



CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE

ISSUE 51  
June - July 2008



# the Oxford Drinker

## Return of the X - Exeter Hall revival

After a shaky start, the Exeter Hall on Cowley Road now seems on track to return to its place in the community as a great music venue for 'the people'.



The Sweeney Pubs venue reopened in March with a continued commitment to providing good beer and a warm and friendly atmosphere.

Manager Pippa Dods has won a Gold Award in Beautiful Beer from the British Beer & Pub Association. Pippa is proud

of all her beers, especially her cask ales. At present they serve Greene King IPA and a guest ale, currently Old Speckled Hen.

However, they are open to, and welcome, suggestions for guest ales and have the option to provide a third ale if demand exists.

Their newest member of staff recently graduated with a Music

Management degree and will be able to provide in-house sound engineering support.

Current regular events are the Pub Quiz (Sundays), open mic sessions (Tuesdays) and poker night (Wednesdays).

*Continued over page*



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

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## Issue 51

Photos here are from a recent open mic night which, as you can see, attracted talented local artists of all ages.

The kitchen will re-open later in June with plans to serve the usual pub grub



from lunch time onwards daily.

Pippa and her team are determined to bring the Exeter Hall back to its former glory, not just in terms of being a strong competitor on the music scene in Oxford, but also to provide its customers with a comfortable place to enjoy a pint whether it be at lunchtime, after work or on a night out



They are open to all forms and genres of music, and welcome bands from across the board.

The small private lounge bar can also be closed off



and booked, free of charge, for private parties.

Promoters, bands and those with suggestions and feedback should contact Pippa via email ([exeterhall@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:exeterhall@hotmail.co.uk)) or phone (01865 776431).



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Good Beer, Food & Company at**



**The Old Bookbinders Ale House**

Corner of Victor & Canal Street, Jericho, Oxford OX2 6BT  
<http://www.oldbookbinders.co.uk>

**And thank you to all that made our spring beer festival  
our biggest and best yet.**

# beer festival diary



Thurs 5 - Sat 7 June

## **Southampton Beer Festival**

Guildhall, West Marlands Road, Southampton  
[www.shantscamra.org.uk](http://www.shantscamra.org.uk)

Sat 14 June

## **Candleford Fayre and Beer Festival**

Fringford Village Hall, Fringford, nr Bicester  
 12 noon-9pm

Tues 17 - Sat 21 June

## **Far from the Madding Crowd Summer Beer Festival**

Friars Entry, Oxford  
[www.maddingcrowd.co.uk](http://www.maddingcrowd.co.uk)

Fri 27 - Sun 29 June

## **General Elliot Beer Festival**

Manor Road, South Hinksey, Oxford  
 01865 739639

Sat 28 June

## **Burford School Association's 4<sup>th</sup> Biennial Beer Festival**

Warwick Hall & Gardens Church Lane, Burford  
 12 noon-10pm

Sat 28 June

## **Chipping Norton Rugby Club Beer Festival**

Greystones, Burford Road (A361)  
 12 noon-10.30pm  
 20 beers, ciders & perries  
[www.cnrfc.co.uk](http://www.cnrfc.co.uk)

Wed 2 - Sat 5 July

## **Ealing Beer Festival**

Walpole Park, Ealing  
 07971 547738

Fri 4 - Sun 6 July

## **Hereford Beer Festival**

Hereford Rowing Club, Greyfriars Avenue, Hereford  
 100+ beers, 50+ ciders & perries  
 01432 275497  
[www.herefordcamra.org.uk](http://www.herefordcamra.org.uk)

Sat July 5

## **Haddenham Village Real Ale Festival**

Youth & Community Centre, Woodaways, Haddenham  
 60+ beers, ciders & perries  
[www.haddenham-beer-festival.co.uk](http://www.haddenham-beer-festival.co.uk)

Fri 11 - Sat 12 July

## **Woodcote Festival of Ales**

(With Woodcote Steam Rally)  
 Tidmore Lane, Woodcote, off A4074 Wallingford to Reading Road  
[www.woodcoterally.org.uk/festivalofale.html](http://www.woodcoterally.org.uk/festivalofale.html)

Sat 12 July

## **Charlbury Beer Festival**

Charlbury Cricket Club  
**NOTE NEW VENUE**  
 The Pavilion, Burford Road Charlbury  
 12 noon-11pm  
 36 beers + ciders & perries  
[www.charlburybeerfestival.org](http://www.charlburybeerfestival.org)

Wed 16 - Sun 20 July

## **Greenwich Beer & Jazz Festival**

Charles Lawn, Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich, London SE10  
 140 beers + ciders & perries  
[www.greenwichbeerandjazz.com](http://www.greenwichbeerandjazz.com)

Fri 18 - Sat 19 July

## **Merton Beer Festival**

Merton Village Hall, Merton, Nr Bicester  
 40 beers + ciders & perries  
 Friday 6-11pm  
 Saturday 12 noon-11pm

Tues 5 - Sat 9 August

## **31<sup>st</sup> Great British Beer Festival**

Earl's Court, London  
 450 real ales + ciders, perries & international beers  
[www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk)

Thurs 14 - Sat 16 August

## **9<sup>th</sup> Worcester Beer, Cider & Perry Festival**

Worcester Racecourse  
[www.worcesterbeerfest.org.uk](http://www.worcesterbeerfest.org.uk)

Fri 22 - Mon 25 August

## **Chester Arms Beer Festival**

19 Chester Street, Oxford  
 see page 9

Further details and updates are available on our **FESTIVALS** webpage at

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

# Breweriana - part 1



Richard Queralt

The word breweriana is a 'made up' term for all the relics, objects and equipment connected to brewing and distilling, and the breweries and distilleries themselves.

Just about everything is deemed collectable, from the smallest scraps of paper, such as beer bottle labels, up to hefty wooden pub signs and ornate brewery-branded mirrors.

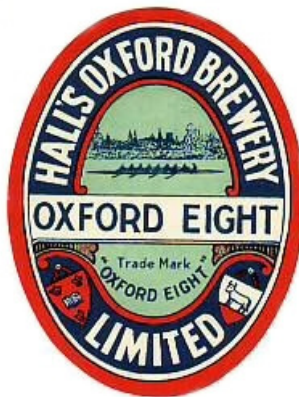


As with stamp collectors, some breweriana fans are prepared to pay high prices for tiny pieces of paper. In this case in the form of beer bottle labels. While fees are unlikely to reach the heights of those paid for a rare stamp, there are plenty of instances of these labels selling for well over the £100 mark. The example above, from Cirencester Brewery in Gloucestershire, which closed in 1937, recently went for £220 on eBay, the online auction site.

Like any collector's item,

rarity value plays a big part in the prices people are prepared to pay. This Hall's Oxford Brewery label dates from the 1920s.

The brewery closed in 1925 and no more of these labels would have been produced. This doesn't always mean an item will be hard to find. It could be that a large number of unused labels were left over and ended up in the hands of collectors.



Some decades-old labels are still available unused in almost mint condition but most have passed through the hands of various collectors and come with the stamp hinges used to mount them in albums and/or the collector's name stamped on the back. Others have been soaked off of the bottles they were stuck to. If done well these can be found in good condition but there are lots of tatty examples.

The best sources for beer bottle labels are eBay and the

Labologists Society. This British-based organisation calls itself the International Society of Label Collectors and Brewery Research and publishes a magazine six times a year which it sends out to its members. This includes news, articles and notice of up-coming label auctions.

Another popular item of breweriana is the beer mat. The fact that beer mats, like bottle labels, are not much more than throwaways and practically worthless doesn't deter the collector and again, the scarcity factor plays its part.

The Glenny Brewery opened in Witney in 1983. Although still brewing, it became Wychwood Brewery in 1989 meaning the beer mat below was probably produced in limited numbers only.



The British Beermat Collectors Society was formed in 1960 and is still going strong. These collectors are known as 'Tegestologists' from the Latin word 'teges' which apparently means small rug, with mat being another term



for a rug. As with the Labologists, a newsletter is produced and meetings are held around the country. Watney's of London was the first brewer to issue beer mats in Britain. They were a cheap form of advertising and, placed on bars and tables, they couldn't be missed by the beer drinker. This was in 1920 but the mats, made of wood pulp, were first used in Dresden in Germany 1892. Previous to this a pottery or porcelain version known as a 'coaster' was used and this term is still in use in some countries, such as Australia and the USA.

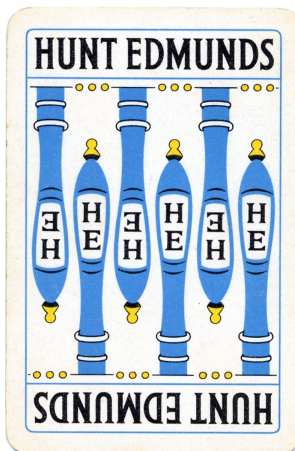


Even fictional brewers seem to get in on the act.

There was a time when no pub would have been without at least one set of playing cards for the use of its customers. As with beer mats, the brewers soon cottoned on to the advertising opportunity.

The British Brewery Playing Card Society - yes there's one of these too - aims to buy up playing cards, either in full or part packs, or single cards and redistribute them as single cards to its membership via its sales list. It also publishes catalogues to illustrate what's available and

what they look like. As with most other organisations they also produce a regular newsletter. Apparently, as in the card games themselves, the picture cards and aces are worth more than the number cards, which probably means this seven of diamonds from Banbury brewers Hunt Edmunds (closed 1967) must rank as second rate.

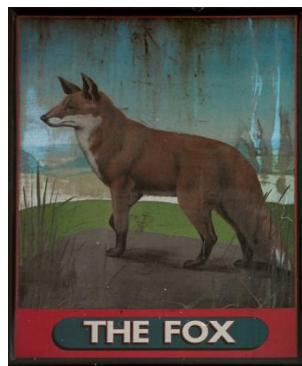


Towards the other end of the scale, in terms of size, pub signs are not only rarely to be found on sale but each item is usually unique. There may be hundreds of pubs named, for example, the Red Lion, but each sign is usually painted as a one off.

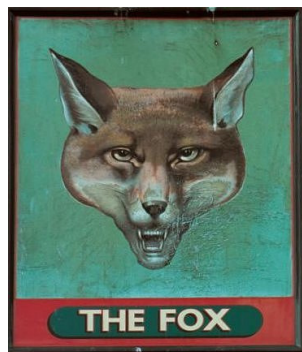
Even more unusual is the 'double-header', which has a different picture on each side.

Up until it was pulled down in 2001, the Bell, Headington, was one of only four Oxford pubs sporting this type of sign. The Fox, Barton, below, suffered the same fate in 2004. And when the Old School pub in Gloucester Green closed

last year it left just the Jude the Obscure, Walton Street, with its cartoon-style double-header, giving some idea of how unusual these things are.



These big, heavy wooden objects are hard to come by so most collectors make do with photographs rather than the real thing, and the Inn Sign Society exists for these people.



Lots more of this sort of thing in Part 2.

# Reading festival



Neil Hoggarth

In recent years, the Reading Beer and Cider Festival has become firmly established as the region's largest and most successful CAMRA beer festival. The 2008 event, held as usual over the May Day bank holiday weekend, continued the spectacular trend.

This year the local council had been persuaded to allow even more of King's Meadow to be turned over to the festival site. In place of the arrangement that has been used in recent years with a "big tent" (featuring the majority of the beer, and

the loud bands on Friday and Saturday nights) and the "quiet tent", this year there were two equally-sized massive marquees with the beers more evenly distributed between them. There was also a larger "garden" area outside for customers to enjoy the sunshine, and for the food traders to have their stalls.

The expansion of the site meant that the organisers were able to increase the capacity of the festival, though perhaps not by quite as much as they had originally hoped. The site

has an occupancy limit for safety reasons, agreed in advance with the Fire and Rescue service. Once the site is operating at maximum occupancy they can only admit new customers as people leave ("one-in-one-out"). This is the root cause of the queuing which has become a unfortunate feature of the event in recent years.

The site reached capacity at 4.30pm on Friday afternoon, and was operating at capacity within one and a half hours of opening on the

## The Cricketer's Arms

Littleworth (Wheatley)

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Saturday morning! At times people queued for several hours to be admitted. Some have asked why there cannot be some sort of priority entry system for CAMRA members. The organisers have said that they intend to look into offering some advanced tickets, as well as group booking facilities for visiting parties from CAMRA branches. However, they very much want to avoid turning the festival into an "all ticket" event - after all, the main reason for putting all the hard work into running a festival like Reading is to campaign to the general public!



A record 14,727 people attended the festival over the four days and they drank 55,400 pints of real ale, 10,600 pints of cider and perry, as well as substantial amounts of bottled foreign beers and English wine. There were some 450 different real ales on sale, of every

## Railway Tavern, Station Road, Wheatley LEASE FOR SALE

Situated in the popular pretty village of Wheatley, 5 miles east of Oxford, this CAMRA Good Beer Guide pub serves real ale and home-cooked food. There is a function room, beer garden and large car park. They host Aunt Sally games and have a number of different pub teams.

Contact Pete or Tracey on 01865 874810 for more details.

conceivable style. Brewdog brewery of Aberdeen showed off, sending both the strongest beer on the list (Paradox Speyside, 10% ABV) and the lowest strength (Edge, a 2.7% ABV mild). The Edge was gorgeous, with an incredible amount of flavour for a low-gravity beer. I didn't get to sample the Paradox Speyside myself (I was working behind the bar much of the time, and needed to keep some semblance of a clear head), but I'm told that it was similarly well-brewed. It certainly seemed popular, although I'm not sure that everyone that ordered it did so for the flavour!

May is when CAMRA traditionally campaigns to promote mild ales, and that style was well represented with 45 different milds available to try, and a "Mild Trail" promotion which had customers collecting stamps for each half-pint of mild that they sampled, then earning a free half pint when they had collected six stamps.

Congratulations are in order for West Berkshire Brewery, who won the "Beer of the Festival" award for their strong bitter Dr Hexter's Healer. The awards, judged during the Thursday afternoon trade session in a blind tasting by independent

judges, were open to all real ale breweries based within 30 miles of Reading.



# Letter to the editor...



*A response to Rob Walters' article, "Death of the Oxford Pub", which appeared in issue 50.*

I agree with a lot of what Rob wrote in this timely article. The loss of suburban and rural pubs appears to be accelerating at an alarming rate, and I think it is going to be a major issue for the Campaign in the next few years - real cask beer needs "real pubs", and Rob is correct in pointing out that the key issue is that drinkers are not using their "traditional local" anything like as much as they used to. It really is getting to be "use it or lose it" time folks!

I would like to take issue, however, with one of Rob's examples - his description of the decline of the **Marlborough House**, on the corner of Marlborough Road and Western Road, due to lack of stability. Rob is correct that the pub did well for years under the stewardship of Pat and Brian (in the late 90s it frequently used to feature in the Good Beer Guide), but his characterisation of the licensees who followed as "a succession of people, none of whom stayed long enough to establish a presence" did not go down well in one of the pubs where I deliver the Oxford

Drinker - the **Chester Arms**.

The Chester is a splendid establishment in Chester Street, just off the Iffley Road, and it is run by John Dunkley and his family. They succeeded Pat (the "droll landlady" of Rob's comments) at the Marlborough, and felt that Rob's comments on the Marlborough were not properly researched. I therefore thought that it was only fair to have a chat to John and give him an opportunity to set the record straight.

John informs me that he and his family took over the tenancy of the Marlborough from Pat in March 2002, and put a lot of investment and hard work into improving the pub. During 2004 they also took on the Chester Arms and, intending to run both pubs for the foreseeable future, employed some people to manage day-to-day affairs at the Chester. Unfortunately the management arrangement at the Chester did not work out very well, and John was forced to move from the Marlborough to the Chester to sort things out in December 2004. The family retained a presence at the Marlborough until May 2005, with the pub in the capable hands of

daughter Tracy. Punch Taverns were unable to find long-term tenants to take the Marlborough over, and the tenancy passed on to pub management company called Cavalier.

While I am sure that Rob did not intend to upset anybody, I think that we owe an apology to John, Tracy and the rest of the family. It is unfortunate that their intention to run both pubs was thwarted by events. I didn't have the pleasure of being a regular at the Marlborough when they were running it, but I admire the way that they run the Chester Arms: a popular, family-friendly pub, with a lively programme of events, good conversation and banter, and good beer.

Meanwhile, under the several managers that Cavalier put in, the Marlborough has not fared so well. It stopped trading last year and is currently boarded up. The only bit of good news is that the recent planning application to turn the site into six flats has been rejected.

The locals are asking if there is anything they can do to get their pub back, but it is difficult to find potential publicans, for all the reasons outlined in Rob's original article. Anybody out there want to have a go?



# *Chester Arms*

Chester Street OXFORD 01865 243203 [www.chesterarmsoxford.co.uk](http://www.chesterarmsoxford.co.uk)

## 3rd Annual Beer Festival



**August Bank Holiday 22nd to 25th**

**20 Ales and ciders**

**Live music Friday, Saturday & Monday Evenings**

**Pig Roast Saturday 23rd**

# Kidlington ramblings



Tony Goulding

The area of Kidlington, for the purpose of this guide, includes Thrupp and Water Eaton. Thirty years ago there were eleven pubs in the area and since then one has closed whilst the population has increased by thirty per cent.

**The Britannia**, a 200 year-old former Morrells local in Church Street, was closed and converted to a private house with the valuable car park the basis of half a dozen new houses. This pub was lost to Kidlington ten years ago.

Around the corner from the Brit are the two best pubs in the village: yes, Kidlington is the largest village in Britain!

**The Kings Arms**, a regular good beer guide entry is another 200 year old 'locals local' situated on the old back road known as The Moors. Once owned by Halls and now part of the Punch empire, this cosy two bar pub dispenses Greene King IPA; Wells Bombardier and a guest ale; up to five a week. With roasts less than a fiver lunchtimes (not Sunday); two beer festivals a year; an outdoor covered heated patio and very good but sometimes part-time landlord; the Kings is the tops.

Along the road in Mill Street is **The Six Bells**, another former Halls now a Punch Taverns pub. This is another old and extended cottage style single room building. Serving good condition Adnams Broadside and Youngs Bitter and excellent food (Sunday recommended), this pub doubles as a family friendly house or a mature drinkers club. Sit in the small front garden and watch the world go by. This part of Kidlington is 'England My England'.

On the main Bicester Road at Water Eaton stands the other **Kings Arms**, once a main road travellers pub and now a Harvester restaurant. A pleasant rambling building, sadly with no real ale. The only pub in Garden City, The Dogwood has suffered a bit of an identity crisis. Originally The Dog, then renamed The Squire Basset, this former Halls house has not fared well over the years. On the last visit the only beer Fullers London Pride was average with a guest ale some times available. Now it's just another food pub.

Along the Banbury Road in the centre of the village there are three pubs close by. **The Black Horse** part of which dates back 250

years was the only Morlands of Abingdon pub in the village and is now owned by Greene King. The usual IPA and sometimes Abbot or Ruddles in good condition are the beers available. Probably the best of the main road pubs during the daytime it becomes the meeting place for the younger generation in the evening with food served all day.

**The Black Bull** another former Halls now Enterprise pub used to dispense good real ale. In recent weeks this house seems to have lost its way with changes of landlord with the hand pumps now out of use. Now the haunt of builder boys in the afternoon and youngsters in the evening this pub can be busy.

The third of these pubs (if you can call it a pub), **The Red Lion**, yet again a former Halls house, is now a Greene King dump. It now attracts the people this type of pub deserves. Needless to say no real ale.

To the north of the village we have the first of three pubs on the Oxford Canal: **The Wise Alderman**. Once again a former Halls pub, now Punch Taverns, this

old spacious house with a huge garden and canal side mooring is named after a long serving local councillor. Hook Norton Bitter, a rare beer for Kidlington, was a popular serving until a couple of years ago, with nowadays Greene King IPA and Ruddles available. This pub is worth a visit although it now appears a little worn out - a good refurb would do it a world of good.

Further north now in the countryside, **The Jolly Boatman**, once a Morrells house, used to be one of my favourite drinking pubs in Kidlington run by a certain Mr Trafford - a fine

landlord. Now mainly a popular food house, Greene King IPA and a choice of Abbot Ruddles or a Morland beer are served in good condition. With a large car park and a pretty garden and conservatory this pub is worth a try also.

The last and still one of the best, **The Boat** at Thrupp, another old former Morrells house sits in an ideal position on the canal with ample moorings. This pub was tastefully refurbished and extended by Morrells in 1995, being acquired by Greene King in later years. The layout of the pub is formed of four different rooms and a large

secluded high walled garden. Again Greene King IPA and Abbot beers with very good food are served by a very welcoming and flamboyant landlord.

To round off please be aware the pubs away from the main road close in the afternoons Monday to Thursday. To find out more about the history of these pubs contact The Kidlington Historical Society. Also if you have any further news or information about these or any other pubs in the area please contact or join your local CAMRA branch.

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# what's on



Matt Bullock

*Meetings are now held on a rota basis Monday - Tuesday - Wednesday throughout the year. Meetings and events are relaxed and friendly. Members and non-members are welcome at all events.*

## **Wednesday 4 June 7.30pm**

### **Branch Meeting**

Brewery Tap, Ock Street, Abingdon

## **Saturday 12 July Social**

Charlbury Beer Festival  
Being held at Charlbury Cricket Club, very close to the station. Travel by train, times tbc.

## **Monday 14 July 7.30pm**

### **AGM**

Kings Arms, Holywell Street, Oxford.

## **Friday 18 July Social**

### **Merton Beer Festival**

Bus at 18:10 from St Giles to get there. Taxi back from the Friday evening session or camping facilities are available. Open all day Saturday with village fete.

## **Tuesday 5 August 7.30pm**

### **Branch Meeting**

Chester Arms, Chester Street (off Iffley Road), Oxford.

## **Wednesday 6 August GBBF trip**

Meet 10am at Gloucester Green

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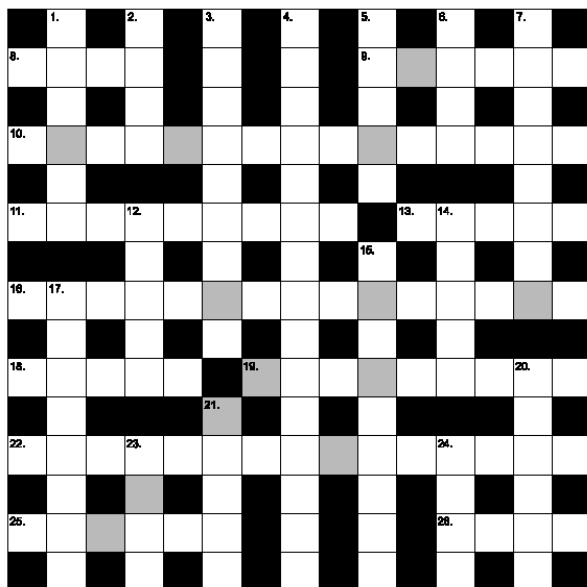
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# Cryptic Crossword No. 3

Matt Bullock

ANSWERS ON PAGE 21



## Across

- 8 Slip backwards into Czech brew (4)
- 9 Author Colin admired exterior of Oxford pub (6)
- 10 Smooth, dark Celtic beer should suit choirmaster (5,5,5)
- 11 Beer next to an East-Anglian highway (9)
- 13 I hear young sheep followed river to Newcastle brewery (5)
- 16 Royal couple visit Wheatley (3,4,3,5)
- 18 Herts brewer hidden in neat ring tone (5)
- 19 Dark Wantage brew fit for only God, eh? (5,4)
- 22 Big terrible Todd drinks Fernandes beer (3,6,6)
- 25 Did Meg predict the demise of this Moorhouse brew? (6)
- 26 Meet the brewer of This and That (4)

## Down

- 1 Reflective breweriana (6)
- 2 Thameside pub of the same name (4)
- 3 A Southport pint ideal for sinking? (9)
- 4 Danger led gorgon to Bungay brew (5,6,4)
- 5 Sam's family brew in Boston (5)
- 6 Eleven push through alien to leave (4)
- 7 Sparkler ate gruel to control beer flow (8)
- 12 Relatives closely follow commercial for Wantage brewer (5)
- 14 Junior member of Bedford brewing partnership (5)
- 15 Hide reptile in North Oxfordshire village (9)
- 17 JR's seeking Ulverston brewery (8)
- 20 Initially 2000 locals ensure everyone supports Manchester, maybe? (4,2)
- 21 Add yeast to sports field (5)
- 23 Gem from the spa (4)
- 24 A bit of a squeeze, we hear, in Chadlington pub (4)

## LOGO DESIGN COMPETITION

This year **Oxford City CAMRA** will be holding its **11th Beer Festival**.

Again we welcome submissions for this year's beer festival logo.

The design needs to be one colour, use limited shading (if any) and be quite 'compact' as it is printed in black on our glasses, as well as used for the programme and T-shirts.

**Forward entries to Sam (editor@) by 7th July at the very latest**

See previous logo designs on the Beer Festival section of the website.



# The Masons Arms

2 Quarry School Place Headington Oxford  
01865 764579



*Keeping it Real*

Hook Norton Old Hooky 4.6%  
Breakspear Oxfordshire Gold 4%  
West Berkshire Good Old Boy 4%

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OLD BOG Ales  
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Oxford CAMRA pub of the Year 2004 & 2005



## NEW IN 2008

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Cider Menue

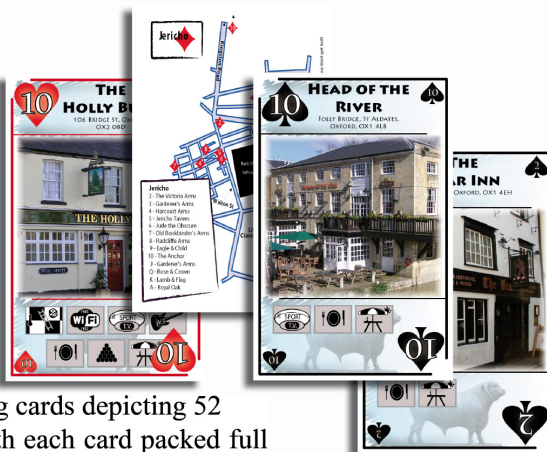
The 7th Headington Beer Festival  
30 Real Ales and Cider Bar

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

**5th, 6th & 7th September**

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

# OXFORD PUB PLAYING CARDS



A terrific set of playing cards depicting 52 essential Oxford pubs, with each card packed full of relevant details and maps to help locate them. More than enough to plan your night out, remind you of old favourites and maybe find you new ones.

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# Headington crawl

Alistair Pitman

I arrived at our first pub of the evening - **The White Hart** - a bit late and the other five surveyors were already half way through their first pints. We haven't done a city survey for about six months, so everyone was enjoying the return to surveying. The beers were Everards' Sunchaser and Tiger, Brains' Reverend James and Titanic's English Glory. The Sunchaser and the Tiger were available cold or extra cold. I had a pint of the cold Sunchaser, which was at just the right temperature. A very cold Sunchaser on a hot day would certainly be a very refreshing first pint: the temperature of the ale affects the flavour a lot and a colder more refreshing ale will have less flavour.



The pub is still very fresh looking after a recent refurbishment. The main drinking area is divided into two rooms, with a single bar stretching into both rooms and a third room without a bar. It is a fashionable boozier with the average drinker age in the mid-

thirties. The pub has half-height wood panelling, and prints and painting of oxford scenes.

Next it was back to the **Black Boy**. I have been a member of Oxford branch for about three years, and have surveyed about a hundred and fifty pubs. The biggest change in a pub during this time has been the Black Boy in Headington.



It used to be a quiet, run down back street pub with constant rumours of closure. Now it is a popular, chic candle-lit pub with excellent food. There are three rooms: a dining room, the large central room with the bar, and a side room with leather sofas and chairs. There was no ale on when we arrived, but we were informed that the Abbot had been breathing

for four hours and was just ready. Abbot was the only ale but was a good pint. The pub was packed when we left at twenty past eight.

The third pub was the **Royal Standard** on the High Street, with the cheapest beer of the night: Green King IPA at £2.40 and Morland Original at £2.60. But despite the cheap beer, the pub, which is neat and comfortable, was fairly quiet for a Friday night.



Then a disappointment at the **Britannia** - no ale! It's usually a fine pub, but not tonight. We strolled in, stared at the bar, asked the bar staff and strolled out. Normally they have a good range at a decent price.



Next was the **Butchers Arms**, which is well hidden among the back streets.

The Butchers was quiet and the only beer on was London Pride. But it was a very good pint of Pride. There was a time when the pub featured the full range of Fullers ales and would draw people in from all over Oxford but trade dropped off, particularly with introduction of near-total resident-only parking, but now it is a good locals pub (see below).

As there was no ale at the Britannia we had enough time to walk to the **Masons Arms** in Headington Quarry. The Masons is, in my view, easily the best traditional boozer in Oxford

and a recent pub of the year. It was at full steam when we arrived.

The pub is a free house with its own excellent brewery, the Old

Bog. Named because the small brewery is in what was the outside toilets. Which were 'vacant' and easy to re-plumb. The beers that night were West Berks Good ol' boy, Old



Hooky, Brakspear Gold and one or two others (but unfortunately I was a bit merry and forgot to write down all the beer in my notebook).

## inn and around oxford



**The Aviator** in Carterton has had a fresh lick of paint and some new furniture, both indoors and out. Still no sign of any real drinks though...

On last visit, the food at Whitney's newest gastro-pub – **The Hollybush** in Corn Street - were ok, but half price wine between 5 and 9pm was a bonus. At the time of the visit, their lone real ale "Olde Trip" was very nice but £3.20 a pint. The Plough, or "lough" since the P has gone missing, had their beer Loddon Ferryman's gold at £2.80.

The landlord at the **Seven Stars** in Marsh Baldon is trying to buy the pub from Greene King. Negotiations have been ongoing for 6 months and the landlord is keen to expand, but not until they own the pub.

A change of landlord followed by a redecoration have been rather frequent occurrences at the **Red Lion**, Islip, a Punch Taverns pub over the last few years. In charge now are Kelvin and Caroline Radford who were previously at the Crown and Thistle, Wood Farm in Oxford. The beers on

when visited were Wadworth 6X and Shepherd Neame Spitfire both in fine form. Kelvin is pleased to be in a pub where he can sell real ale - he attempted to introduce it at the Crown and Thistle but there was no market. He plans to regularly change the beer selection.

Things appeared to have gone a bit quiet at the **Butcher's Arms** in Headington recently (see above) with a reduction in the beers available.

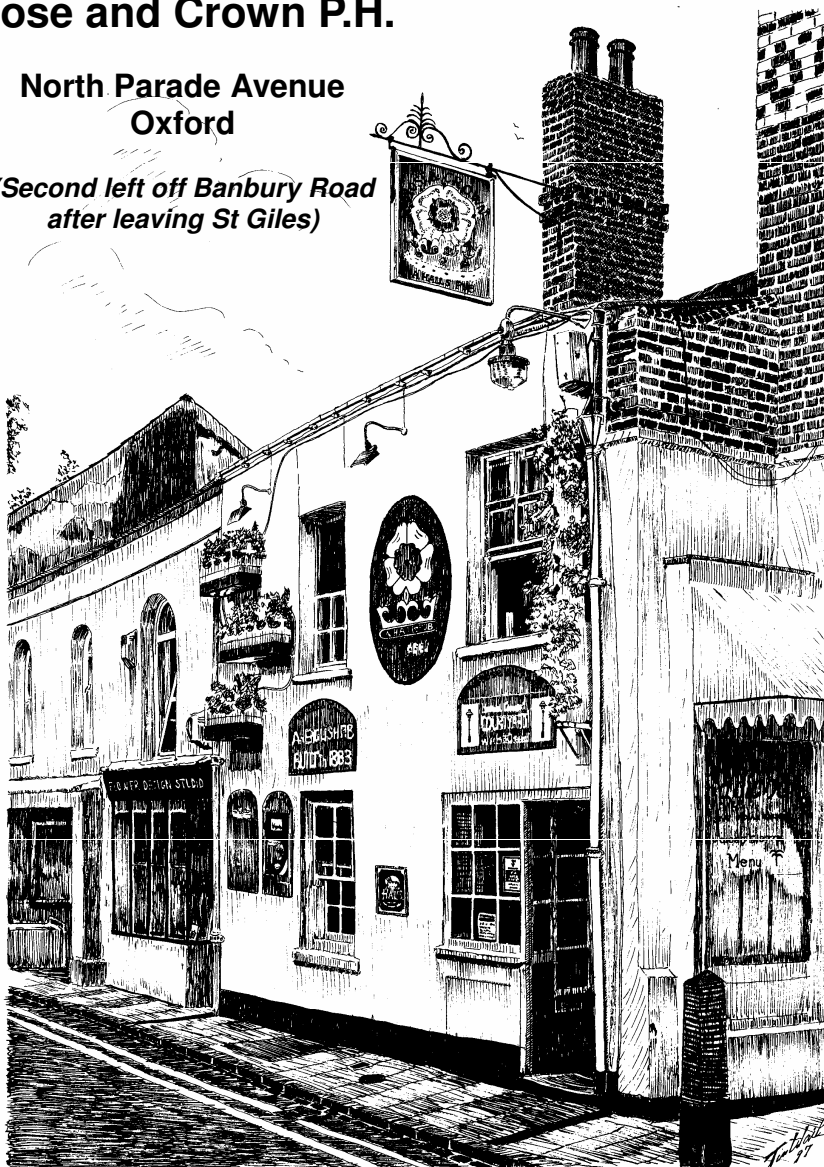
*Continued on page 18*



# 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)



Since the crawl visit, people were seen moving furniture out and the pub apparently was in the process of closing down. We have since heard that a temporary manager is now in post there.



**The Chequers Inn**, in Headington Quarry, is open again and doing well. After a full renovation and refurbishment, including replacing lead stolen from the roof, they now have three decent real ales for sale - Abbot, Morland and London Pride. They are planning to re-establish links with the local Morris Men and restart traditional pub games.



The cask ale sign is being displayed at the **Crown and Thistle** in Headington

but unfortunately they don't appear to be selling any! From reports is sounds like they're trying to take the 'dirtiest pub glasses in Oxford' award previously held by the now-closed Wharf house.



Since it became clear that Punch Taverns had chosen not to renew their lease of the **Gloucester Arms**, rather than the initial rumour that St John's College had made the decision not to offer it, not much more has been heard. Estate agents Savills have the task of finding suitable new tenants.



The long-empty former **Coach and Horses** pub at St Clements has survived an appeal by developers to allow them to demolish it. Councillors felt that the proposed development was not in keeping with the character of the area and would not benefit residents.

Stuart and Angie Bull at **The Cricketer's Arms**, Littleworth have increased their selection of local ales and have adopted a "SixSixes" beer portfolio initiative - all ales having to travel less than thirty six miles from brewery to pub. They have Hooky Bitter on a permanent basis and a weekly guest ale from either Hook Norton, West Berkshire, Vale or a Rebellion ale from the Marlow Brewery. They hope to extend this offering by including more local brewers in their portfolio soon. The pub's food reputation is also increasing with booking becoming increasingly advisable at weekends.

**The Holly Bush** in Osney Island are continuing to sell real ale at only £2.60 per pint. They ask "what is happening to this country and why are the Government so intent on penalising small businesses such as ours?" with 27% of the price of a

pint you buy going directly to the Government? They, as our other pubs, need customers' support now more than ever before. The pub continues to offer a friendly environment, a wide range of drinks and snacks and healthy home cooked food. Current real ale offerings are Ale Fresco and Tanners Jack. No Greene King!

Fancy a punt? John Bellinger, landlord of **The Bell Inn** at Adderbury, is taking up the challenge set by his customers, to raise funds for Katharine House Hospice, also in Adderbury, by punting the Thames from St John's Lock in Lechlade to Henley - more than 80 miles. Sponsorship is via the website: [www.justgiving.com/puntingchallenge](http://www.justgiving.com/puntingchallenge)

JD Wetherspoon have made its second purchase of a parcel of pubs, including the **Slug and Lettuce** on George Street, Oxford, which is currently closed following the administration of Laurel earlier in the year. The

company already own a pub in Temple Cowley - the William Morris - which has some decent beers but is difficult to get to public transport and you wouldn't catch me walking home from there late at night! The company will be investing heavily in their new acquisitions and is set to re-open later in the summer. Let's hope the one in town becomes a mecca for real ale drinkers rather than lager louts.

According to an article in The Oxford Mail:

"Wetherspoons is seeking a name with local connections for the new pub and has come up with three possible options: Four Candles - a reference to the Two Ronnies sketch; TE Lawrence; or Bishop Trelick."

To have your say, send your pick to [news@eddigershon.com](mailto:news@eddigershon.com)



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# Festival round-up



Matt Bullock

**The Kings Arms in Kidlington** held a beer festival in late March. As usual, a range of around a dozen beers was available in the covered courtyard - a venue which is slightly smaller this time due to the creation of a covered smoking area outside the pub. A weekend away in Plymouth meant that I attended on the Thursday night just after the festival had opened. Within an hour or so, the venue was pretty busy, and by all accounts the festival was a great success. My first beer of the night after an hour's pleasant walk from Summertown was Butts Barbus Barbus, a fruity and bitter golden ale that ranks as one of my current favourites, and this proved the ideal refreshment after a bit of physical exertion! So good was it, that I'm sure I had another before the night was out. The quality of this pint set the standard for the session, with a range of beers being in excellent condition - sadly my lack of notes and a memory like a sieve will prevent me from naming many of them, but suffice to say it was a good festival, and you should pay a visit to the next.

Fast forward to May, and to **Banbury TA Centre**, a

familiar venue for North Oxfordshire CAMRA's festival but a new time of the year. The new date meant scorching hot sunshine on the Saturday, a far cry from the freezing temperatures of last year. This year's festival had a North West theme, and with the exception of a couple of strong beers - Brakspear Triple and good old Hughes Dark Ruby Mild - the outstanding beers were all from this region. Wapping's Liverpool Lou (4.0%) and Stout (5.0%) were both top notch, as were both of the beers from Southport, the hoppy Carousel (4.0%) and the fruity and hoppy Natterjack (4.3%). Also in the same style were Millstone True Grit (5.0%) and Pig & Whistle (4.3%) - by now you've probably sussed that if it's golden and hoppy, it scores highly with me! Another of the genre was George Wright Pipe Dream (4.3%) from Rainford on Merseyside, and their mild, Roman Black, was pretty good too. In all there were 80 beers at the festival, plus a good selection of ciders and perries (all these sold out by Saturday afternoon), and I'm sure it will rate as one of the most successful ever.

A week later, the **Old Bookbinders** in Jericho

held a festival. This is a Greene King pub, and the beer menu featured a full range of this company's beers, but in addition there were several excellent beers from outside the GK stable. On Friday night the early frontrunner was Bear Town Kodiak Gold (4.0%), a straw-coloured citrus ale, followed closely by Loddon Rin Tin Tin, which was much maltier.



Beers were coming and going so quickly it was difficult to plan ahead, so I missed the excellent Ossett Quicksilver (5.0%) which is a current Greene King guest, and probably the best they've had, and I gave the West Berks Wale & Anes a miss in favour of White Horse Saracen IPA. I returned on Saturday to join in the Cup Final post mortem over a pint of Butts LeButts Lager, several helpings of the excellent Black Cat mild from Moorhouse's, and some Suffolk County from Nethergate, on which I finished an enjoyable weekend.



## Crossword Answers

### Across

- 8 Pils
- 9 Dexter
- 10 Irish Cream Stout
- 11 Broadside
- 13 Wylam
- 16 The King and Queen
- 18 Tring
- 19 Honey Gold
- 22 Old Bridge Bitter
- 25 Mystic
- 26 Teme

### Down

- 1 Mirror
- 2 Isis
- 3 Quicksand
- 4 Green Dragon Gold
- 5 Adams
- 6 Exit
- 7 Regulate
- 12 Adkin
- 14 Young
- 15 Adderbury
- 17 Hartleys
- 20 Lees MM
- 21 Pitch
- 23 Bath
- 24 Tite

Grey squares spell  
SHEPHERD NEAME

## credits....

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# European Beer Festival



Alistair Pitman

Thanks in part to the work of CAMRA, you can now enjoy a pint of real ale at most locals but if you want more variety of ale then you have to be prepared to travel. For a few unusual beers travel into Oxford to pubs such as the Far from the Madding Crowd or the Turf; 20 or 30 beers head to a local pub beer festival; for a choice of 100 to 200 beers go to a city's annual CAMRA beer festival, such as the Oxford beer festival. CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival has 400 to 500 beers but for a choice of 2000 beers head to

Copenhagen on the 12th September 2008 for the European Beer Festival.

Danish beer enthusiasts have been considering the idea of a giant European beer festival in 2008 to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Danish Beer Enthusiasts for some time. Work on the project began in autumn 2006. The original brewery at the Carlsberg site will be the venue for the festival. Since Carlsberg will be closing down most of its production line at the original brewery it was

considered by the DBE to be an appropriate venue for the festival. However, Carlsberg will have no influence over the planning of the festival.

The goal of the festival is to have up to 140 international breweries at the festival and more than 2000 different beers. Drinking foreign beer in a Carlsberg brewery isn't everyone's cup of tea, but if you want to sample a huge range of beer styles from across Europe and have a short break in September then its ideal, with cheap budget flights and hostel accommodation.

Dick and Lin welcome you to the

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