

Issue 105
April - May 2018

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CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

the Oxford Drinker



Inside: A guide to the pubs of Burford; CAMRA's Revitalisation Project; Oxford Beer Week; Oxford CAMRA's Awards Evening; Blessed Beers; and all the local pub and brewery news

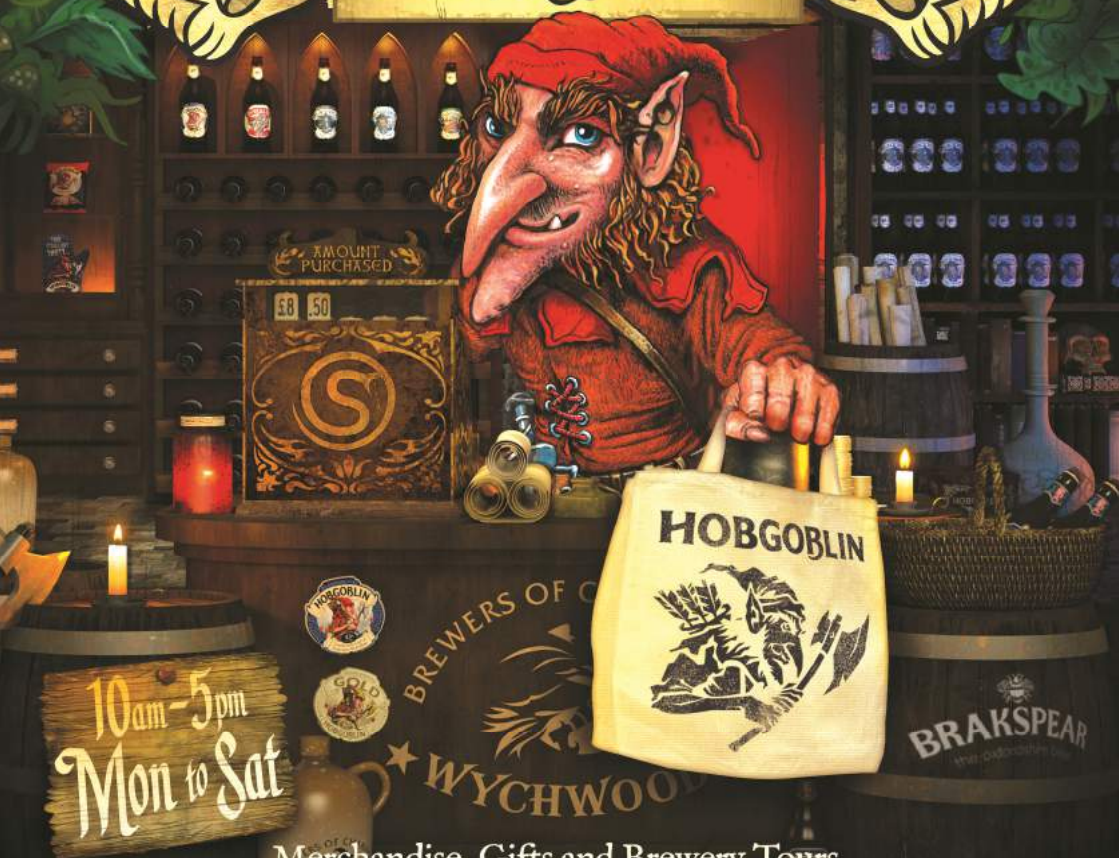
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FRONT COVER PICTURE : The Mermaid on the High Street in Burford - see the guide to the town on page 4.

The **Oxford Drinker** is the newsletter of the Oxford and White Horse branches of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale.

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.

PDF downloads of past issues are available at the Oxford CAMRA webiste, www.oxford.camra.org.uk.

Editorial team:

Editor: Dave Richardson
editor@oxford.camra.org.uk

Advertising: Tony Goulding
advertising@oxford.camra.org.uk
Tony: 07588 181313

Layout/Design: Matt Bullock

Valuable contributions have been received for this issue from Richard Queralto, Luciana and Christian Gyuricza, Russ Taylor, Dick Bosley, Matt Bullock, Dennis Brown, Tony Goulding, Pete Flynn, and Graham Shelton.

Please send contributions to the editor at the above email address.

Pub news can be sent to
pub-news@oxford.camra.org.uk

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Welcome

...why the debate over CAMRA's future is worth joining in

MOST ORGANISATIONS WHICH

conduct "fit for purpose" reviews (aka navel gazing) do so because they're stagnating, but not CAMRA. Membership continues to increase and now stands at over 191,000 – more than for any political party apart from Labour.

Real ale can be found everywhere, the number of breweries has mushroomed to over 1,600 and CAMRA has won some major lobbying successes, notably a change in the law last year meaning that anyone wanting to convert a pub to another use has to get planning permission. So why the so-called Revitalisation Project, and a series of resolutions that members are being asked to vote on by the 18 April deadline?

On page 16 we try to explain the basics, but this really is a struggle for CAMRA's soul between traditionalists and those who feel we should move with the times and embrace quality ale whether in cask, keg, bottle or can. CAMRA's National Executive is proposing these changes, and I for one have voted in favour. Why?

It's important for any organisation to be aware of its public image, which came home to me when I did an interview on Radio Oxford and this subject came up. The presenter said any changes in CAMRA's direction would be resisted by the "crusties" and there was a hint of sarcasm in his voice.

Traditionalists may remember the bad old days when keg beer was awful, but that isn't true today and there are numerous quality

beers on keg. Ironically, many people who drink only cask ale in Britain are more than happy to drink quality keg beer on the Continent!

Personally I don't like cold, fizzy beer however well made, but I worry about the image we will present to breweries if these proposals are rejected. Most of them are already making keg as well as cask beer, and while sales of "craft" kegs are increasing, that's not at the expense of cask ale but of mass produced hogwash.

We as a branch have embraced local non-cask producers such as Tap Social, and know brewers are doing the right thing by appealing to a younger audience with craft keg. XT's Russ Taylor explains brewers' point of view in this issue, and it's possible that keg beers will appear at CAMRA beer festivals if a branch wants them.

One proposal we're asked to vote on that no-one can disagree with is the need to protect pubs, with CAMRA aiming to represent all pub goers to strengthen its lobbying position. New figures show that pub closures are still running at 18 per week, so it's good to read in this edition of another community buy-out being attempted in Oxfordshire, and the fifth anniversary in community ownership of the very successful Seven Stars.

As ever, your news, views and contributions to the *Oxford Drinker* are welcome – just drop me a line.

DAVE RICHARDSON
editor@oxford.camra.org.uk

The Oxfordshire Community Pubs Group holds its first meeting in April. If your community wants to try to save its local, contact the editor who will put you in touch.



Beers in Burford

Dave Richardson and Tony Goulding
discover the delights of the
"Gateway to the Cotswolds"



BELOW: The Lamb on Sheep Street (upper) and the Cotswold Arms (lower)

RIGHT: Chris Jones and Kizzy Eagle at the Cotswold Arms; The Bay Tree Hotel, on Sheep Street

I'D WANTED TO do a pub crawl in Burford for many years as every time I drove through, its historic stone-built hostelrys looked very inviting. I didn't realise until I actually did it that there are yet more pubs down the side streets, or rather hotels with a pub atmosphere.

What's actually a pub rather than a hotel is sometimes open to question, but who cares if a hotel feels like a pub and serves real ale? Two of the hotels we visited aren't actually on CAMRA's WhatPub website, but we went in nevertheless.

First up were two hotels that are on WhatPub, situated almost next to each other on Sheep Street, which used to be the old A40. They are separated by some historic buildings that were once part of Garne's Brewery and Malthouse, which brewed for over a century until 1969 when taken over by Wadworth, which had a distribution depot here for some years thereafter.

The **Lamb Inn** is a lovely old place of flagged floors and wood fires said to date from the 15th century when part was a weaver's cottage, but the prices



are less inviting whether for a drink, a meal or overnight accommodation. Hook Norton's Hooky and Wickwar's Cotswold Way are the regular beers, and while £4.20 a pint isn't excessive these days, half pints cost well over half of that. The chestnut ale Cotswold Way was lovely but I'll have to save up to come here for a meal.

Gloucestershire brewery Wickwar also supplies the single hand pump at the [Bay Tree Hotel](#) just along the street, but this time it was the golden coloured Falling Star (also 4.2%) which was less to my taste. This is another historic building which, like the [Lamb](#), is one of nine properties belonging to Cotswold Inns & Hotels. The Woolsack Bar has a more contemporary feel than the one in the Lamb, but the open log fires were cheery.

It was now time to go around the corner into the High Street and a Greene King (GK) house, the [Mermaid](#). I had meant to write "historic" Greene King house but that term applies to every single pub in Burford – no modern designs here! A former Morlands pub dating from the 15th century, it has original



features including a fireplace and an upstairs restaurant.

Three GK beers are usually served and these were Old Speckled Hen, Olde Trip and the own-badged Mermaid House Bitter, aka Hardy & Hanson's. But we went straight for guest ale Mad Goose by Purity, a reliable, hoppy choice.

Leaseholders Jackie and David Parsons are proud of their pub and rightly so, and said they were considering a free-of-tie option that might save them money despite an increase in rent. She's a local and they have run the pub for 11 years, introducing all-day dining.

Jackie told tales of ghosts including taps being mysteriously turned on and loose corks popping about. Apparently it was once called the Three Pigeons, but renamed the [Mermaid](#) which was considered a lucky name by many travellers. An old pub sign displayed above the fire shows a finely unattired fishy girl!

It was on now to the [Cotswold Arms](#), a free house and another all-day dining venue where we

learned something interesting about a micro-pub in another town. The three hand pumped ales are ever changing and today were Sharp's Doom Bar (the only time we saw it in Burford), West Berkshire's Good Old Boy and Gloucester Brewery's Gold, which tasted good at 3.9%. Other regular suppliers include Cotswold Lion, Stroud, Gun Dog, Prescott and Wickwar.

The [Cotswold Arms](#) dates back to 1411 and a barn at the rear has very low beams possibly dating back to that time. It also has a patio and rear restaurant area, but we didn't move from the bar where co-owners Kizzy Eagle and Chris Jones had a story to tell. They bought it 11 years ago from John Moore who was at this ex-Courage house for 32 years, with Kizzie starting as a pot washer aged 15.

Chris revealed that he also owns the first micro-pub in Oxford CAMRA's branch area, the [Siege of Orleans](#) in Carterton. It has done so well since opening in May 2015 that it now serves "street food" and Sunday roasts in an upstairs room, while maintaining a micro

-pub atmosphere in a former shop. Not only that but Chris is now looking at Witney for his next venture – watch this space!

We moved on reluctantly to the **Golden Pheasant**, another GK pub and Burford's only entry in the 2018 *Good Beer Guide*. The guide describes the **Golden Pheasant**, also a hotel, as having "a Georgian-style frontage built on a 16th century frame" and it also has a large patio.

What we didn't expect was a pub atmosphere around the busy bar, a change from a previous visit a few years ago, although the other half of the pub is mainly for dining. It clearly has its share of regulars with five hand pumps dispensing three regular GK beers – IPA, Olde Trip and Abbot – and two others. On this occasion they were a GK Black IPA (4.5%), which tasted distinctly odd to a Black IPA virgin, and a guest ale from a small London brewery, Canopy Beer Co's SXW Pale Ale.

Landlord Andy Chapman told us that a new deal which still ties him to GK has brought advantages, including the ability to choose SIBA as well as GK guest ales – hence Canopy. The hotel has 18 rooms, and like all hosteleries in Burford, has a strong tourist trade.

We then visited the **Highway Inn**, under new ownership and about to remodel its bar area to include two hand pumps rather than one, with beers supplied by Hook Norton whose Hooky bitter was available today. Free house owner Scott Williamson has a background in the restaurant trade as a former director of Cote brasseries, but

recognises the importance of beer and said every hostelry in Burford has its niche. The **Highway Inn** also has 11 guest rooms.

We didn't have time to drink at **Burford House**, a hotel not listed on WhatPub, which nevertheless had a hand pump dispensing Hooky. Tony had previously been in another non-WhatPub listing, the **Bull at Burford**, a lovely old hotel where Charles Wells Eagle IPA is a regular ale on hand pump.

He also visited the **Cotswold Gateway**, a major historic hotel on the A40 roundabout at the top of the High Street, which was taken over by Wadworth a few years ago and had 6X and Wadworth IPA on hand pump.

We now turned the corner into Witney Street, also on the original A40 route through the town, and our last two pubs of a rewarding day. The **Angel** is a Hook Norton pub with four hand pumps offering Hooky, Old Hooky, Hooky Gold and a beer from its craft range, Hop to It (3.8%) which I found rather

bland. This pub has a nice patio area and grassed garden, but being almost entirely laid out for dining, I didn't take to it. A beer festival is planned for 10-12 August, however, with independent brewers supplying some of the ales and Hooky's dray horses visiting on the Sunday.

Our final stop was Wadworth's **Royal Oak**, where two of the four hand pumps had 6X and IPA, with a third sometimes having one of its seasonal ales. This is also a mainly dining pub but with a patio garden and Aunt Sally. A small bar billiards table had a sign requesting not to use it if diners are at the next table – 'Nuff said.

Sorting out the pubs from the hotels is a tricky business in Burford, but every place we visited had at least some drinkable beer with Hook Norton in the ascendancy. The town may not have a Wow! real ale pub with lots of choice, but offers a pleasant few hours' drinking if you like historical character with your beer.



ABOVE: The Royal Oak on Witney Street



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.



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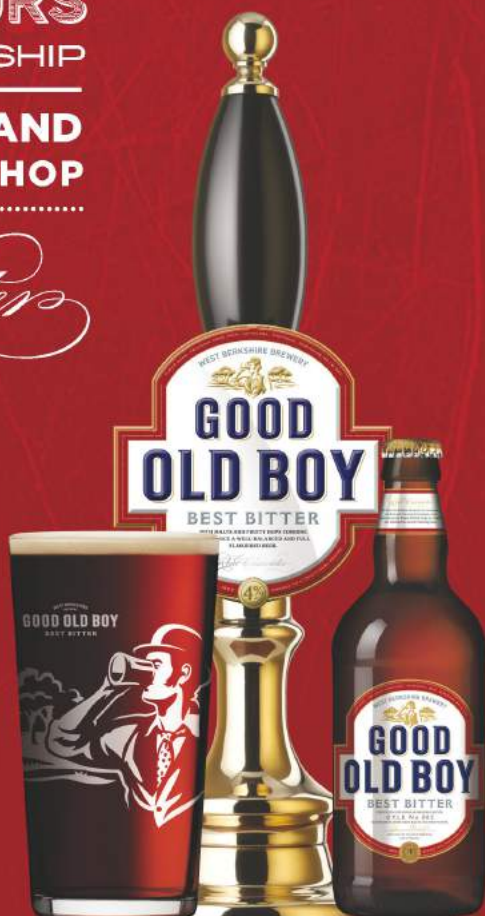
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Blessed Beers from Oxfordshire

Luciana and Christian Gyuricza reflect on organising their first beer festival

WE LIVE IN Tithe Barn South in Church Hanborough, West Oxfordshire, next to the church. We are the owners of Church Hanbrewery, a nano-brewery that started in our house and is now located in New Yatt near Witney, only a few miles from home.

We took part in a couple of beer festivals in St Mary's Church in Witney -- Witney Beer Festival in May 2017 and Oktoberfest in October 2017 - which were very successful events for the church and local breweries.

Inspired by these events, we approached David Tyler, the rector of Hanborough Parish and St Peter and St Paul's Church in Church Hanborough, with an idea that we believed could benefit many parties including the church, the village, the local pub, charity, local micro-breweries, and Church Hanbrewery. The basic idea would be to run a small fund-raising beer festival at the church.

Very supportive, in October 2017 David presented the case to the parish council and to our surprise the idea was accepted.

There are already many great beer festivals in Oxfordshire. It was important to offer something unique and different, so that the festival did not conflict with other festivals in the region. We therefore decided on a winter festival to happen after Christmas but



before Lent (one condition set by the parish council). The first weekend of February seemed the right choice, immediately after "Dry January."

We formed an organising committee involving some church members, the local publican, villagers, and us. The timeline was short but the team worked very efficiently and all seemed to go in the right direction. The biggest challenge was to raise sponsorship from local businesses and promote the event. We aimed at attracting 250 beer drinkers and selling 1,000 pints.

The first-ever Church Hanborough Beer Festival happened on 3 February, and we are very pleased to say it surpassed our most positive expectations in every sense. We sold over the beer ordered and attracted just under 1,000 people, raising good funds for charity and the church. Positive feedback received from the community during and after the event has been overwhelming, and we are already working with the church planning the event in 2019.



**Oxford Branch
Contacts:**

Chairman
Pete Flynn
chair@oxford.camra.org.uk

Secretary
Steve Lawrence
01235 525436
contact@oxford.camra.org.uk

Editor of the Oxford Drinker
Dave Richardson
editor@oxford.camra.org.uk

White Horse Branch Contact:
contact@whitehorsecamra.org.uk

**Oxfordshire Trading Standards
Service:**

Graham Hill House
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Get all the latest news and events, and share information about what's happening in your area. To join send an e-mail with 'subscribe' as the subject to events-request@oxford.camra.org.uk

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Oxford Drinker, 25 Chamberlain Place, Kidlington OX5 1SG
and we will send you as many issues as you send envelopes.

Pub News

From the Oxford and White Horse regions

Carterton

Siege of Orleans

Otherwise something of a real ale desert despite having two large pubs, Carterton can now draw in CAMRA members following the success over the last three years of this micro-pub. A recent visit found beers including Wolfhound, Puppy, Titanic's Chocolate and Vanilla Stout, Mad Dog, Third Eye and Snails Bank cider.

Charlton-on-Otmoor

Crown

It has been sold on to a local private buyer, and service continues as normal with Brakspear Bitter the regular beer, supported on a recent visit by Timothy Taylor Boltmaker.

Cumnor

Bear and Ragged Staff

This mainly dining pub (pictured below before its sale) with historic front bar and guest rooms is now owned by the

Peach pub company which runs the Fishes in North Hinksey and the Fleece in Witney, plus 14 other pubs. It re-opened in March after a major revamp.

Dorchester-on-Thames

Fleur de Lys

The pub is for sale and a campaign launched in the village to preserve it for the community has apparently stalled because not enough money was raised, but the owners want to sell it as a going concern. The Fleur is the last pub in the village although the George and the White Hart hotels also have bars, with the George having a decent range of cask ales. Local CAMRA member Gordon Rogers reports that the Fleur had Marlow Rebellion and Loddon beers on a recent visit.

Islip

Red Lion

The pub is now under the wing

of the Jacobs group which runs Jacobs Inn in Wolvercote, the Woodstock Arms in Woodstock and the Plough in Bicester, plus a deli and restaurant in Headington. Food has always been to the fore but local drinkers are still important, and on a recent visit Sharp's Doom Bar, Black Sheep and Marston's EPA were on offer.

Langford

Bell

This pub has re-opened after an extensive revamp, including guest bedrooms. Good quality food is very popular and supported on the bar by Hooky Bitter, Doom Bar and a guest.

Marsh Baldon

Seven Stars

The pub celebrated its fifth anniversary under community ownership on 30 March, during which time it has become a very popular village venue for real ale, dining, a large garden and numerous events. In 2016 it was also named Oxford CAMRA Town and Village Pub of the Year, having made it into the *Good Beer Guide*.

Oxford

Royal Blenheim

The pub has changed management and will re-open after a revamp in April as Titanic brewery's first outlet outside its home base around Staffordshire. Previously run by White Horse brewery whose directors include Keith Bott from Titanic, the Blenheim has an enviable reputation as a real ale oasis which is set to continue under Titanic, with many guests



likely to remain available.

Previous tenants Mike and Jane Binyon have moved on, and the lease is still held by Everards whose beers usually feature.

Somerset House

Closed since 2014, the last remaining pub in the New Marston area is the focus of a determined fight by locals to re-open it as a pub after plans were published to turn it into an education centre and cafe by Oxford-based charity the Wilaya Trust. The Save Our Somerset (SOS) group was created soon after closure and has demonstrated major support for re-opening it as a pub.

Over 200 people attended a "pop-up pub" event at a local scout hall despite bad weather in December, and the next such event is planned for Sunday 22 April. Its online petition has attracted 650 signatures, and 200 locals have joined an online forum.

Following a change in the law last year lobbied for by CAMRA, anyone wanting to apply for change of use must apply for planning permission, and show that the property is not viable as a pub. According to SOS, three pub companies have approached the private owner to take on the lease, but in vain. These include Drew Brammer, one of the owners of the Jolly Postboys in Florence Park, which successfully re-opened in 2016, who said he put in "a competitive and realistic offer" as he was confident in the potential of the Marston Road area. Also interested is the Dodo Pub Company which runs Arkell's tenancies the Rusty Bicycle and Rickety Press in Oxford, which have also come

back to life in impressive fashion.

A planning battle before Oxford City Council is now in the offing, with SOS believing that it would be impossible to prove that the Somerset is unviable as a pub.

William Morris

The first of the three Wetherspoon pubs in Oxford, adjacent to the Cowley Centre, has won a reprieve having been slated for closure in March. Manageress Becci Fair confirmed that it will remain open for the foreseeable future, but with the Cowley Centre set for a major revamp, its long-term future may not be secure.

Radcot

Swan

Leased from Greene King but free of tie, this West Oxfordshire pub on the River Thames had Otter and Ramsbury beers on due to a pause in brewing at the Old Forge brewery in Coleshill, its main supplier.

South Moreton

Crown

This village pub near Didcot is the latest in Oxfordshire to be the subject of a community buy-out attempt which, if successful, would raise the total to nine in the county. It has initiated a community share officer and called a meeting in the village for 21 April, where the latest position will be announced.



Villagers are trying to raise at least £230,000 as community shares, to stimulate match-funding and grant initiatives that are hoped to bring the total to around £530,000. Paul Jackson, chairman of the South Moreton Community Benefit Society, said: "Even before this share offer launch, we have received pledges amounting to around £125,000 from 94 local people. That's fantastic, however we really need to almost double that amount. Similar fund-raising exercises for other community pubs showed that they could massively increase shareholdings in the final weeks of the campaign, so I'm sure that South Moreton and our local friends can do it."

The Crown was closed and sold by Wadworth to property developer Worthmore Investments in 2015, but since then villagers have successfully sought to list it as an Asset of Community Value. The Community Benefit Society is supported by the Plunkett Foundation which has assisted many rural communities to set up and run their own pubs with cafe and shop facilities on-site.

To find out more, visit www.savethecrownpub.co.uk

Standlake

Black Horse

The village now has its pub open again serving gastro food along with three real ales, Otter being a recent choice.

Tackley

Gardiner Arms

Together with Little Ox Brewery, it has produced two of its own ales: Tackley Bitter, a medium/

dark beer (4%) and Tackley Gold, a slightly fruity 3.9% beer. Both have proved to be very popular and it plans to work with Little Ox to grow the Tackley Ales brand, in bottles and on draught.

The pub, off the A4260 Kidlington-Banbury road, is holding the first of many planned Tackley beer festivals on 23-24 June with about 20 beers, a gin bar, cider tent and live music all day.

Following the pub's re-opening in October 2016, after a period of closure for most of that year, Martin and Jackie Perrin have made the Gardiner Arms into a lovely village pub with regular music events. It has a five-star hygiene rating for the kitchen, with a menu that includes locally sourced meats.

Up-coming events include music on 7 May (The Band Next Door) and 18 May (open mic night), with updates on Facebook. It also has a thriving Aunt Sally team.

Wantage

Kings Arms

Oak Taverns has purchased this pub on Wallingford Street, which will be closed for a major refurbishment and re-opens in May as a new real ale destination for the town. It is introducing five hand pumps for real ale, and a craft lager and cider menu. As part of the refurbishment a one-barrel microbrewery will be built, so the pub can brew its own beers as at Oak Taverns' successful Cross Keys in Thame, and the Swan in Faringdon. The Kings Arms will be modelled on the

success of these award-winning pubs.

Wheatley

Plough

The pub closed in March after the business owners declined to renew the lease on the building, and will apparently be selling off their stock and equipment. It looks unlikely to be opening as a pub.

Witney

New Inn

Landlord Martin Fowler is retiring mid-June, the pub having been passed on by Punch Taverns to Heineken on 5 March. His career including 15 years at the Inn will be covered in the June edition.

Send pub news to pub-news@oxford.camra.org.uk

The advertisement features a dark blue background. At the top center is the Wadworth logo, which includes a stylized illustration of a castle or town and the text 'WADWORTH' above 'BREWED IN WILTSHIRE SINCE 1875'. On the left, the words 'KING OF THE OLD COOL' are written in large, white, distressed, blocky capital letters. Below this, in smaller white capital letters, is 'HARD CRAFT SINCE 1875'. On the right side is a tall, clear glass filled with a golden beer topped with a thick white head of foam. The glass has the Wadworth logo and '6X' printed on it. At the bottom center, in small white text, are the website 'www.wadworth.co.uk', the Twitter handle '@wadworth', and icons for Twitter and Facebook.

Get set for... Oxford Beer Week

YOU'VE HEARD OF Dry January, but what about Wet May? We're not talking about the unpredictable weather, but a series of special events in the second week bookended by some very major beer festivals.

The Oxford Brewers Alliance, which brings together most of the professional brewers within a 30-mile radius, launched the first Beer Week last year with reasonable success, considering that was a first attempt and it had no budget. The aim again this year is to get as many pubs as possible to stock local beers, with several breweries having open days and pubs staging festivals or other events.

Once again a special Collaboration Brew is being produced, this time at Shotover brewery, called OSB or Oxford Special Bitter, brewed with donated ingredients. Profits will



be given to Helen & Douglas charity, and it can be bought from any of the 11 participating breweries.

The outline programme is below, but this will be updated so go online nearer the time. Events are being held not only in the city but around the county, with major beer festivals in Banbury and Witney happening at the same time. The Perch pub in Oxford kicks things off with its own event, and Reading beer festival is held at Christchurch Meadows,

Caversham over the first weekend of Oxford Beer Week, on 3-6 May.

Hook Norton will stage events in the downstairs function room of the Castle pub in Oxford, which was closed for refurbishment during last year's Beer Week.

Managing director James Clarke said: "We want to showcase what a great beer city Oxford is, with a diverse pub and bar scene, and what great beers are brewed here. Last year we were pleased with the response and this year, organisations are coming to us – such as Brewdog."

For a list of breweries involved, see advertisement in this edition. For further info:

:
www.oxfordbrewers.org/events
www.facebook.com/oxbeerweek/
[@oxbeerweek](https://twitter.com/oxbeerweek)

Oxford Events

Saturday 5 May	Perch Beer Festival, Binsey
Sunday 6 May	Perch Beer Festival, Binsey
Monday 7 May	Oxfordshire Beer Festival at Tap Social, Botley
Tuesday 8 May	Tap Taking Over at Brewdog, Cowley Road
Wednesday 9 May	Local Beer Showcase, Rose & Crown North Parade
Thursday 10 May	Loose Cannon launch event at the White Rabbit, Friars Entry

Oxfordshire Events

Saturday 5 May	Witney Beer Festival, St Mary's Church
Thursday 10 May	Banbury Beer & Cider Festival, Army Reserve Centre
Friday 11 May	Banbury Beer & Cider Festival, Army Reserve Centre
Saturday 12 May	Banbury Beer & Cider Festival, Army Reserve Centre
Saturday 12 May	XT Brewery Open Day, Long Crendon 10.30am - 4.30pm
Sunday 13 May	Hook Norton Mini Beer Festival, Hook Norton Brewery

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Brewery Focus: Vale

Dave Richardson joins a branch foray into the wilds of Buckinghamshire on a winter's night

"SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL" is an adage that might well apply to Vale Brewery, which intends to remain that way at a time when many small breweries are ramping up production. Not only does this give the owner/managers a quality of life – hopefully! – but it avoids becoming big enough to attract a higher rate of duty and hence higher prices.

The company is known not just for Vale beers but for ABC, a micro-brewery at the Hop Pole pub in Aylesbury which was set up in 2011 to revive the name of Aylesbury Brewing Company, a long-gone brand that continued to have pubs after its take-over by Allied. While the core range is produced by Vale at a 20-barrel plant, ABC has a 12-barrel plant that usually makes a different brew every week.

Vale was established in 1995 in Haddenham, moving to the village of Brill in 2007. On 21 April it will formally open its first brewery tap bar and expanded shop, open from 9am-5pm.

Our branch visit was made shortly before Christmas, when we enjoyed pints of a light, hoppy seasonal beer called Five Gold Rings, while Black Beauty porter (4.4%) was busy fermenting. The latter is one of eight cask beers in the core range, the others being best seller Gravitas (4.8); Brill Gold (3.5), Wychert (3.9), Red Kite (4.3), Best (3.7), Black Swan mild (3.9) and VPA (4.2).

Head brewer David Renton showed us around, and told us of the challenges and opportunities in today's highly competitive brewing scene.

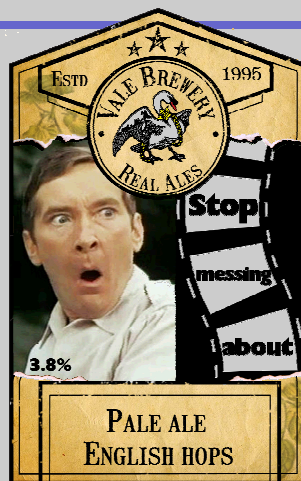
"We are a hands-on brewery and not planning to get any bigger, although we can brew twice a day if we need to," he said. "Some breweries get big quickly, but the whole industry is very volatile and you have to wonder if there's room for so many breweries when there's a lot of rubbish beers and ruthless pub landlords. But if you're good enough, you'll find your groove."

Vale has four of its own pubs, but sadly is trying to dispose of a fifth, the long closed General Elliott in South Hinksey, near Oxford. This re-opened in late 2014 but lasted for little over a year, the latest in a run of bad luck for Vale which hasn't succeeded in finding new tenants. The others, apart from the Hop Pole, are the George in Winslow, the Chequers in Fenny Stratford and the Castle in Tring.

Vale does not yet produce any craft kegs, but David said this was under consideration and the first would probably go out with ABC branding rather than Vale. Some pubs have shown a preference for having ABC rather than Vale beers.

David and brewing partner Mark Stevens then followed our party to the Hop Pole for more drinks and a buffet, and what a great pub it is. The ABC micro-brewery is visible from the dining area and on sale were not only Vale and ABC beers but ever revolving products including from North Yorkshire Brewery and Castle Rock.

All of us – David and Mark included – went home very happy.



Vale is launching its new tap room and expanded shop on 21 April – Mange Tout, a 4.4% Auburn traditional ale, recalls a much loved British comedy and has a bittersweet balance and full-bodied malty finish. "Do you know what Rodney? I'm going to have a pukka pint of this lovely bubbly Vale Brewery beer."

Walk the Line, a 4.2% Red Rye, recalls Johnny Cash's first number one single in 1956. This red rye American beer has flavours of toasted malts and dried fruits with a smooth bitterness.

Stop Messing About is a 3.8% Pale: "Oh Matron! Stop messing about and try a pint of this beer with soft malt and delicate hop flavours, and aromas of fruit and berries" – a golden beer for a golden boy of British comedy.

Its ABC beers are changing constantly, with both traditional styles and more modern twists on some classics. Modern Prometheus is a 5.1% Black IPA marking 200 years since the publishing of Mary Shelley's Gothic classic *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus*. Wilde is a 4.3% Witbier named after the finest wit of them all, Oscar Wilde.

CAMRA's future... and why you must vote

Dave Richardson digs the essentials out of the debate on our future direction

CAMRA MEMBERSHIP shouldn't be a chore, but I have to admit that we are asked to do quite a lot of "homework" before casting our votes by a deadline of midnight on Wednesday, 18 April (or at the AGM/EGM on 21 April if you're going).

There's no real alternative to reading the booklet *CAMRA'S future?*, *CAMRA's purpose?*, *Have Your Say!*, as distributed with *What's Brewing?* and also available online. But in the knowledge that most members probably won't read it, here's my attempt at what it boils down to.

The key proposal is that CAMRA should embrace a wider range of beer styles and recognise them as within a broader definition of "real ale", and that includes so-called "craft ales" that might be keg or in cans or bottles. Also, CAMRA wants

to represent all pub goers and not just drinkers of cask ale and traditionally made cider and perry.

On page 8 of the booklet, you'll find this: "Boundaries have been blurred and there now exist some keg and other non-cask beers that are high-quality products – brewed with first-class ingredients, matured over a long period, unfiltered and unpasteurised.- The highest quality keg beers of today contain live yeast, are subject to secondary fermentation and are, to all intents and purposes, real ale up to the point when CO2 pressure is applied in the cellar.

"The consultation revealed that many members find some of these products superior to lower-quality, mass-produced cask beer common in pubs – and members questioned why CAMRA champions the latter over the former based simply on dispense method and

with no regard to the quality of ingredients, production or taste.

"CAMRA's failure to acknowledge these developments risks failing beer consumers, but also at best ignores, at worst alienates, one of the most obvious, accessible and youthful potential audiences for real ale. - With 80% of brewers and almost 70% of licensees saying they sold a greater proportion of 'craft' keg beer than five years ago, the majority of members (including active members) polled said it was time for CAMRA to expand the scope of beers it recognises."

CAMRA has stressed that after a three-year consultation period and input from tens of thousands of members, traditional cask ale (and cider and perry) will remain at the heart of our campaign. But the National Executive now proposes widening our remit, and that's what the EGM voting is all about.

The aspiration to represent all pub goers is perhaps easier to explain, bearing





in mind that the campaigning focus has increasingly moved on to protecting pubs. The closure rate is still alarming with around 15% of all pubs closing in the last decade.

How do I vote?

Online: all members who have registered an email address were sent an email on 6 March from "Online Voting", with security access codes and a link.

By post: Details were included on the address sheet of *What's Brewing?*, or contact CAMRA HQ.

In person: Only if you're going to the AGM/EGM and conference, at the University of Warwick, Coventry on 20-22 April (the AGM/EGM is from 9.30am on 21 April). You can also appoint the chairman as your proxy beforehand.

A 75% majority in favour (of *those who actually vote*) is required to pass the key proposals. The result will be announced after the AGM/EGM and the whole process is supervised by the Electoral Reform Society.

Useful websites

There's lots of useful discussion on all these issues on the following website, and also links to the Revitalisation Project on the main CAMRA website: www.discourse.camra.org.uk

Why I support CAMRA's proposal to embrace craft beer

XT head brewer **Russ Taylor** reflects on why CAMRA's Revitalisation project is timely

XT BREWING WELCOMES proposals by CAMRA to widen its remit to include all quality beers, and not just cask ales.

Following a very busy 2017 when we made a significant investment in new brewing equipment and a new brewery tap room, we are 100% committed to increasing production of cask ales. However, we are also committed to increasing production of all craft beers, which are also produced in kegs, bottles and cans.

CAMRA's proposal to appeal to a wider range of drinkers who enjoy all quality beers – while continuing to advocate that real ale is the pinnacle of the brewers' craft – fits in well with our thinking. It's been a great voyage so far on the good ship XT – six years ago we were just setting sail as a new virgin brewery in a beer world where there were only a few hundred like us. Now there are five times more breweries but we are still going at full steam ahead, with strong growth every year since the outset.

There have been some significant changes in the world of beer – it has made seismic shifts from dull mass marketing and standard brews to the glamorous new epoch of craft beer. As the beer world evolved, we saw the growing tide of craft brewers and now with so many other brands around -- doing everything from minimalist to psychedelic – it's getting rather hard to stand out in such a crowd.

"The terminology of craft beer is something of an enigma in England. The Americans, who arguably coined the term, view the beer and brewing world *vertically* in terms of volume by producer; whereas over here, we view it *horizontally* in terms of dispense method. This does rather make twisting an American view point over our beer world a bit tricky.

So, is cask beer craft or not? – yes probably, but I don't think it really matters. At XT we make beer for cask, keg, can or bottle and we craft all of them with the same love and care. The most significant format for us is, by far, cask. This makes up most of our production and we have invested heavily to make more of it and make it better. The cask range under the core XT or experimental Animal brands has been growing and we have striven to keep evolving and developing.

To further show our faith in the future of cask beer, we have brought our cask beer branding up to date with a modern new look (see Brewery News). The next generation branding was launched in March 2018 and gives all our beers a cohesive family look while keeping to our core branding principles.

We see the future of XT firmly in the cask market, working with our existing pub partners while reaching out to other operators who are looking for an innovative brewery to develop new markets for beer with us.

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2018

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members

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**A fine selection of cask
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own Tackley Bitter and
Tackley Gold.**

**Food Stalls
Draught Ciders
Gin Bar**

TACKLEY BITTER

See Facebook page: Tackley Beer Festival 2018 for all ticket enquiries or contact
01869 331266

Awards, awards, awards!

OXFORD CAMRA held a second highly successful awards night at St Aldates Tavern in Oxford on 12 February, with about 50 people in attendance.

This was an opportunity for our regular supporters to meet local brewers and pubs listed in the *Good Beer Guide*, and of course to drink some real ale and enjoy a buffet in the pub's impressive Blue Room.

The event was attended by the *Oxford Mail* which gave the local pub and brewing scene some great coverage, and *Oxford Drinker* editor and local publicity officer Dave Richardson also talked about the scene on Radio Oxford.

Certificates were handed out by branch chairman Pete Flynn to four very worthy winners. James Pamphilon of the Brewery Tap, Abingdon won Town and Village Pub of the Year; Dan and Carole Smaje of the White Hart, Headington won City Pub of the Year; John Romer of Turpin Brewery was awarded Beer of the Festival 2017 for Golden Citrus (for the third time in succession!); and Jason Bolger of Tap Social won runner-up Beer of the Festival for Good Size Eh?

Well done everyone, and we're already looking forward to the 2019 awards.

PHOTOS TOP TO BOTTOM: Oxford Branch Chairman Pete Flynn presents awards to Dan and Carole Smaje of the White Hart; James Pamphilon of the Brewery Tap; brewers John Romer (left) and Jason Bolger (right).



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Happiness is a state of mind

Graham Shelton, who led the community buy-out of the Red Lion at Northmoor, continues his regular column

A FEW YEARS ago we conducted a survey to find out what residents liked about Northmoor in West Oxfordshire, and how we could be best prepared for the future. A significant number of people liked the fact that things hadn't changed, and they didn't want them to change, thank you very much.

The truth, of course, is that society is changing all the time, and this was proved when we compared our results with those from a Northmoor survey done in the 1990s. Then, the major concerns were the number of bicycles and TV aerials; parking wasn't a problem, and nobody around here had discovered Google, mobile phones and online shopping.

The pubs were busy in those days, and the Morland family still ran one of several local, independent and very successful breweries. Smoking was allowed in the public bar. Few women chose to venture inside, and children were firmly discouraged.

Up the road in Longworth, "Dirty Dudley" had presided over the Lamb and Flag since the 1960s. He had a belt specially made in the form of a horse girth to encircle his ample frame, and he bought a very nice Bentley car which he had chopped in half by a local coachbuilder in order to make a pick-up truck.

Interestingly, he was one of the first people to provide food in a pub outside London. Up to that point, there were few proper restaurants, and if you were minded to eat out in the evening, you had to go to a hotel.

Dudley was certainly creative and forward-thinking. He never wrote down a food order and rarely, if ever, got it wrong. At the end of the meal, and in order to calculate the bill, it would be "Now, then, what did you have?" People started coming from Oxford, and he had to convert the stables to make more eating space: gloomy, cobwebby, and probably not very clean, but great fun.

These days, much-loved Dudley has gone, and so has his pub. There is hardly a pub anywhere that doesn't serve food; supermarkets all sell cheap booze, and pubs must look afresh at who to attract and how to do it.

What we discovered about Northmoor was that although a lot of things had changed, people have stayed much the same. We still have a really strong sense of community, and this is a differentiator in making Northmoor a good place to live.

It's my belief that the sameness of people also holds the key to the future of pubs. Whoever you are, wherever and whenever you live, it gives you a warm feeling to be welcomed into your local with a smile and a greeting, to be offered a good drink and a tasty meal, and to meet friends who are pleased to see you.

So if you are thinking of starting or saving a pub, here's what to do: learn the trade, act professionally, work hard but above all check out the meaning of "hospitality" and dispense it generously every day. Happiness is a state of mind and it's the key to enduring success.

Pete's Pubs

Branch chairman **Pete Flynn** takes an amble along Oxford's Abingdon Road

LIKE MOST PEOPLE I'm happy to board the Park and Ride bus to Oxford rather than walk into town, but today was different as I planned to visit each of the four pubs situated along the Abingdon Road.

My first port of call was **The Duke of Monmouth**, a large Greene King (GK) pub focusing on providing a spacious and comfortable amenity for sports fans. Named after the illegitimate son of Charles II, James Scott, who led the unsuccessful Monmouth rebellion against James II and was executed in 1685, the pub features some old signage from the days it was owned by Halls Brewery. This is evident from the stone motif on the front wall.

Four real ales were being served mostly from the GK

range but I chose a guest, namely, Daleside's Old Leg-over, and priced at £3 a pint I thought it offered excellent value. I spent some time chatting to Jenny Corradi, who told me she had worked here for over 20 years. From what I could see, Jenny is a firm favourite with her customers as she served drinks whilst they watched the Six Nations Rugby on this Saturday afternoon.

My next stop was **Home** formerly known as **The Berkshire** and also the **Crooked Pot**. Four hand pumped ales were available, including Loose Cannon's Abingdon Bridge, XT/Animal's Hop Cat IPA, Loddon's Hullabaloo, and Outlander's Vibrant Forest. Two new beers are available each week, and I chose Cotswold IPA which was

full of citrus flavours and served via the key cask method – one of 12 craft beers available.

Landlord Noel White, who runs the café, bar, restaurant and pub with his sister, created the eclectic and modern bar area himself. He has also designed the bar area at Oxford pubs The Chester and The Jolly Postboys, and The Bull at Charlbury. I liked the caged dining room area with metal rods running from floor to ceiling. It could have been borrowed from a scene straight out of *50 Shades of Grey*, reminding me of a soft dungeon!

This establishment, similar to The Pint Shop in Oxford, is different from other café-style bars as it has no branding, not even on the metal hand pumps which dispense the beer under a 2.5psi carbon dioxide blanket pressure, thus maintaining the contents in tip-top condition.

Home serves its local community well with a quality food offering, whilst opening at 10am to cater for mums with toddlers who enjoy coffee, cake and a natter. Meet the brewer evenings are also in vogue whilst silent cinema and a mini beer festival in a shed make this a dynamic and diverse alternative to the prosaic back street local.

Heading north once more my next stop was **The White House**, formerly known as **The Folly Bridge Inn** and a pub



ABOVE: Adam Jakielczyk behind the bar at the Duke of Monmouth
OPPOSITE: Home (upper) and Head of the River (lower)

forming part of the Wadworth empire. Managers Alisha Bishop and her chef partner Andrew Myland told me that the pub is 70% wet-led (more drink sales than food) and relies on loyal customers from the nearby Grandpont area for its custom.

Three real ales were available from the Wadworth stable, which included Bishop's Tipple, 6X, and IPA. I chose the Tipple which, being candid, looked a little lifeless but nonetheless tasted OK. I was made to feel very welcome by some locals who told me about activities including Aunt Sally, quiz nights and folk, jazz, and blues in the large function room upstairs.

My last call was **The Head of The River**, built using Headington stone as with various Oxford colleges, an imposing looking Fuller's pub by Folly Bridge. This has undergone a major refurb recently and is also a 20-bedroom riverside hotel. Like many Oxford pubs it has an interesting history having only been a pub since 1977. It was a warehouse when Oxford had a substantial river trade, and by 1827 it became known as the Wharhouse. A crane from that time can be seen on the huge patio area.

The building then became a repair centre for a boatyard owned by Salter's Steamers, which to this day operates a successful seasonal service to Abingdon whilst hiring out punts and boats.

Diners can enjoy food and drink whilst watching river traffic in a lovely location perhaps spoilt only by the sheer noise and vibrancy of this busy hostelry. I was impressed by the sheer professionalism of the staff all donning the branded (two crossed oars) workwear.

The Head of The River is named after the victorious team in the "bumping races" which started in 1815 when teams would race to Folly Bridge from Iffley Lock and try to bump into the team in front.

The Pub gets its name from a competition run by the Oxford Mail, in which the winning entry was selected from around 2,700 entries.

The Head of The River is the victorious team in the "bumping races" which started in 1815 when teams would race to Folly Bridge from Iffley Lock and try to bump into the team in front.

Four real ales from the Fuller's range were available the day I called and I opted for, HSB, this is a silky smooth and fruity English beer style with an abv ABV of 4.8%. The beer was originally named Horndean Special Brew when it was brewed at, The Gales Brewery, prior to George Gale and Co being taken over by Fuller's. The English Bitter is a truly wonderful beer style and this one is no exception with its ruby red/copper brown colour with an off white one finger head. The taste is outstanding

due to its bitter finish. Whilst there are myriad malty beers available it is only English bitters that are able to provide a truly malty taste with a refreshing finish.

Well, that was the end of my beer journey which took me almost to my bus stop and return to Abingdon.

I would like to acknowledge, Dave Richardson, author of the book *Oxford Pubs*, for factual information in this article.



Tony's Travels

Tony Goulding visits CAMRA's National Pub of the Year during two visits "Oop North"

ST HELENS ON Merseyside, a town I had never visited (and there are not many of them), now boasts the top pub in the country according to CAMRA, having made it through the branch, regional and finally national selection process. This is the **Cricketers Arms**, while just down the road (or along the railway line) is one of three runners-up for the national title, Wigan Central.

My own memories of a pub called the Cricketers are of a superb Morland pub on Iffley Road in Oxford. It had two distinctly different bars with their "own" drinkers who passed through each other's territory to get to the toilets in a friendly fashion, but now it's the Mad Hatter cocktail bar.

The Cricketers in St Helens was a stunning eye-opener to the future – a pub free of the

dubious support of a pub company or some of the breweries. This former Greenall Whitley house has gone from closure to huge success in just four years. This back street boozier was very busy even at 5pm on a Monday with drinkers in conversation.

With no music to distract you and a choice of 12 beers and 10 ciders, we were on a different level in heaven. Rosendale Pitch Porter and Castle Rock Sherwood Reserve Porter were duly consumed in very tasty form. The pub should soon have a micro-brewery called West Point, the name of a very interesting place I have visited in the US.

Four beer festivals a year are hugely popular, and with everything about this place blowing me away the final shock was the cost of snacks.

Eat your heart out, Wetherspoon, but jacket spuds and meat pies cost only £1.50 with a bargain seven-variety cheese and cracker board at £2. I could find nothing wrong with this pub, which had clean toilets and very knowledgeable staff. We will be back and the Pub of the Year award is well deserved.

Next up was a previously visited superb recent creation, **Wigan Central**, situated in a railway arch under North Western station. I raved about this place in the last edition of the *Oxford Drinker* and nothing has changed – last trains must surely be missed because of this place. Seven beers and four ciders were on the bar with RedWillow's Heartless Chocolate Stout and Acorn Gorlovka's Imperial Stout both supped with delight. The wonderful atmosphere is supported by a sort of delicatessen full of shelves with almost 200 beers in can and bottle.

On a previous visit "Oop North" myself and editor Dave Richardson found ourselves observing a fast disappearing railway infrastructure scene in the Sheffield area, along with the local model railway shops. The beer scene in the city is massive and you would need a week to tap into it, but we had one evening so off we went.

I last visited Kelham Island in Sheffield some 15 years ago,





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and this is where we headed. First up was the **Harlequin**, formerly a Wards pub called the Manchester with the old railway line to that city just across the road. It's now run by Exit 33 Brewing and functions as the brewery tap, with up to six of its beers often served. On the day the Stout and Northern Best were very drinkable, along with four other beers. With a heaven-sent choice of 24 ciders on the list, where do you start? The **Harlequin** serves very good value pub food along with dozens of gins, rums and malt whiskies, with a super locals' pub ambience. We could have stayed all night.

A walk over the river found the Kelham Island Brewery of Pale Rider fame next door to that legendary pub, **The Fat Cat**, renamed from the Alma. Nothing much has changed here over the years, as the service and real pub feeling are still there. Eight beers and three ciders were served with Milestone Plum Porter very tasty, along with the bargain of the night, Kelham Best, at £1.50 a pint. Never pass this place!

A former CAMRA Pub of the Year, **The Kelham Island Tavern**, was a short walk away. There's lots of beer here on 10 hand pumps, with Acorn Old Moor Porter and Thwaites Nutty Black being dangerously drinkable. Over 100 whiskies including numerous malts are stocked in this superb, quiet

drinking establishment.

Another former Wards pub – it used to be *the* brewery in Sheffield – is **Shakespeares Ale and Cider House**, re-opened in July 2011. Since then a total of 4,844 beers have been served here, wow! This is another superb drinking experience with eight hand pumps serving beers from far and wide. The Titanic Cappuccino stout was seriously sinkable, hic!

This area of the city was originally industrial, but the winds of change now see up-market apartments shoulder-to-shoulder with these surviving pubs from a long gone age.

TONY

Editor Dave Richardson adds: Being a Wigan Rugby League supporter, I ventured into the territory of our arch-rivals St Helens with some trepidation. It was worth it! The Cricketers' winning National Pub of the Year really is a triumph, considering that it was closed and boarded up when current owners Andy and Denise Evans took over in 2013 and hadn't served cask ale since the 1980s. As CAMRA's Paul Ainsworth commented, "It's a shining example of how a pub, which seems destined for closure, can have its fortunes turned around when in the right hands."

The CAMRA Pub Discount Scheme gives licensees the chance to promote their real ale offering to card carrying CAMRA members by offering them money of a pint or half pint.

The pubs in our area that offer a discount are listed below:

Abingdon

Brewery Tap
Broad Face
Kings Head & Bell
Nags Head on the Thames
Narrows *
White Horse

Oxford

Britannia, Headington
Castle Tavern
Chequers, High Street
Four Candles *
Rose and Crown
Swan and Castle *
William Morris, Cowley *

Witney

Company of Weavers *

Pubs offer different discounts, and some discounts are available only at certain times or on certain beers. Please ask at the pub to find out what is offered. An asterisk (*) indicates that the discount is in Wetherspoons vouchers that are sent to all CAMRA members.





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Festival Diary

Compiled by Richard Queralt

Further details can be found on our website www.oxford.camra.org.uk

Friday 20 - Saturday 21 April Newbury Racecourse Beer Festival

Racecourse Road, Newbury
60+ beers ciders & perries
www.newburyracecourse.co.uk

Friday 27 - Saturday 28 April Chippenhams Beer & Cider Festival

Olympiad, Sadlers Mead
90 beers plus cider & perry
www.nwiltscamra.org.uk

Friday 27 - Saturday 28 April Gloucester Beer & Cider Festival

Blackfriars Priory, Ladybellegate Street, Gloucester
www.gloucesterbeerfestival.org.uk

Friday 27 - Sunday 29 April Spring Beer Festival

The Nag's Head, Bridge Street, Abingdon
36 beers & ciders
www.thenagshheadonthethames.co.uk

Thursday 3 - Sunday 6 May Reading Beer & Cider Festival

Christchurch Meadows, George Street, Caversham
500+ beers plus 200 ciders, perries & foreign beers
www.readingbeerfestival.org.uk

Saturday 5 May Witney Beer Festival

St Mary's Church, Church Green,
www.witneybeerfestival.com

Saturday 5 - Monday 7 May Perch Beer & Cider Festival

The Perch Inn, Binsey Lane, Binsey, Oxford
www.the-perch.co.uk

Saturday 5 - Saturday 12 May Oxford Beer Week

See website for details
www.oxfordbrewers.org/oxbeerwk

Thursday 10 - Saturday 12 May Banbury Beer Festival

Army Reserve Centre, Oxford Road, Banbury
100+ beers, ciders & perries
www.northoxon.camra.org.uk

Friday 11 - Sunday 13 May Kings Arms Beer Festival

4 The Moors, Kidlington
Festival to raise money for Prostate Cancer Research.

Friday 18 - Sunday 20 May White Hart Beer Festival

St Andrew's Road, Headington, Oxford
50+ beers & ciders
01865 761737
www.thewhitehartheadington.com

Saturday 19 - Sunday 20 May North Cotswold Spring Ale & Steam Weekend

Wincombe Station, off Becketts Lane, Greet, nr Cheltenham
www.northcotswoldcamra.org.uk

Friday 25 - Sunday 27 May Rokefest Beer and Music Festival

Home Sweet Home, Roke, nr Wallingford
www.rokefest.com

Saturday 26 - Monday 28 May Swindon & Cricklade Railway Real Ale & Cider Festival

Blunsdon Station, Tadpole Lane, Blunsdon, nr Swindon
www.swindon-cricklade-railway.org

Saturday 2 June Great Chadlington Beer Festival

Chadlington Memorial Hall, Chapel Row, Chadlington
www.chadlingtonbeerfestival.com



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Branch Diary

Friday 20 - Sunday 22 April

CAMRA Members' Weekend and AGM

University of Warwick, Coventry

Saturday 28 April Beer Festival Helpers' Trip

Travelling to Burton-upon-Trent.

Tuesday 1 May Branch Meeting

7.30pm
At Tap Social, Curtis Industrial Estate, Botley.
Meet beforehand for a chat at the Seacourt Bridge from 6.30pm.

Saturday 5 May Beer Festival Social

1pm
Social at Witney Beer Festival.

Saturday 12 May Beer Festival Social and Regional Meeting

12 noon
Social at Banbury Beer Festival.

Saturday 19 May Beer Festival Social

1pm
Social at White Hart Beer Festival in Headington.



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NOON TIL 10PM



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Wantage Festival Success

THE EIGHTH WANTAGE Beer Festival was held on 16-17 March at The Beacon in Wantage and featured 27 real ales along with five ciders and two perries selected by branch members, many from breweries local to the Vale and Oxfordshire.

The ale selection tries to bring beers to the festival that are special one-off brews or are not normally available locally. This year members of the branch brewed a special festival beer, Nice Try, in conjunction with local brewery LoveBeer from Milton. LoveBeer won the Beer of the Festival award last year for Hair of the Doug, and so volunteered a brewery experience for branch members with Nice Try being a 5% traditional style bitter.

This year's Beer of the Festival was Forest Fruit Porter from Flash House Brewery, North Shields. The competition was fierce with three other breweries tying for runner up – Butts Wild Mild Port Side, White Horse Single Hop Styrian Wolf, and Wild Weather's End of Level Boss.

For the first time a souvenir pint glass was available for visitors

to purchase. It had a Rugby theme, as this was the Six Nations tournaments final weekend.

On the first day the branch's annual presentations were made by Steve Trinder, the Mayor of Wantage, pictured below with the winners. He presented certificates to:

Pub of the Year 2018:
The Royal Oak, Wantage
 Pub of the Year Runner-Up:
Shoulder of Mutton, Wantage
 Country Pub of the Year 2018:
The Greyhound, Letcombe Regis
 Club of the Year 2018:
Stanford Social Club, Stanford in the Vale
 Cider Pub of the Year 2018:
The Royal Oak, Wantage

During the two days of the festival approximately 450 members of the public and CAMRA members attended. Many positive comments have been received and 16 new CAMRA members were signed up for the campaign. This year's festival built on the success of last year and improvements are already being discussed for 2019 to ensure it improves year on year.



White Horse AGM

WHITE HORSE CHAIRMAN Ian Winfield writes: "We will be holding our branch AGM on Tuesday 24 April at the award-winning Royal Oak in Wantage, starting at 7.30pm. A very warm invitation is extended to all local branch members, especially those who may not have attended local branch meetings before. It's an opportunity to meet the current committee and other active members and to exchange views on campaigning issues, local and national. The evening is also a great social get-together.

"As always, all committee positions are up for re-election so if you feel you can contribute to the running of our branch or Wantage Beer Festival, then I would be very pleased to hear from you. I would very much like to fill the young persons' representative role on the committee as we need more young people involved.

"Most of the positions involve only a few hours' volunteering a month, if that. If you would like to stand as chairman, treasurer or secretary please inform me by email: chair@whitehorsecamra.org.uk

"The agenda will be circulated a week before the meeting and a buffet will be provided."

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Forename(s)	(UK & EU)	
Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)	Joint Membership £30.50 <input type="checkbox"/>	£32.50 <input type="checkbox"/>
Address	(Partner at the same address)	
..... Postcode		
Email address	*For information on Young Member and other concessionary rates please visit www.camra.org.uk/membership-rates or call 01727 798440.	
Tel No(s)	I/we wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association these are available at camra.org.uk/memorandum <input type="checkbox"/>	

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title Surname	
Forename(s)	
Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)	Signed
Joint member's Email	Date
Joint member's Tel No	Applications will be processed within 21 days of receipt of this form. 04/17

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Brewery News

Loose Cannon

The latest beer of the month is called Rascal. It had great result at the SIBA awards where its Session IPA won gold in the regional awards, and Double IPA was awarded a silver medal in the national category. This has now been canned and is available only in the Abingdon brewery shop.

Hook Norton

The brewery's Castle pub at Edgehill, Warwickshire, is now fully licensed for celebrating Civil Ceremonies and Partnerships. The 17th century pub has beautiful grounds and spectacular views and is suitable for weddings of up to 60 guests or 150 in the evening. It is run by British Institute of Inn keeping (BIi) Licensee of the Year, Mark Higgs.

Oxbrew

Based at Enstone, North Oxfordshire, it is approaching its first anniversary after a successful year which started with Oxford Beer Week 2017, when it made the Oxford Red collaboration brew with Wychwood Brewery that was actually brewed at Hook Norton.

Simon Scamp, who runs Oxbrew with Aaron Baldwin, said the Oxford Brewers Alliance had been instrumental in helping him set up, and he also paid tribute to CAMRA's Oxford branch, where he is a member, for its help and support.

"The first beer produced was Amber at 4.5%, with a combination of Motueka, Progress and Sussex hops," said Simon. "Aaron then came up with Red Ale at 5% which is truly red, with a 'grown-up' bitterness and bags of flavour which set the tone for the rest of

our brews – 'grown up'. We then followed up with a session Pale at 3.8% with a depth of flavour beyond its light ABV.

"We've also done a winter beer called Winterlust, deep and dark with Christmas spices, plums and oranges, and a very tasty, very 'session', 3.6% dark Porter. Most recently Aaron has made a Citra hop presentation called Citrafella at 4%."

It has also produced Oxford Lager at 4.8% and Freudian Sip, a darker lager at 3.6% made with Vienna malt. Both lagers are available in bottle and keg. Watch out for news of its plans at Oxford Beer Week 2018.

West Berkshire

WBB has launched a quality cellaring scheme to help educate landlords and others about the importance of keeping and serving cask and keg beer in perfect condition. As part of a new partnership with Day One Training, it will offer the scheme to permanent stockists of its beer (which includes Good Old Boy Best Bitter and the Renegade keg range) and may extend this in the future. The one-day course will include topics such as line cleaning, the workings of a cellar, glass care, dispense and product presentation.

WBB moved into new premises in October, and the training will take place at the new brewery in Yattendon, near Reading. For more information contact Clare (clare.candy@wbbrew.com).

It produced various special beers for the Craft Beer Rising event, including Mashed & Wired, which was originally brewed on its pilot kit in collaboration with Pharmacie

Coffee Roasters from Hove. Tropic Like It's Hot was also brewed on the pilot kit and is back as one of the limited-edition specials.

Cask Special for April is Spartacus, an ESB with a twist, brewed with English Goldings for a classic bitterness and dried English elderflowers to give a light floral character. The Taproom and Kitchen is now in full working order serving pizza.

Wychwood

A Beer and Cheese Night will be held at Wychwood Brewery in Witney on Friday 11 May, to celebrate Oxford Beer Week, featuring a wide range of Oxfordshire's finest beers and cheese from across the street at Wates and Co. Deli. For only £10 guests should expect at least six beers, lots of cheese and expertly led tasting by one of Wychwood's brewers. Running from 6.30-9.30pm, places are limited so to book ring 01993 890900, option 1.

XT

XT has launched its all new beer branding, with new designs for pump clips and bottles while keeping the colour themes and graphical designs that have become the signature of the XT brand. This shows the solid commitment XT has to the long-term future of cask beer whilst also wanting to promote beer in keg, bottle and can.

It has also launched a Homebrew Competition to run alongside Oxford Beer Week to win the chance to brew your own beer at XT in a full sized batch – see www.xt.com.

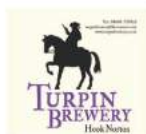
A new semi-permanent summer ale is XT-18, a 4.2% golden beer generously hopped with English and American greens.

OXFORD BEER WEEK

5th - 13th May 2018



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