

Issue 108
October - November 2018

FREE

please take one



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE



the Oxford Drinker



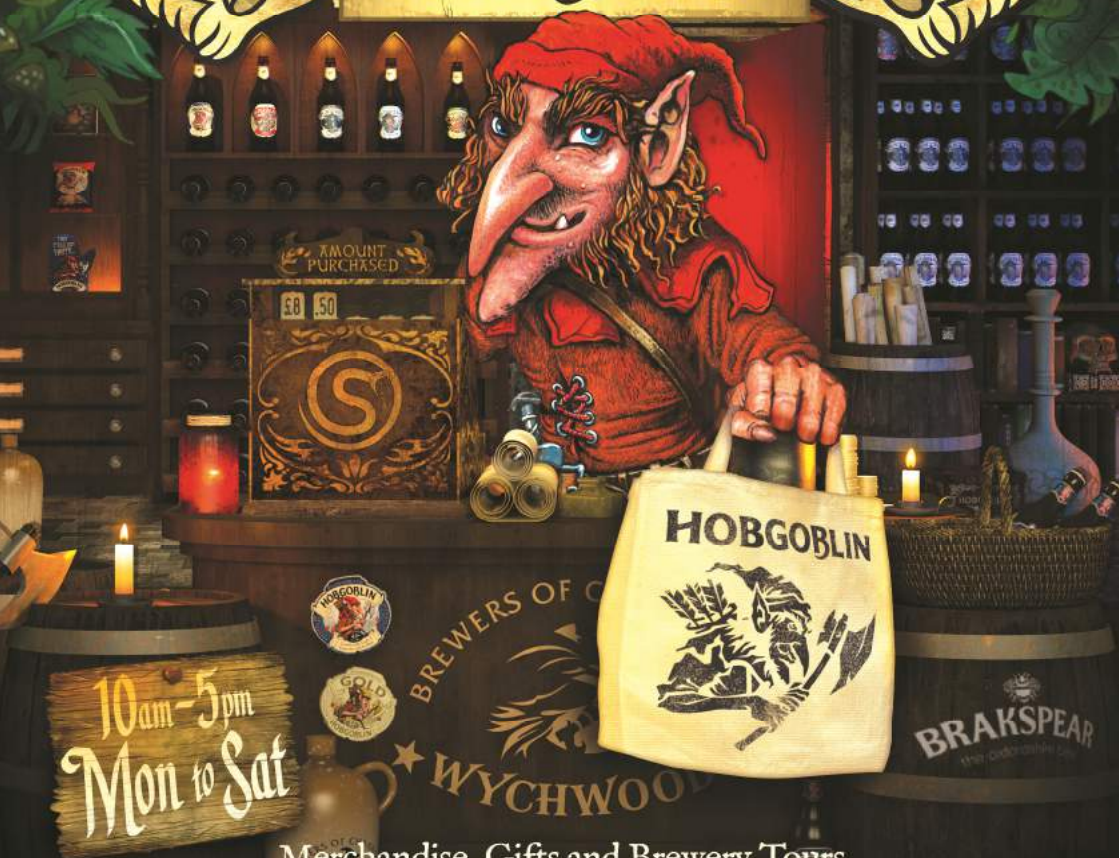
The free newsletter of the
Oxford and **White Horse** Branches
of CAMRA

www.oxford.camra.org.uk

www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk

WYCHWOOD BREWERY

STORE & TOURS



Merchandise, Gifts and Brewery Tours.
Bottled Beers, Cask Ales and Goodies galore!

Visit the ancestral home of the Hobgoblin and peruse his store,
or take a brewery tour to see mischief in the making.

Book a tour online at www.wychwood.co.uk or call: 01993 890 800*
(*pre booking essential)



facebook.com/WychwoodBrewery

Wychwood Brewery, Eagle Maltings, The Crofts, Witney, Oxon OX28 4DP.

FRONT COVER PICTURE : Oxford Town Hall at Beer Festival time, by Keith Rigley

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 Queralt, Paul Silcock, David Lydiat, Dick Bosley, Dennis Brown, Tony Goulding, Pete Flynn, Matt Bullock 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

The views expressed in this publication are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of Oxford or White Horse Branches of CAMRA, or of CAMRA Limited.

Printed by OxUniPrint
www.oxuniprint.co.uk

© Copyright Oxford CAMRA 2018

Welcome

...to the Oxford Beer and Cider Festival

A HIGHLIGHT OF our annual calendar marks its 21st anniversary at Oxford Town Hall from 8-10 November, when you can sample 170 "real" or cask ales from near and far plus 50 ciders and perries.

As we celebrate the success of the local brewing scene (over 20 breweries in Oxfordshire alone) and the national picture (2,500 breweries around the UK), there's much to mull over. The Cask Report 2018-19, by accreditation scheme Cask Marque, makes interest reading.

This states that 66% of 18- to 24-year-olds have never tried cask ale, and that sales declined by nearly 7% in the past year. It's just not cool enough for young drinkers – actually or figuratively.

Matt Eley, author of the report, says: "There's a job to be done to engage these younger drinkers, as well as older ones, in this fantastic drink – and to reduce the risk to pubs in the process. You can't buy real ale from a shop. The only places you can get it are pubs and bars.

"As a delicious, fresh product with no added gas, it should be in growing, not shrinking demand. It ticks all the boxes for people who care about the environment, ingredients, naturalness and taste."

Cask Marque feels that real ale might be seen as old-fashioned by younger drinkers, who want it served colder. Certainly there's a growing trend towards

cold, carbon dioxide-infused keg beers, now produced by nearly all breweries alongside their cask products. It's interesting to note that Oxbrew in Witney, a new micro-pub, has two cask ale hand pumps but six keg lines.

There's certainly no shortage of 18- to 24-year-olds at the Oxford Beer and Cider Festival, but this is a university town. A survey of all cask ales on sale in city centre pubs, to be published in the next *Oxford Drinker*, will make interesting reading.

In this edition you can read how beers are sourced for the festival, while we also report on new entrants in the *Good Beer Guide*. Our roving reporters have been as far as Bratislava in Slovakia, while more locally they have been out and about around Iffley and West Oxfordshire.

Although pub closures nationally are still running at 18 a week, we report on the opening of Oxbrew in Witney and plans to re-open a long-closed pub in South Moreton. Maybe Oxfordshire is bucking the trend, but as we celebrate at the festival we should remember that success can't be taken for granted, and remember those who have lost their livelihoods.

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



'By the Danube, beautiful blue Danube'

Oxford CAMRA's summer trip took us to Bratislava, on the banks of the not-so-blue Danube. **Matt Bullock** recalls what we found.



HAVING VISITED PRAGUE last year, we decided this time to visit the other half of the former Czechoslovakia, the Slovak Republic and its capital Bratislava. Flights to Bratislava are few and far between – and very expensive – so we opted to fly to Vienna, and go the final bit of the journey, around 60 kilometres, by road.

Our base in Bratislava was the centrally-located Austria Trend hotel, which, aside from a booking mix-up that meant we had more rooms than we needed, comes very much recommended. Once we had all found our rooms, swapped rooms so that everyone had what they needed, and cancelled the ones we didn't need, we met up round the corner at the local brewpub, Mestiansky Pivovar. As we had found in Prague, most brewers do a light (Leziak) and dark (tmavy) beer, and this was no exception, though we took care to avoid the alcohol-free option! The bar is a bright, airy space and the staff were keen to serve us and help us move furniture as we colonised a whole room at the front of the building. The light beer was less interesting than the dark, though both were



OPPOSITE: Everyone gathered at Mestiansky Pivovar; the utilitarian exterior of the Castle Brewery
ABOVE: Starosloviensky Pivovar (left) and Le Šenk Craft Beer Café

12° Plato, the light being a little spicy and hoppy and about 5% by volume, and the dark (called 'Bubak, 6%) richer, roasted and coffee flavours. A good start, then.

We moved down the road past our hotel's front door to Starosloviensky Pivovar. This is a traditional-looking house, with a small tiled and brick-vaulted bar and a large, walled garden. The service again was attentive, and the beer range was greater, with traditional Slovak styles alongside some hoppier, American-style beers, the Pressburg 14° IPA being the pick of the latter. We tried the Slovak food too – the national dish (bryndzové halušky) is potato gnocchi topped with fried bacon and goats cheese sauce. It tastes much better than it looks in the pictures in the menu.

Our route – all within 500 yards of our hotel – took us to the Slovak Pub, a huge establishment over many floors situated on the city's main street. It was hard to tell whether this was genuine Slovak or a tourist trap; it seemed to offer light and dark beer and the same culinary

delights, so I rather suspect it might be the former.

After a long day of travelling, some retired to the hotel at this point, but a brave few ventured on another hundred yards to Kollarko. This neither traditional or touristy; it's a new craft beer bar housed in a single storey former municipal building in a square. Whether it was once a public toilet, or an electrical sub-station, or something to do with the local trams and trolleybuses, nobody could agree, but it uses its industrial heritage and utilitarian architecture to good effect. Don't be put off by the graffiti décor outside. The interior, virtually semi-circular in shape, is very small, so most of the seating is outside, some of it under large umbrellas. We sat outside as it was still very warm, and we enjoyed beers from Jama, Stupavar and a couple of others. The bar snacks were free, not particularly pleasant, but addictive!

The following day was hot, in the mid-thirties, and probably not the best day to embark upon a four-hour walking tour of the city, which we did. The tour was good, and we saw a lot of

the small city, learned about its history and its people. Our guide kindly pointed out a couple of bars to us during the tour, so once it was over and we'd given him a healthy tip, we retired to the Castle Brewery (Zámocký Pivovar). This was also in an uninspiring industrial building, and we stayed only long enough to slake our thirst with a succession of pale lagers and to feast on some more bryndzové halušky before we sought something more interesting at Le Šenk Craft Beer Café. The outside seating area was full of smokers, so we sat inside in near darkness to enjoy their beers, which were a mix of local and Czech brews with one or two from further afield. It was here we met a chap called Daz, a Scouser, who was part-way through an overland trip round the world from Birkenhead to Vietnam, travelling on a tight budget without flying. He recommended a few beers to us, and so began a pleasant hour or two exchanging ideas of good places to drink around Europe. We recommended places to Daz for his future travels in the Baltic states, and we in turn got some good pointers as to where to travel to next year. Daz

joined us for a few more bars on our crawl as we moved on back into the old town and into the blazing afternoon sunshine.

Čierny Pes is a small basement bar serving Bernard beers and was pleasant. I can't recall what I drank as somebody else went to the bar to fetch it, which they did also round the corner afterwards at the Stupavar pub, but where I remembered to photograph the beer blackboard to aid my memory. They had six of their own brews, the black IPA being especially good, a 15° brew costing 2 Euros 70 per half litre, so not expensive! The pub itself is very pleasant; the bar is in the entrance hall and there are a number of small but

bright, airy rooms; pictures of punk bands adorn the walls. I suspect later on it could have been a whole lot louder.

From here we walked to Zil Verne, another new craft bar where we sat outside in the pedestrianised street, enjoying a range of beers. I think everyone got what they ordered; the staff seemed to have very good memories as there was a huge range of beers and we tried a lot of them! From here we went to Steinplatz which is a weird place. It's in a square, almost on a traffic island, and is mostly underground in what might have been a public toilet and is now dark and a little eccentric. It

does have pavement seating and a raised deck area, which is a little like being on board a ship. We sat "upstairs" and I was happy to be re-acquainted with Bastard IPA, a favourite from the beer festival at Prague Castle last year.

Daz left us at this point – I do hope he completed his marathon 78-day journey – and we set off in search of somewhere to eat. We rejected Pivovar Šenk as it was very busy, noisy and was serving in plastic glasses, and headed off towards our hotel, where we were once again welcomed into Mestiansky Pivovar despite it being a busy night, to the same prime seats where we drank and ate as we sheltered from a violent electric storm that ended the day.

On Friday we took a bus to visit Devin Castle on the Danube, and only ventured to the pub when we got back into town. I led a few off-piste to view the bizarre Slovak Radio Station building before we all gathered at a bar called Meetnica. It's a micropub-style, with two separate rooms, one for smoking and one not. Nine draught beers were on the blackboard and I found a favourite with Cornel IPA, brewed by Trebic in the Czech Republic. We walked through the university district to the Omama Shop Café, a small traditional bar crammed with enamel signs and beer bric-a-brac, with a pleasant garden where we enjoyed a drink or two, an over-generous cheese platter and the beautifully-named 'diabolical toast'.

The jewel in Bratislava's beer crown is arguably Pivovarský Hostinec Richtár Jakub which



ABOVE: Outside Zil Verne; **OPPOSITE:** The beer blackboard at Meetnica; Hellcat at Pivovarský Hostinec Richtár Jakub; the bizarre Slovak Radio Station building



boasts a huge beer menu featuring three of its own and a number of guests, the Matuska Hellcat 21° amongst them. This bar is a long room; the servery and beer taps face you as you enter and to both sides there is plenty of seating in a relaxed atmosphere. We tried everything on the board, though only a small glass of the Hellcat.

We walked back to the hotel and then gathered at Kollarko, where we grabbed a seat inside whilst we hatched a plan of where to go and where to eat. Our plan to eat at Fabrika, a modern hotel bar-brewery was scuppered by them being fully booked, so we drank a beer outside, made a booking for Saturday night, and sought food elsewhere.

Some went back where they'd eaten before, others went for a curry. A hardy few sought sustenance in Staromeštianska Pivotéka, a basement bar where we spent the rest of the evening chatting with the locals, watching the World Cup on the television, and sampling repeatedly 'just one more for the road' from their impressive list of beers. We'd encountered Wywar beers before during the weekend, but several more

were available here, the *15 Years in Hell* IPA being very much to my liking. We never did get to eat.

On Saturday after a bit of sightseeing we walked out of the centre up a steep hill to a bar called Funus, where we sat in the garden to enjoy some lunch, though the view was not as panoramic as billed! The beers were basic Slovak fayre, but it was pleasant enough. From here we walked back down the hill through a smart residential area and via the Russian War Memorial, from where you can enjoy the promised fine views across the city. We met up later at Unity Street, another basement bar where four interesting beers were available if you could bear the cigarette smoke. Our final port of call was to return to the bustling Fabrika, where our reserved table awaited. The food was a mix of everything, from traditional goats' cheese-based stuff to Fish and Chips and American burgers, but the beer was good, again a mix of Slovak and American styles. And by the end of a substantial meal, most of us were too tired to go anywhere else.

So that was Bratislava. The following day we took a scenic coach journey to Vienna Airport (and hour's journey for five euros) for our flight back home. I think it's fair to say Bratislava has less to offer than Prague, but it's a pleasant, compact city, still with many scars from the Communist era, but the people are friendly and welcoming, most speak some English, beer and food is cheap. The food is a little uninspiring, to be honest, but the beer is coming on leaps and bounds with new bars opening up to serve an ever-growing range of craft breweries.



Pub News

From the Oxford branch and beyond

Banbury

Old Town Ale and Cider House

The micro-pub, opened by former Hook Norton landlord John Bellinger, closed in September after less than 12 months.

He wrote on Facebook: "It is with regret and an amount of sadness that I have to announce that I have been unable to find anyone willing to commit to taking over running the Old Town Ale and Cider House, and therefore I will be closing the doors for the last time on Sunday 16 September at 5pm.

"I have enjoyed not only creating and running my first and only free house here in Banbury, but even more the new friends I have made and their company, along with that of my old friends, throughout my time in the Old Town. Your support has been amazing and the memories of the last 12 months will remain with me forever."



Beckley

Abingdon Arms

The pub has unveiled a blue plaque commemorating *Brideshead Revisited* author

Evelyn Waugh, a regular while at Oxford University. It reads: "Evelyn Waugh, Author, wrote, drank and loved here 1924-1931."

Oxford

Bicycle Shed

A new bar on Banbury Road in Summertown, opened in early October. Operated by City Pub Company which runs St Aldates Tavern, the Grapes and George Street Social, it is selling a range of craft keg ales through 12 keg lines and has three handpumps for cask beer - West Berkshire Good Old Boy, White Horse Bitter and Loose Cannon 42 Pounder at the time of our visit. A mainly vegetarian and vegan menu is available.

Bullnose Morris

The lease has been advertised for sale by an agent as free of tie. The Blackbird Leys pub was owned by Greene King as part of its Hungry Horse chain.

Castle

The Hook Norton pub, acquired in 2016 and fully re-opened last year, was one of six national finalists in the Best Turnaround Pub category in the John Smith/Morning Advertiser Great British Pub Awards.

Rickety Press/Rusty Bicycle

The pubs, operated by a company called Dodo and leased from Arkell's, has introduced a phone amnesty on Tuesdays offering discounts on food and drink if customers hand over their mobiles during their stay. It describes this as a "social experiment" to encourage people to talk to

each other, and will extend the amnesty if a trial in September is deemed successful.

Six Bells

The Headington Quarry pub, alongside the ring road, has been sold on by Greene King.

Somerset

The campaign to re-open this Marston Road pub, closed in 2014, continues unabated with around 500 people supporting a pop-up pub event at the Scout Hall opposite in September. Over 700 people have signed a petition to re-open the pub, whose lease has been acquired by the Wilaya Trust which wants to establish an Islamic educational and cultural centre, and cafe. There is no longer a pub in the New Marston area.

South Moreton

Crown

Villagers have raised £475,000 to save and re-open the pub as a community-owned venture, and were hoping to finalise the purchase by the end of September. They hope to re-open the pub by February 2019, as it has been closed for about four years and needs much refurbishment.

The village, between Didcot and Wallingford, has only 105 properties, but 126 shareholders have got involved. The fight to save the pub was featured on the BBC programme *One Day that Changed My Life*.

Paul Jackson, chair of the South Moreton Community Benefit Society, said: "We have

already had four expressions of interest in running the Crown, from people with experience. With the village hall, the shop, the post office and the local bus service all being lost in the last 10 years, people realised how much they had lost when the pub closed."

The pub was sold by Wadworth to a property developer, which has now agreed to sell to the community.

Witney

New Inn

The Ock Street pub, which bade farewell to long-serving landlord Martin Cornish earlier this year, was being run under a temporary tenancy at the time of writing. Stuart Cockwell, landlord of the Sportsman in Eynsham and the Woodman in North Leigh, was negotiating to take over tenancy of the New Inn on a long-term basis. It is a former Punch property now owned by Heineken.

Oxbrew

Witney's first micro-pub was opened in August in Langdale Court, just off Market Square and adjacent to the short stay car park. Owned and operated by Oxbrew, which started operations at Enstone in summer 2017, it sells not only its own beers but guest ales from small breweries around the county. During a visit towards the end of August, the two cask ales were Oxbrew Red Ale (4.6%) and Deer, from XT's Animal range (also 4.6%).

A wider range of keg taps was offering Oxford Lager, Freudian

Sip and J. Street English Porter from Oxbrew's own stable, plus beers from Church Hanbrewery and Tap Social. Other local drinks available include gin and vodka from the The Oxford Artisan Distillery (TOAD) and Cotswold Distillery. Bottled beers came from Little Ox, Loose Cannon, Tap Social and Church Hanbrewery.

Oxbrew is run jointly by Simon Scamp (pictured below) and his stepson Aaron Baldwin (who did the interior design), with Simon's wife Sue also serving behind the bar. The micro-pub is open from midday, but closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.

"Our brewery is two miles from a main road and doesn't have any public transport, so opening a micro-pub makes sense," said Simon. "Logistically it's a good idea to sell our own beers and provide variety from our friends in the brewing industry. Having

only two cask ales but keeping them very nicely means a quick turnover."

Oxbrew's latest venture will be a cask ale produced specially for the Oxfordshire Community-Owned Pubs Network, due to be launched in November.

Abingdon

Kings Head and Bell

A new couple have taken over as the managers and they have plans to improve the pub. They'll be making sure the beer lines are kept clean, simplifying the food menu, and will be refurbishing the pub in January.

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



Roll up, roll up - to Oxford Beer Festival!

Dave Richardson meets Oxford's own Beer Hunter – **Graham Baker** – who sources the ales for our annual festival



LONG BEFORE MOST people have even put it in their diaries, a team of planners is hard at work preparing for the Oxford Beer and Cider Festival at the Town Hall – to be held a little later this year, from 8-10 November.

While festival organiser Grahame Allen does most of the nitty-gritty work, the task of ordering the beers falls to Graham Baker who started getting involved even before the first festival at the Town Hall in 1998. He started helping out at

a festival in Long Hanborough jointly organised by CAMRA and the Oxford Bus Museum, but things became a lot more challenging after moving to the Town Hall.

In those days major local breweries Morrells (in Oxford) and Morland (in Abingdon) were still in business, but despite the existence of other local breweries such as Wychwood, Hook Norton and Brakspear, there was much less variety then. Today there are around

2,500 breweries in the UK and tens of thousands of beers – so where do you start?

Graham has good contacts with local breweries, but doesn't simply choose the others at random. Most of the beers from outside Oxfordshire come either through wholesalers or through small breweries which specialise in distributing beers for other breweries in the regions where they operate.

There will be 170 real ales at

this year's festival, 40 of which will be held back for consumption on the Saturday, to encourage people to come back. There will also be 50 ciders and perries, which are sourced by Sam French.

The largest suppliers are Avalon Wholesale of Somerset and Great Heck brewery of North Yorkshire, which will each send more than 50 ales. This explains why there will be plenty of beers from the West Country and North of England – while most breweries from Oxfordshire and many from neighbouring counties will also be represented.

"People sometimes ask why we have so many local beers that they may have tried already, but some of these can be hard to find and as CAMRA is a campaigning group, we should be supporting local breweries," says Graham. "Breweries such as Wychwood and Hook Norton deserve their place, while micro-breweries such as LoveBeer, Little Ox and Church Hanbrewery don't have much distribution in local pubs."

Twenty years ago when the festival was first staged in the Town Hall, there were not only far fewer breweries but less variety in styles. Graham remembers having the last batch produced of Morrells' College Ale, as the brewery closed in 1998 and this famous strong ale disappeared. But it was very much the exception, as the average strength of beer was considerably lower than it is now.

"People used to spend the evening in the pub, so a beer of 3.5% ABV was about right," says Graham. "Now a lot of beers are 4.5% or above, but

you wouldn't spend all night on that. More people now drink beer with a meal.

"Most of the beers in those days were very conservative in style, whereas now some of them are gimmicky."

Coffee, chocolate and ginger are just three of the ingredients commonly added to real ale these days, while fruit beers are a speciality of Church Hanbrewery. As Oxford remains a "cask ale only" festival, breweries such as this which make mainly keg beer produce cask ales especially for the event. The same applies to Tap Social.

But will Oxford remain for cask ale only, now that CAMRA is taking a more relaxed attitude towards quality keg? That's a decision for the local committee, but it's probably fair to say that keg drinkers shouldn't hold their breath.

"I have no problem with keg beer myself, but it needs special equipment and it seems to be a licence to print money as many keg beers are priced at more than they're worth," says Graham.

"But if demand for keg increases, we may have to move with the times. Some festivals also have gin bars, but the size of the Town Hall does limit what we can do."

By September each year, Graham's list of breweries is largely complete although they may not have decided which beers to supply. Breweries represented for the first time this year include Wiggly Monkey, a new brewery from Bicester; Anthology, Hopscotch and Twisted Angel. Current or



past CAMRA Champion Beers of Britain are sometimes available, but these are often in high demand and if the brewery is small and far away then the logistics are difficult.

As in previous years, styles will be milds; bitters up to 4% strength; best bitters (4.1-4.6%); strong bitters; stouts and porters; beers with unusual ingredients; and Continental styles.

"Oxford Town Hall is a really classic venue for a beer festival, and many visitors are amazed by the architecture and the good atmosphere," says Graham. "It's part of the beer drinkers' calendar, and being one of the last festivals of the year, particularly good for winter ales."

"It's a very big volunteer team effort behind the scenes, with great camaraderie, and it's remarkable how it all comes together."

Oxford Beer Festival is open Thursday 8th 5-11pm; Friday 9th 11am-11pm; Saturday 10th 11am-7pm. Entry to the festival costs £5 including glass, with drinks tokens costing £5 a strip.

Brewery News

Hook Norton

The brewery has teamed up with Yeastie Boys (below) to create X Ale, after the New Zealand based craft brewer celebrated 10 years by approaching 10 breweries to create 10 one-off beers. X Ale is a contemporary re-imagining of a 100-year-old recipe with a dose of artistic licence – pale gold with aromas of zesty lime, satsuma and passion fruit and a dark fruit taste with a hint of spicy lemon zest.

Hook Norton managing director, James Clarke, said: “We love to push the boundaries and have a play around with people’s perceptions of what beer Hooky makes. This is not the usual brew people would expect to come out of our cellar but we are always looking to offer something new and different and this certainly fits the bill.”

Meanwhile Red Rye has been voted the UK’s Best Rye Beer at the World Beer Awards 2018. Further success came with Old

Hooky (4.6%) being voted the Best Bitter and Hooky Gold (4.2%) winning Silver in the Golden Ales category.

Hook Norton is expanding its 330ml can range with Red Rye (4.7%) and X Ale alongside its existing Cotswold Pale. Special beers have been created for the 70th anniversary of the Horse of the Year show and for 47th Squadron at Brize Norton.

Little Ox

The Freeland-based brewery has decided to make all its beer gluten-free to address the rising number of gluten intolerant beer drinkers. This has gone down well in many pubs including the White Rabbit and the Gardeners Arms in Plantation Road, Oxford, which now have Wipe Out as a regular.

Yabba dabba doo, a 4.8% tropical IPA, was launched for the summer festival season and has featured in many of the region’s beer festivals and a few pubs too, including the new

Oxbrew micro-pub in Witney. Filthy rich porter is available again from October together with a new seasonal offering, name yet to be confirmed.

Loddon

The new taproom is open and always features three of its own cask ales, seven bottled beers and – coming soon – a rotating keg line from other local breweries. The taproom has indoor and outdoor seating and will also be serving teas and coffees, the latter sourced from the local Horsebox Coffee. Opening times are Thursday – 10am-6pm, Friday – 10am-7pm, and Saturday – 10am-6pm. It is fully licensed until 11pm, so while there are people present it will stay open.

Russet, one of its oldest seasonal beers, is now available. Brewed for the first time in three years, this ruby-red, multi-grain beer has long been an autumnal favourite.

Vale

With the refurbishment of the new brewery shop and taproom earlier in the year, it now offers brewery tours again after a long hiatus. The tours are held on the first Saturday of every month.

New beers to ease drinkers into the autumn months include Another Fine Mess (4.5%), a golden ale tribute to comedy legends Laurel and Hardy. Just like the Anglo-American duo this beer marries the best British Maris otter malted barley with big punchy American Simcoe, Centennial and Idaho 7 hops. James Clerk Maxwell,



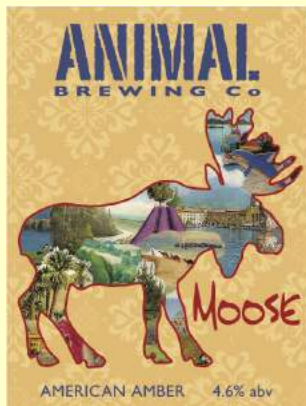
"the finest British scientist that you have never heard of", has inspired a deep golden beer (3.8%) with four hop varieties.

"From the life and songs of the crow" is a work by the poet Ted Hughes, and Crow (4%) is a ruby beer to celebrate the work. That's all folks (4.1%) is a classic copper best bitter showcasing the finest qualities of British malt and hops. Due out for Bonfire Night is the 6% Smoke on the Porter.

West Berkshire

Every Thursday evening is burger night in the taproom, with a free pint with every burger purchased. Christmas packages start at £25, or £40 including buffet.

It has joined 1980s synth-pop duo Soft Cell to create a limited edition new beer named Say Hello Wave Goodbye, available exclusively in Mitchells & Butlers pubs in cask. At 4.2%, it is a pale ale inspired by the classic English Bitters enjoyed by the band during their early years in Leeds, with the addition of New World hops to reflect their time in America. Launched in September, it is available for three months as part of WBB's



Autumn Seasonal Cask Range.

XT

The XT Home Brew Competition saw an impressive and very varied selection of beers entered, and the winning team will be working with the brewers to develop their entries into a new beer which will be launched in November.

The latest Animal Beers for the autumn months include Moose, an American Amber at 4.6% packed to the antlers with Simcoe, Chinook and Columbus, dry hopped with Mosaic and crammed full of aromatic malts. Dalmatian is an easy drinking European Pale at 4.6%, packed with soft European hops, but none of the original 101 Dalmatians was hurt in the making of this beer!

Dragon is a 4.6% Golden Ale using classic English malt coupled with Anglo-American hops.

Wychwood

Hobgoblin IPA has been awarded Best English Style IPA at the World Beer Awards 2018. Head Brewer Jon Tillson said: "The team and I were extremely excited to hear Hobgoblin IPA has been given awards in both the International and World Brewing Awards. Hobgoblin IPA spent many months in the development stages and was a real team effort."

The Hobgoblin is up to his usual tricks during his 13th consecutive year as the Unofficial Beer of Halloween. He will be holding his annual Grand Lighting of the Pumpkins on Monday 31 October at Wychwood Brewery in Witney from 6-9pm.

Admission is free, with a complimentary pint of Hobgoblin, Hobgoblin Gold or IPA on arrival. Children will receive a goodie bag. Live music will be provided by the legendary Thrill Collins, and money raised will be donated to local charity SpecialEffect.

Wriggly Monkey

This new brewery at Bicester Heritage was launched at an Oktoberfest-themed party on 28 September. To quote from its website, Wriggly Monkey takes inspiration from the worlds of engineering and motoring, creating traditional real ales with flair: "Think the stiff upper lip of Winston Churchill combined with the craic of James Hunt".

The taproom at Bicester Heritage will be open to the public from October and it will also host special events, special openings for groups and car clubs, and create brews to order.

A wriggly monkey is a key component of a Frazer Nash, one of its favourite models of car. The amber ale Full Tilt is being made available in cask.

Burton Ale

Reader John Norman writes: "The quality of Burton Ale is not a product of the mineral-rich waters of the River Trent, as you report, but is down to water drawn from deep underground. The monks of Burton Abbey were on to a good thing when they started brewing using water from their own deep well as early as 1295. Burton ale was sold in London as early as 1630 but it was the coming of the railways that made Burton-on-Trent the biggest brewing town in the world."

THERE'S MORE THAN JUST BEER HERE!

CAFÉ, COFFEE & BAR

Pop in for a cuppa
Free WiFi
Light bites



MEET AT THE BREWERY

Book our boardroom
or cellar bar



EVENTS AT THE BREWERY



OPEN TAP EVENING

2ND Wednesday of each month
6pm – 9pm Free samples of our latest ales



RUN THE FIRKIN 5

Saturday 20th May
Fun run starting & ending at the brewery

OPEN

MONDAY-SATURDAY
9.00AM - 5.00PM

HOOK NORTON
BREWERY

Brewery Lane,
Hook Norton, Banbury,
Oxon, UK, OX15 5NY
T: 01608 730384
E: brewery@hooky.co.uk
W: www.hooky.co.uk

A drinker's guide to branding

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

IN THE OLD DAYS (i.e. quite a bit before you and I were born) there were fewer fences than there are today, and cattle ranged freely over huge areas of prairie, outback and common land. Every year a new crop of calves was born, and graziers needed a way to tell which calf belonged to which rancher.

The answer was simple and practical. Each grazier developed a distinctive mark. As soon as possible after the calves were born, the cattle were mustered, and each calf was branded, using hot irons, with the same brand as its mother. This was typically a simple but clear mark such as a star or a lightning flash. Those that slipped through were called cleanskins and were there for someone else to brand and therefore own.

In the Old Days, brands denoted ownership but, of course, people quickly discovered that the brand was often a reliable guide to how good the animals were, the best farmers tending to have the best cattle. Similarly, today, each logo in the marketplace stands for a distinctive set of values and beliefs. Advertising agencies everywhere often spout rubbish about "branding" and brand essence, but one

thing is clear, if you can make your offering distinctively and consistently more attractive than that of your competitors, customers will come. Good, focussed and consistent promotion can reinforce your brand and it won't take long for the money to roll in.

It all sounds so simple, doesn't it? And that's the trouble. It is deceptively easy to drop into running a pub. The barriers to entry are low, and the idea of retiring to a quiet life running a pub is still out there. The reality, of course, is that good pubs don't just happen automatically. Whatever the drink offering, the food, the hospitality and the pricing, finding the right business formula and consistently delivering it in each locality is just as hard for a pub as it is for any other business. It involves knowledge, experience, training, sacrifice of free time, family life and sleep and, of course, it presupposes that you have a formula that is consistently attractive to customers and staff.

People who are good at this sort of thing understand the importance of consistency. Recently I went into a usually good pub and was served a pint well past its best. By contrast, I also had breakfast at a pub on

the South Coast. It was spotlessly clean, it smelled nice, the staff were happy and efficient, the service prompt, and the cooked breakfast spot-on and very reasonably priced. It was a Wetherspoon, and whatever you may think of Tim Martin, there's no denying he's a smart businessman. Is he good at pulling a pint or sweating in the kitchen? Probably not, but his shares are worth half a billion pounds, and Wetherspoon has happy customers, and happy employees, the length and breadth of Britain!

From the drinker's perspective, finding out which are the pubs that do it consistently well and which are the ones that don't is a huge challenge. While it can be fun to try them all, bitter experience shows that as a naïve consumer you do have to kiss a whole lot of frogs.

So here's a shortcut. The burgeoning Oxfordshire Community-Owned Pubs Network comprises eight of the most promising pubs in our area and soon we too will have our own brand. It will be appearing on our Community Ale, exclusively brewed for us by Oxbrew. Look out for it and know that this will be a sign of a good brew in a good pub.

Gardeners' World

Paul Silcock, landlord of the Gardeners Arms in Plantation Road, North Oxford, continues his regular column

MY PUB MADE it into the *Good Beer Guide* again this year – the Gardeners Arms is in the 2019 edition. Usually I start these columns with a point that I'm going to bang on about for another 500 words or so, but this time I'm actually just boasting. I'm rather damn chuffed to be in the guide for another year. I'm with some good company as well, so have a look.

Just as an aside though, there's quite a bit of secrecy surrounding the *Good Beer Guide*, and who's in it, until its release every year. Despite this though, they always send you notification of inclusion through the post with a large Good Beer Guide logo on the front and a note at the bottom of the envelope telling you not to tell anyone until the 19 September that you're in the guide. Don't tell a soul, although any halfway intelligent postman has already figured out the Guide has something to say about the pub they just delivered the letter to. I might be wrong but honestly it's about as subtle as if they delivered it by hand, dressed as



a cartoon pint with the words
GOOD BEER HERE
emblazoned on the side.

I'm pretty sure that in the past I've had something to say about keg versus cask, about this growing trend for craft brewing into keg. How it can help the smaller business offer a wider range by extending the shelf life of the ale it stocks. But here's the thing that's starting to grate on me about keg beer. It comes at a price. I mean it's pricey!

Let's take the new rather tasty Hobgoblin IPA keg that's come out. During the tedious business of working through my accounts I noticed just what a cost it is. Without giving away all the secrets here, it's ever-so-slightly cheaper than a firkin of Lancaster Bomber. So that's fair enough, I hear you cry. But you're wrong. It would be fair enough except for one little fact.

There is a slight size discrepancy between the two barrels. A slight difference of nearly 20 pints. Okay, that's not a slight difference, that's a bloody good night out. And it's missing from the barrel of Hobgoblin IPA because they sell keg beer in 30-litre kegs but regular good old fashioned ale in 40.1-litre casks. What, I hear you ask again, does this have to do with me?

Right, time to pull back the velvet curtain and reveal the little man working all the pulleys and levers. In order to calculate how much to charge for a pint of

booze, you start by dividing the number of pints in the barrel into the price of the barrel, and then figuring out your profit margin from there. Even my poor maths tells me that the Hobgoblin is going to be more expensive by the pint than the Bomber simply because there are fewer pints to spread the cost of the barrel over. So why am I having to pay nearly the same for considerably less?

I can only assume it's down to the same marketing trick most famously pulled by Stella Artois way back in 1982:

"Reassuringly Expensive". How do you make people think something is worth more than something else? Put a higher price tag on it.

I've got nothing against paying more for a good beer, but it has to taste like a good beer, and not just come in a smaller barrel, have a fancier badge and be served four or five degrees cooler. I still think there's a place for keg beer as I like the diversity but come on folks, level the playing field or enlarge the barrel.

Honestly though, I really hope you're all reading this at the Oxford Beer Festival because I think I'm going to be getting far more sympathy for this view point than if it's a sweltering hot October day, and you're supping a refreshing chilled IPA from a keg somewhere.

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
Electric Avenue
Ferry Hinksey Road
Oxford
OX2 0BY
Tel: 01865 815000
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Keeping in touch with Oxford Branch:

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

To receive copies of the *Oxford Drinker* by post, please send A5 sized, self addressed envelopes with postage to cover 100g letter to:

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

LOOSE CANNON

BREWERY • ABINGDON



WWW.LCBEERS.CO.UK

01235 531141

The Masons Arms

2 Quarry School Place
Headington Oxford



Oxford CAMRA City pub of the year

2004, 2005, 2010, 2014 & 2016

www.themasonsarmshq.co.uk



20 years of Stand-Up Comedy



THE MASON'S ARMS
HEADINGTON OXFORD

WWW.THEMASONSAMSHQ.CO.UK

Save our pubs!

As CAMRA prepares for a mass lobby of Parliament on 30 October, Parliamentary researcher and Oxford CAMRA member **David Lydiat** looks at what we are campaigning for

THE IMAGE of a closed, boarded up pub is one that no community wishes to experience. Whether the former regular patrons who must now go elsewhere for a pint or those who live nearby, it affects everyone in the community; socially, financially, historically.

The latest research published by YOUNGOV in August states that 80% of people in Britain have witnessed a pub closure. Meanwhile CAMRA has revealed that pub closures remain high at 18 per week on average, keeping to the near 20 a week figure of recent years. For CAMRA members it is part of the organisation's mission to help reverse this trend.

These figures may well represent 18 families who have lost their livelihoods, or hundreds of staff losing their jobs, or 18 communities missing a social hub which may have been in place for centuries – each week, 52 times a year.

This is a really worrying trend, but not a new one.

As someone whose family used to own two pubs, which I grew up working in, I am particularly passionate about this aspect of CAMRA's work. I am sure it is the same for every member. Where would we be without our local? In a city such as Oxford we are fortunate enough to enjoy many historical and

atmospheric pubs, all of which face the challenges of the trade. But in a rural village there may only be one pub, and when that's gone, it's gone.

Some may argue that it is the reality of market economics; supply and demand, and footfall. I would argue it's more than that.

There is a perfect storm facing pub landlords: business rates, beer duty, staff costs, rents, the off trade... (the list goes on). Basic economics mean that publicans need to make a profit on their bottom line, otherwise they won't survive.

At Oxford CAMRA's August's branch meeting, publican Ian Ridding gave us an insight into the trade and in particular micro-pubs – which had me wondering if this is now the

present as well as the future? Micro-pubs seem to be one solution to the difficult market conditions, and more are appearing in Oxfordshire and beyond.

Another solution is the Government addressing some of the factors in the perfect storm. With the upcoming budget in November CAMRA members hope to see the Chancellor reduce (or at least freeze) beer duty and do even more in regards to business rates.

At the time of going to print there is still time to write to your local MP or even direct to the Treasury before the budget to consider the current reality facing pubs, and why 18 are closing every single week in the UK.

DAVID LYDIAT



Tony's Travels

Tony Goulding roams near and far

Eynsham

When Morrells owned the **Red Lion** it was the village destination pub. Then along came Greene King which had little interest in looking after the building and passed it on to property company Hawthorn Leisure, which appeared to just let the pub run down. What a difference a couple of years makes from my last visit, as it's now leased by those successful guys from the **Jolly Post Boys** in Oxford, and is a top pub again.

Tommy Higgs, with lots of previous experience in the trade including 10 years at Fat Lil's in Witney, leads a very enthusiastic crew who all live in



the pub, which is a rare occurrence these days but a plus in this very expensive area. An early opening at 10am is for coffee and cake followed by traditional 12-3pm and 6-9.30pm when very good food is served, staying open till 11pm. On the bar were Loose Cannon's Abingdon Bridge, Purity Gold, a changing guest and six kegs.

A five-minute walk takes you to the **Sportsman**, a former Halls house now owned by Punch Taverns. Stuart Cockwell (pictured below) and family have been behind the bar for 2½ years with lots of previous pub experience. It is open all day from 12-12, later at weekends. Three beers are served from the Punch list and SIBA delivers from micro-breweries. Top seller St Austell Tribute, Marston's Wainwright and Sharp's Doom Bar were on.

North Leigh

The second of Stuart's pubs is

the ever popular **Woodman** in this village near Witney, now owned by Heineken. On the bar and in good condition were Wainwright and Bath Ales' Gem, with a third real ale at weekends. The pub is well supported by the community being open from 12-12 and with a full menu from Wednesday till Sunday.

Witney

Stuart Cockwell is also looking after the **New Inn** on a short-term lease, which could be extended. Heineken is to invest £100,000 in a refurbishment which may involve food but a reduced real ale range. Martin Cornish who recently retired from the **New Inn** will be a hard act to follow after 15 years when it was in the *Good Beer Guide*.

Opposite Church Green is a café/bar known as **Brew**, serving simple but very tasty food from morning till 6pm and then becoming a micro-bar till late. Four ever-changing keg beers are served with (on the day) a rare Buxton beer supported by 30 or so bottles and cans, gins and other spirits.

Around the Wild West

A recent branch mini-bus tour took us to eight pubs beginning with the **Red Lion** in Northmoor, a superb community-owned pub. Available were Brakspear Gold, North Cotswold's Windrush Ale, Loose Cannon's Abingdon Bridge and Cotswold Lion's Golden Fleece – all local breweries.



The **Clanfield Tavern** in Clanfield is a popular Marston's dining house serving Old Thumper, Razorback and Lancaster Bomber, and Thatcher's Stan's cider is always on hand-pump. In the same village, the **Cotswold Plough Hotel** has a very cosy feel with Ramsbury Farrow Bitter and Hooky being regular ales. The **Plough** at Kelmscott is another mainly dining hotel where Woodforde's Wherry and Old Hooky were being served. The recently re-opened **Bell** at Langford is another top dining pub serving Sharp's Doom Bar, Old Hooky and a rare Donnington Gold.

The **Morris Clown** in Bampton never disappoints, and beers in top form were White Horse Grumpy Old Landlord, West Berkshire's Mr Chubb's Lunchtime Bitter, and Pitchfork Brewery's Frogbit Bitter. The **Siege of Orleans** in Carterton is a very popular micro-pub following conversion from a shop, serving Box Steam's Deraill, Piston Broke and Indian Summer, Mad Dog's Tekno Trousers and Bee Sting Cider.

In Brize Norton is cosy village local and free house the **Masons Arms**, where we found Doom Bar and a tasty Pitchfork Frogbit, again! We ended our tour at new micro-pub **Oxbrew** in Witney, where two hand-pumps and six kegs plus many bottles and cans kept us happy as we reflected on a good day out sampling and scoring some excellent pubs.

Llandrindod Wells

An opportunity to travel over the Central Wales scenic railway line and visit the 2016 Welsh Pub of the Year took my mind away from my wonderful wife Marie, whose life was ebbing away in hospital. The **Arvon Ale House** is one of the new breed of micro-pubs, a former grocer and guest house which serves five beers, four ciders and light snacks. Run by Laura Gallagher who has lived in Powys for 10 years and previously worked in mental health, she decided on a change in lifestyle and also has a smallholding. Her colleague Kate Vandersteen had previously lived and worked in Kidlington before retiring to this wonderful historic town – it's a small world, as they say.

The beers all cost £3 were and were Wood's Shropshire Lad and Born and Bred, Mad Dog's Sea Dog, Sarah Hughes's Surprise and Stockport Brewery's Stock Porter, all in super condition along with a couple of ciders. A Welsh language conversation group was in the pub, and at last orders we had a choice of 20 Welsh gins, 30 Irish whiskeys and some interesting malts. What a wonderful time we had.



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
Nags Head on the Thames
Narrows *
White Horse

Oxford

Britannia, Headington
Castle Tavern
Chequers, High Street
Fir Tree, Iffley Road
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.

Pete's Pubs

Branch chairman **Pete Flynn** discovers all about Iffley

THE RIVERSIDE VILLAGE of Iffley is a very attractive part of Oxford, and with its dry stone walling and tall trees it feels more like a Cotswold village than an area within a 10-minute bus ride of the gleaming spires of academia.

A short walk from Iffley Lock, near the 700-year-old St Mary the Virgin Church, is the **Prince of Wales**. This is a Wadworth pub run by Steve Bant and his wife Sue, who've been in residence for five years. They had previously spent 12 years with Mitchell and Butlers and have owned a pub restaurant and rooms in Worcester, so have plenty of experience which is self-evident as the place is kept spotlessly clean. Steve and Sue are ably helped by Richard Van Der Stelt who takes so much passion and pride in maintaining the cask ale that the **Prince of Wales** is in the

last six to be judged from a total of 400 in the Wadworth portfolio. Richard always looks forward to a Tuesday, he tells me, as it's the day all the beer lines are thoroughly cleansed whilst the lines are of course flushed through each time a barrel is changed.

Six cask conditioned ales were on offer the day I called which were the usual Wadworth 6X, IPA, Bishops Tipple, Swordfish and Horizon, plus guest ale Proper Job from St Austell Brewery. I opted for the latter which Richard told me was the first from the new barrel, and excellent it was too. The Swordfish is also a firm favourite of mine and has a wonderful malty flavour infused with rum.

The building has been a pub since the 1700s, and at some point converted what was a

bakery next door into a single use building, which is evident from the reference to Bakers Lane which runs alongside it.

My next stop was the **Tree Hotel** which is well known to us in CAMRA for its highly popular beer festival held annually at the end of July. With his warm and engaging, friendly smile I was met by manager Namit Julka, who instantly made me feel welcome as we both sat down for a chat.

Namit has been the manager since 2010 and prior to that worked in restaurants in Delhi, so has a lot of influence on the food offerings which include British, Thai, and Indian cuisine. Three real ales were available which included the ubiquitous Sharp's Doom Bar; Kansas Avenue Brewing Co's chestnut Smith and Tinker; and Upham Brewery's 1st Drop. I chose the Smith and Tinker, an unusual beer with its slightly sweet taste and caramel notes. Kansas Avenue is part of Hyde's of Salford, which has been brewing beer since 1863.

Namit told me that he sells about seven to eight barrels of cask ale a week and has a personal interest in real ale, which prompted him to contact Andy Wilson of White Horse Brewery. Andy has become a firm friend and helps him source and set up the annual festival which has been running for six years, attracting 600-800 people during the three-day event. Although the **Tree Hotel** is free of tie it does have a



OPPOSITE: Steve Bant (right) and Richard Van Der Stelt at the Prince of Wales

RIGHT: Namit Julka at the Tree Hotel

supply arrangement with Heineken regarding spirits and non-alcoholic drinks.

I walked a short distance to Iffley Road and didn't have to wait long to board a Number 3 bus to my next destination, the **Oxford Blue**. Gone are the days of bus timetables when Google Maps not only informs you how to get there, but tells you the number and estimated arrival time plus the name of your destination stop. It really couldn't be simpler. My journey of about eight minutes took me to Marston Street where this gaudily coloured venue invites you to sample "Pints Pots and Pizza".

I was the only customer in this revamped pub and was greeted by manager Lexx Lucas and his assistant Tom Harris. They had been here no more than four weeks so they were not able to provide much information, only that owner Charles Wells & Co of Bedford had sold its brewing operation to Marston's last year. The influx of cash had enabled Charles Wells to embark on developing a new chain of pubs under the Pints Pots and Pizza brand, together with investment in a new £13 million brewery and conference/visitor centre to be established in 2019.

In the meantime Charles Wells is involved in the Wandering Brewery Project, a collaboration to promote other brewers' products. I sampled Rendezbrew Pale Ale, brewed in conjunction with Bedlam Brewery, which I found to be in



good condition and perfectly acceptable. Lexx did say that they had not established customer footfall as yet, so they were experimenting with the take-up of real ale so this was the only one available presently. Marston's and Young's beers are often on.

My last stop was the nearby **Fir Tree** on Iffley Road, which has recently been nominated for inclusion in the 2019 CAMRA Good Beer Guide and offers a 10% discount to card carrying CAMRA members.

Joe and Hannah Hill took over the pub in 2007 and they are ably assisted by cellar and barman Chris Jones. Joe said he was almost speechless at gaining entry in the guide, and together with Chris they are passionate and take pride in keeping their cask ale in tip top condition.

This lovely split-level Victorian ale house first started trading in 1866 and is an ex-Morrells house before succumbing to Greene King in the 1990s. Five

real ales were available which included two guests, and I chose the Oakham Bishops Farewell; a strong premium beer of structured quality dominated by elaborate fruity hop notes, with a grainy background and dry finish. The more I drank, the more I liked this one – but it was time for me to get the bus home after I had wished everyone farewell.



WEST BERKSHIRE BREWERY



DRAUGHT & BOTTLE BEERS

BREWERY TOURS
AND CLUB MEMBERSHIP

AVAILABLE ONLINE AND
FROM OUR BREWERY SHOP

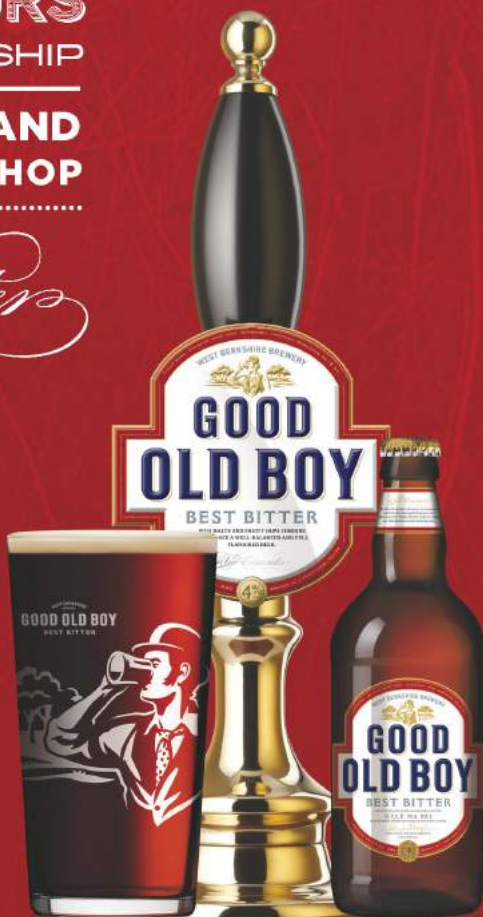
Real Character

OPENING TIMES:
MON - SAT
10AM TO 4PM

WEST BERKSHIRE BREWERY
The Flour Barn
Frlsham Home Farm
Yattendon, RG18 0XT

WBBREW.COM

WESTBERKSBREW





In the footsteps of the monks

Bryan Brown, chairman of the Friends of Abingdon Civic Society, sets the scene for the Abingdon Beer Festival on 7-8 December

ABINGDON ON THAMES is thought to be the longest continually inhabited town in England and was the county town of Berkshire until 1867, with a magnificent County Hall and 300 architecturally listed buildings in its centre.

At the core of its heritage is the great Abbey of Abingdon; in medieval times it was the sixth largest and one of the richest abbeys in the country, with the church of St Mary almost the size of Westminster Abbey. It hosted many kings and queens including William the Conqueror for hunting and Henry VIII, who visited four times. As I like to say to my Oxford friends: Abingdon was a far more important place than Oxford!

Two distinct activities loom large in its history. The Abbey, founded in the seventh century, had become a major landowner and the authority of the area by the 13th century. Second was brewing and malting, which created wealth for the town following the destruction of most of the Abbey under orders from Henry VIII in 1538.

Brewing and malting have taken place at Abingdon Abbey for over 1,000 years. Initiated by the monks for their own consumption, up to a gallon (eight pints) a day were consumed – the amount we hope will be drunk by visitors to our beer festival! Shortly after the Dissolution the remaining

buildings were developed as the Abbey Brewery, including a major malt house. Beer continued to be brewed on the site for some 300 years until it was merged with Morlands in the 1860s.

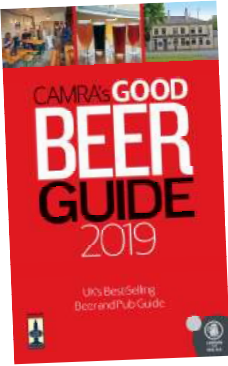
The Abingdon Beer Festival, now in its third year, is a tradition revived and organised with the support of Loose Cannon Brewery, itself a revival of the Abingdon brewing tradition. The festival is held in the remaining Abbey Buildings which are now a nationally scheduled monument and grade 1 listed. In 1944 they were saved from demolition by charity the Friends of Abingdon Civic Society, who have continued to own and maintain them for almost 75 years. Although the buildings are wonderfully atmospheric and include the only theatre in town, the Unicorn, there is much to do to make them more accessible and functional.

So, do come and join us in these atmospheric buildings for an unusual experience whilst enjoying over 30 Oxfordshire ales. These buildings need to pay for themselves, so all profits go towards supporting them. The Friends are undertaking a project, partly supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, to make the buildings secure for generations to come, useable for 12 months of the year and more accessible, while continuing to provide a great venue for weddings and events which include amateur dramatics, music and the Unicorn Cinema. We also aim to create a visitor attraction animating over 1,000 years of history for the benefit of the Abingdon community and to attract more visitors.

The festival is on Friday 7 and Saturday 8 December, from 6-11pm.



More of our locals in 2019 Good Beer Guide



OXFORD CAMRA HAS six new entries in GBG 2019, while the White Horse branch has two plus a club.

The newcomers in Oxford branch include a micro-pub, a community-owned pub and three pubs owned by large breweries, plus Hook Norton's first pub in Oxford city. There are now 24 pubs listed in the Oxford branch, based on beer quality scores as voted by CAMRA members throughout the year using the Whatpub website. Most of the winners offer a good choice of cask conditioned real ale, but beer quality takes precedence over quantity.



Among the newcomers, the Siege of Orleans in Carterton was the county's first micro-pub, converted from a shop. The Abingdon Arms in Beckley, overlooking Otmoor, is among eight pubs in the county saved from closure by a community buy-out.

Also new are the Castle in Oxford, re-opened by Hook Norton brewery last year; the Fir Tree in Iffley Road and the Broad Face in Abingdon, owned by Greene King; and the Butchers Arms in Headington, owned by Fuller's. Two pubs have dropped out due to change of management, and one because of beer quality.

Oxford Drinker editor Dave Richardson says: "Real ale is thriving around Oxford as throughout the country, and it is particularly pleasing to see a micro-pub and a community-owned pub join the list as these are positive trends at a time

when pub closures are still happening at a worrying rate.

"The Castle's inclusion will delight anyone who enjoys the beers of the county's oldest independent brewer, as there are many 'Hooky' pubs around the north of the county but no guarantee you will find them in Oxford until now.

"It's also very welcome to see larger breweries represented with more GBG pubs. Greene King now offers certain pub tenants a much wider choice of the beers they can serve from other breweries, and the Broad Face is a good example of this."

White Horse CAMRA members have voted for a club to be listed for the first time – Stanford in the Vale Social Club, last year's runner-up in the CAMRA Regional Club of the Year competition. Other new entries are the Swan in Faringdon and the Plough in

West Hanney, a community-owned pub.

White Horse members have spent the last year undertaking surveys of all local pubs to see if they meet the criteria. Other pubs included are the multi-award winning Royal Oak in Wantage, the Shoulder of Mutton (also in Wantage); the Greyhound, Letcombe Regis; the King and Queen, Longcot; and the Crown at Marcham.

The 2019 *Good Beer Guide* includes 4,500 pubs nationwide and also the growing number of breweries – now standing at 2,500. It is available direct from CAMRA or from bookshops and online retailers.



LEFT TOP: Simon Abbott behind the bar of The Red Lion at Northmoor

LEFT BOTTOM: Su Osborn and Oxford chairman Pete Flynn at The Siege of Orleans, Carterton

TOP: The Swan makes a return to the guide; landlords Andy and Liz Brotherston behind the handpumps receiving the GBG

FAR RIGHT: Landlord Nick Musgrove at the Plough at Hanney.

RIGHT: For the first time ever a club in the Vale of White Horse is in the guide, Pictured in Stanford Club are Malcolm Hutt, Chairman, Colin Clark, bar Manager, and Steve Moore with branch chairman Ian Winfield.





**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

Join up, join in, join the campaign

You are just moments away from a year in beer heaven!

From as little as £25* today, be part of the CAMRA community and enjoy discounted entry to around 200 beer festivals, exclusive member offers and more. Discover all the ins and outs of brewing and beer with fantastic magazines and newsletters, but even more importantly support various causes and campaigns to save pubs, cut beer tax and more.

Join CAMRA today

Enter your details and complete the Direct Debit form below to get 15 months for the price of 12 for the first year and save £2 on your membership fee.

Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit www.camra.org.uk/joinup or call 01727 798440. All forms should be addressed to Membership Department, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

Your details:

Title Surname

Forename(s)

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

Address

Postcode

Email address

Tel No(s)

	Direct Debit	Non DD
Single Membership	£25 <input type="checkbox"/>	£27 <input type="checkbox"/>
(UK & EU)		
Joint Membership	£30.50 <input type="checkbox"/>	£32.50 <input type="checkbox"/>
(Partner at the same address)		

*For information on Young Member and other concessionary rates please visit www.camra.org.uk/membership-rates or call 01727 798440.

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 ☐

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title Surname

Forename(s)

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

Joint member's Email

Joint member's Tel No

Signed

Date

Applications will be processed within 21 days of receipt of this form. 04/17



Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

Please fill in the whole form using a ball point pen and send to:
Campaign for Real Ale Ltd, 230 Hatfield Road St. Albans, Herts AL1 4LW



This Guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer.

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To the Manager Bank or Building Society

Address

Postcode

Names(s) of Account Holder

Bank or Building Society Account Number

Branch Sort Code

Reference

Service User Number

9 2 6 1 2 9

FOR CAMRA OFFICIAL USE ONLY

This is not part of the instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Membership Number

Name

Postcode

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay Campaign For Real Ale Limited Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Campaign For Real Ale Limited and, if so will be passed electronically to my Bank/ Building Society.

Signature(s)

Date

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay by Direct Debits
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society
- If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd asks you to
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

New Direct Debit members will receive a 12 month supply of vouchers in their first 15 months of membership

the 21st

OXFORD BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL 2018



170 real ales
130 Thursday and Friday, 40 new, different ales for Saturday
50 ciders and perries

Thursday 8 November 17.00-23.00
Friday 9 November 11.00-23.00
Saturday 10 November 11.00-19.00

Oxford Town Hall
St Aldate's, Oxford OX1 1BX

 [oxfordbeerfestival2018](https://www.facebook.com/oxfordbeerfestival2018)
 [@oxford_beerfest](https://twitter.com/oxford_beerfest)

Entry cost is \$5 including a non-refundable commemorative glass. CAMRA members entry \$2. Customers will need to purchase beer/ales to spend at the bar. Unwashed hands are fully refundable or may be donated to charity. Proof of age may be asked for. Accompanied children and under 16s admitted only in The Old Library. The Festival is organised by Oxford CAMRA and is staffed by CAMRA volunteers.



THE STAR

01865 248011 OX4 1BU

The Star is an independent freehouse, always seeking out new, exciting local and international craft beers, to add to our growing range. Try a few in the best beer garden in east Oxford!

thestarroyal@hotmail.co.uk

Branch Diary

Saturday 27 October

Beer Festival Publicity and Pub Survey Crawl

12 noon

Walk around all the real ale pubs of central Oxford to deliver Beer Festival publicity material and to survey pubs to record real ales available. Meet at the St Aldates Tavern at noon..

Monday 5 November

Branch Meeting

7.30pm

At the Red Lion, Banbury Road, Kidlington. Meet up beforehand for a chat at the Black Horse, Kidlington, from 6.30pm.

Thursday 8 – Saturday 10 November

Oxford Beer & Cider Festival

Help needed at all sessions, plus for set up (Tuesday, Wednesday) and take-down (Saturday and Sunday mornings).

Sunday 18 November

Minibus Surveying Trip

11am

Minibus trip to survey country pubs. Pick-ups in Abingdon and Oxford. For details and to book a seat contact@oxford.camra.org.uk

Saturday 1 December

Chairman's Crawl

Visit to Hackney, London. Details tba, contact chair@oxford.camra.org.uk or visit website for more.

Wednesday 5 December

Branch Meeting

6.30pm

At the Broad Face, Abingdon. Note the earlier start time. Will be followed by visits to a few Abingdon pubs.

Tuesday 11 December

Christmas Social

7pm

Social at Oxbrew, Witney, which will be opened specially for us on a Tuesday night.

Festival Diary

Thursday 25 - Saturday 27
October

Swindon Beer Festival

STEAM Museum, Fire Fly
Avenue, Swindon
100+ beers & ciders
www.swindon.camra.org.uk

Friday 26 - Saturday 27 October

Aylesbury Beer Festival

Sir Henry Floyd Grammar
School, Oxford Road, Aylesbury
<https://avw.camra.org.uk>

Thursday 8 - Saturday 10
November

Oxford Beer & Cider Festival

Town Hall, St Aldates, Oxford
170 beers plus 50 ciders &
perries. See information on
page 10
www.oxford.camra.org.uk

Friday 16 - Saturday 17
November

Oktoberfest

Beacon, Portway, Wantage
www.beaconwantage.co.uk

Thursday 29 November -
Saturday 1 December

Dudley Winter Ales Fayre

Dudley Town Hall, St James's
Road, Dudley
70+ beers plus cider & perry
www.dudley.camra.org.uk

Tuesday 4 - Saturday 8
December

Pig's Ear Beer & Cider Festival

Round Chapel, Glenarm Road,
Hackney, London
230 beers & ciders
www.pigsear.org.uk

Friday 7 - Saturday 8
December

Abingdon Beer Festival

Abbey Buildings, Abingdon
OX14 3JB
Open 6-11 both days; 30+ real
ales.

Saturday 8 December (noon -
6pm)

Haddenham Winterfest

Banks Park, Banks Road,
Haddenham
40+ beers
www.haddenham-beer-festival.co.uk/winterfest

Compiled by Richard Queralt

Further details can be found on
our website

www.oxford.camra.org.uk

**An ancient city.
A modern beer.**



Complex, distinctive and richly satisfying
– Prospect is the full-bodied session ale
from Oxford's Shotover Brewery

www.shotoverbrewing.com



Wide range of cask ales & craft beers

Extensive selection of gins

**Hand-crafted dishes including pub
classics and fabulous vegan options**

**10% off any cask ale for all
CAMRA members**

www.royalblenheim.co.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!



6 Alfred Street, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX1 4EH
Telephone: 01865 728164
Email: bearinn@fullers.co.uk

THE FRIENDS OF ABINGDON AND THE LOOSE CANNON BREWERY
CONTINUE AN ABINGDON ABBEY TRADITION AND PRESENT
THE VERY BEST OF OXFORDSHIRE BEERS

ABINGDON BEER FESTIVAL

FRIDAY 7TH DECEMBER | 6PM - 11PM
SATURDAY 8TH DECEMBER | 6PM - 11PM

ABINGDON ABBEY BUILDINGS, CHECKER WALK, ABINGDON, OX14 3JB

FREE ENTRY

EXPERIENCE THE STUNNING
MEDIEVAL ABBEY BUILDINGS
& HELP SUPPORT THEIR UPKEEP
+ **SUPPORT OTHER LOCAL CHARITIES**

BEER TOKENS AVAILABLE ON THE NIGHTS

**£7 FOR 2 PINTS
OR 4 HALFPINTS**

**FANTASTIC
FESTIVAL
FOOD**

**GREAT
MUSIC**

FROM LOCAL BANDS



THE FRIENDS
OF ABINGDON
CIVIC SOCIETY

LOOSE
CANNON
BREWERY

 heritage
lottery fund
LOTTERY FUNDED