



**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**

issue 48  
October - November 2007



# the Oxford Drinker

## 10th Oxford Beer Festival

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Oxford CAMRA beer festival in the Oxford Town Hall. The first was held in May 1998, featuring roughly 100 different cask beers - only about 75% of the beer was sold by the end! There were also brewery bars and traders stalls - a mini GBBF. The logo was a picture of two Oxford college-style gargoyles, one happy (clutching a pint) and one sad (clutching an empty one). We would love to hear from those of you who attended this event and have stories to share, a copy of the original programme etc.

Prior to 1998, festivals were held at the Student Union and at the Bus Museum at Long Hanborough. These had roughly 30 beers on offer so the move to the Town Hall heralded a considerable increase in the number of beers available to customers.

This year's event will take place from Thursday 11 October, 5pm (close at 11pm), and is then open Friday and Saturday 11am - 11pm. Saturday's session will last as long as the beer, so arrive early for the best choice. As previously however, thirty duplicate beers will be made available on Saturday to ensure that weekend visitors have a good choice of ales, irrespective of the success of previous sessions.

There will be a 'young persons' beer tasting in the main hall on Saturday afternoon, from 1.30pm. This is a tutored session where those new to real ale will get the chance to try all the main styles of beer including mild, golden, India pale ale, best bitter, porter and stout. There will also be an opportunity to smell and taste some of the raw ingredients used in the brewing process, including malt, barley and hops. This helps to identify different flavours in the ale and how they combine to produce different flavours and style. The tasting session will start near the main stage - just look out for the group by the stage or ask one of the volunteer staff.

**Thursday 11 - Saturday 13 October**  
**Oxford Town Hall St Aldates Oxford**

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

**130 different  
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breweries  
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and perries  
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continental  
bottled beers**

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regional pub of the year competition

# beer festival diary



Thursday 4 – Saturday 6  
October

## **The Woolpack 1<sup>st</sup> Beer Festival**

28 Horse Fair, Banbury  
11am – 11pm 15 beers,  
several ciders and perries  
[www.ratebeer.com/events](http://www.ratebeer.com/events)

Friday 5 - Sunday 7  
October

## **Swan 2nd Annual Beer Festival**

Lower Street, Islip  
01865 372590  
[www.theswanislip.co.uk](http://www.theswanislip.co.uk)

Thursday 11 - Saturday 13  
October

## **10<sup>th</sup> Oxford CAMRA Beer Festival.**

Oxford Town Hall,  
St Aldates, Oxford  
[www.oxfordcamra.org.uk](http://www.oxfordcamra.org.uk)

Friday 19 – Sunday 21  
October

## **Old Bookbinders Beer Festival**

Victor Street, Jericho,  
Oxford  
01865 553549  
See page 6 for details  
[www.oldbookbinders.co.uk](http://www.oldbookbinders.co.uk)

Friday 26 - Saturday 27  
October

## **Turf Tavern Beer Festival** Bath Place, Oxford. 01865 243235

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

Thursday 1 - Saturday 3  
November

## **21st Swindon Beerex** STEAM, the Museum of the Great Western Railway, Kemble Drive, Swindon

**Note:** the Friday evening  
session is entry by  
advance ticket only  
[www.swindoncamra.org.uk](http://www.swindoncamra.org.uk)

*continued across page*

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# beer festival

diary *continued*

Tuesday 4 - Saturday 8  
December

## Winter Beer Festival

Far from the Madding  
Crowd,  
Friars Entry, Oxford  
01865 240900

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

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

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website, including some  
back issues

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

## credits....

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# cider and perry

Richard Queralt



As well as promoting the real ale CAMRA is famous for, the organisation also campaigns for traditional cider and perry through its APPLE arm and has designated October as National Cider month. This coincides with Apple Day, October 21<sup>st</sup>, when apple related events take place all over the country. Each year in early summer CAMRA's cider and perry committee consider who or what has done the most the previous year for cider or perry and bestows upon them the prestigious Pomona Award, to be presented in October.

Pomona, left, was the Roman goddess of apples. History has it that the Romans, followed by the Normans, introduced improved varieties of apples to Britain.

The history of cider though stretches back much further and it has been made in these islands for well over 2000 years - long before that new-fangled beer.

There are over 600 types of apples grown in Britain, each with its own unique flavour. It is estimated that three quarters of these are cider apples, which bear more resemblance in taste and appearance to the wild crab apple than the eaters and cookers we see in the shops. The West Country, especially Somerset, is well known for its cider and perry producers and it's here that most specialist cider apples and pears are still grown. But not all ciders and perries come from the West Country of course. Cider is a national

drink and is made the length and breadth of Britain, including Scotland and Wales. Some regions have a tradition of cider making using apples other than the specialist varieties, such as cookers and eaters.



Perry, sometimes known as pear cider, is ideally made from 100% perry pears but, as the trees they grow on are much rarer than cider apple trees, some perry producers use a proportion of apples - up to about 25% - in their perries. This has become more likely over the last few years with perry's growing popularity.

As you'd expect, each variety has its own picturesque name. Among the apples are: Foxwhelp, Slack-ma-Girdle, Handsome Maid, Bloody Butcher, Sops in Wine, Hoary Morning and Sheep's Nose. Perry pear trees have equally evocative names such as Painted Lady, Merrylegs, Taynton Squash and Hendre Huffcap. Some of these pear

trees can produce fruit for 200 or 300 years and more but it's probably the fact that a newly planted tree can take decades to produce its first fruit that puts growers off planting new ones.

In the south-east of England, Kent for instance, ciders are more likely to be made from culinary and dessert apples with the more familiar names of Bramley, Cox, Discovery and Worcester.

Now for the technical bit. Specialist cider apples fall into four main categories: sweets, bittersweets, sharps and bittersharps. Besides sugar, which is converted to alcohol during fermentation, each category has its own balance of acid and tannin, both essential for making good cider. It is the three components of sweetness, acidity and tannins which give the cider its range and depth of flavour.

As with cask beer - real ale - and keg beer, there's a world of difference between real cider and most of the cider on sale in pubs, off-licences and supermarkets. Keg beer and keg cider are filtered, pasteurised and artificially carbonated resulting in a bland, fizzy product usually served chilled to mask its lack of character.

The cider making process is much simpler than brewing beer and at its most basic consists of squeezing the juice out of the apples and letting it ferment in a suitable container.

Cider apples tend to be hard and have to be crushed into a pulp before the juice can be extracted in a press. Traditionally, the resultant liquid was then run off into wooden barrels and allowed to ferment with natural wild yeasts present in the atmosphere. Larger producers kill off these yeasts and use their own strain, often a wine yeast, which they keep from year to year to ensure a more predictable and constant result. This usually takes place during October and November as soon as the apples are harvested, though some of the harder apples are stored for a month or two. The juice ferments slowly over the colder winter months and more briskly during the warmer days of the following spring. So the cider and perry we drink this year is last year's crop of fruit.

For some producers this is the finished product and is ready for drinking. Known as scrumpy, or rough cider, it will usually be cloudy and straw-coloured but can vary from yellow and gold through to red. Most ciders are siphoned out of their containers, leaving the 'lees' behind and are left to mature resulting in a clear, smoother, paler drink. The alcohol level will usually be between about 5% and 8.5%.

Some weaker ciders are made but 8.5% is the legal limit set by Customs and Excise above which the higher rate of duty allocated to wine becomes payable. It's unusual to find cider on sale above 8.5% but there are a few to be found.

Most ciders are either made from a mixture of varieties of apples or blended after fermentation, though single

varietal ciders - made from just one type of apple - are becoming more popular. These ciders are often named after the apple they were made from, Kingston Black being an example. While on the subject of blending, pider, a mixture of perry and cider, can sometimes be found on sale, but is something of rarity.



Oxfordshire doesn't have a history of commercial cider making and has just one producer. Upton Cider Company was founded in the early 1980s and produces its organic Real Farmhouse Cider from a mixture of ten different varieties of apple picked from its own 16-acre orchard, the only cider apple orchard in the county. The orchard was originally planted in 1970 to supply the Taunton Cider Company in Somerset. It is now certified organic and the apples are used to produce Upton's own ciders. Upton Cider can be found at Upton Fruit Farm in Upton on the A417 near Didcot. The company's website gives details on opening times and how to buy their ciders and a small selection of cider-related books.

At this year's CAMRA Oxford beer festival (at the Town Hall, St Aldates on October 11<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup>) we will be

offering our biggest-ever selection of ciders and perries, providing an ideal opportunity to try a taste of Old England (and possibly Old Scotland and Wales too).

The APPLE acronym stands for Apple and Pear Product Liaison Executive. Understandably, that mouthful has fallen out of use and this part of CAMRA is now usually referred to as the APPLE Committee. Part of the committee's remit is to run the annual National Cider & Perry Competition.

The CAMRA website below has a section dedicated to cider and perry. The Good Cider Guide, published by CAMRA, contains a wealth of information on cider producers and sellers, complete with maps and various articles. It is available via 01727 798434 or [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk)

"Once drinkers enjoy a real cider or perry - where the fruit has simply been pressed and allowed to ferment without any need for additives - then we are certain the cider renaissance will continue.

Why not ask in your local if they are planning to stock a real cider and perry in October?"

Go to:  
[www.camra.org.uk/cidermonth](http://www.camra.org.uk/cidermonth)  
for more details

# Beer, Glorious Beer!

And plenty of it  
at the

## Old Bookbinders October & Whisky Fest

Corner of Victor & Canal Street, Jericho, Oxford

Thu 19<sup>th</sup> – Sun 21<sup>st</sup> October

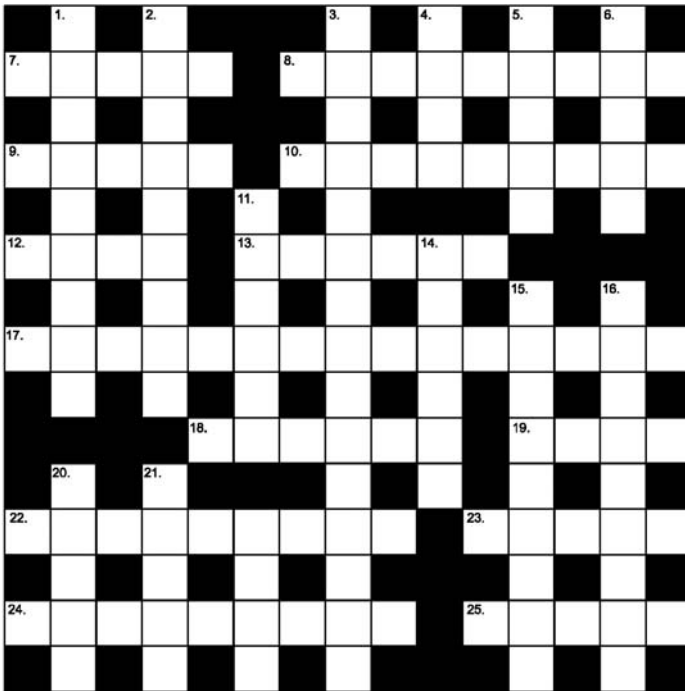
Due to popular demand we're  
starting on Thursday and will be  
adding additional beers on the  
Saturday

Live Music on Thursday from 9pm and, as  
always, Open mic on Sunday from 8:30

17 beers, perry and cider  
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<http://www.oldbookbinders.co.uk>

# The Oxford Drinker Cryptic Crossword No 2 by Beermatt



## Clues: Down

- 1 I rid verse of Bateman's neighbouring brewery (9)
- 2 Three swam to see Kentish brewer (9)
- 3 Old tax absent now for Cheltenham beer (10, 5)
- 4 Choosing food makes everyone understand, initially (4)
- 5 Time for a re-fill (5)
- 6 Stuart, a relative brewer in Norfolk (5)
- 11 Pub tenant found in Eccles, seemingly (6)
- 14 Large car goes to group of pubs (6)
- 15 A game of.... a pint? (3, 6)
- 16 Dark bird off the Cowley Road (5, 4)
- 20 Suffolk saint, brews fruit beers (5)
- 21 Colourful Oxford pub once had rendezvous with pennyfarthing (5)

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!

## Clues: Across

- 7 Cried out for a Magners? (5)
- 8 Men saw art at pub beside the Thames (9)
- 9 Hasten the anniversary of the Oxford Beer Festival (5)
- 10 Least lust for a Cornish brewer (2, 7)
- 12 Or is it an award-winning Welsh Seidr company? (1, 3)
- 13 City Hall on the Cowley Road? (6)
- 17 Also shut down dam for east coast session beer (6, 9)
- 18 Complimentary bar snack contains vegetable (6)
- 19 German wine of a Fuller's mild? (4)
- 22 The Western Isles are behind this brewery (9)
- 23 Vessel for beer (5)
- 24 Marlow man ill - no beer allowed (9)
- 25 Take-away will make baby queasy inside (5)

Turn over page  
for  
the answers



# what's on

Matt Bullock



*Following requests to vary the day of meetings, we have agreed the following:*

*Meetings will be done on a rota basis Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday throughout the year. Therefore January, April, July and October will be on a Monday; February May, August and November on a Tuesday and March, June, September and December on Wednesdays.*

*As ever, 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**

## Friday 6 October 7.00pm

**Beer Festival Publicity Crawl**  
 Meet at the Lamb and Flag, St Giles

## Wednesday 10 October 12 noon

**Beer Festival set-up at the Town Hall**  
 Please notify Tony Perry if you are able to help so personal protective equipment can be acquired for you from HQ  
 tony\_perry3000@hotmail.co.uk  
 07799 588972

## Thursday 11 - Saturday 13 October Oxford Beer Festival

## Sunday 14 October 10.00am

**Beer Festival take down**  
 Followed by lunch and a few beers. Please contact Tony Perry as above.

## Friday 19 October 7.00pm

**Social at the Old Bookbinders Beer Festival**  
 The Old Bookbinders Ale House, Victor Street, Jericho, Oxford.  
 Festival runs Friday to Sunday.  
 www.oldbookbinders.co.uk  
 01865 553549

## Monday 22 October 7.30pm

**Branch Meeting**  
 Far from the Madding Crowd, Friars Entry, Oxford

## Friday 26 October 7.00pm

**Social at the Turf Tavern Beer Festival**  
 Turf Tavern, Bath Place, Oxford. The festival runs Friday and Saturday.  
 www.theturf tavern.co.uk  
 01865 243235

## Saturday 3 November 12 noon

**Pub Crawl with Rugby Branch**  
 Jericho area.  
*Contact social secretary for details.*

## Saturday 10 November All day trip

**Birmingham**  
 Social trip to Birmingham by train.  
 Visit some of Birmingham's Victorian gems such as the Barton's Arms as well as some old favourites like the Wellington and the Anchor.  
*Please contact the social secretary if you're interested so we can pre-book group tickets.*

## Wednesday 14 November 6.30pm

**Minibus Survey Trip**  
 Meet at Lamb & Flag, St Giles  
*Please contact the social secretary to book a seat and allow us to source an appropriately sized vehicle.*

## Tuesday 20 November 7.30pm

**Branch Meeting**  
 Kings Arms, The Moors, Kidlington

## Tuesday 4 December 6.30pm

**Minibus Survey Trip**  
 Meet at Lamb & Flag, St Giles  
*Please contact the social secretary to book a seat.*

## Wednesday 12 December 7.30pm

**Branch Meeting**  
 The Bricklayers, Marston

## Friday 21 December 7.30pm

**Christmas Social**  
 Meet at Carfax for pub crawl.

## Crossword

### Across

7 Cider; 8 Watermans; 9 Tenth; 10 St Austell; 12 O'Sir; 13 Exeter; 17 Adnams Southwold; 18 Peanut; 19 Hock; 22 Hebridean; 23 Glass; 24 Rebellion; 25 Kebab

### Down

1 Riverside; 2 Westerham; 3 Battledown Saxon; 4 Menu; 5 Empty; 6 Uncle; 11 Lessee; 14 Estate; 15 Two Halves; 16 Black Swan; 20 Peter; 21 Green



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# regional pub of the year



Neil Hoggarth

Every year the eleven CAMRA branches which make up the "Central Southern" region (which are broadly those branches covering Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire) get together and run a competition for Regional Pub of the Year. I commented last year that some branches struggle to survey all eleven. As a result of this difficulty the organisation of the competition was changed somewhat this year - the contest is now run in two phases. In the period up to the end of June, each County held a run-off between their branch pubs of the year. In the second phase the winners of the three County competitions were judged by a panel to pick an overall winner for the region.

As has been the case for the last few years, Alistair Pitman and I volunteered to act as surveyors for the Oxfordshire phase of the competition. Several other branch members came along to enjoy the pubs and keep us company on individual trips. Details of travel arrangements and opening times are included in case readers feel inspired visit the pubs.

**The Royal Oak, 12 Newbury Street, Wantage, OX12 8DF (Vale of the White Horse branch, p397 in the Good Beer Guide 2007).**

A corner pub with traditional separate rooms for public bar and lounge. The public bar is the smaller room, decorated with pictures of Navy ships bearing the same name as the

pub, and features pub games such as table-top football and darts. The pub is a long standing CAMRA favourite - the walls in the lounge carry a number of awards from Oxford, Berkshire and Vale of the White Horse branches, dating from recent times right back into the 1980s. It is a free house, although several West Berkshire Brewery beers are named in honour of the landlord, Paul Hexter, and there are normally a couple of West Berks beers on the bar along with a selection of guest ales. The pub scored well with us, gaining marks for its "sympathy with CAMRA aims", good service and good value. It came second in the County phase of the competition.



Getting there: We travelled to Wantage on a weekday evening, by X30 bus - the trip only takes about half-an-hour. Get off the bus at the Market Place and head south along the A338 for a couple of hundred yards. Note that this pub is only open 5.30pm-11pm on weekdays. It opens at noon on Saturday and Sunday, but is closed in the afternoon between 2pm and 7pm.

**The Bear at Home, High Street, North Morton, OX11 9AT (South Oxfordshire branch, p394 in GBG2007).**

The Bear is a 16th Century country inn, with low oak beams which several members of the party managed to crack their heads on during the course of the evening. It is a free house. The pub normally has Timothy Taylor Landlord and a couple of guest beers (from White Horse and Loden breweries on the evening that we were there).

We visited the pub on the evening that South Oxfordshire presented their branch Pub of the Year certificate, so there was a good crowd in the pub and a celebratory atmosphere, helped along by live music and a couple of casks of free ale on gravity dispense outside! The bar staff looked at us a bit funny when we insisted on buying pints of hand-pumped beer over the bar when they had just told us that the same brews were available outside gratis, but we felt it was important to judge the pub in its "usual" state before going out and joining the party. It is a fine pub, and came first in the County phase, making it Oxfordshire's nomination for the regional run-off.



Getting there: This is the only pub of the four that we couldn't reach on public transport - Alistair drove a car-load of us from Oxford on a Thursday evening. Its only a few miles out of Didcot, however, so train to Didcot followed by a short taxi ride would be an alternative if you don't have a designated driver. Open for lunch and evening sessions every day, but closed in the afternoon between 3pm and 6pm.

**The Bell Inn, Middleton Road, Banbury, OX16 4QJ (North Oxfordshire branch, p389 in GBG2007).**

Like the Oak, the Bell is a town pub with a traditional public bar / lounge split. Alistair, Matt Bullock and I had a very enjoyable evening socialising with a number of North Oxfordshire branch members who had turned out to meet us. It is a Punch tenancy, and the beers on offer when we visited were Caledonian Deuchars IPA, York brewery Yorkshire Terrier and Batemans XXXB. This kind of community local is a style of pub that I am very fond of, and I scored the pub highly on its beer quality and the friendly atmosphere. I must confess I was a little surprised to learn that it had come fourth in the competition. All four contenders are very good pubs with a number of strengths - it seems harsh to put them in any sort of order, but if we are going to have a competition then I suppose that there have to be winners and losers.....

Getting there: We went from Oxford to Banbury by train. Walk out from the station to the main road, then turn right (away from the town centre) - the pub is only a few minutes stroll

along the road. Open 1pm-4pm, 7pm-midnight weekdays ; all day Saturday; noon-4.30pm, 8pm-11pm on Sundays. There is a regular train service and it only takes about 20 minutes, but make sure that you check the return time-table; when we went there was an awkward gap of almost two hours between 9:55pm and 11:45pm when no return trains ran.

**The General Elliot, Manor Road, South Hinksey, Oxford, OX1 5AS (Oxford branch, p396 in GBG2007).**

Our own branch pub of the year will already be familiar to many readers. It is a Vale Brewery tenancy, normally serving two Vale beers and two guest beers. The pub has a single large room, catering well to both drinkers and diners, and a spacious garden with plenty of outside seating and a children's play area. It has a lively events programme, with beer festivals several times a year and frequent live music. All the feel of a village pub, just five or ten minutes stroll from the Abingdon road! It came third in the County phase of the competition.

Getting there: from the Abingdon Road, walk down Lake Street, use the footbridge to cross the lakes and the railway line and follow the path to South Hinksey - it is an easy walk but is unlit, so take a torch if going in the evening. By car use the South Hinksey turn-off from the A34 ring road. The pub is open all day.

Following the county round, two judges from each county were nominated to visit the

three county winners and choose an overall winner. The idea was to try and get all of the judges together in the pubs at the same time, so as to come to a consensus about scores.

In addition to re-visiting the **Bear at North Morton** (on a rather quieter Tuesday evening than our first visit), the pubs from the other two counties were:

**Berkshire Winner: The Bird in Hand, Bath Rd, Knowl Hill, RG10 9UP (on the Reading to Maidenhead road).**

I have to say that the Bird in Hand looked rather unpromising from the outside. It is a 600-year-old country inn, apparently, but the bits that you see from the car park look pretty much like any modern road-house eatery. The interior is a lot nicer, however. The inn includes a hotel, a restaurant, and bar which is furnished with leather armchairs, wood panelling and a tartan carpet (which didn't seem to appeal to Jim Scott, one of the Buckinghamshire judges, who hails from north of the border originally!). The bar is comfortable, smart and upmarket without being exclusive or unwelcoming. We were favourably impressed with the beer quality, the service, and the enthusiasm of the staff.

Getting there: There is a limited bus service on Saturdays, and little or nothing during the week. The pub would be a relatively short taxi ride from Twyford railway station.

*continued over page*

**Buckinghamshire Winner:  
The Rose and Crown,  
Hawridge, HP5 2UG (nr  
Chesham)**

The Rose and Crown is a country pub with a traditional feel. There is a restaurant area upstairs, and several rooms on the ground floor for drinkers and bar meals. There are four hand-pumps, serving London Pride, beer from the local Tring brewery, and a couple of guests. As well as the ales the pub also serves real cider, and has an imaginative range of keg beers (I can't remember when, if ever, I last saw a Belgian Peche (peach) beer on tap in Britain!). We were again very favourably impressed with the quality of the beer and the welcome that we received.

The couple running the pub took over a couple of years

ago, and have certainly created an impression - they proudly display over the bar the certificates for Mid-Chiltern's branch Pub of the Year, Mid-Chiltern's branch Cider Pub of the Year and Buckinghamshire Pub of the Year.

They will get another certificate frame to add to the collection soon: we chose the Rose and Crown as winner of the Regional competition.

Getting there: Again, we ended up travelling by car to this one. It is about 3.5 miles from Chesham and about 4.5 miles from Tring, so a journey by bus to one of those towns, followed by a taxi ride to Hawridge ought to be feasible. The pub is open all day Saturday and Sunday, noon-3pm and 6pm-11pm on weekdays.



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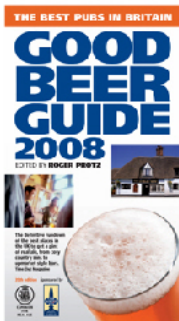
# did you know.....?



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

- 1) Irish Moss is:
  - (a) The slang term for Irish-brewed Guinness
  - (b) A noastery produced "barley wine" with herbs
  - (c) Sea weed used to clear beer during brewing
- 2) Maris Otter is:
  - (a) A pet mammal kept at the Otter Brewery in Devon
  - (b) A chute used when filling sacks with dried hops
  - (c) A strain of barley
- 3) A firkin can be:
  - (a) A little green cucumber pickled in strong ale
  - (b) A beer measure
  - (c) An adjective to describe inebriated night clubbers
- 4) White ale is:
  - (a) Wheat beer
  - (b) A West Country medicinal beer
  - (c) Beer that is just racked from fermentation and not even ready to be called "green"
- 5) A beer engine is:
  - (a) A steam powered pump used to take liquor (water) to the top of a Victorian tower brewery
  - (b) A dispensing unit in some pubs
  - (c) A term, in some regions, for a dray (delivery lorry)
- 6) A Yorkshire Square is:
  - (a) A robust Dales landlady
  - (b) A fermenting vessel made of slate or stone
  - (c) A village green or town market place with at least three Inns
- 7) During World War I, Lloyd George said, "Drink is doing us more damage than all the:
  - (a) Powdered eggs
  - (b) Americans
  - (c) German submarines.....put together".

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



# The Masons Arms

2 Quarry School Place Headington Oxford

01865 764579

Oxford CAMRA Pub of the Year  
2004 & 2005



*West Berkshire - Good Old Boy  
Shepherd Neame - Spitfire  
Caledonian - Deuchars IPA  
Old Bog Brewery  
Plus  
Ever changing Guest Ales*



## OLD BOG Brewery

Join our Web Forum at  
[www.masonsquarry.co.uk](http://www.masonsquarry.co.uk)





# beer abroad - jersey



Dave Cogdell

Having seen an advert in What's Brewing for the Jersey Beer Fest, a quick investigation on the internet got us flights at under £40 including taxes and I, along with a friend, Tim, arrived at the airport and awaited the arrival of Sam, our Editor, who was making her own way. She got there just as the plane was boarding!!!

Having booked into our respective hotels we decided to meet later at the bus station, on the way we espied the **Lamplighter** and decided it would be a pity to pass it by. Inside we found several hand pumps but also barrels on the counter and in holes in the wall. By accident we had walked into one of Jersey CAMRA's real ale pubs - what a result! - it was pub of the year for 2006 and, we found out later, sponsor of the Fest. It was serving Bombardier, Eagle IPA, Youngs Bitter, Courage Directors & Best, Bass, Ringwood Boondoggle, along with Le Mare Jersey cider, a fine choice for the first one of the day.



A bus journey and a choice of a walk over a headland, or over rocks and along the beach, (we got off at the wrong stop!) took us to the **Smugglers Inn** in St Brelades which had Dark Star Dark & Mellow, Old Ale, Bass

and Bombardier on offer.

Time for a meal – and a beer. We have "special" said the waitress, what's it called?, says I, "Special", she says in her Polish? accent, I gave up. Later we found out that the Jersey Brewery brew "Special" and "Best" and it was very nice.

On to the festival, held in Peoples Park, just off the centre of St Helier. There were two very large marquees holding over 130 barrels of ale and a choice of nearly 20 ciders and perrys. Over the 3 days many of the brews were sampled and all were in good condition. Attendances were good and due to the brilliant weather during the day the outside seating area was packed.



There was live music every evening but in my opinion the Oompah band on the Thursday night was the best received. We met many of the local people including the Jersey Branch Chairman, Jon Le Sueur, who for some reason turned up in a dress?! Perhaps our Chair might do the same at the Town Hall in October!!!

The following day we decided to visit another of the Jersey CAMRA recommended pubs - the **Le Moulin Inn de Lecq**. A bus journey through the scenic

countryside took us to Greve de Lecq where the pub was in a picturesque 12<sup>th</sup> century water mill which was last used in 1929. We sat in the garden and sampled Theakston's Best and Bombardier, whilst Sam decided on the cider, Old Rosie - several at 8%, for lunch! The landlord here told us that he used to sell Old Thumper but the barrel cost had been raised by £14, plus he now had to pay import as well as export tax and this made it uneconomical.

Saturday, a day off the beer found Tim and I on the "Condor" to Guernsey, whilst Sam awaited the arrival of Ashlie, Oxford's ex-young drinker's rep, who was flying in from France for the Festival.

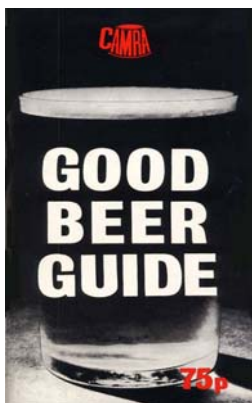
On arrival we jumped on a bus for an island tour, we saw several uninspiring watering holes en route, all bearing the name of Randalls. On our return to harbour, the sun had just gone over the yardarm and it was a very dry trip, so we popped into the Yacht Inn on the harbour which was distinctly lacking in hand pumps, but we were told that they had "Best" - I don't ask anymore. This turned out to be very tasty if a tad cold. However, we wanted to tour St. Peter Port, so we left and went up the alley to the side and a few minutes later noticed a sign - Freehouse. We weren't really ready for another but, with arms well twisted, in we went. The Cock and Bull was set out over several levels and has regularly been Guernsey's CAMRA pub of the year →



# CAMRA good beer guide

Richard Queralt

CAMRA has been publishing its Good Beer Guide (GBG) for 35 years. It started life in 1973, a year after CAMRA's foundation, as a collection of sheets of paper stapled together and posted out to CAMRA members. The first GBG in book form was published the following year and was available to all by post and via 'all good bookshops.'



This 1974 edition, shown above, was hastily withdrawn from sale on legal advice due to the inclusion of a suggestion that Watney's beers should be 'avoided like the plague'. The re-print went on to sell 30,000 copies, with the offending sentence toned down slightly to read 'avoided at all costs'. The 1974 GBG is now remembered in CAMRA's history as the Plague Edition.

Watney's, along with other big brewers, were at the forefront of the movement to rid Britain of cask-conditioned beers (real ale) and replace them with bland, fizzy keg versions. They were all doing this for one reason - money. Keg (filtered

and pasteurised) beer is easier to look after and keeps much longer than real ale. That the beer was tasteless and fizzy, and was served cold in an attempt to hide this fact, was a measure of the contempt these people had for their customers.

One of the results of this outrage was the founding, in 1972, of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, followed two years later by the first GBG.

The Good Beer Guide offers the best pubs in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man that serve cask-conditioned real ale in tip-top condition.

Details of beer, food, entertainment, family facilities, history and architecture for the pub entries.

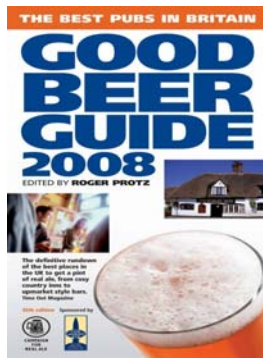
The unique Breweries section that lists all the breweries - micro, regional and national - that produce cask beer.

There's also information about beers suitable for vegetarians and vegans, as well as the growing number of organic beers. The Guide lists new breweries, closed breweries, mergers and takeovers, and keeps track of the new, powerful pub groups.

It's compiled by people who live locally, know where all the pubs are and, more to the point, know where to find the best in real ale. The pubs are selected on the basis of consistently serving ale of good quality. There are no fees for listings, and every pub is checked many

times a year.

The 35<sup>th</sup> Good Beer Guide is available at 'all good bookshops' or direct from CAMRA on 01727 867201 and [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk). Copies will also be on sale the Oxford CAMRA beer festival.



## Jersey festival contd.

It had on offer Hop Back Brewery Entire Stout, Fortyniner and GFB, Ringwood's Best and Boondoggle all in excellent condition, plus Roquette & Thatchers cider. The Rugby was on and the boat sailed in 2 hours, so we will do the 'tour' next time.

It is a shame that Randalls Brewery no longer brew and the small Toad Brewery was recently taken over by the Jersey Brewery. Any entrepreneurs out there? Also we were informed that pubs are shutting down and to be honest there are not many of them as it is.

Overall it was an excellent break and we recommend it to you all for next year.

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



# The Lord Nuffield Club



Situated in William Morris Close, Barracks Lane, Cowley The Lord Nuffield Club is Oxford's newest premier community club. The club is family friendly and children are welcome.

Offering a range of sporting activities the club also offers unrivalled facilities for all events and functions, from Weddings, Conferences, training events and product launches to meeting rooms for small groups and community use.

Apart from a selection of real ales the club also boasts state of the art kitchens where our chef can cater for any size function with all food freshly prepared on the premises.

Social membership is available at just £16 and a limited number are now available.

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Email: [info@thelordnuffieldclub.co.uk](mailto:info@thelordnuffieldclub.co.uk)  
Tel: 07702 742051 / 07703 484902



# Aunt Sally rematch

Neil Hoggarth

## Aunt Sally: Oxfordshire vs Buckinghamshire

One year on from our first Aunt Sally confrontation, Oxford CAMRA and Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe CAMRA got together on Saturday 18th August for a repeat of our very successful inter-branch social. For anyone unfamiliar with the game: Aunt Sally is a traditional pub game which involves throwing wooden battons at small skittle, known as a "dolly", perched on top of a pole). We were also pleased to be joined this year by members of North Oxfordshire branch and Mid-Chilterns branch.

As with last year, the venue was the Mason's Arms in Headington. Those of us that arrived early were treated to a brewery tour of the Old Bog micro brewery - well, we looked through the door and chatted to the brewer - there's not much room for a big party!

Rather than trying to match up four unevenly sized teams, we ended up playing Oxfordshire branches vs Buckinghamshire branches. The visitors were short by one player so they were allowed to nominate one of their number to go twice in each leg.

Unfortunately we were a little less fortunate with the weather than last year. It started out overcast and came on to drizzle and rain more and more throughout the afternoon.

It was a closely fought match. Last year both sides were mostly rookies at the game.

This time around the Aylesbury contingent had apparently been getting some practice done in advance of the event, but this advantage was somewhat counter-balanced by the fact that Oxfordshire managed to field several players with some regular experience of the game. The first leg went to the visitors, the second leg to Oxfordshire, and the third leg was tied. People who play the game regularly tell me that there is supposed to be some sort of tie-break leg at this point, but the rain showed no sign of letting up and we decided to call the match a draw and press on with the serious business: the Beer Leg.

The fourth leg doesn't count towards the match result, but the team that loses it buys a round of drinks for their opponents. The prospect of a free beer brought out the competitive spirit on both sides and it was a tense and closely fought battle, but Oxfordshire triumphed and retreated indoors to claim their reward.

I would like to thank "Noj" from Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe for proposing the joint social, and to thank Chris and Christine Meeson, and all the staff at the Mason's, for their hospitality.



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Vale of the White Horse

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# inn and around oxford



**The Kings Arms**, Holywell Street in Oxford, celebrated its 400<sup>th</sup> birthday on September 18<sup>th</sup>. The site of the Kings Arms was originally an Augustinian Priory, built in 1268 and covering most of the land up to and including the front quad of Wadham College. The king to whom the inn's sign referred was James I (1603 – 25), whose picture can be seen on the wall next to the back bar.

By the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Kings Arms was an important coaching stop on the London to Gloucester run, and one of the five major posting houses in the city. The pub has changed hands a number of times and in 1991 the lease of the Kings Arms was taken by Youngs.

A party was held on the night to celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> birthday. Locals past and present were in attendance and a lucky few CAMRA members also attended the ticket-only event.



*Tony asleep already!!*

There was a full range of real ales available, including the first tasting of the 400 centenary ale – it had previously only been available

in bottles. There was live entertainment in the form of a three-piece band, a tarot reader and blackjack table. There was a great selection of food and Ali cut the birthday cake at 9.30. A great time was had by all – what they can remember of it!

We would like to wish a warm welcome to Nick Basset and Joe Hill, who have recently taken over at the **Fir Tree** on Iffley Road. The pub has had a bit of a clean up and redecoration, but retains its existing layout for the moment. There has been some re-organisation on the bar, reducing from seven hand-pumps to a (probably more reasonable!) four. I visited one sunny Sunday afternoon in late August and had an excellent pint of St Austell Tribute – the other beers on sale were Greene King IPA and Morland Speckled Hen.

**The Horseshoe**, Bampton, has been gutted and revamped by Greene King a tasteful single bar, new cellar equipment and toilets – a long awaited improvement.

**The Talbot**, Eynsham, is having new cellaring arrangements. The old cellar will become toilets, with one designated for disabled customers, casks will be visible directly behind the bar and cooling will be by saddle and insulated jacket.

Beer will be served by direct gravity with three beers available, Kingsdown

permanently. Lifting the firkins (9 gallons) may present some problems but at least the system exhibits that it's "Real Ale" and does away with the problems of cleaning pipes.

Our neighbours the **VOWH CAMRA branch** seem to be in a state of chaos at the moment. We believe this came about due to confusion around the new voting procedures for the Regional Pub of the Year. In the aftermath all the committee members resigned and the website has been completely removed. Watch this space to find out what happens next!

**The White House**, Botley Road, is currently boarded up with metal grills over the windows. Any of you know more? - please contact us if you do.

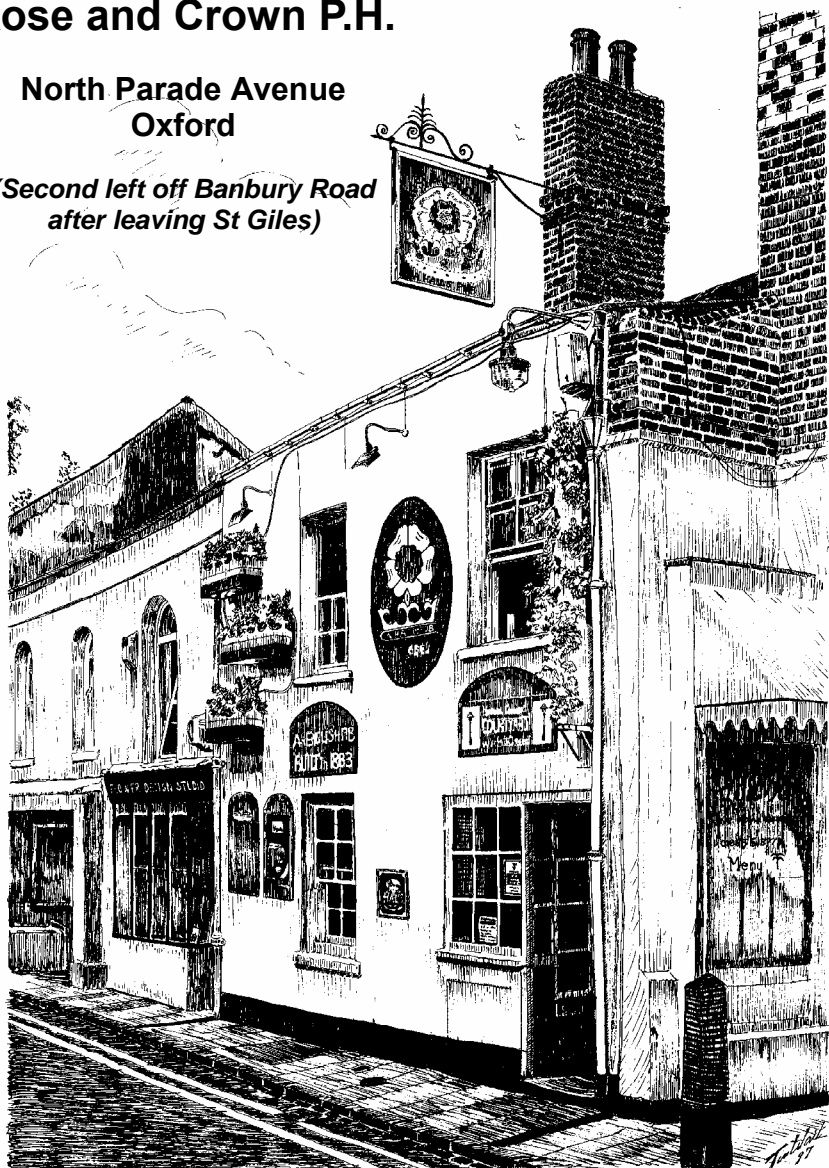
**Witney washout:** The summer floods have affected a number of pubs in our area. At the **Court Inn**, Witney, by the River Windrush which formed a reservoir behind Bridge Street and exited through the properties. The **Plough Inn**, Witney suffered a similar fate. At one stage the "riverside garden" was advertised as being in the pub. Both pubs will be closed for some considerable time.

The rain turned Binsey Lane, Botley, into a river, and won't have helped the restoration of **The Perch**, Binsey, which was gutted by an accidental fire in May and it is expected to be at least another year before it reopens.

# 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)

# rise of admiral taverns



David Hill

Admiral Taverns is a pubco you may know about as you have more than likely visited one of their establishments but, on the other hand, you may not, as they are still a fairly new concern and I have never seen any indication at a pub that they are the owners.

Formed four years ago they have expanded at an astonishing speed to become the country's third largest pubco, with about 2,600 properties, although this is still a little way behind Punch and Enterprise who weigh in at around 8,400 and 7,500 respectively.

Admiral have acquired this portfolio from other operators, including a fair few from Punch and Enterprise. Over the last couple of years they have also bought a number of pubs from Greene King which is how they have come across much of their estate in this locality. In fact, a good indication of an Admiral pub around here is when a Greene King pub loses its signage and starts selling non-Greene King beers, recent examples of this being the **Donnington Arms** on Howard Street and the **Fox at Sandford**.

Opinions about Admiral from the licensed trade are a bit divided at present and they have a reputation for keeping a close eye on landlords, metering the draft and keg products, and remotely relaying it back to the company. However the local landlords whose opinions I have asked have given comments like "so

far so good" or "at least they're better than Greene King".



## Queen's Head, Eynsham

From the point of view of the local drinker, Admiral's acquisition of Greene King pubs has been positive as it has led to an increase of real ale choice. The landlords have a fairly free hand in the beers they stock and most have replaced the GK products with those from a variety of other brewers. Some, like the Plough at Witney, stock a changing selection of local micro-brewery beers.



## Honey Pot, Oxford

However, somewhat perversely, the one area where Greene King has not sold pubs on to anybody is Abingdon, where they have their strongest monopoly. In fact they have tightened their grip by bringing the previously non- Greene King College Oak, on Peachcroft, into the fold.

### "did you know...?"

1. C: A marine algae or seaweed that can be added during brewing to coagulate protein during late boiling (also called Carragheen)
2. C: A strain of barley regarded to give the best malt for beer and grown in Britain
3. B: A nine gallon cask - often wrongly called a barrel - and most common form of container in pubs and festivals
4. B: This is a "folk medicine" of the West Country containing ale, rum, eggs, flour and salt!
5. B: The traditional beer dispenser used in pubs to get beer from cask to bar. Leverage is similar to that used in old beam/steam engines hence the term "beer engine".
6. B: Traditional fermenting vessel partially covered and made of slabs of stone or slate (now stainless steel).
7. C: German submarines



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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 .....

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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)