



Issue 21



Campaign for Real Ale

Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch

DEC 2000/JAN 2001

Swan Supping

FREE



AYLESBURY BEER FESTIVAL RAISES £3,500 FOR LOCAL CHARITY



The *7th Vale of Aylesbury Beer Festival*, held at the end of October, raised around £3,500 for the '*Friends of Florence Nightingale House*', which supports the hospice at Stoke Mandeville Hospital.

The festival, which was held at the Eskdale Road Community Centre in Stoke Mandeville, was a great success with a packed crowd on the Friday night. The numbers decreased for the

Saturday, but the enthusiasm did not and over 80% of the thirty-one barrels of traditional beer on offer was sold.

Virtually all the beer had been sponsored by local firms, to whom we offer our thanks.

A special beer called *Mandeville Mild* had also been brewed especially for the festival by Steve Banfield of *Banfield Ales* who also

donated both of the barrels. Steve will be the guest speaker at the *Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe* branch of CAMRA A.G.M. to be held at the Red Lion, Haddenham, at the end of January.

It is planned that there will be another *Vale of Aylesbury Beer Festival* in October 2001. Please keep your eyes on '*Swan Supping*' which will keep you up to date with the dates and venue.

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**See Page 16 and
find out how you
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The Clifden Arms



Local News



ASTON CLINTON

We announced last issue that the **Oak** was planning to have a beer festival early in the New Year. The actual plan was to hold it at the **Plough**, Weston Turville, but as this will no longer be under the control of John Andrews, the landlord of the **Oak** (see the Weston Turville news), any thoughts of a festival have been abandoned.

Mick and Pat Camfield have retired after running the **Partridge Arms** for eighteen and a half years, and we send them our best wishes for their retirement. Their son, Simon, who has been the steward at **Weston Turville Golf Club** took over in early November.

AYLESBURY

The **Buckingham Arms** reopened on the 23rd of November after having been closed for a few months. It is now owned by **Brakspear** and is leased by **GRS Inns**. The landlady is Siobhan Wilton who used to work at the **Old Neptune** in Whitstable, Kent.

They are serving *Brakspear's Bitter* and the current seasonal beer, *OBJ*. The *Bitter* is served from two handpumps, one 'normal' and one 'Chill Cask' which presumably cools the beer to a temperature usually associated with lager. We did not try this 'feature' so we don't know how cold the beer gets. Still, it's nice to have the choice! For fans of Belgian beer, they have *Hoegaarden* on draught.

At the back of the pub, in the old function/music room, there is a new Thai restaurant which can hold up to sixty people. The restaurant is part of a small group which have another place in Stornaway! Their proud boast is that all their food is prepared without M.S.G

The landlord of the **Hobgoblin**, Nigel Manley has left the pub trade and the new person in charge is Mark Adams. Mark was an assistant manager at the **Hobgoblin** in Brighton before he came here. Among the changes that are going to happen is that there will be regular live groups on Thursdays (with an extension to the pub's licensing hours until 2am) and **Merlins** will become the **Gate Night Club**.

After having been closed for many years, the **Kings Head** has finally reopened. Owned by the **National Trust**, it is probably the oldest pub with a courtyard in the country. It is being run by Les Shardlow, landlord of the **Queens Head**. A full report appears on page 3.

There has been a change of landlord at the **Millwrights**. Colin and Anne-Marie Roll left at the end of September and Terry and Lee Ward have taken over. The pub was closed at the end of November for general refurbishment and it is now one of **Greene King's** 'Top Value' pubs. Bar meals will be offered at £2.99 each and there will be a special offer each day on one of the beers.

The new wine bar & brasserie **MNA's** has opened, but there is no sign of any real ale.

CHEARSLEY

The **Bell** has won the **Aylesbury Vale Village Pub Competition** for the second time in three years. See the article on page 10.

DINTON

La Chouette is a Belgian restaurant which until the late 80s it was an ABC pub called the **White Horse**. Recently, six members from Aylesbury paid **La Chouette** a visit. It was a rainy evening and the restaurant was quiet so we had a good opportunity to sample the fascinating range of bottled beers ranging in strength from about 6% ABV up to 12% ABV. The menu looked good but if you just want to try the Belgian beers the 'patron' will probably make you welcome if you don't choose too busy a time. Be warned, he doesn't have a very high opinion of English real ale.

FORD

The **Dinton Hermit** has reopened under the new ownership of Johnny Chick, who used to run the **Mole & Chicken** at Easington.

GAWCOTT

The **Cuckoos Nest** is a regional finalist for *Real Fire Pub of the Year*.

HADDENHAM

The **House of Spice** Indian Restaurant, which has room for 80 covers, has reopened on the 25th of September in the refurbished site of the **Crown**, which closed earlier this year. There have been a lot of changes to the interior including replacing the fireplace with a fountain, although this might have an unfortunate effect on late night diners following a night in a local pub. There is no real ale available, but if the rest of the food matches the 'Selection Starter' that has been tried, it is well worth a visit.

The **Green Dragon** has been awarded a second rosette by judges

from the **A. A.** (that's actually the **Automobile Association** if you were wondering!). The number of rosettes an eating establishment has depends on the quality of food and service and it is a prized honour to get just one!

Clarence and Enid Robinson will be celebrating 29 years in charge of the **Red Lion** in December. As they have signed up for another three years, we can look forward to a good party next year!

The **Rising Sun** has been closed for internal refurbishment. The bar area will probably be extended – we will try and check it out before the next issue. It is due to reopen early in December.

The **Rose & Thistle** is to have work done in December to re-lay the car park. As well as this, the pub will be repainted outside and new signage and exterior lighting will be added.

HARTWELL

The **Bugle Horn** reopened in October. It is run by **Vintage Inns**, part of **Bass**, and has been smartly

refurbished in much the same style as the **Duck In** at Aston Clinton and the **Five Bells** at Weston Turville. The emphasis is very much on food, but surprisingly you can't book a table – it's just pot luck!

HIGH WYCOMBE

The **Bell**, Frogmore, has had a new landlord, Neil Kingham, since October. Happy hour is from 12 until 2 and 5 until 7, Monday to Friday, when there is 50p off a pint of *London Pride* or *ESB*. Fresh sandwiches are available at lunchtimes until the kitchen refurbishment is finished when there will be fresh hot and cold food. More noteworthy, is the restoring of the real fire in the pub, lighting up time to be at the beginning of December, so it should be cosy for Advent.

The **Desborough Arms** is currently closed, former landlord is now at the **Queen**, Victoria Street.

There is a new landlady at the **Iron Duke**, Nicola Byrne, who was formerly at the **Flint Cottage**.

(Continued on page 19)

MOWCHAK

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KINGS HEAD, AYLESBURY REOPENS

At last the **Kings Head** in Aylesbury is open again. At last Aylesbury's historic inn is back in business. At launch parties held on 15th and 16th November many customer's wrote "At Last!" in the visitors book. Crowds of customers flocked to the pub to enjoy a drink there for the first time since 1993.

The new landlord is Les Shardlow who, together with his wife Noreen, has taken out a lease from the *National Trust* to run the bars and restaurant sides of the enterprise.

The building is described in the latest *National Trust Handbook 2000* as "a coaching inn dating from 1450 and of particular interest for its large mullioned window, which contains fragments of 15th-century glass carrying the arms of Henry VI and his wife, Margaret of Anjou." Local legend also claims that Oliver Cromwell stayed there before the Battle of Aylesbury and you can see "Cromwell's Chair" in the bar. As



A 'Fish Eye View' of the Kings Head

you approach from the Market Square, the first thing you notice is that it is difficult to get a good view of the front of the building. From the square you can see the covered entrance-way through which stage coaches once would have passed to the cobbled courtyard beyond.

The large stained glass window faces on to some shops and offices which were built in the 1960s. There were probably shops there before that but

it is a pity that the whole frontage cannot be seen from the Market Square.

To the right of the archway is the Farmers Bar which has been re-designed since it was last used as a bar. To the left is the Great Hall – a classic bar with most of its best features preserved; the high ceiling, the famous window, an exposed section of wall (showing how it was built), the little snug

(Continued on page 4)

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THE RETURN OF AN OLD FAVOURITE

(Continued from page 3)

beside the main bar, the large unusual clock, the real fire, the wooden settle beside the fire. The colour scheme has changed but the overall impression is that it has all been beautifully preserved and restored.

There are three real ales: *Draught Bass* in both bars and *Greene King IPA* and *Fuller's London Pride* in the Farmer's Bar only. Depending on demand for real ale, another beer may be added in due course. The bars are now open during normal licensing hours with a break from 3.00-5.00pm Monday to Friday. Bar meals are available at lunch time.

Along the main corridor is the old hotel dining room which has been beautifully restored as Oliver's restaurant with wood panelled walls. Booking is recommended for the restaurant which can seat about 30 people and is open for evening meals and is licensed to sell drinks until midnight.

The rest of the inn will be run by the National Trust. In December they will open a conference centre but it remains to be seen what will happen to the bedrooms and the stable block.

Les Shardlow also runs the nearby **Queens Head** so he now has Aylesbury's two most traditional pubs under his wing.

Swan Supping wishes Les and all those involved in this project every success.

Nick Holt

Alan Bell
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New Year

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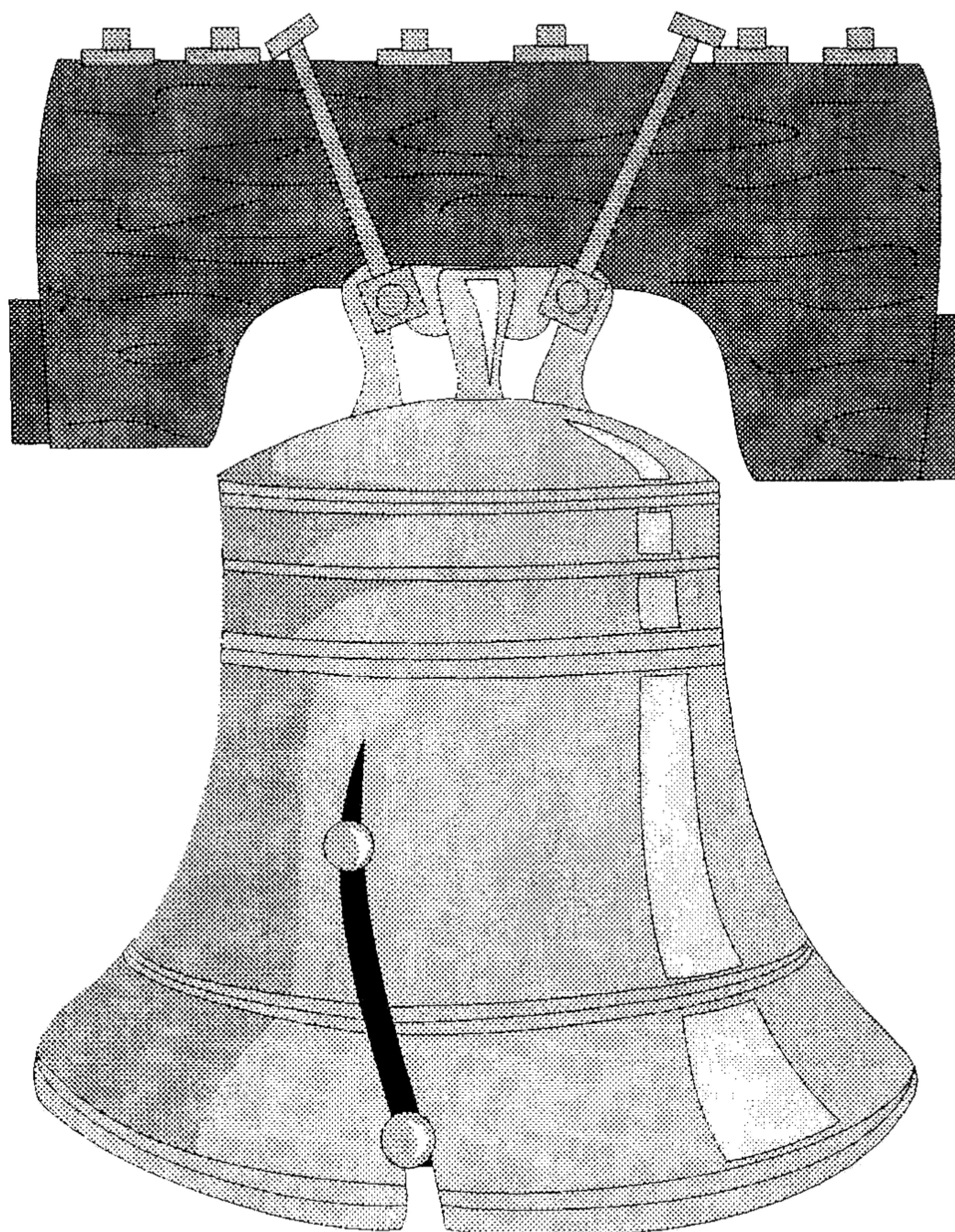
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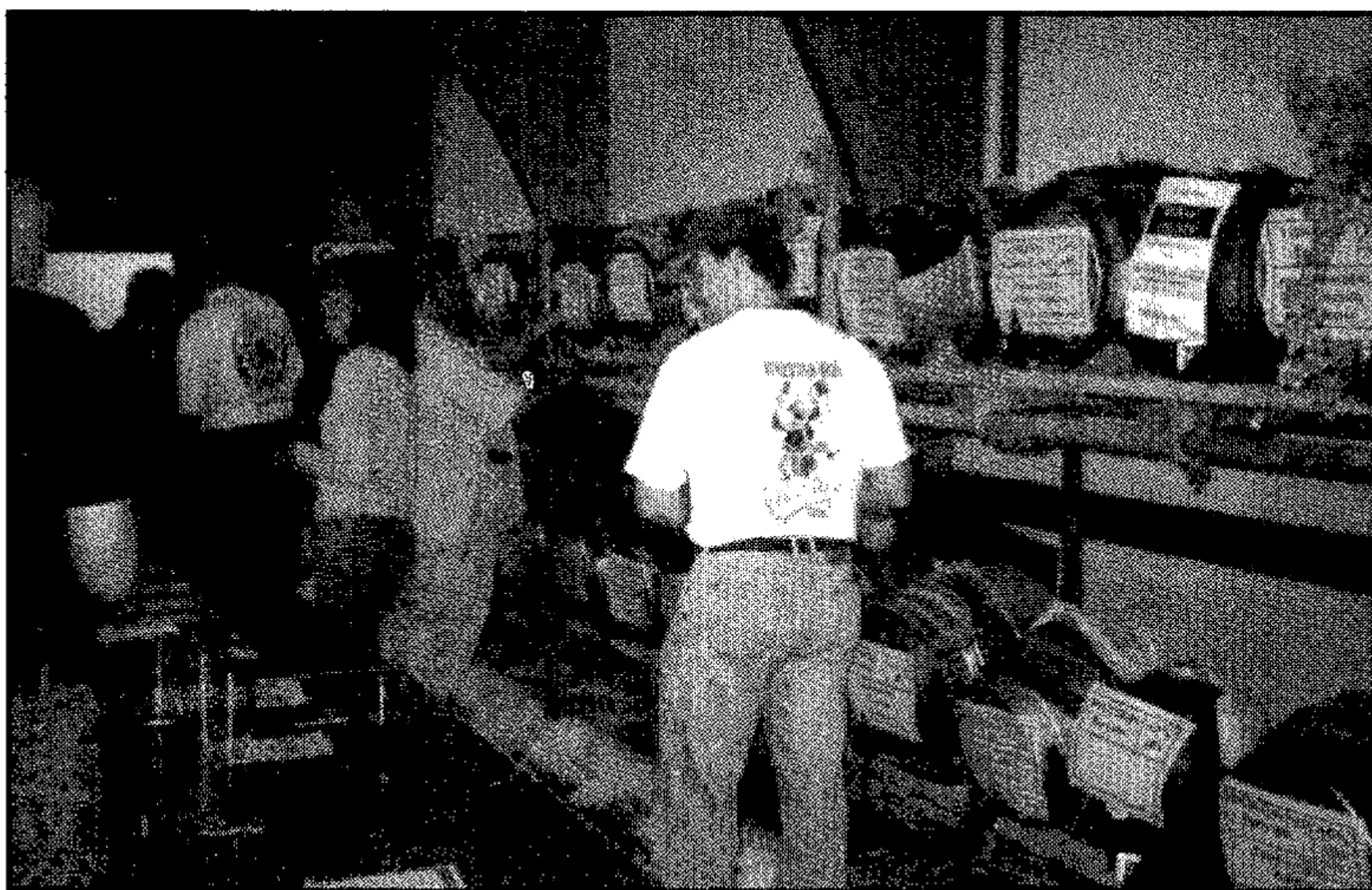
MANDEVILLE MILD WINS BEER OF THE FESTIVAL

The 7th Vale of Aylesbury Beer Festival run by the charity 'Friends of Florence Nightingale House' with the co-operation of CAMRA, proved to be even more successful than previous years, raising around £3,500.

As in previous years, drinkers could vote for their favourite beers in the various categories available, and this year the competition for the top prize was particularly fierce.

Of the thirty beers plus three ciders and one perry, nineteen of them gained votes as the festival favourite and there were no beers at all that got no votes in their respective section.

The MILD section was probably the most hotly contested as there were only two in the range. Both the Moorhouse's Black Cat Mild and the Vale Black Swan Mild had won previous *Beer of the Festival* awards and both received equal numbers of votes for their category.



Happy volunteers serving at the festival

The BITTER section winner was taken, by one vote, by *Shugborough Gardeners Retreat*.

In the STRONG beer section *Tring Death or Glory* was a clear winner, gaining more than half the votes in that section.

The CIDER section was another closely fought affair with *Weston's Herefordshire Country Perry* narrowly taking the award.

However, it was the beer brewed especially for the festival, *Mandeville Mild*, which was voted the overall **Champion Beer of the Festival**.

Mandeville Mild, which was brewed and donated by Steve Banfield of *Banfield Ales*, will not be seen again as it was a one-time brew. However, we shall try and prevail on Steve to brew another beer next year when we present him with his award at the Branch AGM in January (see **Branch Socials** for details).

Derek and Carol French wish customers old and new a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

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CODSALL REVISITED

As Giles de Boulay and I were concerned that we had not heard if the **Station** pub at Codsall was keeping up its high standards we made a last minute decision to go to see and taste for ourselves.

We went off via Princes Risborough where we stopped for the now customary bacon roll and 'frothy coffee'.

The Birmingham Clubman soon whisked us to Birmingham where we had quite a wait for our train. There was an element of confusion 'cos the train we were going to catch did not now stop at Codsall! All was sorted and we arrived at the premises at about 12:15.

A quick look around revealed that all was well and although there was no guest beer, there were five *Holdens* 'goodies'.

We started with the *Bitter* which was well up to standard and swiftly followed it with a fine pint of *Railway*. We thought that we ought to take some sustenance on board so Giles went for bangers and mash (he is a confirmed sausage addict-but that's another story!) and I went for a cheese omelette.

Those consumed we then took *XB*, followed by *Golden Glow* (rather a suitable name bearing in mind how we were beginning to feel) and we finished off with a fine pint of *Special*.

We were well pleased with our visit and were reassured that standards were remaining very high indeed. We were told that the weekend before our call they had a beer festival with some 35 different beers. This festival had been so successful that they had to replenish supplies on the Saturday.

As the train only calls once every two hours we thought we should make a move. We set off for Wolverhampton as our spies had told us there was a good establishment very near to the station.

And so it was that we found ourselves happily seated in the **Great Western** with a fine pint of *Holdens Mild*. That finished we felt it would be unkind to leave without sampling the *Bathams Bitter* so we supped a quick pint of that as well. Both beers were first class.

We took ourselves on the next train to Birmingham where we called in to the **Anchor**. There we had a nice pint of *Ansells Mild* followed by some *Holts Bitter*-also very good.

We decided to call into the **Woodman** on our way back to the station to rest our weary legs. We took *Greene King IPA* (me) and *Speckled Hen* (Giles). They were in good nick but a tad too cold.

When we had gone into the pub, I was clutching my A to Z of Birmingham which, I guess, marked us down as visitors. Anyway Gwen, mine host, came over to talk to us and when she discovered the reason for our expedition she insisted that we tried some of her *Ansells Mild*. She insisted on treating us and I must say it was very good. As the evening was getting on we thought we should then make our way home.

All in all a wonderful day-here's to the next one!

Mike Clemence

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



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REGIONAL PUB OF THE YEAR

The **White Horse** at Hedgerley has been chosen as *CAMRA's Regional Pub of the Year* for the Central Southern region.

This region includes all of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire and a small part of Hertfordshire (around Tring and Hemel). The new Regional Director, Colin Lanham, presented the pub with a certificate on 7th November supported by a packed bar full of CAMRA members, locals and press.

Seven of the *Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe* contingent attended, including members that originally surveyed the pub for the contest along with our branch chairman and secretary. The avid throng of real ale buffs enjoyed some excellent beer, including a mystery ale challenge, all served straight from the cask. The landlord kindly laid on an array of finger food delights to round off a thoroughly enjoyable night.

Hedgerley is just outside our branch area but is only a couple of miles from Beaconsfield just south of the M40. *Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead Branch* can be proud of their choice of this excellent free house as their *Pub of the Year* and following its success in the regional judging we now wish it well in the national judging process which is taking place at present.

The **White Horse** is a small country local with two bars and is distinguished by its unusual range of draught real ales all of which are served straight from the cask. The regular beer available is *Greene King IPA* and there are always six regularly changing guest beers.

Janet and Kevin Brooker, their family, and the staff will give you a fine welcome. Well worth a visit. If you think the pub's exterior seems familiar, you may have seen it on the front of our local pub guide: *Real Ale In Bucks*.

There were four runners up for the competition:

Butchers Arms, Oxford
Horse and Groom, Caulcott
Lamb Inn, West Hanney
Retreat, Reading

As you may realise, none of these pubs are in our branch area!

To be eligible for the *Regional Pub of the Year* a pub must win a POTY award for the branch area. It seems a long time since the *Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch of CAMRA* held their own *Pub of the Year* competition. If the feeling of the branch members who attend the AGM in January (see the **Branch Diary** for details) is that a branch competition would be worthwhile, then we could see a pub in our branch win the regional award next year.

One obvious suggestion must be the **Bell**, Chearsley, which has won the award for *Aylesbury Vale Village Pub Competition* for the second time. There are lots of other worthy pubs and we would love to get some suggestions from our readers. Why not put pen to paper and write to the editor with your ideas!

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LOCAL BREWERY NEWS



Tring Brewery

The **Tring Brewery** has recently launched a range of seven new ales, three of which are available all year and four seasonally. All the ales are named after local myths, legends and sayings from Hertfordshire. Names such as *Side Pocket for a Toad* (an old Hertfordshire saying alluding to the uselessness of anything), *Jack O' Legs* (a well loved local giant who used to rob the rich and give to the poor) and *Colley's Dog* (named after a local villain, Thomas Colley) definitely signal that there have been some radical changes at the brewery.

The brewery, which started production back in 1992, has been noticeably quiet over the past few years supplying only very local outlets with its beers *Ridgeway Bitter* and *Old Icknield Ale*. The recent arrival of Andrew Jackson who joined the brewery from **Whitbread** has been accompanied by a complete relaunch of the brewery. He joins both the founder Richard Shardlow and Barry Phipp the Brewer who has been brewing for **Tring Brewery** for over 7 years.

For those who have seen the new beers in local pubs, the first noticeable difference is in the pump clips. These are bright and colourful and definitely more contemporary than their previous more traditional versions. It is obvious that these beers and their respective pump clips have been designed to compete more effectively in the ever-increasing guest beer market. The pump clips start as black and white sketches from local artist before being water coloured and then incorporated into the pump clip by a local design agency in Tring called Image House.

The beers are as distinctive as the pump clips and all very individual in their



characteristics. For example the new seasonal beer called *Reap the Rye* as the name suggest is brewed with Rye Malt, which imparts a unique maltiness. The use of the American hop Cascade also imparts an unmistakable citrus hop note to the *Side Pocket for a Toad*.

Although **Tring Brewery** made it very clear that they will not be producing endless different ales but prefer to focus on producing seven great ales that pubs and retail customers will want to purchase again and again. Having said that they have produced one beer this year for the RAF to

Mick and Wendy Rolley

The White Hart Quainton

(Nice Pub, shame about the Landlord)

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LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. The beer, which was called *Squadron Scramble*, was a great success being delivered as far as Lossiemouth in Scotland, Torquay and Glamorgan.

At present *Tring* is working to secure local business through direct delivery and further afield using wholesalers. However, their long-term plans include both bottling and pubs.

With Christmas approaching it is also worth noting that the seasonal beer is to be called *Santa's Little Helper* – lets hope Bart doesn't mind too much!

Andrew Jackson
Tring Brewery

Trueman's Brewery

If you fancy doing some brewing instead of the Christmas shopping, why not go along to the **Crown and Anchor** and join in on the brewing of *Trueman's* Christmas special 8.2% beer *Percy's Downfall* on Thursday December 7th.

Trueman's are also producing a new bottle conditioned 7% ABV beer called *Beer With No Name!* Bottles are priced at £2-50 each.

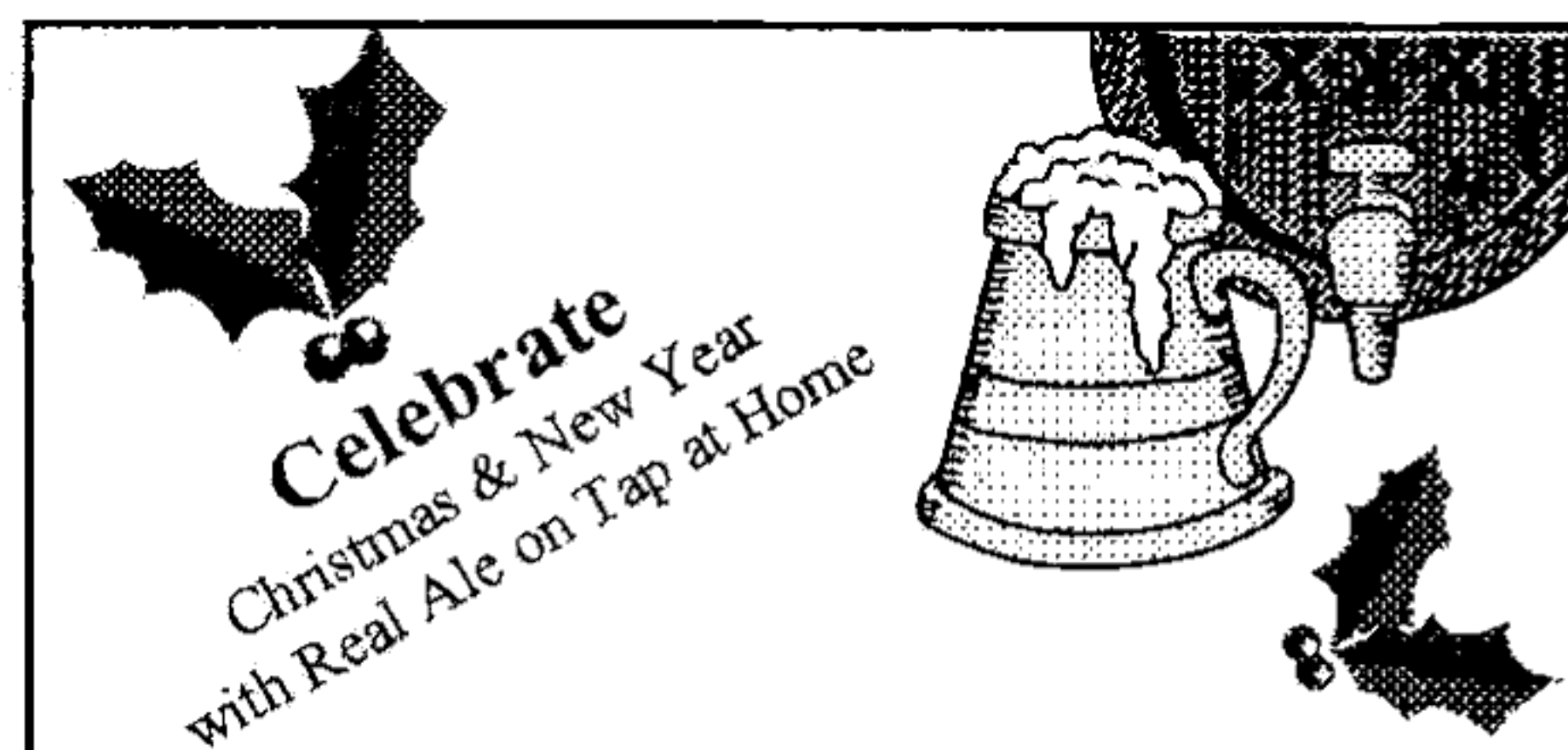


Vale Brewery

Vale Brewery's winter brew *Good King Senseless* (5.2% ABV) is available in both cask & bottled form. For a limited time, free 'It's Senseless' T-shirts are being given away with every case of bottles (Budweiser Budvar T-shirts are also available).

Hadda's Winter Solstice (4.1% ABV) is also available until the end of February. This is a single varietal beer with 100% fuggles hops which was first brewed last year.

Vale are now offering up to a dozen guest beers from other similarly sized small breweries. They also stock an extensive selection of wines available to both landlords and the public in mixed cases.



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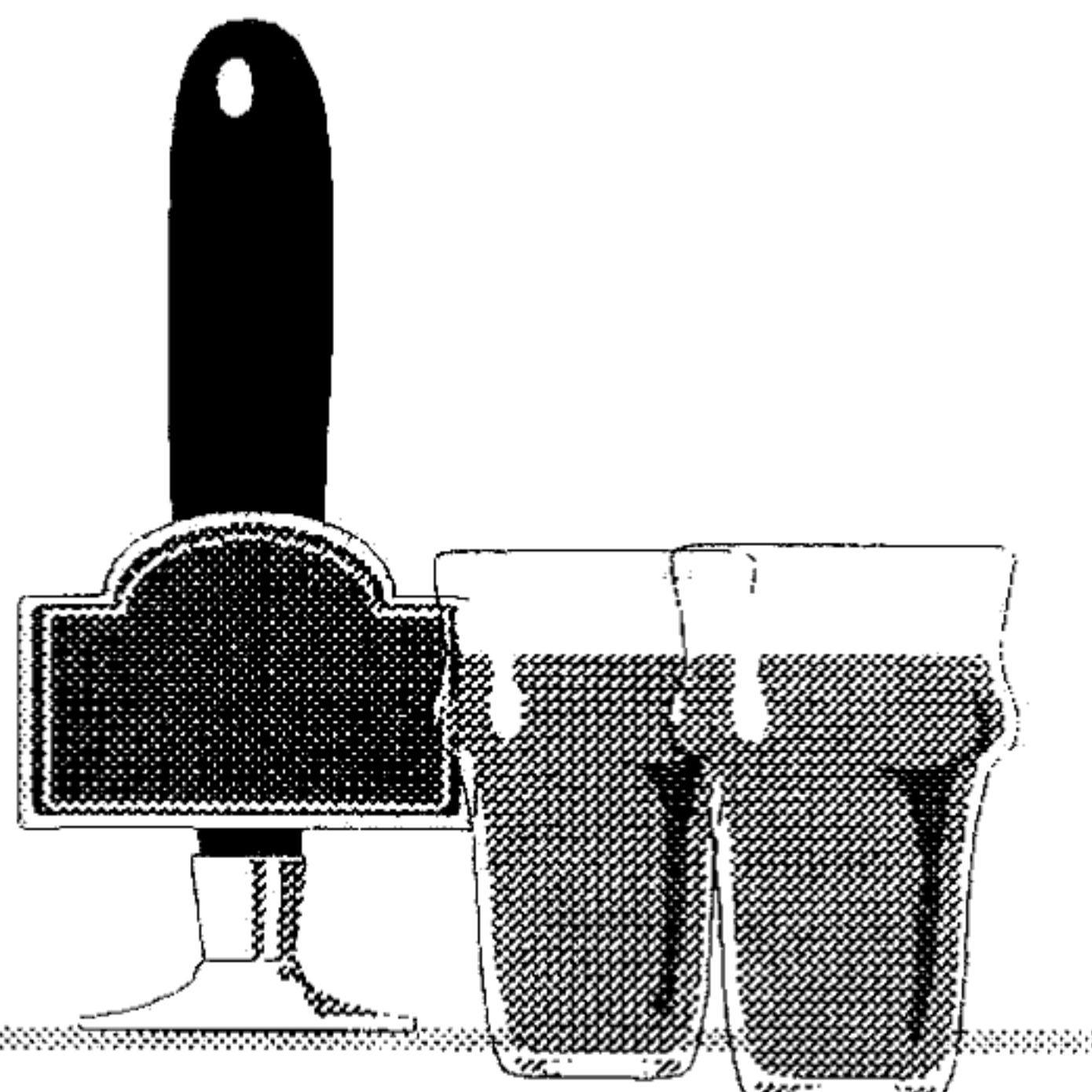
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GUEST BEERS FROM THE VALE BREWERY

GUEST BEERS FROM THE TRING BREWERY

GUEST BEERS FROM THE REBELLION BREWERY

AYLESBURY VALE VILLAGE PUB COMPETITION WINNER



Winners and runners up with Councillors Maureen Payne and Chris James

The **Bell**, Chearsley, has won the *Aylesbury Vale Village Pub Competition* for the second time. The competition, which is in its fourth year, is run by *Aylesbury Vale District Council*. All the pubs that are entered into the competition have to be nominated by a member of the public, then they are visited by a panel of judges who

have to visit the pubs and give marks for various aspects that go to making the perfect village pub. These include the friendliness of the staff, how good the pub looks, facilities, work done for the local community, food, and, of course, the quality of beer available.

The **Bell** is a very picturesque pub with a thatched roof, and it faces Chearsley village green. It serves *Fullers Chiswick* and *London Pride* plus seasonal beers and has frequently appeared in the *Good Beer Guide*.

It has gained a very good reputation for its food and according to the regulars, it acts as community centre for the village and is a lovely meeting place to chat about village life. There is also a beautiful garden with a play area for children which is fenced in, making it safe for small children.

On Tuesday, 20th November, the prize giving took place at the pub in the company of a lot of the runners up. Landlord and landlady Peter and

Sue Grimsdell, were presented with a certificate and a hand crafted trophy from the Gladstone Pottery in Stoke, by the chairman of the district council, Chris James. They will also receive a free internet site as well as extensive publicity from co-sponsors *Mix 96* and the *Bucks Herald*.

The Carpenters Arms, Marlow



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Food Times
Lunchtimes 12-2 PM
Evenings 6.30-9 PM

Licencees, Alan & Pam Sandell, welcome you to a pub with good food, good beer & good company.

An English country pub, set in the Buckinghamshire countryside, full of character and offering a fine selection of real ales,

Bass, Adnams, Ringwood Best Bitter
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lagers and wines, a food area and a real fire in winter.

An extensive range of home cooked dishes is available every day for lunch or dinner, including home-made soups, main courses, snacks, vegetarian and sweets at reasonable prices.

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THE BELL INN, CHEARSLEY

The competition was initially set up in commemoration of Councillor Ted Payne. Maureen Payne, Ted's widow, introduced the evening by reminding everyone of the massive contribution her husband made to the cause of real ale and the village pub.

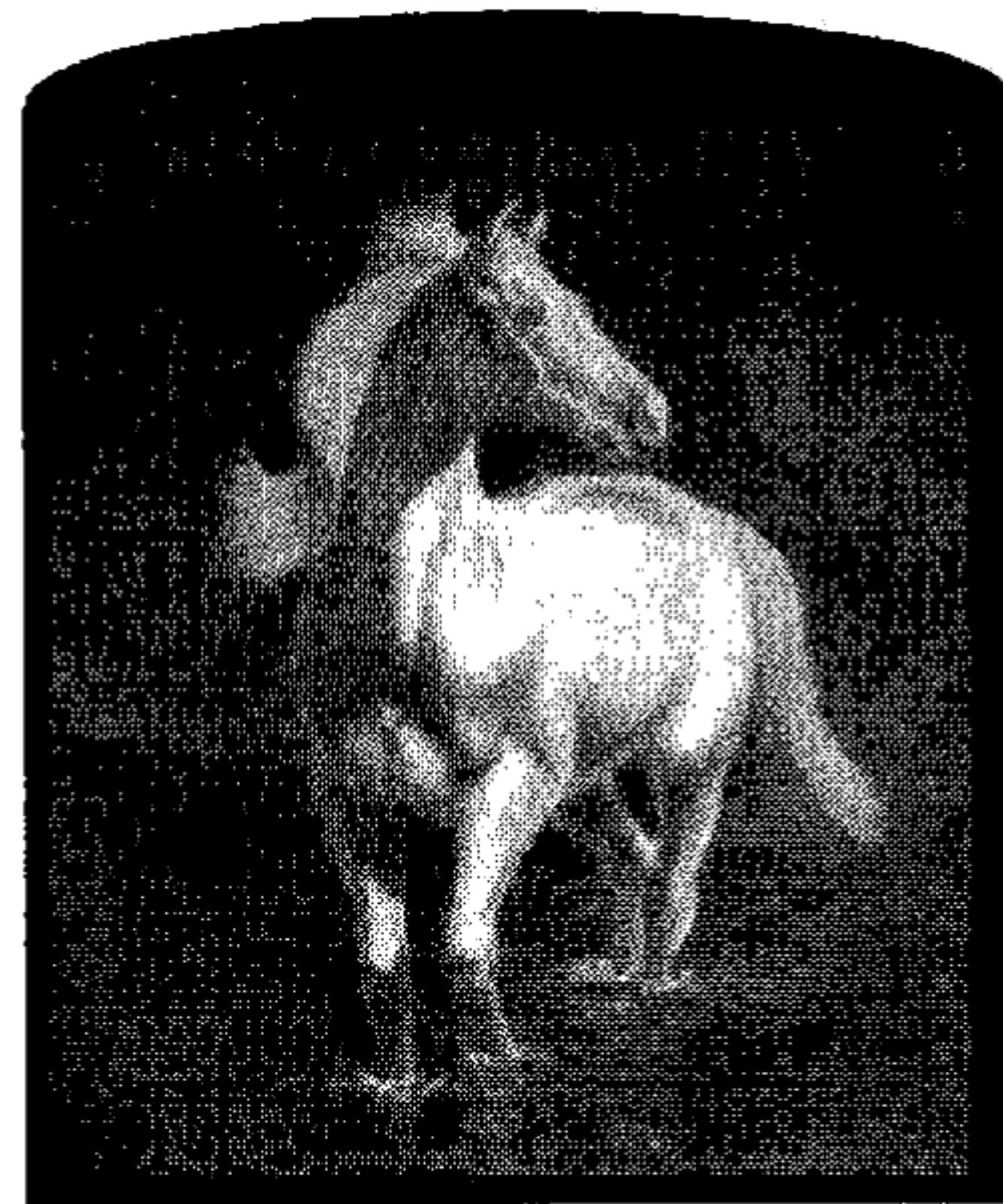
In the 70's there was no real ale in his home village of Wing, so Ted and some of his drinking buddies organised a society to promote it. The local landlords had to stand up and take notice when Ted organised a function in the village hall serving real ale which emptied the pubs. After that, the pubs started to serve real ale.

Following on from this success, Ted went on to organise pub games and leagues throughout the area. He even ran a pub Olympics where people went from pub to pub playing a different pub game in each. This led on to the quiz leagues that became very popular and for which he set the questions.

While doing all this, he realised that the village pub was at the heart of the local community and was therefore very precious. The competition was put forward as a way of promoting village pubs and emphasising the role they play in the life of the countryside.

Joint runners up in this year's competition were both first time nominees, the **Old Swan**, Cheddington, and the **Stag Inn**, Mentmore. They and the other eleven short listed pubs received certificates and will be included in a guide to Aylesbury Vale village pubs which will be distributed to Tourist Information Offices, Libraries etc. throughout Aylesbury Vale.

Merry Christmas to all our customers!



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01296 641377

for the best steaks
in the area

CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2000

The Cuckoos Nest at Gawcott

Merry Christmas to Customers Old and New - we are delighted to announce our inclusion in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2000.

Vale Beers:-

Notley Ale

Edgars Golden

Good King Senseless

Hadda's Winter Solstice

Dec/Jan Guest Breweries:-

Mighty Oak, Buffys

Crouch Vale, B & T

Nethergate, Iceni

Flagship & Burton Bridge

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plus *Budweiser Budvar* Free T' Shirts

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Real Food

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For Coffee & Pastries.**



Book Reviews



National News

Thame Inns Discovered

£6.95

Alan Hickman & David
Bretherton
Doal Publishing, Thame

This is a rarity – a book about pubs, but no mention of 'Real Ale'. Indeed, many of the pubs referred to were closed before the term was invented.

This is instead a thoroughly researched work on all known pubs in the centre of Thame. Some eighty different pubs and licensed premises have been identified in 61 locations, of which only thirteen remain trading as pubs in Thame at present. Many photographs and drawings, potted histories and a complete list of all licensees since the sixteenth century make this a fascinating document, whilst use of quality gloss paper aids clarity.

As always, interesting snippets and tales lie within the covers. The **Wenman Arms** for example, which was situated in Park Street near the **Falcon** until closure in 1957. It was raided one night for after hours drinking, the police knocking on all the doors at once. Confused drinkers inside, not knowing which to answer first, decided not to open any of the doors. By the time police gained entry, any evidence of drinking had, of course, disappeared. Not to be outdone, however, they booked the landlord for having a dog without a licence!

Of more interest is the history of the **Red Cow** situated on the Aylesbury Road out of Thame. This was next to Thame Mill, which in the eighteenth century was owned by a Mr. Henry Boddington. The book includes a painting of the **Red Cow** and the mill done just before Mr. Boddington left to find his fortune by founding a certain brewery at Strangeways in Manchester. This book is sponsored by the **Unique Pub Company** whose offices are now almost on the site of the mill!

This is an excellent book for browsing whilst supping your pint in one of the remaining Thame pubs and reading all about its history. More so if walk along the High Street and think that a building looks as if it once could have been a pub, then no doubt it was, and this book will tell you all about it!

The book is available from pubs and bookshops in Thame and from the Thame Tourist Office.

John Wood



CAMRA's Good Cider Guide

£9.99

edited by David Matthews
ISBN 1852491434

This publication is a must for any *Real Cider Drinkers*.

When the last *Guide to Real Cider* was published in 1996, there were thirteen entries for Buckinghamshire, now there are only eleven (and the price has risen by £2.00!).

We need more real cider drinkers in high places putting pressure on the big brewery owners to get the message across that what is sold in the majority of pubs from a nitro font is a very poor relation to the real thing from a barrel behind the bar.

The 2000 edition is packed full of information, history, availability abroad, recipes etc. in fact 103 pages of it – arguably a bit long, but well worth dipping into. The book itself no longer follows the slim 4½ inches by 9 inches of the previous guide or the *Good Beer Guide*. It is 5½ x 8½ inches (my apologies, I have not gone metric yet!). The cover is somewhat flimsy and the whole publication will easily become dogeared. But the information it contains is vital to the well being of a real cider drinker!

It is set out in large print with clear headings for locations and informative maps. The symbols have been kept to a minimum, so find the opening hours and get on down there!

See if you can persuade Santa to bring you a copy in your stocking!

Tina Wood
Real Cider Connoisseur

CAMRA's Champion Scottish beers announced

"If beer was whisky, this would be it", is how *Dark Island*, the winner of the prestigious *CAMRA Champion Beer of Scotland 2000* competition, is summed up in the 2001 edition of the *Good Beer Guide*.

Brewed by *Orkney Brewery* in Quoyloo the winning beer is dark, beautifully balanced and full of roast malt and fruit, with a hint of caramel. A sweetish taste leads to a long-lasting, roasted, slightly bitter finish.

Set up in 1988 in an old school building, *Orkney* is one of Britain's most northerly breweries, but its beers are available from wholesalers throughout the UK. *Dark Island* was judged to be the best beer in Scotland by an expert panel of beer tasters including journalists, publicans and *CAMRA* members.

Rob Jenner, *Orkney's* Sales Manager said, "It's wonderful news. It just reinforces our position as the prime cask ale producer north of the border. All credit for this win must go to Rob Hill, our Head Brewer and his world-beating team at the brewery."

Colin Valentine, *CAMRA's* Scottish Director, said, "It's great news to see a traditional style Scottish beer take the top gong. All the winning beers come from Scotland's small independent brewers. It clearly shows that they are leading the way on distinctive, quality beers. I hope Scotland's pubs will do their best to celebrate *Orkney's* victory by offering *Dark Island* to their customers over the coming weeks." It was intended that *Dark Island* would be on offer at the recent *Vale of Aylesbury Beer Festival*, but it literally 'missed the boat'!

Runners up in the competition are *St Peter's Well* from *Houston Brewery* in Renfrewshire, a 4.2% ABV golden beer with a hoppy aroma and *Bitter & Twisted* from *Harviestoun Brewery* in Clackmannanshire.

The winners were announced at the *Aberdeen and North East Beer Festival*. The festival featured all the winning beers and forty top real ales from across Britain. It's *CAMRA's* most northerly festival and is held in the McClymont Halls on Holborn Street.



IT'S CHRISTMAS !!

Vale Brewery of Haddenham offer CAMRA Award Winning Local Ales, made from only the finest malted barley and whole cone hops, in ready to drink party packs.

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<u>Price list (incl. VAT)</u>	<u>ABV</u>	<u>Firkin</u>	<u>polypin</u>	<u>2 gal</u>
Notley Ale	3.3%	72.00	42.00	22.00
Wychert Ale	3.9%	74.00	44.00	23.00
Hadda's Winter Solstice	4.1%	75.00	45.00	23.50
Edgar's Golden Ale	4.3%	76.00	46.00	24.00
Good King Senseless	5.2%	79.00	49.00	25.00

Speciality Beers

Black Swan Dark Mild	3.3%	73.00	43.00	22.50
Black Beauty Porter	4.3%	77.00	47.00	24.50

Bottled Beers

Halcyon Daze	4.3%	12x500ml Case	18.00
Good King Senseless	5.2%	12x500ml Case	22.00



Special Offers

It's SENSELESS!! Free T' shirt worth £5 with every case of Good King Senseless

5% OFF all cask ales upon presentation of this voucher

Good Beer Guide 2002

You may be confused by the above title! Surely, I can hear you say, the *Good Beer Guide* for 2001 has only just been published!

In fact, we have just received the forms for carrying out the detailed surveys for the 2002 edition and these surveys will be carried out early next year. As you may know, the format of the guide is changing in order to get more detailed descriptions for the exceptional pubs, and there will be far more 'try also' pubs which will look very similar to the entries in the current guide.

However, how do local branch members decide which of our hundreds of pubs will form the approximately 35 entries for the guide? We do this in many ways. All members of the local branch of *CAMRA* tend to go to pubs on a regular basis. They go to pubs they know already or come along on socials organised by the branch. Over the course of a year, they get to know a lot of pubs!

In order that these pubs can be compared, members are encouraged to fill out beer tasting forms on each visit (these are available from the editor) which score pints from Undrinkable (0) to Superb (6). Scores from these forms are entered onto a database and the pubs in the branch offering the best beer calculated. These pubs are then surveyed and a final decision on the guide entries is made over a series of selection meetings in March.

We have a large branch area to cover, so it is possible that we may be missing some absolute gems! If you feel that your local pub has been unfairly overlooked, please write to the editor so that we can consider it before the end of March deadline for surveys for the next guide.

JOIN CAMRA TODAY

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 £14, Joint £17 (at same address),
Student/OAP/Unemployed/Disabled £8
Joint OAP £11 (at same address)
Under 26 £8 Date of birth _____
For Life/Overseas rates, please ask for details.

Name(s)

Address

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I/We wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Rules.



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Letters

Dear Sir,

With reference to the article (in your October/November 2000 edition) about the publication of the *Good Beer Guide 2001*.

Before continuing, I would like to point out that although I am a leaseholder through *Whitbread Pub Partnership*, I have no other brief with *Whitbread* or *Interbrew* and am writing these comments independently.

You report that the *Good Beer Guide* editor, Roger Protz, "slates *Bass* and *Whitbread* for turning their backs on beer – cask ales in particular". Later the same article states: "The declining interest in real ale among the handful of giant brewers offers tremendous opportunities for smaller regional and craft brewers". *Adnams*, *Batemans*, *Fullers*, *Youngs*, *George Gale* and *Timothy Taylor* are all mentioned.

I would like to point out that during the last year alone I have sold ales from all of those brewers. I have had *Adnams Best & Broadside*, *Fullers London Pride*, *Youngs Waggledance*, *George Gale HSB* and *Timothy Taylor Landlord*. In addition, I sell regularly: *Coniston Bluebird*, *Brakspear Special*, *Everards Tiger*, *Black Sheep Special Bitter* and *Shepherd Neame Spitfire*. All those beers were obtained through my normal *Whitbread/Interbrew* delivery system. And, there are others, which when supplemented by my 'guest pump' are helping me to establish a good reputation for cask ales throughout this area.

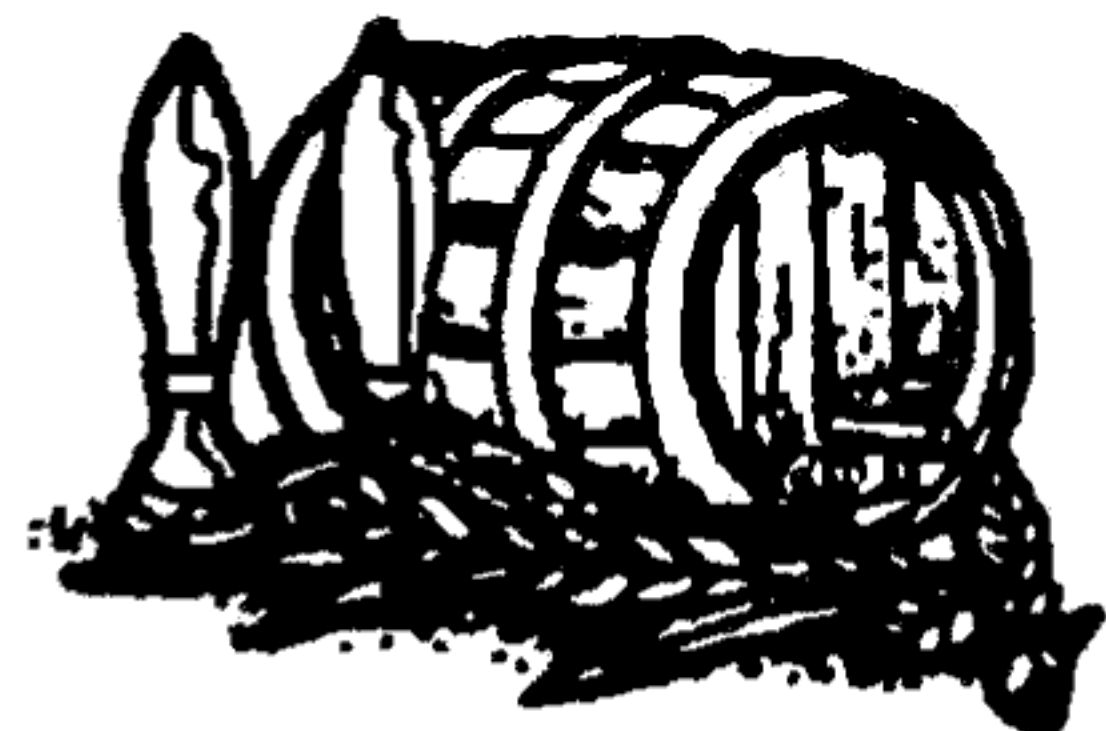
However, articles slating *Whitbread/Interbrew* beer policy do not help pubs like mine which try very hard to keep as many cask ales on tap as possible. Basically, readers will see a *Whitbread* sign and ignore the premises as not worthwhile.

I believe that before such articles are written it would be a good idea for the authors to perhaps talk to *Whitbread/Interbrew* and find out exactly what they are offering their outlets. With a list containing the aforementioned ales, surely it is time they were commended by real ale groups, rather than constantly criticised.

Just because it doesn't say "Free House" and has a "giant brewer's" logo outside, doesn't mean that there isn't anything worth drinking inside. Come and see for yourself!

Mick Dunton
Landlord/Lessee
Royal Standard, Wooburn Common

(This letter raises a good question and it would be interesting to see if other landlords feel the same way about it. Whitbread has deserved most of its bad press following the number of breweries it has closed over the years: the Tour of Destruction T-shirt famously listed them! Now that Whitbread have given up on the pub trade, perhaps we ought to give the new owners Interbrew a chance to prove themselves without the undue prejudice from past events. Lets hope that they maintain the choice of real ales for the pubs and keep giving the customers the choice they deserve. -Ed.)



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2001 Good Beer Guide
Cask Marque Approved



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customers a Happy Christmas and a
prosperous New Year*

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Gordon Brown loves his beer

William Hague's famous fourteen pints a day is dwarfed by the nine million pints a day Gordon Brown takes in tax from Britain's beer drinkers.

Figures released in November by the Brewers and Licensed Retailers Association (BLRA) and Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) show that when duty and VAT are added together, the Chancellor takes a third of every pint in tax. That adds up to nine million of the 27 million pints bought in the UK every day.

In response, the BLRA and CAMRA are launching a major national campaign, which will run from now until the Budget next year, to focus consumer attention on the amount of beer tax they pay every time they buy a pint. The campaign aims to involve every pub and beer drinker in Britain. People can vote in a national e-poll on whether they think beer taxes are too high and sign an e-petition to support the campaign to bring beer taxes down. The addresses are given at the end of the article.

Every year, Gordon Brown collects more than 3.2 billion pints in tax. That's enough beer to fill more than one and a half Domes, just over three Wembley Stadiums or 21 Albert Halls.

On duty alone, Gordon Brown now charges 34 pence a pint. That compares with 5 pence in France and 3 pence in Germany and Spain for a similar pint. When duty and VAT are added together, the Chancellor is now taking more than £5 billion a year in taxes on beer. That is the equivalent of £228 a year from the pocket of every beer drinker in the UK.

Rob Hayward, Chief Executive of the BLRA said, "Now we know why Gordon loves his beer. Every time you buy a pint, the Government takes a third in tax. The Chancellor is the nine million pint a day man. As an industry, we're calling on our customers to tell us what they think about the level of tax they pay on their beer. Their voice is a vital part of our campaign to bring beer taxes down."

Mike Benner, Head of Campaigns for CAMRA said, "We are calling on Britain's fifteen million beer drinkers to stand up and be counted in the battle for a fair deal on beer

tax. High beer tax is not only damaging brewers, pubs and the farmers who grow the raw materials for beer, it is also leading to rural pub closures and the loss of important centres of the community."

Have your say!

The e-poll and e-petition are found on the BLRA website at www.blra.co.uk. Comments on the campaign can also be e-mailed to beertax@blra.co.uk

The **Brewers and Licensed Retailers Association (BLRA)** is the trade association representing brewers, their pub interests and pub owning companies. Their membership accounts for 98 per cent of beer production and approximately two thirds of the 60,000 pubs in the UK. Their sector employs around half a million people.

The **Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA)** is a not-for-profit volunteer-led consumer group with 58,000 members. Its key objectives are to promote full flavoured and distinctive beer and decent pubs. It campaigns for choice, consumer rights and value for money.



Total Refreshment

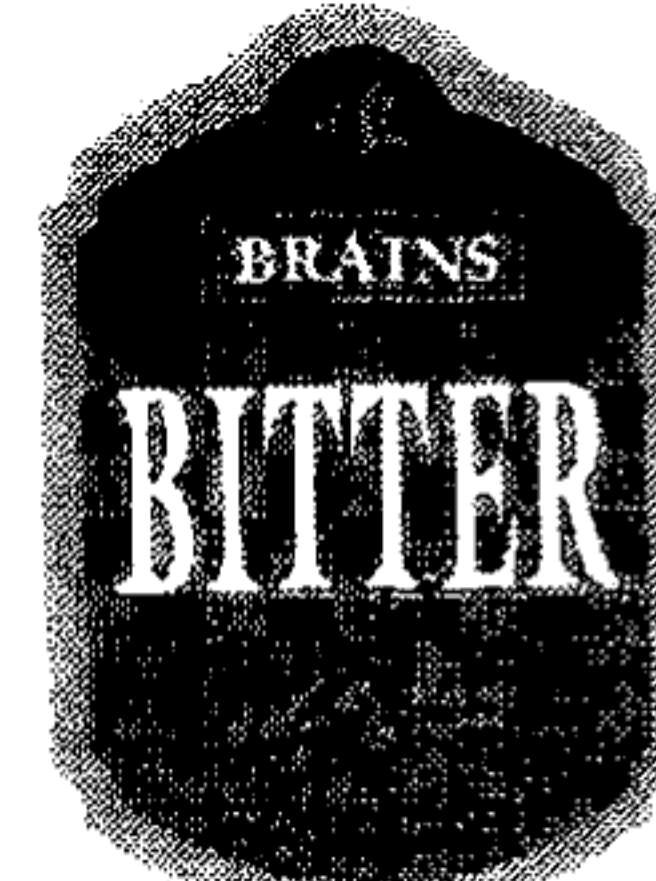
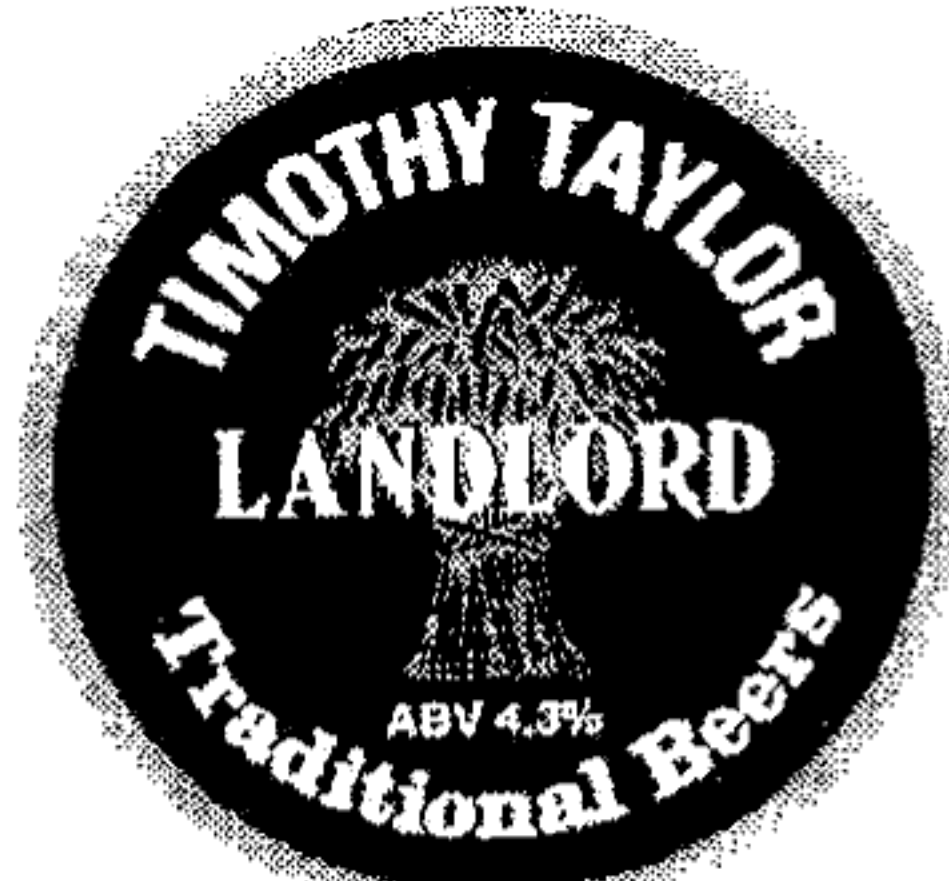
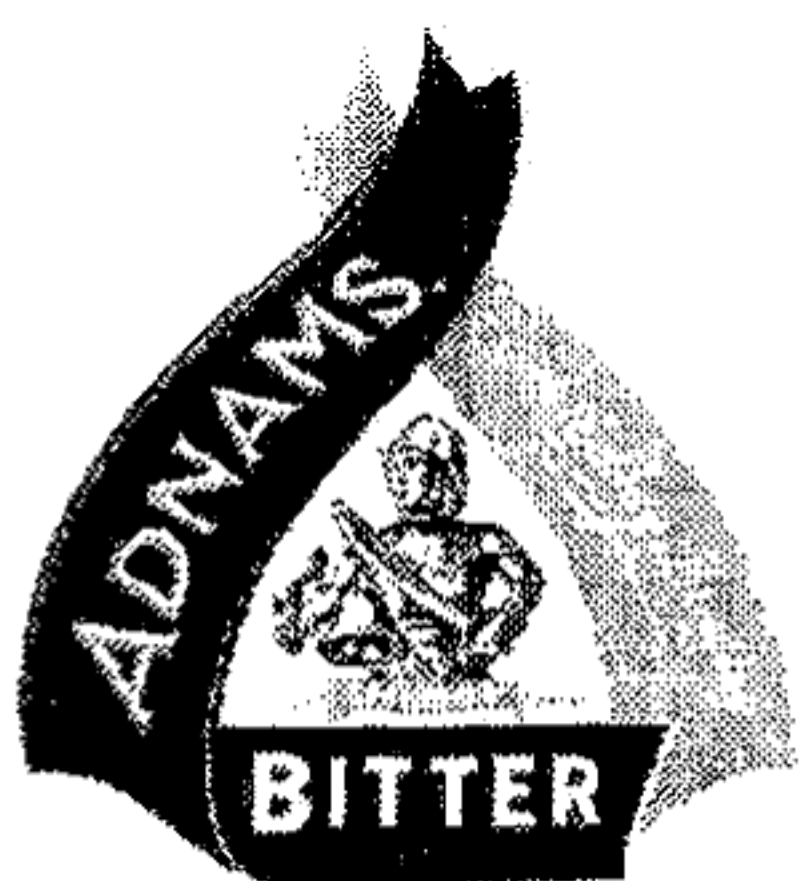
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Hop Back Brewery Tour

I have been a member of the **CAMRA Investment Club** for several years and the main reason for joining was to go on brewery tours. On average I have been on three tours a year and these have ranged as far and wide as **Belhaven** at Dunbar, **Cameron's** at Hartlepool, **Greene King** at Bury St Edmunds, **Burtonwood** at Warrington etc.

My most recent tour was to the **Hop Back** brewery at Downton near Salisbury on a Thursday in October. Due to problems with the railways I had to forgo my usual form of transport and drive there. Arriving in plenty of time I eschewed a visit to **The Bull** at Downton and did a few miles on my bike before arriving at the brewery for a two-o'clock start.

Our party of about a dozen were met by John Gilbert the founder of the brewery and now joint managing director. He gave us a brief history of the brewery as well as a quick half of the beer they had brewed for the **Wetherspoons** Halloween beer festival called **Full Moon Fever** - a superb beer. The brewery tour proper started and we were conducted round by the other joint managing director who used to work for **Gibbs Mew**.

First stop was the Malt Store where we went through the customary tasting of the half dozen different malts that they used. We then moved on to the Mash Tuns of which there were two, one holding 20 barrels and the other 50 barrels. The Copper (which was made of stainless steel!) was alongside and was directly fired by gas. If you



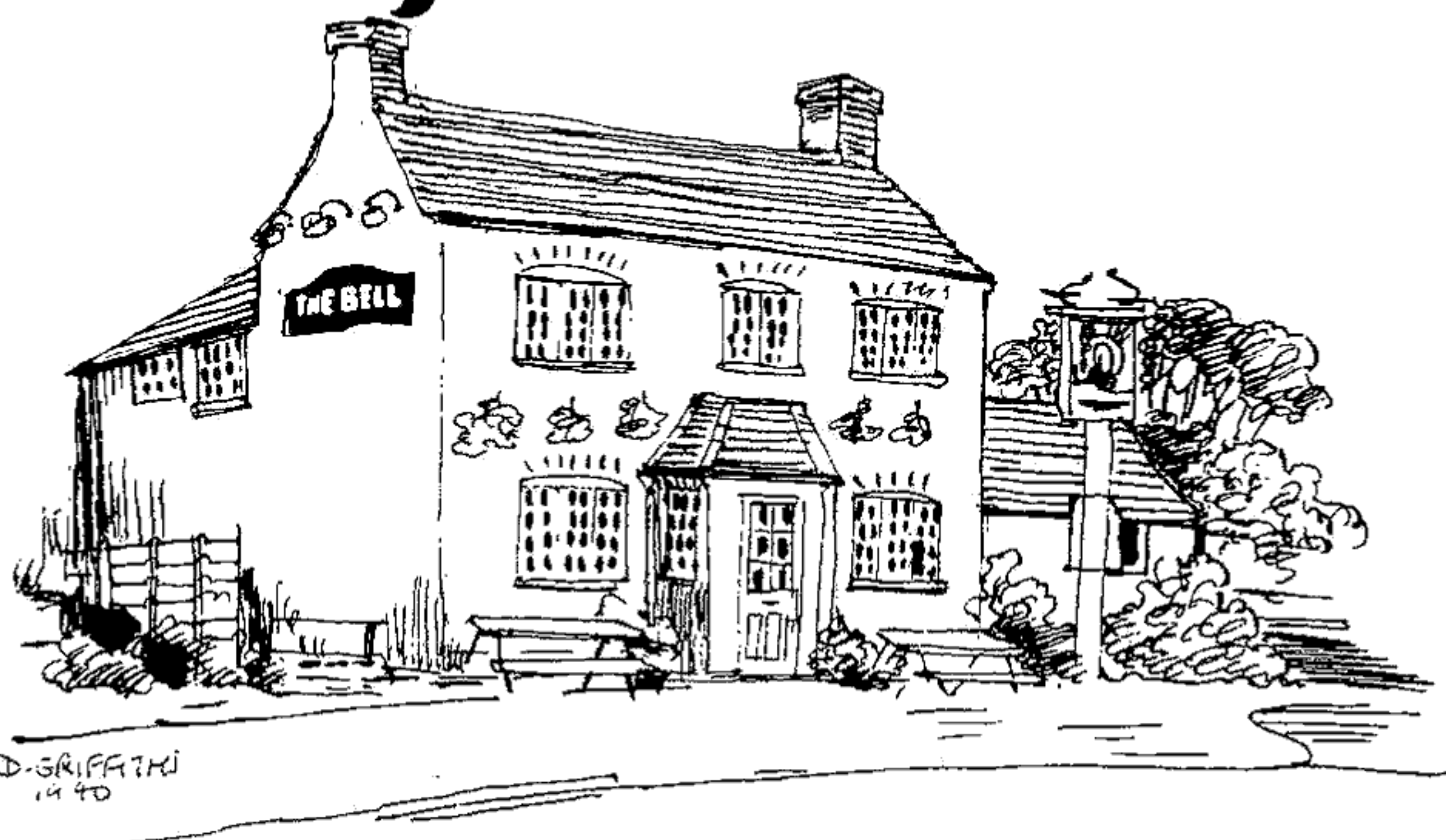
look at the accompanying picture you can see all the gas flues sticking out of the brewery roof. The Mash Tuns and Copper were all second hand and had been adapted for the brewery. One of the interesting things was that the **Hop Back Brewery** has never owned a Hop Back!!

We then visited the fermenters which were all of the enclosed type and in stainless steel. The final visit was to the bottling line which was the most compact one I had ever seen. Operated by a man at each end - one feeding the empty bottles in and the other one packing the full bottles into cases. The whole line was about 20 feet long. The beer currently being bottled was a contract for **Ringwood, Forty-Niner** being the beer involved.

After about an hour and a quarter we returned to the sampling room to help ourselves to *Summer Lighting*, *Winter Lighting*, *GFB*, *Hopfest* and of course more of the *Full Moon Fever*. Both of the Managing Directors were now present to answer our questions. As I had come by car I was rather restricted on the sampling so I made my excuses and left about four-o'clock. Even though the brewery was housed in industrial units rather than a conventional brewery building it had been still been a very interesting visit and as with all **Investment Club** tours because you have a stake in the brewery you seem to get extra special treatment.

Dick Moore

The Bell



Bierton

Dave & Vee White
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Listed in the 2001 Good Beer Guide
Fuller's Award Winning Ales
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from an independent brewer

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LIVE MUSIC ON SUNDAY EVENINGS (8.00pm):

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Sun 10 Dec | THE LEE RYDER BAND
Blues, R&B |
| Sun 24 Dec | CLIVE PRESLEY
Rock 'n' Roll Show |
| Sun 7 Jan | SUGAR CREEK
50s/60s Rockabilly Blues trio |
| Sun 21 Jan | GINNY BROWN BAND
Top British Female Country Vocalist |

New Quiz League Started

Following the end of the last Quiz League run by the *Oxford Mail*, a few pubs started to keep their Thursday night question fix satisfied by organising a series of friendly matches. These matches were only intended to run until the Winter league started, but no league happened, so some of the enthusiasts decided to create their own quiz league.

Frank Hughes, from the **Eight Bells**, Long Crendon, volunteered to organise the questions, Neil O'Donovan, from the **Red Lion**, Haddenham, volunteered to deal with the scoring and the **Long Crendon Quiz League** was born!

As there is currently no local newspaper publishing the results of the matches, **Swan Supping** will try and keep you up to date until the situation changes.

The eight teams for this league are as follows:-

Chandos Arms, Oakley
Clifden Arms, Worminghall
Rising Sun, Ickford
Eight Bells, Long Crendon
Red lion (Red Loin), Haddenham
Kings Head, Haddenham
Half Moon (Ex-Lambs), Cuxham
Rising Sun, Thame

Rising Sun (Ickford) 48-44 Chandos Arms
Ex-Lambs 47-40 King's Head
Red Loin 52-47 Rising Sun (Thame)
Clifden Arms 42-55 Eight Bells

After one game played, the table looks like this:

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. The Eight Bells	1	1	0	0	55	42	65
2. The Red Loin	1	1	0	0	52	47	62
3. Rising Sun (Ickford)	1	1	0	0	48	44	58
4. Ex-Lambs	1	1	0	0	47	40	57
5. Rising Sun (Thame)	1	0	0	1	47	52	47
6. The Chandos Arms	1	0	0	1	44	48	44
7. The Clifden Arms	1	0	0	1	42	55	42
8. The King's Head	1	0	0	1	40	47	40



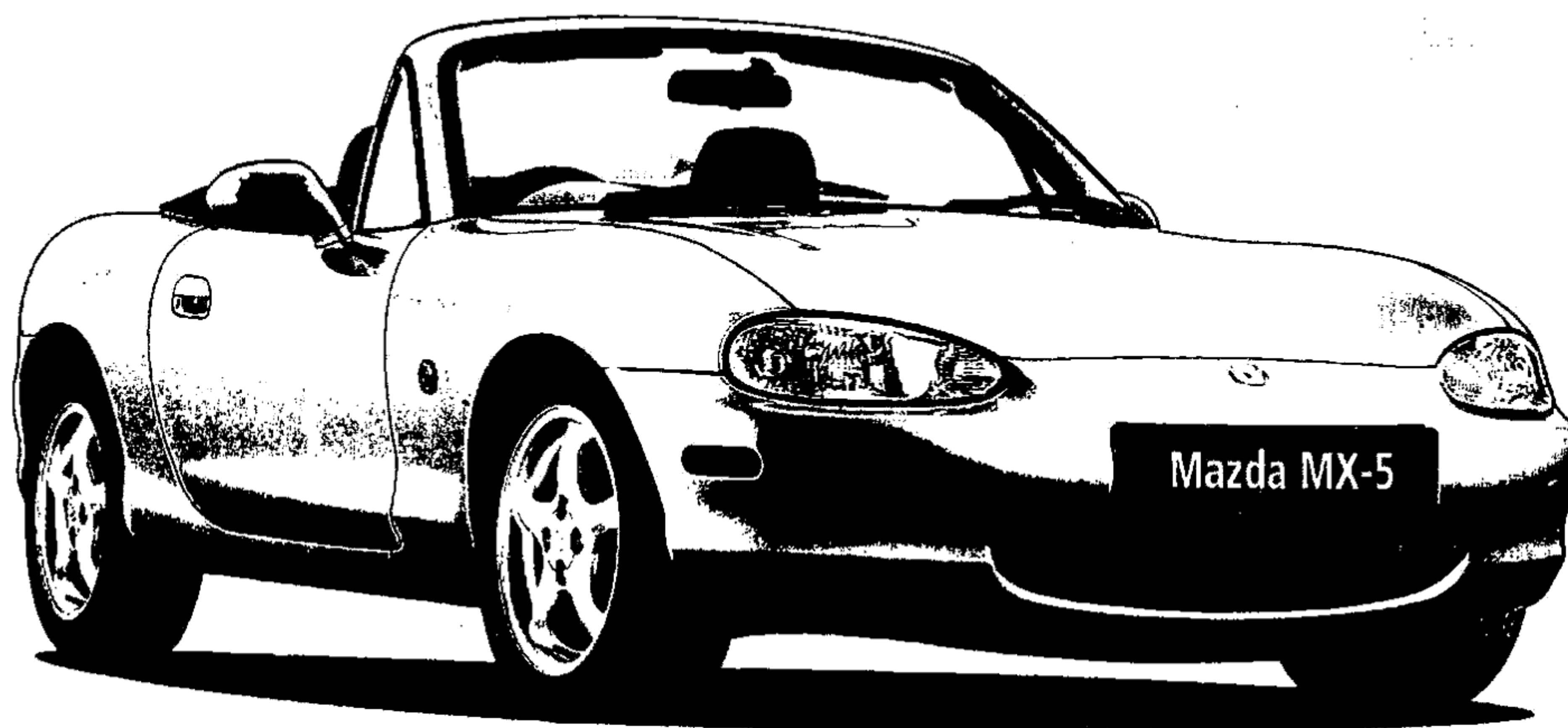
**Old Luxters
Brewery**

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Ales
and Bottle
Conditioning

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The following are the results for the opening day's fixtures, played on Thursday 23rd November 2000:

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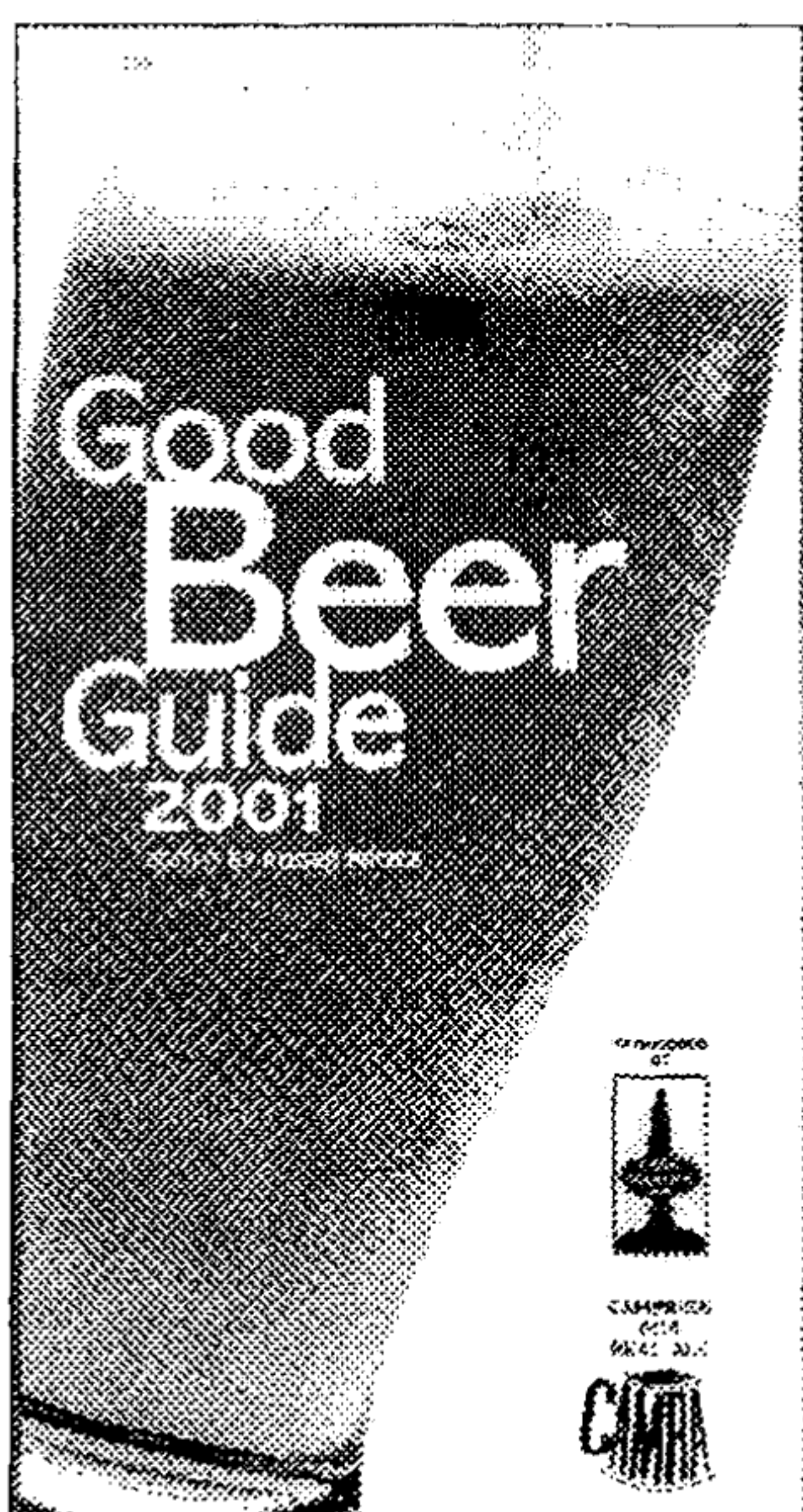
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perfect gift for
every
Beer Drinker at
Christmas!**

Local News

(Continued from page 2)

Wycombe Cricket Club opened its new pavilion in April 2000, under licensee Graham Curzon-Thompson. Currently has *Greene King IPA* on handpump, and has also had *Wadworth's 6X* and *Everard's Tiger*. There is a function room upstairs and the annual social membership fee is £10.

LITTLE MARLOW

The **Queens Head** was featured in the last ever episode of the famous TV series, *Inspector Morse* which was called 'The Remorseful Day'.

LOUDWATER

The Papermakers Arms, has closed after having been under threat for months. It was one of the few *Morrells* pubs in the area, and with the **Royal Oak** at Great Kingshill also shut, the *Morrells* presence in the branch is now low indeed.

The **White Blackbird** is still boarded up and there is no news as to its future.

MARLOW

The **Bank of England** is no more and there is no hope of resurrection as it has been demolished and is now a building site.

There is a new landlord at the **Prince of Wales**. He is Bob Robson who, ten years ago, was the landlord of the **Duke of Cambridge**.

SAUNDERTON

The Watson brothers have sold the **Rose and Crown** to *Buccaneer Inns* and they are due to leave on the 6th December. This was breaking news as we went to press and we will have a full report next issue.

PRESTON BISSETT

Any hopes of saving the **Old Hat** (a pub just outside our branch area but well known to our members) have now been dashed. Last spring the owners applied to change the pub into a private house. This application was refused at first by Aylesbury Vale District Council but this decision has since been overturned at an appeal.

RADNAGE

There was a kitchen fire a few weeks ago at the **Crown**. The landlord, Barry, was able to control the fire initially, then the Fire Brigade attended to complete the task and check the premises. Barry had to be taken to hospital suffering from the smoke, although he was released soon afterwards. The kitchen was virtually destroyed but the rest of the pub and bars were unaffected and business is continuing as near normally as possible.

There is no food at present and it is unlikely that the kitchen will be renovated before Christmas.

STONE

The fight for the **County Arms** appears to have been lost as planning permission has been passed for it to become two private houses.

WESTON TURVILLE

There will be a new landlord at the **Plough** from the 4th of December. The pub was previously under the control of John Andrews of the **Oak**, Aston Clinton, and it was his intention to hold a beer festival there over the Christmas period. This will no longer be going ahead. We will get up to date details in time for the next issue.

Branch Contacts

Chairman	David Roe	01296 484551
Treasurer	Tony Gabriel	01494 527884
Secretary	Nick Holt	01296 483554
Bierton	Mick White	01296 428266
Beaconsfield	Colin Staines	01494 674427
Bledlow Ridge	Ben Walter	01494 481459
High Wycombe	Elvis Evans	01494 511248
Marlow	John Williamson	01628 486378
Stokenchurch	John Bazin	01494 483039
Wendover	John & Tina Wood	01296 625215

Useful Addresses

CAMRA HQ:

230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW.

Tel: 01727 867201

Fax: 01727 867670

E-mail: camra@camra.org.uk

Internet: <http://www.camra.org.uk>

TRADING STANDARDS

For complaints about short measure, price lists, strength lists (ABV), etc.

Aylesbury:

County Hall, Walton Street, HP20

IUP Tel: 01296 383212

Oxford:

PO Box 618, County Hall, OX1 1DX

Tel: 01865 815000 (Mon - Fri

8:30am-5pm)

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

For comments, complaints or objections about pub alterations or developments -

Aylesbury:

AVDC Planning Dept, Exchange St,

Aylesbury

HP20 1UB

Tel: 01296 585406

ADVERTISING STANDARDS AUTHORITY

For complaints about deceptive advertising-

Advertising Standards Authority

Brook House, 2-16 Torrington Place

London WC1E 7HN

C.I.E.H BASIC FOOD HYGIENE A VITAL QUALIFICATION FOR:

- ◆ Those who manage a food business
- ◆ People who handle or sell food
- ◆ Anyone wishing to pursue a career in the catering trade

NDT are a local company specialising in training small outlets

- ◆ Have your staff trained on your own premises
- ◆ Between four and fifteen delegates
- ◆ Eliminate travelling time and expense
- ◆ N.D.T courses are tailored to your business, using your menu to illustrate potential risks
- ◆ The timing of the session is at your convenience, late at night, early in the morning or over the weekend

NDT ALSO HAS TRAINING FACILITIES IN HIGH WYCOMBE FROM WHICH IT RUNS REGULAR COURSES

For further information, please call Nick on 01494 464275 or 07770 746194 (Mobile) Email: ndtuk@yahoo.com

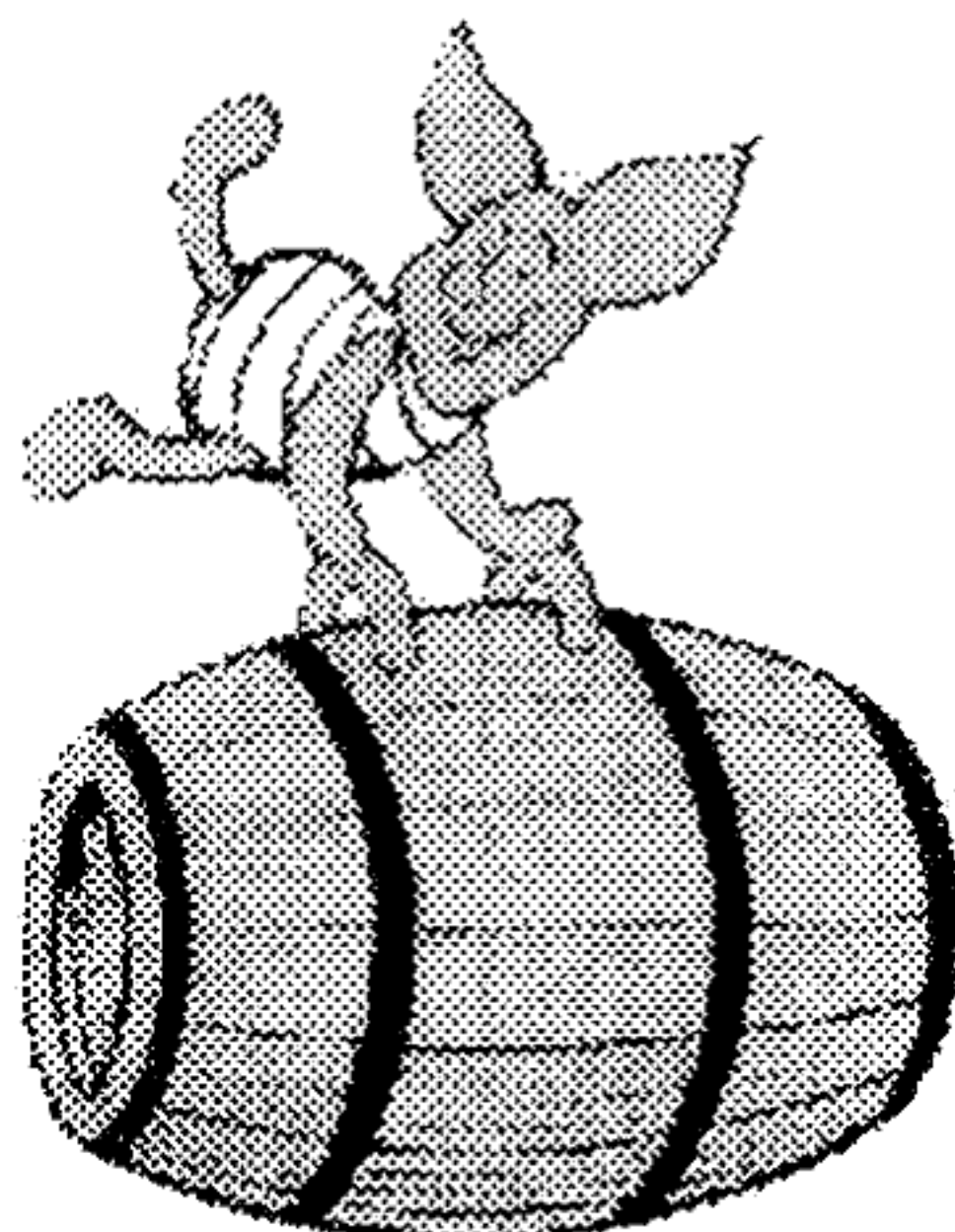


Beer Festival Diary

DECEMBER 2000

1-2 (Fri-Sat): WEST CUMBRIA & WESTERN LAKES 3rd COCKERMOUTH BEER FESTIVAL, at the Kirkgate Centre, Kirkgate, Cockeremouth, Cumbria.

5-9 (Tue-Sat): 19th PIGS EAR BEER FESTIVAL, at The Old Town Hall, Stratford LONDON E15 (on Stratford Broadway, near to Tube, BR, buses). Open Tuesday 4-11pm; then all day, 11-11pm, rest of week. Admission: Tuesday-Thursday after 4pm £2; Friday after 3pm £3; Sat £2 all day. All other times admission free. CAMRA Members Wednesday & Thursday after 4pm and Friday after 3pm £1, all other times FREE. Free creche Saturday noon-5pm. Well over 100 superb beers from breweries across the country. Also a range of real lagers! Also, bottle conditioned ales (look out for the "Specials"), Foreign beers plus our usual extensive range of ciders and perries. ANOTHER "MUSIC FREE" YEAR AT PIGS EAR! If you are interested in working at Pigs Ear 2000 then please contact Roy Jenner, 4 Ashdown House, Charnwood St, London E5 8SL tel 020 7502 0984. Any other info, contact Mrs Robyn Parr-Ferris, 2 Tudor Court, Walthamstow London E17 8ET Telephone 07966 513243/020 8521 4410 or e-mail robyn@pigsear.org.uk



JANUARY 2001

11-13 (Thu-Sat): CAMBRIDGE WINTER ALE FESTIVAL, at the Anglia Polytechnic University, off East Rd, Cambridge.

13 (Sat): 12th EXETER FESTIVAL OF WINTER ALES, at the Coaver Club, Matford Lane, Exeter, Devon (rear of County Hall).

18-20 (Thu-Sat): NATIONAL WINTER ALES FESTIVAL, at the Upper Campfield Market, Deansgate, Manchester, on the corner of Liverpool Rd and Deansgate, follow signs for Castlefield (4 mins from Deansgate Rail Station and G-Mex Tram Station).

26-27 (Fri-Sat): 6th BURTON WINTER BEER FESTIVAL. Open Friday noon-3pm & 6.30-11pm; Saturday 11.30-3pm & 7-11pm. Admission: Friday lunchtime FREE, evening £4, CAMRA members £1.50 including souvenir glass; Saturday lunchtime FREE, evening £3.50, CAMRA members £1.50 including souvenir glass. A selection of beer styles and strengths, including seasonal brews, all kept in prime condition with aid of cask cooling system. Entertainment and food available all sessions. Ciders and country wines available. Contact Richard Perry 01283 564983

**A Merry Christmas
& a Happy New Year
to all our readers!**

Swan Supping

Swan Supping is distributed free of charge to pubs in the branch area. Published by the Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe branch of the Campaign for Real Ale and printed by Northridge Printing Services Limited, Unit 13-14, Bessemer Crescent, Rabans Lane, Aylesbury, Bucks HP19 8TF. Tel: 01296 424796

Circulation 3000 copies.

Edited by David Roe

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Tel/Fax : 01296 484551

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Advertising rates are :- 1/16 page £5, 1/8 page £15, 1/4 page £25, 1/2 page £50, full page £90. Add 10% for front page adverts. 10% discounts for payment in advance.

Copy deadline for next issue, due to be published on 1st February 2001 is 14th January 2001.

Subscriptions :- To receive editions of Swan Supping by post, please send SAEs to the Editor.

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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!

December 2000

Monday 4th BRANCH MEETING

8:30pm Bull, Stoke Mandeville

Friday 15th AYLESBURY PUB CRAWL

Starts 7:30pm Hogshead, followed by Kings Head at 8:00pm, Queens Head at 8:30pm.

Other pubs will follow as the fancy takes us, please inquire at the last pub visited for details of where to find us. The pub crawl will be followed by either an Indian or a Thai!

January 2001

Thursday 4th MARLOW SOCIAL

9:00pm Hogshead, 10:00pm Crown & Anchor

Friday 12th THAME PUB CRAWL

7:30pm Six Bells, 8:15pm Rising Sun, 9:00pm Birdcage, 9:45pm Abingdon Arms, 10:30pm Swan

Tuesday 20th WHEELER END COMMON SOCIAL

9:00pm Chequers, 10:00pm Brickmakers

Monday 29th AYLESBURY VALE & WYCOMBE CAMRA A.G.M.

8:00pm Red Lion, Haddenham

Guest Speaker: Steve Banfield, Banfield Ales (brewer of *Mandeville Mild*, the winner of the *Beer of the Festival* award of the 7th Vale of Aylesbury Beer Festival).



CAMRA AYLESBURY VALE & WYCOMBE BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday 29th January 2001

Red Lion, Haddenham

Guest Speaker: Steve Banfield, Banfield Ales

All Local CAMRA Members should attend

Vic & Sue Hinde

Welcome you to

The White Swan

10 High Street

Whitchurch

Tel: 01296 641228

Home Made Meals

Sunday Roast Lunches

Special Parties catered for
Large Attractive Beer Garden

2001 Good Beer Guide

Fullers Traditional Ales

