

Issue 44



Campaign for Real Ale

Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch

Swan Supping

FREE

OCT/NOV 2004



MAKE OCTOBER THE BEST MONTH OF THE YEAR!



As last year, Halloween is the time for the *Aylesbury Vale Beer Festival* to be held in conjunction with the *Friends of Florence Nightingale House*.

Once again, it is being held at the Stoke Mandeville Community Centre, Eskdale Road, very close to Stoke Mandeville Station on the Chiltern Line and the route of the 323 bus between Aylesbury and High Wycombe.

The festival times are 6:00pm to 11pm on Friday 29th October and all day (11am – 11pm) on Saturday October 30th.

There will be lot of real ales available, plus traditional cider and perry and prices will start at £1-80 per pint.

Among the beers we hope to have available will be a few Halloween special beers from some small brewers plus a lot of old favourites and the *CAMRA Beer of the Year*



which is *Kelham Island Pale Rider* plus as many others of the winners from the *Great British Beer Festival* that we can get hold of.

Chiltern Brewery are planning to have their special winter brew on sale. This is a spiced milk stout which will appeal to both 'tickers'

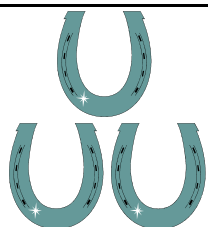
as well as all those who are just after a good time!

In addition to a great range of beer, there will be hot and cold food available as well as soft drinks for the drivers.

Tickets cost £3 in advance (£4 on the door) and each ticket includes £2 of beer tokens. Please remember that the beer festival is for over 18's only!

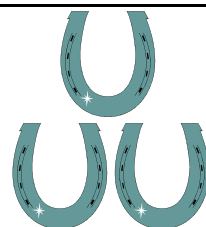
Tickets are on sale at the Aylesbury Tourist Information Offices, Aylesbury and Wendover Hospice shops, or directly from the Friends' Office (01296 429975) where you can obtain further information or pay by credit card.

It may still be possible to sponsor a barrel of beer at the festival! Please contact Sue Cato on 01296 429975 for full details of the sponsorship package available.



REBELLION'S

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ASTON ROWANT

Roger Romyn, previously at the **Inn at Emington**, has taken a three year lease at the **Lambert Arms** as from 16th August.

AYLESBURY

The 40 seater restaurant at the **Broad Leys** is nearing completion. It is due to open to the public on Saturday 2nd October and it is planned to have three real ales: **Tetley Bitter**, **Fullers London Pride** and **Adnams Bitter**. The Christmas menu will be available and bookings are being taken.

After a very chequered recent time, it looks like the **County Arms** has closed its doors for the final time! Boarded up and due to be demolished as part of the total redevelopment of Aylesbury, its eventual demise was expected, but it was assumed that it would stagger on until the last moment. However, all the recent tenants have taken the route of offering loud music, cold lager and smooth bitter. Don't they realise that that market has gone. All the youngsters who enjoy that sort of thing are well catered for in the new large drinking emporiums in the centre of town. The **County Arms**

was a great BASIC BOOZER which catered for real ale drinkers (getting into the **Good Beer Guide** for many years) where locals could gather and reminisce about the **Derby Arms** whilst drinking cheap real ale, cooled only by the stream that ran through the cellar. It could have continued that way and made a profit until its end. I tried to explain this to one of the recent landlords, but nobody listens to me! I might as well be a Leonard Cohen record!!

Major changes are to happen at the **Emperor**! Greta and Keith Kent left the pub on 14th September and this time it looks like it is for good. The plans are for the pub's interior to be knocked through to make it a large single bar establishment and moving the emphasis of the pub to a more food based set-up. We wish Greta and Keith all the best for the future and they, in turn, want to thank their customers for their support over the last few years. The pub is currently boarded up.

The **Kings Head** is continuing its policy of offering a 20% discount to **CAMRA** members when purchasing real ale from Monday to Thursday. They have also reported that **Chiltern**

Brewery will be taking over the lease in January and will be offering two of their ales and a 'local guest beer'. More news next issue.

Vale Brewery completed their takeover of the **Hop Pole** on the 21st of September! This has not gone smoothly as the flat roof at the rear of the pub largely gave up in a very rainy August, but this has now been sorted out. The pub is currently closed whilst work is carried out on the refurbishment of the front bar. The plan is to have the front bar open by December and **Vale** want it to become the major real ale venue in Aylesbury. However, the back room, which has been used as a music venue, is in a very poor state and will remain closed until the pub gets on its feet again.

The **Lantern** has changed hands. The lease of this **Punch** pub is now under the control of Andy Phipps, landlord of the **Britannia**. Larry Baker will be the manager in charge of the pub, due to re-open early in October after the current refurbishment has been completed. The two things that are now needed are real ale (**Fullers London Pride** is available at the **Britannia**) and the

reversion of the name to the historic **Dark Lantern**!

Keg restaurant, **Magoos** has closed.

Work is continuing at the **Steeplechase**. By the end of October it is hoped that the painting of the front plus the installation of the new lights and signage will be completed. Future plans for next year include the refurbishment of the lounge and a brand new kitchen. The beers available when last visited were **Brains Reverend James** and **Charles Wells Bombardier**.

CHINNOR

Adrian Smith, landlord of the **Black Boy** previous to the new incumbents, rang to say that he took exception to the comment in our last issue that we were hoping that the pub would have a more stable future! As he was there for five years and the previous landlady to him, Sue St. Helair (apologies for any mis-spelling!) was there for approximately ten years, just how stable does a pub have to be to satisfy us!

(Continued on page 15)

OLD LUXTERS

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& SUNDAY 17TH OCTOBER

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CREAM OF MANCHESTER – NO MORE?

CAMRA has attacked **Interbrew UK** for its decision to close **Boddingtons Brewery** in Manchester next February. It is the global brewers only major cask beer brewery. The Boddingtons Action Group, set up in 1989 to keep the **Boddingtons Brewery** out of the hands of **Whitbread**, has been resurrected.

The **Boddingtons** (Strangeways) **Brewery** was founded in 1778 and was acquired by the Boddingtons family in 1835. It was sold to **Whitbread** in 1989 and became part of **Interbrew** in 2000.

Mike Benner, **CAMRA**'s Chief Executive, said 'We're appalled at this decision. **Boddingtons Brewery** is one of the best known British breweries and to close it after nearly 230 years shows little regard by **Interbrew** for Britain's beer heritage or the people of Manchester. Despite claims to be the 'World's Local Brewer', **Interbrew** is riding roughshod over British brewing. Strangeways is the home of the 'Cream of Manchester' and for beer, there's no place like home.'

Boddingtons beers use water from wells 200 feet below the brewery. **CAMRA** claims it will be impossible to replicate the taste of the beer elsewhere.



Interbrew has stated its commitment to producing and developing its ale brands, but **CAMRA** is concerned that the closure of **Boddingtons** signals the brewer's intention to further reduce production of its real ales and sends the wrong message to Britain's beer drinkers.

Mr. Benner said 'So many family and regional brewers are performing well by concentrating on strong real ale brands, yet the powerful global brewers seem intent on taking over the World with global brands and just fiddling around with their real ales. Only by keeping the brewery open and investing in its future could **Interbrew** demonstrate real commitment to the cask beer market.'

Steven Prescott, **CAMRA**'s Regional

Director for Greater Manchester, said 'Beer drinkers in Manchester are not going to take this lying down. **Interbrew**'s own marketing for **Boddingtons** links it with Manchester, so to close the Strangeways Brewery is a strange move indeed. The Boddingtons Action Group intend to fight tooth and nail to keep the brewery alive and kicking.'

Roger Protz, editor of the **Good Beer Guide**, the brand new edition for 2005 is available now, said 'In the **Good Beer Guide** I've called **Boddingtons** 'a Manchester legend'. We must not sit back and let that legend fade in the hands of a faceless global brewer which seems intent on taking over the world of beer while abandoning traditional national styles like real ale.'

Interbrew UK has also announced that the famous **Draught Bass** is now to be brewed by **Marstons** in Burton upon Trent.

Mr. Benner said 'We are pleased that **Draught Bass** will remain in Burton in the hands of a regional brewer. We encourage **Interbrew UK** to demonstrate their commitment to **Bass** through marketing. Very little is spent on their real ale brands compared to global lagers and if **Bass** is to perform in today's competitive market, it needs major marketing support.'



OLD SHIP INN

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BANK HOLIDAY BEER FESTIVALS



This August Bank Holiday saw a plethora of pub beer festivals within a 12-mile radius of Aylesbury. We have very few festivals in our area so with four all on the same weekend it was like the bus syndrome – nothing for years then they all come along at once.

I managed to cover all four and started off on the Saturday at the **Shepherds Crook** at Crowell. The landlord had selected about 14 beers to add to his usual selection of five beers on the bar. The selection was excellent and he had even managed to secure the *Champion Beer of Britain 2004, Kelham Island Pale Rider*. Unfortunately this was not available on the Saturday, as it still had to settle. Trade had been good on the Friday night, but when I arrived at opening time on the Saturday it took some time to get going, noticeably with the arrival of other branch members.

All the beers tasted were in excellent condition and were supplemented by the usual excellent range of food. I left about mid afternoon and hope that the landlord's imitative was rewarded with good trade for the rest of the weekend and hopefully a sell-out.

On the Sunday I managed to cover the other three festivals, the first being the **Seven Stars** at Dinton (pictured top left). This was a modest affair with three beers on gravity on the bar alongside the two usual beers on handpump. I believe that another beer or two would be

available on the Monday. I sampled the *Nethergate Umbel Magna* on gravity, which has a unique taste due to the addition of coriander.

The next port of call was the **Unicorn** at Cublington. This was another first time beer festival for a pub which has recently been brought by the villagers to prevent it closing down, perhaps to have become another Indian restaurant. There were four beers on handpump, including three of their regular beers and six beers in a barn in the large garden. Unfortunately it had started to rain so I purchased a half of *Shepherd Neame Bishops Finger* and retired to the inside bar. Trade had been good on the Saturday with about 150 people attending but on this lunchtime it was mostly families eating Sunday lunch with little beer being drunk. They had a Mexican theme in the evening so hopefully trade would be better.

Next visit was to the **Kings Arms** at Tring. This pub has had a beer festival 'on and off' for several years on the bank holiday. Six ales were available at the bar and eight in the barn in the garden. The pub was very busy with most people in the garden, luckily under various awnings as it was pouring with rain. A hog roast was also in progress and live music was being provided. I sampled the *Mordue IPA*.

All beers sampled on both days were in excellent condition and thanks must go to all the landlords for their initiatives in holding their first beer festivals. I hope that all of them were rewarded with a sell-out. Perhaps if any of them are reading this article they could let us know how things went.

I am looking forward to next August Bank Holiday to see if any other pubs decide to join in or perhaps decide to try beer festivals at other times of the year, that is in addition to the few pubs that currently have regular beer festivals.

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PUB OF THE YEAR



The *Regional Pub of the Year (POTY)* for the Central Southern region of **CAMRA**, is the **Kings Arms**, which is in Tring, Hertfordshire.

In the newly published *Good Beer Guide 2005*, which is featured elsewhere, the **Kings Arms** is described thus:

Hidden in the back streets of Tring, this 19th-century pink pub is a frequent local **CAMRA Pub of the Year** and regional winner in 2002. The ever-changing range of five guests from micros never disappoints and cider is available occasionally. There is a welcoming country feel in the single-roomed bar, which has three distinct seating areas, wood panelling and green walls. The canopied patio is heated in cooler weather. The pub offers home cooking, a quiz league, and darts. Children are admitted at lunchtime only.

The regular beer on offer is **Wadworth 6X** which is accompanied by at least five top quality guest ales, which are generally from small independent breweries.

Our unsuccessful entry for the competition was the **Shepherd's Crook**, Crowell, and the other pubs selected by branches in the Central Southern region which were also considered for the *Regional Pub of the Year* were:-**Broad Street Tavern**, Wokingham, **Hatchet**, Childrey, **Retreat**, Reading, **Wetherspoon's**, Milton Keynes and the **White Lion**, Fewcott.

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TASTED ON MY TRAVELS

The occasional jottings of an ardent real ale drinker

Back in June I went on a brewery visit with the **CAMRA Investment Club** to **Fullers Brewery** in Chiswick. This was very interesting and pleasurable especially when the party were coerced into taking a sample or two of **Fullers** ales - for research purposes you understand. Would you believe that also on this visit I met another of our **Aylesbury and Wycombe CAMRA** branch members, Nigel North. We decided that as we were in town we would have a wander around the area to see what was available pub-wise. Nigel wanted to check out some previously visited establishments and some fresh ones and I did not know the area at all.

We went first to the **Dove** which features in the **GBG**. Alas a disappointment as the doorway was closed and we were told that we could not enter as workmen were cutting off the electricity supply and it would not be safe. Oh dear! Off we went to a **Weatherspoons**, the **Plough and Harrow** where I sampled some **Burton Bridge Top Wack**.

We then wandered on and passing an establishment called the **Paragon** at 80 Chiswick High Road, Nigel thought he saw a

Tim Taylor pump clip! Further investigation proved that this was a good spot and I really enjoyed that pint of **Landlord**. Also on hand pump were **Adnams Broadside** and **Fullers London Pride**. Further enquiry established that the pub had previously been the **Eclipse** which served no real ale. Nice to find a place which now has literally 'come in from the cold'. This nice pint was finished and we wandered off to the **Tabard**, another **GBG** pub. **Adnams Broadside** was taken there and very enjoyable it was too. A very good day out in west London.

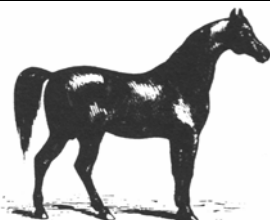
Later in June I spent a few days in the Welsh borders. A friend and I went off to Carrog, left the car in the station car park and took the preserved railway to Llangollen. We decided that some refreshment was called for so we strode off to the **Sun** in Regent Street. Imagine my chagrin to find that it was closed - it was a Monday lunchtime so I suppose that is a quiet day. We trudged back towards the station passing three pubs, all closed, and I was getting somewhat despondent! We espied the **Bull** which had an open door so in we sped with renewed energy. **Wadworth 6X** was on offer and was gratefully consumed - it was very good.

Early July saw Giles du Boulay and I wending our way to Bierton to sample what

was on offer at **Bob's Barn**. We arrived at our meeting place, the **Bell**, and there Dick Moore and Bruce Seymour were waiting. We were coerced to try some **Castle Rock Harvest Pale**, a guest beer. It was superb! We then wandered off on our mission and found **Butcombe Blond** awaiting sampling. This I really enjoyed and after we had fed we moved off to the **Red Lion** in Bierton where some **London Pride** was saved from going off! After this Dick pedalled away and we took the bus back to Aylesbury. Giles had to move on so Bruce and I decided to slip into the **Market Tavern** where a good drop of **Wadworth 6X** was taken.

Giles and I like to take in some Prom Concerts through the summer so we could be found on the concourse at Marylebone Station consuming something solid and slipping into the **Victoria and Albert** for something to wash it down. On the first occasion I had **Youngs St George** - a nice pint. We went off to the Albert Hall having left plenty of time and found we were very early. So we went off to the **Queens Arms** where an excellent measure of **London Pride** was consumed.

On one of our South Kensington trips we decided to take a walk to Kensington High Street on our way home and found the **Goat**



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MORE JOTTINGS



Tavern. They served an excellent pint of *Youngs Bitter* so we will remember this one for next year!

My local, the **Packhorse** in Wendover, continues to dispense a fine pint. When distributing copies of *Swan Supping* around pubs in the village I always make the last port of call the **Packhorse**, to rest the tired size tens you understand.. On 29 July *Fullers Summer Ale* was the guest so I sampled that. I had intended to stop just for one but it was so good I had to keep checking to make sure that my taste buds were not deceiving me. Oh well such is life! I slipped back a couple of evenings later to find that the *Summer Ale*

was all gone. Nothing to do with me guv!! On offer was *Tom Woods Best Bitter* which went down very well.

In August a friend and I took ourselves off to Bridgnorth and stayed at the **Golden Lion** in High Town. A really fine establishment where we had a good welcome and were served some very good pints. We arrived in time for the Sunday lunch time session (!) so we had a bar snack and washed it down with *Woods Pot o' Gold*. It was a warm day so a further drop was taken, this time I had *Banks's Bitter*. We took our evening meal in the *Weatherspoons*, a short walk along from the **Golden Lion**, where with the meal I had a nice pint of *Woods Shropshire Lad*.

The next day a run on the Severn Valley Railway was enjoyed, especially when we called into the station pub on Kidderminster Station, the **King and Queen**. Here with lunch I had *Bathams Bitter* closely followed by *Bathams JHB*. Both very good. We had decided that we would go to Ironbridge and 'do' the various museums in Coalbrookdale, a village created to represent life in the early 1900s.

So on another day, would you believe, we found a licensed premise called the **Black Swan**. We stopped for lunch and some good

Holden's Bitter. On our return we found that the **Golden Lion** was dispensing *Hobsons Town Crier* and *Holden's Golden Glow*. They were sampled and were not found wanting!

The Welshpool and Llanfair narrow gauge railway was visited and when we got to Llanfair we toiled off in the broiling heat up the hill to the **Goat**. The things we do in pursuit of real ale! This proved to be disappointing started with *Cottage Whippet* which proved to be very near the end of the barrel. Then I went for *Going for Gold* but although this was drinkable it was hazy with not a lot of life. Just one of those things I guess? I've had some good pints here on many occasions.

We took ourselves out on another day to the RAF museum at Cosford. A brilliant morning following which we went off to Codsall station for a late lunch. There I enjoyed some *Holden's Netherton Flickers* followed by *Holden's Golden Glow*. Both exemplary pints. We then journeyed home, stopping at the **Gatehangers** at Ashendon for some dinner where I sampled some *Greene King IPA*, a nice pint. A super way to spend a week's holiday!!

Mike Clemence



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SHEFFIELD TUESDAY

The title's about as close as I'll get to talking football with our esteemed **CAMRA** branch chairman Dave Roe – so I'd better stick to the beer chat.

Dave's been dripping on about the pubs of Sheffield for some time now, having been 'born and dragged up' (to use his phrase) just beyond the Shire in nearby Worksop. A group of the usual suspects (Dick Moore, Mike Clemence, Alan Sheppard and yours truly) decided therefore to go and see what all the fuss was about, if only to shut him up.

We were not disappointed. What a great way to spend a wet Tuesday – although we did manage to avoid most of the rain we certainly got pretty damp inside...

Dick Moore's encyclopaedic knowledge of train timetables, pub opening times and locations (he seems to have been just about everywhere before you know) and his usual thorough preparation, got us from Haddenham via Birmingham and Derby to Sheffield and then by tram to the door of the **Cask & Cutler** dead on opening time – we'd no sooner got our pints in when Dave joined us (funny how he always manages to miss out on buying the first round...) – my apprenticeship in the pubcraft of Sheffield was initiated, appropriately enough, with a

pint of Cotswold's *Wizard Ales Apprentice*.

There were so many fine beers on that it would be pointless trying to list every one. Besides, I couldn't keep track of them all, as I am sure you will understand. We could easily have stayed there all day just as we could at any of the pubs we visited, but the **Fat Cat** (nothing personal) awaited.

There we were joined by another 'hoppy wanderer' Dave Thornhill. A 'purrfect' (sorry) pint of locally brewed **Kelham Island Pale Rider**, Champion Beer of Britain 2004, followed by **Kelham Island Kelham Gold** made a suitable starter to a good helping of steak pie and mushy peas – and it should be said that the prices in Sheffield are such that you can buy a pie and a pint and still get change from a fiver.

Next on the agenda was the **Kelham Island Tavern** where a pint of *Highwood Tom Wood's Dark Mild* slipped down a treat.

By then the sun had come out so it was very pleasant to relax in the garden of our next pub, the **Gardener's Rest**, where two pints of pure Rotherham gold, *Wentworth WPA* soon worked their way down to this particular drinker's Yorkshire roots – deeply bitter and to my taste a beer just as worthy of 'champion' status.

The **New Barrack Tavern** at Hillsborough was our next stop on the crawl – or perhaps 'pilgrimage' would be a better word given the way each pint we consumed and each hostelry we visited led this particular happy band of knights further on their quest for the Grail. Alan, especially, was taking it very seriously – methodically getting in two half-pints of different beers each round. Here we encountered another superb Sheffield brew, *Abbeydale Moonshine* which was liquid sunshine really.

Conscious of our train times for the return trip we hastened to the **Devonshire Cat** where a dozen handpumps and another great menu confronted us with the need to make decisions which by then, we were not quite so able to make quickly, so to speak...

Well Dave you proved your point – we managed to visit in one day just a few of the brilliant pubs of Sheffield – we sampled some fine, well kept, ales at reasonable prices (I think they were all less than £2 a pint) and we had a great time. You can say 'I told you so' but you're too much of a gentleman to do that, surely? *<Want to bet!! - Ed>*

Giles du Boulay



The Red Lion

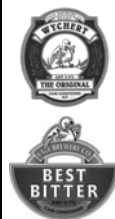
3 High Street, Chinnor (☎01844 353468)

CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2005 listed with four real ales including the following in October:-

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Spinning Dog Mutleys Pit Stop 4.0%,
Orkney Dark Island 4.6%,
Wye Valley Autumn Delight 4.%,
Gales Trafalgar 4.2%,
Exmoor Wild Cat 4.4%,
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Price list (incl. VAT) ABV	Fir.	Polypin	2 gal
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Black Swan Dark Mild 3.3%	76.00	44.50	23.50
Vale Best Bitter 3.7%	76.50	44.50	23.75
Wychert Ale 3.9%	77.00	45.50	24.00
Edgar's Golden Ale 4.3%	79.00	47.50	25.00
Black Beauty Porter 4.3%	80.00	48.50	25.50
Vale Special 4.5%	81.00	49.00	25.75
Grumpling Premium 4.6%	81.50	49.50	26.00

Bottle Conditioned Beers

Black Swan Dark Mild	3.3%	500ml
Wychert Ale	3.9%	500ml
Edgar's Golden Ale	4.3%	500ml
Black Beauty Porter	4.3%	500ml
Grumpling Premium	4.6%	500ml
Hadda's Head Banger	5.0%	500ml

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LOCAL CAMRA SAMPLE THE PROOFS!



When 'my better half' poked a sheet of auction lot literature, under my nose, for my children's school fundraiser, I was asked 'what do you fancy from that little 'lot'!? A quick gander and 'lot 4', a tour around the **Old Luxters** brewery and winery

seemed a must, especially as I am blessed with being their BLO (Brewery Liaison Officer). Lot 4 was acquired, so a local **CAMRA** branch visit was in order around the South Bucks brewery in mid-August.

Our evening tour guide was proprietor Mr. David Ealand, who established this hill top brewery and winery fourteen years ago in 1990, in a 17th century barn. This traditional, full mash independent farm brewery sculpts three cask ales to accompany a variety of bottle-conditioned beers, some of which are fashioned exclusively for the Royal Household Farm Shop.

Eight local **CAMRA** devotees were treated to a leisurely amble around the brewery and bottling plant before tasting the delights of, first the ale, moving onto the wines, champagne, dessert wine and sloe gin. Yes, this South Bucks retreat creates a wide selection of tipples for the discerning drinker.

Barn Ale (4.0), *Barn Ale Special* (4.5) and the mystic *Dark Roast Ale* (5.0) complete the cask ale offerings, complemented by 'bottle-conditioned' brews *Luxters Gold* (5.0), *Winter Warmer* (5.0) and *Damson Ale* (7.0).

So, another local **CAMRA** excursion concludes, lets hope for a further brewery visit at one of our fine local breweries (**Chiltern, Loddon, Rebellion** and **Vale**) in the not too distant future. Anyone who has not been to a brewery tour should give it a try. You may be pleasantly surprised!

Many thanks to David Ealand for his hospitality and all the best in future brewing.

JOIN CAMRA TODAY

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

Rates are Single £16, Joint £19 (at same address), Student/OAP/Unemployed/Disabled £9, Joint OAP £12 (at same address), Under 26 £9 Date of Birth

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LAUNCH OF 'OXON BREWS'



Author Mike Brown

One fine, hot and sunny (remember?) day in July saw Dave Roe and myself travelling by bus to the **Wychwood Brewery** in Witney for what turned out a most informative and enjoyable afternoon.

The occasion was the launch of a book on the history of brewing in Oxfordshire together with a tour of the recently added **Brakspear** plant.

Published by the **Brewery**

History Society, the book being launched was **Oxon Brews: The Story of Commercial Brewing in Oxfordshire**. The author is Mike Brown who has written similar volumes on the counties of Leicestershire and Northants and edits the Society's newsletter. Oxon Brews is some 200 pages in length, with illustrations and is indexed by named brewers. It is part of a series of successful books on brewing in different counties.

The publication chronicles the growth, particularly after 1750, of the commercial brewers such as: **Clinchs, Halls, Hanleys, Hook Norton, Hunt Edmunds, Morrells**

etc. It also gives details of some of the lesser known firms such as **Garnes** of Burford, **Gundry** of Goring and **Phillips** of several locations.

It provides much information on those pubs which are known to have brewed over the last 3 centuries. The book brings the story up-to-date including the return of **Brakspear** beers to the county of its birth and details the microbreweries, which have recently started.

The book will retail for £12.50, (ISBN 1 873966 12 1) with appropriate wholesale discount. It

is available from local bookshops, family and history societies as well as the remaining breweries.

Mike is working on similar projects for other counties and hopes to complete a book on Buckinghamshire in the near future.

After a talk about the book by the author himself we were conducted round the



Witney's Finest!



The interior of the brewery

brewery, in particular the part recently expanded to become the new home of the **Brakspear** brands. Since buying the brands in 2002, **Refresh**, who also own **Wychwoods**, had been looking for a new site to brew **Brakspears** until a site next to their own brewery became vacant late last year. Much original equipment from Henley was re-sited in Witney, including the coppers and drop fermentors.

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WYCHWOOD



Brakspear's new home

Production of **Brakspear Bitter** and **Special** commenced in June of this year.

Back in the tap room we were invited to try some of the above, which did not need much persuasion, together with some of the *Hobgoblin Ale*.

Thus was spent the rest of the afternoon, with much discussion on many topics relevant to **Brakspear**, **Wychwood** and beer in general. In my view the re-created **Brakspear** is an excellent attempt at the original.

Our thanks to all concerned for their generous hospitality, especially Georgina Hicks, who also provided us with a set of the **Brakspear** promotional posters and some **Wychwood** classics.

Mick White



Georgina in action!

SEPTEMBER SUN

Hambleden's NT treasure, the **Stag and Huntsman**, held its weekend beer festival on 4th/5th September, bathed in glorious sunshine.

Twelve real ales from near and far were on display from the beer tent pitched in the garden of this 2003 local **CAMRA Pub of the Year**. A couple of **Thatchers** ciders were available for good measure, landlord and organiser Andy, who hails from the West Country, is naturally sympathetic with the cider fraternity.

The local **Loddon** brewery masterminded **Staggering Huntsman** (4.4), (*Ferryman's Gold* used as the base beer). The guest beer at the **Stag and Huntsman** is often a **Loddon** brewery creation and their monthly specials regularly fare at the hand pump, along with other ales from the more wayward microbrewery scene. Plaudits to all concerned!

Others 'ticks' included *Ye Olde Country Yokel* (4.0) from

Preston's **Hart** brewery, and the ever-dependable **Cottage** with their *Flying Duck* weighing in at 4.4. **West Berkshire Mr. Chubbs Lunchtime Bitter** (3.7), was the most popular Saturday imbibe with the **Loddon Red Kite Mild** (3.3), satisfying the Sunday service drinkers with increasing regularity.

Special limited edition pint glasses were produced for the event along with printed T-shirts, to mark this inaugural occasion. A first beer festival is always a learning curve for future real ale fests. A dozen brews with a good cross-section of styles, colours and strengths is a fair gauge for the punter to take stock of.

Well done to the **Stag and Huntsman**. Not many local landlords indulge in a real ale soiree. Same again next year would be very welcome, I will leave it in Andy's capable hands.

The Deerstalker

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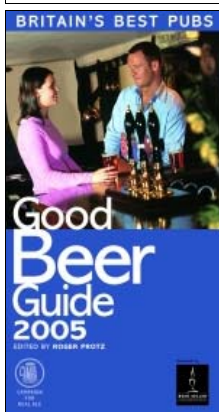


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PUB COMPANIES ARE THE SUPERMARKETS OF BEER



The 2005 edition of the **CAMRA Good Beer Guide** castigates the majority of modern pub companies as acting like beer supermarkets by demanding heavy discounts from suppliers, restricting access to market for small brewers and ignoring the needs of millions of beer drinkers.

But a handful of 'pubcos' win a star rating for their dedication to real ale and their support for small independent breweries.

Editor Roger Protz said as he launched the new edition of the guide: 'Big brewers have disengaged from brewing and handed retailing to the new breed of pubcos. This has led to dramatic changes in the way in which beer is retailed - and the changes have not been to the advantage of publicans or their customers.'

'Pubcos tend to favour big suppliers over small ones and wrest enormous discounts

from those suppliers - discounts that are pocketed by the pubcos and not passed on to publicans or drinkers.'

'The pubcos force their tenants to pay top dollar for the beers supplied to them and the prices are carried over to the cost of a pint at the bar. Most of the pubcos take their beers from global brewers, who produce such vast volumes they can afford discounts so deep that they are selling beer at only a fraction more than the cost of production.'

Editor Roger Protz is sharply critical of the government, which, he says, has turned its back on pubgoers. 'Two years ago, the government axed the Guest Beer Policy, which allowed pub tenants to buy real ales of their choice free of the tie. The government did so because it said it was satisfied that 'full and fair competition existed in the brewing industry and pub trade'. If it believes that then the moon must truly be made of green cheese.'

'The Guest Beer Policy must be brought back to tackle the power of the giant pubcos and to give choice back to publicans and beer drinkers.'

Mergers and takeovers at the top have created four giant national pub companies

that now dominate beer retailing and dictate choice to their tenants and customers. **Enterprise Inns** has bought the **Unique Pub Company**, while **Punch** has merged with **Pubmaster** and only recently finalised its acquisition of over 1,000 pubs from **Innspired**. Between them, the two groups own over 17,000 pubs.

The four biggest pubcos - **Enterprise**, **Punch**, **Spirit**, and **Mitchells & Butlers** - own close to 22,000 pubs, a third of the country's stock. Roger Protz said: 'This gives the Big Four pubcos enormous marketing power and leverage with even the biggest global brewers. This power is used to drive up the price of beer in order to boost profits and concentrate on big volume, heavily advertised brands, mainly lagers and keg beers.'

'The enormous choice available to beer drinkers today from regional brewers and more than 400 micros is not reflected in the beers available to consumers in outlets controlled by the big pubcos. Regional brewers have a route to market through their own tied estates but many micros cannot gain access to pubcos and have to find alternative routes, such as borrowing to buy a few pubs or concentrating on farmers'

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Bucks Dining Pub of the Year 2004

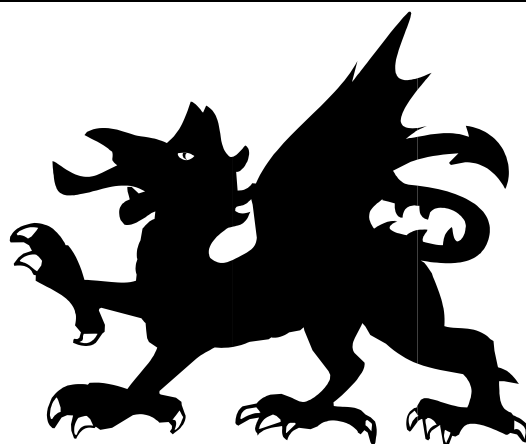
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2005 GOOD BEER GUIDE

markets and specialist beer shops.'

The *Good Beer Guide* says that the 'awesome power' of the pub retailers has been brought in to sharp focus by evidence given by publicans and **CAMRA** to the House of Commons Trade and Industry Select Committee's inquiry into pubcos.

Complaints include:

- * Tenants beer prices as much as 39% higher than their true market value.
- * Extortionate rents increased by as much as 40% a year.
- * Ruthless imposition of the tie between publican and pubco that forbids a tenant from buying guest beers. If the tie is broken, tenants are threatened with eviction or legal action.
- The *Good Beer Guide* says that in order to redress the balance of power in favour of pubgoers there should be:
- * Guest beer rights for all pubco tenants.
- * Pubcos should be obliged to offer every prospective tenant the option of a free-of-the-tie tenancy at a competitive rent.
- * The annual increase in pubco price list prices must not exceed the annual increase in

the Retail Price Index.

* The Office of Fair Trading must monitor pubco mergers and takeovers to see if they are against consumers' interests.

The guide singles out a handful of independent pub companies for their support for real ale, independent breweries and fair prices. The ones mentioned in the guide which are close to our branch area are:

* The best known is the pub group **JD Wetherspoon**, which runs more than 600 pubs, all with no-smoking areas. Each pub stocks regional ales from the likes of **Cains, Fullers, Greene King, Shepherd Neame, Banks's** and **Marston's**. The pubs offer at least two guest beers and there are often beer festivals in most pubs when up to 30 micro-brewery beers are stocked.

* **Capital**, London SE1, was formed in 2000 by veteran pub owner David Bruce of **Firkin** brew-pub fame. It runs 10 managed pubs in London dedicated to cask beer.

* **Gray & Sons** of Chelmsford, Essex: 49 pubs in Essex with a choice of cask beers from **Adnams, Greene King** and **Mighty Oak**. Tenants are free to choose from a monthly guest list that features at least ten

different ales.

* **Head of Steam** of Newcastle-on-Tyne is run by **CAMRA** activist Tony Brookes. His pubs are sited at railway stations, including London Euston, Huddersfield, Newcastle and Liverpool. All the outlets serve a wide range of cask beers and stage beer festivals.

The *Good Beer Guide*'s Wooden Spoon Award goes to national pub company **Mitchells & Butlers** of Birmingham. **M&B** was named as the worst payer in the FTSE 100 group of leading quoted companies. **M&B's** 4,000 employees earn an average annual salary of just £9,401.

The *Good Beer Guide* details the best pubs in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man that serve cask-conditioned real ale in tip-top condition. It has the unique Breweries section that lists all the breweries: micro, regional and national that produce cask beer.

It retails for £13-99 and is available now in all good bookshops. However, if you are a member of **CAMRA** and can get along to one of our branch meetings or our annual beer festival at the end of October (see back page for details), then you will be able to buy one at a substantial discount!



Lorna and Greg welcome you to the **The Glory Mill**, Wooburn Green (formerly the Rose and Crown). After an extensive refurbishment we have re-opened to offer a bigger, brighter and better place for eaters and drinkers.

A non smoking restaurant, seating 36 people will offer a menu ranging from light snacks to traditional English food. An atmospheric bar area offering a wide range of beers and ales including regular guest ales. We have also extended the garden area to include a new patio whilst still retaining the childrens' activity centre.

This has been a bit more than a lick of paint - so come see for yourself.

*Meals served: 12 - 2.30pm & 6.30 - 9pm Mon to Sat
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CAMBRIDGE TRIP

On Saturday 21st August the branch held its annual coach trip to the wonderful drinking area known as Cambridge. Here are a few pictures to bring back some memories for those lucky drinkers who came along!



The pictures feature some happy drinkers outside the **Fort St. George**, followed by outside views of the **Elm Tree** and the **Empress**. The last picture shows



part of our group taking over the snug bar at the **Free Press**. The photo was taken by the



barman and the whole bar is visible and the record attendance in there is (allegedly) 61 people (obviously not typical **CAMRA** members)!



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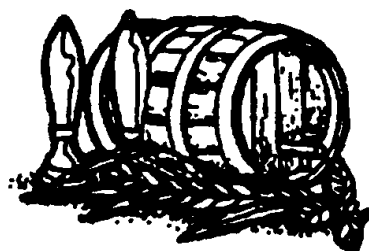
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Wine Tasting Evening

Friday 12th November at Holiday Inn, Aylesbury
Canapes and Bucks Fizz at 7.30 pm – Tickets £20

For more information about our events, please ring Sue Cato on 01296 429975



Local News



Beer Festival Diary

(Continued from page 2)

GRANBOROUGH

The **Crown** at Granborough has had a new landlord since mid September. He is Wayne Jenkins and the pub is leased by the **Union Pub Company** from **Wolverhampton & Dudley**. Real ales are **Marstons Pedigree** and a guest beer.

LACEY GREEN

The range of beers available at the **Black Horse** has changed with **Shepherd Neame Spitfire** and **Timothy Taylor Landlord** being available alongside **Brakspears Bitter**.

In an attempt to brighten up the dark days of October, Nick Smith is holding a beer festival at the **Whip** over the weekend of the 16th and 17th. It is planned to have eighteen beers including **Triple FFF Pressed Rat & Warthog**, **Crouch Vale Blackwater Mild** and **Hopback Entire Stout**, plus real cider.

LONG CRENDON

The **Churchill Arms** is now describing itself as a really relaxed village pub with a Thai restaurant.

MARLOW

New 2005 GBG entrant the **Carpenters Arms**, has had **Morland Original Bitter** (4.0) as their seasonal guest beer of late. **Greene King** brew 1799 Special Ale (4.5) is rumoured to be 'guesting' during the Autumn months. Watch this space.

Scottish & Newcastle pub the **Cross Keys** has new joint landlords and a welcome return of real ale. Matt McKay and Andy Pye have introduced two beers, **Courage Best** (4.0) and a guest beer, (**Marstons Pedigree** (4.5) when visited) to the handpumps. This rotating ale which is sourced from the **Courage** portfolio, a pleasing addition to the Marlow real ale pub scene.

The **Plough** is on the verge of a change of ownership. Cherie Atherton and Rae Flint are reportedly at the helm. More news next issue.

MEDMENHAM

New proprietors of **Ye Olde Dog and Badger** are Shaun and Deborah Rowlands. With his metropolis background in the restaurant industry behind him, Shaun is introducing his catering acumen to this roadside pub. **Vale Notley Ale** (3.3) and **Fullers London Pride** (4.1), are to be joined by a further beer, possibly **Brakspear Bitter** (3.4) or **Wadworth 6X** (4.3).

MILTON COMMON

Typical! We write about a deal that everyone expects to go through and it doesn't. However, no matter how much egg we have on our face, this time we are pleased about it! The **Three Pigeons** is still up for sale, but it has not (yet) become an Indian restaurant as we had been reliably informed (we thought). It is still hoped that the pub will remain a pub, just so long as someone is prepared to take over the tenancy (it is owned by those famous people who love country pubs so much, **Punch Taverns**). We apologise if we have inadvertently added to the problems at the pub.

OAKLEY

The **Royal Oak** is due to have an official re-opening to the public on Friday 15th October, following a couple of special sessions for local dignitaries, with a new landlord and landlady. Rashik Essauyah is the new man in charge after having been at the **Magpies**, Coleshill, for the past few years. The pub has been completely refurbished, revealing the original stone and wooden floors and the original brick fireplaces.

STOKENCHURCH

Andy Wimbush and Nick Nuthall have been running the **Enterprise Inns** owned **Fleur De Lys** from July of this year. The two real ales being served are **Courage Best** and **Fullers London Pride**.

WADDESDON

Things always seem to happen as we go to press. As we sent the last issue to the printers, we heard that the **Lion** was on fire! However, despite the fire closing the busy A41 for a while, the pub was reopened the following evening.

WEEDON

Bobby Roberts has taken on the tenancy at the **Five Elms** and continues to run the **White Horse** at Whitchurch as well.

WORMINGHALL

The new people at the Clifden Arms are Terry and Angie Holmes, having taken over the pub in early September.

They both have many years of experience in the pub trade including running the **Queens Head** in Wokingham.

Terry runs the bar side and is currently offering **Hook Norton Bitter**, **Caledonian Deuchars IPA** and **Adnams Broadside** plus a guest beer which changes every week.

Angie is the chef and she specialises in vegetarian food.

OCTOBER

- 1-2 (Friday-Saturday): 6TH SOLIHULL & DISTRICT BEER FESTIVAL, Solihull British Legion, Union Road, Solihull.
- 1-2 (Friday-Saturday): WHITEHAVEN BEER FESTIVAL, Whitehaven Civic Hall, Lowther Street, Whitehaven.
- 6-9 (Wednesday-Saturday): 27TH BEDFORD BEER FESTIVAL, Corn Exchange, St Paul's Square, Bedford.
- 6-9 (Wednesday-Saturday): 11TH WALLINGTON BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL, Wallington Hall, Stafford Road, Wallington, Surrey.
- 7-9 (Thursday-Saturday): THE GREAT WELSH BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL, City Hall, Cardiff.
- 7-9 (Thursday-Saturday): EASTBOURNE BEER FESTIVAL, Winter Garden, Compton Street, Eastbourne.
- 8-9 (Friday-Saturday): GRAVESEND BEER FESTIVAL Fleetway Sports Ground, Bronte View, off Parrock Road, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 1PX.
- 8-9 (Friday-Saturday): 8TH WORTHING BEER FESTIVAL, Richmond Rooms, Stoke Abbott Road, Worthing.
- 9-10 (Friday-Saturday): HUDDERSFIELD OKTOBERFEST BEER FESTIVAL at The Irish Centre, Fitzwilliam Street, Huddersfield.
- 14-16 (Thursday-Saturday): 5TH QUORN OCTOBERFEST at Quorn Village Hall, Leicester Road, Quorn, Near Loughborough.
- 14-16 (Thursday-Saturday): 18TH SWINDON BEEREX, The Old Railway Museum, Faringdon Road, Swindon, SN1 5BJ.
- 14-16 (Thursday-Saturday): 14TH WAKEFIELD BEER FESTIVAL at Light Waves Leisure Centre, Wakefield
- 15-16 (Friday-Saturday): 27TH BATH BEER FESTIVAL, The Pavilion, North Parade Road, Bath.
- 15-17 (Friday-Sunday): 3RD RICHMOND ALE FESTIVAL, Market Hall, Market Place, Richmond, North Yorkshire.
- 20-23 (Wednesday-Saturday): 24TH STOKE BEER FESTIVAL, Kings Hall, Stoke, Stoke-on-Trent.
- 21-23 (Thursday-Saturday): 10TH BIRKENHEAD BEER FESTIVAL at The Pacific Road, Birkenhead, Wirral.
- 21-23 (Thursday-Saturday): OXFORD CAMRA BEER FESTIVAL, Oxford Town Hall, St Aldates, Oxford.
- 21-23 (Thursday-Saturday): 6TH TWICKENHAM BEER FESTIVAL, York House, Richmond Road, Twickenham.
- 21-24 (Thursday-Sunday): NOTTINGHAM BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL, Victoria Leisure Centre, Sneinton, Nottingham.
- 22-23 (Friday-Saturday): 13TH ALLOA OCTOBER ALE FESTIVAL, Town Hall, Alloa, Clackmannanshire.
- 22-23 (Friday-Saturday): BARNSELEY CAMRA BEER FESTIVAL at The Keel Inn, Canal Street, Barnsley.
- 22-23 (Friday-Saturday): 21ST EASTLEIGH BEER FESTIVAL at The Nightingale Centre, Nightingale Avenue, Eastleigh.
- 22-24 (Friday-Sunday): FALMOUTH BEER FESTIVAL, Princess Pavilion, Melvill Road, Falmouth.
- 25-30 (Monday-Saturday): 27TH NORWICH BEER FESTIVAL at St Andrews & Blackfriars Hall, Norwich.
- 26-30 (Tuesday-Saturday): 11TH WESTMORLAND BEER FESTIVAL, Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal, Cumbria.
- 29-30 (Friday - Saturday): 11TH AYLESBURY BEER FESTIVAL
- 29-30 (Friday-Saturday): HAMPSHIRE DOWNS OVERTON BEER FESTIVAL, St Luke's Village Hall, Winchester Street, Overton, Nr Basingstoke, Hampshire.
- 29-30 (Friday-Saturday): 6TH POOLE BEER FESTIVAL, St Aldhelms Centre, Poole Road, Branksome, Poole.

NOVEMBER

- 4-6 (Thursday-Saturday): 18TH GREAT GRAMPIAN BEER FESTIVAL, The McClymont Halls, 43a Holburn Street, Aberdeen.
- 4-6 (Thursday-Saturday): 10TH WATFORD BEER FESTIVAL, West Herts Sports & Social Club, Park Avenue, Watford, WD18 7HP.
- 11-13 (Thursday-Saturday): MILTON KEYNES BEER FESTIVAL, Madcap Theatre, Creed Street, Wolverton, Milton Keynes.
- 12-13 (Friday-Saturday): 11TH WOKING BEER FESTIVAL, Woking Leisure Centre, Woking Park, Woking.
- 16-20 (Tuesday-Saturday): 25TH SOUTH EAST ESSEX (ROCHFORD) BEER FESTIVAL, Freight House, Rochford.
- 18-20 (Thursday-Saturday): BELFAST BEER FESTIVAL, The Ulster Hall, Belfast.
- 19-20 (Friday-Saturday): 9TH EREWASH VALLEY BEER FESTIVAL, Sandiacre Freisland Sports Centre, Nursry Avenue, Sandiacre, Nottingham.

Swan Supping

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E-Mail : DWRSS@aol.com

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Copy deadline for next issue, due to be published on 1st December 2004 is 14th November 2004.

Subscriptions :- Swan Supping is distributed to over 200 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 need to do is to send a supply of A4 size envelopes stamped 35p to:

Nick Holt, The Old Star, 163 Aylesbury Road, Birtton, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 5DW.

This applies to single copies to UK addresses only. We can mail overseas, so just send us some money and we'll let you know when it runs out.

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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 of the outlet.



Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

OCTOBER

Wednesday 6th BRANCH MEETING

8:30pm Swan, West Wycombe

Wednesday 13th INTER-BRANCH SOCIAL

8:30pm Kings Arms, Tring

Southern Central *Regional Pub of the Year*

Joint Social with Mid-Chilterns Branch

Thursday 21st AYLESBURY SOCIAL

8:30pm Hobgoblin, 9:30pm Kings Head

Tuesday 26th BRANCH SOCIAL

9:00pm Bull, Stoke Mandeville

Friday 29th/Saturday 30th AYLESBURY VALE BEER FESTIVAL

Eskdale Road Community Centre, Stoke Mandeville

Our annual charity beer festival held in conjunction with the 'Friends of Florence Nightingale House'.

As usual, we require lots of willing CAMRA members to come along and help!



NOVEMBER

Friday 5th BRANCH DINNER

7:00pm (for 7:30pm) Green Dragon, Haddenham

Another chance for all local CAMRA members and their significant others to have a great night out! Please contact the editor (address details are on this page) if you are interested in having a delicious meal with superb beer with your local CAMRA branch. Please note that numbers are limited!

Use of public transport is strongly advised and Haddenham is well served with trains for the Wycombe end of the branch, whilst there is a late night bus for those in Aylesbury interested in a few beers afterwards.

OTHER NOVEMBER EVENTS WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN 'WHAT'S BREWING' OR ON THE BRANCH WEBSITE (GO TO CAMRA HQ SITE (www.camra.org.uk) THEN LOOK UNDER 'CENTRAL SOUTHERN' & 'AYLESBURY VALE & WYCOMBE')

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