



**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**

issue 47  
August - September 2007



# the Oxford Drinker

## Pub of the Year 2006!

The branch met at the General Elliot in South Hinksey on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> June to present the branch Pub of the Year certificate. We were pleased to be joined by Jackie Parker (CAMRA's Regional Director Elect for the Central Southern Region) as well as a visiting contingent from the North Oxfordshire branch. The General Elliot beat off competition from six other pubs in the race for the award, following the publication of the short list in the February issue of Oxford Drinker. In addition to assessing the quality of the beer in the pubs visited, voters were asked to take into consideration factors such as the atmosphere, style and decor, the service and value for money.

Back in late March when the votes were counted we decided to combine the award presentation with a full branch meeting, and opt for a June evening for the event: the hope was to muster as many branch members as possible and we had visions of a long, sunny, summer's evening in the pub garden.

The British weather didn't quite co-operate with our naive vision, but we were able to make use of the excellent garden in the early evening for the formalities of the monthly branch meeting, before retiring to the bar for the presentation itself and a party accompanied by live rock band East Point.

different real ales to choose from as well as a real perry (pear cider) to sample.

In addition to receiving recognition locally, the General Elliot will now go forward to the regional round of CAMRA's national Pub of the Year competition.



We would like to extend our congratulations to John, his family, and staff on their success, and thank them again for their hospitality.

The certificate was presented by branch chairman Tony Goulding (left), and received by licensee John Westendorp (right).

An excellent time was had by all those attending, with four

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National Beer Scoring System

the free newsletter of the  
Oxford City Branch of CAMRA  
[www.oxfordcamra.org.uk](http://www.oxfordcamra.org.uk)

# beer festival diary



Tuesday 7 - Saturday 11  
August

**30th Great British Beer  
Festival**

Earls Court, London  
450 real ales - the 'Biggest Pub  
in the World'  
[www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk)

Saturday 11 – Sunday 12  
August

**Bicester Jazz & Beer  
Festival**

Garth Park, Bicester  
[www.bicesterroundtable.org.uk](http://www.bicesterroundtable.org.uk)

Thursday 16 – Saturday 18  
August

**Worcester Beer & Cider  
Festival**

Worcester Racecourse

200 beers, 100 ciders & perries  
[www.worcesterbeerfest.org.uk](http://www.worcesterbeerfest.org.uk)

Saturday 25 – Monday 27  
August

**Woodman Inn Beer Festival**  
New Yat Road, North Leigh, Nr  
Witney 01993 881790

Saturday 25 - Monday 27  
August

**Brill Beer Festival IV**  
Brill Sports & Social Club,  
Church Street, Brill, Nr Thame  
[www.brillbeerfestival.co.uk](http://www.brillbeerfestival.co.uk)

Saturday 25 - Monday 27  
August

**The Crown, Marcham**  
Packhorse Lane, Marcham, Nr  
Abingdon 01865 391522

Saturday 25 - Monday 27  
August

**White Hart Beer Festival**

Main Road, Fyfield (off A420 to  
Swindon)  
01865 390585  
[www.whitehart-fyfield.com](http://www.whitehart-fyfield.com)

Monday 27 August

**Banbury Cricket Ground**

Whitepost Road, Bodicote  
01295 264368

Friday 31 August - Sunday 2  
September

**Wallingford BunkFest 2007**

'music, dance, steam & beer'  
See [www.bunkfest.co.uk](http://www.bunkfest.co.uk) or  
call 07743 330494 for tickets  
(see advert page 6)

*continued across page*

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# beer festival

**diary** *continued*

Friday 7 - Sunday 9 September

## 6<sup>th</sup> Headington Beer Festival

Mason's Arms, Quarry School  
Place, Headington Quarry, Ox-  
ford

30 beers + cider

01865 764579

[www.masonsquarry.co.uk](http://www.masonsquarry.co.uk)

Tuesday 18 - Saturday 22

September

## Autumn Beer Festival

Far from the Madding Crowd  
Friars Entry, Oxford

01865 240900

[www.maddingcrowd.co.uk](http://www.maddingcrowd.co.uk)

Friday 28 – Sunday 30

September

## Autumn Beer Festival

General Elliot, Manor Road,  
South Hinksey, Oxford

01865 739369

[www.generalelliot.co.uk](http://www.generalelliot.co.uk)

Further details and  
updates are available  
on our FESTIVALS  
webpage at  
[www.oxfordcamra.org.uk](http://www.oxfordcamra.org.uk)

Missed an issue of  
the  
Oxford Drinker?

Seen an interesting  
article that you want  
to read again?

All new issues of the Oxford  
Drinker are now available on the  
Oxford City CAMRA website,  
including some back issues

## credits....

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# beer styles - part 6



Richard Queralt

## OLD ALES, BARLEY WINES & SCOTTISH BEERS

This short series of articles looks at the different styles of beer native to Britain. This final article deals with old ales and barley wines, and finishes off with Scottish beers.

The original old ales were brewed to be kept and matured for several months or even years in huge wooden barrels known as tuns. As these vessels were unlined, the beer took some of its characteristics from the wood used in their manufacture, usually oak. Wild yeasts on the wood's surface added a slightly sour taste while tannins drawn from within the wood gave it a drier edge.

The reason for the long maturation period was the methods used to produce malted barley in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Malting is essential to the brewing of beer and involves heating barley in a kiln. This was done using various types of fuel but usually wood and the smoke from the fire invariably tainted the malt. The process left the finished beer with an unwanted smoky tang. Storing the beer resulted in the characteristics mentioned in the above paragraph but without the previous smokiness. This subject was covered in more depth in Parts 2 & 3 of this series, which looked at porters and stouts. These two styles were to evolve from the original old ales.

Not that they were called old ales at the time, 'old' being the modern term used when the style was revived in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This type of beer would have gone under several different names over the decades following its 'invention'. Among these were 'stale' (stale would originally have meant a beer that been matured over several months rather than 'not fresh' as it does today), 'stock ale' and 'keeping ale'.



The beer would commonly be served as a blend with mild - stale & mild - giving an overall sweeter, fruitier taste. When bitter beers became the dominant style in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a mixture of old & bitter became popular, better known to some as a pint of mother-in-law.

Most old ales would have been in the range of 4% to 7% alcohol. Originally exclusively dark brown or ruby red in colour, improvements in malted barley production saw paler versions develop alongside.

Today's old ales are usually found in bottles and tend towards the higher end of the alcohol spectrum.

Among these are Gale's Prize Old Ale and Thomas Hardy's Ale. Neither is produced by its original brewery, both having closed. Both beers are difficult find but are worth the effort, with some enthusiasts buying them to mature for several years.

Another version available today is Theakston's Old Peculier. This is a dark, fruity beer which, as well as being sold in bottles, is also available on draught. (A Royal Peculier, or Royal Peculier, is a place of worship that falls directly under the jurisdiction of the British monarch, rather than a diocese, in this case the peculier of Masham, a town in North Yorkshire, home to Theakston's brewery).

These beers almost certainly don't taste much like the original old ales they're styled after. But then those sour, lactic and tannic flavours would seem quite alien to most 21<sup>st</sup> century beer drinkers.

The beer bottle label above left, from Bass of Burton-on-Trent, was first used from around 1903 when the company added the words 'barley wine' to its No 1 bottled beer. Although the beer was brewed in Burton, it was bottled by now-defunct Burford brewers Garne & Sons, as shown on the label.

The No1 term was reserved for Bass's biggest and strongest

pale beer. Bass seem to have been the first brewery to use the term barley wine to denote a particular style of beer. By the 1860s, the company, then known as Bass, Ratcliff & Gretton, had become famous for its pale-coloured beers, as opposed to dark beers such as brown ales, porters and stouts, and it's around this date that the term came into use.

The story goes that, during the various wars between England and France of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, it was considered unpatriotic to drink French wines, so the Claret and Bordeaux had to make way for good old English ale. This, of course, only affected those rich enough to afford expensive foreign wine in the first place. These would be the upper classes in their big houses, where the beer would be brewed on the premises by the butler in the house's own small brewery. And there wouldn't have been a beer mug in sight – cut glass goblets were the order of the day at the dining table.

To take the place of wine, alcohol-wise, the beer had to be strong, and barley wines usually weighed in at 10 to 12%. And it's this fact that gives the style its name – it's as strong as a wine but since it is made from grain (barley) rather than fruit, it is in fact a beer.

As with most strong beers, barley wines suffered from grain rationing during the two world wars – with grain being diverted to produce food rather than beer – and the higher taxes levied on strong beers. By the 1960s the style had almost died out and just a handful of examples survived.

One of these was Whitbread's Gold Label, which was Britain's best-selling barley wine for decades. Now part of the Inbev portfolio, it's still available but only in tins and not really to be recommended.



*A latter-day barley wine from Morland of Abingdon*

But there are some newer examples of the style to be found: Fuller's Golden Pride, Young's Old Nick and Robinson's Old Tom can be found in supermarkets in bottled form are good examples of the current version of the style. Bass No1 is still brewed occasionally for beer festivals. The Bass brewery site is now a brewing museum, part of which houses a small brewery specialising in keeping alive beers such as No1 and Worthington White Shield.

Today, a lot of Scottish beers can to be quite similar in style and taste to beer from the rest of Britain. This hasn't always been the case. Although top quality malting barley was available from the Scottish Lowlands, hops needed the warmer climate of southern English counties such as Kent and Worcestershire. This meant that, in the early days of

public and commercial transport, 'importing' hops from down south was expensive. The result was a maltier, sweeter beer with a low hop content. Several Scottish beers are still brewed this way and are well worth seeking out.

Another Scottish brewing practise concerned the method of naming each style of beer. The 'shilling' system involved naming beers after the amount of duty levied on each barrel. Caledonian 80/- (80 shillings is the equivalent of £4 in today's currency) is one example preserving the tradition. Although out of date today - the tax on a barrel of beer is a damn sight more than four quid now - the practise still serves a purpose as an indication of a beer's strength.

'Heavy' is a term still used in Scotland for a stronger beer. This would be a 70/- and roughly equivalent to an ordinary bitter the rest of Britain. 60/- is similar in strength to mild and known as Light - a bit confusing this. 80/- takes the place of best bitters and is known as Export, with 90/- reserved for the strongest beers such as the old ales and barley wines above, and known as Strong Wee Heavy, or just Strong.

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# black country trip

Matt Bullock

Our annual trip to the Black Country in June took us on a tried and tested route to some familiar and favourite pubs. A large group, including some welcome new faces (and most of the predictable old ones), gathered at Oxford station for the bargain train journey northwards, and despite a detour around roadworks on our arrival at Wolverhampton station, we were still five minutes early arriving at the first pub of the day, **The Great Western**. Once we were admitted, Holdens Bitter, Mild and Golden Glow were the choice drinks, and in the hour we were allowed, there was just time to sample all three.

parlour to sup our beer from the most traditional handle mugs. This pub is an absolute gem.



Ma Pardoe's as it's often known, is one of the few surviving original brew pubs - many closed during the keg years - and only its own beers are sold here. The front bar is a fantastic space, with its elaborate timber and etched glass bar fitting and a unusual enamelled ceiling. We also recommend the pork pies here, and usually consume most of their available stock. This year was no exception.



Fortunately, the next bus journey is only a matter of a minute or two to Upper Gornal, and here we called briefly at the **Jolly Crispin** before heading down the road to another of my favourites, **the Britannia**.

From Netherton, it's a short ride to Halesowen and to the **Wagon & Horses**, an old corner pub that has suffered from subsidence (the floor slopes away from the bar most alarmingly) that has a permanent beer festival with sixteen ales to choose from. I'd be lying if I said I recall exactly what I drank here, so I won't even try, but it was all good stuff and our hour here seemed to pass very rapidly.

A number 558 bus took us from Wolverhampton to Sedgley, a journey of around fifteen minutes, and from there it's a short walk to the **Beacon Hotel**, home of Sarah Hughes brewery. My memory of the day gets a little vague after a few pints of Dark Ruby Mild (6%), so my apologies if the rest of this report contains inaccuracies, but when at the Beacon, the Dark Ruby just has to be drunk, even if it is only lunchtime. We enjoyed the luxury of the fine Victorian

The Brit is a Batham's pub, and again we managed to sit in our favourite back room, which sports its own wall-mounted Edwardian handpumps that still see service on busy Friday nights dispensing the sweet, hoppy bitter.

Outside the pub we again caught the 558 bus to Dudley, and after a quick change we arrived at the **Old Swan** in Netherton. The Old Swan, or



Our last Black Country Pub was again a short bus ride away, the **Windsor Castle** in Lye, home of the brewery of the same name. This was a new venue for us, and was most enjoyable, even if again, my memories are somewhat cloudy. What I do recall is that we took the train back to Birmingham and enjoyed a

final pint in the **Wellington** before the journey back to Oxford, but that is about all.

So if you're trying to forget, don't join the Foreign Legion, come on our next Black Country crawl!



## what's on

Neil Hoggarth

Wednesday 8th August  
Daytime

### **Branch Social at the Great British Beer Festival**

Earl's Court, London. 10am coach from Gloucester Green bus station, or rendezvous inside the festival at the Charles Wells Routemaster bus, 1pm.

Wednesday 15th August  
6.30pm

### **Rural pub survey trip by minibus.**

All welcome. Please rendezvous outside the Lamb and Flag, 12 St Giles, OX1 3JU.

Friday 17th August,  
Daytime

### **Branch Social at the Worcester CAMRA Beer Festival**

Meet at Oxford station in good time for the 9.48am train.

Saturday 18th August  
1pm

### **Ant Sally match**

Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe CAMRA, at the Mason's Arms, 2 Quarry School Place, Headington Quarry, OX3 8LH

Monday 20th August  
7.30pm

### **Branch Meeting, Mason's Arms, Burford Road, Brize Norton, OX18 3NN.**

If travelling from Oxford: catch a Stagecoach 100 bus from stop A3 in George St at 6.30pm (arrives Brize 7.23pm). A branch mini-bus may be available, same rendezvous time/place.

Saturday 25th August  
Noon

### **Branch Social**

### **August Bank Holiday Beer Festivals: Crown at Marcham**

(1 Packhorse Lane, OX13 6NT), followed that evening by **White Horse** at Abingdon (189 Ock Street, OX14 5DW). Catch a Stagecoach 33 bus from St Aldates stop H4 at 11:20am.

Wednesday 29th August  
6.30pm

### **Rural pub survey trip by minibus**

All welcome. Please rendezvous outside the Lamb and Flag, 12 St Giles, OX1 3JU.

Friday 7th September  
Evening

### **Branch Social at the Mason's Arms Beer Festival**

2 Quarry School Place, Headington Quarry, OX3 8LH.

Monday 17th September  
7.30pm

### **Branch Meeting**

The British Legion, Abingdon.

Friday 28th September  
Evening

### **Branch Social at the General Elliot Beer Festival**

Manor Road, South Hinksey, OX1 5AS.

Thursday 11th - Saturday 13th  
October

### **Oxford CAMRA Beer Festival, Oxford Town Hall.**

*Branch meetings are on the **third** Monday of each month.*

*All meetings and events are relaxed and friendly. Members and non-members are welcome at all events.*

*Further details are available at branch meetings, on our website or by contacting the Social Secretary  
[social@oxfordcamra.org.uk](mailto:social@oxfordcamra.org.uk)*



# The 6th Headington Beer Festival

**30 Real Ales and Cider Bar**

*Check our web page for a list of all the beers*

**Pig Roast Saturday Night**

**7th, 8th & 9th September**

**The Masons Arms**

**2 Quarry School Place Headington Oxford**

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# around the county

Helene Augar

After meeting up at the **Lamb and Flag** for one of our regular trips into the great unknown, and sampling some very good beer there - Palmers Best Bitter and Sharps Doom Bar, we found ourselves heading to the West of the Oxford City CAMRA boundary to some very pleasant pubs I hadn't visited before.

We started at **The Plough Inn** at Kelmcott, where I had a lovely pint of Burford and really liked the atmosphere, with warm and welcoming staff and locals.



Then Robin took over the driving from Tony and we went to **The Bell** at Langford. I had a pint of Haymaker, from the Hook Norton Brewery, which unfortunately had a slight vinegar tinge to it. Other people had the same beer (poured after mine) and theirs tasted much better even though it was of a cloudier appearance. Perhaps mine was the first out and had been sitting in the pipes for a while? I wasn't so keen on the atmosphere of the pub as it felt a bit like a

restaurant inside and the outside seating was mainly in the car park.

Tony kept up the pace of the group and we sped off to the **Five Ails** at Filkins. I liked this pub very much as it had bags of character, they served great chunky chips (food was needed by this stage) and also served a good pint of Brakspear's Hooray Henley.



This was followed by another cracking pub - the **Clanfield Arms**, Clanfield. I enjoyed a good pint of Castle Eden from Camerons. The staff informed us they will be doing some refurbishment work to the large conservatory turning it into a dining area in the next few

months but there is still plenty of space inside if you just want a drink.

The final leg of the trip took us to the **Morris Clown**, Bampton. Although I had a nice Adnams and appreciated the clown themed decor, I felt it was a bit lacking in atmosphere in comparison to some of the establishments visited earlier.



At least it gave Ray (above) an opportunity to brush up on his drinking skills!

It was a very enjoyable evening with some good contenders for the next Good Beer Guide and fun was had by all. I look forward to the next magical mystery tour!

**This issue's caption competition is for the picture below (if it helps David is on the left and Alistair on the right).  
Suggestions to editor@oxfordcamra.org.uk**



## LOGO DESIGN COMPETITION WINNER

Congratulations and thanks to Alan S. for designing the winning logo for the **Oxford City CAMRA 10th Beer Festival** in October.

This will appear on programmes, t-shirts and glasses  
- keep checking the website for further details.

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## A Beer Swillers "Did You Know ...?" by Hop Bine.

- 1) A pocket is:
  - (a) The cost of beer (especially in the city!)
  - (b) A sack of hops
  - (c) Where money for the next round originates
- 2) At Rosebury (mid-west Wales), the pub is noted for having:
  - (a) Sawdust on the floor
  - (b) Its own railway station
  - (c) Being built of corrugated iron
- 3) You may have come across a yard of ale but what is a yard of flannel?
  - (a) The end of a roller towel in the toilets
  - (b) A long drink of mild ale
  - (c) The landlord's reason for the beer costing so much
- 4) An ANKER is a:
  - (a) Seaside pub in Devon
  - (b) "Barrell" measure
  - (c) Complaint from brewery workers of beer-sodden boots
- 5) A snob-screen is a term for a:
  - (a) Modern plasma screen television
  - (b) Screen to separate the snobs from the workers
  - (c) Partition for privacy in the gents
- 6) "Brewer's Droop" had a surprise chart hit in the UK in 1974 with "Somerset Cider Insider Her". True or False?
- 7) What is a PUNDY?
  - (a) A beer belly
  - (b) A ration of beer for brewers
  - (c) A second mash giving a low gravity beer
  - (d) Enough beer to make you very drunk

Have a go then turn to page 22 to check your answers.



“WHAT’S THE MATTER  
LAGERBOY,  
AFRAID YOU MIGHT  
TASTE SOMETHING?”



**HOBGOBLIN**

*Deliciously dark*



# beer festival reports

Neil Hoggarth

## Spring Bank Holiday Beer Festival at the General Elliot Friday 24th May - Monday 28th May

The General Elliot's most ambitious beer festival to date crammed around 30 different beers from a wide range of micro breweries into casks on gravity dispense in the outside shed, the hand pumps on the bar, and beer fetched on request direct from the pub's cellar. I'm told that Friday night was popular, and the members of the branch turned out in force for the social arranged for Saturday afternoon/evening. There was a variety of entertainment (both arranged and co-incidental) throughout the day. A Morris dancing team were in full swing as I arrived mid-afternoon, and after they had worn themselves out dancing the team members latter settled into some traditional folk-singing (and beer drinking!). The Red Arrows aerobatics display team were performing for the Abingdon Air and Country Show, and those of us in the pub garden had a good view of much of their routine. The several member of the branch's "travel spotting" faction popped back along the Abingdon Rd/ Hinksey footpath to the railway bridge at one point for the rare sight of a steam locomotive on the main line. There was a live band playing in the garden on Saturday evening, though unfortunately the cold and rain (which came on early evening and dogged the rest of the weekend) had driven most of us inside the pub by that time. The beer was in excellent form.

Probably the most commented on brews were two unusual blended beers that the pub's owners, Vale Brewery, had prepared. Landlord John Westendorp had the honour of naming these, and christened them "Despite" and "Dead Horse (as in flogging a ...)" in appreciation of the support which pub has received from the company over the last few years. John plans a first beer festival for the newest addition to his pub empire, the Crown at Marcham, over the August bank holiday (Sat 25th - Mon 27th August) and another festival at the General Elliot in late September (Fri 28th - Sun 30<sup>th</sup> September).

## Beer Festival at the King's Arms, Kidlington Friday 15th - Sunday 17th June

A friend from work and I arrived at the festival at about 6pm on the Friday evening and were surprised to find that we seemed to be the first people there. Others were quick to follow, however, and within an hour or so a number of friends from the branch were gathered around the table and the venue was beginning to hum (*we don't all smell! - Ed.*).



There were three real ciders available (Moles Black Rat, Bulmers Original and Weston's Old Rosie) and eleven real

ales served on gravity, all drawn from small breweries, many relatively new (Festival Brewery of Gloucester, Ramsbury, Lancaster, Black Country, Three Castles, White Horse) along with a few more established (Titanic, Banks and Taylor). Many pleasant pints were supped before we eventually staggered off in search of a bus back to Oxford, but the one that several of us commented on as being the most impressive was the Titanic Hidden Depths.

## 2nd Annual Beer Festival at the Chester Arms Friday 22nd - Sunday 24th June

We were enthusiastic about the Chester Arms' first beer festival in August last year, so it was good to see the event return. The pub again put its spacious garden to good use, with a beer tent providing stillage for some 17 different real ales and two real ciders from Westons (Old Rosie and Traditional Scrumpy) as well as some seating under cover, which came in handy as the weather was unfortunately not as kind as it could have been.



Despite the weather, it was a good family-friendly event with a bunch of kids playing on a

bouncy castle which had been added to the garden's already impressive array of play equipment. A group from the branch gathered on Friday evening - unfortunately I wasn't able to join them as I was attending a friend's stag night. I wandered over to the festival early on Saturday lunchtime and stayed the entire afternoon. The beers were drawn from smaller breweries from right across the UK, ranging from Belhaven from East Lothian in Scotland down to St Austell of Cornwall and, closer to home, two Old Bog beers from the micro-brewery at the Mason's Arms in Headington Quarry. There was a good range of styles represented, including some fine session bitters, pale hoppy summer beers, a fruit beer, and several lovely dark beers - Highgate "Dark Mild", Mauldon's "Black Adder Stout", and Theakston's "Old Peculier". An excellent festival - we look forward to a 3rd!

## Merton 2007 Summer Beer Festival, Merton Village Hall Saturday 7th July

Our plan to catch the Charlton-on-Otmoor bus that runs from Oxford to Merton on a Saturday was thwarted, owing to confusion about the location of the bus stop in the face of the current Ashmolean Museum building works. Eight of us standing at what we thought was the correct stop watched despondently as the bus sailed up St Giles without us. Undaunted we caught the next available 27 bus to Bicester, then shared a couple of taxis to go to Merton. The festival and village fete were in full swing when we arrived. This is the fourth year that the summer festival has run and it goes from strength to strength - they had about 25 different beers

this year, drawn exclusively from small independent breweries, and a range of ciders and perrys. Special mentions go to the Crouch Vale "Blackwater Mild", the Bridge of Allen "Red Mist" (raspberry wheat beer), and Grand Union "Simcoe" (part of their seasonal "one hop" series). By the time we left mid-evening the beers were running out fast. Congratulations to Fin and Loz and all at Merton on another successful event.

## 10th Charlbury Beer Festival, Memorial Hall Saturday 14th July

The Charlbury Beer Festival started 10 years ago as a modest little fund raising event for the local school. It has grown enormously over the decade, both in size and reputation. Last year the organising committee reorganised themselves as an independent charity and, while the school remains the primary beneficiary, they now make grants to a wide variety of community groups and projects in the Charlbury area. A couple of years ago they toyed with the idea of moving to a bigger site and running a festival under canvas, but they have (wisely in my view) ended up sticking with their established venue. I missed the festival last year, so this was the first year that I'd seen the new layout which features the bar and stillage along one long wall of the hall, rather than across the front of the stage. The change makes it possible for them to put an lot more beer on: this year the festival featured 36 ales and five different ciders. Rather than being sorted by style or brewery name, the beers appear on the stillage and in the program in order of

strength (%ABV) - weaker beers are on the far left of the bar, stronger beers on the far right. This imaginative arrangement rather suits those of us who like to start off with lower gravity beers and work our way up, though you need to be aware that the strongest beers may run out before you reach them (as some people who wanted to try the Spectrum "Old Stootwobblor" found out to their cost!). Another notable feature of the layout is the prominent vertical name banners above the stillage, indicating exactly where on the bar each beer is to be found. We arrived shortly after the festival had opened and were able to get a nice table in the garden. This was handy, because the event was



heaving by mid-afternoon! I enjoyed most of the beer that we sampled during the afternoon, but one of the early beers sticks out in my memory particularly - the Cains

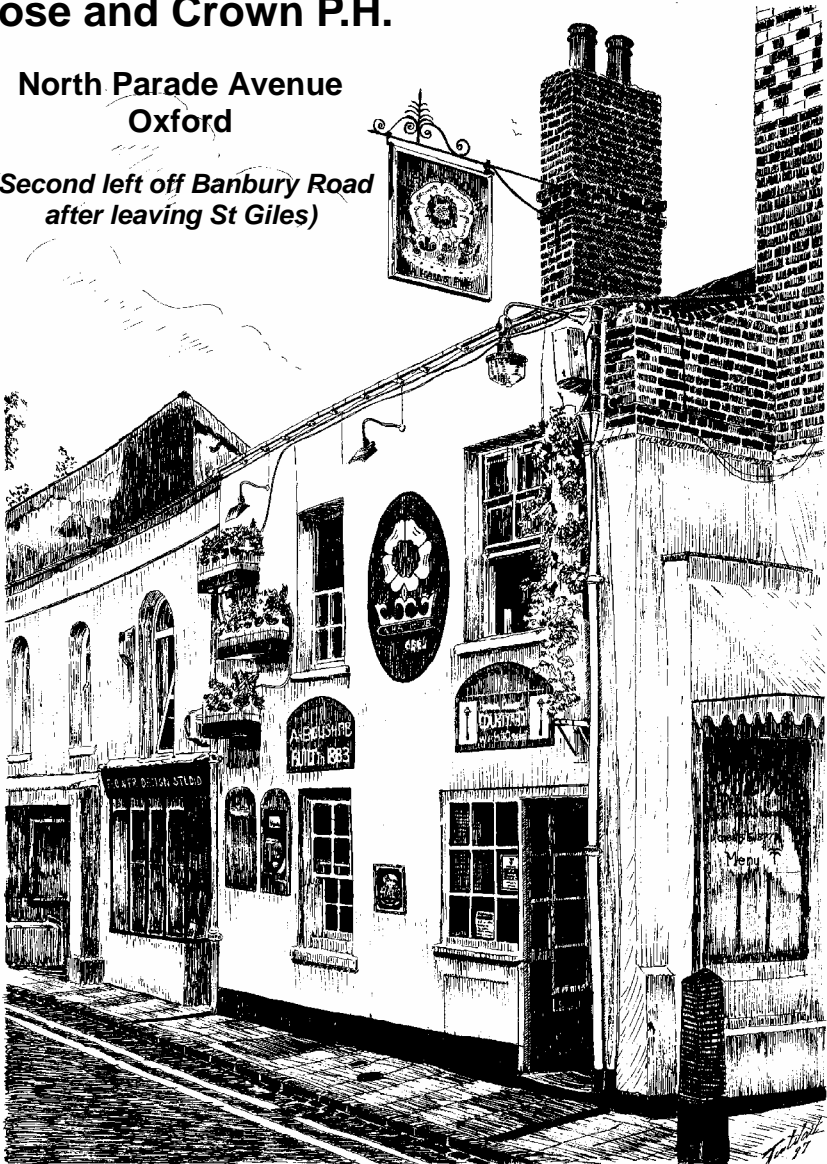


"Liverpool IPA", a magnificently full-flavoured beer for its modest strength (3.5% ABV).

# Rose and Crown P.H.

North Parade Avenue  
Oxford

(Second left off Banbury Road  
after leaving St Giles)



Oxford City CAMRA Pub of the Year 2001  
Listed in the Good Pub Guide 2006  
[www.rose-n-crown.co.uk](http://www.rose-n-crown.co.uk)

# what makes a good pint?



Neil Hoggarth

## Good Beer Guide Selection and the National Beer Scoring System

There has been a debate in the Oxford branch recently about the short-comings of our traditional methods used for surveying and selecting for entries for the Good Beer Guide. Historically we have discussed pubs at branch meetings, and then held a vote of the members attending the branch meeting in February or March. Selection was by a process called "approval voting"; we worked through the short-list and asked for a show of hands for each pub in turn. Members could cast a positive vote for as many pubs as they liked, and voting for a pub indicated that the member knew from personal experience that it consistently served good quality beer. This approach worked well in terms of selecting good pubs which were well known to the active membership. If the selection meeting is attended by 20 people we could be highly confident that a pub which got 18 or 19 enthusiastic votes belonged in the Guide. It worked much less well at comparing quality further down the list. We failed to distinguish between a well-visited pub which only 5 people thought worthy, and a pub which had been visited by only 5 active members and favourably impressed all of them.

The selection bias in favour of "well known" pubs is made more serious by the scale of the surveying task. The branch covers a large area: as well as Oxford itself we take in

Kidlington, Otmoor, Wheatley, Abingdon, Witney, Bampton, Clanfield, Carterton, and their surroundings - as far as the M40 in the east and the Gloucestershire border in the west. There are about 300 pubs in this area, with a roughly 50/50 split between "in Oxford" and "outside Oxford". There are some 500 CAMRA members in the branch area, but only about 15 or 20 active members who attend branch meetings or social events, and the majority of the active members are Oxford based. We need help from the membership at large, both to identify good pubs that we may be overlooking and to provide more "year round" beer quality information for pubs that the active membership visit infrequently.

in scoring the pubs that they visit and drink in.

The idea behind NBSS is simple: we just want you to give us your honest views of the beers that you try in the pubs that you visit. Whenever you visit a pub, give the beers that you drink a score on a six point scale (0-5) and make a brief note on a score card.

Send us the scores and we will use them to compile a "league table" showing how good and how consistent the beer is in the pubs covered by the branch. You don't need to be a beer tasting expert to take part. The scoring system is easily understood and non-technical - printed on the back of the cards is a handy guide to how the 0 to 5 scale is supposed to

### CAMRA National Beer Scoring Scheme

Surveyor \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mem.No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date of survey \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
 Pub \_\_\_\_\_  
 Location \_\_\_\_\_  
 GBG County/Area \_\_\_\_\_ Score 0-5 \_\_\_\_  
 Beer \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

To address these problems the branch have decided to adopt CAMRA's National Beer Scoring System (NBSS) as the basis of our shortlisting and selection for the 2009 edition of the Good Beer Guide (to be published September 2008, following selection by branches in February 2008), and we want to encourage all CAMRA members who drink in the branch area to get involved

be used, with meaningful examples that should make sense to any regular beer drinker:

0. UNDRINKABLE. No cask ale available or so poor you have to take it back or can't finish it.

1. POOR. Beer that is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment.

2. AVERAGE. Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.

3. GOOD. Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again.

4. VERY GOOD. Excellent beer in excellent condition.

5. PERFECT. Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.

What should you be looking for in a pint? The great thing about real ale is the diversity of tastes. With over 2000 different real ales to choose from everyone has their own personal favourites (and things that they don't like!), so please try give an honest account of how well kept a particular beer is. Don't give a pint 5 just because it is (say) London Pride and you happen to like London Pride, and don't give a pint 0 because it is a stout and you happen to hate stouts. Most people can tell the difference between a beer that just happens to have a flavour that "isn't for them" and a beer with actual defects (cloudy, flat, sour, chemical tastes, too warm, too cold, etc), but if you aren't sure then try to do your scoring based on beers that you know that you normally like when they are good condition. Here are a few things to take note of when evaluating a beer:

Look: Assess the colour, clarity and foam of the pint. Golden ales should appear bright and

clear while darker beers, such as stouts and porters, possess a richer colour and often a thick, creamy head. As a general rule of thumb it is best to base your view on whether it looks appealing.

Smell: Smell is an important part of the drinking experience. Take a short sniff of your drink to assess the aroma.

Taste: Take a sip and let it flow around your mouth before swallowing. Beers can reflect all taste sensations including sweet, sour, salty and bitter. The intensity of the flavours and the finish make up the whole taste! Give your taste buds a few seconds to register all the differing sensations.

CAMRA members can get a supply of NBSS cards from several different sources. You can download a PDF from the Members Area of the CAMRA web site and print your own (Members Area -> National Issues -> National Beer Scoring System), you can request them from the local branch, or from CAMRA HQ (see pane on right for branch and HQ contact details).

You can also submit scores over the Internet, using Oxford CAMRA Pub Database (<http://oxfordcamra.org.uk/pubs.php>) or CAMRA's national beer scoring web site (<http://www.beerscoring.org.uk/>).

If you are an interested ale drinker but are not a CAMRA member then why not get involved in the battle to protect real ale and pubs? A CAMRA membership application form can be found at the back of the magazine.

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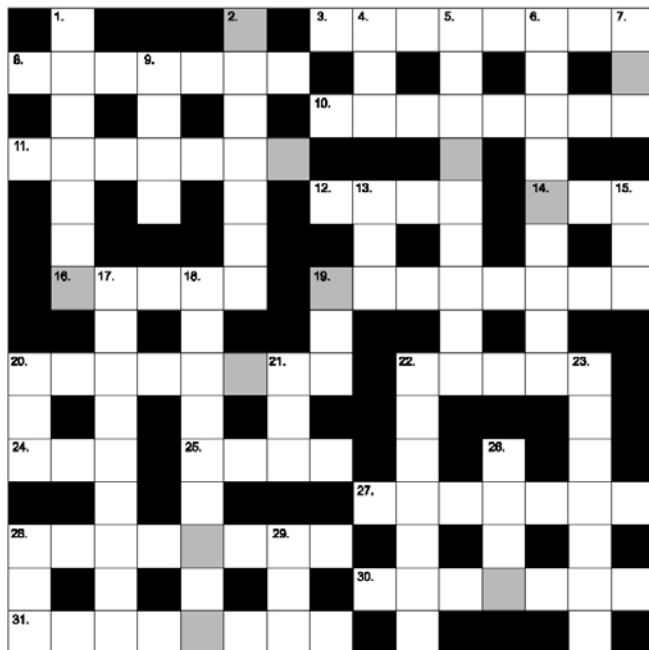
[www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk)

Oxford Trading Standards

01865 815000

# Oxford Drinker Cryptic Crossword

## No. 1 by BeerMatt



All of the answers have beer, pub or Oxford connections. Note that any acronyms of beer names (such as ESB) are listed as being of 3 letters. Note also that the setter is very keen on anagrams!

Once you have filled in the crossword, take the eleven highlighted letters and re-arrange them to form the name of a brewery.

### Clues: Across

- 3 see 24 across
- 8 Gold bars taken from old mill (7)
- 10 Be idle in pub with dreadful food (8)
- 11 Breeze slices through child in Arkell's railway town (7)
- 12 How many degrees in Reading brewpub? (4)
- 14 Popular colour for heraldic lion (3)
- 16 Better to visit this Shropshire brewery on the bus than by car (5)
- 19 Brewery of the late Mr George (8)
- 20 Slaters admire the best girls (3,5)
- 22 Not bitter about being amongst normal types (5)
- 24 and 3 Jostle heathen past former St Giles Inn (3,8)
- 25 Damage a Cumbrian brewery (4)
- 27 The beer runs freely in Sunningwell's pub (7)
- 28 I loan hog to thuggish Rooster (8)
- 30 Boast about then fetch seasonal apple and honey beer (7)
- 31 Nab oldie with novel opposite the Kings Arms? (8)

### Clues: Down

- 1 The law shut down Castle Douglas brewer (7)
- 2 Off to see the wizard, with a good body? (7)
- 4 Fowl of the old, speckled variety (3)
- 5 Dead Roman sees galaxy of Milton beers (9)
- 6 Blame tram for mixing brewing ingredient (5,4)
- 7 Neckwear could prove restrictive to pub tenant (3)
- 9 Unaccompanied in the middle of a Colonel's Choice (4)
- 13 Nottingham beer that initially every punter appreciates (3)
- 15 Lynam made someone drive home (3)
- 17 Take a fruit with car to Power Station? (9)
- 18 Is Boris dead following attack by warship in Sole Bay? (9)
- 19 He's no backward yob, just good and old (3)
- 20 Express disapproval about centre of a shive (3)
- 21 We hear brewing vessel is very heavy (3)
- 22 Notts brewer finds small duck in minimal larder (7)
- 23 Edinburgh brewer William is not as old as you think (7)
- 26 Drink deeply in Indian's wigwam (4)
- 28 Forecast hinted strong breeze initially, or maybe Gales (3)
- 29 Dark Star beer drunk at the start of a party conference? (3)

Turn to page 22 for  
the answers



# inn and around oxford

**The Woodman Inn** in North Leigh, near Witney, has new licensees from mid July. John and Leanda Birch, who are both CAMRA members, are in charge and this community pub is now open all day with food available at most times. The twice yearly Beer Festivals will remain (the next is on August Bank Holiday with 18 ales and 5 ciders expected) and John is hopeful of building up cask sales to make more use of the four handpumps. Currently 6X and either Brakspears or Hook Norton Bitter are the regular real ales on sale, with guest beers appearing as demand or events allow, so sup up!

**The Spread Eagle**, Abingdon, has new Licensees, Nic and Tina Crawford, who have moved from the Boundary House just up the road. They intend to keep the pub at a local level, whilst increasing food choice and quality, and for the first time in many years the pub is open all day for drinks and food. They are also increasing the size of their beer garden to encourage families.

A changing guest beer - at present St. Austell's Tribute - compliments the regular GK range of Morlands, Abbot and IPA.



Both the **Black Swan** and the **Cross Keys**, also in Abingdon, are available for let from Greene King so if you've got a few pounds to spare and fancy working for Greene King.....



Completion date for the new **Morris Motors Club** is 7th October. It is expected to open mid-October, possibly under a new name. Details of the opening 'bash' will be posted in the next issue.

At time of going to press the **Blackboy Inn** in Old Headington had reopened, following a period of closure and refurbishment. There was an enthusiastic gathering on the opening night, perhaps due in part to the free beer provided ? They only had one real ale on - GK Abbot Ale - but this was received well and finished before the night was up. The new tenants are planning on running it as more of a 'food pub' than it had been previously. We wish them luck and wait to see how they get on.

Please e-mail us an update if you get a chance to visit the pub!



I feel sorry for  
people who don't  
drink. When they  
wake up in the  
morning, that's as  
good as they're  
going to feel all day"

*Frank Sinatra*



# we've got all the answers!

## "did you know...?"

1. B: A very large sack containing hop cones
2. A, B and C: Originally called the Preselly Hotel, it was built to service the local slate quarry workers in 1876. The station was built for transporting roof slates. The building is still constructed with corrugated iron sheet hence its name "Tafarn Sinc", with woodshavings on the floor to soak up beer and mud.
3. B: A yard of mild ale flavoured with Cognac, sugar & spices, and mixed with beaten eggs.

4. B: A 10-gallon cask - very rare as the norm is a 9-gallon Firkin and multiples thereof.
5. B: A pivoted and decorated etched glass screen above a bar to allow the Victorian elite to drink without being identified by bar staff.
6. False.
7. B and C: A 17th century term for second or third mash giving a low alcohol beer known as small beer. Also used as the term for beer supplied to brewery workers.

## Crossword

Down: 1 Sulwath; 2 Dorothy; 4 Hen; 5 Andromeda; 6 Amber Malt; 7 Tie; 9 Lone; 13 EPA; 15 Des; 17 Appleford; 18 Broadside; 19 Boy; 20 Tut; 21 Tun; 22 Mallard; 23 Younger; 26 Swig; 28 HSB; 29 APA

Across: 3 and 24 The Pheasant; 8 Bullion; 10 Inedible; 11 Swindon; 12 Zero; 14 Red; 16 Hanby; 19 Batemans; 20 Top Totty; 22 Malt; 25 Dent; 27 Flowing; 28 Hooligan; 30 Bragget; 31 Bodleian

Hidden brewery name:  
THORNBRIDGE

## GBBF 2007 - Celebrating 30 years of "the largest pub in the world"

The **Great British Beer Festival** is 30 years young in 2007, and to celebrate CAMRA wants this year's festival to be better than ever before.

In 2007 at its official 30<sup>th</sup> birthday, the festival will include:

- Over 450 of the UK's finest ales from the smallest microbreweries to some of Britain's best known beers.
- A Bottled Beer Bar offering more than 100 varieties of real ale in a bottle.
- The prestigious CAMRA Champion Beer of Britain 2007 will be announced on Tuesday August 7th during the trade session.
- Beers from around the world at Bières Sans Frontières, including Germany, Belgium, Italy, USA and the Czech Republic.
- A wide variety of unique and tasty ciders and perries from some of the UK's finest independent producers.
- Tutored beer tastings with brewing experts
- Full liquid pints guaranteed thanks to the use of oversized lined glasses.
- A great selection of delicious food
- Live Music
- Pub games
- A family room for under 18's.

For more information, visit [www.gbbf.org.uk](http://www.gbbf.org.uk)

**Book your tickets for the festival in advance and save typically £2 per ticket!**

It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale

Save money by paying by Direct Debit!

# Join CAMRA today...

Complete the Direct Debit form below and you will receive three months membership free and a fantastic discount on your membership subscription. Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk) or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to Membership Secretary, 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) .....

## Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title ..... Surname .....

Forename(s) .....

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy) .....

Please state which CAMRA newsletter you found this form in? .....

	Direct Debit	Non DD
Single Membership (UK & EU)	£20 <input type="checkbox"/>	£22 <input type="checkbox"/>
Joint Membership (Partner at the same address)	£25 <input type="checkbox"/>	£27 <input type="checkbox"/>

For concessionary rates please visit [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk) or call 01727 867201.

I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

I enclose a cheque for .....

Signed ..... Date .....

Applications will be processed within 21 days



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



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 Postcode

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# OXFORD CITY CAMRA



NEEDS  
**YOU**

A Pubs Database has been set up on the Oxford City CAMRA website which shows all the pubs and bars listed in the region. This can be searched by pub name, town or postcode. The information on each pub is very limited at the moment and this is where you come in.....

We would love to hear from you about your local pub or any you visit in our region. Just look up the pub on the database and click on 'Send a comment'.

We try to visit pubs across our region as much as we can, often visiting hard to reach pubs in one of our car trips but we always on the look out for great pubs in our area which we may have missed or not visited for some time.

[www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/pubs.php](http://www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/pubs.php)