



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

ISSUE 53
October - November 2008



the Oxford Drinker

Oxford Beer Festival

This year sees Oxford CAMRA branch's beer festival return to the Town Hall, St Aldates, for the 11th year running. This year, there will be 130 different beers available, with 30 of the popular ones being duplicated, to be ready for Saturday morning. This should ensure a plentiful supply for visitors on Saturday.

Sessions run from 5pm to 11pm on Thursday 16th, 11am to 11pm on Friday 17th and 11am to "whenever the beer runs out" on Saturday 18th. Experience from previous years shows that the beer is usually running out by about 8pm on Saturday - we take that as a sign of a good festival. Remember that Thursday and Friday evenings are our busiest times - queues can form at the door between 7pm and 9pm - so if you want to sample the beers in a more relaxed atmosphere why not come during the day on either Friday or Saturday. Food will be available at all sessions.

Entrance fee to the festival is £2 (£1 for card carrying CAMRA members). You'll need to hire a glass for £2, which is refundable if you don't want to take the glass home, and buy a supply of beer tokens, as no cash is taken at the bars. Every new member joining at the festival will receive £20 of Wetherspoon vouchers and a free hardback copy of the Good Beer Guide 2008.

The festival is run entirely by CAMRA volunteers, who give up their free time, not only to run the festival, but to set up and take down as well. If you are a CAMRA member and want to find out what it is like running a festival, why not volunteer? It's good fun, and you also get free beer tokens. Contact details are at the end of this article.

On a technical note, we will be hiring water cooled cask jackets from CAMRA HQ this year. This should keep the beer at a constant temperature during the festival and remove the need for us to continually spray water over the casks, as we have in previous years.

So please, do come along to our festival. It's an event that has proved very popular in previous years so let's make this one a success too.

Contact details for volunteers (or general enquiries):
Tony Perry 07528 241113 / tony_perry3000@hotmail.co.uk

the free newsletter of the
Oxford City Branch of CAMRA
www.oxfordcamra.org.uk

**130 different
real ales
including
stouts,
porters and
lagers
camra award
winning beers
new
breweries
beers from all
the local
breweries
20 real ciders
and perries
20+ varieties
of continental
bottled beers**

inside this issue:
beer festival reports

pub of the year voting
regional Aunt Sally match
festival and branch diaries
Witney pubs review - part 2



Neil Hoggarth

Meetings and events are relaxed and friendly. Members and non-members are welcome at all events.

**Saturday 4 October
11.30am
Beer Festival Publicity
Crawl of Reading**

Meet at Oxford Station in good time for the 11.30 train.

**Monday 6 October
7.30pm
Branch Meeting**

Rose & Crown, 14 North Parade Avenue, Oxford
OX2 6LX

**Friday 10 October, 7pm
Beer Festival Publicity
Crawl of Oxford**

Meet at the Lamb & Flag, 12 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3JU

**Saturday 18 October
Regional Membership
Committee Meeting**

At the Oxford Beer Festival
Town Hall, Oxford

**Tuesday 21 October, 7.30pm
Rural Pub Survey - West
Oxfordshire**

Meet at the Lamb & Flag for 7.30pm. Contact the Social Secretary to book a place. Neil Hoggarth, 01865 794438, social@oxfordcamra.org.uk

**Saturday 25 October
12 noon
Pub Crawl with visiting
Rugby Branch**

Starting at the Old Bog Brewery, Mason's Arms, 2 Quarry School Place, Headington Quarry, Oxford

and moving on to a city centre crawl.

**Tuesday 4 November
7.30pm
Branch Meeting**

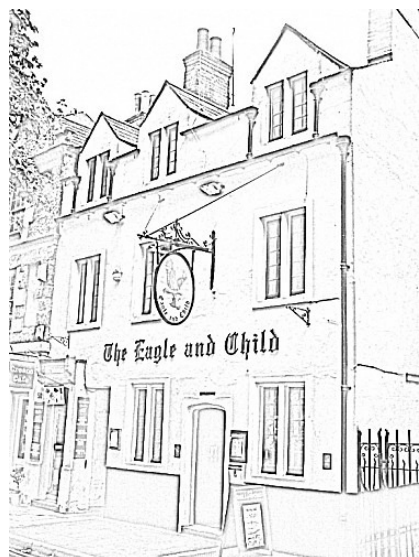
Waterman's Arms, 7 South Street, Osney Island, Oxford
OX2 0BE.

**Saturday 8 November
1pm
Regional Meeting**
The Woolpack, Banbury.

**Tuesday 25 November
7.30pm
Rural Pub Survey**

Meet at the Lamb & Flag for 7.30pm. Contact the Social Secretary to book a place. Neil Hoggarth, 01865 794438, social@oxfordcamra.org.uk

Listed in the Good Beer Guide 2009!



THE EAGLE AND CHILD

Fabulous Fish & Chips!

FOOD SERVED 10AM TIL 10PM DAILY

**SERVING BRAKSPEAR BITTER, OLD
HOOKY
&
GUEST ALES**

- *Weekly Quiz Night - Sundays 9pm*
- *Ale and Fish Sampling*
- *Halloween Party*
- *Children in Need Charity Event*

49 ST. GILES, OXFORD, OX13LU TEL 01865 302925

Chester Arms beer festival

Helene Augar

On Friday 22nd August 2008 we gathered for a branch social at The Chester Arms pub for their annual beer festival. This is a real community pub located on Chester Street, just off the Iffley Road in Oxford, and there was a good family friendly feel to the festival.



The organisers had decided to go for quality over quantity, reducing the barrels of beer from 22 last year to 14 this year. They also had 3 beers available on the hand pumps at the bar. Their decision to reduce the number of beers to concentrate on the quality seemed to work as all the ones I tried were very good indeed. The beers ranged in strength from the 3.6% ABV of the Tring Brewery's Side Pocket for a Toad to the 6.5% ABV of the White Horse Brewery's The Governor. This strong beer was named by the pub as their star of the festival, and although some of us found The Governor to be rather sweet, it was still a good beer in good condition.

The barrels were under a section of a marquee in the garden of the pub, with 3 other

sections providing covered seating areas. It was an improved set up from last year as the marquee had been relocated from the far side of the garden to just outside the pub, which enabled punters to avoid getting muddy feet crossing the garden.

In addition to the beer they had 4 real ciders available which were all well received. These all came from Westons and ranged in strength from the Bounds Brands Scrumpy at 4.8% ABV to the award winning and popular Old Rosie at 7.3% ABV.

The pub were offering a free Sunday lunch to customers who drank a pint of each of the 14 beers over the course of the weekend, providing customers with an "Ale Trail Record" to be stamped with each purchase of

a half pint or pint of each beer. While this seems a good incentive to try different styles of beer and to promote the food in the pub, and the pub probably had the best intentions behind it, unfortunately it seemed a bit of an unrealistic achievement.

I calculated that I would have had to drink on average 3½ pints a day over 4 days in a row which is well over the recommended daily amount for men or women to drink (information from the NHS website www.units.nhs.uk). Therefore this offer could encourage binge drinking, something which CAMRA tries to campaign against, so the pub may wish to reconsider this offer next year.

Overall the festival was well run with a welcoming and friendly atmosphere, with plenty of activities for children (including a trampoline in the garden) and a good time was had by all.



Around the county



Helene Augar

The Branch held another popular rural pub surveying trip on the evening of Tuesday 16th September, with a couple of members taking a night off drinking beer to kindly drive us to the southern part of the branch area. The good news for the drivers was that the pubs we visited were very close together once we had arrived in the region, less than 10 miles from Oxford.

We started at **The Chequers** in Burcot which has been a pub for around 400 years and is an old thatched-roof building on the main Abingdon Road. The interior has black and white décor, which looked to have been redecorated fairly recently and carried out quite sympathetically. The pub is a freehouse but on the night we visited there was only 1 real ale being served (out of a possible 3 pumps) - Batemans XB. The pub is undoubtedly more of a restaurant, with most of the floor space being set up for dining and the smaller bar area having a few high level tables with stools and a few sofas - more like a space diners can sit while waiting to be seated in the main dining area. However, we received a warm welcome from the staff and were not made to feel like we should have been there to eat, which was good.

We moved on to another thatched pub, **The Plough**, again on the main Abingdon Road, but this time in nearby Clifton Hampden. This had a very different ambiance, feeling much more like a friendly village pub, popular with the locals and welcoming drinkers,

although serving food if customers chose to eat. It is a smaller pub with low beamed ceilings, rustic plaster, and red and black quarry tiles on the floor. It was busy for a week night and the clientele included a pub cat! They were serving beer on 2 out of the 3 hand pumps - Wells Bombardier and the Appleford Brewery's Brightwell Gold. This is another freehouse and the landlord chooses to keep a local beer on one of the pumps (which CAMRA supports with its LOCALe campaign) and regularly changes the beer on the other 2 pumps.

The third pub of the evening, **The Barley Mow** was just around the corner, still in Clifton Hampden. Yet another thatched roof, old pub, this was much larger and comfortably catered for both drinkers and diners. Some areas of the pub had such low ceilings we could easily reach them from a seated position! The pub is owned by The Spirit Group, and although this means the landlord is more restricted on his choice of beer than the previous 2 establishments, he regularly changes the ales and they had all 4 hand pumps on with a good selection: Exmoor Gold, Wells Bombardier, Adnams Explorer and Everards Equinox. The pub had a warm atmosphere, friendly staff and a multitude of dried hops hanging from the beams.

From there we took another short drive to nearby Culham and stopped at **The Railway** Inn. Well, we didn't actually stop... more of a pause while we got out of the cars, looked

inside briefly, got back in the cars and carried on the survey to the next pub. The reason we didn't stop is that The Railway is now an Indian restaurant rather than a pub. From our fleeting glance inside we saw they did have 1 hand pump serving a real ale, Courage Best, but we felt that it was the type of place to visit if you wish to sit down to a full meal rather than just go for a quick pint.

The final pub we visited was very close by - **The Wagon and Horses**. This is a New Wood Inns pub with a good selection of beer. We received another warm welcome and had a choice of all 3 pumps: Wychwood Big Bertha, Evan Evans Harvest Home and Marstons Pure Blonde. The place appeared to have a somewhat split personality when it came to the food on offer as it serves Tapas food in the week but a carvery on Sundays. It has a large drinking area with a smaller dining section but felt a bit cluttered with the amount of ornaments and memorabilia hanging from the walls and ceiling, like it was trying to cater to too many different types of customer. We never wish pubs to exclude anyone, but I feel this pub needs to decide which market it can best appeal to.

Overall it was a successful and enjoyable evening and provided an opportunity to visit some more of the rural gems in our branch area. The pubs were all close together which meant we were able to visit (nearly) 5 pubs without having to drink like fishes!

Kidlington crawl

David Hill

The latest in our series of Friday night pub crawls took place in late August with the venue being Kidlington and Thrupp. If you think we have only just done a Kidlington and Thrupp pub review you are right as Tony Goulding did a guide to the area in issue 51. One reason, then, for choosing this area was to see if a group of us would agree with his assessment.

We started out at the furthest point, **The Boat Inn** at Thrupp, the first of three pubs we visited on the Oxford canal. This old stone built pub has four separate rooms all which have the appearance of being well looked after as does the large rear garden. Three of the four rooms were laid for food and even at 7 o'clock there were quite a few people starting to dine. Judging by these diners it seems they attract a fairly elderly clientele. Despite the emphasis on food there is a reasonably sized bar, however the beers, Greene King IPA, and Morland Original were mediocre.



Then followed a pleasant early evening walk along the canal to Thrupp's other pub, **The Jolly Boatman**. There has been a refurbishment since I was last here and it is now quite smart

although the room just off the bar is now set for dining leaving only the small area around the bar, with I think two tables, as a dedicated drinking area. Despite this there seemed to be more people drinking than eating, mostly sat outside on the canal-side terrace. The beers were Greene King IPA and Sun Dance. Tony said in his article that the beers here are kept in good condition which we found to be true.



The final canal-side venue was the most northerly pub in Kidlington, **the Wise Alderman**. Tony reported this as being a little worn out but it had a good atmosphere with a welcoming landlady and locals involved in conversation and everyone ignoring the television which was switched on. Beer quality was fair but we were disappointed with the choice of two Greene King beers, IPA and Ruddles County. This being a

Punch Taverns establishment we hoped they would have something a bit different to distinguish themselves from the local GK tied houses.

And talking of GK tied houses our next call was the **Black Horse** which offered us IPA and Sun Dance. This pub near the centre of Kidlington and on the main road was quite lively with a young clientele, music playing and a football match being shown on numerous TV screens. There is also an outside garden/smoking area which was likewise busy. The beer was OK, which is a lot better than the other two main road pubs in the centre of Kidlington which have no real ale.

Next I had a quick look inside the **Black Bull**, an imposing red brick building in the very centre of Kidlington, and found that having lost its real ale a while back it has

now also lost its handpumps. We had only time enough for one more call so we were headed towards the **Kings Arms**, as recommended by Tony Goulding. Here we found what he found, a friendly traditional local with good service and good beer, even though the landlord was not in attendance. Beers were Greene King IPA (him again!), Wells Bombadier with the guest being an excellent pint of Danish Dynamite from Stonehenge Brewery. A bonus on this visit was the appearance of Wilma the friendly pub cat.

All in all an enjoyable crawl. Pity we didn't get to the **Six Bells** but that was just over ambitious planning on my part.

Witney pub review - part 2



Tony Goulding

This, the second in the series, looks at pubs on Witney High Street and Church Green. The good news since the first review is that **The Plough** has now recovered from last years floods to serve up to four good quality changing beers, along with **The House of Windsor**, always under the shadow of closure, also serving four beers in top condition. In fact all eight pubs at this west end of town would make a good weekend crawl.

Moving on from the Plough towards High Street we come to **The Royal Oak** (9), originally owned by Halls of Oxford, but now a very successful and genuine family run free house offering a warm and friendly welcome to all. The pub serves four beers from the Wychwood and Marstons range in top condition along with exceptional food. The pub has, following refurbishment, grown from a two room local to become a spacious and comfortable bar that now has the ambiance of quality. Run by the same family for almost 20 years the Oak is not to be missed but beware - the beer is expensive.



Across the road is **The Cross Keys** (10) owned by The Spirit Group who acquired most of the former Courage estate. Serving Adnams Broadside, Timothy Taylor Landlord and Wychwood Hobgoblin in good condition and food all day, this is a typical market day locals pub. With a long single bar and a large outdoor drinking area this is a spacious pub that needs a modest refurbishment to give it some atmosphere. This building's call to fame go back to the 19th century when Richard Brakspear commenced brewing here before moving to Henley.

A short walk across from the Keys to your left can be found **The Eagle Vaults** (11) a former Bass Charrington house now run by Greene King. This cavernous bar serving IPA is busy with food at lunch times and full of the younger generation in the evening.

A few steps further on is **The Marlborough Hotel** (12), a large 17th century coaching inn. The very comfortable front bar serves good quality beers, two from Wychwood, along with tasty food. This is the place to watch the business of the market, You can also take tea here.

Around the corner into Corn Street - more pubs than shops - is **The Eagle Tavern** (13), another former Clinches house. Throughout the 70s, 80s and 90s this pub was a splendid time warp run like a club house. Now completely rebuilt internally by Hook Norton Brewery in 2001 (what

a scoop!), most of the breweries range of beer is served in good condition along with quality food. The eager landlord with many years experience is a Hook Norton cellar man of the year.



Step a few yards across the road into **The Red Lion** (16), an old Morrells now Greene King pub. The friendly live-music-loving landlord is also a beer festival fan. This long sprawling one room pub has the former Barn Room at the rear acting as a music venue. The beer from the Greene King range also includes seasonal guests. Good food is served lunchtimes. Many years ago this pub was unique in having a multi sided pool table.

Walk around the corner to Church Green and you will find **The Angel** (15) another former Courage pub now leased from The Spirit Group. This is another comfortable and successful pub run by the same family for nearly 20 years. The friendly and knowledgeable staff serve four beers in good condition Courage Best,

John Smiths (yuck), Brakspear Oxford Gold and a monthly guest. Tasty food is served, soon to be all day. A front patio and a sun trap rear garden help to promote a soon to visit feeling. The Angel overlooks Church Green and with its wonderful Georgian bay windows and local Stonesfield slate roof this pub could be in cosy small village some where in the county.

Across the Green is **The Fleece** (14), formerly The Marlborough Head, where Clinches Brewery commenced there brewing in the early 1800s. Now more of a cafe bar with a bright and airy feel .Two beers changing occasionally are served in good condition along with interesting food .This is another pub with a pretty outlook onto Church Green.



Again, for more info on this subject purchase a copy of Derek Honey's handy book - Witney Pubs Past And Present - and don't forget the local branch of CAMRA is always looking for news on pubs and breweries.

Want to know all the latest news and events?

Share information about what's happening in your area?

Sign up to our e-mailing list.

Details on the website at:

www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/mailling-lists.php

The Cricketer's Arms

Littleworth (Wheatley)

HOME
MADE
FOOD
NOW
BEING
SERVED



HOOKY
BITTER &
WEEKLY
GUEST
ALE

"The little pub with the BIG welcome"
Visit our website for our Events Calendar

www.cricketers-arms.co.uk

01865 872738

beer festival diary



Fri 3 - Sat 4 October

Solihull Beer Festival

Solihull Royal British Legion,
Union Road, Solihull
35 beers plus ciders
www.solihullcamra.org.uk

Thursday 16 - Saturday 18
October

11th Oxford CAMRA Beer Festival.

Oxford Town Hall, St Aldates,
Oxford. See front cover.
www.oxfordcamra.org.uk

Friday 17 - Saturday 18
October

31st Bath Beer Festival

Bath Pavilion, North Parade
Road, Bath
70 beers, plus ciders and
foreign beers
www.bathandborderscamra.org.uk/

Thursday 23 - Sunday 26
October

The Old Bookbinders Ale House October Festival

Victor Street, Jericho, Oxford
20+ beers, cider and whisky
www.oldbookbinders.co.uk

Thursday 23 - Saturday 25
October

Turf Tavern Beer Festival

Turf Tavern, Bath Place,
Oxford
www.theturftavern.co.uk

Thursday 23 - Saturday 25
October

10th Twickenham Beer & Cider Festival

York House, Richmond Road,
Twickenham
70 beers, plus ciders & perrys
and foreign bottled beers
www.rhcamra.org.uk

Thursday 30 October -
Saturday 1 November

22nd Swindon Beerex

STEAM, the Museum of the
Great Western Railway,
Kemble Drive, Swindon
100 beers plus ciders & perrys
Note: Friday evening session
entry by advance ticket only
www.swindoncamra.org.uk

Friday 21 - Saturday 22
November

Wantage Beer Festival

Masonic Hall, Alfred Street,
Wantage
24+ beers, plus ciders & perrys
and bottled conditioned beers
www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk

Saturday 29 November

Haddenham Winterfest

Tithe Barn, Manor Farm,
Haddenham
[www.haddenham-beer-
festival.co.uk](http://www.haddenham-beer-festival.co.uk)

Tuesday 2 - Saturday 6
December

Winter Beer Festival

Far from the Madding Crowd,
Friar's Entry, Oxford
www.maddingcrowd.co.uk

Tuesday 2 - Saturday 6
December

25th Pig's Ear Beer & Cider Festival

Ocean, Mare St, Hackney,
London E8
www.pigsear.org.uk

useful camra contacts

Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe

David Roe
01296 484 551
dwrrs@aol.com

North Oxfordshire

Alan Mitchell
[contact@northoxfordshire
camra.org.uk](mailto:contact@northoxfordshirecamra.org.uk)
www.northoxfordshirecamra.org.uk

White Horse Branch

Neil Crook
contact@whitehorsecamra.org.uk
www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk

South Oxfordshire

Hugh Steele
www.soxxoncamra.org.uk

Oxford Branch

Tony Perry
contact@oxfordcamra.org.uk
www.oxfordcamra.org.uk

Oxford Drinker Editor

please send any material to
editor@oxfordcamra.org.uk

CAMRA

230 Hatfield Road
St Albans, Hertfordshire
AL1 4LW
01727 867201
camra@camra.org.uk
www.camra.org.uk

Oxford Trading Standards

01865 815000

Further details of
festivals and
updates on events are
available
on our
website at
www.oxfordcamra.org.uk

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



Pub of the year 2008



Voting is now under way for the Oxford CAMRA Pub of the Year 2008. This year we will be selecting a single Pub of the Year from the pubs within the ring road (a country pub of the year award will follow next summer). Six pubs were nominated at the September branch meeting and they are:

Harcourt Arms

Cranham Terrace, Jericho, OX2 6DG

Kings Arms

40 Holywell Street, OX1 3SP

Masons Arms

2 Quarry School Place, Headington Quarry, OX3 8LH

Old Bookbinders

17-18 Victor Street, Jericho, OX2 6BT

Rose and Crown

14 North Parade Avenue, OX2 6LX

Turf Tavern

4 Bath Place, OX1 1SU

All CAMRA members are entitled to vote, and a voting form is included on the opposite page. All you have to do is visit all six pubs, get your form stamped to show that you've been to each pub, and then rank the pubs in your order of preference. Don't forget to add your name and CAMRA membership number at the bottom of the form.

Forms can be posted to the address given on the form,

or they can be brought along to either the November or December branch meetings.

Judging for the regional and national CAMRA Pub of the Year competition is done by scoring on the factors listed below. This should give you some idea of what we are looking for in branch Pub of the Year candidate.

Quality of Beer: Obviously CAMRA are only going to give an award to a pub which consistently serves excellent real ale. One thing to note is that this is about quality not quantity; although choice of beers is nice to have, one or two really well kept beers are preferable to a wide range of beers which turn out to be mediocre.

Community Focus: A good pub is genuinely part of the community in which it is situated, and attracts a good cross-section of local people.

Atmosphere: This is difficult to define, but drinkers tend to know when a pub "feels right". Is it a good place to be? Are you going to want to come back on a regular basis?

Campaigning: CAMRA is keen to reward pubs which espouse and promote our values. Is cask ale being given a positive push? Is information available on the beers being sold?

Style and Decor: Is the décor appropriate and does the style show respect for the building and its history? A pub doesn't have to be a picture-postcard

rural gem to score highly here; a basic back street boozer is just as valid, if it is a well-kept example of that type of pub.

Service and Welcome: Is the service prompt and friendly? Do you get a full measure without having to ask? The staff in a good pub should regard you as a human being rather than just a potential source of revenue!

Value for Money: How do prices compare with other pubs in the vicinity?

We have had excellent responses to previous competitions, and hope to get as many members as possible involved again this year. Please pay a visit to these wonderful pubs, and make sure you return your voting form.

The winner will be announced in December, and a presentation will be made to the winning pub prior to Christmas.

**Only forms with
six completed
stamps will be
considered in the
vote.**

Happy surveying!

Oxford CAMRA Pub of the Year 2008

To vote in the Oxford CAMRA Pub of the Year contest, please use this form. All you have to do is visit the six pubs listed below, get your voting form stamped, and then rank the pubs in your order of preference. You need to be a member of CAMRA to vote.

When voting, indicate **"1" for your favourite down to "6" for your least favourite**. Make sure you put a score beside each pub and you use each number only once. Ensure you get your voting slip stamped in the appropriate place when you visit too, as any missing stamps will invalidate the form.

Remember the points listed opposite on what to vote on - not just beer quality but on ambience, the welcome, the service, the knowledge and helpfulness of the staff, the pub's attitude towards CAMRA and how it promotes real ale over other products.

Once you have visited all six pubs, cast your vote on this sheet (or a photocopy), fill in your name and membership number and return it to:

Oxford CAMRA, 31 Rivermead Road, Rose Hill, Oxford OX4 4UE

to arrive by **Monday 1 December 2008**, or present it in person at the **December Branch Meeting**.

Many thanks for taking the time to vote, and enjoy your visit to these six fine pubs.

	Pub Name	Pub Stamp	Rank
1	Harcourt Arms		
2	Kings Arms		
3	Masons Arms		
4	Old Bookbinders		
5	Rose and Crown		
6	Turf Tavern		

Regional Aunt Sally

Neil Hoggarth

This is the 3rd year that the Mason's Arms in Headington has hosted an inter-branch social playing the traditional Oxfordshire pub game of Aunt Sally - an outdoor game which involves throwing wooden batons at small skittle, known as a "dolly", perched on top of a pole. This year we struggled to find an August date that suited everyone, and moved the event back to September. This had the fortunate effect of allowing us to combine the match with the Mason's Arms beer festival - which added to the fun, although I'm not sure that it helped the throwing very much!

This year's event was advertised as a regional social, and saw the added spice of a real trophy to compete for, kindly provided by Regional Director Jackie Parker. There were competitors from North Oxon, White Horse, West Berks and Mid-Chilterns branches, as well as the traditional teams from Oxford and Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe. We juggled the numbers trying to come up with a suitable division into teams, ending up with three groups of ten: Oxford & White Horse; North Oxon & Mid-Chilterns; and AVW, West Berks and Steve Laird from Bicester to make the teams equally sized!

The weather was threateningly overcast, but the event started out in the dry. Oxford/White Horse started poorly in the first leg, scoring 2, with only Will Reed and Neil Crook avoiding the dreaded "blob" (zero from six sticks). The other two teams got off to a slightly better

start, drawing with 5 points each. The first leg was then decided by a "three-sticker" play-off - using half the normal number of sticks. North Oxon/Mid-Chilterns won the three-sticker by 6 to 4.

In the second leg, Oxford/White Horse started to get into the swing of things, winning with 7 points vs 5 from North Oxon/Mid-Chilterns and 6 from AVW etc (in truth not all of the Oxford contingent got their act together - your intrepid reporter continued to blob consistently throughout the entire match, as usual).

The third leg saw all three teams at peak performance, with Oxford/White Horse drawing against AVW etc on 8 points and North Oxon/Mid-Chilterns only just missing out with 7 points. This draw ought to have been resolved by another three-sticker, but by this time the rain had set in quite heavily and it was decided to go straight to a one-sticker between the drawn teams in the hope of settling the leg as quickly as possible. However, the one-sticker was also drawn, with a solitary point scored by each team! We then arranged a face-off between Jackie Parker (playing for Oxford) and David Roe (playing for AVW). Jackie eventually winning both the leg and the match for Oxford/White Horse.

However, the visitors from Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe did get some satisfaction (and a round of drinks at the expense of the other two teams!) from the Beer Leg,

winning by 7 points to Oxford/White Horse's 6 and North Oxon/Mid-Chilterns' 2.

Thanks once again to Noj of Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe for setting up the event, and to all at the Mason's Arms for their hospitality.



BEER FESTIVAL

A number of the branch were unable to make the Aunt Sally match (with excuses ranging from Jersey Beer Festival to go-karting), so a Friday night session was arranged.

The abiding memory of that Friday is of rain. Lots of it. Torrential, one could say! There was water everywhere but it didn't seem to keep people away as the place was heaving by 9 o'clock.

There were about 30 beers on, and 5 ciders, and all were flowing well. Andy had a good selection of championship winning beers, including 3 barrels of Triple F Moondance - a good plan as 2 of the barrels were emptied on the Friday. My eyes lit up on seeing Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild, but on trying, our group all agreed it was not on top form for some reason. Still, there were plenty more to try and we all found beers to suit our varied tastes.

Photos at:

<http://masonsquarry.co.uk/~wsn/page3.html>

It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale

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 or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

Your Details

Applications will be processed within 21 days

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 ☐ £22 ☐

Joint Membership (Partner at the same address)

£25 ☐ £27 ☐

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 Mem Form 0108

Signed Date

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



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



Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To the Manager Bank or Building Society

Address

Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder

Bank or Building Society Account Number

Branch Sort Code

Reference Number

Originator's Identification Number 9 2 6 1 2 9

FOR CAMRA OFFICIAL USE ONLY This is not part of the instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Membership Number

Name Postcode

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay CAMRA Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards

ensured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with CAMRA and, if

so will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s) Date

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

The Direct Debit Guarantee

This Guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer.

* This Guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme.

The efficiency and security of the Scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society.

* If the amount to be paid or the payment date change CAMRA will notify you 10 working days in advance

of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed.

* If an error is made by CAMRA or your Bank or Building Society, you are guaranteed a full and immediate

refund from your branch of the amount paid.

* You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a

copy of your letter to us.

6X equality



Every drop of 6X is Handmade in Devizes and brewed especially to suit both half and pint glasses at a pub near you.

Wet 'n' Worcester

Helene Augar

A few of us from the Oxford branch took a well deserved day off work to visit the 9 ¾ Worcester Beer, Cider and Perry Festival on Friday 15th May 2008. The ¾ is an acknowledgement of the loss of the 9th annual festival last year due to the venue being under several feet of flood water. The festival was back this year, held in an enormous marquee in the centre of the Worcester Race Course, and although the floods of last year held off the going was still very soft!

There were over 200 real ales, ciders and perries along with an interesting selection of fruit and vegetable wines including carrot, pumpkin and banana to get the taste buds excited. The main marquee held the beers, merchandise and membership stands, with an annexe especially for the ciders, perries and wines. There was another annexe with a stage area for entertainment. Plenty of seating was dotted around inside all the parts of the marquee and outside near the food outlets. The festival organisers were promoting the national CAMRA campaign of LocAle, with all beers coming from within a 30 mile radius bearing the LocAle logo on the barrels.

We were lucky enough to attend a day on with an alcoholic "Olympics", with no less than 4 competitions being held. The first of these was the West Midlands Mild of the year competition, and the selection of stouts, porters and mild beers at the festival was so good, this member didn't

drink anything else! The results were: Bronze medal to Hobsons – Mild; in Silver place was Church End – Gravediggers; and in Gold medal position was Highgate – Dark Mild. My personal favourite of these is the Hobsons, but I have to say I am always a little disappointed when the wonderful Sarah Hughes – Dark Ruby Mild (pictured) is available but left out of contention.



We then heard the results of the West Midlands Cider and Perry of the year competitions. The Cider picking up 3rd place was Dunketons – Medium, 2nd place went to Wilkins and the Gold medal winner was Newton Court – Medium. The results for the Perry of the year competition were Gold to Olivers and Silver to Malvern Magic. There was no Bronze medal awarded this year.

The final competition we were treated to was a rather less conventional CAMRA affair - a beer brewing competition between the BBC's Oz Clarke and James May. Following the success of their Big Wine Adventure television series and

book, they were at the festival to film the results of their attempts to brew bottled conditioned beers for another BBC programme due to be broadcast later this year.



Brett Laniosh, National Beer Scoring Scheme Coordinator and CAMRA Director chaired a tasting panel, sitting on the stage in the entertainment annexe. This was a highly competitive event, with Phil from Reading CAMRA challenging me to a bet over who would win, with the loser having to buy the winner their next drink. I was rather grateful when he said he thought "Captain Slow" (James May) would win as I knew Oz is something of a wine connoisseur and surely this would do him some favours when it came to brewing beer. The panel found it rather hard to judge the beers with both really needing another couple of weeks' conditioning and it ended up being a very tight score. I am pleased to report I was the winner of a free drink, with James May receiving 128 points and Oz Clarke just pipping him to the top spot with 129.

It was really nice to see a good turn out from all our surrounding branches which led to a great atmosphere.

The Perfect Pub - an apology



Rob Walters

When I wrote the article on 'The Death of the Oxford Pub' for the drinker I defined my dream pub like this: It's a pub which is always warm in winter, with a characterful personality behind the bar and many more in front. Naturally it has a range of well-kept, constantly changing real ales, a smoking room (!), darts, pool and other games, an Aunt Sally team, locals who can answer questions on any topic without reference to the Internet, regular draws particularly at Christmas, music nights with a variety of live performances in the function room, small scale commerce in the public bar (particularly the supply of garden produce) and so on – and on. There are no pubs in Oxford that exactly fit the bill – but one that comes pretty near is the Chester Arms just off the Iffley Road. I go there often and would be there more often if it were not the other side of town from where I currently live.

Imagine then my horror to read the anonymous letter in the last Drinker. It explained that John and his family who run the Chester had also taken on the Marlborough House after the long term tenants had departed. And I said in my article that none of the tenants who followed stayed long enough to establish a presence! Well I was wrong, as the letter points out John and his family had a good shot at making a go of the Marlborough and my comments should only refer to the period following the end of their tenancy.

Mortified by the letter I went to the Chester to apologise in person and to sink a delicious pint of Deuchars). My apology was received very graciously and I was invited to the music session on the following night. It's a great pub – a local with the power to draw in people from all over Oxford – long may it continue.

Meanwhile the letter asked if anyone wanted to take over the Marlborough. Hmm. We now know from the Publican magazine that the Marlborough was one of over 1200 pubs to close last year, nearly double the number of the previous year. I thought of this as I cycled out to the Chester and then on to the Red Lion in Old Marston (for a session of live music). Along the way I saw a good number of pubs that were almost empty – and that was a Friday night, it's scary.

Meanwhile there is light on the horizon – four candles are illuminating George Street, and an impressive number of handpumps face you as you enter this new Wetherspoons pub. Is cheaper beer in large city pubs the answer to the death of our local boozers? Or will those fork handles be used to bury more of our pubs?

inn and around oxford



Darren and Beth Payne, the managers at the **Eagle and Child** since April, are engaged to be married in October. They joined Mitchells and Butlers 2 years ago and are both very passionate about the business and the pub. They are looking forward to becoming part of the Oxford pub and real ale scene, and plan to take the pub forward offering customers the best choice in food, wine, ale and excellent customer service.

The Wetherspoon pub in the Cowley Centre - the **William**

Morris - has a new manager, yet again! His name is Dave Gardner and we wish him well.

The **Jack Russell** in Marston now plays host to an electric blues jam or open mic session on alternate Thursdays. They also have a music quiz on Tuesdays and pub quiz on Wednesday. A group of us recently spent a very pleasant evening there at an open mic session and I (ed.) even got the chance to play the tambourine! Live music every Saturday night too.

Vale Brewery are now producing Hadda's Autumn Ale at 4.5%. This is a copper coloured premium ale and is available at The Royal Oak in Oakley and The Hope Pole in Aylesbury.

The **Brakspear Oxford Ale Trail** runs for 3 months from October 1st and covers 13 city centre pubs. Trail 'maps' are available from all 13 pubs - free t-shirt when you get 6 stamps, free pint when you get all 13. Details at www.brakspear-beers.co.uk and our website.

Letter to branch & response



"I am writing to you with some dismay over an advert placed in the August/September publication of 'The Oxford Drinker'. I write with reference to an advert on page 5 regarding the Vale Brewery and their encouragement for people drinking at home instead of supporting local pubs.

I have always been an avid reader of 'The Oxford Drinker' and always enjoy your write ups etc, but I can't understand you printing this advert when your organisation is meant to be campaigning to keep the traditional great British pub alive.

As an ex publican who was recently declared bankrupt, I feel very strongly about this issue as it is hard enough for us to make a penny, let alone a pound.

I look forward to your reply and hearing what your members have to say about this issue."

The Campaign for Real Ale is supportive of all aspects of real ale. The Oxford Drinker is sorry to hear about your difficulties and understands your concerns. Oxford CAMRA has great sympathy for licensees who are struggling to keep their heads above water at the moment, and we would and do of course encourage people to use and enjoy their local pubs. CAMRA campaigns to support pubs and oppose closures, and to encourage governments and other authorities to introduce measures to make the pub trade a more sustainable business.

Nevertheless, CAMRA has also always supported the breweries, without whom there would be no beer to drink. As a rule, the Oxford Drinker does not discriminate against anyone when it comes to advertising. We welcome adverts from pubs, brewers and off licences alike, as long as they sell real ale, whether it be on draught or in a bottle. As

advocates of consumer choice, we would like to encourage those who choose to drink at home (for whatever reason) to consider drinking real ale rather than the cheap, pasteurised fizz that is so often peddled cheaply by the supermarkets.

The same issue of our magazine contained adverts for Ascot beer festival, which could be argued took people away from the pub for a few days, and also for Wychwood Hobgoblin, which has had tremendous success as a bottle beer as well as in the cask form. Vale are brewers and wholesalers, and were using their advert to promote some of these strands of their business, in what must be a difficult climate for them to operate too.

HAVE YOUR SAY

We welcome comments from members of our community on this or other aspects of real ale. If you have something to say please send your comments to the Editor. Details on page 22.

Good Beer Guide Abingdon



The good news of being included in the Good Beer Guide 2009 was delivered to the Brewery Tap pub in Abingdon in September - the third consecutive year the pub has made it into the Guide. It is also the only Abingdon pub which is in the Guide, and the licensee Matt, his wife J.D., and their staff (pictured) were delighted with the news.

In order to be included in the Guide, pubs must serve consistently good beer with the Brewery Tap indeed does. It is

a Greene King pub so they are limited in the range of real ales they can offer. However, they always have 4 beers on at any time and at the time of the presentation they had Everards Tiger, Hardy's and Hason's Bitter, Morlands Original and Titanic White Star. There are two other beers waiting to come on in the next few weeks from Davenport's and Tribute.

In addition to serving very good quality beer, the pub now offers 3 en-suite rooms

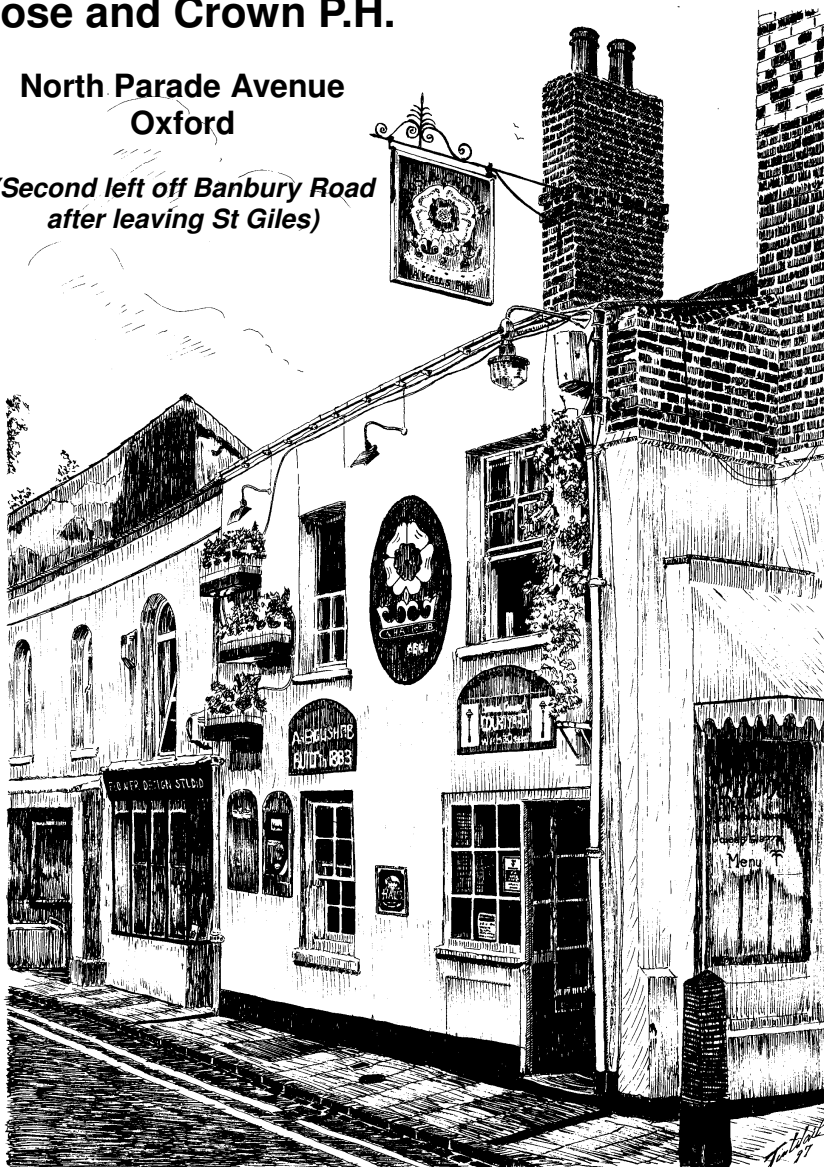
which have been added this year, and their Sunday rib roasts are always a sell-out and bookings are taken in advance.



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

Oxford

Oxford - Oxford's premier series of ceilidhs - relaunches on Saturday 11th October in its new home at Kennington Village Hall and is marking the welcome return of real ales to this long-running series of dances. The bar will be run by John of the Oxford CAMRA award winning General Elliott in South Hinksey. The pairing of top-notch beers and ciders, and top quality music and dancing, means that participants are in for some really cracking ceilidhs!

The monthly series of energetic barn dances starts with The Woodpecker Band, Oxfordshire favourites with a national profile. This folk rock dance band is firmly rooted in local folk traditions and they deliver infectious and irresistible tunes with electric rhythm. Gordon Potts is calling with boundless energy and style, and an interval spot is provided by the marvellous Rockhopper Morris.

The venue is Kennington Village Hall, with a beautiful sprung floor. Just off the A34 and easily accessible on the 35 bus from Oxford.

The next dances are on Saturday 8 November - The Hosepipe Band with Andrew Swaine and Saturday 13th December - Boldwood with Fee Lock and Cat Kelly.

For more details of times and entrance fee go to www.oxfolk.org.uk or call 07866 804220 / 07515 410211



credits....

The Oxford Drinker is the newsletter of Oxford CAMRA, The Campaign for Real Ale.

The next publication will be in October 2008.

3000 copies of each one are distributed free of charge to pubs and other drinking establishments across the city and its surrounding area.

editor:

Sam French

editor@oxfordcamra.org.uk

valuable contributions have been received for this issue from:

Helene Augar, Matt Bullock, Tony Goulding, David Hill, Neil Hoggarth, Tony Perry, Rob Walters et al.

photos courtesy of:

Helene, Tony P., Neil and Sam

advertising

is available at excellent rates from:

Matt Bullock 01865 439 664

advertising@oxfordcamra.org.uk

contributions and bribes accepted by the editor at:

31 Rivermead Road

Rose Hill

Oxford

OX4 4UE

or call 07905 212318

please share this magazine with other interested people and dispose of your Drinker carefully

Don't miss a single copy of the Oxford Drinker. Why not subscribe to the Oxford Drinker? To do this, send some A5 size stamped addressed envelopes to:

Oxford Drinker, 20 Victoria Road, Abingdon OX14 1DQ

We will send you as many issues as you send envelopes

please send any pub news for inclusion to:

editor@oxfordcamra.org.uk

The views expressed in this publication are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the branch or CAMRA limited.

© Oxford CAMRA 2008

THE BUTCHERS ARMS HEADINGTON

Renowned for the quality of our Fullers Ales

Open All Day Seven Days a Week

True Value for Money Food Served 12 - 9 Daily and Sunday Roast Available

Warm Welcome Assured With Our Real Log Fire and Covered Heated Patio -
Available to Book for Parties All Year Round

Sunday Night Quiz from 9pm

Up to £100 Jackpot to be Won + Other Prizes

Tuesday Night Bingo and Saturday Night Karaoke

Roy and James, 5 Wilberforce Street, Headington, Oxford OX3 7AN

Past the shark, first left, first right

And it is available in abundance at
The Old Bookbinders Ale House
October Festival 2008
Oct 23rd - 26th

And on the Eighth Day
God created Ale and
He saw it was good



The Prince of Wales

Church Way, Iffley Village, Oxford OX4 4UE

Open all day every day

Lunches 12 - 3, Evening Meals 6 - 9,

Food All Day Sunday

½ portions available

All Beers Now Cask Marque

Guest Beers, Good Wine and Good Atmosphere

All Customers Welcome, New and Old

For bookings contact Peter 01865 778 554 / 07990 630793

The Masons Arms

2 Quarry School Place

Headington

Oxford

01865764579

Brains Rev James 4.5%

Caledonian Deuchars IPA 3.7%

West Berkshire Good Old Boy 4.0%

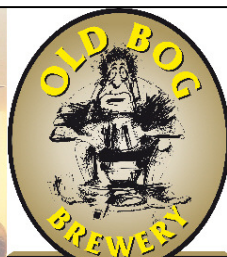
Old Bog Beers

Ever Changing Guests

Real Cider on the Hand Pump

Oxford CAMRA pub of the Year 2004 & 2005

www.masonsquarry.co.uk



**SOMETHINGS
BREWING...**



the Oxford Drinker

is published by Nuffield Press, Abingdon