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FOR
REAL ALE

Issue 93
December 2015 - January 2016

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5000 copies are distributed free of charge to pubs across the two branches' area, including Oxford, Abingdon, Witney, Faringdon, Eynsham, Kidlington, Bampton, Wheatley and Wantage and most of the villages in between.

We have recently relaunched our website and pdf downloads are now available there once again.

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Valuable contributions have been received for this issue from Richard Queralt, Stuart Bull, Dick Bosley, Matt Bullock, Chris Dicks, David Howe, Tony Goulding, and all those who have provided pub and brewery news. Photos on page 28 courtesy of Oxford Mail/Oxford Times.

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The best things in life are three

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Welcome

...what's in a name, or a brand?

NEWS THAT one city centre pub has changed its name, for at least the fifth time, prompts me to wonder whether there's any loyalty at all among people who frequent the bars around Queen Street and George Street, or might these hostelries just as well change their names every month to something more "sexy"?

I don't know what kind of image Cow and Creek suggests to you, but while wishing the pub well, it's not a name I would find appealing while downing a pint. It was previously the Bell and Compass, which at least sounds traditional. Before that, it was Que Pasa (what's happening? in Spanish). Before that, O.X. One, its postcode. Before that, for 20 years until 1997, it was the Westgate, a flagship for Morrells brewery. Before that, the Anchor. I could go on.....

So is the Cow and Creek the Oxford pub which has had the

most names? Quite possibly, but as I considered all the name changes we have seen it gave me the idea for a competition in this issue (see page X16), to win a case of Wychwood's seasonal ale, Bah Humbug. See how many previous names you can think of.

Every month seems to bring yet another brand of real, bottled or craft keg ale, with Christmas ales following hard on the heels of Halloween and, this year, the Rugby World Cup (England Flop, anyone?) Getting a brand in front of the public is the thing that matters, and Greene King is rather good at this especially for IPA which is not, it must be said, the average CAMRA member's favourite tipple in these parts.


On opening my newspaper in November I was surprised to read that Greene King IPA is now in huge demand in China, after premier Xi Jinping was photographed necking it with

David Cameron during his state visit, at the Plough pub near the PM's country retreat at Chequers. Whether that's happy coincidence or a nice piece of product placement (UKIP leader Nigel Farage has also been photographed quaffing it), I don't know. It is good news for Greene King and British exports, but if China's 1.5 billion people get hooked on IPA, will there be any left for us?!!

Jesting aside, I love the Greene King Premium Locals Pubs Christmas campaign and the lovely artwork produced by Pamela Storey Johnson (see Pub News). This adorns the Christmas menu at the Turf Tavern and probably other pubs, being a wonderful mix of traditional looking characters with a modern twist.

Cheers! See you down the Dingo and Dinosaur, or whatever.

DAVE RICHARDSON



The Oxford Drinker wishes you the compliments of the season, and *please* send in pub news and ideas for articles. We're also looking for a new landlord guest columnist for the next issue, so if you're interested please contact me at editor@oxfordcamra.org.uk



**CAMPAIGN
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Drinking like a Monk

Chris Dicks pays homage at the shrine of beer in Belgium



BELGIUM HAS many sights to see, but the dreary Brussels suburb of Halle is not one of them, especially not on a rainy Saturday morning. Seeking coffee with my old friend Matthew Hendrick while we waited for a bus, we headed to the nearest café to find a cheerful room almost completely full of middle aged to elderly people with almost all of them drinking large mugs of beer. Thoughts of coffee banished (the shame of it!), we settled down to quite a decent beer list and made our choices. Yet another reason we love this small, beer-fanatic nation.

Our trip began as usual on a Friday afternoon in St Pancras at the Betjeman Arms. After a pint each of the Betjeman Ale (tasty for a 3.5% ale) we got on Eurostar, armed with a picnic of Hook Norton's finest bottles. A quick train ride later, we were sitting at Café Leffe (Place du Grand Sablon) in Brussels,

where I enjoyed a bottle of the always decent Kwak while Matthew had the Chimay Rouge. Familiar yet good choices. Leffe itself is taken for granted now, but I remain fond of it, not least for first introducing me to Belgian beer.

On to the Porte Noire (Rue des Alexiens), a dark cellar bar where the selection is much more serious. We decided on doing a lambic comparison (beer fermented with wild yeast giving it a very sour characteristic). I ordered the Cantillon Gueuze and Matthew the Boon Mariage Parfait. The former was a tad lighter and more sour, the latter more complex and almost oaty. Then it was time for the abbey beers, with a St Bernadus 12 (one of the best in my opinion, malty with a well-balanced sweetness), and a Brasserie Le Fort (not unlike a Rochefort Trappist, a touch fruity). We moved down the hill to the

modern Moeder Lambic (Rue de Savoie), which now sports a number of craft beers alongside traditional ones, a new trend in Belgium. We went for Monks Stout (nice and dry) and Cavalier 28 Triple (a zesty session beer). A large plate on cheese and charcuterie made a fine accompaniment.

A quick stop was made at A La Becasse (Rue de Tabora), famed for its draught lambics. The crock of gueuze turned out to be a bit too sweet however, and if blind tasted I'd have said it was cider! The pub is also a bit touristy. We moved on to the nearby L'Image de Nostre Dame (lively place with live music) for a Rochefort 8, then finished up at Aux Vieux Bon Temps next door with a Duvel (another good bet despite its prevalence).

Saturday saw us in Halle, en route to the famed village of Beersel. Tim Webb's CAMRA



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: Matthew consults the Beer Guide; a typical Brussels café; Boon Brewery; Chris with classic Kwak glasses

book *Good Beer Guide Belgium* promised several highly rated cafes, plus the Drie Fonteinen and Oud Beersel lambic breweries. Being Belgium, the latter two were shut in contrast to their stated opening hours. However the excellent Centrum café/restaurant alone made the trip worthwhile. A bit like an alpine chalet inside, with wooden panelling and trinkets on the walls, the beer list is beyond extensive. Beers we drank included Roedenback Grand Cru (dark beer, excellent nutty character, with lambic-like zing); Hansens Oude Gueuze (sour finish); Cornet Oaked (on the bland side); and Slaapmutske Blond (worth it for the name, drinkable hoppy golden beer). Lunch was also excellent and reasonable value, with Matthew enjoying a horse steak.

We finally moved on to the Westvleteren, the rarest Trappist, now so "iconic" it

commands high prices. I had the 8 while Matthew had the 12, the latter proving more complex and smoother. They were served with their own bottle opener; perhaps at €15 each people are mindful of cheaper substitutions being made! I would question whether the beer really merits the price compared to many others at a third of the cost, but no visit to Belgium is complete without trying one.

We eventually managed to leave the cosiness and head up the road to Oude Prium, a more basic café complete with a brick herringbone pattern bar. It was Orval Trappist for me, while Matthew had the Girardin Gueuze which he declared the most sour lambic he's had so far (no mean feat!). Another suburban bus and train ride brought us to the village of Lembeek, home to the legendary Boon brewery. Tours are difficult to organise, so we

settled for paying our homage in the car park. Fortunately, the Krings café is worth a visit in its own right. After obligatory bottles of Boon, we went for an Omer Blond (too honey tasting for me).

Back into Brussels, for a repeat visit to most of the places we visited Friday, we ended up back at the L'Image de Nostre Dame where the music was in full swing. Sunday brought an obligatory lunch at Chez Leon, a 19th century style brasserie with smart waiters and classic moules-frites (mussels with chips). We did our souvenir shopping at the excellently stocked Beer Temple on Rue du Marche aux Herbes, a good job too given the embarrassing selection on offer in the Eurostar terminal. Until next time!

CHRIS DICKS



HOWZAT!

Stuart Bull, owner of the Cricketer's Arms in Littleworth, gets all festive

I HAVE WRITTEN before about how we find it nigh on impossible to sell beer during the week (and indeed at weekends) at a strength of over 4.5% and that, even at our beer festivals, stronger ales are often the last to go, so most of the time we stick to brews between 3.5% and 4.3%. There is one time of year though when this rule can be broken, and we are approaching it very quickly: Christmas. The time for festivities. The time for over-eating, and over-indulging in general; and at the Cricketer's, the time for strong ale. Just the one firkin though, as we don't want to be left with it on our hands when the post-Christmas lull sets in. That would never do.

Our choice of Christmas ale this year will be the same as the last several. It is pretty much the only time these days that I make an announcement of our ale availability, since I know this ale will draw people in and it will go fast. What is this ale, you ask? As well you should. Hook Norton Twelve Days. We are a free house, but we have always branded with Hook Norton since it is Oxfordshire's only remaining historic brewer. And a great one. And whilst they have some great brews, Hooky Bitter and Old Hooky being up there as the best you will ever taste (in my opinion), Twelve Days is the ultimate strong ale. Personally, I am a big fan of

strong dark ales, and I know I am not alone in that capacity. The Hook Norton Brewery website describes Twelve Days with a flurry of prose as: "A strong dark brown beer, offering a dominantly malty palate with nutty overtones, giving way to a lyrical sweetness that speaks for its strength". If you have tasted it, and you are a fan, then I'm sure you couldn't disagree with that.

Beer cocktails. What are they then? Sacrilege, some might say. Another corporate excuse to push beer and spirits alike, others may utter. However, they were in vogue a couple of years back as I recall, but I'm not sure that they ever took off. Not big time anyway. I might be wrong, since I'm not much of a follower of fashion. A quick search of the web reveals an article from two years ago, so I might be right. I'm sure the beer press bangs out the same sort of stuff whenever they are short of a few column inches. Anyway, the same article lists such standards as Black Velvet (Guinness and champagne), or the Poor Man's Black Velvet (Guinness and cider) and such oddities as one called Hangman's Blood, which sounds a little like liquid suicide (as I'm sure it's supposed to): "a double shot of gin, rum, whisky (e)y, brandy and Port all poured into a pint glass. To this add 4oz of Champagne and the pint

is then topped up with Guinness" – invented, apparently, by Anthony Burgess. He is best known perhaps for his somewhat bonkers novel *A Clockwork Orange*, (some scenes of the film, starring Malcolm McDowell were filmed in nearby Aylesbury and Shipton-under-Wychwood). Burgess said of it: "It tastes very smooth, induces a somehow metaphysical elation..." Well, it would after you had downed that lot, wouldn't it?

Anyway, so back on track. Hook Norton's Twelve Days and beer cocktails and Christmas Day. My favourite Christmas drink, without exception -- but only ever at Christmas, mind – is one I have enjoyed on Christmas Day for the last several years, and is simplicity in itself. A perfectly poured pint of Hook Norton Twelve Days with a large shot of Cointreau in the top. Pure delight. Not a Clockwork Orange -- but a Chocolate Orange – in a glass. Christmas. Itself. Perfect. Sacrilege, of course. Can't wait!

Have yourself a good 'un.

P.S. This is my last article for the Oxford Drinker. I've enjoyed doing it, but I'm sure there are plenty of landlords out there waiting to take the column on, whatever it becomes known as. Please drop a line to editor@oxfordcamra.org.uk



THE BEAR INN

The Bear Inn is the oldest pub in Oxford and is a hidden gem, just off the hustle and bustle of the busy High Street.

◆ ◆

The pub is popular with students, locals and tourists alike, who enjoy a warm welcome, a range of real ales and bottled conditioned beers and traditional, home-cooked food by the fire.

◆ ◆

The pub is most famous for its collection of ties - dating back to the early 1900's and representing clubs in the Oxford area and, more recently, around the globe.

◆ ◆

A great place to unwind, take off your own tie, and enjoy looking at everyone else's!



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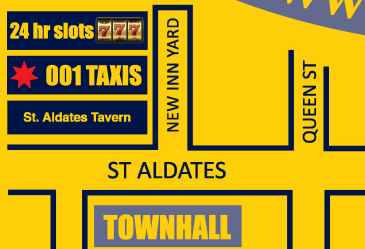
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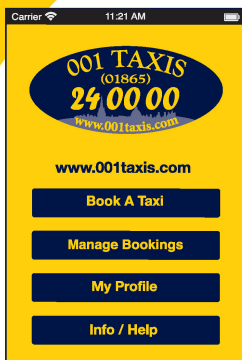
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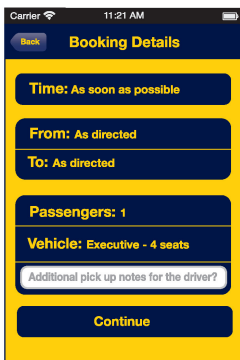
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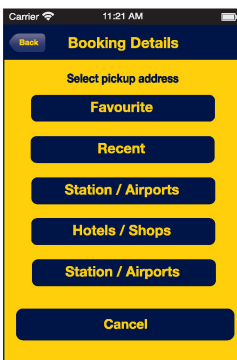
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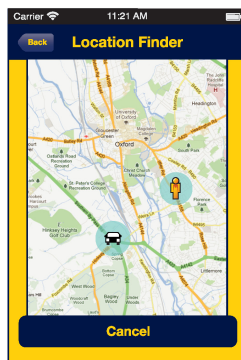
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The Bar Man

Oxford barman **Kriss Sprules** continues his regular column by looking ahead to the festive season. Kriss is moving on from one Nicholson's pub to another, from the Chequers to the Crown



IT'S THAT TIME of year once again; Christmas is upon us and for those of us in the trade, it's our busiest time of year. With our daytimes buoyed by Christmas shoppers, our nights by Christmas parties and everything in between, there's certainly no rest for the wicked!

Though I often try to deny it, I love this time of year. Not for all the glittery trappings of Christmas – I'm not exactly excited by *going* Christmas shopping or worried about the decorations – but I enjoy working through the holiday period. From the rich smells of mulled wine and cider and the influx of the more traditional winter dark ales, to the vast amounts of mince pies that seem to appear, it seems like our pubs get transformed overnight.

The change isn't just on the taps, pumps or menus, either. The faces of the guests we welcome are different, too. A lot has been written about the "dreaded Christmas drinker" over the last few years. One

landlord was reported to have written a list of rules for them last year, and another apparently barred them entirely. Thankfully, neither of these landlords was based here in the city. But along with these apparently dreadful souls comes an increase in the number of families which, to this old barman, is like a throwback to the good old days when pubs used to be a place for the whole family to spend time (or to go alone to get away from them entirely!)

Despite the extra business coming through the doors, this is one of the most looked forward to times of the year for those of us behind the bar, too. For those of us working long hours, often miles away from our own loved ones, it gives most of us the rare opportunity to plan on spending even a little more time than usual around our families, especially when the traditional January quiet period comes. Although, obviously, I recommend anyone reading this looking to spend extra time with their families to

do so in one of the city's finer drinking establishments.

On a personal note, and speaking of families, this column marks the end of an era for me as I leave behind my old Chequers family to move on to pastures new. And though I'm certain to miss them and already do, I'm really looking forward to spending Christmas in my new home at the Crown with my new team. I've already been told there's a secret Santa going around, so feel free to stop in and give me some tips on finding him!

Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good pint. Cheers!

Editor's note: Unlike in many places, many city centre pubs are closed on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day, or have restricted hours, while some with a lot of students among their customers close for longer. Do check before travelling. The last time I went into town at Christmas it was hard to find anywhere open so thank you, the Wheatsheaf!

Pub News

Northmoor

RED LION: This community-owned free house in a village off the A415 Witney to Abingdon road is hoping to add a Good Beer Guide listing to its recognition by various culinary publications. It has four hand pumps selling local ales, which on a recent visit were Brakspear Bitter and Hobgoblin from Witney's Wychwood brewery, plus Vale Brewery's VPA and West Berkshire's delicious strong ale Dr Hexter's Healer.

It is now included in the *Good Pub Guide*, the main *Michelin Guide* and also the *Michelin Eating out in Pubs* guide, which says: "It is an extremely welcoming place where you can't help but feel at home – the rooms have a rustic modern feel: low beams, open fires and fresh flowers abound, and the menu is a great mix of pub classics and more modern daily specials." It is also named Best Newcomer in the *Cotswold Life Food and Drink Awards*, while commis chef Amy Bulgin is recognised in the *Oxfordshire Restaurant Awards* as a trainee.

Graham Shelton, who led the community buy-out, said: "I am thrilled every time I come in here as I love beer, food and company, and the community supports the Red Lion very strongly. You can come in any time and find someone you know. It's not just a pub but therapy, and that's what the villagers want. Our goal is to get into the Good Beer Guide as this is the bible of the pub world." Graham continues to advise the backers of other community buy-outs, including the Gardiner Arms at Tackley, and has spoken at CAMRA events. "Most people like the idea but don't want to put the

work in," he said. "But I say if you've got the will to save a pub you can do it."

Oxford

CROWN & THISTLE: Closed since the start of 2012, this ex-Greene King pub in Old Road, Headington might re-open after being advertised for lease at a cost of £22,500 per year. A pub has stood on this site for 400 years and was originally called the Titup (!) Hall, being on the corner of Titup Hall Drive and named after an ancient village. Whether the pub does re-open remains to be seen as it is believed to be a target for developers.

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD:

This is definitely the last mention in the *Oxford Drinker* for this former City Pub of the Year, which closed in January 2014 due to rocketing rents. A Caribbean-themed restaurant called Turtle Bay now occupies the building.

GARDENER'S ARMS, PLANTATION ROAD:

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has listed it as one of the top 10 vegan pubs in Britain, with particular mention of mushroom pie, vegetarian chilli hot dog and the Indian Thali platter. This magazine's editor, though not a vegetarian, would also recommend the very tasty flatbreads.



JACK RUSSELL: A very spirited group of locals is trying to save the Jack Russell, which was purchased from Hawthorn Leisure, a pub property company, by a property developer without any chance of it being offered to other interested parties. We also await details of the possibility of the Somerset being involved in a local group's dreams of it continuing as a pub.

PERCH: This famous thatched pub in Binsey village, taken over and re-opened last March by a company running several restaurants owned by well-known ex-publican Jon Ellse, is now recommended by Alastair Sawday's *Special Places To Eat & Drink*, which says: "Braised ox cheek? A pint of scrumpy? There's no better place to park your punt than by the willow-fringed gardens of the glorious Perch." It serves a continually changing choice of local ales which usually include Hooky, with White Horse's Champion the Wonder Horse on one of the four hand pumps recently.

TURF TAVERN: The pub has joined the Greene King Locals Pubs Christmas campaign with a beautiful original artwork by Pamela Storey Johnson on its menu. To quote the pub: "In this traditional British pub scene, with its dark wooden bars and warm fire places, you'll see all the familiar faces – the City Boys having their after-work pints, the quiet couple reading the newspaper, the office party getting a little bit out of hand and friends old and new raising a toast to December 25th..... The traditional Dickensian setting, complete with period dress, is offset by modern touches such as mobile phones, on-trend beers

and beards! This eclectic mix captures the Christmas spirit we all know, love and crave around that time of the year.”

South Leigh

MASON ARMS: Villagers are hoping to mount a community bid to stop this historic pub falling into the hands of developers, having listed it as an Asset of Community Value. It closed in March 2014, with owner Gerry Stonhill being in the headlines a few years earlier when he was fined for ignoring the smoking ban.

Letcombe Regis

GREYHOUND: Villagers are hoping to mount a We are pleased to report that the Greyhound in Letcombe Regis (above) has finally reopened. The pub has been shut for some two years, with fears that it might never reopen. However, after extensive refurbishment, it is back in business under the ownership of Catriona Galbraith and Martyn Read.

On the pub's website (www.thegreyhoundletcombe.co.uk), the owners state that: “The Greyhound is at heart a proper pub, with plenty of comfortable seating, and no pressure to eat anything. Being a free house we pride ourselves in the quality of our real ales, craft beers and ciders, chosen from local producers and the best to be had from the rest of the UK. Our wine list is filled with delicious wines from passionate producers, and to help you explore, we always have a wide selection by the glass or carafe.”

We understand that there will be



four ales on hand pump, one of which will be from Marston's list. The manager is Lidia Dhorne and the chef is Phil Currie. Sample menus can be found on the website. The cellar has been refitted, a new kitchen installed, a new toilet block added, plus eight bedrooms and the garden has been landscaped. There is parking for 30 cars. We wish them well, as villages like the Letcombes can ill afford to lose such a valuable community asset.

Watchfield

EAGLE: The pub has changed hands and a local person has taken over the reins. On a recent visit the pub was serving Prescott Hill Climb, Doom Bar and Thwaites Lancaster Bomber.

West Hendred

HARE: Villagers are hoping to mount a The West Hendred village group who were trying to buy The Hare have been in contact with the new owners, Star

Bars and Pubs, who have indicated that they would be happy to share plans and listen to the views of the community in due course. Star Bars and Pubs have invested in turnaround pubs before and have committed £30 million to pub refurbishment this year.

A condition of the transaction under which Star Bars and Pubs bought 16 pubs as a bundle from Greene King, and of which The Hare was one, was that the new owner would be obliged to run them as pubs. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) will monitor The Hare's future operation as a pub so there are reasonable grounds for optimism. Updates will continue to be provided on the savethehare.co.uk website and on Facebook.

Brewery News

Hook Norton

It is continuing to offer full-day brew-your-own beer packages at the micro-brewery, as offered in a prize in our last competition. It's a hands-on experience perfect for fans of real ale or anyone interested in the beer brewing process, that has remained relatively unchanged at Hook Norton since 1849.

The Hooky Christmas Hamper (£39) includes two bottles of the seasonal Twelve Days (5.5%), glass, and treats such as cheddar, mustard and chutney (£39). In the annual Cotswold Awards, Hook Norton's Angel pub in Burford has been voted Best Pub.

West Berkshire

It has released 800 bottles of Ooh La La, a limited edition Belgian style Dubbel, brewed to celebrate its 20th year. This special ale was made using British hops and malts and Belgian yeast, champagne yeast then being added during a secondary fermentation.

Head brewer Will Twomey, the creator of Ooh La La, said, "This beer marks an auspicious occasion for WBB. I thoroughly enjoyed creating a beer which affirms our ongoing commitment to preserving traditional brewing methods even while adding our own twist to this classic style."

This latest addition tops off an unprecedented year for the brewery. Led by renowned international brewing entrepreneur, David Bruce, WBB has seen annual sales grow by 20%, has won two awards

presented by the International Beer Challenge and launched a second line, Renegade Brewery, aimed at the craft beer market. It has also raised £2.6m via the Enterprise Investment Scheme to fund future developments in the brewery.

Yule Fuel, the Christmas special, is a full-bodied strong beer perfect for long winter evenings by the fire. Deep red in colour, it has plenty of caramel sweetness to balance a full berry-fruit hop flavour with raisin and liquorice overtones.



Wychwood

Bah Humbug is the Christmas ale, a case of which is up for grabs in the competition in this edition. Brewed with the choicest hops and malts, lightly spiced with cinnamon, this rich ale contains subtle tones of dried fruit evoking the aroma of all things Christmas.

XT

The brewery extension at XT is being completed including new storage area, cold room and more brewing space. The new brewery tasting room provides space for beer tastings, and to buy fresh beer in mini-casks and bottled beer to drink at home. Three new special Christmas beers are available from XT:

XT-25 at 4.5% is a cold brewed burgundy AltBier, slow fermented for a smoother deeper flavour. Animal 'Robin' is a bottle only 'Rockin Ruby Ale' – at 4.5% it's a rich malty winter ale.

Animal Rudolf – a cappuccino stout at 4.5% – is a collaboration beer brewed with Dusty Ape Coffee and using its Silverback Espresso to deliver a punch that is worthy of the king of primates. Intense and fruity, this coffee has a sweet aroma with blackcurrant and plum notes. Syrupy and full-bodied with a fresh lime finish, it is blended with lactose to give a really smooth stout.

The new brewery shop and tasting room will be open from 9:30am to 4:30pm Monday to Saturday from 1 December.



Oxford CAMRA pub of the year
2004, 2005, 2010 & 2014

The Masons Arms

Headington Quarry Oxford. 01865-764579

www.themasonsarmshq.co.uk



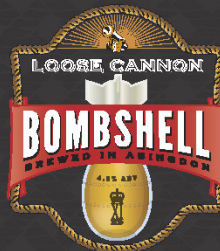
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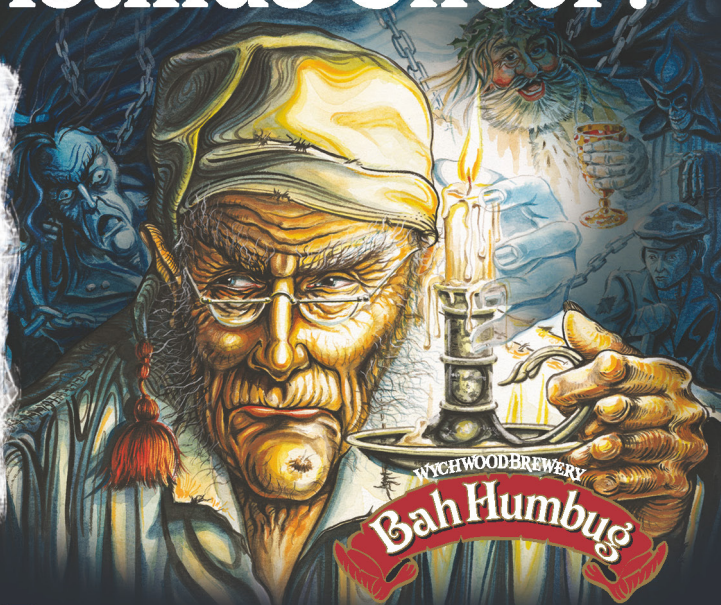
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Fed up of the usual? Comedy socks, ties you'll never wear, DIY tools that never see the light of day, January diets as you've over-done it over the festive period, inedible Christmas dinners, carol singers that can't hold a tune, houses festooned with gaudy lights...in November, the in-laws?.....not to mention the miserable cold slushy snow! Bah Humbug!

Don't be a misery – go on, enjoy yourself! Wychwood Brewery 'Bah Humbug' festive beer at 5% abv is just the thing to ward off those wintry blues and those lovely people at Wychwood brewery have 5 cases of their seasonal bottled ale up for grabs. For your chance to win a case all you need to do is answer the 10 questions below, telling us the previous names of well-known pubs in Oxford. Some (including the first!) were known by more than one name, so the highest score would be nearer 20 than 10.

1. St Aldate's Tavern
2. The Lighthouse
3. Eurobar
4. White House
5. White Rabbit
6. Oxford Retreat
7. The One
8. Punter
9. James Street Tavern
10. Big Society

You must be a CAMRA member to enter, and closing date is 20 January when the winner will be drawn from all correct entries received. Email your answers to editor@oxfordcamra.org.uk or post your answers to Oxford Drinker, 42 Kennington Road, Oxford, OX1 5PB, to arrive not later than 20 January. Please include your name, telephone number, email address and CAMRA membership number, and your postal address as the beer will be delivered by courier to the address you specify on your entry form. The competition is not open to members of the Oxford CAMRA committee or anyone associated with the *Oxford Drinker*.

Hooky competition result

The competition in the last edition to win a day's brewing at Hook Norton – together with two barrels of your own beer! – proved very successful. Congratulations to **Magda Clarke**, of Oxford, who was the first to answer all questions correctly, and you will be hearing more about her day in the next edition. Magda works for a charity, so it's reassuring to know she won't be tackling

both barrels on her own!

Commiserations to new CAMRA member Camille Guezennec, the runner-up, who wins a brewery tour for two. Well done also to others who got all the answers right or nearly right, including Graham Bishop, Robert Langham, Johanna Breen, and Chris Dicks.

The correct answers are as follows:

- 1: Which two pubs are mentioned in Thomas Hardy's novel *Jude the Obscure*?
Lamb and Flag, and Turf Tavern
- 2: Which pub was frequented by the poet Robert Graves?
General Elliott
- 3: Name the tavern involved in the St Scholastica's Day riot.
Swindlestock Tavern
- 4: Which pub was previously called the Oranges and Lemons?
Angel and Greyhound
- 5: Who was known as the "rudest landlord in Oxford" and where did he work?
George Chitty, who ran the Gloucester Arms and the Perch
- 6: Name the two pubs where the landlord also acted as ferryman.
The Isis Farmhouse and Victoria Arms
- 7: Which pub was once called the Bulldog?
St Aldate's Tavern



Picture A: King's Arms



Picture B: Gardener's Arms, Plantation Road



Picture C: Turf Tavern

Beer Festival Diary

Friday 29 - Sunday 31 January

Rose & Crown Winter Beer Festival

The Rose & Crown, Market Street, Charlbury
01608 810103
roseandcrown.charlbury.com

Wednesday 17 - Saturday 20 February

CAMRA National Winter Ales Festival

The Roundhouse, Roundhouse Road, Pride Park, Derby
Includes 'Champion Winter Beer of Britain' competition
400+ beers, ciders & perries
www.nwaf.org.uk

Friday 19 - Sunday 21 February

Littleworth Original Beer & Sausage Festival

Cricketers Arms, Littleworth, nr Wheatley
01865 872738
www.cricketers-arms.co.uk

Friday 26 - Saturday 27 February

Merton Beer Festival

Merton Village Hall, Islip Road, Merton, nr Bicester



Tony's travels

Our branch Chairman Tony Goulding's discoveries whilst distributing the Oxford Drinker

South Oxford

Making *Oxford Drinker* deliveries, I found the Duke of Monmouth and the Berkshire very much as they were this time last year. The Duke of Monmouth is a Greene King house while the Berkshire is tied to GK despite claiming to be a free house, so there were no real surprises on the beer scene. But they are still serving their local and passing customers well, something we should be thankful for given the bleak outlook in parts of Headington and Marston.

Almost on Folly Bridge is the White House, a former Morrells now Wadworth local. The Bishops Tipple at least was in very good condition but the pub in general is in a tired but basic state. From the White house I moved across the Thames to the Head of the River, a spacious Fuller's tourist trap. On our visit the pub was quiet and it was possible to have a look around. The Gales HSB was only all right, disappointing given that the pub serves about 30 tubs of beer a week in busy periods, so beer is not in the pipes too long. I had to thank Anna and Adrian for their very well organised and attentive bar staff, and it's a pity they were soon leaving to take on the

Swan in Staines. It was good to see Shotover Brewery has got its Prospect Bitter on the bar at some Fuller's pubs in Oxford.

City Centre

The Sunday roast being served in the Royal Blenheim was bettered by Weston's superb Family Reserve Cider, along with halves of Elgood's Black Dog Mild and a superb White Horse Black Horse Porter. On to the Bear, a very well run Fuller's house, where a cider and a very tasty bottle of Black Cab Stout was had in this very popular pub frequented mainly by professionals, students, academics and tourists. A wander up the cobbles found the Chequers with nine beers on, some of which I had never come across before, but I chose Thistly Cross cider which was in fine form. A short stroll to the Crown found another busy pub with a very enthusiastic crew informing me of their forthcoming Christmas ales. Another short sprint brought me to another very popular boozer, Beard (the former Grapes) which was very busy with six real ales and many craft kegs available.

The White Rabbit turned out to be the top pub of the afternoon, with a comfortable feel, and

friendly and knowledgeable serving staff. Hung Drawn and Portered from North Cotswold was my Sunday best, along with a swift half of Undercurrent Oatmeal Pale Ale also in superb form. The other beers on were XT3 and Shotover Scholar. A chat with a CAMRA member whose local is the legendary Old Spot pub at Dursley, Gloucestershire, revealed that the White Rabbit along with the Beard were his top two pubs of the day.

Kidlington

Our regular Sunday visit is to the Kings Arms in The Moors, a superb, basic, quiet old boozer, a favourite for over 20 years. But it was a shame that after a super Sunday in town we arrived here to find this genuine free house serving mediocre Marston's beers, though always in very good condition. The Plum Porter (God's wonderful water!) was a lot more tasty!

Charlton-on-Otmoor

I came here to check out the Crown, as the nearby George and Dragon closed in the 1980s which left this former Morrells village local to fly flag in Otmoor. A downward spiral resulted in closure a couple of years ago, but although the

village mounted a bid to purchase it as a community asset, the present couple Max and Louise became the owners. With the right people at the bar and support from the locals, plus discerning visitors, we now have a successful pub. On the night Brakspear Bitter and a Vale beer were in very good form, with two local beers being the norm from XT, Loose Cannon and Chiltern to name a few. Very good class pub food is served lunchtimes and evenings, but it is closed Monday and Sunday evening. This bright and airy pubs still retains a public bar for the locals to drink and play darts, with a comfortable smaller dining area leading out to the rear spacious garden where in summer Aunt Sally is played.

Murcott and Islip

The Nut Tree at Murcott is a village local rescued a few years ago by another enterprising and hard-working couple, and it serves fine but top-price food. Two local beers are usually on the bar, and a very good pint of Vale was enjoyed. The sun trap garden is also home to Aunt Sally.

The former Morrells local the Swan at Islip used to be a super boozer with good food, but after sale by Greene King to a Far Eastern business it became a Chinese restaurant with accommodation and is now sadly no longer a pub [an update on this situation is always welcome]. The Red Lion, a former Halls house, has three beers on as the norm with Black Sheep and Old Hooky the popular regulars. I had a half of Wychwood Hobgoblin, a very tasty guest. The spacious and split level bar is complemented

by a comfortable dining area.

Witney

Not all tenant landlords suffer the problems that are now so commonly known throughout the drinking community. Take Martin at the New Inn in Witney, a very successful local boozer with no food smells (most rare these days) and six hand pumps with a range that would put some free houses to shame, despite being a Punch Taverns house.

.... and South Yorkshire

I know this is way outside our area, but I wanted to tell you about the Beehive at Harthill, a former Tetley house which still dispenses Tetley Bitter and one other Punch guest ale. But it also serves Harts Desire, a 4.4% premium ale; Ace of Harts, a 3.9% best bitter; Dark Hart, at 4.8% a very tasty chocolate stout; Hart of Steel, a 5% strong pale ale; and Warm Harted, a 4.4% spicy winter ale. For Christmas it will have a 6.5% Dark Hart Festival Reserve, which would have me camping in the car park to enjoy!

The present landlady has been at the pub for nearly eight years and a couple of years ago, after a deal was struck with Punch, the Harthill Brewery was created in buildings behind the pub. There has been a pretty good rate of converting lager drinkers to some of the golden ales, with a couple of Guinness drinkers seeing sense and drinking the Harthill stout. There are probably a few more of these success stories around and if I find them you will know. Why not give us news of any happenings from a pub near you?

Oxford Branch Diary

Monday 4 January Branch Meeting

At the Kite, Mill Street, Oxford
Starts at 19.30

Regular monthly meeting with pre-meeting social at the Punter, Osney Island from 18.45.

Saturday 16 January Presentation

Presenting the Champion Beer of Oxfordshire award to Turpin Brewery at Hook Norton, followed by a couple of local pubs. Please book a seat on the bus with Tony on 07588 181313.

Saturday 23 January Village Pub Survey Trip

A minibus trip to visit some of the more remote Good Beer Guide candidates. Please book a seat on the bus with Tony as above.

Saturday 30 January Beer Festival Social

At the Rose and Crown, Charlbury. Meet there from 1pm.

Tuesday 2 February Branch Meeting

At the Cape of Good Hope, The Plain, Oxford
Starts at 19.30

Regular monthly meeting with pre-meeting social at the Big Society, Cowley Road, from 18.45.

Future dates for the diary—look at our website for updates:

Wednesday 2 March Branch AGM

Saturday 5 March Beer Festival Helpers' Trip



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The Final Stretch....

Dick Bosley reports on the final leg of the Great Walk

OUR FINAL STRETCH of the Cotswold Way promised a weekend of witty repartee and the chance to visit some fine pubs. The guide book also promised us stunning views from the top of Cleve Hill, the highest point along the route. What we got was a downpour of biblical proportions that rapidly became freezing sleet. As we now looked like rodents who had delayed their maritime disembarkation for too long, we decided that we should abandon our plan to detour to the nearby Rising Sun. Nil desperandum: the sun, views and our good humour soon returned as we made our hilly way to Winchcombe and our first pub stop. The Plaisterers Arms is a lovely little pub in the middle of the village and served us good food and welcoming pints of Timothy Taylor's Landlord, as well as HPA and Betty Bach from the Wye Valley Brewery. We returned to the trail where the hill out of the village seemed to have been designed by Escher – whichever way we turned was up. This caused a temporary health problem as John's heart briefly rebelled. This was a surprise to the rest of us as there had been no previous evidence that he had one.

We kindly offered to reduce his load by carrying the beer kitty and then continued on our way to our B&B. After a quick ablute we walked to the nearest pub, The Pheasant at Toddington, for supper. Here were two beers

from the (very) local Stanway Brewery: Broadway Artists Ale (3.9%) and Stanny Bitter (4.5%). Both were very good, with the Artists being slightly paler, but don't rush there to try them as by the time you read this, the pub will have been taken over by Donnington Brewery.

A good night's sleep, with minimal snoring, and a hearty breakfast saw us back on the track before 9am. Sadly, this meant that we reached Broadway by 11am, which on a Sunday morning meant that our chances of a reviving pint were slim. In fact the official path goes past the door of The Crown & Trumpet, and that door was open! A quick check and I was able to report the good news to the others. Even better news, there were eight hand pumps.

The decoration here was a homage to Flowers Brewery which had been collected by the (self-confessed) fanatical landlord, who has run the pub for more than 30 years. All the beers we tried – Broadway Artists, Tom Long from Stroud Brewery, Moreton Mild from North Cotswolds—were superb. Also available were TT Landlord plus a cider and a perry – all in all a very good pub, and if you find yourself in the area it is well worth a visit.

Suitably refreshed we set off for the next, inevitable, hill. Motorists may be aware of the

road that climbs out of Broadway, with the benefit of hairpin bends. The footpath does the same ... but without the benefit of the hairpin bends. On reaching the summit and regaining your breath you are rewarded with fine views and from here the path levels out across fields and along old droving roads to the end of the Cotswold Way at Chipping Campden.

After a short debate we decided to celebrate completing the "Way" in the traditional way, and we called into the Volunteer. Sadly, the only beer on offer here was Sharps Doom Bar and the only seats available were adjacent to a TV loudly showing a Grand Prix. Checking the helpful local CAMRA magazine, *The Tippler*, while we drank, we found that there were two pubs in Chipping Campden that stocked Locale and so we moved on to the Noel Arms in the High Street. Here we found one of my favourites, Purity Mad Goose, but annoyingly served too cold, and so we moved on again, this time to the Eight Bells. This is a fantastic, friendly pub with four ales and I started with Goffs Joustier before moving on to the UBU from Purity. They were both in excellent condition and this seems to be the ideal spot to end the Cotswold Way – surely one of the best and most scenic walks in England ... with some damn fine pubs too!

DICK BOSLEY

Not beating about the Bush

Dave Richardson reports on how Oxford City Council can help people try to save their local pub

IT'S A FAMILIAR scenario to pub campaigners. A pub in need of some care and attention is taken on by a would-be developer, who then runs it down and closes it, claiming nobody wants it any more and it should be demolished or converted into housing, a shop or other uses.

Whether or not that is the case at the Hollybush, a closed pub on Osney Island in West Oxford, an enterprising local councillor has ensured that any planning application is studied in depth, and has organised a survey showing great support for re-opening the pub as a more welcoming venue.

In November 2014 the council published a detailed policy statement on pubs, which can be read online, as part of the Local Plan. It notes that pubs in Oxford genuinely fulfil an important economic role and that beyond the immediate economic turnover they produce, pubs typically add £80,000 to local economies every year.

The document also considers the social effect on communities when a pub closes, and sets three criteria which should be adhered to by organisations buying pubs, before a planning application for change of use is granted:

Marketing: A property should be marketed as a pub for a

minimum period of 12 months before a planning application is made.

Non-Viability: Evidence should be provided to show why the pub has not been successful, including profit and loss over recent years, and whether changes could be made to make it more successful.

Availability of alternative pubs: The type of pub should be assessed to fully understand

the market it is aiming at, and therefore the potential competition in the local area. The impact of closure on customers arriving by public transport, walking, cycling or by car should be assessed, with a reasonable walking distance defined as 800m.

The document states that planning permission will only be granted for change of use if one or more of the following criteria are met:



No other potential occupier can be found following a realistic effort to market the premises as a pub; substantial evidence of non-viability is submitted; and it is demonstrated that suitable alternative pubs exist to meet the needs of the local community.

It's a moot point how effective planning rules are, but pubs can be listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) through a provision of the Localism Act. Alex Hollingsworth, the city councillor whose remit covers planning, says: "Government policy keeps changing on permitted developments. It has been easy to turn pubs into restaurants, and it is now easy to turn them into shops or financial services, with very little we can do. But if a pub is listed as an ACV then a community gets first refusal when a pub is for sale, and has six months to try to raise the money. Developers must also get planning permission if they want to demolish these pubs and build something new."

Alex says he would welcome CAMRA organising ACVs for pubs thought to be at risk, and helping community groups to organise (the CAMRA website offers plenty of advice). "Local groups may need a toolkit to get started," he says. "Sometimes you need someone to create a local community group, as people tend to assume someone else will do it."

"We have had a limited number of ACV applications so far, but we can do a lot of hand holding. We helped nudge people along to put in an ACV application for the Corner House, and we have achieved some delays in pubs

being redeveloped. The Ampleforth would probably have been flattened by now if it didn't have an ACV.

"I would strongly welcome more such applications, and if CAMRA can provide a toolkit for local groups to make it easier for ACV registration, or help to get local groups set up quickly, that would really help."

The Hollybush – a case in point?

The pub was sold by Greene King in 2014 to a property company, which kept it open last summer when it had a large tent in the garden with shisha pipe smoking that upset some of the locals. The company has applied to turn it into a House of Multiple Occupation but told the *Oxford Mail* that its longer term future was undecided. Krystian Volak, of Holly Bush Property Ltd, is quoted as saying that as residents objected to plans to reopen the pub, it will remain closed for the foreseeable future. He did not respond to the *Oxford Drinker's* invitation for him to comment.

Councillor Susanna Pressel has organised a survey of Osney Island residents that drew a good response from 53 people with only one not wanting to see it reopen. Responses included the following:

"It is our nearest pub but we never go there because the interior and exterior are not very attractive and the atmosphere is not very welcoming."

"Get rid of the abusive drunks, people vomiting outside... no loud music. If it was more civilised I would use it."

"At the moment, there appears to be no interest in making it an attractive pub to visit. It seems the owner is going through the motions of keeping it open for a while as a very unappealing pub, so that he can have evidence of little use for a later planning application for housing or flats. The pub has huge potential, but it needs a management that wants to make it successful."

"I'd be delighted to have a choice of venues on Osney Island and would definitely go there if it felt more inviting."

"I would love there to be a friendly and pleasant alternative to the Punter."

Councillor Pressel stressed that she was not taking sides, adding: "Our Local Plan makes it unwise for developers to buy a pub that is doing OK and then apply for change of use. The planning committee could say that the owner has not tried to run the pub properly, and an application could be refused."

"When a pub closes, people really miss it because it is an obvious focal point. We want to see community cohesion, and pub closures often leave a vacuum as there is nothing else to take their place. Pubs are especially useful for me as a councillor, as I need to keep in touch with local people and the pub is one of few places I can meet them and hear the latest gossip."

There should be more news about the Hollybush in the next edition.

A ramble around Jericho

Dave Richardson reviews pubs in this 'character' area of Oxford

EVER SINCE I lived there in the early 1980s, when the Gardener's Arms in Plantation Road was my local, I have loved the area around Walton Street and in particular the terraced streets of Jericho leading down towards the Oxford Canal. It's changed a lot since then, of course, and has been very much gentrified with a great choice of restaurants and boutique shops. The two-up, two-down terraced houses built for print workers now change hands for over half a million pounds.

This vast social change has had a marked effect on Jericho's pubs, with most of the basic hostelrys closing down and some others having more emphasis on food than drinks. But the area's pubs still have plenty of character and variety, which is why I included all of them in the book *Oxford Pubs* which came out in August.

Old Bookbinders

First stop was this former Oxford CAMRA Pub of the Year, which has gone through several changes of ownership but has now found a successful formula with the Anglo-French tenants. Don't be put off by the Greene King sign, as three ales from its extensive guest range are always available in addition to the more standard selection which usually includes Old Speckled Hen, St Edmunds, and GK's landlord bitter branded here as Bookies Best. I went straight for the guests, sampling a very more-ish Robinsons Unicorn Premium Golden Ale (4.2%) and, unusually, Bath Ales' Dark Side Stout (4%), while branch chairman Tony Goulding reported that his St Austell Proper Job was equally tasty. Small jars underneath the pumps show the colour of the ales.

The Old Bookbinders is run by Frenchman Michel Sadones with wife Jackie and son Josh,

who have been here for four years and created a very cosy pub with a French twist on food. Michel used to run French restaurants in Oxford including Michel's and Ma Belle, but when he arrived here he wanted to keep a pub atmosphere while serving good value French dishes. The Menu de Jour served at lunch times and from 5.30 to 7pm costs £10.50 for two courses and £13.50 for three, served at candlelit tables and in the rear or music room at busy times. The interior is one of the most quirky in Oxford being a jumble of bric-a-brac including part of an ancient model railway upside down on the ceiling, and a barrel dispensing free monkey nuts in shells. It has Inspector Morse links too, being seen in the first episode of the long running ITV series (1987) called *The Dead of Jericho*.

Harcourt Arms

I comment in *Oxford Pubs* that this is probably the closest in atmosphere to the many old



LEFT: The Jericho Tavern
ABOVE: The Rickety Press

pubs of Jericho that have closed down, “though you won’t find any spit, sawdust or skittles”. This Fuller’s pub retains a very traditional pub atmosphere as it doesn’t serve food, with the exception of snacks, although it has a fairly contemporary interior.

We were pleased to see a roaring real fire on this windy November night, and the beer range was much as expected with one exception. Beside the London Pride, Seafarers and ESB from Fuller’s was a guest ale, Shotover Porter at 5%. I had a half of Seafarers and a half of the porter, which made a fairly extreme contrast, but should have had the Seafarers first.

This is still a pub for friendly conversation and is clearly loved by its regulars, and seems to have found its niche. It’s still a good place for old as well as young, to have a pint and reflect on long-gone Jericho pubs such as the Bakers Arms, Carpenters Arms, Crown, Globe

and Walton Ale Stores.

Rickety Press

Arkell’s Brewery of Swindon acquired this pub and spent a great deal refurbishing it in 2011, and it has recently gone through another make-over with the menu changing from gastro-pub to more informal pizzas (£7.50-£13) and burgers (£10-£13). It was very busy early in the evening and clearly does a roaring trade, with a mainly younger clientele packing out the large conservatory to the rear. “Eat, Drink and Be Social” is the pub’s slogan, with a good choice of craft keg beers in addition to 3B, Moonlight and Wiltshire Gold from the Arkell’s range, supplemented by Old Rosie cider. I contented myself with a half of Moonlight, which was average, while admiring the shelves of books, and couple playing chess, which give the front of the pub a more traditional feel.

To see the pub so successful today is heartening, whatever you think of the real ales. This is

particularly so due to its chequered recent history, as it was at death’s door when closed in 2010 and seemingly destined to become a private house like many other Jericho pubs. Formerly known as the Radcliffe Arms or “Raddy”, it was at one time a music pub and a Thai restaurant.

Nowhere illustrates the changes in Jericho more than the Rickety Press. For more on the old Radcliffe Arms, see Down Memory Lane in this issue.

Jericho Tavern

This is still an important rock music venue today, and was even more so in the 1980s and 1990s when bands such as Radiohead and Pulp appeared here (see the plaque outside). Gigs are held upstairs, while downstairs is a large, wooden-floored pub busy with mainly younger people and serving typical pub food. The craft keg IPA revolution is in full swing here with at least eight usually available, but the choice of real



LEFT: Jude the Obscure

ABOVE: The Walton Street front of the Victoria

RIGHT: Paul Silcock behind the bar of the Gardener's

ale won't excite many people being limited to regulars Doom Bar (which was off) and a passable Brakspear's Oxford Gold, plus a guest ale which was, oddly, Greene King's Old Speckled Hen. Why you would offer a guest ale which is so widely available around Oxford is a mystery to me, but no doubt the pub knows what its customers like.

The Jericho Tavern can trace its history back to 1650, and was called the Philanderer and Firkin in the 1990s. It's an interesting place, but not an essential stop for real ale drinkers.

Jude the Obscure

This is a large, busy, modern pub formerly called the Prince of Wales, developed on this Walton Street site to replace a much smaller and older Morrells property. It is contemporary in feel with a mainly younger clientele, and you wouldn't call it cosy. As it's another Greene King house, the real ale drinker

will probably look to the guest ales rather than the regular brews, and on this occasion these were disappointing being limited to Wadworth 6X which can be found at several locations around the city. All the others were regular GK beers but at least there was a choice of five, including Olde Trip, Hardy and Hanson's, Old Speckled Hen, the landlord brand Jude the Obscure Best Bitter, and GK IPA.

There's certainly plenty of choice from the GK range, but it isn't a pub where I wanted to linger. The name, by the way, was chosen by former landlord the late Noel Reilly, who also ran the much lamented Far From the Madding Crowd in the city centre. Both names come from Thomas Hardy novels.

Victoria

This imposing pub with an unusual layout features strongly in *Oxford Pubs*, mainly because of the wonderful mural on the roof which is a copy of a

Michelangelo work in the Sistine Chapel in Rome. This is The Creation of Adam, with the original showing God reaching out to Adam – the Victoria's version shows them both holding glasses of Banks's Bitter!

You need to go up on the balcony to get a decent look at this, as the balcony is effectively the pub's upper storey. Both the pub and its beer garden can get very busy, so look out for the small snug at the front where you might find a quiet corner.

This Marston's pub has a wide range of beers to choose from but could do better, so it was good to hear that a third hand pump might be installed. Quality made up for the lack of quantity as the two beers available tonight were both guests – Everard's Original, and a very dark and tasty Colonel's Whiskers (4.3%) from Batemans. Tasting notes are provided, with the Whiskers being described as a classic black and tan beer which is rich,



dark and creamy: “The flavour profile is brimming with nuts, biscuits and fruit, whilst the aroma is dominated by the crisp roasted malt which creates a rich voluptuous body”!

Just what a man needs after a night on the lash.....

Gardener's Arms

Had I saved the best pub till last? I certainly hoped so, as this used to be my local when it was a fairly basic Morrells boozer in the 1980s, but it is now a free house and a new entry in the Good Beer Guide 2016 – the only GBG entry in Jericho, although the nearby Rose and Crown in North Oxford is a regular guide entry. So well done to Gardener's Arms landlord Paul Silcock and his team.

The four ales available were Loose Cannon Session Bitter, Prescott's Grand Prix, Marston's EPA and Gardener's Ale (I forgot to find out who it's brewed by – must have been

dreaming of that rich voluptuous body!) Toodle Pip Apple and Pear cider was an unusual find.

The Gardener's (not to be confused with the Gardener's Arms in North Parade) is decorated with vinyl LP covers from Paul's own collection, and it serves a tasty vegetarian-only menu which makes it quite a draw – oddly, there is no vegetarian-only restaurant in Oxford. It's a cosy two-room pub with a beer garden and lounge to the rear, and has a very atmospheric and almost village pub feel. If the quality of my Session Bitter and Grand Prix were typical, it's a true real ale haven.

Paul has been here for fifteen years through various changes of ownership, and comments: “I realised early on what I wanted a pub to be – and this is the kind of pub I like to drink in. To be a free house is a godsend as I can choose whichever beers I like, and new customers are already coming in because we're in the GBG.”



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Down Memory Lane

MY BOOK *Oxford Pubs* continues to stir memories for lots of folk, and I was very pleased recently to meet Hazel Bleay who used to run the Radcliffe Arms in Jericho – now the food-oriented Rickety Press (see Jericho feature on page 24). Hazel has provided this wonderful archive picture, below, of a group of customers outside the pub in what looks like the 1920s, who were apparently off to a darts match! Her grandfather Edwin Phipps once ran the pub and another ex-landlord was Bob Moore.

The Radcliffe Arms was built in 1872, taking its name from physician John Radcliffe (1652-1774) who financed building of the nearby Radcliffe Infirmary and whose name lives on in Oxford's main hospital. It was originally owned by Northampton Brewery Company (NBC) and later came under the aegis of various other breweries, while in more recent years the "Raddy" was well-



known as a music pub before falling on hard times and closing in 2010, with Arkells reviving it as the Rickety Press the following year.

It was a Watneys pub when Hazel took over in 1981, but the original NBC etched windows and beer glasses were still used – as was the Watneys Red Barrel sign outside, which was

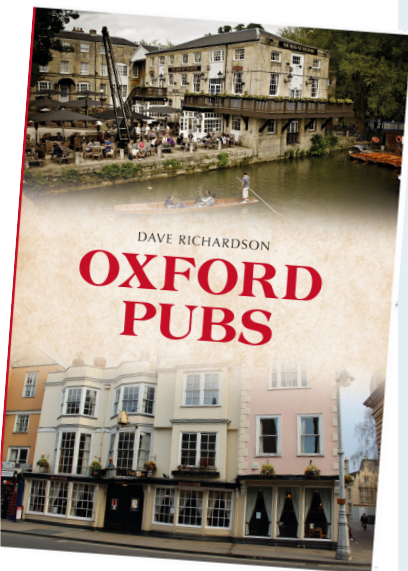
usually the sign of terrible beer! A pint of Starlight beer then cost around 47p.

"I was a tenant of Ushers, which was a hived-off company of Watneys," she recalls. "The five NBC houses in Oxford all became Ushers – others were the Swan in Marston Street (which later became the Oxford Blue), the Lamb and Flag in St Giles, the Star in Rectory Road and the Quarry Gate in Headington.

"I left in 1988 but returned in the 1990s to run the Bell at Bicester, the Red Lion at Stratton Audley and the Bull at Launton. Then I ran the Fox and Pheasant in Swindon and the Nag's Head in Thame, until Morrells sold all the tenants down the river."

Continuing the theme of rare photographs of pub customers, the second picture appears in the *Oxford Pubs* book and a





giant version of it can be seen inside the Angel and Greyhound in St Clements. The picture was taken in 1979 when the pub was called the Oranges and Lemons, and as it was known as a punk venue in those days you can see that reflected in some of the fashions! Thanks to Angel and Greyhound managers Richard and Kathryn Gibson for explaining about the picture and preserving this piece of modern history.

Oxford Pubs could make a great Christmas present – to order a signed copy visit www.oxfordpubhistory.co.uk

Would you like to share your memories of pubs, landlords and customers for these pages, like David Howe has done so? Then contact me at editor@oxfordcamra.org.uk

DAVE RICHARDSON

Gone but not forgotten

My return to Oxford after a period of seven years coincided with the raging “Battle of the Back Bar” at the King’s Arms, Holywell Street and the raging fire in the thatched roof of the Perch Inn at Binsey, in 1977. The back bar was a male-only preserve for many years but had to move on with the times.

Whilst away I would return for weekends fairly frequently, occasionally drinking at the Oxford Arms, Kirtlington, run by Guy Chase. He was a real character landlord if ever there was one, who had previously been landlord of the Royal Blenheim in St Ebbes.

My recollection is of a dapper man with bow tie and goatee beard and an unstoppable line of patter, for which he was famous at both pubs. The most oft mimicked by his customers was “.....and for the lady? A little gin-gin, with tonn-tonn and a slice of lem-lem?”

My return also occasioned a visit, with a solicitor friend, to the Prince of Wales at Iffley Village, for a lunchtime pint and some of the pub’s famous doorstep sandwiches. We were met by his wife and a nursing ward sister friend of theirs; as a consequence of this meeting, we have just celebrated 36 years of happy marriage!

The pub was run by Graham and Jean Morrow, a charming couple -- a true lady and gentleman in every sense. Graham was an ex-RAF Vulcan test pilot. Large photographs of aircraft in flight hung behind the bar, but the pub lost some of its

atmosphere when they decided to retire to Northamptonshire and the photographs were taken down.

Jean was a dog lover and on one occasion returned from the garden with a face of thunder. Incensed by some patrons who had been eating in the garden, she was heard to say briskly: “They didn’t get anything for their dog.” She returned to the garden a few moments later with fresh water and a cold sausage.

One of the resident pub dogs was a stray that had been abandoned on Iffley Turn. After a few days coaxing and feeding, it decided that life in a pub might not be such a bad idea after all and followed her back.

Graham and Jean were assisted by an exuberant bar lady. On one occasion when wearing a drop stitch pullover/top she pulled the beer pump downwards in the time-honoured fashion, and the brass teat on the top of the pump disappeared through one of the holes and into the pullover. As her other hand was in charge of steadying a brimming pint of ale, her efforts to extricate herself became so comical she didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. Letting out a huge laugh that reverberated round the bar, she was heard to utter the immortal words, “Oh, cor blimey, I’ve caught me nellies on the beer pump!”

Thanks to Thelma, James and Paul for their input.

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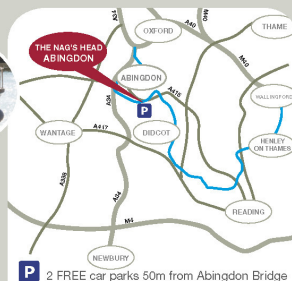
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