

FREE

Swan Supping

Issue 123

Dec 2017/Jan 2018



**24th Vale of
Aylesbury Beer
Festival a great
success!
See Page 4**



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

Newsletter of the Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch of CAMRA

avw.camra.org.uk

Circulation 6000

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NEWS FROM THE EDITOR



The main subject for my editorial this issue is the sad loss of Peter Hoade who died suddenly early in October.

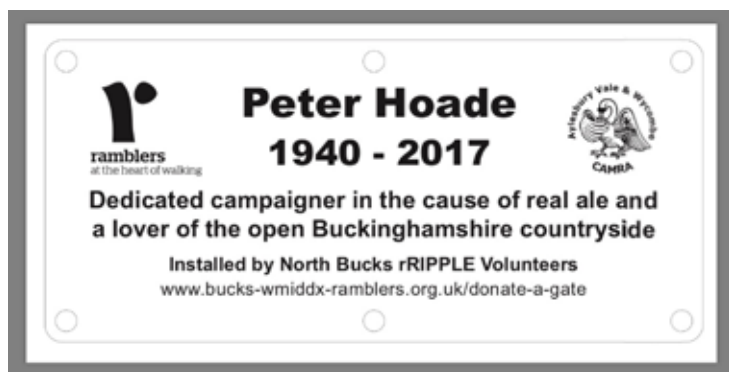
Peter (pictured top right) was a very active member of the branch who loved his beer. This love always came through when he was writing about his many trips abroad for *Swan Supping*. His last article, which was squeezed out of last issue due to lack of space, appears on page 5.

His death came as a complete shock as he was so slim and fit we thought he would outlast most of us! He did a lot of cycling

and took part in the Grand Canal Cycle Challenge last year, which we featured in the August/September issue of 2016, when he joined Harry Enfield and *Team Malt* from *Malt the Brewery* as they raised money for the Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospitals Charity.

His vast experience in business came to the fore as he helped me with the accounts as I took on the job as Treasurer and once that was completed he took on the task of redoing the website and organising *Swan Supping* deliveries! He acted as Auditor for many years and was a regular contributor at committee meetings. He was also Brewery Liaison Officer for both *Malt the Brewery* and *Rebellion Brewery*.

Peter also did a lot of walking and this is the plaque dedicated to Peter for a gate somewhere in North Bucks which will be installed by North Bucks rRIPPLE (see the article in our last issue regarding their activities).



Peter was born on 26th of November 1940 and died on the 10th of October this year. His funeral took place at the Hampden Chapel, Chilterns, Crematorium on Thursday 26th of October and this was followed by drinks and memories at the *Squirrel*, Penn Street.

Our heartfelt condolences go to his son, Matthew, the rest of his family and all his many friends. To say he will be missed is a total understatement!

As well as the big hole left by Peter's death, we have also said goodbye to Mick White who has moved to Somerset with his wife, Rosemary. This leaves us very light when it comes to delivering *Swan Supping* and we need local members to step up and fill the gaps. Please contact me (details on page 14) or join us at the *Hop Pole*, Aylesbury, on the 11th of December (see Branch Diary, also on page 14) as we discuss how we progress from here. Also, don't forget to enter your beer scores!

The other main news was the successful *24th Vale of Aylesbury Beer Festival* which raised over £6,000 for the Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity. This was the first time the festival had been officially run in partnership with *CAMRA* who received a small percentage of the profits. This partnership had a few hiccups but the ability to borrow a cask lifter from St. Albans was much appreciated as we had 38 casks to lift onto the three-tier stillage. For the first time that I can remember, we signed up a new member as well. The new venue at the Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School, Aylesbury, worked very well and over 600 people enjoyed not only the beer, but the food, including speciality sausages, plenty of music and an appearance by Towersey Morris Men. A full report and pictures appear on page 4.

My thanks to all who have contributed to this issue of *Swan Supping*, especially Colin Stanford for the cartoon and those who deliver the finished magazine to the pubs, breweries and festivals etc.

David Roe, Swan Supping Editor



NATIONAL CAMRA NEWS

Budget bonus for pub goers

Following the Chancellor's Budget announcement recently to freeze beer duty and extend the £1,000 business rate relief for most pubs in England *CAMRA's* National Chairman Colin Valentine said:

On the subject of beer duty - 'Pubgoers were fearing the worst from this Budget but will now be raising a glass. Freezing beer duty will help arrest rising beer prices and keep the British pubgoing tradition affordable. I will be celebrating this decision in my local this evening and I hope millions of beer lovers across the country will be doing the same. Now, to make a real, lasting difference we hope that this move represents the first step towards a long-term freeze. *CAMRA* is calling on brewers to match the Chancellor's support by holding beer prices so that local pubgoers benefit.'

On the subject of business rates in England - 'We welcome the Chancellor's decision to extend the £1,000 rate relief for pubs for one more year. This shows that the Government is alive to the threats facing English pubs although more needs to be done. *CAMRA* is calling for further action to secure a thriving pub sector and would like this relief to be made permanent and increased to £5,000 a year. We would also like to see a wholesale review of the business rates regime, which unfairly penalises pubs and rewards online retailers.'



Following the plans announced by the Chancellor to increase duty on higher strength ciders 'This will be disappointing news for a number of traditional cider producers who will be hit by this measure unless an exemption for traditional produce can be secured.'

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CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

VALE OF AYLESBURY BEER FESTIVAL



This year the 24th Vale of Aylesbury Beer Festival moved home and had a successful weekend of supping on the beer and snaffling on the sausages. The Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School provided a larger indoor space, better accessibility and public transport links. This allowed for a record 38 beers to be available to the 600 thirsty beer lovers who came along. They drank nearly all of it too.

The Beer of the Festival was a very close decision as there were so many

beers to choose from. A lot of people gave in whilst trying as many as possible and didn't remember to fill in the form. However it was the surprisingly named *Slightly Foxed* from the *Slightly Foxed* brewery that eventually got the nod. Tasting notes for this beer described it as having been blended using American hops, Amarillo, Delta and Cascade, and using Maris Otter malt. Light and refreshing on the palate and pale golden in colour.



Our ciders and perries proved more popular than ever before and we did run out by 7pm on Saturday despite ordering the same amount as at the previous festival when we had a lot left over. We will increase the order for next year's festival, so please come along and drink it all!

Stomachs were duly lined with the 11 different varieties of locally made sausages available at the Sausage Festival that ran alongside on the Saturday. Local musicians all performed for free as the event raised £6,000 for Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity, who organised it, with CAMRA as the beer experts and event partners.

Aylesbury's MP, David Lidington, kindly took time off from his busy schedule as Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice to open the festival and features along with members of CAMRA and the Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity in the picture above and our front cover (photos: Michael Snell). Happy revellers enjoying the beers and the music are pictured below (photo: Kirsty Shanahan).

Save the date: our 25th Aylesbury Beer Festival will be on Friday 26th and Saturday 27th October 2018.



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AUSTRIAN TYROL BREWERY

On a short trip to the Austrian Tyrol this July I had the good fortune to be taken to the **Starkenberger Brewery** at the Starkenberger castle in Tarrenz a location in the holiday area of Imst.

Starkenberger Castle in Tarrenz, built between 1309 and 1339 by the Knights of Starkenberg, offers a brewery and an experience, called 'Starkenberger Biermythos' – an opportunity to experience the first beer swimming pool in the world. No, I didn't try it out and if you wish to discover more about its therapeutic effects google its website.

The **Starkenberger Beer**, a beer brewed according to the Bavarian purity law from 1516, is produced here. It is the most-awarded beer of Austria, rewarded with 40 gold medals of the 'Monde-Selection'! This comprises light and dark beer, pils, wheat beer, lager and an own festival beer.

Despite being on medication and most days drinking soft drinks or **Erdinger Alkohol Frei** beer, I fortunately had my arm twisted (it wasn't too difficult) and sampled two of the beers – *Schloss Pils* and *Gold Spezial dunkel*. The former was a very good Pils but the second, the Dunkel, was a superb beer; one I could drink regularly.

Well worth a visit if you find yourself in this beautiful part of the Tyrol.

I hope the picture does the beers justice.

Peter Hoade



HADDENHAM WINTERFEST



Final preparations are underway for the annual **Haddenham Winterfest** which, this year, takes place on Saturday December 9th at the usual venue, a huge marquee in Banks Park.

We pride ourselves on supporting local producers and businesses and our ever growing number of local breweries has allowed us to populate the whole 40 barrel stillage with superb, personally selected, ales all of which have been brewed within 35 miles of

Haddenham. In addition, we will of course have at least a dozen fabulous ciders, again, all crafted within 35 miles.

For those of you who prefer to get into the Christmas 'Spirit' we will again have a selection of gins and cocktails as well as wines – both mulled and unmulled - and plenty of wholesome food available to keep you fed and nourished on a cold winter's day.

We have booked five top local performers and bands to keep you entertained throughout the afternoon and, just for a change, we have a Hat competition so dig out your fanciest, silliest headgear and join in the fun! As always, Haddenham Mummers will be appearing at random intervals with their traditional short play. If you've never seen the Mummers you're in for a treat (so they tell me!).

We run a voucher system on the day and all beers and ciders are £3 a pint. All proceeds go to local good causes and, to date Haddenham Beer Festival Trust has raised and distributed over £240,000 so why not come along, have a great time and know you are helping the local community.

The festival runs from 12 noon to 6pm (last entry at 5pm) and tickets can be obtained on the door for £10 or from pubs and some shops in Haddenham. Why not beat the queues and get some Special Deals by buying your tickets and vouchers online at winterfest.org.uk.

Pete Summerskill

SOUNDING (OFF) BOARD

'REAL ALE' IN CANS



To supplement my enjoyment of drinking real ale in pubs, I often buy bottles to drink at home, but only if they are bottle-conditioned. Often such bottles have a 'CAMRA' says this is real ale' statement on the label. But I am finding more and more shelf space in specialist beer shops is being given over to beer in cans.

Many of these are produced by the same brewers whose bottle-conditioned beers are amongst my favourites and they are purported to be 'can-conditioned'.

The arguments for beer in cans run along the lines that the beer is kept in better condition, being hermetically sealed against oxygen and light, that cans are more environmentally friendly than bottles, and that they are easier and cheaper to produce, store and transport.

OK I like to do my bit for the environment but I simply do not want to see proper beer reduced to looking like the rows of cans of cheap weasel pee on the supermarket shelves. I want my beer to be treated with respect not downgraded to a mass-produced commodity designed for profit.

When I pour a bottle-conditioned beer I do so with care so as to avoid the sediment going into the glass. I can then choose either to discard the lees or drink it separately, 'for the vitamins' as they say. That is almost impossible to do with a so-called can-conditioned beer.

I will not buy them.

Giles du Boulay

'Sounding (off) Board' is designed to encourage readers to respond with their thoughts and opinions on issues concerning pubs and real ale.

Please send your comments to editor@swansupping.org.uk.

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LOCAL NEWS

ASHENDON

The **Hundred of Ashendon** is hosting several events in December with free entry to everyone. On Thursday 7th there is the Sloe Nouveau evening starting at 8pm offering locally produced sloe gin made from this season's sloes. On Saturday 16th from 7.30pm there are carols followed by the annual auction which raises money for village activities throughout the following year. But you don't need an excuse to visit and sample the well-kept ales from local breweries including **Vale, XT, Chiltern, Tring** and **Rebellion**. One or two always available.

AYLESBURY

Work is continuing at the **Aristocrat** as Nick and Anna, who took over the tenancy in April, are gradually getting the pub into shape by doing the work themselves when it is quiet. They are stripping the pub back to reveal a lot of the original features and the TVs, dart board, pool table and fruit machines have all disappeared as the change from a traditional pub to a café bar continues. The disabled toilet is now far more easily accessible for wheelchairs as a ramp has been included in the new wood floor and wood panelling now obscures the toilets from the view of the drinkers. The pub now attracts far more women than before who enjoy the relaxed, friendly, atmosphere. Although it is a **Fullers** tenancy, there is very little sign of their brand, following their new 'debranding' policy for tenanted pubs, except for the new 'Landmark' handpumps offering **London Pride** and **ESB**. Future plans include leasing the kitchen to a Michelin-starred chef in the New Year adding to the current menu which includes continental breakfasts in the week and full breakfasts at the weekend. They intend to build out into the garden area to extend the eating area and offer outdoor seating on the pavement at the back of the pub by the car park.

The bar and the shop at the **Hop Pole** will be open on Christmas Day lunchtime in case supplies are running low. Their next beer festival will take place over the Easter weekend from Thursday 29th of March through to Sunday April 1st. You will find **Chiltern Brewery's** seasonal **300s Dark Old Ale** on draught at the **Kings Head** and the new **Oatmeal Stout** to be released in December along with guest ales and ciders. Bookings are being taken for Christmas lunches and evening meals including in the new pop-up restaurant, the Dining Room,

what was the old tourist office for those of you who remember. The room is transformed and is now a beautiful setting for this time of year.

Some interesting beers on the nine handpumps recently at the **Old Millwrights Arms** included a festive spiced ale from **Morlands**, **Old Mulled Hen**, as well as **Titanic Stout** and **Haway in a Manger** from **Mordue**.

The **Queens Head** were offering **Sharp's Atlantic** as well as the usual **Doom Bar** and **Westons Old Rosie** cider recently.

The tenancy of the **Punch** owned **Rockwood** has been taken over by John Cusworth and Mark Powell of the **Mermaid** in St. Albans. It is being managed by Matt Black who used to work at the **Blacksmiths Arms**, also in St. Albans. Matt and Mark, who are Cask Marque accredited, are pictured below behind the handpumps which offered **Butcombe Original**, **Oakham JHB** and **Skinner's Betty Stogs** when visited. Food includes award-winning pies and Sunday lunches. A refurbishment will take place in the New Year it will remain a traditional pub with six handpumps offering beers from both **SIBA** and **Punch's** 'Finest Cask' ranges.

GREAT KIMBLE

The **Swan** will be spending a few pennies on upgrading its ladies toilets in advance of the Christmas rush. **Hillfire California Gold** continues to make regular appearances on the bar, alternating with the likes of **Brakspear's Bitter**, **Loddon Reading Best** and **Tring Moongazing**.

HADDENHAM

At the **Green Dragon Loose Cannon** ales are frequently on offer with **Gunners Gold** available recently alongside **Black Sheep Bitter**.

Haddenham born and bred, Abby Armstrong has taken over the **Kings Head**. She's doing food and will have a range of three ales on handpump. **Rebellion IPA** is one choice with **Sharp's Doom Bar** currently a fixture. Available recently was a tasty drop of **Sharp's Sea Fury**. The pub has been given a good makeover and is set to become a **Heineken Community Hub**. Alongside **Sharp's Doom Bar** and **Greene King IPA** at the **Rose & Thistle**, welcome alternatives such as **Wychwood Ripsaw Crystal Rye IPA** make an appearance.

HARDWICK

Beers available at the **Bell** recently included **Young's Bitter**, **Vale V.P.A.** and **Beartown Brown Bear** (a very moreish 4.2% mild) which was served in really



good nick straight from the cask as the landlord had not yet had time to hook it up to the handpump. It was very pleasing to note that at the beginning of the lunchtime session, before any of the beers had been pulled, he automatically discarded the first pint (of the Young's) as he did not want to serve any beer that had been sitting in the (short) lines overnight. Bravo!

HIGH WYCOMBE

The **Spindle and Thread** opened as planned last month. The range of real ales is four from the **Marston's** stable.

LACEY GREEN

The **Whip Inn** reopened on 20th November after a week-long refurbishment. New carpets have been laid in the dining area and the bar area now has exposed floorboards. The pub has been given a fresh lick of paint and new lighting has been installed over the bar. A new chef has also started to coincide with the reopening. Fortunately there's been no change to the real ale policy, with six handpumps on the bar. There are lots of photos of the refurbishment on the pub's Facebook page but why not check the makeover out in person — it's a stone's throw from the 300 bus route.

LITTLE MARLOW

Raymond Blanc's **White Brasserie Co.** is appealing against the decision by the local council against his plan of extending the **Kings Head**.

MARSH

Bells were rung, songs were sung and music played when Owlswick Morris came to the **Prince of Wales**, Marsh on Saturday, 30th September to toast the landlady, Christine, whose last night this was before the pub closed for ever. She had been in charge for an impressive 54 years, with husband, Horace, and had decided to call it a day. Many locals were there to mark this auspicious moment and Owlswick Morris, who had danced there regularly every summer, came specially to bid Christine farewell, present her with an appropriate picture and thank her (pictured above). The atmosphere was jolly with everyone in a good mood — a little sadness too, though.

Mary Walter

MARLOW

The **Britannia** on Little Marlow Road continues to have the standard

three beers from owners **McMullen's** together with a seasonal beer from their **Rivertown Brewing** brand. The current seasonal is **Proper Porter** which is a delicious dark beer at 5.6% abv.

The **Butchers Tap** in Spital Street opened on Friday 17th November after a total premises refurbishment. Amongst many meaty offerings there are two cask ales which are currently **Rebellion Smuggler** and one from **Greene King** badged as **H & F Ale** 3.9%.

Marlow Royal British Legion in Station Approach will host their Winterfest beer festival from Friday 15th to Sunday 17th of December.

PRINCES RISBOROUGH

The **Bell** has been steadily building its real ale offering with three ales on offer at popular times.

As **Swan Supping** was going to press the **Whiteleaf Cross** was due to reopen on 28th November after a refurbishment. It is believed it will still be offering four real ales, as previously.

STEWKLEY

Gary Deering of Aylesbury has taken on the **Carpenters Arms**, his first pub, as a **Heineken** tenant. He is open 12-11 Monday to Thursday; 12-12 Friday/Saturday and 12-10.30 Sunday. Lunch and dinner served every day but not Mondays nor Sunday evening. He is currently serving **Tribute** and **Doom Bar** with a third from the **Heineken** guest list. We wish him the very best of luck with his endeavours.

THAME

The **Brasserie Blanc** chain who have taken over the **Black Horse** appear to be keeping the name as the pub sign shows a carousel horse on the sign and it is rumoured that it will be a bit like the **Thatch** — a pub brasserie. Due to open mid December so we will know more then.

WORMINGHALL

The Griffiths family took over the **Clifden Arms** on the 29th September and after a week's closure to clean up and redecorate, they opened for business. They have **London Pride**, **Wye Valley HPA** and **Adnams Broadside**, as well as two craft lagers. Their restaurant is serving food from Wednesday to Sunday and features good pub grub, freshly prepared and not from the freezer via a microwave oven.



RISING SUN GETS COOLER



During the two years since Liam and Silvie took control of the **Rising Sun**, Haddenham, many changes have occurred. Most within view of the customers, like the removal of the pool table and dart boards, but recently a hidden change has occurred.

When the cellar cooler broke down mid summer, they decided, along with the help of the owners, **Oak Taverns**, to take the chance to completely refurbish the whole cellar (it is pictured in its old form above). A new bigger capacity cellar cooler system including an exterior condenser unit was installed and relocated to give a more consistent air flow.

Three interior walls were dismantled, one of which was rebuilt and reinforced for structural strength. The additional space gained from removing one of the walls has been turned into shelving for bottled beers and spirits.

After knocking the two separate rooms into one, there is now a designated area specifically for the real ales. With six handpulls at the bar and fourteen stillages in the cellar, the real ales are a massive draw. A mutually beneficial relationship with local brewers **XT Brewing Company** means that the real ales don't have to travel far. **XT 4** is a staple beer at the bar but the other five pumps are rotated on nearly a daily basis.

Animal beers, also brewed in Long Crendon at the **XT** brewery, are a common sight on the pumps. However not all of the real ales are brewed locally. With the help of **XT's** exchange program, which swaps beers with other microbreweries all over the UK, over 150 different guest ales have had their turn on the pumps since December 2015.

When the real ales had been relocated into a new area of the cellar (as pictured below), **XT Brewing** were keen to make the beer lines as short as possible. Therefore a new water-cooled python has been installed, reducing the beer run by about a third.

Now with a consistent temperature in the cellar, shorter beer lines and dedicated management, the real ales at the **Rising Sun** are always of top class quality.

Bill Piers



SMALL BATCH
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A STILTON PLOUGH



There's a touch of genius in the concept behind Roger Protz's new title, *Historic Coaching Inns of the Great North Road* (published by **CAMRA** books). There are many books on beer history and styles, regional guides and, of course, national guides like the newly published *Good Beer Guide 2018*.

Roger Protz has combined history, geography and beer around one unifying theme – the Great North Road. This is the old route

between London and Edinburgh, connecting the two capitals up to and during the days of stagecoaches. It became the A1 when road numbering was introduced in the 1920s.

As well as large cities, like Newcastle, the Great North Road winds through many lesser-known places – something that made me itch to get out on the road with book in hand and visit some of these classic pubs.

I soon realised that I'd have to limit my ambitions to visit as many as possible in one day in the absence of a designated driver with infinite patience: unfortunately, the pubs, by definition, are all spaced out along a long road.

Moreover, the upgrading of the modern road network has by-passed the small town and villages containing many of the most interesting pubs. Where in the Great North Road's heyday, these would have been hubs of transport activity, many now are lucky to have a bus every other Thursday.



Fortunately, the East Coast Main Railway Line often shadows the Great North Road's route and, with some careful planning, this allowed me and my friends Andy and Jon on a Saturday in July to visit a selection of pubs from the southern end of the book.

One of the most famous of the coaching inns is the **Bell Hotel** (pictured above and below) in the village of Stilton. Despite the cheese actually being produced in a designated area in the East Midlands, it's the Cambridgeshire village which has given its name to the cheese – a speciality served at the hotel in the 18th century. The **Bell** repays a thirty-minute bus ride from Peterborough, having been authentically refurbished and being that rare example of a hotel that caters unapologetically for the needs of ale drinkers. My pint of **Crouch Vale Brewers' Gold** was so good I had to order an immediate second.

And to soak up the ale, what else to enjoy but a classic ploughman's lunch of stilton in Stilton?

Peterborough is not only home to a famous **CAMRA** beer festival but has an extensive selection of *Good Beer Guide* pubs. Although it's not on the Great North Road, we'd travelled via the railway and it would have been rude not to have popped into a local hostelry near the station.

Happily, **Oakham's** brewery tap was close by. This is a huge, two-storey pub in a converted employment exchange and serves a wide range of **Oakham's** excellent ales plus various guests. It also has a micro-brewery on the premises





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HUMAN'S IN STILTON



(pictured right).

We headed south to intercept the Great North Road again, taking the train to Huntingdon in Cambridgeshire – famous to those of us of a certain age as John Major's parliamentary constituency and little else. We visited the **Falcon**, according to the book it's Huntingdon's oldest pub and notable for having been rescued from closure in 2014 by local campaigners.

While the building was impressively historic, we were slightly less overwhelmed by the beer quality – although the pub's range was extensive and some ales were good, we were disappointed by one or two we sampled.

Feeling rather peckish, we took a detour on the way back to the station into Huntingdon's newest pub – **Sandford House** (pictured below). It's an enormous conversion from an old post office, chapel and other assorted buildings – inevitably by **Wetherspoons**.



down – and a pint of **Timothy Taylor Landlord**.

And then rather than our stagecoach awaiting, it was back to the station, where we could return to London in under an hour. It was a contrast with the day or so's journey time during the era when these pubs were originally built. While transport in Great North Road's glory days would have been slow, Roger Protz had given us a reminder of its beery compensations.

Charlie Mackle

The standard of the décor is very impressive, with spectacular glass chandeliers and many original features retained. The attention to detail shows that someone in the **Wetherspoons** empire is focusing on the day job while supremo Tim Martin seems set on undoing their good work by insisting on browbeating his customers with his own political views, even when there's no election or referendum planned. The beer range was typical **Wetherspoons** – a few national brands and a tempting selection of regional and microbrewery ales – most of which were labelled as that intriguing beer style found exclusively in their pubs of 'Coming Soon'.

Back on to the train and south into Bedfordshire we hit the town of Biggleswade. By now the sunny lunchtime had turned into a drizzly afternoon, which meant we didn't see Biggleswade in its most flattering light.

The book recommended the local **CAMRA** pub of 2016, the **New Inn** in the Market Square, a **Greene King** house which unusually boasts a microbrewery. Sadly, for us (but not for the pub) a private function was being held throughout most of the pub. This made it so busy it was impossible for us to appreciate all the features recommended by Roger Protz, although I did sample a **BAD Dazed and Confused** milk stout, brewed further north on the Great North Road at Dishforth in North Yorkshire.

We took a detour into the nearby **Golden Pheasant** to find somewhere to sit



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LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

ABC Brewery

Over the next couple of months drinkers can expect a mix of traditional styles and more modern twists on some classics :-

None More Black (4%). It's like, how much more black could this be? And the answer is none. *None More Black* is a chocolate stout brewed in honour of Spinal Tap.



Reindeer (4%) Rudolf who? Reindeer is a light amber ale made with four different malts to give a wonderful toasty caramel malt base.

Lord of Yule (4.6%). Krampus is the horned 'half goat, half demon' who punishes the children who have misbehaved during the Christmas season. This edition of their

regular Christmas offering is a deep ruby ale enhanced with a generous helping of seasonal spices and black treacle to really bring the flavours of the holiday to life.



Chiltern Brewery

Chiltern Brewery have released a range of new limited-edition bottle-conditioned authentic Imperial Stouts. There are three to choose from – *Tudor Spiced* (6.8%), *Dark Coffee* (7%) and *Export Original* (10%) - all in 375ml Champagne style bottles with detailed historical and tasting notes on the labels. Free tasters were very well received at the launch of the Brewery Christmas Shop on 11th November. They were also delighted to welcome renown beer writer and historian Roger Protz to the opening – and he was on great form.



Head Brewer Tom Jenkinson is celebrating winning three top awards for the Brewery from **SIBA** at their Midlands Awards. Bottled *300s Dark Old Ale* (5.0%), which is certified gluten free, won Gold in the Small Pack, Strong Bitters and Pale Ales category, draught *Chiltern Pale Ale* (3.7%) Bronze in the Cask Standard Bitters and Pale Ales and draught porter *Chiltern Black* (3.9%) Bronze in the Cask Speciality Mid to Dark Beers section.



December sees the launch of a brand-new cask ale: *Oatmeal Stout* (4.1%). Their most decorated award-winning beer, *300s Dark Old Ale* (4.9%), billed as a classic in the true tradition of old ales, satisfyingly dark but not impenetrable, is available through to January.



Fisher's Brewing Co

The brewery is doing well and have secured their core range now to *Blonde*, *Red*, *APA* and *Smoked Porter*.

They have their 3-bottle gift boxes available in the shop and 5 litre cans to follow shortly. They also have a market stall on the 9th and 23rd December in High Wycombe and, more importantly, they have a 'Tap Takeover' at the **Grey Friar** in Reading on December 7th. They are hoping for a good crowd down there as it's their first 'TTO' and they'll have six taps on with six cask ales.

If you have picked up *Swan Supping* on its day of publication, you may still have time to catch their music monthly event on Friday December 1st at the brewery, all welcome. Live DJ, wood fired pizza and lots of beer!

Hillfire Brewing Co.

Hillfire had a busy summer of brewing and with production increasing to meet demand, they are now taking on a Brewery Assistant. Exciting times!

In September they harvested hops from the **Hillfire** hop yard. The entire crop went in to their *Hop Harvest* one-off brew which featured at **Maidenhead Beer Festival**. *Hop Harvest* was exclusively available at the **Rose & Crown**, Stone (newly reopened under new management after a refurbishment) and at their Brewery Shop.

They were really pleased to sponsor a cask and help out at the **Vale of Aylesbury Beer Festival** in aid of the Florence Nightingale Hospice charity. The new venue was excellent and a good time was had by all!

They are now looking forward to doing a one-off spiced ale for **Haddenham Winterfest** (see page 5).

Malt the Brewery



The popular *Winter Ale* is available now at the recently refurbished shop and tasting room at the Prestwood brewery which is well worth a visit. In addition to the range of real ales, produced on site, there's also a variety of carefully selected local produce, including ciders and wine also made in the Chiltern Hills. Enjoy an 'Ale Flight' and then treat yourself to a growler of your favourite tipple. At this time of the year you'll find the *Winter Ale* is the perfect fireside companion.

Rebellion Brewery

Winter is here and with it **Rebellion's** brand-new winter seasonal *Gold*. This is a 4.4% golden and hoppy beer that will be available for the winter (from now until February). A rich golden ale with an intensely hoppy aroma, they've crammed the hop back with as much American Mosaic hops as they could which gives the beer a full aroma of tropical fruits, citrus fruits and red berry. The bitterness has been kept relatively low despite the huge dose of late hops, so *Gold* retains its drinkability and balance. A truly contemporary golden ale which has received very good initial feedback.



December's beer is *Humbug*, named after the Dickens' character Scrooge and will offer fruity character to go along with your mince pies and Christmas dinner.



Winter Royal was originally brewed by the **Wethereds Brewery** in Marlow, and it became one of their flagship beers and was famous in the area until the brewery closed in 1988.

Rebellion proudly revived the popular beer using the original **Wethered's** recipe last year. They had amazing feedback so have decided to brew it again this year. Like last year, this will be a limited-edition beer, with only a few brews being produced. It will be available from early December for the run-up to Christmas.

2016's monthly beer range was 'English Greats', this year they had 'Great Britons' and next year **Rebellion's** theme will be 'World Greats', containing such beers as *Relativity*, *Revolutionary* and *Peacemaker*. Head Brewer, Ed Bates, has some fantastic beers lined up for 2018, using some brand new hops to the brewery like Ernest and Callista. Bring on 2018!

Tring Brewery

The award of this year's Chiltern Society's Food and Drink Awards took place at Tring Brewery in October. Certificates were awarded to the owners of **Tring**, **Rebellion** and **Chiltern** breweries (pictured below) so that they



MORE LOCAL BREWERY NEWS

now have a truly local award to add to their collections!

The biggest push for Tring at the moment is the Small Batch Bottles and they should have four on the shelves at Christmas: *White IPA*, *India Stout*, *American Brown Ale* and *Orange Wheat*.



The seasonal special till the end of the year will be *Santa's Little Helper* and the monthly special for December (in collaboration with Herts Air Ambulance) will be *Santa's Sleigh*.

Vale Brewery



As Christmas approaches, feast your eyes on *Vale's* festive brews:-
5 Gold Rings (4.2%). Golden in colour, using a blend of Maris otter and Munich malts with Fuggles and Goldings hops.



Christmas Star (3.6%). Brewed with Brewers Gold, First Gold and Celeia Golding hops, this robust dark copper coloured session style beer has a roast toffee flavour and pleasant spicy finish.



Good King (5.0%). Mahogany full bodied ale with rich malt raisin flavour with a spiced hoppiness to finish.

XT Brewery

XT have been involved in a ground-breaking joint brewing project. A new collaboration with the *Wandering Brewer* (pictured top right) is a very exciting project with *Charles Wells*. Following the sale of the original site *Wells* have joined up with a select group of independent brewers, including *XT* to work on a new range of beers. Two special collaboration beers brewed at *XT* with *Charles Wells'* head brewer will be available for a very limited

period in *Wells* pubs. The beers are called *Wet*, a 3.7% pale ale and *Wild*, a speciality amber ale at 4.3%

XT brewery owner Russ headed off to Italy to work with the innovative *BBBirra* brewery in Bosa. Part one of the collaboration saw the *Animal*

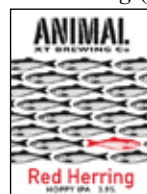


Donkey wheat beer last year. Part two got the two brewers working on a very unique Einkorn Bier made with the oldest variety of grain cultivated by man since the days of ancient Egypt. The *Pharaohs Ale* is chewy, smooth and very biscuity with a tart sourness from the Einkorn. The brewery have their own farm and grow a wide spectrum of unusual barley and wheat strains along with local hop varieties, they even have a well for drawing the brewing liquor. They also worked on an Italian speciality beer, known as a *Doppio Malto*, a very high gravity beer fermented using yeast from the strong local Malvasia Wine. This has a really rich malt flavour and big alcohol kick balanced with a citrus finish from the punchy citra hop.

New beers to look out for from the *XT* range: the annual delight which is the *XT-25* Christmas ale returns. This is joined by the latest single hop edition of the *XT-17*.

The *Animal* range is joined by two new seasonal beers:

Red Herring (3.9%) which is a hoppy IPA. This *Red Herring*, neither red nor filled with herrings.



Snow Moo (4.6%) is a milkshake IPA brewed with lactose and high alpha citrus flavoured hops (Summit, Dana and Chinook). *Snow Moo* has a pleasant grapefruit, lemon and lime aroma.



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GRAVEDIGGERS - PART FORTY-NINE

Nine o'clock on an early December's evening and all was quiet in the **Gravediggers'** bar, except for the snoring of the regulars lying comatose on the floor.

Mazz decided to amuse herself by scraping the coating of fungus off the pub's television screen and take a peek at what was happening on the extraordinary TV sensation, *I'm A Nonentity, Get This Cockroach Out of My Ear*.

Plenty of the locals had caught the habit of watching the notorious programme on demand the morning following transmission. Frankly, they had little else to do between coming around from the bacchanalian carousing of the evening before and waiting impatiently for the pub to open its doors at eleven the next day.

Most of the diehard regulars were bemused and unimpressed by the so-called privations of the nonentities. Their own beds were usually crawling with vermin. The skintful they'd had at the **Gravediggers** the night before had put them beyond caring.

But there was a special visitor who was particularly unimpressed – Old Bruce. He was Old Pete's long-lost twin brother. The rumour was that their impoverished young mother, suffering the effects of working on a top-secret wartime flatulence bomb in a sealed hillside bunker nearby, decided she could only afford to bring up one of the infants. Old Bruce had been found on the doorstep of the **Diggers**. He'd been fed with beer slops by the then landlord from a bottle for the first few weeks of his life and then sent for adoption in Australia, already a confirmed alcoholic at the age of six months.

Seventy years on, the wonders of the internet meant that Bruce had managed to track down his original family and had made a surprise visit to the **Gravediggers**. He argued that his first act – projectile vomiting on the ancient pub doorstep – was an act of emotional catharsis rather than the effect of drinking a hundred and fifty cans of *Festers* on the plane over. In the days since, his slobbering and swearing while swilling innumerable pints at the bar had made Old Pete's manners seem like a model of royalty.

Meanwhile, James joined Mazz in the bar as she winced at the latest contestant on screen, who was writhing in a claustrophobic, dark container full of disgusting creepy-crawlies.

'Lightweights! That's got nothing on our cellar,' James said. 'I have to remove cockroaches from my nostrils every time I go to change a barrel.'

'It hasn't got anything on what's living in Old Joe's long johns,' Mazz added. 'And you still owe me overtime for that incident.'

'But Mazz, aren't we all far too squeamish about this? Don't the scientists say the future the planet is based on us adopting an insect-rich diet?' James said. 'Maybe we're underexploiting a valuable resource?'

'I suppose we do have a reputation for serving disgusting, parasite-ridden, unpalatable food,' Mazz said. 'Perhaps it's time to exploit it in the name of eco-friendliness?'

'We need an expert in cooking up dishes from vile, inedible ingredients?' James said.

'Erm, how long exactly is Old Pete's Australian twin staying for?' Mazz asked.



Old Bruce sported a chef's hat and a bloodstained machete as he downed a bottle of *Sphincter Loosener* in the kitchen doorway. 'When I was a boy, a pair of kangaroo eyeballs was a delicacy we'd save for Sunday dinner,' he roared.

Not to be outdone, Old Pete retorted from the bar with stories of his own privations. 'Our Sunday roast used to be crawling with maggots once we'd pulled it out of the abattoir dustbin.'

'Them nonentities don't know they're born,' Old Pete and Old Bruce declared in unison.

Old Bruce had transformed the **Diggers'** menu from the carelessly disgusting into the realms of the deliberately vile – a smorgasbord of squirming maggots, flies trapped on sticky paper, cockroaches impaled on shish kebab sticks all marinated in the collected juices from the food recycling bins of the local villagers.

There was plenty of material for the ravenous assorted insects and slithering creatures to feed on.

The local villagers' obnoxious and hostile attitude to seasonal agricultural workers from over the hills had finally resulted in a shortage of labour to harvest the produce and farmers had been forced to leave huge crops of vegetables rotting in the fields.

The rich, decomposing vegetative mass gave the **Diggers'** microbrewery the opportunity to create *Botrytis*

Bitter and *Mycotoxin Mild*. However, the putrefying biomass was also a favourite of huge clouds of flies of biblical proportions. When shovelled inside Old Moses's condemned cowshed the flies' maggotty offspring thrived on the moist, putrid conditions.

Rather than be viewed as a novelty, word quickly got around gastronomic circles about the **Diggers'** reportedly noble ventures into eco-friendly insect fayre. Hipster fans of a new extreme eating craze, inspired by the trials of the contestants on *I'm A Nonentity*, descended like a plague of locusts themselves on the **Gravediggers**. They downed vast quantities of *Double Earwig Stout* and *Parasite Porter* before enduring a special Aussie barbecue of squirming worms and unspecified varieties of decomposing fungal matter.

Word spread until Old Bruce discovered he'd been nominated for a Mescaline star – the highest accolade in the culinary world.

'There was only one way a true Aussie could celebrate such an honour,' Old Bruce announced to a crowd of foodie journalists who'd flocked to the **Gravediggers** for the occasion. 'And that's to open a case of *Festers*!'

He took a can of the lager, shook it up and opened the ring pull, spraying the liquid everywhere.

The journalists shouted, making the sign of the cross: 'No. No. The chemicals! The chemicals!'

But it was too late. The *Festers* contaminated everything. Any living creepy-crawly that hadn't been obliterated by the can's toxic contents had swiftly disappeared, never to return.

'Old Bruce! Stop! Stop!' James shouted. 'That's terrible. Our food hygiene rating will now get a maximum score of five out of five from the local council.'

'Aaargh! We're ruined,' wailed Mazz.

Charlie Mackle

Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

December

Tuesday 5th BRANCH CHRISTMAS DINNER

7.30pm Black Horse, Lacey Green.

Saturday 9th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

Noon Winterfest, Village Hall/Banks Park complex, Haddenham

Monday 11th BRANCH DISCUSSION

8.00pm Hop Pole, Aylesbury

An informal get-together to give local members their chance to discuss how the Branch is doing. Are we on the right track or have we totally lost the plot? How is it that the Branch has over 800 members and yet the number of active members dwindles every year. These questions will be asked at the AGM in February, but it is thought that a more informal meeting might be less intimidating for some members wanting to have their say.

Tuesday 12th WYCOMBE PUB CRAWL SOCIAL

Starts 7.00pm, Mad Squirrel Brewery Shop

Friday 15th AYLESBURY PUB CRAWL SOCIAL

Starts 7.00pm, Hop Pole

Saturday 16th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

Noon WinterFest, Royal British Legion, Marlow

Sunday 24th POST LAST MINUTE XMAS SHOPPING SOCIAL

12.00pm, King's Head, Aylesbury

January

Saturday 6th OXFORD CITY RAMBLE

Meet up at Jude the Obscure, Walton Street (OX2 6AE) at 12.30pm.

Rail journey is 11.18 from Wycombe, getting into Oxford at 12.09 with a change at Haddenham. The Arriva 280 bus runs frequently from Aylesbury to Oxford on Saturdays.

Monday 8th BRANCH MEETING

8.00pm Whip, Lacey Green

Thursday 18th FAREWELL TO THE BREE LOUISE

7.30pm Bree Louise, 69 Cobourg Street, Euston NW1 2HH

February

Wednesday 28th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7.00pm Kings Head, Aylesbury

All local CAMRA members should attend and help decide the direction of the Branch for the coming year. A buffet will be provided and a bottle raffle will be held to raise funds to help cover the cost of the evening (please bring along bottles to be raffled off).

Further details can be found on our website
www.avw.camra.org.uk, facebook and meetup.com

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Copy deadline for next issue (due out 1st February) is 14th January 2018.

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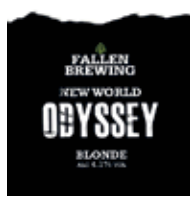
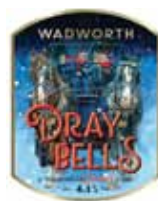
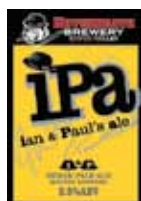
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