two levels – which may pose health problems for some but none for others. This is why it is termed hazardous – one person may be damaged while others might be fine. It is impossible to generalise between the two extremes and so doctors – and indeed *Swan Supping* – can never recommend drinking an amount over the 'safe' limit. On the other hand, there isn't an epidemic of cirrhosis of the liver among men who drink 22 units a week.

Moreover, while alcohol is definitively associated with higher risks of many diseases, most notably cancers and liver damage, there are many studies which have proved that a moderate amount of some alcoholic drinks can confer health benefits – even the health

fanatic Americans recognise the benefits of antioxidants found in red wine. Also, real ale is brewed from entirely natural ingredients – prior to fermentation it is effectively a liquid version of wholegrain cereal.

The incessant pressure from some quarters to lower the 'safe' limits further could be viewed as part of the buck-passing, blame-shifting, 'no-risk-is-ever-worth-taking-however-small-in-case-we-get-sued' culture that is ingrained into institutions nowadays.

Risks are relative. If the chances of suffering from a certain ailment are extremely low then doubling the risk will still generate a low probability in absolute terms. In this context, 'hazardous' drinkers are not the equivalent of teenage binge drinkers. They may be engaging in risky behaviour but, unlike those 'harmful' category, they will not all be condemning themselves to future health problems.

Nevertheless, it is impossible to deny that misuse of alcohol causes a lot of physical, mental and emotional harm and it is easy to underestimate one's alcohol consumption. It is important principle that misuse by a small number does not mean there is any problem for the vast majority. *CAMRA* promotes responsible drinking – with the quality of the drink being more important than the inebriating effect of consumption. *Unity O'Warder Akin*

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JOIN CAMRA TODAY AND HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Over the last thirty six years, **CAMRA**, the *Campaign for Real Ale*, has been campaigning on all different kinds of beer and pub issues. We have helped to save breweries and pubs, helped to introduce more flexible licensing hours, run numerous beer festivals, created the environment for new breweries to open and thrive but our work doesn't end there!

Research in February 2007 showed that we are losing more pubs now than ever before.

A staggering 56 pubs close every month and **CAMRA** needs your help to campaign and save the pubs that are under threat from closure in the future before it is too late.

CAMRA now boasts over 90,000 members and we are striving to reach 100,000 members to help us with our current campaigns that include getting legislation that makes sure the consumer gets a Full Pint, reducing beer duty, promoting localism and supporting breweries and pubs.

By becoming a **CAMRA** member you can help to make a difference.

Join **CAMRA** today by completing the membership form below, or by visiting the website www.camra.org.uk/joinus or by calling **CAMRA** HQ on 01727 867201 or joining us at one of our socials (see page 22 for a listing).

CAMRA membership represents great value. For just £20 a year, that is less than 39p a week, you can join our organisation and benefit from the following:

- A monthly copy of our colour newspaper 'What's Brewing' – this includes news on the pub and brewery industry, information on what is happening in your area, lists of **CAMRA** beer festivals around Britain, features on different real ale breweries plus much more!
- Free or reduced entry to over 150 **CAMRA** beer festivals, including the *Great British Beer Festival*.
- Discounts on **CAMRA** books including our best selling *Good Beer Guide*.
- Discounted Membership of the **CAMRA Beer Club** – The **CAMRA Beer Club** has been set up to provide a home delivery service to enthusiasts. As a member you will discover and enjoy a range of bottle-conditioned beers that are not widely distributed. All **CAMRA** members receive a £5 discount on each mixed case of 20 beers. For more information visit www.camrabeerclub.co.uk.
- The opportunity to become an active member of the organisation - All members are welcome to attend branch

meetings, socials, sign petitions to save pubs and breweries that are under threat from closure and survey pubs and bars etc.

- **Complimentary Clubs** – these clubs are exclusive to **CAMRA** members and are free to join. Clubs currently running include *Fuller's*, *Hook Norton*, *Everards* and *Woodforde's*. Complimentary Clubs offer members a variety of promotions.

CAMRA's highlights over the last twelve months

- **CAMRA** launched a new Full Pint campaign, 'Take it to the Top', in April 2007. This was the first time **CAMRA** had advertised a campaign in a national newspaper. Over 20,000 people have now signed the petition.
- Our annual Parliamentary reception in Westminster gave us the opportunity to lobby over 100 MPs, Lords and researchers.
- **CAMRA** Pub Design Awards
- Community Pubs Week
- **CAMRA** has helped develop the new Cyclops tasting initiative.
- **CAMRA** has organised over 150 beer festivals in the last 12 months including the *GBBF* at Earls Court which was visited by over 65,000 people.

Why not join CAMRA Now?

Just fill in the form below and send your remittance (made payable to CAMRA) to Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 4LW

Rates are Single Membership (UK & EU) £20 (£22 non Direct Debit),
Joint Membership (Partner at the same address) £25 (£27 non Direct Debit)
For concessionary rates please visit www.camra.org.uk
or call **01727 867201**

Name(s).....

Address

..... Postcode

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

I enclose a cheque for £.....

Signature

Date



Swan Supping
(Aylesbury Vale &
Wycombe Branch)



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<small>Note: Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account.</small>			
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Signature(s)			
Date			

WINTER BEER FESTIVAL



The *Haddenham Real Ale Winterfest*, will be held in the Tithe Barn, Manor Farm, Haddenham on Saturday, 8th December from 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. There will be 16 real ales on offer, with the emphasis on winter ales, plus 10 ciders, all served up in a festive seasonal atmosphere, which will include an all-day barbecue, and full entertainment programme.

December is the month during which the Romans celebrated the Festival of Faunus, the god of wild nature and fertility. Wine and food of the highest quality to celebrate nature's

bountiest goodness is on offer but they can't guarantee the fertility bit!

The wonderful old Tythe Barn is situated in Manor Farm at the lower end of the village near St Mary's Church (see map). The Winterfest

opens at 11am and the Church bells will ring a Quarter Peal to mark the occasion.

Admission is £3.50 on the door (£3 in advance and glass hire is £1.50 (refundable!).

Website: www.haddenham-beer-festival.co.uk.



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DIRECTORY OF BUCKS' BREWERS

The *Brewery History Society* has published **ABC: A Brewers' Compendium**, a directory of Buckinghamshire Brewers compiled by Mike Brown.

This is the latest in a series of county directories published by the *Brewery History Society* and is a companion volume to Mike's most recent publication: **Oxon Brews**. It focuses on the period from 1750 onwards and is based on extensive research at the County Records Office.

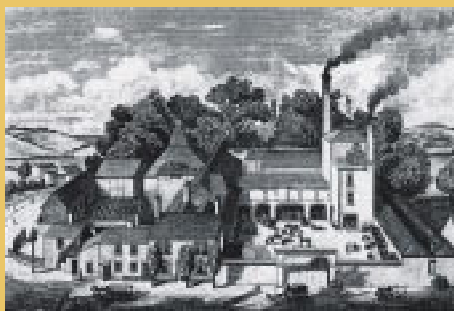
In particular it uses the *Allied Brewery* papers especially those of **ABC**, which were placed there by the *Brewery History Society* and of course the papers, which came from *Whitbread*. Along the way, one or two 'myths' are touched upon.

The introduction gives an overview of brewing, as it relates to the county, as well as providing a glossary of some of the technical terms used in brewing. The book highlights the well-known firms, which survived into the twentieth century such as **ABC**, **Chesham and Brackley** and of course the much missed *Wethereds*.

Information is also given on the other less well-known concerns such as *Hipwells*, *Roberts & Wilson*, *Wells* and *Wheelers*. In several cases the research has traced the origins back further than previously thought eg 1600 at Amersham, 1607 Marlow and 1653 at High Wycombe.

ABC: A BREWERS' COMPENDIUM

A Directory of Buckinghamshire Brewers
by
Mike Brown



A BREWERY HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATION

It also identifies the 200 or so pubs, which are known to have brewed, including the **Bell** at Winslow, which continued until just after WW1.

Some 114 villages and towns are covered, with the latter often having more of a tradition than is realised.

Photos of remaining brewery sites at Amersham, Buckingham and Rowsham, as well as the more obvious one of Marlow, are of particular value for those with an interest in the built heritage of the county.

It also includes the new micros which have started in the county ie *Chiltern*, *Rebellion* and *Vale*, with details of their production and products.

The book is 208 pages, with full index and black and white illustrations.

It is in the standard format of A4 size bound in laminated covers.

It retails at £12.50 and is available at the *Chiltern Brewery* shop, the Old Goal centre in Buckingham, or by post from:

BHS BookShop,

Long High Top,

Heptonstall, Hebden Bridge,

W Yorks HV7 7PF (please add £1.50 p&p).

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A TALE OF TWO SUPERMARKETS

Sometimes the marketing departments of supermarkets are too clever by half. In the middle of October **Tesco** for example was promoting a beer festival in most of its sizeable stores. Good discounts were on offer and some very interesting beers were on sale. Local brewery **Loddon** supplied their excellent bottled *Gold* and specials like the excellent *Badger Pumpkin Ale* were available.

Then **Tesco** realised it was getting closer to Christmas (but still actually nowhere near) and seemed to clear space all over the store (including the bottled beer department) to fit in a large range of Christmas puddings and related goodies that no one sane would buy at least until the start of December.

No doubt when it is closer to Christmas, **Tesco** will jiggle its stock around and make room for more interesting beer. However, at the time of writing, their medium sized stores, such as Tring and Princes Risborough, have a pitiful choice of bottled beer – with the selection in the low teens and almost all from large regional brewers.

Waitrose are much more consistent. They have a clear advantage in that their beer buyer, Steve Wallace, is a long-time member of **CAMRA** – and this passion shows through both on the shelves of their stores and in the significant amount of marketing effort they expend on the



promotion of quality ale.

In a recent edition of their free 'Thirst' magazine, ten beers from different regions of the country were selected as regional champions. These included such great brews as: *St. Austell Tribute*, *Coniston Bluebird*, *Hall and Woodhouse Tanglefoot*, *Timothy Taylor's Landlord*, *Hop Back Summer Lightning* and our very own *Rebellion* of Marlow.

As may be expected from a fellow **CAMRA** member, unusual and small breweries are heavily promoted on the shelves. The stupendous *O'Hanlons Thomas Hardy's ale* – at 12% – is available in its small, but potent bottle.

Bottled beers from microbreweries are also promoted. A three bottle box with changing selection is available. Recently it contained a West Country trio of *Ramsbury Gold*, *RCH Double Header* and *Otter Head*. *Cotleigh Red Nose Reindeer* and *Dark Star Espresso Stout* have also recently featured. **Waitrose** also make a point of supporting local food and drink producers and beers from *Rebellion* and *Oxfordshire Ales* among others have been stocked in their local areas.

The **Waitrose** web site has an informative section devoted to beer – with descriptions of the main styles and various references to **CAMRA** – including the *Real Ale in a Bottle* accreditation scheme.

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Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

DECEMBER

Tuesday 4th FRIETH/LANE END SOCIAL

9.00pm Prince Albert, Frieth; 10.00pm Old Sun, Lane End

Saturday 8th HADDENHAM WINTER BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

12 noon, Manor Barn, Haddenham.

The Haddenham Real Ale Winterfest, will be held in the Tithe Barn, Manor Farm, Haddenham on Saturday, 8th December from 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. There will be 16 real ales on offer, with the emphasis on winter ales, plus 10 ciders, all served up in a festive seasonal atmosphere, which will include an all-day barbecue, and full entertainment programme.

Friday 14th AYLESBURY CHRISTMAS CRAWL

Starts 7.00pm Hop Pole, then Harrow, Rockwood, Hobgoblin, Queens Head, Kings Head, curry.

Monday 24th RECOVER FROM YOUR LAST MINUTE CHRISTMAS SHOPPING SOCIAL

11.30am Kings Head, Aylesbury.

Friday 28th WENDOVER CRAWL

7.30pm King and Queen; 8.00pm White Swan; 9.30pm Pack Horse

JANUARY

Saturday 5th COMPLETION OF OXFORD PUB CRAWL

Start 12noon Turf Tavern; 1.00pm Bear; 1.45pm King's Arms; 2.30pm White Horse; 3.30pm Lamb and Flag; 4.15pm Eagle and Child; 5.00pm Far From The Madding Crowd; 6.30pm Angel and Greyhound.

Monday 7th BRANCH MEETING

8.30pm Dashwood Arms, Piddington.

Wednesday 16th MARSH GIBBON/KINGSWOOD SOCIAL

8.45pm Plough, Marsh Gibbon; 9.15pm Greyhound, Marsh Gibbon; 10:00pm Plough and Anchor, Kingswood.

Friday 25th THAME CRAWL

Starts 7.30pm Star and Garter (113 Wellington Street); 8.15pm Falcon (1 Thame Park Road); 9.15pm Abingdon Arms; 9.45pm Swan Hotel, then Bird Cage, Six Bells (depending on time)

Tuesday 29th - TERRIERS/HAZLEMERE SOCIAL

8.30pm Beech Tree, Terriers; 9.15pm Three Horseshoes, Hazlemere; 10pm Queen's Head, Hazlemere.

FEBRUARY

Monday 4th BRANCH A.G.M.

8.00pm Kings Head, Aylesbury. We hope to have a guest speaker. The venue and date are still to be confirmed at the time of going to press, so please check the website for details.

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 will appear on the website

**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.

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Edited by David Roe

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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 February, is 14th January.

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).

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Opinions expressed in Swan Supping are not necessarily those of the editor, or the *Campaign for Real Ale*.

Acceptance of an advertisement in Swan Supping by a pub or its availability there does not guarantee CAMRA approval.

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More Local News



(Continued from page 2)

FLACKWELL HEATH

The **Magpie** is still boarded-up with the once trim beer garden looking overgrown and unsightly.

It's been six months since we last reported, and nothing has moved forward at this **Greene King** pub. The signs don't look too promising!

GREAT KIMBLE

We would like to thank the **Bernard Arms** for their hospitality at the social held there in October. The three real ales available went down very nicely.

The **Swan** held another excellent firework display on Guy Fawkes' night with fireworks worth well over a thousand pounds ignited by regular Terry Duffell. As mentioned in **Swan Supping** last year, the vast majority of the cost is raised by the pub itself – either by the regulars (through a quiz night and other ad hoc offerings) and a large direct contribution by landlord Tim Woolnough.

The **Swan** is currently offering a special, low-priced senior citizen's menu on Mondays.

HIGH WYCOMBE

Sands sole public house the **Hour Glass** which has been closed of late, is reportedly going to be given a new lease of life from the landlord of the **Carpenters Arms**, Marlow. Mr. Chris Martin, barring dotting the i's and crossing the t's, will be taking the reins and putting a team of bar staff together, if all goes to plan. More details as we get them in the next issue.

IBSTONE

The **Fox** was sold at auction for a reputed £757k. It has been bought by a local hotelier and we hope to have further details next issue.

LACEY GREEN

In October, **Bateman's Victory Ale** was the 500th beer this year at the **Whip**. It was sold at 50p a pint and the barrel went very quickly! Tasting notes for some of 120 different beers to be served at the **Whip** before the New Year are now available at the pub. This should take the pub to nearly 700 different ales for the year. During January they will be having a favourite ale week and if you ask for a slip at the bar you can vote for your own personal favourites. The top ten will then be ordered to be enjoyed in January.

LITTLE HAMPDEN

We have discovered that Wycombe council some time ago granted planning permission for the **Rising Sun** at Little Hampden to be converted into a private dwelling.

LONGWICK

Construction work of a small development of houses is now well underway on the site of the old **White Horse** pub.

LOUDWATER

The bar/restaurant at the **Wycombe Heights** golf centre still serves **Brakspear Bitter** (3.4) on hand pump.

MARLOW

Spittal Street pub the **Carpenters Arms** (aka the Carps), has added a fourth hand pump to their trio of well-kept **Greene King** beers. **IPA** (3.6), **Old Trip** (4.3), **Abbot Ale** (5.0) and new seasonal winter warmer **Abbot Reserve** (6.5), were on parade as we went to press. **Rocking Rudolph** will be appearing in December at this locals local. The fourth hand pump is testimony to landlord Chris Martin's devotion to the quality and turnover of his ales at this town centre gem.

Seasonal dark delights **Archers Oyster Stout** (4.8), **Black Jack Porter** (4.6) and **Adnams Old Ale** (4.1) have featured at the **Duke of Cambridge** in the last couple of months.

The old **Red Lion** (aka **Lion**), which has been closed and looking rather sorry for itself in the last six months, has now reopened. Unfortunately the make-over has produced a **Thai Square** restaurant. What another Marlow eating destination? That now makes 4000 in the town centre alone!

The **R : Home** (aka the Market, aka the Crown) has also reopened under new ownership, after being closed for the past few months. Regrettably no real ale, but at least it's a bar and not restaurant number 4001.

West Street public house the **Ship** has also been shut of present for renovations and will be reopening reputedly on December 10th. It will be interesting to see what 'improvements' have been made to this traditional town centre pub.

OAKLEY

The **Royal Oak** has had a small refurbishment inside and has been fully painted outside. It is now back under **Vale Brewery** management

with Andy and Ruth, who will be known to customers of the **Hop Pole** in Aylesbury and the **Bell** in Princes Risborough, running the pub. The kitchen has been revamped and they are offering home prepared country fare.

There are three cask ales: **Vale Wychert** and two ever changing **Vale** beers.

SPEEN

The **Old Plow** does **Chiltern Beechwood** on handpump and is a rare outlet for **Chiltern** beers outside the **Kings Head** in Aylesbury.

THAME

The **Abingdon Arms** had on offer when visited recently **Timothy Taylor Golden Best** at 3.5%, **Adnams Bitter**, **London Pride** and **Youngs Bitter**.

The **Birdcage** had on offer **Brakspears Bitter** and **Charles Wells Bombadier** at the time of visiting.

The **Cross Keys** is now under new ownership and stewardship, but still no sign of any handpumps.

Congratulations to the **Falcon** for their inclusion in the 2008 **Good Beer Guide**. It just goes to show what can be done with a pub that was on its last legs with good beer, hard work and a friendly landlord. On offer at a recent visit were **Hooky Best** and a guest beer which was **Fullers Chiswick**. **Jennings Cumberland Ale** at 4% was waiting in the wings as was **Hook Norton 12 Days**. A pub well worth a visit, especially for those who remember what it was like.

The **Nags Head**, although a **Greene King** pub serving only **Greene King IPA**, has the added value of being the only pub in Thame showing Setanta sports.

The **Rising Sun** serves **Brakspears Bitter** and a seasonal guest from the **Wychwood** brewery. Coming soon will be their Christmas offering **Oh Be Joyful**. Still running Thame's friendliest quiz.

The **Six Bells** has a range from the **Fuller's** portfolio including **London Pride**, **Discovery**, **Gales HSB** and the latest **Fuller's** seasonal beer. Their quiz night is on a Monday.

The **Star and Garter**, a **Greene King** pub serving **Abbot** (the only **Greene King** pub in Thame serving **Abbot**), also has **Morlands Original**, **IPA** and a frequently changing guest beer.

The **Swan Hotel** has the usual good selection of beers featuring **Pride of Thame** from the **Tring** brewery, **Brakspears Bitter**, **Cottage Brewery Wessex Red** at 4% and **Three Castles Witches Brew** at 4.4%. At £1.50 for a half, it was a bit pricey for a 4.4% beer, but in very good condition.

The latest incarnation of **Thatchers/Old Trout** is now **Eight at the Thatch**, the restaurant operated by Raymond Blanc and the winner of the TV series 'The Restaurant'. There is a bar with two handpumps, dispensing we have been told, **Old Hooky** and **Spitfire**.

With the **Black Horse** and the **Two Brewers** both serving **Greene King IPA**, it just shows how many beers you can get within a short distance and the last bus back to Aylesbury leaves Thame at 23.41 – seven days a week.

WENDOVER

The **Red Lion** is closed and its owners, **Marstons**, are investing £1.1m in a major refurbishment. The historic inn is not expected to re-open until at least February 2008 when it will have 23 bedrooms and a larger restaurant. We await further news on the beer.

Since Pat Keenan left as manager of the **Rose & Crown**, Tring Road, in summer 2007 (after over 20 years in charge) use of handpumps discontinued. No longer real and it used to do the cheapest pint of **Tetley Bitter** around!

WORLDS END

The **Marquis of Granby** appeared to close suddenly in October and this **Punch** owned public house is available on a business transfer.

WYCOMBE MARSH

Marc Porter has reported that the friendly family run **General Havelock** has increased its number of real ales available to a minimum of six.

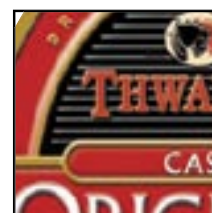
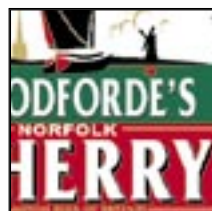
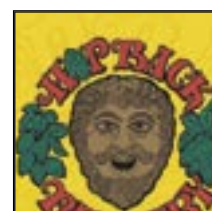
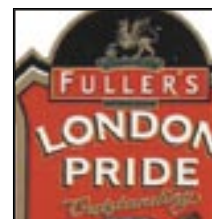
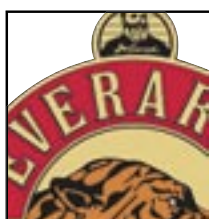
Fuller's ESB, **London Pride** and **Chiswick Bitter**, as well as **Gales HSB** are always available, along with the **Fuller's** or **Gales** seasonal ale, plus at least two guest ales per month.

December's guest ales include **Tribute**, from the **St Austell Brewery** and **Rosey Nosey**, from **Batemans** and are likely to be joined by **Gales Winter Brew** and **Fuller's Old Winter Ale**.

The pub is also promoting an 'Ale Sale Night' every Wednesday, where special discounts are available to encourage drinkers to sample the wide range of beers available that week.



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