

Swan Supping

Issue 131

Apr/May 2019

FREE



**A new look for the
Bird in Hand,
Princes Risborough!**

See page 15



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

Newsletter of the Aylesbury Vale & Wycombe Branch of CAMRA

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NEWS FROM THE EDITOR



continue without them being filled.

It is always nice to get to the stage where you can consider that a problem that has caused trouble for months is largely solved, at least for a while!

Unfortunately, I'm not talking about Brexit which was scheduled to occur as we published this issue, but the ongoing saga of the Branch Committee!

We held our Annual General Meeting at the **Riverside Club Legion Hall** in High Wycombe in February and volunteers stepped forward to help and take up the crucial positions our branch could not

We bid a welcome return to Alexander Wright (pictured top right) who has returned from his stint on the National Executive to take up the post of Branch Chairman after having vacated the post to take up his position on the aforementioned loftier perch. We also welcome Simon Heap who has stepped fresh into the fray as the Branch Secretary.

Most of the committee posts are covered, although some members have more than one job and it would still help if we had more volunteers. Help is definitely required co-ordinating the work on surveying pubs and making sure that the **What Pub** information is up-to-date. As this job requires that the person taking it on has to go to pubs I'm surprised there isn't a queue at the door for the post.

Our thanks go to all those on the committee plus the others who stepped up to help at the AGM, Ian Mathias for taking the minutes and the ones who collected money and dealt with the bottle raffle tickets. Our thanks also go to David Richards who filled in for our Regional Director, Carl Griffin, who, due to work commitments was unable to attend the meeting. Also, our thanks go to all those at the **Riverside Club** for their work in laying on a great spread for us and the use of their room for the meeting. In addition, their beer seemed to be very well received!

On page 8 we feature the National Pub of the Year, the **Wonston Arms** in Hampshire. Our latest **Branch Pub of the Year** is the **Rising Sun** in Haddenham, and we wish them luck as they start on the road to be the next National winner!

Joint runners up locally were the **Kings Head** in Aylesbury and the **Mad Squirrel Tap & Bottleshop** in High Wycombe.

Our **Cider Pub of the Year**

is, once again, the **Cross Keys** in Thame, where Peter and Trudi Lambert have just celebrated ten triumphant years in charge.

Club of the Year for the branch is, surprise, surprise, the **Royal British Legion** in Marlow. It regularly wins the **Regional Club of the Year** award and we wish them well in the National competition. The branch is holding a social at their Spring Beer Festival, so why not join us there and see why!

The date for the **Black Country Coach Trip** has been set for **Saturday 22nd of June**. This is the twenty-ninth time we have travelled out to one of the best areas of the country for enjoying a few beers. Full details appear on page 4 and by next issue we hope to announce the route for the best day out of the year!

My thanks to all who have contributed to this issue of **Swan Supping**, especially those who contributed to what has turned out to be a bumper crop of Local News, and those who deliver the finished magazine to the pubs, breweries and festivals etc. Also, thanks once again to Colin Stanford for the cartoon.

David Roe, *Swan Supping* Editor

editor@avw.camra.org.uk



NATIONAL CAMRA NEWS



New National Chairman

CAMRA has announced its new chairman-elect as Nik Antona, who will take on the leadership of the organisation following its Members' Weekend, AGM and Conference to be held in Dundee in April.

Nik Antona takes over from Jackie Parker, who is stepping down after a year in the role, and after nine years as a member of **CAMRA's** National Executive.

Meeting in Hastings in February, **CAMRA's** National Executive elected

Nik as chairman-elect. Based in Burton-on-Trent, Nik has been a National Executive member since 2009, and currently chairs the Finance and General Purposes Committee. He was a **CAMRA** Regional Director for five years, representing the West Midlands.

Nik (pictured above) said: 'I'm delighted and honoured by the confidence my National Executive colleagues have shown in me by electing me to take over as Chairman in April.

'Jackie has been a strong leader for the organisation and I'm keen to carry on where she will leave off - making sure **CAMRA** is effective in its national campaigns, especially in seeking much-needed reform of the Pubs Code, calling for a review of Business Rates on pubs and campaigning to get a reduction in beer tax on pints served in pubs.'

Jackie said: 'It's with great sadness that I choose to step down as chairman of the Campaign. It's the right time, however, as I come to the end of my

third term as a National Executive member. I've spent nine years as a National Executive member and served as a Regional Director for three years prior to that. I believe it's healthy for an organisation to refresh its leadership regularly and now is the time to step aside and give someone else the opportunity to lead the Campaign.'

Great British Beer Festival Winter

Following three great years in Norwich, the **Great British Beer Festival Winter** will next year move to Birmingham as part of its three-year rotation around the country. As the West Midlands is a region built on the trade and innovation of the industrial revolution, next year's festival will be themed 'A Festival of a Thousand Trades', celebrating industry, diversity, and creativity throughout time.

This theme will define the drinks on offer, which will include a range of spirits and non-alcoholic options to accompany over 400 beers, ciders and perries that will represent the region, the wider United Kingdom, and beyond. Alongside the drinks, the festival will feature games and activities, musical entertainment, a range of food stalls, and a selection of tastings and talks for those looking to expand their horizons further.

As always, the festival will continue to host the finals of the winter beer categories in the Champion Beer of Britain Competition, and **Lacons Brewery** has scooped gold this year with **Audit Ale**, an 8% ABV Barley Wine packed with berry fruit and spices. Only available on limited release, **Audit Ale** was named after a number of Cambridge and Oxford University colleges celebrated the end of their annual audits with the special brew. By popular demand, it was exported to the USA in champagne-style bottles from 1937.



THE BEST DAY OF THE YEAR!

The 29th Black Country trip will take place on **Saturday 22nd of June**, and bookings are now being taken and the cost is expected to be £34 per person. Members and non-members are all welcome to join us on the best day of the year.

The coach will pick up and set down in Aylesbury, Princes Risborough, High Wycombe and Stokenchurch, and after our usual stop for food and wonderful beer at the **Coach and Horses**, Weatheroak, we will be off to the Black country to visit lots of old favourites, such as the **Bull & Bladder** in Brierley Hill, the **Beacon Hotel** in Sedgley, and the **Old Swan** in Netherton amongst others.

The pictures on this page are from last year's trip and besides showing a lot of people enjoying their beer, we also show two pubs that we had not been to before. Both of these pubs, the **White Horse** in Harborne and the **Britannia Pub** in Rowley Regis, were selected as they had started brewing their own beer! Both pubs were very welcoming to us and had their own brews thoroughly tested and may well feature again, either this year or in the future, depending on whether or not other new pubs in the area pubs start brewing!

There are so many pubs in the Black Country area that are

worth visiting that we are always spoilt for choice! We are always open to requests if we can fit them in fairly easily along the route between a lot of the regularly visited pubs whose absence from the itinerary could cause a mini-riot!

The pictures below show (clockwise from bottom left) the handpumps at the **Coach & Horses**, the **Britannia Pub**, getting served at the **Waggon & Horses** in Halesowen, the **White Horse** pub, people enjoying the sunshine (sadly, not guaranteed on the trip) in the garden at the **Coach & Horses** and the large picture at the centre of the bottom row shows conversation combining with drinking at the **Waggon & Horses**. We tend to get more pictures from early on in the trips - go figure!

Pickups start in Aylesbury at 9.45am outside the **Broad Leys** in Aylesbury and then Stewart Hall in Kimble, opposite the **Bell** in Princes Risborough, the **Bird in Hand**, High Wycombe, and the **Mowchak** in Stokenchurch.

This is genuinely reckoned by many of our regular attendees to be the best day of the year, so make sure you don't miss out. Get in touch with the editor (contact details on page 18) to ensure your place on the bus as space is limited and seats are bound to go fast!

David Roe



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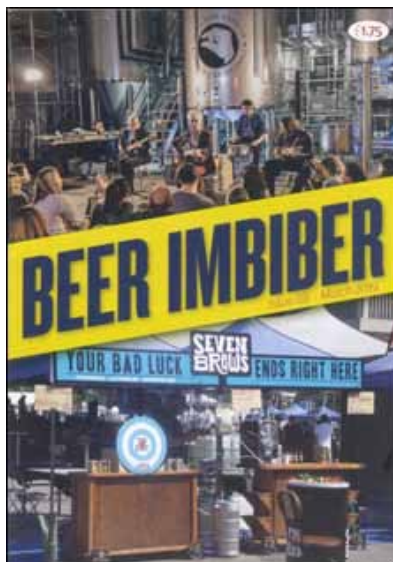
MAGAZINE REVIEW

The *Beer Imbiber*, published every two months, is one of those magazines that only the real ale cognoscenti seem to know about. I've been enjoying and benefiting from it for many years. From its pages one can learn about breweries, brewpubs and brew-restaurants mostly launched after the publication of the *CAMRA Good Beer Guide* each year. There is also a 'New Beers Update' in each issue invaluable to beer 'researchers' (OK 'beer tickers' if you must). These listings are compiled by the magazine's indefatigable team of researchers and are supplemented by cask beer news and interesting articles.

The magazine goes back to the *Independent Imbiber* launched by Alex Hall in the 1990s. There was a break in publication in 2003 but a year later the magazine reappeared as the *New Imbiber*. Then in 2018, under new editorship and with modernised design, it was renamed the *Beer Imbiber*.

The March 2019 issue contains a thought-provoking article 'Sustainable Brewing: A Modern Problem for an Ancient Industry' – perhaps some of our local breweries should embrace the creative solutions to cutting down waste water and energy consumption described in the article.

You can pick up a copy for £1.75 in a number of dedicated real ale pubs around the country or subscribe to have each copy mailed to you (£18.00) or online (£8.00 p.a.) – see their website www.beerimbiber.co.uk for details.



Giles du Boulay

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LOCAL NEWS

ASHENDON

At the **Hundred of Ashendon**, don't miss the chance of partaking of brunch now served on Saturdays from 9am to 3pm. Enjoy the treat even more with a couple of pints of *Hundred IPA* from **Vale**. All the real ales in this pub are LocAles with ever-changing alternatives from **XT**, **Chiltern**, **Tring** and **Rebellion**. Many people don't realise that Ashendon has a pub as it's tucked away down a dead end lane. But it's well worth the effort of finding it.

AYLESBURY

Rebellion IPA, **Smuggler** and **Sharp's Doom Bar** were all available for £3.95 at the **Broad Leys** recently.

It is reported that **Dukes** will close shortly and there will be an 'end of an era' party on 6th April. This is situated in the passageway behind the Market Place and adjoins the Hale Leys Shopping Complex. Opened in December 1982 as the **Bull & Crown**, it then became Muswell's Café bar. In December 1997 it became **Hampdens**, then in October 2004 **G & C's**. By May 2006 it was closed and boarded up. Reopened in June 2009 as **Shoot Pool** it was renamed **Dukes** in April 2018 in honour of David Bowie. It was a live music venue, with no reports of it serving real ale in recent times. Nevertheless another loss.

The **Hop Pole** Easter Beer Festival starts Thursday 18th of April at 6pm and finishes when the beer is gone! Over forty beers and ciders from around the U.K. will be available and there is live music on the Friday and Saturday nights and Sunday afternoon.

Ember Inns's Horse & Jockey offered **Sharp's Doom Bar**, **Fuller's London Pride**, **Purity Pure UBU** and 'Ember Ale' as well as real cider in the form of **Old Rosie** and a boxed **Weston's** cider. A Quiz night is held every Sunday at 8:30pm with cash prizes for the top three teams and a 20p discount is available to **CAMRA** members. The pub is also dog-friendly.

The **King's Head** has now concluded its annual *Celebration Of Beer* event, which saw twenty of the finest porters, stouts and dark and old ales on the bar and has thanked **Swan Supping** readers for all of their beer suggestions and for helping to make it their most enjoyable *Celebration of Beer* yet.



The **Old Millwrights Arms** has recently been named by **Greene King** as their best performing pub in the region of Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire. This is the result of the hard work of Liz and Tom and their staff. The innovative and constantly changing selection of top quality real ales and ciders ensures a nine-pump line-up which is second to none in Aylesbury and their focus on community shines through in everything they do. A resounding 'well done' and thank you from **CAMRA**!

The **Rockwood** is currently closed as **Stars Pubs & Bars** search for new tenants and a refurbishment takes place.

BISHOPSTONE

Rapid progress is being made with the gutting and enlarging of the **Harrow** as we reported last issue. The pub has been repainted, a new entrance built and a large rear extension for a new cellar and kitchen has been added (see below). Oak timbers will be a feature in the restaurant and the grand opening is still hoped for by late spring or early summer.

BLEDLOW

A couple of visits to the **Lions at Bledlow** since the last issue have seen a rotating selection of ales, including locAles **Vale Gravitas** and 80/-, **Fisher's APA**, **Loddon's** limited edition *Winter Rays* and **Haresfoot Dragon's Bane**.

BLEDLOW RIDGE

Andy and Emma, the current tenants of the **Boot**, will be leaving on 31st July this year. The **New Boot Limited** is now searching for a new tenants(s) to take over this thriving pub in August to build on the outstanding success Andy and Emma have achieved over the last six years. If you would like to enquire, please contact Jenny Dexter on thenewbootlimited@gmail.com.

BOURNE END

LocAles **Vale Wychert** and **Rebellion IPA** were accompanied by **Butcombe Bitter** and **Sharp's Doom Bar** on a February weeknight visit to the **Black Lion**.

BOVINGDON GREEN

Two locAles, **Rebellion IPA** and **Chiltern Honey Porter**, were found at the **Royal Oak** in early March – the latter superb. The **Rebellion IPA** sells well here and they have recently had locAle guests from **Fisher's**, **West Berkshire** and **Windsor & Eton**. This



gastro pub has a BYO Wine Club on Mondays as well as a function teepee for hire in their garden.

BUCKLAND

A pop-up pub called the **Buck** appears annually in Buckland Village Hall (near Aston Clinton), and is normally open on the Late Spring Bank Holiday. This year however it is slightly later and will be from Friday 14th June to Sunday 16th June. Normally several barrels of ale are served on gravity together with other wines and spirits.

This event has happened almost annually since 1997 when the last pub in Buckland closed. This was the **Rothschild Arms** on the crossroads with the B489 Lower Icknield Way (not to be confused with the **Rothschild's** in Weston Road, Aston Clinton currently under threat).

Amazingly the much worn inn sign still survives outside the Buckland **Rothschild** although it is now a private residence.

BUTLER'S CROSS

After a short period of closure for refurbishment the **Russell Arms** (pictured above) is now back in full swing again. They are open Monday to Saturday noon-11pm and Sunday noon-6pm with good food every day. The focus is very much on local breweries e.g there were beers from **Chiltern**, **Rebellion**, **Animal** on their three handpumps recently. Like their now sister pubs the **Eight Bells** at Long Crendon and the **Black Boy** at Oving they give 10% off food if you have photo ID proof of working as a nurse, in the police, emergency services or armed forces or if you are a community care

worker, teacher or teaching assistant. This is a great example of community spirit.

CHINNOR

The Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway will be holding another real ale and gin night on 15th June departing either from Chinnor or Princes Risborough. Ales are yet to be decided, depending on the numbers booking, but locale ales will be sourced. Trains depart from Chinnor at 19.00 and Princes Risborough, platform 4, at 19.30. Cost is £22.00 which includes three pints in the price. Should you require fish and chips, that would be an extra £7.50. See Chinnor Railway website for further details and for bookings.

XT 4 continues as the session beer at the **Community Pavilion's** bar, with the guest ale pump being occupied by **Milk Street Zig Zag Stout** and **Navigation Smoking Joe** (the latter a smoked porter – always great to see a dark beer in Chinnor!) A Spring Beer Festival is planned for Good Friday and further down the line, Ska in the Park is scheduled on 20th July as well as a Music Festival on 7th September – details nearer the time.

The 300-year-old **Red Lion** continued to serve locAles throughout February and March, with **Hook Norton Cold Turkey**, **Rebellion Roasted Nuts**, **Zebedee** and Afterburner joined by beers further afield from **Bath**, **Exmoor**, **Purity**, **Robinson's** and **Shepherd Neame**. The **Lion** entertained a coachload of Sunderland fans on the lunchtime of Saturday 9th March, prior to their match against Wycombe Wanderers at Adams Park. Despite requests for **John**





Smith's and *Maxim*, many made do with the *Rebellion* ales and enjoyed them immensely! Quiz and karaoke night continue – check their Facebook page for more details.

Nationals *Greene King IPA*, *Fuller's London Pride* and *Charles Wells Bombardier* were on the pumps at the **Crown** last month. Breakfasts continue to be served on weekend mornings and an Easter Eggstravaganza includes an Easter Egg Hunt, Raffle, Face Painting and BBQ (weather permitting).

EMMINGTON

At the **Inn at Emmington** (pictured at the top of the previous page), localAes *Rebellion IPA*, *XT 13*, *Chiltern Beechwood Bitter*, *Loddon Ferryman's Gold* and *Shotover Scholar* have been spotted since the last issue. Our congratulations to David and Sharon who celebrated two years at the helm on 29th March and have taken this popular pub and hotel just outside Chinnor from strength to strength. The last Friday in February saw London covers band Leech play to a packed house at The Inn including a party of 30 Rugby players who ate before the music and dancing started. A minibus was also organised to take a party of regulars on a tour of Marlow's *Rebellion Brewery* in March. Aunt Sally resumes in the springtime.

FINGEST

Brakspears Bitter and *Young's 485c* were available from two out of the four handpumps on a weeknight visit to the **Chequers**, a Midsomer Murders favourite – its facade has been used as an antique shop in a couple of episodes and even has a red plaque outside the entrance to attest (see above)!

FLACKWELL HEATH

Rebellion IPA, *Roasted Nuts* and *Black Sheep Bitter* were the three ales on offer at the **Cherry Tree**. The kitchen is open seven days a week serving food 12-3 and 6-8 (pizza are served 5:30 till 9) Monday to Saturday, and roasts 12-3 on Sundays. An Open Mic night is held every first Thursday of the month. *Brakspear Bitter* and a very good *Young's Special* were to be found at the **Crooked Billet**, a delightful pub between Flackwell Heath and Bourne End. Dating back to the 16th century, this was originally two cottages before becoming a cider house in the mid-1800s. No ale was to be found on a recent trip to the **Three Horseshoes**, although a *Rebellion IPA* pump had a glass over its handle.

FRIETH

Four localAes in the shape of *Chiltern Beechwood Bitter*, *Windsor & Eton Last Drop*, *Rebellion IPA* and *Loop the Loop* were on offer at the resurrected **Yew Tree**. Note that the pub is closed on

Mondays and Tuesdays.

HADDENHAM

The **Haddenham Summerfest** will take place on Saturday 6th of July. More details next issue.

Sadly, the proposed community purchase of the **Green Dragon** which we reported in our December/January issue has been halted as the **Green Phoenix Community Interest Company** have withdrawn from any further engagement in the sale of the pub.

The **Kings Head** (pub sign pictured below) has been closed recently for a refurbishment and is due to reopen on Friday 29th of March.

HAMBLEDEN

Rebellion IPA and *Afterburner*, *Brain's Rev James* and an excellent red ale in *Windsor & Eton's Last Drop* were found on four of the seven handpumps over the two bars on a weeknight visit to the **Stag & Huntsman** which featured in a recent 'Four in a Bed' programme on Channel 4.

HARDWICK

Sharp's Doom Bar, *St Austell Tribute* and *Cousin Jack* were the three ales available at the recently reopened **Bell**. A Kilimanjaro sausage roll, made with African spices was delicious and is highly recommended!

HIGH WYCOMBE

Handy for the train station, the **Bootlegger** (Amersham Hill) continues to showcase in-town brewery beers from *Fisher's* amid their myriad of handpumps and craft ale beer taps on offer.

KINGSTON BLOUNT

The latest on the currently-closed **Cherry Tree** is that it is due to open as a B&B/cafe in the early summer. There will be no bar, so this means it will not return as a public house as beer is unlikely to be served. At the time of writing, it is unclear whether it will retain the former name.

LACEY GREEN

Despite having the necessary authority for the proposed interior changes, plans at the **Whip** have been thwarted as they are unable to get a builder to complete the works before the busier summer season (when the adjacent windmill reopens etc). Latest thoughts are to defer the works until the autumn 2019 (possibly October), but in the meanwhile the pub continues to trade normally. On a recent visit they had three beers from *Rebellion* and three from the *Greene King* stable (including *Morlands Original* and *Hardy & Hanson Bitter* is also a regular here).

LITTLEWORTH COMMON

The **Blackwood Arms** will be holding their annual St. George's Day beer



festival from Friday 19th to Monday 22nd of April. Twenty real ales and ciders plus live music will be available.

LONG CRENDON

The recently reopened **Churchill Arms** was serving *Marston's Pedigree*, *Wychwood Hobgoblin* and a very good *Tring Side Pocket for a Toad*.

XT Bells Amber (XT 4), *Animal Armadillo*, *XT 3*, *Chiltern Pale Ale* and *Deuchar's IPA* were the ales available on a visit to the **Eight Bells** in February. Run by the same team in charge of the **Black Boy** at Oving and the **Russell Arms** at Butlers Cross, the pub is open all day and offers food all day. Dog and Child-friendly, a Quiz Night is held on the first Tuesday of every month.

LONGWICK

As mentioned in the previous issue, the **Duke of Wellington's** old *ABC* sign was briefly uncovered after some facia work was done to this former pub building. Unfortunately, it was soon covered back up, but we managed to get a photo (see above).

St Austell Tribute and *Trelawny* as well as localAes *Chiltern Beechwood Bitter* (a fourth pump had *Sharp's Doom Bar*) were the available options on a Sunday lunchtime jaunt to the **Red Lion** – Longwick's sole remaining pub. The beer is sparklered, but they will happily remove these for you. This cosy pub does a great trade in pub grub (no food on Mondays) with a monthly steak night special (two ribeye steaks and a bottle of wine for £30) and monthly Quiz Night.

MARLOW

Popular meeting venue the **Botanist** (West Street) had no real ale on during a recent pub perusal, but craft beer *Sound Wave* (5.6%) from the excellent *Siren Craft* brewery made up for this discrepancy.

At Tom Kerridge's **Butcher's Tap** (15 Spittal Street) a brace of local *Rebellion* beers reside at present, house beer *Hand & Flowers IPA (Rebellion IPA* rebadged) and monthly special *Loop the Loop* (4.2%). This venue transforms from a butchers shop in the day to a pub in the evening. A nice place to meat!

Town centre public house the **Chequers** (High Street) has recently had two tap takeover events at their Churchill Tap bar. February saw High Wycombe based brewery *Fisher's* participate, and as we go to print newish local brewery *New Wharf* (Pinkneys Green) host some nine craft ales and one from the cask in the March slot. A recent visitation unearthed *Brakspear Bitter* (3.4%), *Oxford Gold* (4.0%), *Wychwood Dirty Tackle* (4.0%) and *Charlie Wells Bombardier*. In the Churchill Tap bar, five craft beers were

flourishing, notably *6 Degrees North Wanderlust Wheat* (4.6%), *Fisher's APA* (4.5%) & *DIPA* (8.5%), *Revisionist English Lager* (4.0%) and *Shipyards Rye Pale* (4.5%). Well done **Chequers**!

Local mock-Tudor landmark pub the **Cross Keys** (46 Spittal Street) is still closed for business as it undergoes a huge internal and external refurbishment project. The new pub owners are local residents Carlos Maidana and Joy Roberts, (who also own the **Grouse & Ale** at Lane End and the **Yew Tree** at Frieth), and are to rename their new venture as the **Oarsman**. This is due to relaunch this Spring with a rear dining area, open kitchen, outside patio and hopefully some Oarsome real ales on handpump!

Back street watering-hole the **Duke @ Marlow** (19 Queens Road) offers two *Rebellion* brews, latterly *IPA* (3.7%) and *Loop the Loop* (4.2%). A smart, cosy pub with a pleasant rear al fresco drinking zone.

Greene King pub the **Marlow Donkey** in Station Road now offers 10% discount to **CAMRA** members on all cask ales. Currently these are *IPA*, *London Glory* and *Abbot*.

This year's **Marlow Beerfest** will again take place on the first weekend of June at **Marlow Football Club**. They will be open from 4pm to 10pm on Friday 31st May, midday to 10pm on Saturday 1st June and midday to 4pm on Sunday 2nd June. Admission £5 (under 18s free).

Their beer and cider selectors have been hard at work and their selections will be added to their website (www.marlowbeerfest.co.uk) and Facebook page (@marlowbeerfest) over the coming weeks. Like/follow their page and send them a message for your chance to win one of five free tickets to this year's Beerfest. As well as a great selection of beers and ciders, this year they will be featuring two new bars serving craft ale and gin. Following feedback received last year, they will have even more live music, more seating, more outdoor cover and a wider selection of food available – to include a BBQ, paella, slow roast pork, pies, bratwurst and much more. Live music will come courtesy of Ricochet Blues Band, and the Wycombe Steel Orchestra making a welcome return. Further acts to be announced.

AV & W CAMRA Branch Club of the Year 2019 Marlow RBL Club (Station Approach) are hosting their annual **Springfest** over the early May Bank Holiday weekend featuring circa 15 eclectic real ales (see website www.rblmarlow.co.uk for beer list) and an

Continued on page 11

NATIONAL PUB OF THE YEAR



The **Wonston Arms** (pictured above), a small community pub nestled in the heart of a Hampshire village, has been named the best in the country in **CAMRA's** prestigious *National Pub of the Year Awards 2018*, the most respected and well-known pub accolade in the UK.

The pub was derelict and empty just four years ago (pictured right) when the owner and landlord Matt Todd bought it. Since reopening, it has focused on benefiting the local community. As a result, the pub has become an incredibly important asset for local residents, as well as a successful, growing business.

Alongside a selection of carefully kept cask ales and a gin bar with 180 varieties, the **Wonston Arms** boasts a range of pop-up foodie nights and social events carefully selected to meet local demand. Darts matches, folk music, jazz sessions, quizzes and a photography club all take place regularly, and local food vendors are invited for special fish and chip, pizza and curry nights.

The **Wonston Arms** is also the heart of fundraising for the local area. To date, it has raised in excess of £25,000 from the pub community. Every month it hosts a pop-up cafe, which has raised over £7,000 for local charitable causes.

Owner and landlord Matt Todd said: 'I'm overwhelmed that our little pub - which had been handed a death sentence four years ago - has now been named the very best in the country. I have strived to recreate the kind of wet pub I went to in the 1970s with my dad when I was a young boy in the north of England. The support from the local community and beyond has been overwhelming, helping to propel us forward despite these testing times.'

'Ultimately I'd like to see our pub play a vital role in supporting and employing local residents and recirculating the local pounds that are spent in our pub. To do this, we need to ensure our continued survival with the likes of small business rate relief, which has been absolutely vital to getting us through our fledgeling years, helping us to realise our potential. Now we're in a position where continuing to build our business may end up ensuring that we're penalised for growth through the rates system, and we need all the help we can get!'

Local MP Steve Brine said: 'The pub trade is not easy these days, to put it mildly. In this context, it is even more impressive what Matt Todd and the team have achieved. The fact he's done so while staying so true to the values of real ale, a decent local pint and community is just great.'

Ben Wilkinson, National Pub of the Year Coordinator said: 'Matt and his team have created a fantastic rural village pub with a great atmosphere by shaping it around the community and its needs. They have realised that it takes something special to create a sense of real belonging so that people want to come out of their homes and back in the pub.'

'Pubs like the **Wonston Arms** highlight what communities stand to lose if their local pub closes - something being experienced in all too many places. These types of pubs are more than just businesses, they are the heart of our local communities and part of what makes the UK the country it is. The **Wonston Arms** serves excellent cask ales and is a great social environment for all. It fully deserves its title as the best in the country.'

Pubs in the competition are selected by **CAMRA** volunteers and judged on their atmosphere, decor, welcome, service, community focus and the quality of the beer. Runners-up in the competition include the **Cricketers Arms** in St Helens, Merseyside; the **Chequers** in Little Gransden; and the **Volunteer Arms (Staggs)** in Musselburgh.

Wonston Arms, Stoke Charity Road, Wonston, Winchester, SO21 3LS. Tel: 07909 993388. Opening Times: Monday 5.00 pm - 8.00 pm, Tuesday to Friday 5.00 pm - 10.00 pm, Saturday Midday - 10.00 pm, Sunday Midday - 8.00 pm.



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SOUNDING (OFF) BOARD

DOGS IN 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@avw.camra.org.uk.

I have known and loved many dogs in pubs over the years. One such was Bunty, pictured here, a beautiful, good-natured long-haired German Shepherd belonging to the owners of a pub in Wales we got to know well some years ago.

They let my wife and I take Bunty for a walk whenever we visited on holiday, and we were all very sad when dear Bunty suddenly became ill and had to be put to sleep. Then there was the mischievous, little, grey-whiskered Jack Russell named Tuppencc belonging to a customer of the same pub.

These days I cannot help but be cheered when I encounter Marley, Bramble or Finnie in my various locals and I look forward to being greeted by their wagging tails, talking to and stroking them. They all have such different characters (and their owners are good company too). They are one of the reasons why I go to the pubs in question. The joy of well-kept real ale happens to be another !



I don't own a dog myself but I love those I am fortunate enough to get to know and win the trust of in pubs. In fact I feel that well-behaved, clean and cared-for dogs bring out an extra dimension of community togetherness in pubs and can contribute to a homely and welcoming atmosphere. They can break the ice in helping lonely or shy people make contact with others. A friendly word or two can make a great deal of difference to some people's lives.

Some pubs, especially of course those in which a dog lives, are particularly dog-friendly providing water bowls and treats, but in others customers are discouraged from bringing in their dogs, or at least in letting them go anywhere near eating areas.

One well-known chain of pubs bans dogs altogether, even in their outside areas, claiming dogs can be unpredictable, with the exception of assistance dogs otherwise that could constitute discrimination against disabled dog-owners. If a dog makes a mess in a pub it is understandably unpleasant.

Clearly both pub staff and dog owners have to observe the law, good practice and common sense in relation to safety and food hygiene. Another issue is that some people may not feel comfortable in the presence of dogs, particularly the larger ones and that may influence or even limit their choice of pubs locally.

I've made my preference clear but what are your thoughts? Do please e-mail our editor with your views on dogs in pubs.

Giles du Boulay

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WHITTLESEY STRAW BEAR FESTIVAL



On a dull and cold January at the start of the year I fulfilled a long-standing ambition and travelled to the Cambridgeshire village of Whittlesey for their annual Straw Bear Festival.

The festival is held on the first weekend after Plough Monday, which is the



first Monday after Twelfth Night. A villager plays the bear by wearing a costume that covers the whole body in straw with an elaborate headpiece, resembling a neatly constructed mobile haystack. Because the bear can see very little, he's paraded around the village on a chain by a human 'driver'. He's traditionally meant to dance but the weight of the modern costume means he's not likely to worry any *Strictly* professionals.

The attraction for **CAMRA** members is that the bear's route on the Saturday is something of a pub crawl around the village. The unfortunate bear's straw costume prevents him from enjoying any beer as he visits the pubs. Several thousand local merry-makers and visitors compensate by packing out the pubs and drinking for England. Forget Dry January in this part of Cambridgeshire (see photo outside the **George Hotel**, a local *Wetherspoons*).

As bizarre English eccentric rituals go the Straw Bear takes some beating (perhaps the bear ought to have been nominated as the UK's negotiator in the Brexit negotiations with the EU?).

The festival is based on an ancient custom (there are photographs substantiating this) that appeared to die out just before the First World War. In common with similar traditions, like Morris dancing, it was revived in the late twentieth century. In fact, the Morris community have enthusiastically embraced the Straw Bear Festival with many sides visiting from around the country to dance in the streets and outside the pubs.

Whittlesey is fortunate to have retained a good half-dozen pubs within its centre (the Straw Bear and his followers probably are a big factor in keeping them open). Most pubs lay on beer festivals of their own to slake the thirsts of the many revellers – and while the bear is dancing around the village the pubs are bursting with customers. Many operate additional bars in their gardens and car parks – and put extra casks on the bars. Real ale is most definitely not in decline at the festival. There's even an official Straw Bear beer brewed locally by *Elgoods*.

Let's hope the bear eventually had chance to sink a pint of it.


Charlie Mackle



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MORE LOCAL PUB NEWS

Continued from page 7

array of gins. Derbyshire, Devon and Greater Manchester are amongst the counties that some of the brews hail from. Remember there is FREE entry for all **Marlow RBL** beer festivals. During the recent inclement stormy weather in March, the **Prince of Wales** (Mill Road) was gatecrashed by a large tree that smashed into their roof. The 'POW' was shut for a brief spell while running repairs were carried out, but has since reopened for business as usual. Beware the low beams! Iconic public house the **Ship** (West Street) paraded three **Rebellion** ales on a recent visit, **IPA** (3.7%) **Loop the Loop** (4.2%) and seasonal brew **Amber** (4.3%).

Rebellion IPA, **Roasted Nuts**, **Sharp's Doom Bar** and **Wadworth Dirty Rucker** with a fifth pump unclipped were to be found at the **Two Brewers** located down a quiet street just off Marlow's High Street. There is a 10% discount off for **CAMRA** members on a Monday and 10% off **Rebellion** beers on Wednesdays.

MEDMENHAM

Just **Rebellion IPA** on offer as an ale option at the **Dog & Badger** (£4 a pint), despite the presence of a further two handpumps.

MILTON KEYNES

The **Concrete Pint Beer Festival** has been revived and will take place from Friday 10th to Sunday 12th of May. The local **CAMRA** branch will be working in partnership with Barworx (who have provided racking and chilling for their last couple of festivals) and it

will be different from previously. They will be responsible only for the Beer Hall (casks, some craft kegs, games, Tombola, etc) but there will be plenty more there – a cocktail bar and a gin bar, food (from Nonna's at Woburn Sands) plus live music and a big marquee with seats and tables. The £20 weekend ticket will include six free halves for **CAMRA** members.

SPEEN

The **King William IV**, a grade 2 listed building and the only pub in the village, closed its doors Christmas 2015, since when the village 'Save The King William Group', has been trying to purchase the pub. It has been registered as an ACV by **CAMRA**. Having set up a website www.savethekingwilliam and asked the villagers to register expressions of interest the village is now actively fundraising and a lot of work has garnered registrations of interest from many villagers. All those interested are being personally visited with a proposal document to gauge the appetite (no pun intended) for investment in the pub. They are trying to save their village pub! A saved pub has just won the **National Pub of the Year** award (see page 8) so we wish them every success.

SYDENHAM

Will and Pippa left the **Crown** on 9th March and the pub was due to be closed for a week before reopening under new owners. More in the next edition.

THAME

The **Birdcage** had **Timothy Taylor**

Golden Best (3.5%), **Landlord** and **Doom Bar** when visited recently. They have music on Friday nights.

Celebrations in February, saw the 10th anniversary of Peter and Trudi being at the helm of the **Cross Keys**. The pub was packed all day. Congratulations to all the staff who made sure we were never kept waiting for one of the good choice of beers on offer, ranging in strength from 3.4% to 7.2%. In the upstairs function room there was live music courtesy of some of the **Cross Keys** regulars, only spoilt by the showing of the England rugby match in the afternoon – only 'cos England lost. They are now running 'Upstairs at the Keys', as it says, upstairs in the function room on the third Friday of the month, room opens at 19.45. It is acoustic music and stories, see web for further details and entry is free. Just buy the beer!

At the **James Figg** there was the popular **Purity Mad Goose**, **Hooky Best**, **Doom Bar** and a very tasty **Animal**, **Wasp**, a 4.6% golden IPA. Their music event is the popular open mike night in the Stables on the first Thursday of the month with free entry.

The recently refurbished **Six Bells** has live music every Friday night and on the first Sunday of each month there is a jazz band between 2.30 and 5.00. The **Fullers** beers are **London Pride**, **Olivers Island** with the other two pumps having a rotating selection. **HSB** was on at the time, the other pump was coming soon.

TOWERSEY

Rebellion IPA and **Black Sheep Bitter**

continue as the two real ales at the **Three Horseshoes**.

WEST WYCOMBE

The **George & Dragon**, a former coaching inn was pleasingly busy on a midweek visit, with three from the **Rebellion** canon in **IPA**, **Roasted Nuts** and **Smuggler** joined by **St Austell Tribute**.

At the **Swan**, **Rebellion IPA** is served direct from the barrel for £3.30 (in a dimpled mug!). This pub is Buckinghamshire's only entry in **CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Interiors**.

WING

Superb food, local ales and friendly service are very much order of the day at the **Queen's Head**. On a recent visit there were **Vale Brill Gold**, **Tring Moongazing** and **XT Animal Oink** on the three handpumps. They also regularly have beers from **Hornes** of Bow Brickhill. Note the pub is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays. Check their website for opening hours and menus. Bus stops are nearby and a reasonably frequent daytime (including Sunday) and early evening 150 bus service.

WOOBURN COMMON

The **Royal Standard** will be holding a beer festival over the May bank holiday weekend from Friday the 3rd until Monday the 6th.

WOOBURN GREEN

Inn on the green, the **Red Lion** has reopened after an upmarket refurbishment to the pub premises.

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MILLENNIAL MAKEOVER

CAMRA, the national group of so-called curmudgeonly real ale drinkers, has announced a new initiative in reaction to recent media criticism of the organisation's image and that of its members. **CAMRA's** own newspaper recently published a letter from a group of its own young members in which they complained they felt alienated from what they believed was becoming an old person's boozing society.

The recently announced Age Friendly scheme is designed to radically overhaul the organisation's reputation by making it much more millennial friendly.

A spokesperson said 'The letter from the youngsters provided the catalyst that **CAMRA** needed to revitalise its geriatric image. While we're obviously grateful to the real ale pioneers of the 1970s and 80s they should realise that they're now old and clapped out. Frankly, they're an embarrassment because they sabotage our attempts to appear happening and groovy.'

'They are particularly prone to exhibit distasteful and unattractive physical characteristics, such as excessive nose hair and bald spots. Some have been known to dribble and drool on the carpet in their local *Wetherspoon* while on branch business. While that might be an attractive look to a seventy-five-year-old, it sadly doesn't cut the Colman's with the youngsters.'

The campaigning group is taking its appeal to a younger demographic with great seriousness. For example, it is insisting that all of its active members and branch officials who might come into contact with millennials conform to a new appearance code. This will be determined by a new Grooming and Personal Hygiene working group which will be announced at its forthcoming national conference in early April.

A few details of the new regulations have been leaked. Grey hair will be banned at official events, such as branch meetings. In return the organisation has organised a members' discount on special eco-shampoo called Slops made from a Hackney Wick microbrewery's by-products. This will turn hair a random colour depending on which brewing style it originated from (porter for black and glossy, American IPA for golden blonde, etc.).

Facial hair is, however, safe, provided it is groomed in the style of a Dalston hipster – beards must be grown long and bushy and must be liberally lubricated with beard oil. Facially hirsute branch members must agree to random beard inspections to identify any rogue creatures inhabiting the beards, especially those that may distress millennials, such as fleas or species of arachnids, or for pulverulent infestations of yeast.

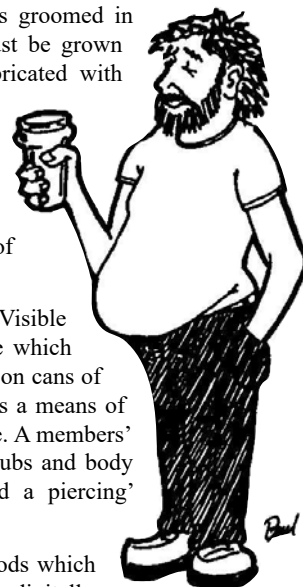
It's not all bans and inspections, though. Visible tattoos will be encouraged, especially those which emulate the colourful, wacky artwork found on cans of craft beer. Tongue studs will be promoted as a means of visibly enhancing the beer tasting experience. A members' discount will be available at participating pubs and body modification establishments in 'a pint and a piercing' promotion.

Branch business will be conducted by methods which make millennials feel comfortable, principally digitally. Flora Spoils, the chairperson-elect of the organisation's Youth Wing said: 'to encourage the participation of the younger generation, meetings will be relocated from pubs to those new-fangled mobile phone app-things, like WhatsUp or Instamatic. And if older members complain they can't understand the technology, it just shows goes to show the scale of the problem us modernisers are facing with these perma-sloshed Luddites.'

The changes will be instituted on 1st April 2019 with a mission to transform the organisation from a bunch of grumbling, aged misanthropes to beautiful, shiny, dynamic idealists.

Note that this story refers to the niche *Campaign for Rejuvenated Ale*, not any similar organisation which may coincidentally share the same abbreviation.

Sir Pol Foal



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LOCAL BREWERY NEWS



Aylesbury Brewhouse

The new brew in the pipeline from **Aylesbury Brewhouse** is **Equinox** (4.5%). Brewed to celebrate the official launch of Spring, Equinox has an amber, copper hue along with citrus flavours and aromas.

Bad Joke Brewery

Just outside our branch area at Unit 2Ca, Penn Street Works in Penn Street, can be found the newly opened **Bad Joke Brewery**. Owners Jamie Cross and Jessie Bailey currently brew four bottled beers.

They obtained a commercial licence to sell their beer about a year ago but brewing is very much a low-key affair as and when they make time between their full-time jobs. A variety of styles of bottle-conditioned beers have been available over the past few months and sold at local gatherings such as at the village hall. There are no regular outlets apart from the brewery itself and only then by prior arrangement by phoning or by email to agree a suitable time to pay a visit. No draught beer is produced.



Chiltern Brewery

The **Chiltern Brewery** has enjoyed a roaring start to 2019, thanks in part to the launch of three new seasonal beers! **Table Beer**, **3 Thread Stout** and **Honey Porter** all rallied together to overcome obstacles such as 'Dry January' and provide a successful start to the year.



As the warmer Spring months come around, they have some really exciting ales for everyone to enjoy, including the brand new **Hop, Spring & Jump** that will be released in April! A golden ale with juicy citrus and loganberry notes, **Hop Spring & Jump** will be partnered by traditional favourite, **Nut Brown Mild**.



In May they will release another 'fan favourite' - **Cobblestones**! At 3.5% and with delicious blackcurrant notes, **Cobblestones** makes for a perfect early summer ale.

Fishers Brewery

Events planned for April include Open Nights on Friday 5th and Friday 19th and a Quiz Night on Tuesday 16th.

May Open Nights on Friday 3rd and Friday 17th.

Rebellion Brewery

The monthly special beer for April is **Dive Bomb** (4.2%) which is a Golden Ale with a pronounced hop aroma. Mosaic, Nelson Sauvin, Azacca and Citra all vie for your attention, layering on flavours of Citrus and tropical fruits. In May they are offering **Near Miss** (4.2%), described as pale and fruity. Their seasonal 330ml bottled stout is also back in stock.

They've had success at regional and national competition. Lager won Gold in the Midlands in session keg lager and pilsners up to 4.4% category. It also received Bronze at SIBA Beer X's national competition in session keg lager and pilsners up to 4.4% category.

Tring Brewery

Tring's April monthly special will be **Sidesaddle** (4.1%) which is described as oats for a smooth mouthfeel and buckets of US Simcoe hops (described as 'Cascade on steroids!') convey berry and passion fruit to this burnished gold ale. No pumpclip artwork was available as we went to press but it will feature their year-long collaboration with the Gaddesden Place Riding School for the Disabled..

Vale Brewery

The brewery shop and tap room are offering brewery tours held on the first Saturday of every month and can be booked with the office by calling 01844 239237.

Vale have got a number of new brews in the pipeline to accompany its drinkers into spring and beyond:



Feel The Need (4.1%). An amber supersonic citrusy beer to take your breath away. Soft biscuity malts combine with aromas of Lemon, Lime and Grapefruit.

Boom Boom (4.3%). A fruity stylish red beer to celebrate Britain's favourite fox. Maris Otter and Propino Pale blend with Crystal and roasted barley to give hints of tangerine and gooseberry.

Bad Hat Harry (4.5%). Welcome their 2019 Jaws beer, as chosen by head brewer, David. Celebrate the onset of summer with this blockbusting straw beer. English and American hops combine to create a predatory pint with a monstrous bite.



XT Brewery

Oxford Beer Week is coming .. and **XT** are getting involved along with their fellow members of the **Oxford Brewers Alliance (OBA)**. The Beer Week will run from the 4th May to the 12th May. There will be a whole series of beer-related fun happening across the city pubs from beer festivals to food and beer matching events, plus a new craft beer trail.



The week kicks off with the 'Big Event' which will be a day long festival with ten brewery bars from members of the **OBA** offering a wide range of local beer. Plus music, food and local gin. The event will be held at TOAD distillery in Headington, on South Park in Oxford. Look out for more details at oxfordbrewers.org.

XT have been brewing up a special beer for the National Trust at Waddesdon Manor. The exclusive **Gardeners Ale** is made with quince grown on the estate. The beer will be available from the estate shop.

New beers have been flowing from the little **Animals** including:

Wasp – a buzzing Golden Ale at 4.6% Using the very highest alpha hop from America: Apollo, layered with Chinook and packed it full of Munich and Vienna malts. Sweet biscuit notes with hints of caramel are contrasted with grapefruit, pine and herbal flavours, with an added citrus hit due to dry-hopping with more Chinook. This little animal packs a sting.



Mioung – Amber Hopped Alley Cat – 4.6% - This cat got all the hops and malt. Packed with Rakau, Dr Rudi and Columbus this beer pairs strong tropical, lemony citrus and floral notes along with sweet biscuity toffee notes with a hint of something roasty in the background. A perfect mash up for the malt and hop lover.

XT have also been involved in a project to highlight the provenance of a range of craft food products. They have been certified on the 'Happerley Transparent' scheme, which identifies and audits all the stages of production from field to glass. It ensures that producers are fully transparent in the sources of ingredients they use, and their high standards for sustainability, welfare and environmental care.



There are still
14 pubs closing a week
according to the latest
statistics from CAMRA



NEW LOOK FOR THE BIRD IN HAND



As we reported last issue the **Bird in Hand**, Princes Risborough, has been taken over by **Oak Taverns** who also run the **Cross Keys** in Thame and the **Rising Sun** in Haddenham, plus other pubs not in our branch area.

Previously run by **Greene King**, the **Bird in Hand** was closed for a few days in March for some refurbishment and the results can be seen on this page and on our front cover.

They have a new look inside and out. This includes a new logo designed by a local graphic designer and the garden has been refurbished with the decking replaced and new furniture installed.

Oak Taverns have managed to persuade Charlotte to stay on at the **Bird in Hand** and help them develop the pub longer term.

They have also worked with Long Crendon Manor to develop an exclusive real cider that they launched on the opening night.



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THE CASKITEERS - PART FIVE

One sunny Tuesday morning, Jacob and Harry were sampling the latest craft beer, *Shiny Foreheads IPA*, from their microbrewery, **Eaten Trifles**.

‘Spiffing,’ Harry said, grimacing from the quadruple load of Tasmanian hops that brewer Ruthie had piled into their brew.

‘Marvellous,’ Jacob agreed. ‘Remind me to make an appointment with the dentist to get the enamel replaced on my teeth.’

Camilla and Sophie are going to go wild when they taste their sixteenth of a pint of *Shiny Foreheads* when they party on down tonight.

Ruthie stood on the other side of the bar, accepting the compliment but with an exasperated expression on her face. ‘You two realise that I’m capable of brewing other beers apart from IPA? I’m starting to get a tiny bit bored, yous knows.’

‘Bored of IPA?’ Jacob and Harry exclaimed in shock.

‘We’ll never get bored of IPA,’ Harry said. ‘Or I’ll eat my red trousers.’

‘Until the next big thing comes along, of course,’ Jacob said. ‘Maybe port or Bulgarian mead?’

‘And besides, we’re part of the Shackney IPA Triangle,’ Harry protested. ‘Every single one of the thirty microbreweries on Shackney High Street brews IPA exclusively.’

‘It’s the natural order of things, dear woman. Dullstone has the Porter Pentangle, Stroke Olderham is famed for its Sour Square and Beerexton is synonymous with the Craft Lager Ellipse.’

Indeed, each hipster area of London had its own specialised beer character in a similar way to the subtle differences in dress between members of the tribes – the Shackneyites being partial to brightly coloured trousers whereas the denizens of Dullstone favoured tweed jackets and shooting-sticks.

In these favoured haunts of millennials, the many craft beer bars and breweries operated an inter-neighbourhood trading system using eco-friendly delivery vans decorated by ironically-fonted slogans or cartoons of dinosaur invasions. In this way, styles of guest ale could be featured in bars in each district without threatening the indigenous beer culture of the local area – in fact, tap takeovers had been occasionally known to occur. Nevertheless, the time-honoured beer style of each enclave was maintained, having been established for all of a couple of years in some cases.

‘I’m so bored with IPA, I’m gonnae experiment by brewing a porter,’ Ruthie announced to the posh pair.

‘Aren’t they those jolly useful chappies who used to lug one’s trunk around at railway stations in the good old days?’ Harry said, a little more confused than normal.

Jacob started to furiously jab at his smartphone, disguised as a pocketbook bound in antique alligator skin. ‘Erm, Harry old chap, it’s a style of beer – a dark one! My oracle informs me it is characterised by aromas of chocolate and roast coffee, an almost chewy texture and with a hue of mahogany.’

‘That doesn’t sound like a beer that comes from Shackney,’ Harry replied. ‘But I guess we could make its diversity a selling point?’

‘I know. Let’s devise a deal between ourselves and our artisan brewer here. We’ll call it the Shackney compromise – we’ll name the beer **Eaten Trifles IPA Porter**.’ Jacob declared.

‘I’m not sure, old bean. Perhaps *Porter IPA*?’

‘Not on my father’s country pile,’ Jacob declared. ‘It has to be *IPA Porter*.’

‘Do you want a bunch of fives, dear chap? I was a green at boxing in my prep school. *Porter IPA* it must be!’

‘I cannae believe yous arguing about the name. It’s the same beer.’ Ruthie said, wandering back to the brewery to order the ingredients as Harry’s right hook knocked off Jacob’s spectacles before becoming embedded in his fully-oiled beard.

A fortnight later, *Porter IPA Porter Ianitor India Jacobi Cervisia (IPA)*, as the Shackney compromise had eventually named it, was ready to taste.

Ruthie poured out a full eighth of a pint of the velvety liquid for Jacob and Harry to sample.

‘I’m proud of the wee recipe if I say so myself’ Ruthie declared, swigging a pint of the twelve percent brew. ‘What does yous two think?’

The two hipsters took a tentative sip.

‘Well, dear Caledonian cousin, I’d venture to say it’s a classic example of the genre that is characterised by aromas of chocolate and roast coffee, an almost chewy texture...’

‘And its hue of mahogany.’ Harry completed the description, reading from his top-of-the-range smartphone. ‘Hugh of Mahogany – didn’t I go to prep school with him?’

‘The only problem is that with its possession of that colour we can’t possibly market it as a bone fide Shackney ale – but I have a cunning scheme to circumvent this encumbrance. I need to open bilateral discussions with Rupert at the **Artisan and Artichoke** in the Dullstone Porter Pentangle – an old gap-year chum.’

Jacob, who despite his genteel exterior, could operate with ruthlessness and low cunning, devised a fiendishly complex bogus craft beer smuggling plan. Using threats of revealing secrets from the dormitory at Eton, Jacob blackmailed Rupert into the charade of brewing the Porter in his Dullstone brewery. In return, Rupert pretended to have brewed a Shackney-style IPA in Dullstone, *Shackney Backstop IPA*, badged as being from **Eaten Trifles**.

A word-of-mouth viral marketing campaign fuelled the deception that the two beers, naturally unfiltered, had been decanted into unmarked casks and smuggled in the backs of upmarket Range Rovers between Shackney and Dullstone at times well past the hipsters’ normal bed-times.

Craft beer aficionados flocked to **Eaten Trifles** to sample the supposed guest *Artisan and Artichoke* porter that Ruthie had brewed in reality. They overwhelmingly gave it five stars on their smartphone apps. Sadly, Rupert brewed the imposter *Shackney*

IPA himself in Dullstone and his competence was far beneath Ruthie’s. Eventually, word of the foul-tasting **Eaten Trifles** ale reached Ruthie, who made a covert trip over the border to Dullstone.

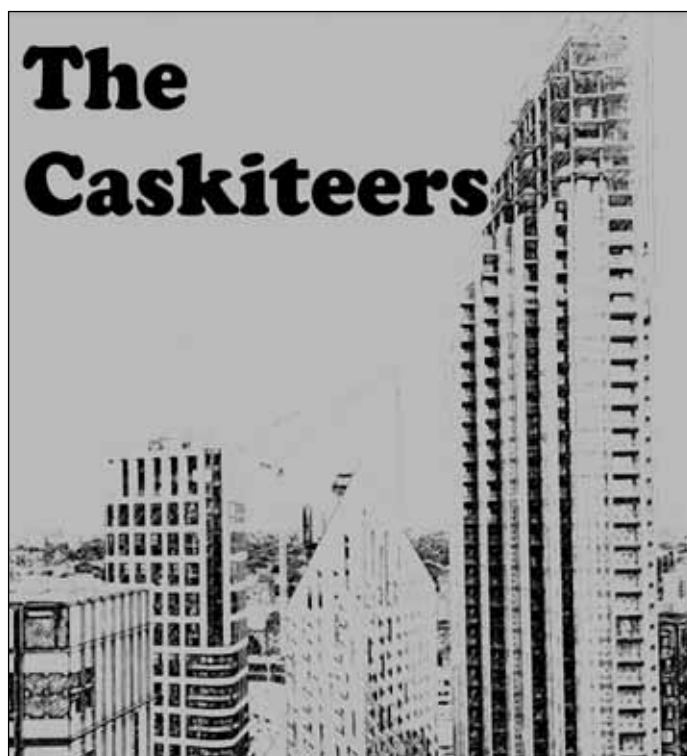
On tasting a pint of *Backstop IPA* she immediately flew into a Glaswegian rage. ‘What’s this? Has it been sucked up from the bottom of Loch Ness? Why’s it so filthy, cloudy and tasting of nothing but a sack of hops?’

‘Listen you ignorant Scottish serf, it’s supposed to taste like that,’ Rupert blithely replied with his usual self-assurance. ‘And jolly good value at fifteen guineas a half-pint.’

‘Not when this muck’s got my microbrewery name on it. Have a Glasgae kiss’. She headbutted Rupert so hard he ended up landing in his own mash-tun.

‘That takes the biscuit! Tell Jake I’m withdrawing my brand endorsement,’ Rupert uttered, the most chilling and final words that could come out of an artisan brewer’s mouth.

Charlie Mackle



Branch Diary

Everybody welcome to all socials and meetings!

April

Monday 1st BRANCH MEETING

7.30pm, Spindle and Thread, High Wycombe

Friday 5th - Sunday 7th CAMRA NATIONAL AGM

Dundee - further details available at <http://www.camra.org.uk/>

Saturday 6th SOCIAL

7.00pm, Cross Keys, Thame (to coincide with Comedy Ladder evening upstairs)

Tuesday 16th HIGH WYCOMBE SOCIAL,

7.30pm Chiltern Tap, 8.30pm Rose and Crown

Friday 19th GOOD FRIDAY BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

2.00pm, Hop Pole, Aylesbury

Wednesday 24th SOCIAL

7.30pm, Swan, Great Kimble

Monday 29th BRANCH MEETING

7.00pm, Hop Pole Aylesbury

May

Saturday 4th BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

12.00pm, Royal British Legion, Marlow

Thursday 9th SOCIAL

7.00pm, Bird in Hand, Princes Risborough

Wednesday 15th AYLESBURY SOCIAL

7.00pm, King's Head, 8.00pm, Old Millwrights Arms

Tuesday 21st HIGH WYCOMBE SOCIAL

6.30pm, Mad Squirrel Brewery Emporium, 7.30pm, Heidrun

Thursday 30th OVER THE BORDER SOCIAL

6.30pm, Jolly Cricketers, Seer Green

June

Saturday 15th STEAM AND ALE

Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway Real Ale and Steam Trip

Saturday 22nd BLACK COUNTRY TRIP

Join us on the best day out of the year! Full details on page 4.

Saturday 29th CHARITY OPEN DAY

Rebellion Brewery

July

Saturday 6th HADDENHAM BEER FESTIVAL

Further details on www.avw.camra.org.uk and facebook

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Swan Supping

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