



CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE

ISSUE 58  
October - November 2009



# the Oxford Drinker

## Oxford Beer Festival

This year the Oxford CAMRA branch's beer festival returns to the Town Hall, St Aldates, for the 12<sup>th</sup> year running. It opens at 5pm on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October and the festival runs on to Saturday evening, 17<sup>th</sup>. This year there will be 140 different beers available, with 40 of the popular ones being duplicated, to be ready for Saturday morning. This ought to ensure a good supply for visitors on Saturday with 10 more available than last year.

In addition to cask ales, the festival will also feature a range of bottled beers, plus cider and perry straight from the keg. Food will be available at all sessions which run from 5pm to 11pm on Thursday, 11am to 11pm on Friday, and 11am to "whenever the beer runs out" on Saturday.

Experience shows that the beer is usually running out by about 8pm on Saturday so get there early and, when planning a visit to the 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 try coming during the day on either Friday or Saturday.

Entrance fee to the festival is £2 (£1 for card carrying CAMRA members). You'll need to hire a glass for £2 - 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. As in previous years, there will a commemorative glass for the festival.

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.

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winning beers  
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breweries  
beers from all  
the local  
breweries  
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and perries  
British bottle  
conditioned  
beers**

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## New Oxford CAMRA committee

Following the September AGM, the new committee is as follows:

**Chairman:** Tony Perry

**Vice-Chairman and Press Officer:**

Matt Bullock

**Secretary & Branch Contact:** Steve Lawrence

**Treasurer:** Grahame Allen

**Membership Secretary:** Helene Augar

**Pubs Officer:** Tony Goulding

**Social Secretary:** Neil Hoggarth

**Public Transport Officer:** John Mackie

**Branch Young Members Contact:**

Caroline Wingate

See [www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/contact.php](http://www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/contact.php)  
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## Oxford Drinker Editor

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# Abingdon crawl 3



Neil Hoggarth

On Saturday 22 August a number of us got together to undertake the third and final of our Abingdon pub survey crawls (the first 2 outings were written up in issues 56 and 57). This is the first comprehensive survey of Abingdon that the branch has done since 2005 (appearing in issues 34, 35 and 36).

The 2005 surveys were done not long after the Oxford branch had taken over responsibility for Abingdon from the Vale of the White Horse branch, and were largely a case of a group of Oxford people coming down to discover Abingdon. The situation in 2009 is very different, as we have a number of very active Abingdon members who attend branch meetings and social events. As with the previous two crawls, local Abingdon members made up most of the survey party. It was a very nice day (again - we have been very fortunate with the weather on these outings, despite what people might say about the summer of

2009 in general) and we did all of our day's drinking in the gardens, patios and courtyards outside the pubs. In many places we were accompanied by wasps that seemed to have a bit of taste for real beer and real cider.

## Old Anchor Inn, St Helen's Wharf

The Anchor is a very pretty, traditional Thames-side pub, just downstream from the Abingdon Bridge. The front is nicely decorated with hanging baskets, and the interior is made up of a main bar and several snugs. We sat out in the courtyard. The pub was doing busy lunch-time trade, and the lady who appeared to be running the bar and serving out the food orders on her own was rushed off her feet! The service was very pleasant and friendly despite this. The pub is a Greene King tenancy, and the beers on offer were GK IPA, Morland Original, and Hardy and Hanson Olde Trip (which are all GK beers brewed in Bury St

Edmunds - Morland and Hardy and Hanson breweries have been taken over and closed by GK). Between us we tried all the beers. I had the Morland Original and thought that it was fine, which matched the general consensus of the group.

## Saxton Arms

The Saxton had no real ale when we visited, so we didn't stop. I am told that it does sometimes have Morland Original available.



## Midget, Preston Rd

The Midget is a big estate pub, built around 1970. The interior is a single large bar with comfy leather sofas at one end and pool tables at the other. Televised sport seems to be an important component, with lots of large screens around showing Sky Sports. There are even mini-TV monitors in the Gents toilets (1 per urinal) so that you don't

miss any aspect of the match when going to answer the call of nature! There are 2 substantial areas of decking for outside drinking and we made use of one of these. The beers were GK St Edmunds, Morland Original, and Hardy and Hansons Olde Trip. Most of us went for the St Edmunds and judged it to be rather nice. The beer was in good condition, and the general feeling is that St Edmunds is one of the better GK beers from a flavour point of view, with a good floral and citric hop character.

### **Ock Mill, Marcham Rd**

The Ock Mill is a Beefeater restaurant, and the Abingdon people who drew up the itinerary had not originally included it, as it didn't occur to them as "a pub". I suggested adding it: there is a bar, there are tables outside for drinkers to sit, and they have a blackboard out on the pavement inviting people to "Try our Real Ales", so they obviously expect to cater to drinkers as well as diners and belongs in a comprehensive survey of the pubs. However, I

must confess that I had a reason for wanting to visit beyond a desire for a complete survey: morbid curiosity. In Oxford Drinker 36 the place was absolutely slated. In general we try to find something positive or encouraging about a pub, even if it isn't really to our taste.

The 2005 review scores the Ock Mill zero out of a possible 5 stars, and Matt Bullock, the editor at the time, asked (on the front cover!) "Is this the worst pub we've ever visited on an Oxford Drinker Crawl?" The criticism mostly focused on the attitude of the staff: "The 2 bar staff were more interested in their own conversation than they were in serving us and during our stay numerous people came in and all had to wait a long time to be served or show to a seat in the restaurant". I wasn't on the 2005 survey trip that visited the Ock Mill, so I wanted to experience the

place for myself and see whether things had improved.

The good news: I didn't think on this visit that the staff were lax or indifferent to the customers; they were trying their best to do their job and be helpful. The bad news: the service was still staggeringly slow. There were 3 or 4 people behind the bar, but they were largely young and inexperienced. They had problems operating the tills and didn't know how to work the coffee machine. The only person who did know the ropes had to keep stopping what she was doing to help or advise the others. On a quiet period during mid-afternoon there was a queue of 4 or 5 small groups snaking away from the bar, even before our own sizeable group turned up. It took us in excess of 10 minutes to get served and half our party had given up and headed off to the next pub by the time we got as far as ordering drinks. Those of us who did wait eventually had 3 hand-pulled beers to choose from: Adnams



Bitter, Brains Best Bitter, and Shepherd Neame Spitfire. We bought our beers and retreated to the tables outside. I found my Adnams to be rather average and nondescript. Another member of the party commented that the Spitfire was not very good. So I think we have a rather mixed result: an improvement on 2005, but still very much a "must try harder" rating. Some honest advice to the management of the Ock Mill: mentioning the real ale in your kerbside advertising is a good move and as one of relatively few outlets in Abingdon that are free of a GK tie you should be able to do well out of beer sales, but you need to do a better job of staff training (and do less of it "on the job" while customers are waiting!), and you should probably concentrate on doing 1 or 2 cask beers in top condition rather than serving three with insufficient turn-over to keep them fresh - if the quality goes up then so will consumption and once the level of demand justifies 3 beers then you can put the other hand-pump back into action.

### White Horse, Ock St

The White Horse is a GK managed house, but is allowed a much larger choice of guest beers than is usual. There were three GK real ales on offer when we visited (Greene King IPA, Morland Original, Hardy and Hanson Olde Trip) and 3 guests (Brewdog Physics, Brewster's Decadence, and Piddle Express). There were also two real ciders: Moles Black Rat and Weston Old Rosie). The interior used to have a traditional two room layout but the pub has been opened up into a single room, as is the modern style. It features a few TV screens for those who want them, though these are not overly intrusive. I was pleased to see that the pub had a pinball table - pinball used to be quite common in pubs "when I were a lad", but you rarely see it anymore. I didn't get a chance to play, but that gives me an excuse to revisit the pub sometime soon!

The exterior still looks very traditional, and beer garden is extremely well kept and attractive.

This was the only outside drinking that we did where we seem not to have been pestered by wasps, though this might have something to do with the time of day that we visited rather than being an intrinsic advantage of the pub! I sampled the Physics and the Piddle, and thought both to be in



very good form. The beer and cider was judged to be in good condition in general. We poked gentle fun at the spurious apostrophes on the "Ladie's" and "Gent's" toilets, and then reluctantly moved on.



### Cross Keys, Ock St

The Cross Keys is a "basic boozer"/sports bar kind of pub and had the football results showing on TV when we arrived. I think that this is the type of pub that probably had no "outdoors" until the arrival of the smoking



ban, but post-ban we were able to sit at the out the back, overlooking the car park, at a couple of picnic tables. When we reviewed the pub in 2005 it had no real ale, but we gave a mention to the friendly staff. The staff still seem welcoming, but the big news is that they now have 3 hand-pumps to serve from. The beers on sale were Morland Original, Batemans XXXB and Everards Tiger. Unfortunately, the beers weren't in the best of nick – the Morland and the Tiger were rather average, and the Batemans was described by the one member who tried it to be "not good". It is really good to see a pub that we had previously written-off as "keg only" to be serving cask conditioned real ale, though (as with the Ock Mill) perhaps they are trying too broad a range, and would benefit from doing a couple of real

ales well rather than 3 with mixed results.

From there we moved on to the previously visited **Stocks Bar** where another of their successful beer festivals was in full swing. Kane the bar manager had recently left their employ and Tom, his assistant, who steeped into the breach promptly fell ill. However the General Manager, Mario, the Restaurant Manager Jane and the bar staff, assisted by local volunteers succeeded in putting on an excellent festival. They provided around 30 ales and 7 real ciders all in good condition, they were supported by live bands every day and everyone agreed that this was one of the best.

Tom has now been installed as bar manager and hopes to continue with the festivals and music that Abingdon (& surrounds) customers have come to enjoy. Kane is now bar manager at the **Brewery Tap** and has started looking at the beers on offer with view to serving local fare (see page 20).

The festival provided an appropriate end to a great day out for all (followed by a traditional post-beer curry for some).



We hope you have enjoyed this 3-part series of articles on Abingdon pubs - if you missed any of the previous articles they can be downloaded from the website.  
[www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/drinker.php](http://www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/drinker.php)

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# beer festival diary



Fri 2 - Sat 3 October  
**Solihull Beer Festival**  
Solihull Royal British  
Legion, Solihull  
40 beers, ciders & perrys  
[www.solihullcamra.org.uk](http://www.solihullcamra.org.uk)

Thurs 15 - Sat 17 Oct  
**Oxford Beer Festival**  
Town Hall, St Aldates,  
Oxford  
140 beers plus ciders,  
perrys & foreign beers  
[www.oxfordcamra.org.uk](http://www.oxfordcamra.org.uk)  
See front page for further  
details

Fri 16 - Sat 17 Oct  
**Bath Beer Festival**  
The Pavilion, North Parade  
Road, Bath  
70+ beers, plus ciders,  
perrys & Belgian beers  
[www.bathandborderscamra.org.uk](http://www.bathandborderscamra.org.uk)

Fri 16 - Sun 18 Oct  
**Royal Oak Beer Festival**,  
Worminghall Road, Oakley  
01844 237133

Thurs 22 - Sat 24 October  
**Turf Tavern Beer Festival**  
Turf Tavern, Bath Place,  
Oxford  
01865 243235  
[www.theturftavern.co.uk](http://www.theturftavern.co.uk)

Wed 28 Oct - Sun 15 Nov  
**Wetherspoon's Real Ale Festival**  
All J D Wetherspoon pubs  
[www.jdwetherspoon.co.uk](http://www.jdwetherspoon.co.uk)

Thurs 29 - Sat 31 Oct  
**23<sup>rd</sup> Swindon Beerex**  
Steam Museum, Kemble  
Drive, Swindon  
100 beers plus ciders &  
perrys  
[www.swindoncamra.org.uk](http://www.swindoncamra.org.uk)

Fri 30 - Sat 31 October  
**Aylesbury Beer Festival**  
Eskdale Road Community  
Centre, Stoke Mandeville  
30 beers + 4 ciders/perrys  
[www.swansupping.org.uk](http://www.swansupping.org.uk)

Fri 30 Oct - Sunday 1 Nov  
**Queen's Head Beer Festival**  
Queen's Head, Church  
Road, Horspath  
01865 875567  
[www.thequeensheadhorspath.co.uk](http://www.thequeensheadhorspath.co.uk)

13 - 15 Nov  
**The Hope Pole Inn**  
83 Bicester Road,  
Aylesbury  
Celebration of the best of  
British beers  
[www.hop-pole.co.uk](http://www.hop-pole.co.uk)

Fri 20 - Sat 21 Nov  
**Wantage Beer Festival**  
Masonic Hall, Alfred Street,  
Wantage  
30 beers, plus ciders &  
perrys  
[www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk](http://www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk)

Sat 21 Nov  
**Haddenham Winterfest**  
Tithe Barn, Manor Farm,  
Haddenham  
[www.haddenham-beer-festival.co.uk](http://www.haddenham-beer-festival.co.uk)

Tues 1 - Sat 5 Dec  
**Pigs Ear Beer and Cider Festival**  
Ocean, 270 Mare Street,  
London  
100+ beers  
[www.pigsear.org.uk](http://www.pigsear.org.uk)

Fri 4 - Sun 6 Dec  
**The Brewery Tap's Beer, Cider & Sausage Festival**  
40/42 Ock Street, Abingdon  
[www.thebrewerytap.net](http://www.thebrewerytap.net)  
See back page for details

Tues 8 - Sat 12 Dec  
**Winter Beer Festival**  
Far from the Madding  
Crowd, Friars Entry, Oxford  
01865 240900  
[www.maddingcrowd.co.uk](http://www.maddingcrowd.co.uk)

19 - 21 February 2010  
**Cricketer's Arms Beer & Sausage Festival**  
Cricketer's Arms,  
Littleworth.  
[www.cricketers-arms.co.uk](http://www.cricketers-arms.co.uk)

For further details of the festivals shown  
and more, and updates  
on events, please visit our website at  
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# Oxford Brewers Group

Tim Hampson



My heart sank when I read the email: "Tim, just to remind you that you agreed to join us at our next meeting. Kind regards Mike Lord". I had been invited to attend a meeting of the Oxford Brewers Group. Members of the group describe themselves as enthusiastic home brewers. I remembered my own feeble efforts at trying to turn the ingredients of beer bought as a home brewing kit from a high street store. Disastrous would be too good a word.

The group was holding its third taste and swap session, which is now an annual event, where members, meet to share, drink and enthuse about beer. So on a Saturday afternoon I found myself in a Scout Hall in East Oxford. Normally, members of the group set themselves a brewing challenge – in this case a common grist which included some Maris Otter Pale Ale malt, some Crystal and wheat malts.

Within moments I was won over – as each brewer lead a brief tasting of their beer. This was no homage to the Boots Home brew kit. It was brewing at its most exciting and creative. It was brewing that showed just some of the wide palate of colours, flavours, aromas and tastes can be produced from similar recipes. Some used Styrian hops, others Cascade, some chose Sovereign and Northern Brewer were included too. The colours of the beers went from soft yellows to dark as night stouts – well several were quite liberal with their interpretation of what could be used in the grist. And the strengths went from the easy drinking and not very strong to easy drinking but much stronger.

Each brewer had also bought a beer from their portfolio of current brews. I

quickly discovered many of these beers were one-off brews that couldn't be easily recreated. They were brewed for the sheer exuberance and enthusiasm for making something different. Eric had brewed a dry stout – called Stout Stanley's not so Bitter Stout. As smooth as velvet and the equal if not better than many commercial brews, it was equalled by his American Pale Ale, called Barley Ben's Pale Ale.

The grist was a cocktail of malts – pale, Maris Otter, Munich, Vienna, wheat and roasted barley. The hops were Amarillo Gold, Centennial and Cascade – providing marvellous lemon citrus and floral notes.

Will had made an outstanding brown beer to which Brettanomyces yeast had been added, producing marvellous, soaring Lambic style flavours. Liam produced a Wheaty Pale ale and a mouth warming Chocolate Stout.

*continued page 11*

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# Old Anchor Inn Festival



Graham Hillsdon

## **The Old Anchor Inn Beer Festival, Abingdon, 16 - 19 July**

This festival was held even though the landlord, Paul White, had been taken seriously ill only a couple of weeks beforehand. His wife, Lesley, was left with a problem, minor in comparison to Paul's health, but a problem none the less: should she continue with the festival? Previous festivals had largely been Paul's projects: should it go ahead or be cancelled? In the end she decided to go ahead. At this point bar and cellar staff rallied round and, with a little help from the regulars, and a very successful festival was held.

The beers available were as follows:- Batemans - Middle Wicket; Batemans XXX; Thwaites - Well Well Well; Thwaites - Lancaster Bomber; Adnams - Regatta; Wells - Bombardier; Newman's - Last Lion of Britain; Everards - Tiger and Greene King -

Sundance. Ciders were Westons - Old Rosie and the excellent Mole Valley Black Rat

The beer was complemented by live music on Friday and Saturday, the Abingdon Morris Men provided the entertainment on Sunday afternoon, but I hear that they were disappointed to find, that most of the ale had been drunk by that time. Thursday is quiz night at the Anchor and the festival started a day earlier than usual to allow the participants to indulge in some real ale, however I cannot vouch for the accuracy of their answers, later in the evening.

On to the important part of this report: the beer. The ales chosen this time were mostly lighter, lower strength, to go with the warmer weather. The biggest surprise was that the strongest one, the Newman's Last Lion (5% ABV), was the first to "call time", early on Saturday evening. Several customers returned, late on that day only to be disappointed

and many a cry of "I wish I'd had more of that on Friday" was heard. Thwaites proved to be a popular choice and the Well, Well, Well and Lancaster Bomber continued to sell well until their demise late on Saturday.

Of the remaining beers Adnams Regatta and Batemans Middle Wicket (4.4% ABV) remained steady sellers until they were no more, a number of people remarked upon the pleasant taste of the Middle Wicket. It is supposed to be spicy with a citrus follow through, however no one seemed to report that, just a good well balanced ale, after all that is all we can ask. I think that the last beers to go were Wells Bombardier, Everards Tiger and Green King Sundance which I suppose is not surprising, as these are often, available locally. It's to be expected that the more unusual brews will attract greater attention. One unexpected feature was

the slow take up on the two ciders, which have been outstanding sellers previously. However, I for one was not too disappointed as it allowed me to carry on drinking Black Rat for a good few days after the festival finished.

Overall it was a very successful venture and Lesley's earlier worries proved unfounded. I am confident that she can be persuaded to run a similar venture, sometime later in the year, hopefully by then Paul will be able to join us and "put in a shift". To all those who missed the last festival, keep your ears and eyes open for news of the next, I can recommend quality ales served by cheerful staff in a traditional pub, a rare combination in this day and age.

**The members of Oxford CAMRA wish Paul, Lesley and family all the best during this very difficult period.**



### **Continued from page 8**

Andrew likes strong beer – so his contribution was a seven per cent Bock – which could have been the envy of any Bavarian brewer. Ed contributed an interpretation of a Simmonds Bitter and a stunning Bombay IPA.

So there I was within a mile of Brookes University, now the home of the Michael Jackson library (the beer writer), and I remembered that Michael had travelled the world to discover some of the greatest brews and because of his work and the lead shown by a generation of new brewers in the USA, Denmark and Italy I now had had the privilege of drinking beers from a new wave of creative brewers and all within walking distance of my home.

The Oxford Brewers Group is informal and is open to anyone - amateur or professional - who values quality and variety. Joining the group is easy - just turn up to a meeting or sign up for their email list. There's no fee or qualification required.

The group has no committee and is self organising so members make whatever contribution suits them. And should you ever get an email from Mike Lord – don't sigh at the thought of home brewers – just hope it is an invite to their next swap and taste day.

*This article was written by Tim Hampson about his experience of the Oxford Brewer's group recent taste and swap event. It was originally published as the lead article in the Guild of Beer Writers July 2009 newsletter, and is also being published in Brewer's Contact (the UK Craft Brewing Association's magazine).*

*Tim Hampson is the chairman of the British Guild of Beer Writers, is a regular writer for Camra's What's Brewing and is author or contributor of many top selling books about beer such as 'Eyewitness Companion Guide to Beer', 'The Beer Book' and 'Room at the Inn'. Other Publications include The Weekend Telegraph, Morning Advertiser, Brewers Guardian, Pub Business, The Guardian, The Independent, and American Brewer. He lives in Oxford.*

# Regional Aunt Sally

David Hill



On Saturday 5th September the **Masons Arms, Headington Quarry**, hosted the 2nd day of its 8th annual beer festival. It also hosted the 4th CAMRA Central Southern region Aunt Sally match. This competition began 3 years ago as challenge between our local branch and our eastern neighbours from Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe. Subsequent years have seen members of other branches in the region turn up to join in the fun and the number of teams and their composition are improvised on the day. This year a turn up of 11 from 3 Oxon branches neatly matched the 10 from 2 Bucks branches plus a lone Berks member, and this lead to an 11-a-side Oxon vs Bucks/Berks competition.

For anyone unfamiliar with the game; Aunt Sally is an outdoor pub game, traditional to Oxfordshire and surrounding counties, which involves throwing wooden sticks at a small wooden skittle known as a "dolly" perched on top

of a 2½ foot high pole. The scores we achieved, as ever, were low by normal Aunt Sally standards. In fact we managed to score even less than in previous years. Last year's innovation of having it on the same weekend as the pub beer festival didn't help matters then and this year's event also followed an official CAMRA beer tasting. A number of the throwers were involved in the tasting and this perhaps somewhat affected their throwing. The scoring started off badly and proceeded to get worse as the match and the beer festival continued together through the afternoon.

The Oxfordshire team threw first, each player throwing 6 sticks, and from these 66 throws we managed a 1st leg score of 7. Tension mounted as the Bucks/Berks side throwing second seemed to have this total well within their sights with a number of their early throwers

managing a hit of the dolly and one of them managing 2!

However, most of their later players blopped (technical Aunt Sally term for someone failing to displace the dolly with all 6 sticks) and they finished with 6 giving us a narrow win. The 2nd leg was equally thrilling and equally close with Bucks/Berks scoring 5 in reply to Oxon's 6.

As Oxon were then leading 2-0 in a 3 leg match, and with time and some of the festival beers running out, it was decided to forgo the 3rd leg and go straight to the beer leg: a final leg which does not count towards the match but after which



each member of the losing team buys their opposite number in the winning side a beer. In this leg we showed our true metal and our superiority over the opposition with a 2 point winning margin, the score being 6-4.

Thus ended an enjoyable and for the spectators an amusing event, and with sticks flying everywhere a somewhat dangerous one. It was only left for us to retire to the beer room and support our local festival.

Thanks to everyone who turned up as players or spectators and to the Masons for hosting us incompetents once again.

The beer festival itself was another great event, as previous years, and this year we were also blessed with great weather. There was a great mix of beers and ciders along with outdoor pig roast and BBQs over the period. As mentioned, the festival also afforded the opportunity for a CAMRA



beer tasting panel to meet and assess some of the Old Bog brewery beers. Data collected by the tasting panels is used for tasting notes in the brewery section of the Good Beer Guide and nominations for the Champion Beer of Britain.

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\* For non Direct Debit prices, Young Member and concessionary rates please visit [www.camra.org.uk/joinus](http://www.camra.org.uk/joinus)

## credits....

The Oxford Drinker is the newsletter of Oxford CAMRA, The Campaign for Real Ale. The next publication will be in May 2009.

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

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Ray Borrett, Dave Cogdell, Tony Goulding, Neil Hoggarth, Richard Queralt et al.

photos courtesy of:

Dan McHugh, Dave and Stuart Bull

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at excellent rates from:

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It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale

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Complete the Direct Debit form below and you will receive three months membership free and a fantastic discount on your membership subscription. Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk) or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

## Your Details

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

Forename(s) .....

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

Address .....

Postcode .....

Email address .....

Tel No (s) .....

## Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

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

Forename(s) .....

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

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

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

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

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

I enclose a cheque for .....

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

Applications will be processed within 21 days



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

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

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Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder (s)

Bank or Building Society Account Number

Branch Sort Code

Reference Number

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

Membership Number

Name

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detached and retained by the payer

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Save money by paying by Direct Debit



# what's on



**Monday 5th October**  
**7.30pm**

**Branch Meeting**

White Hart, 126  
Godstow Road,  
Wolvercote, OX2 8PQ

**Wednesday 14th Oct**  
**Set-up day for Oxford**  
**Beer Festival**

Festival open to the  
public Thursday evening,  
all day Friday, Saturday  
until 8pm.

**Tuesday 3rd November**  
**7.30pm**

**Branch Meeting**

Kite Inn, 68-69 Mill  
Street, Oxford, OX2 0AL.

**Saturday 14th Nov**  
**1pm**

**Regional Meeting**

Mason's Arms,  
Headington Quarry,  
Oxford, OX3 8LH

**Saturday 28th Nov**  
**Daytime**

**Black Country Mini-bus**  
**trip**

Cost will be in the region  
of £15. A £10 deposit  
secures a seat:  
remainder payable on  
the day. Names to Matt  
Bullock ASAP - seats are  
selling fast.  
press@oxfordcamra.org.uk

## Around the county

Tony Goulding

The village of Bampton  
used to have 8 pubs 12  
years ago but recently a  
visit found just 4 - as we  
say use them or lose  
them. **The Elephant and**  
**Castle**, now a Greene  
King house, was found  
to be comfortable  
following a recent refit  
and friendly when  
ordering the 3 beers on  
tap – IPA, Old Trip and a  
seasonal were all in  
good condition. The pub  
was busy due to Aunt  
Sally matches.

Next pub on the tour,

**The Talbot**, was also  
very busy with Aunt Sally  
but again a friendly  
welcome was had. This  
old building was serving  
Brakspear Bitter and  
Fullers London Pride  
again in good condition.

Almost next door another  
Punch Taverns, and  
once Bampton's top pub,  
is **The Romany**. This old  
pub, for some years a  
good beer guide entry,  
used to be famous for  
well kept and rare  
Donnington beers. Now  
serving Brakspear Bitter

## useful camra contacts

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www.camra.org.uk

Oxford Trading Standards  
01865 815000

in good order, the  
Romany needs better  
fortunes.

The last and the best was our next visit. **The Morris Clown** a former Courage house is now a thriving and friendly free house. This well run pub serves no food just good quality beer with, on the night, Brakspear Oxford Gold, Wizard Druids Fluid and West Berks Good Old Boy. The Morris Clown is a Good Beer Guide regular and the visit of landlords' gang at the Oxford Beer Festival is a legendry event.

The Abingdon Road pub scene is now a pale shadow of its former glory. **The Fox and Hounds**, now closed for 3 years and owned by greedy Tesco, looks very sad and down at heel.

The first pub inbound to the city is **The Duke of Monmouth**, a former Halls and Marstons house now owned by Greene King. This large one roomed pub now has a Swiss food theme and still retains a locals' following. Beers in good form on the night were the usual Greene King IPA Abbot Ale and a seasonal, Sundance.

With all pubs in the side

streets now closed it's a fair walk to **The Folly Bridge**, a former Morrells house now well run by Wadworths. On this visit the pub was busy with darts and many people were enjoying the outside patio, the weather being fine. The beers - 6X, Henrys IPA and a seasonal - were all in good order.

Yes, that's it, just the 2 pubs, so over Folly Bridge to **The Head of the River** in Saint Aldates, converted over 20 years ago by Halls from a former riverside warehouse. Now very well run by Fullers this large spacious food factory is a magnet for students and tourists alike. The beers in good condition were London Pride, ESB, a seasonal and Gales HSB.

Opposite the Police Station, **The Saint Aldates Tavern**, a former Morlands pub originally named The Apollo, is now a restaurant.

Opposite the Town Hall, the **Old Tom**, once Oxford's best local in the city centre and very well run by

Morrells (in the good beer guide for countless years) is now just another Greene King pub serving IPA along with good Thai food.

Almost next door, the now **Saint Aldates Tavern** was originally the Courage-owned Bulldog. In later years the pub was refitted and firmly run for Wychwood by "big Andy", who's beer quality was never disputed as the Hobgoblin. Following the sale of the pub to a small company, Pubs and Bars, the Aldates led a quiet life until recently when a revival of fortunes has seen Wizard Ales on sale in good condition along with other guest beers.

*Since writing this piece, the **Berkshire House**, which was damaged by fire in March, has been completely refurbished and reopened as the **Crooked Pot**. It is owned by Greene King but leased to management company, Blue Bear, who also relaunched the **White House**, Botley, July. On visiting 2 Brakspear beers were available on handpump.*

# Inn and around



On Friday 11th September, the local branch of CAMRA gathered at **The Eagle Tavern**, in Witney, to present the country pub of West Oxfordshire award to pub landlord Ian and his staff.



The Eagle fought off some very stiff competition from 4 other pubs to win the award now in its 5th year. As well as serving beer in excellent condition, the Eagle promotes a local community pub atmosphere in the centre of a busy county town. This tidy but sprawling tavern is welcoming to all, with staff serving good food one minute and taking part in live music the next. With the super support of Hook Norton Brewery behind them, the Eagle on that Friday was very busy with CAMRA members, Ian's friends, Hook Norton's MD James Clark and staff, all enjoying what

has made the pub this years winner. Previous to his years at the Eagle, Ian had been the landlord at the Red Lion opposite for many years, not to mention his years following his father as he ran pubs for most of his life.

The July Branch Meeting was at the **Nags Head, Abingdon**. It is now run by Punch and the new managers, Rob and Kim, have built up the trade well since taking over at the latter part of last year. More importantly they are now regularly serving 4 cask ales. On tap at our visit was Morrissey: Pride of Pubs, Gribben Ale: Wooden Hand Brewery, Your Bard: Hydes Brewery and Yorkshire Warrior: Cropton Brewery, all in good condition. Strong wind and spots of rain meant we were forced inside. The outlook from the conservatory and the gardens over the river to the open pastures beyond put this pub in a extremely attractive position and on fine days the garden is enjoyed by travellers by boat,

walkers on the Thames path and local townsfolk alike. Over the years the building itself has undergone many alterations taking in adjoining properties to reach its present size. This has led to a strange layout on various levels but the decor was fine and the facilities excellent. We were joined by the Mr Hemmings Morris Dancers and adjourned for a fine display of their art before returning complete the meeting.

Mark Taylor the new manager of **The Grapes**, George Street, Oxford, is a CAMRA member and has been allowed by Greene King to stock an interesting range of real ales. He has kept Abbot Ale on tap but the 4 other handpumps dispense a range of non-Greene King guests which have included beers from Wyre Piddle, Brewdog, O'Hanlons and Loddon Hullabaloo. The quality of these beers has been good and he is planning a sixth handpump for a real cider. We hope he keeps up the good work.

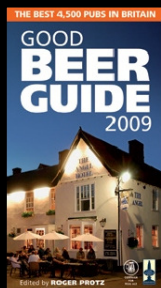
- 10 hand- pumps
- selection of bottled belgian beers
- Home-made food
- Free Wi-fi



We are  
in it !



13 St Ebbes St, Oxford  
tel : 01865 242355  
royalblenheim@live.co.uk  
www.whitehorsebrewery.com



## The Masons Arms

2 Quarry School Place, Headington Oxford  
01865764579

Oxford CAMRA Pub of the Year 2004 & 2005

www.masonsquarry.co.uk



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Cider Menu

Ever Changing Guest Beers

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Brains Rev James 4.5%

West Berkshire Good Old Boy 4.0%  
and

New to the bar in 2009

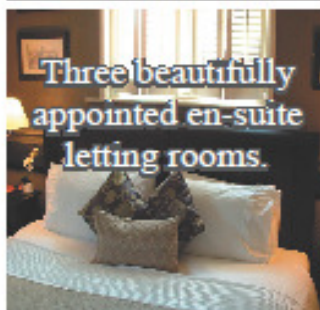
**HARVIESTOUN**

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4th, 5th & 6th September 2009  
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## The Brewery Tap Abingdon



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### ABOUT OUR PUB.

The Tap is open every day with lunch served from noon. Our food is always freshly prepared using the best local ingredients we can find and we are very proud of our daily specials. We are in the 'Good Beer Guide' for the fourth consecutive year and have just been accepted into Greene King's exclusive 'Head Brewers Club'. As well as our love for cask ales, we also have 5 draught lagers, an extensive wine menu and 'bean-to-cup' coffee.

***SUNDAY ROAST IS BACK*** starting October 4th and the rear courtyard now has an outdoor heater. *Brrrrr!*



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**the Oxford Drinker**  
is published by Joshua Horgan, Oxford