

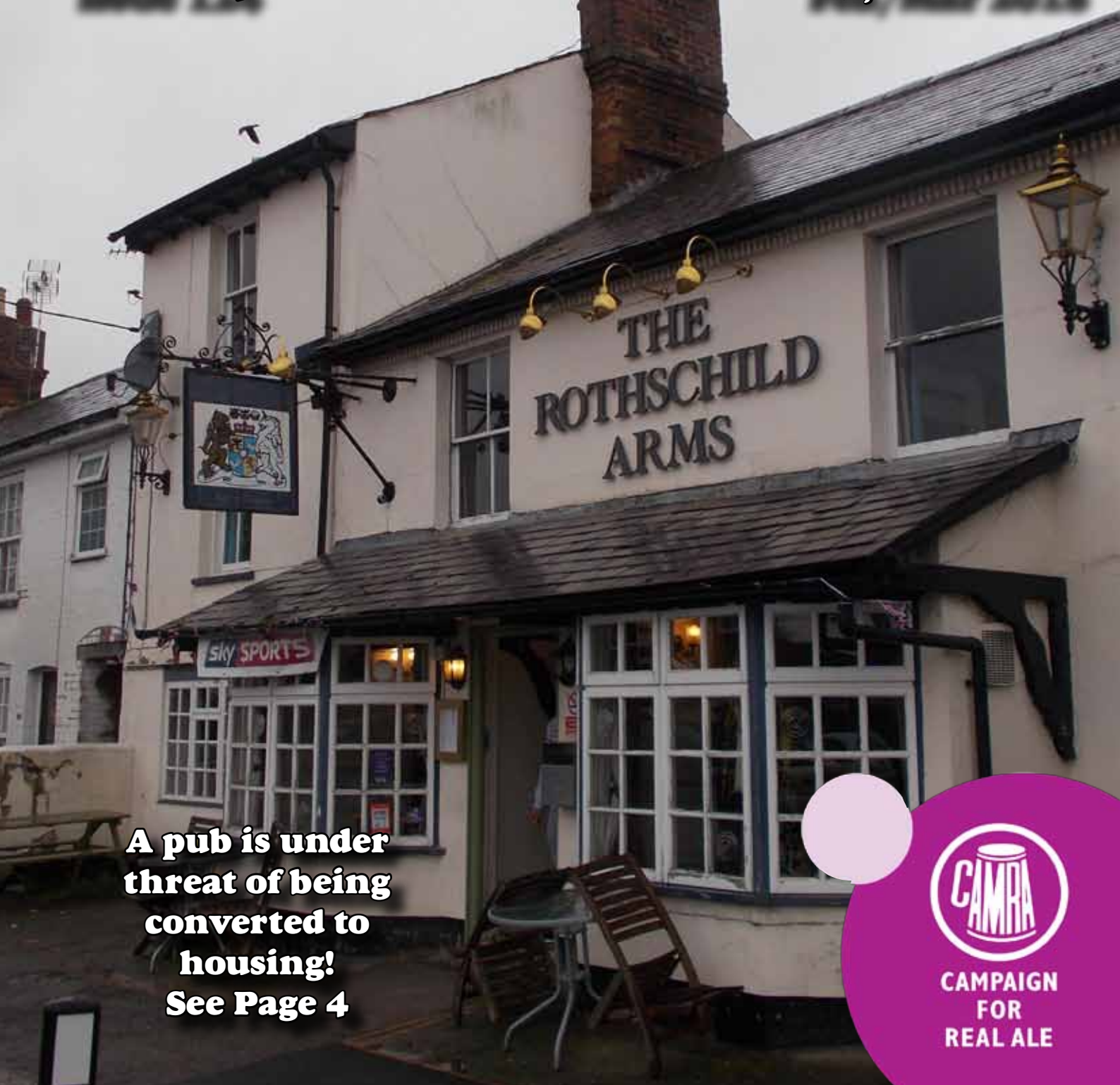
Swan Supping

Issue 124

Feb/Mar 2018



FREE



**A pub is under
threat of being
converted to
housing!
See Page 4**



**CAMPAIGN
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Newsletter of the Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch of CAMRA

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NEWS FROM THE EDITOR



2018 will be a busy year both locally and nationally. As an independent, voluntary organisation which campaigns for real ale, cider and perry as well as protecting and promoting community pubs and clubs and fighting for consumer rights, **CAMRA** now has over 190,000 members across the country who work to champion beer and cider drinkers as well as pub and club goers.

In April, at the Members' Weekend, AGM and Conference **CAMRA** members will decide the future of the campaign (see below) as we seek to extend our remit by representing even more pub users and

thereby exerting further influence on the Government, especially regarding the level of taxation we have to pay to enjoy our favourite tippie.

Locally we have to get more volunteers involved. We tried to organise a meeting at the **Hop Pole** in December to discuss this and that was the day the weather changed and it had to be cancelled at the last minute due to the snow and the treacherous conditions underfoot. If you were thinking of attending that meeting, please come along to our AGM at the **Kings Head**, Aylesbury. Further details are given in the letter from our Branch Chairman, Simon Isted, alongside this text.

Swan Supping is now in its 21st year and we intend to build on its success - please keep reading! In October we will be holding our 25th **Vale of Aylesbury Beer Festival** to raise money for the Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity. We will also be heading to the Black Country for our annual trip and we hope to organise other trips for you to enjoy.

Meanwhile, our pubs are still under threat. See the article on the **Rothschild Arms**, Aston Clinton, on page 4! It could be your pub next!

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.

Hope to see loads of you at the Kings Head AGM!

David Roe, Swan Supping Editor

Dear local **CAMRA** branch members,

We will be holding our branch **Annual General Meeting** on Wednesday 28th February 2018 at the **Kings Head**, Aylesbury, starting at 7pm. A warm invitation is extended to all local branch members, especially those who may not have attended local branch meetings before. It's an opportunity to meet the current committee and other active members and to exchange views on campaigning issues, local and national. The evening is also a great social get-together with a bottle raffle and a rare opportunity to drink the **Kings Head's** excellent ales in a historic private room that's rarely open to the public.

As always, all committee positions are up for re-election so if you feel you can contribute to the running of our branch then I would be very pleased to hear from you. The position of secretary will be falling vacant as our current secretary, Alexander Wright only temporarily stepped in until this AGM. Otherwise the branch would have been forced to cease operating. Many thanks to Alex.

As well as a secretary I would like to fill the roles of deputies for chairman, treasurer and secretary. Also, if there is a young member who would like to stand as young persons' representative that would be fantastic. If you have a passion for real cider then we have a position available as branch cider representative, as well as positions for coordinating our national beer scores and **Good Beer Guide** submissions.

Finally, we would very much welcome new committee members so if you wish to join us please let me know. We hold approximately six meetings a year that deal with formal branch business and four or five informal meetings per year.

Most of these positions involve only a few hours of volunteering a month, if that. Full details of what is involved for each position are available on the national **CAMRA** website at <https://members.camra.org.uk/group/guest/branch-opportunities> (you may need to login with your **CAMRA** membership number and password to view this page).

If you would like to stand as chairman, treasurer or secretary then please inform me by sending a reply by email.

The agenda will be circulated a week before the meeting.

Many thanks in advance.

Simon Isted,
Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch Chairman.
istedsj@hotmail.co.uk



NATIONAL CAMRA NEWS

CAMRA courts all beer and cider drinkers as it widens remit

CAMRA is set to widen its remit to represent drinkers of quality beers, ciders and perries of all types, as well as moving its focus beyond traditional pubs, if its members approve recommendations put before them in April.

While continuing to advocate that real ale is the pinnacle of the brewer's craft, the Campaign's wider focus will mean all drinkers who enjoy a range of beers, ciders and perries will feel welcome in the organisation.

If the changes are approved, the Campaign will work to provide an enhanced education and information experience for its members, and all drinkers who attend **CAMRA** festivals, to help them appreciate and learn about all types and styles of beer, cider and perry - and make informed decisions about what constitutes 'quality'.

While campaigning for the continued production and consumption of real ale, cider and perry will remain at the core of **CAMRA's** objectives, members will be asked to consider changes to the organisation's Articles of Association which will widen the range of types of beer that it represents - including quality beer which does not meet the organisation's definition of 'real ale'.

The recommendations also propose that as a result of widening its scope of interest **CAMRA** will be able to represent and engage with all beer drinkers and with all pubgoers, irrespective of what they choose to drink, increasing its ability to campaign in the interests of a much larger constituency.

This broadening of consumer representation will also see **CAMRA** demonstrate an interest in and lobby for a much wider range of on-

trade outlets. While the organisation will continue to campaign for the preservation of the traditional British pub, it will also encourage on-trade outlets of all kinds to serve quality beer, cider and perry. **CAMRA** will continue to advocate drinking in public social venues, rather than the increasing practise of consumers buying their drinks from supermarkets for home consumption.

CAMRA launched a root and branch review of its purpose and objectives, called the Revitalisation Project, at the start of 2016. All 190,000 members have been involved and consulted throughout the process and will soon have their say on whether the resulting proposals for change are adopted.

Seeking approval for their recommendations, the Campaign's leadership argue that a wider appeal and closer connection with the current revolution in beer and bars will enable the organisation to connect with modern-day beer drinkers and pub goers. This in turn will strengthen **CAMRA's** campaigning voice: enabling it to increase the already-considerable influence it exerts on the Government and industry decision-makers.

A vote will be held at the Annual General Meeting, in Coventry in April. In the months between now and then they'll be making sure members can access the full details of the changes recommended, along with the analysis of the impacts and potential opportunities the changes will have.

All members who attend the Members' Weekend in April 2018 will be able to vote on the changes. Members who do not attend the AGM will be able to vote by proxy ahead of the meeting. The recommendations will be presented as Special Resolutions to change the wording of **CAMRA's** Articles of Association - these changes will require 75 per cent of those voting to be in favour in order to pass.

ANOTHER COUNTRY PUB UNDER THREAT!

A planning application has been issued to convert the **Rothschild Arms**, Aston Clinton, into two terraced dwellings and construction of three terraced dwellings on the opposite side of the road currently used as car parking and beer garden (pictured below).

I visited the pub to collect information for this article and instead of a run-down establishment with tumbleweeds passing through it that the developers would lead you to believe it is, I found a busy, lively pub with a lunchtime crowd that a lot of other pubs would envy.

Only one real ale was available, **Sharps Doom Bar** which is served directly from the barrel. Real ale has only recently been reintroduced following the upturn in trade which is largely due to the efforts of the landlord.

The local support is amazing as the pub now runs seven darts teams and two pool teams and there is a large marquee at the back which is used for functions and other special events.

Lots of competitions are run as the pub does everything it can to encourage people to call again. In fact, it reminded me of how pubs used to be run in the past, relying on its local trade and treating its drinkers with respect and not just relying on passing food trade.

This respect has been repaid with a massive campaign by the locals to keep the pub open, with well over 500 people having objected via Facebook to the planning application.



In fact, if the worst happened and the **Rothschild Arms** closed, the other pubs in Aston Clinton couldn't cope as there is nowhere else like it (or even close) despite the viability report from Savills (the agents who would handle the sale). This recommended the use of the 'nearby' **Five Bells** in Weston Turville. Not only would this encourage drinking and driving as I'm not aware that the road to the village has a pavement and it certainly doesn't have adequate lighting, not that it is anything approaching the style of a similar establishment. I'm also surprised that they didn't recommend going to the **Plough** which would have been nearer, and much more of the local style of pub as the **Rothschild Arms**, despite its having been converted into housing many years ago, instead of recommending the **Aston Clinton Social Club** which only closed a mere two years ago!

Aston Clinton has already lost a lot of its historic pubs. The **Bulls Head** and the **Rising Sun**, both on the main road through the village, have closed in the last few years and if you go back even further in time there used to be another **Rothschild Arms** in the nearby village of Buckland which closed in the nineties. Perhaps the planners have something against the family or just don't like the name!

The **Rothschild Arms**, which dates back to 1857, meets all the criteria of an Asset of Community Value and it serves its local area well. It is very clear therefore that a community public house, such as the **Rothschild Arms**, should be retained in the village. Aston Clinton has had an unprecedented amount of housing approved, and needs to retain all the local services it can – especially a popular and well-run pub.

My thanks to Liz Tubb who wrote a very detailed objection to the planning application, and is one of the leading lights organising the fight against the closure, for her invaluable help and information.

David Roe



Our beers for 2018 are themed around the heroic wartime achievements of the **Bletchley Park** codebreakers and are brewed as part of a fundraising campaign in support of **Bletchley Park** and **The National Museum of Computing**.

CODEBREAKER (4.0 % ABV) January
Plenty of oats. Clean, fresh and light-amber colour. El Dorado hops give a flavour of stone-fruit and an aroma of pears.

LORENZ (4.3% ABV) February
Extra pale. Slower fermentation brings out the distinctive tangerine flavour of Mandarin Bavaria hops.

TUNNY (3.9% ABV) March
Generous portions of wheat in the grist. Cascade hops for a full and fruity aroma.

ABACUS (4.1% ABV) April
Galaxy hops. Passion fruit and peach aromas. Spicy rye malt base.

ENIGMA (3.8% ABV) May
Endeavour and Jester hops with aromatic malt bestow a unique colour and deep flavour.

COLOSSUS (4.2% ABV) June
Citra, Citra and then more Citra. Intense tropical-fruit and grapefruit flavours.

WRENS (4.1% ABV) July
Extra pale malt base with Mosaic, Citra and Simcoe hops. Tropical, and citrus flavours.

HEATH ROBINSON (4.0% ABV) August
Complex biscuity body. Cascade and Chinook impart a lingering and resinous bitterness.

WHIRLWIND (3.8% ABV) September
Amarillo for a sunshine blonde beer with a fruity palate and lingering late hop aroma.

WITCH (4.2% ABV) October
Northern Brewer hops. Notes of pine and grass on the nose and lingering bitterness.

CIPHER (3.9% ABV) November
Rye malt and US hops form the backbone of this copper ale. Pleasantly balanced bitterness.

SECRET SANTA (4.0% ABV) December
A medley of malts and a generous dose of Bramling Cross hops. A perfect all-day.

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OFF THE COWLEY ROAD



All local ale lovers know that Oxford is a wonderful city for pubs.

With the extension of Chiltern Railways services into the centre of the city over the last year, local drinkers from the south of the branch

have enjoyed much improved public transport connections with Oxford (although they can be awkward from Princes Risborough and Haddenham and Thame, often involving changes of train).

The historic core of Oxford contains many classic pubs, often made even more well known by TV series such as *Inspector Morse* and its successors. Certain areas out of the centre, such as Jericho to the north, feature a number of excellent pubs. But what about the east side of City – where it's far more 'town' than 'gown' with the huge BMW Mini plant in Cowley being the predominant destination, in favour of any fusty medieval college.

On a recent Saturday lunchtime, we decided to discover what was Oxford pubs' east-side story.

After a long stroll down the Iffley Road we arrived at the **Chester**, a pub well off the beaten track, down a residential side street. Formerly the **Chester Arms**, the pub has been given a Millennial-appealing makeover in much the same manner of many London pubs in those areas where prosperous thirty-somethings can actually afford to buy houses.

As part of its appeal to the non-traditional pub goer, the pub had been already open a while for breakfast when we arrived just before midday. As one might expect in a place where the menus are attached to clipboards, the pub has a limited but eclectic offering of food that caters well for the likes of vegetarians.

To put a lining on my stomach for the onslaught ahead, I ordered a Greek mezze plate which, while not cheap, had such generous portion sizes that I couldn't actually finish it. (If the pub does the same with its carnivorous portions I'm sure the *Swan Supping* editor would make a bee-line there.)

But we didn't go there for the food. What was the beer like? It was actually rather excellent. The pub always features two beers from *LocAle* brewery, *Loose Cannon* from Abingdon. I had a pint each of their *Gunners' Gold* and *Abingdon Bridge*, which were in excellent condition.

With its quiz nights and board games, the **Chester** successfully negotiates the fine line between gastropub and welcoming local. It's difficult to think of an equivalent pub in our Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe branch area that pulls off the same trick in the same laid-back manner.

While the **Chester** had a relaxed lunchtime crowd, our next stop, The Rusty Bicycle, was positively heaving. Again, hidden in a residential area, this time between the Cowley and Iffley Roads, the **Rusty Bicycle** (pictured above) is another local pub that's been given a 21st century makeover.

With genuinely oxidising bike frames hanging outside, the **Arkell's** pub (formerly the **Eagle**) was doing a roaring Saturday lunchtime trade with standing room only. Perhaps the five real ales on offer might be partly responsible? I downed a pint of *Arkell's Hoperation IPA*.

There was rather more room in the inn at the **James Street Tavern**, nearer the Cowley Road. Perhaps it was because we arrived as the lunchtime football match had just finished or because we had the bad luck to visit when the range of beers wasn't quite as extensive as the eight that it's said to serve on occasion. I had a pint of 8 from local branch brewery, *XT*.

Now emerging on the Cowley Road proper, we'd missed out many of the student drinking holes that give this long street its notoriety. But, on our

way back towards the dreaming spires of the city centre, we made a call at the **Big Society** (pictured below).

Those with acute political memories will recall that the **Big Society** is named after an ambitious but failed policy initiative (like almost all of his others) by Oxford graduate and ex-Prime Minister, David Cameron. It's very surprising, given recent allegations about his Bullingdon Club activities, that the pub hasn't been renamed the **Boar's Head**.

According to the *CAMRA What Pub?* website the pub is described by the manager as a 'youth club for adults.' Perhaps that explains the school furniture? While the pub genuinely serves drinks in real jam-jars, the beer offering is actually quite appealing. It's probably more so to craft beer aficionados but cask ales are available.

It was only a short walk from the **Big Society** across Magdalen Bridge into the honeyed, Cotswold stone where the traditional appeal of the likes of the **Turf Tavern** beckoned. As far as Oxford pubs go it's true to say that a change is even better than a rest.

Charlie Mackle



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LOCAL NEWS

AYLESBURY

The old *Dayla* site has now been totally demolished as it makes way for housing. The **Hop Pole** is once again holding an Easter Beer Festival from Thursday 29th of March until the beer runs out.

The **King's Head** enjoyed a busy festive period, led by the launch of their new 'pop up' dining room in the historic oak panelled 'Cromwell Dining Room', so named after Oliver Cromwell who it is believed was a regular guest in the early part of the 17th century, just as King Henry VIII had been before him. Executive Head Chef Paul Adams and his team are now looking forward to focusing on the next stage of exciting development of the **King's Head** kitchens.

300's Dark Old Ale is still delivered directly from traditional wooden casks, and throughout 2018 they will continue to serve a further range of beers on gravity. The delivery from the brewery is on a Wednesday, the first glass is served on the Thursday, with only 36 pints available at a time. These traditional ales will only be available for a limited time.

Their annual 'Celebration of Beer' has again proved to be a resounding success, with beers from *Titanic*, *Bude*, and *Daleside*, to name but a few, being served.

BRILL

The **Pheasant** features *Brains Reverend James* alongside *Brill Gold* and *Pheasant* from the nearby *Vale Brewery*. The **Pointer** was recently serving *XT*

Pointer, *Vale Gravitas* and *Rebellion The Greatest*, a fruity and chestnut flavour ale.

CADSDEN

The first site in a chain inspired by a Buckinghamshire pub is set to open in Beijing in March. The **Plough** at Cadsden, near Princes Risborough, was sold to Chinese firm SinoFortone, which hopes to transform it into an international pub chain, for an undisclosed amount in December 2016. The pub shot to fame in China after president Xi Jinping ate fish and chips and drank a pint of *Greene King IPA* with former prime minister David Cameron during a state visit to the UK in 2015. A year later, SinoFortone bought the pub with plans to open 50 similar venues across the Far East. Managing director Peter Zhang told the BBC: 'We believe we have the best location in central Beijing and the British pub concept will work well in China.'

FLACKWELL HEATH

As we go to press a notice has appeared in the window of the **Stag** announcing 'Closed for Staff's Annual Holiday'. Hopefully this popular venue will be reopening shortly.

FRIETH

We learnt just too late for our last issue's Local News section that the **Yew Tree** has reopened.

GRENDON UNDERWOOD

The **Swan** is for sale at £450,000 for the freehold. Advertised by Fleurets.

HADDENHAM

The 2017 *Winterfest* was held on December 9th, one of the coldest days of the year, fortunately just before the



snow fell. 1100 people enjoyed getting into a warm(ish) marquee (photo above - courtesy of haddenham.net) and partied the afternoon away listening to five amazing local bands and performers together with plenty of food and drink to nourish and refresh them. In a first for the festivals, all ales were sourced locally. 18 brewers were represented and every single one of the 43 firkins consumed was brewed within 35 miles of Haddenham - what a fabulous position to be in for an ale drinker!

There was even more fun to come the following day when the snow came making the clear up an 'interesting' experience. A huge thanks to the dedicated volunteers who battled through the blizzard to help take down empties, equipment and decorations.

The next festival, *Summerfest*, will take place on Saturday 7th July.

The **Green Dragon** had some splendidly lively ales to wet the palate when visited recently. *Tring Ridgeway* and *Otter Amber* were both in lovely condition. The **Kings Head** is serving *Rebellion IPA* and *Doom Bar* with the likes of *Black Sheep Bitter* as a third ale over the weekend.

At the **Rising Sun**, Liam and Silvie continue to serve splendid ales mostly from *XT* and *Animal*. The pub is one

of only two chosen to host *XT's* re-branding event.

LITTLE MARLOW

We understand Raymond Blanc's *White Brasserie Company* may not now take over the **Kings Head**. The pub is still closed and sports a new sign 'Pub to Let'.

LITTLEWORTH COMMON

The **Blackwood Arms** will be holding their seventh St. George's Day beer festival from Thursday 19th to Sunday 22nd of April. Around 18 ales and ciders will be available to help wash down 15 different varieties of sausages. There will also be live music and a St. George fancy dress competition on the Saturday.

LUDGERSHALL

At the **Bull and Butcher** the locals like *Sharp's Doom Bar*, reportedly the best beer in Britain, and *Greene King IPA*, so Stewart and Dawn serve it and it sells well!

MARLOW

The **Royal British Legion SpringFest** for 2018 will run from Friday the 4th to Monday the 7th of May inclusive.

At the **Britannia** on Little Marlow Road the latest seasonal offering is *Rivertown Brewery Refreshing Pale Ale* (3.2%).

The **Cross Keys** in Spittal Street closed its doors at the beginning of December. Owners *Heineken* have stated they wish to have the pub reopen as soon as possible but no date has been announced as far as we know.

PRINCES RISBOROUGH

New management took over at the **Whiteleaf Cross** at the end of November last year. The new landlady told *Swan Supping* that she's a real ale enthusiast,



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based on her successful experience at previous pubs. The *Morland's Old Golden Hen* and *Original* sampled at the *Greene King* owned pub were certainly in good nick on a recent visit.

THAME

The **Black Horse** has reopened after a comprehensive renovation as a pub brasserie, part of the **White Brasserie** chain owned by Raymond Blanc. So we give a warm welcome to General Manager, Abdur Reham and his team to Thame. Abdur has moved up from the Chichester area where he was running a chain of Italian restaurants and previously he was at the **Travellers Rest**, a large pub in Kenton near Wembley Stadium.

The bar area has been totally refurbished and the tea room/pool room is now a drinking/dining area which can be hired for private functions. They now have four ales permanently on, being *Doom Bar*, *Sharps Atlantic*, *Timothy Taylor Landlord* and the fourth pump for guest beers – *Animal Boar* bohemian pale ale (4.6%) when visited. The only downside is that, as seems to be a current trend, the beers are on the cold side, but Abdur said he would look into that aspect.

As well as an a la carte menu, there are lunchtime snacks, 2/3 course lunches for £11.95/£14.95 and Sunday roasts. See their website for full details. Meanwhile, things are a changing at the **Cross Keys**. *Oak Taverns*, the owners, have now taken on a full time brewer. He will be brewing at their four pubs which are the **Black Horse**, Barnet, the **Angel**, Bicester, the **Swan**, Farringdon and the **Cross Keys**. Alongside the pub's favourites such as the original

Hoppiness and *Mr Splodge Mild*, which we haven't seen for quite a while, Nick the brewer hopes to resurrect some old brews that time has forgotten. All four breweries' outputs will be distributed throughout the *Oak* estate by *XT Brewery*. If all goes to plan, then the range of beers at the **Keys** could become even more interesting. Again, keep up to date with current events by checking on social media.

WINSLOW

The *13th Winslow Beer Festival* will be held at the Public Hall, Elmfields Gate, Winslow, Bucks. MK18 3JA, on Friday 16th and Saturday 17th of March.

There are three sessions: Friday Evening 7pm - 11pm, Saturday Matinee 1pm - 7pm (hopefully with Live RBS Six Nations Rugby being shown), and Saturday Evening 7 - 11pm.

As ever, a varied selection of over 40 beers and ciders this year from around Britain. This is a festival run by the Lions Club of Winslow and run as their major Charity Fund-Raising event for local charities, so come and 'Drink for Charity.' Last year they raised over £10,500!

Session entrance fee is £5 including a commemorative glass and programme. Light refreshments available. Tickets available in advance from 1st March from the **Bell Hotel**, Market Square. Details of the beers that will be on offer will be available from 1st March on the Winslow Lions Facebook and Twitter Pages. This is the Lions' thirteen festival and has proved to be very popular so get your tickets early, as venue capacity will restrict numbers. More details will be available on www.winslowlions.org.uk.

SOUNDING (OFF) BOARD



'REAL ALE' IN CANS

In the Sounding (off) Board section of the December/January issue of *Swan Supping*, Giles du Boulay detailed some of his reservations regarding beer in cans. He prefers bottle-conditioned beer, especially those which have a label stating that '*CAMRA* says this is real ale'.

This prompted the following reply:-

'It's a great pity that Giles du Boulay will not drink beer from a can, as there is a lot of fantastically tasty beer sold in that format. He makes a strong logical case as to why beer packaged in cans is superior to that in bottles, then unfortunately becomes all emotional because the can format reminds him of cheap weasel pee. In my time, I have seen ketchup, vinegar and buttermilk served from glass containers, but it does not put me off bottled beer, because I can easily dissociate any comparison and do not drink with my eyes.

As for his argument that it is easier to spot sediment emerging from a glass bottle rather than a can, I disagree. Many beer bottles are brown or green rather than transparent. What he is actually seeing is the sediment once it emerges from the bottle, not from through the coloured glass. A careful pour from a can will easily allow him to stop at the desired moment just as it will from an opaque brown bottle, whose design is specifically to NOT allow light to penetrate.' *Ian Boyd*

and the following subsequent reply:-

'The fact that most beer bottles are brown or green presents no difficulty in decanting a bottle-conditioned beer. The technique is simply to hold it up to the light and keeping your eye on the shoulder of the bottle then stop pouring once the sediment reaches it. This cannot be done effectively with a can.'

Giles du Boulay

What do you think about this or any other topics to do with beer and pubs?

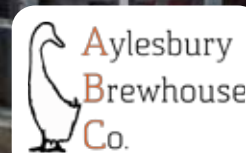
'Sounding (off) Board' is designed to encourage readers to respond with their thoughts and opinions on issues concerning pubs and real ale.

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

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A SARDINIAN BREWING ADVENTURE



Last summer at *XT* we brewed a Belgian Wit Beer, the *Animal Donkey*, with innovative and eccentric Italian Brewery *BBBirra* from Bosa. The beer was made with wheat and loads of potent Sardinian orange zest brought over by our brewing friend Carl Fitzpatrick (pictured above and bottom right as he checks the hops).

This year I headed out to the idyllic Sardinian coastal town of Bosa to join Carl again and get our brewing heads together for round two of our international collaboration.

Carl runs his brewery and farm in the medieval town of Bosa on the banks of the river Temo in NW Sardinia. The two ventures are built on very strong environmental and sustainable principles close to Carl's heart. The farm grows all the barley, wheat and hops for the beers, and his well provides all the brewing liquor; the yeast even comes from the local wine producers. Both ancient and contemporary varieties of grains are grown to ensure a diverse culture on the farm and remove the need for chemical assistance. The by-products of brewing are fed to the farm animals. Unusual these days – even the used beer bottles are returned by Carl's drinkers and refilled. The locals are so used to this now; he doesn't even need to charge a deposit! The whole process from field to glass takes place all within walking distance of the farm.

The first beer we worked on in the four storey brewery, tucked away in the narrow, winding streets of old town Bosa, was based on an Italian speciality – *Doppio Malto*. This very high

gravity beer is made with a unique double mashing process. The super strong wort is then munched away by yeast which had been cropped from actively fermenting Malvasia wine. To balance the massively chewy malt flavours, high alpha hops are added for a citrus bite.

If the beers travel further than Bosa, Carl takes them in his mobile pub – an amazing, converted German fire engine. With hand pumps, a bar and a bespoke chilled cellar; the beers are enjoyed in perfect condition while drinkers rest on old wine barrels. One day, between brews, we collected an old oak foeder (pictured bottom left) from an ancient and crumbling wine cellar. The cellar tucked away in a tiny narrow street was an Aladdin's cave of amazing old wine casks resting unused for many years, I wish I could have brought one home for a bit of whacky fermentation of my own.

As a balance to the *Doppio*, we turned our attention to a beverage made from the oldest strain of grain grown by man – Einkorn wheat which was originally cultivated in ancient Egypt. It's a tough little grain and takes a lot to get it to give up its sugars for brewing. To help the process, our grist needed to be blended with some contemporary malted wheat. The flavours of this hazy, refreshing *Pharaoh's Ale* perfectly matched the heat of the Sardinian sun.

Sardinia has a hot, Mediterranean climate and the beer culture has grown accordingly – with the locals and visitors preferring lighter and fruity beers, softer IPAs, wheat beers and lagers. The craft beer craze has swept across the whole of Italy and now even Sardinia has over two dozen local breweries.

The beer market is still dominated by *Ichnusa* – a classic Euro fizz lager. As with many similar brands this brewer is now a part of the giant *Heineken*, but a raft of small independent producers are making many inroads.

My pick of these new kids on the island include: *Marduk* from Orosei on the east coast – this is one of the more commercial of the independent producers and their beers include American style IPAs, Czech Lagers and a Munich Alt Bier. But as with *BBBirra* they also follow a sustainability field to grain principle and have their own farm and maltings.

Birrificio Cagliari, based in the capital, produce a very wide range of styles –and all packaged in beautiful bottles with very stylish labels. Worth it just to enjoy the Italian designer look.

Birra Lara from Tertenia on the south eastern coast is a very modern brewery creating beers using barley grown on their own farm. The owners enthusiastically support the traceability of their ingredients throughout the process.

Sambrinus from Sassari in the north is the oldest craft brewer, operating



since 1999. Beers follow a more classical style of traditional brews.

Birrificio 4 Mori based in the south western town of Guspini, the brewery is housed in old mine workings and uses an excellent numbering system for their beers.

Most of the beers are available in bottles – generally I found these to be bottle conditioned, the locals expect 'craft' to be cloudy and preferably with lots of foam. Finding the beers on draught was a little tricky, but when you do



find them, they are often 'keg conditioned' in key-keg or other bag type disposable systems. Many of the beers I tried were unfiltered and unpasteurised. In order to enjoy a really good range look out for one of the many beer festivals around the island. These tend to be laid out in the 'market street' style where you can meet and talk to the brewery teams on their own stalls.

It was a pleasure to work with Carl again this year, and get an insight into beer and brewing in Italy. Travelling for beer – what could be better?

Russell Taylor
XT Brewing Co.





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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 from **ABC**.



Crux (3.8%). Crux, or the Southern Cross, is the constellation that appears on the flag of many oceanic countries including New Zealand. This is a golden ale made with Maris otter and Munich malts. Hopped with all NZ hops Dr Rudi and Waimea and dry hopped with Southern Cross.

Modern Prometheus (5.1% Black IPA).

January marks 200 years since the publishing of Mary Shelley's gothic classic *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. Made with a concoction of dark and roasted malts to give a robust body and heavily hopped with big hitting pine and citrus flavours from Simcoe and Chinook hops. This monster of a black IPA is **Vale's** homage to Shelley's seminal work.



Golden Gate (4.5%). 'California Common', also known historically as 'Steam Beer' is one of the original West Coast beer styles. Made with pale and crystal malts and hopped exclusively with Northern Brewer Hops, it gives a malty brew with distinctive clean bitterness.



Wilde (4.3% Witbier). Named for the finest wit of them all **Wilde** is a belgian style witbier. Made with unmalted wheat and pilsner malt. A hazy golden beer spiced with coriander seeds and orange peel, makes it a vibrant and refreshing beer.

Chiltern Brewery

Just one example of the successes achieved by **Chiltern Brewery** in the past

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year was the limited edition 'Imperial Stout' range which saw extensive positive feedback online, with one influential reviewer awarding the *Dark Coffee* edition a perfect 10/10, stating that it was 'one of the best Imperial Stouts I've had all through 2017 – and I've drunk lots!'

In January, the brewery were chosen to represent Buckinghamshire as a 'Tryanuary Champion'. 'Tryanuary' is a nationwide event which was launched four years ago to support the independent beer industry during the traditionally difficult period of January, with its focus being on trying new beers. On the 25th of January, **Chiltern Brewery** joined forces with **West Berkshire Brewery** to showcase the best of local, independent breweries across Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, and Oxfordshire on social media.

Tom Jenkinson, has also recently announced what he described as an exciting development, with the unveiling of the brewery's first ever low alcohol ale.

Tom went on to say that 'this is the culmination of over a year of planning and development in our bid to achieve a low alcohol ale which while being under 2% ABV, still maintains the flavour and quality our customers have come to expect in our award winning ales'. Tom went on to state that although the ale has initially been trialled at a few select pubs, it will be made more widely available in due course, with the further promise that 2018 has 'an exciting range of seasonal beers planned with some brand new ales to be tried amongst the old popular favourites'.

Tom closed by saying, 'once again, we can't thank **CAMRA** and **CAMRA** members enough for their invaluable support year after year and we look forward to welcoming many more of you to the **Chiltern Brewery** in this coming year'.

Fisher's Brewing Co.

Fisher's are holding their next open night on Friday 2nd February to kick off the new year, all welcome from 6pm. As the weather improves in spring, they'll be using their outside space a lot more and keeping the shop/tap open on Saturday afternoons until 7 or 8pm.

They'll be releasing the first of a range of single-hopped pale ales in the coming month, starting with *Cascade* at 5.4% and will soon release their *Oak Barrel-Aged Belgian Tripel* at 10% in 750ml bottles.

Fisher's are looking to join the **SIBA** Beerflex scheme by March once the Food Safety Quality audit is done.

Malt the Brewery

The brewery continues to go from strength to strength and, following on from the launch of their all new Shop, Taste and Tour offer last year, further changes have recently been made to the comfortable tasting room and bar. Visitors can enjoy a **Malt** ale, local artisan spirits and English wines while looking out through large gallery windows over the brewing hall.

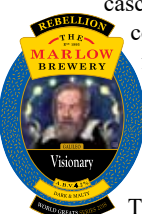
The shop focuses on promoting local produce from within the Chilterns and, they now also feature local vodka and gins made from grains grown on their farm, as well as snacks produced within a ten mile radius..

In December a new range of Chutneys were launched. Made with **Malt** ales and, judging from how quickly they sold out, the perfect match to the beer. They're now back in stock, including the very popular Malt the Hot One, so grab one while you can!

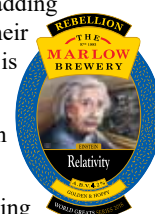


Rebellion Brewery

February's beer from **Rebellion** is called *Visionary* (4.2%). *Visionary* is a dark mahogany bitter dominated by rich malt flavours. The addition of cascade hops adds a pleasant fruity element, adding complexity and balance to the beer. Fans of their former core beer *Mutiny* should like this one as it is based very closely to the old recipe.



March's beer is called *Relativity* (4.2%). A golden and hoppy ale.



They have a new spring seasonal beer. *Amber* is going

MORE LOCAL BREWERY NEWS



to be 4.3% but the style and pump clip are to be confirmed.

Spring will also bring the first of two new seasonal bottled beers to be released this year. *Black* will be a 5.2% stout sold in a 330ml bottle. Full tasting notes are to be confirmed.

Tring Brewery

A winter seasonal still available is *Hound* (3.3%). A well-crafted amber table beer. It has three formidable malts that give great body and three potent hops, of which Citra, is used for dry hopping. This beer is bursting with tropical fruits so don't be fooled by its low strength, there is flavour aplenty.

Their February Monthly special is *Lorenz* (4.3%). Mandarin Bavaria hops have a very distinctive tangerine flavour. Their intention is not to mask this, so we have used an extra pale malt base and a slower fermentation to let them truly speak for themselves.

On Saturday the 13th of January, *Tring Brewery*, in partnership with *Fabulous Fan Fayre* catering, opened the 'Real Ale Bar' at Watford FC for the hornet's home fixture against Southampton. This match marked the launch of the most extensive cask ale offering in the Premier League, with the choice of five beers pouring for fans throughout the day.

The 'Real Ale Bar' was in response to great feedback, given to *Side Pocket for a Toad* from fans, having enjoyed this initial cask offering the season prior at Vicarage Road. *Tring* beer was again well received, more so than anticipated, and the initial allocation had been drunk dry by the time the whistle blew for kick-off! An emergency re-supply was arranged with the guys on the ground in the *Tring* brewhouse, and five fresh casks were raced and racked up onto the barfront, just in time for half-time service.

Due to the overwhelming popularity of the bar, they will be looking to stock a higher quantity of ale at games going forward. The next fixture for Watford (and indeed the Real Ale Bar) will be the hornet's home game against Chelsea, set to take place on Monday evening, February 5th.

Tring are extremely proud to be part of the first ever Hertford Brew Club Competition. HBC is a group of around 20 homebrewers who meet on a monthly basis to discuss all things beer and brewing, now in its third year! Among the ranks of the HBC are four Beer Judge Certification Program qualified beer judges, with experience running competitions throughout the country. With experience, qualification and years of operation under their belt, the group will now host their first ever competition.

The winner will claim the prize of a Full Brew Day on the test-batch brewing kit at *Tring Brewery*, collaborating with brewer Sam to upscale the winning beer, to be tapped at the St. Albans Beer & Cider Festival, pouring to thousands of thirsty pundits across the last weekend of September.

Vale Brewery

Two new beers to look out for from the Brill brewery:

Billy Bones (4.0%). 'Fifteen men on a dead mans chest', sings the keeper of Captain Flint's Map. This hoppy chestnut beer is brewed in honour of R.L. Stevenson's classic novel, *Treasure Island*.

High Time (3.9%). Hooray for Harold Lloyd! It's high time you stopped for a second to have a pint of this malty amber beer from *Vale Brewery*.

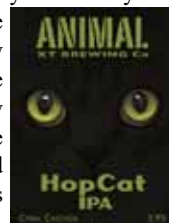
XT Brewery

After six years and brewing over three million pints, *XT Brewery* have announced a rebranding of their cask beer range from March. Following a very busy 2017 with significant investment in new brewing equipment and the new brewery tap room, *XT* have clearly shown a commitment to producing quality cask beer. The new look brings the beers bang up to date

and will ensure the brand will continue to grow and appeal to both existing and new beer drinkers well into the future.

The new *XT* look will be launched with a number of special events including: *St Aldates* in Oxford on Tuesday 27th February and at the *Rising Sun* in Haddenham on the following day.

The *Animal* beers have continued to grow in popularity over the years and the first ever permanent *Animal* beer now joins the stable: after a trial run of *Red Herring* which was a low ABV but high hop beer brewed in 2017, the dials have been turned up and the recipe fine-tuned for the new *Hopcat IPA*. This is described as a hyper hoppy Pale Ale at only 3.9%, packed with Citra and Cascade New World hops to excite your taste buds but with a low strength it is gentle on the head.



There will still be the ever evolving range of new *Animals* to compliment the *Hopcat IPA* as 2018 begins with: *Tarsier* (4.6%). A Pacific amber, this little guy is packed with sweet malts and rye and crammed full of Rakau, Casade and Chinook, layered throughout the boil and during dry hopping.

For the real beer connoisseur: In limited availability is the *XT Oak Aged Imperial Stout*

at 8.6% - available in bottle conditioned, keg or cask form - with characteristics carried over from the sherry, brandy, whisky or rum casks in which they have been aging for over 12 months. The aging casks will next be put to work storing a new strong *Burton IPA* - which will be kept for 12 months and develop some of the character of a true nineteenth century beer headed for tables of the Raj.



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GRAVEDIGGERS - PART FIFTY

It had been a quiet start to a freezing winter's lunchtime in the **Gravediggers**. All seemed normal at first sight. Old Joe was beginning to come round after having been stuck to the floor all night, sleeping in a frozen puddle of rancid *Undescended Gonad*. Yet the atmosphere was even more sombre than usual.

Old Moses wheezed and coughed as he chain-smoked his way from his tumbled-down house which had the blizzards had left with more holes in the ceiling than actual roof. Pushing the heavy oak door open he shuffled into the public bar and immediately tumbled over Old Joe.

'Started falling over already, Moses, and you've not even had your morning pint of *Fit Shaced*?' Mazz said, shivering in a heavy coat as Old Moses pulled himself up to the bar.

'Is the ale still frozen?' Old Moses asked.

'Afraid so,' Mazz replied, chipping away at a block of solidified *Fit Shaced* with a chisel, then scooping the shards up from the filthy floor into a pint mug.

'Make sure it's got a handle,' Old Moses insisted.

'I'm afraid the electricity's still off too,' Mazz said.

'Don't care for those new-fangled inventions like electric,' Old Moses replied, after a hearty belch. 'The planners still trying to force you out?'

'Yes. They've cut off the phone, the gas, the electricity, even the water.'

'Mains water? What would you need that for in the **Gravediggers**? There's plenty of Old Pete's septic tank is plenty full.'

'Is Old Pete still on the barricades?' Mazz asked. 'Maybe someone can take him out a frozen block of *Septic Fleabite* to suck on?'

'Progress,' Old Moses said, waking up on the floor with a gargantuan hangover. 'Never a good thing.'

The siege of the **Gravediggers** had begun a few days earlier when a council planner had hammered a notice on the village stocks outside the pub.

Once the villagers had eventually found someone able to read what it said, the terrible news sunk in. The whole local area had been selected for development as a shiny new overspill city.

Under the government's new streamlined planning powers any property developer selected by environment minister Ebenezer Cove was permitted to immediately start bulldozing. There could be no local objections to the plans as the need for planning permission had been abolished. In this brave, new world of entrepreneurial development all protestors were arrested and incarcerated in the many new prisons, coincidentally being built by the same developers.

The **Gravediggers** was inconveniently located just outside the cluster of ugly skyscrapers in the new city centre, which was to be named Arson Biscuit, after the massive fast-food multinational that would concrete over ten square miles of rare-orchid populated pastureland.

Nevertheless, the construction of the high-speed rail link, FU2, which required the razing of every building within quarter of a mile of its path, had resulted in a demolition order on the pub.

Twenty four hours' notice had been given to vacate the premises. The locals suspected that the developers had announced their plans in the middle of the deep winter freeze to discourage protestors but the builders hadn't banked on the unbreakable bond between the regulars and their daily fixes of *Sphincter Loosener*, *Old Nitrate Run Off* and *Crusted Armpit*. Nor had the incoming demolition squads anticipated the toxic potency of the brews. Each local had taken it in turns to stand in front of the bulldozers, brandishing the luminous and effervescent liquid, which struck fear into



the security contractors after Old Pete's accidental spillage had corroded right through the three-inch steel of a JCB excavator bucket.

James rigged up a trebuchet behind the microbrewery that catapulted barrels of *Purple Poisoner* and *Campylobacter Porter* deep behind the enemy lines surrounding the village. Supplies were running low but a stand-off was maintained.

After a week, minister Cove lost patience and visited the front line.

'We must silence these enemies of the people,' he proclaimed, amusing himself by stabbing a number of his lieutenants in the back.

'Not the nuclear option?' the head of the private security company said, quaking.

'Indeed,' Cove yelled. 'Bring in the *Blandweiser* cannon!'

'Isn't that against the Geneva convention?' the security chief protested.

'No mercy for these mutineers!' the minister shrieked.

The *Blandweiser* cannon was readied and immediately began firing out gobbets of lethal lager, which froze

readily in the cold as they were almost all water anyway.

Old Pete, Old Moses and Old Joe ran bravely into the onslaught but were cut down by the impact by the icy missiles.

The frozen projectiles crashed through the microbrewery roof, destroying the old wooden barrels and neutralising the **Diggers'** unique yeast culture with their chemical warheads.

'Resistance is futile,' James yelled. 'It's going to blow!' He grabbed Mazz by the hand, yanked her on to the lid of the violently churning fermenting vessel. 'Only one way we're getting out of here.'

A huge explosion followed. James and Mazz shot out of the roof, locked in an embrace but clutching an empty malt sack to their chests.

'The strangest things turn into parachutes,' Mazz whispered to James a minute later as they floated through the air on the other side of the valley, the sacks billowing above their heads. They both turned away as the massed bulldozers moved in towards the **Gravediggers** in the distance.

Just as the wrecking ball was about to swing, a young man with a bushy beard and long hair pushed to the front of the crowd advancing on the **Diggers** and raised his hand.

'Stop!' he shouted. 'Every self-respecting hipster always wants to hang out in the most run-down, dilapidated, disgusting part of town.'

Cove's brain began to whirr. 'Indeed. Luxury apartments follow hipster hangouts as soon as night follows day!' he muttered. 'And we don't need to go to the trouble of knocking the place down.'

More young people congregated outside the **Gravediggers**.

'That unfit for human habitation cottage would make a perfect vegan seitan takeaway,' one bearded twenty-something chipped-in.

'Or a gallery dedicated to seventeenth century Peruvian performance art,' said a girl with dreadlocks and a ring through her nose.

'Or a record shop specialising in 1960s vinyl flexi-discs and old cassette tapes,' another hipster agreed.

'But there's one thing we hipsters need above all else,' their leader proclaimed.

'Yes. Our own craft beer microbrewery!' they all shouted in unison. 'Cloudy pints all round!'

Charlie Mackle

Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

February

Tuesday 6th SOCIAL

7.00pm, Black Lion, Bourne End, 8.00pm, Keg, Bourne End, 9.00pm, The Garibaldi, Bourne End, 10.00pm, The Queen and Albert, Wooburn Green.

Thursday 8th SOCIAL

8.30pm Shepherd's Crook, Crowell, 9.30pm Lions of Bledlow.

Thursday 15th SOCIAL

7.00pm, Chequers, Wheeler End, 8.00pm, Yew Tree, Frieth, 9.00pm, Bull and Butcher, Turville, 10.00pm Stag and Huntsman, Hambleden.

Monday 19th GOOD BEER GUIDE SELECTION MEETING

8.00pm, Hop Pole, Aylesbury.

Wednesday 28th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7.00pm Kings Head, Aylesbury

All local **CAMRA** members are warmly invited to attend and help decide the direction of the Branch for the coming year. A light 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).

March

Monday 5th BRANCH MEETING

8.00pm, Rising Sun, Haddenham.

Thursday 15th LAST EVER LONDON DRINKER FESTIVAL

7.00pm, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, London WC1H 9AU.

The Camden Centre is closing in the summer so we have to say goodbye to one of the longest running and most popular London Beer Festivals and we don't even have the solace of heading to the Bree Louise to drown our sorrows as that has also closed to make way for HS2.

Saturday 17th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

1.00pm, 13th Winslow Beer Festival, Public Hall, Elmfields Gate, Winslow, Bucks. MK18 3JA,

Saturday 31st DAVE ROE'S PENSION BOOK BASH

12.00 noon, Hop Pole, Aylesbury

Come along and help the editor celebrate his 65th birthday!

April

Friday 20th – Sunday 22nd CAMRA National Members' Weekend

Warwick University. **CAMRA** decides the future direction of the campaign following the 'Revitalisation Survey'.

Further details can be found on our website

www.avw.camra.org.uk, facebook and meetup.com

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Swan Supping

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Edited by David Roe

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Copy deadline for next issue (due out 30th March) is 12th March 2018.

Subscriptions :- *Swan Supping* is distributed to over 250 pubs and many other locations in our area but if you would prefer to receive your copy by post we can mail it to you immediately it is published. All you have to do is send £1.50 for each edition you wish to receive to the Editor at the address above (please make all cheques payable to **CAMRA AV & W**) and leave the rest to us! This applies to single copies to UK addresses only. We can mail overseas, but the price will vary depending on the country to which it is to be delivered. Remember that all issues of *Swan Supping* can be downloaded from our website (www.swansupping.org.uk).

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

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

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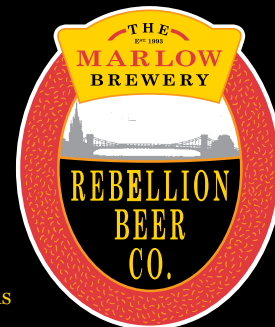
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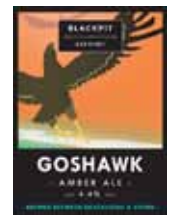
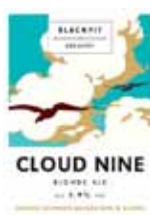
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