



Free

(Please take a copy, read it and pass it on)



Oxford CAMRA Pubs of the Year 2011

Pages 5 & 6

On Tour in Jericho

Page 14

Page 14

Pages 5 & 6

*'The church is near but the road is icy.
The pub is far away but I will walk carefully'*

PROVERBS

Winter Warmer Bike Pub Tour

Page 20

Page 20

A Day as a Brewer

Page 25

Page 25

001 TAXIS
(01865)
24 00 00
WWW.001TAXIS.COM

www.0014.org.com

Supporting



We are currently seeking **OWNER DRIVERS** with a valid Hackney Carriage Licence issued by South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, Cherwell District Council or Oxford City Council. **Please contact 001 Taxis. New Inn Yard, 108 St. Aldates, Oxford**

LUCKY 777'S
Amusements

Amusement arcade next to
001 Taxis city centre waiting room



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

Also Including the
White Horse Branch of CAMRA
www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk



Rates Reduced

24 Hours



GREAT PUB BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Punch Taverns are looking for people with the skills, passion and business acumen to take on a pub lease opportunities in your area and across the UK.

Please get in touch if you'd like to talk to a Punch representative about your aspirations and the types of pub businesses you are interested in.

We can then keep you informed about suitable opportunities.

**Your Punch Partner Relationship Manager
covering Oxfordshire and South Warwickshire
is Stuart Taylor.**

**To find out more contact Recruitment & Lettings
on: 0844 848 3264
or Email: Vicky.brown@punchtaverns.com**

www.punchpubs.co.uk



PASSIONATE ABOUT OUR PUBS



The Oxford Drinker is the newsletter of Oxford and White Horse branches of CAMRA, The Campaign for Real Ale.

5000 copies are distributed free of charge to pubs and other locations across the branch area; including Oxford, Abingdon, Witney, Faringdon, Eynsham, Kidlington, Bampton and Wantage.

This newsletter is also available electronically in PDF format at www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/drinker

Valuable contributions to this edition have been made by Matt Bullock, Neil Hoggarth, Richard Queral, Lawrence Harman, Dave Richardson, Dave Cogdell, Helene Augar and others.

The next issue will be published in **April 2012**.

Deadline for the next issue is **16th March 2012**.

To advertise, contact Johanne Green on 07766-663215 or send an email to advertising@oxfordcamra.org.uk

Send news, information and articles to Steven and Johanne Green; editor@oxfordcamra.org.uk

Printed by Leachprint, Abingdon.
www.leachprint.co.uk

The views expressed in this publication are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Oxford or White Horse branches of CAMRA, or of CAMRA Limited.

© Copyright 2011, Oxford CAMRA

Contents

Oxford Pubs of the Year 2011.....	5
Local Pub News.....	8
Vale & Aylesbury Brewing Company.....	10
The North West Frontier.....	10
Loose Cannon Brewery Members Club.....	11
Rural Campaigning Trip.....	12
On Tour in Jericho.....	14
Oxford CAMRA Branch Diary.....	16
Oxford CAMRA Branch Meeting Report.....	16
Beer Festival Diary.....	17
White Horse Branch Information.....	18
White Horse Branch Diary.....	18
Meet the Brewers - Bellingers.....	18
Desert Island Pubs.....	19
Bainton Bikes Beer Lover Rides.....	20
A Day's Brewing at Slaters.....	25
National Campaigning.....	28
Join CAMRA today.....	29
I Love Oxford Pub Tours.....	30
18th Reading Beer & Cider Festival.....	30

Welcome to the February 2012 edition of The Oxford Drinker.

Active members of Oxford CAMRA have formed a new Pub Campaigning Group to try to fight pub closures in a more organized way.

If conserving a great part of our English heritage - our pubs - the envy of other countries, lies close to your heart feel free to join the group (you don't have to be a CAMRA member) send an email to vicechair@oxfordcamra.org.uk or contact the editors.

Pubs contribute greatly to the local economy, creating jobs as well as welcome meeting places for local businesses, general networking opportunities and socializing. In principal we should oppose any pub closing, as each pub with the right management could turn out to be invaluable for the local community. An excellent example of this is the Cricketer's Arms in Littleworth. Threatened with being converted into housing it was taken over by Angie and Stuart Bull and is now a sterling example of how to run a community pub (see page 6)

The Oxford Branch covers quite a large geographic area, and to be able to visit the pubs in the more outlying areas we are planning to start a regular mini bus trip each month. We will need more people to come along to make it worth while. These trips are always enjoyable. Reading the article on page 12 will give you an idea of what they are like. The days out will be on a set Saturday every month and cost £5 for transport. The bus picks up people in Abingdon, Stratton Way by the bus stops at 10 am and at the Lamb and Flag, Oxford 10:30. Check the branch diary online or next issue of the Oxford Drinker for dates and destinations.

— **Steven & JoHanne**

Useful Contacts

Oxford Branch

Stephen Lawrence
contact@oxfordcamra.org.uk

White Horse Branch

Neil Crook: contact@whitehorsecamra.org.uk

Oxford Drinker Editors

Steven and JoHanne Green
editor@oxfordcamra.org.uk
13 Cheyney Walk, Abingdon
07766 663215

Oxford Trading Standards

01865 815000

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, 13 Cheyney Walk, Abingdon,
OX14 1HN

We will send you as many issues as you send envelopes.



ROYAL BLENHEIM



The only pub in Oxford run by
an Oxford brewery.

13 St Ebbes, Oxford, OX1 1PT
01865 242 355

www.royalblenheim.co.uk

**10% off food/drink for CAMRA
members 3pm-7pm**

The Masons Arms

2 Quarry School Place
Headington
Oxford
01865 764574

*Headingtons best choice for
Real Ale, Cider and
Bottled Beers*



*Home of
The Old Bog Brewery
And
The Headington Beer Festival*



Oxford CAMRA pub of the year
2002, 2005 & 2010



For news updates
And more
visit

www.themasonsarmshq.co.uk

Twitter
[@TheMasonsArmsHQ](https://twitter.com/TheMasonsArmsHQ)

Oxford Pubs of the Year 2011



Two branch "Pub of the Year" awards are voted for annually by the members of Oxford CAMRA:

- **Town and Village Pub of the Year:** chosen from amongst the pubs in the branch area outside of the Oxford ring-road. (Results on Page 6)
- **City Pub of the Year:** chosen from pubs within the ring-road. (Results below)

The pubs nominated are the very best in our branch and being shortlisted it is a achievement in itself. Some pubs get shortlisted year on year and even though they might not win they are fantastic pubs and deserve that recognition.

For each award, CAMRA members were invited to visit a short-list of six pubs and rank them in order of preference and are encouraged to judge the pubs on a range of criteria:

- Quality of the real ale and real cider
- community focus
- atmosphere
- support for CAMRA values
- style and decor
- service and welcome
- value for money.

This is an invitation to join a working party to discuss the voting method for Pub of the Year. Any CAMRA members, pub landlords and other interested parties are welcome to be involved as well. The time of the first meeting of the group will be put on the branch diary online.

If you are interested please email Dennis Brown at vice-chair@oxfordcamra.org.uk.

Oxford City Pub of the Year 2011



Winner of the Oxford CAMRA City Pub of the Year 2011 award is:

Far From the Madding Crowd,
Friars Entry.

A freehouse, which was also Pub of The Year in 2009. The managers, David Patalong and Lauren McGill, have an ever changing beer selection, always served in excellent condition, with one hand pump dedicated to



Dave's special, always priced at £2.80 for a pint. There are 6 hand pumps for ale and 2 dispensing Cider in addition to 2 polypins of traditional Cider behind the bar and 15 varieties of bottled Cider.

The other top five pubs shortlisted for the City Pub of the Year were:

- **Mason's Arms, Headington:** Last year's Pub of the Year, a fantastic freehouse with its own brewery and a shining example of how a community pub should be run.
- **The Lamb and Flag, St Giles:** Owned by St. John's College and operated as a freehouse. Beers include Lamb & Flag Gold brewed by Palmers, Skinners Betty Stoggs and Theakstons Old Peculiar.
- **Turf Tavern, Bath Place:** One of the most famous pubs in Oxford, yet possibly the most difficult to find. There are several rooms with two bars and 11 hand pumps.
- **The Royal Blenheim St Ebbes:** The White Horse Brewery tap, features 10 hand pumps with beer from White Horse, Everards and a number of guests.
- **The White Horse, Broad Street:** Famous old Oxford pub squeezed between the entrances to Blackwell's bookshop. 6 real ales, several from local breweries including Shotover.

Town & Village Pub of the Year



Winner of the Oxford CAMRA Town and Village Pub of the Year 2011 award is:

The Cricketer's Arms in Littleworth.

Neil Hoggarth, chairman of the Oxford branch of CAMRA said that *"real beer needs real pubs, and the Cricketer's certainly qualifies"*.

In 2006, under previous management, the Cricketer's Arms was saved from conversion to use as a private house when Oxford CAMRA and many Littleworth residents objected to a planning application. The pub is now run by Stuart and Angie Bull, and under their management it has become a popular and thriving community village pub.

The pub is a "free house", meaning that they are able buy beer from any supplier, rather than being tied to purchasing beer through a particular brewery or pub-owning group. The Cricketer's uses its freedom to offer an interesting, varied and ever changing line-up of real ales, and shows strong support for small independent local breweries - all the cask beers come from within a 36-mile radius of the pub. In recognition of this it was the first pub in the Oxford branch area to be given a CAMRA "LocAle" accreditation.

At lunchtime on Saturday 26th November the branch got together for social event to present its "Town and Village Pub of the Year 2011" award to the Cricketer's Arms in Littleworth. As a special treat for the members that went along to celebrate, the pub had on tap the brews which won "Beer of the Festival" at the two beer festivals the pub ran during 2011: **Patriot "Kiwi"** and **Compass "Baltic Night Stout"**.

Our congratulations to Stuart and Angie on their award, and our thanks to them for their hospitality!



The other top five pubs shortlisted for the Town & Village Pub of the Year were:

- **The Brewery Tap, Abingdon:** Serves 6 real ales and a selection of real cider, including ale from local breweries. Offers a 15p/pint discount to CAMRA members. Involved in local community events including hosting several beer and music festivals each year.
- **The Eagle Tavern, Witney:** Last year's winner of the Town & Village Pub of the Year. Serves full range of Hook Norton beers with a choice of handled or straight glass and served with or without sparkler.
- **The Kings Arms, Kidlington:** Unspoilt, two room local, with good value lunchtime food and always an interesting guest beer. Holds several beer festivals in its outdoor heated marquee.
- **The New Inn, Witney:** Excellent choice of six real ales and a real cider. Holds two beer festivals a year and also hosts other fundraising events.
- **The Morris Clown, Bampton:** A former winner of Oxford Pub of the Year. A freehouse with beers from local breweries and guests. The bar area has a log fire, bar billiards table and hand painted murals on the wall.



**An ancient city.
A modern beer.**



Complex, distinctive and richly satisfying
– Prospect is the full-bodied session ale
from Oxford's Shotover Brewery

www.shotoverbrewing.com



WINNER: Oxford Town & Village Pub of the Year 2011

*The Cricketer's Arms
Littleworth*



Home of The Original
**Beer & Sausage
Festival**

17 - 19 February 2012

www.cricketers-arms.co.uk/welcome
01865 872738

THE TAP
PRESENTS

MARCH

23RD

2012

FRIDAY TO SUNDAY
WITH

50+ REAL ALES & Ciders
Pies, pies & more pies

Springtime

**Beer
Festival**

Big Boys Blues Band

Rascals of Rhythm

Swingtime Big-Band

Top-hat Marquee

The Brewery Tap

01235 521655

www.thebrewerytap.net

thebrewerytap@gmail.com

Local Pub News



Waggon & Horses, Culham

It is great when we can report on pubs opening in these times, especially when a pub opens as a free house. Hamish Forsyth has taken over The Waggon and Horses in Culham, which is an 18th Century coach house. Hamish said: *"The pub is a traditional English pub with a slight South African flair. The menu sports the classic Fish and Chips, Burgers, steaks and the odd Springbok or Crocodile stew."*

He goes on to tell us about the beers he serves: *"Our drinks are however a little closer to home sporting Hooky Bitter, Old Hooky, Abingdon Bridge, Dark Horse and Roasted Nuts. As a free house it is important to us to keep the 5 cask ales fresh and ever changing. It is important that we support local breweries like Loose Cannon, Hook Norton, and Rebellion and we will be bringing in other Local beers from Shotover Brewery and White Horse to mention a few."*

The pub is open from 1100-2300 Monday to Saturday and 1200-2230 on Sundays. It is best to book for the popular Sunday carvery to get a seat; bookings@waggonhorsesculham.com

You can follow the Waggon and Horses on Facebook.

Eagle Tavern, Witney

The landlord of the Eagle Tavern in Witney, Ian, has been afflicted by Guillain-Barré syndrome, a rare condition where the body's immune system attacks the nervous system. Ian is currently in the John Radcliffe and although he is expected to make a full recovery, he will be out of action for some time. We wish him a speedy recovery. Thank you to Ian Roberts for telling us this.

Turl Street Kitchen, Oxford

The Turl Street Kitchen serves **White Horse Village Idiot** and a range of **Cotswold Brewing Co (CBC)** lagers and beers. The pub serves a Stout specially brewed by the CBC for them called **Turl Street Stout**.

Three Horseshoes, Marston

In the previous edition of Oxford Drinker, a round-up of Marston pubs reported that The Three Horseshoes was now private housing. This is not the case - The landlady confirmed that she'd been there for 25 years and had been open continuously. Thank you to Tom Davies for sending us this correction.

James Street Tavern, Oxford

The James Street Tavern, Oxford, is a new type of pub concept that Greene King have developed; Mike Brown from Greene King tells us, "The focus of the pub is local and cask ale based".

They have up to 8 cask ales on sale, whilst 50% are from the Greene King range, 50% are from local breweries. This particular pub was at risk of closing before the new landlord (Jamie) took over and the pub was sympathetically refurbished to display his passion for great quality cask and a support for local cask ales. There is a 'meet the brewer' night with Greene King's head brewer, John Bexon, being arranged at the pub. A tentative date is Thursday 23rd Feb, contact the pub for more information and confirmation of the date.

A member who has been to the pub (Mark Robinson) reports that there is a good rotation of ales, good bottled ale selection. Live music most nights, quiz on Sunday and they've just reopened their kitchen. The décor is also nice, friendly and welcoming. An excellent pub now.

Duke of Monmouth, Oxford

The Duke of Monmouth, on Abingdon Road, reopened on 18 November after a major revamp by owners Greene King. It's now entirely open plan, and part of GK's Meet and Greet branding with the front section mainly for food, the middle section for food and drink, and the rear section for Sky Sports, with a snooker table. At first glance it might seem only Abbot is available on hand pump, but the "Duke" has one of the new-style pumps that while looking like a lager tap, did in fact dispense a very "real" and frothy pint of IPA. New landlord Neil Cunningham also plans to offer a local guest ale, but being new to the area he will be mugging up on them first. Neil and his partner Marina have moved from the **George & Dragon in Bedford**, so are new to the area. They were ably assisted on opening night by his father Leo, who started in the pubs trade aged 14 but is now partly retired in Spain. Re-opening of the "Duke" is good news for south Oxford drinkers, with the derelict Fox & Hounds just along the road a reminder of what we have lost (and yet another Tesco to come). The ales are very well priced too – at £2.75 a pint for **Abbot** and £2.19 for **IPA**, among the most competitive in Oxford.

The Plough Inn, Wheatley

The Plough Inn in Wheatley managed by Fitzroy Davis and Claire Putt, is now a free house after the renovations, not a Greene King pub, as reported in the last issue. Apologies to Claire and Fitzroy.



THE BROAD FACE Abingdon



WEEKLY@thebroadface

Mondays: Steak Night

Tuesdays: Dusty's Jazz Train

Wednesdays: Fish 'n' Fizz

Thursdays: Free Tapas Evening

Fridays: Blues/Rock Bands

Saturdays: Wine Offers

Sundays: Roast Lunch and Jazz

Our chefs use only locally sourced, fresh seasonal produce. The menus offer a wide selection of tempting dishes with daily specials and fantastic weekly special offers, look out for the blackboards.

- **20p off** all real ales for CAMRA members
- **10% off** a la carte menu Mon-Thur



LOVE@thebroadface

Valentine's Dinner

Tuesday 14th February

3 course **£29.95**

Choose from a specially created menu to tempt and seduce your loved one! Includes glass of champagne, a rose and chocolates

DINE@thebroadface

Mother's Day Lunch

Sunday 18th March

3 course **£19.95**

Celebrate with the family and have a fantastic meal plus a free glass of champagne and flowers for all Mums. Listen to The Rob Terry Trio afterwards

FREE LIVE MUSIC

Friday Blues/Rock 9.30-midnight

Sunday Jazz 4.30-7.00pm

Check the weekly gig lists online or in the bar!

Every Tuesday Jazz jam with
Dusty's Jazz Train 9pm-11pm

Easter Beer Festival

The Broad Face are hosting their 3rd Beer Festival over the **Easter Bank Holiday Weekend** with real ales and ciders, local wines, free live music and serving tempting ale-laced food!

Easter Bank Holiday Weekend
6th - 9th April

The Broad Face, 30-32 Bridge Street, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 3HR
t: 01235 524516 e: info@thebroadface.com www.thebroadface.com

Vale and Aylesbury Brewing Company

The February special is called Spring Promise. This is a Copper coloured bitter with a fresh clean taste that reminds us that spring is not too far away.

The March special is Artful Bodger. This is a mahogany coloured bitter with a fruity finish at 4.1%. Named after Bodgers who were skilled craftsmen who worked in the Chiltern woodlands making chair legs for the local furniture industry. They turned chair legs on pole lathes. One is featured on the pump badge. The picture is supplied courtesy of Wycombe Museum.



The Beer Club that links Vale Brewery with sister brewery The Aylesbury Brewhouse Co was launched in December 2011. This scheme offers customers of the shops in Brill and Aylesbury the chance to become club members and gain points on purchases, access to brewery tours along with free T-Shirt and a member's exclusive glass. More details can be found on the vale website www.valebrewery.co.uk

The Brewhouse shop is now up and running and well stocked with over 100 different bottled beers available. And if any further encouragement is needed to visit, **take along your copy of Oxford Drinker, sign on to their e-mail list and they will offer you 10% off your first purchase.** (Offer ends 31st March 2012 and cannot be used in conjunction with any other promotional offers).

The North West Frontier



A small number of pubs to the north-west of the city were visited recently and the first turned out to be the best – the **Royal Sun at Begbroke**, on the main A44 road towards Woodstock. Until the last couple of years, this Punch Taverns house had really been in the depths of despair but then along came the top gang from the **Black Horse at Standlake**. The result was total success with top-class food in a very a comfortable and friendly pub. The beers in good form were **Mordue Winter Tyne** (from near Newcastle) and the ever popular **Hook Norton bitter**.

The **Turnpike Inn at Yarnton**, also on the main A44 near the canal bridge, is part of the M+B estate and a very busy food house. It is very well run and serving pleasant tasting **Purity Pure Ubu**, **Everards Triple Gold** and, rare for the area, **Acorn Barnsley Bitter**. Around the corner we see Yarnton's **Red Lion**, a Greene King pub very popular with the locals. Beers on offer were the usual GK suspects **IPA**, **Abbot** and **Old Speckled Hen**, which were in fine form.

Continuing over the railway to Cassington, we found another good old locals pub also called the **Red Lion**. A former Halls pub now run by Punch Taverns, this is how a pub should be run even though reduced opening times apply and it is mainly open in the evenings. Beers being served were **Greene**

King IPA and **Wells Bombardier**. A few steps around the corner is a Young's house, **The Chequers**, serving quality food in top class surroundings along with **Young's Bitter** and a Wells guest beer. The present Chequers is a new build of ten years replacing a previous Morrells local well liked by all including mature motor bikers.

Onto the busy A40 we came upon a former Berni Inn, the **Evenlode**, now a spacious and bright budget food pub serving the rare **Butcombe Bitter** and **Gold**, both in good condition. A couple of miles along the A40 in the small village of Barnard Gate is the **Boot Inn**, another former Morrells (a splendid and sadly missed brewery) pub which is also a very comfortable quality food house. It is well worth a visit to view the wonderful boot collection and sample the **Young's Gold** and frequent guest beers.

Last stop on this adventure was the most unusual of the pubs in the area, the **Mason Arms at South Leigh** on the back road to Witney. This former Brew Pub (which last brewed 20 years ago) used to serve Bass but is now an eccentric top class restaurant with some customers arriving in limos and even helicopters. Go and see for yourself.

Amongst these pubs there is something for everyone. If you visit any of the pubs in our branch area please let us now about your visit – **use them before you lose them**. Happy drinking!



The first beers brewed in Aylesbury in 75 years were

- Alpha 3.8%
- Red Right Hand 4.2%
- Electric Soup 4.6%

Planned beers are:

- Dark Energy 4.0% A dark London style mild.
- Twisted Bine 4.5% An English Pale Ale.
- Old Glory 4.8% An American Wheat Beer.
- Black Path 5.0% A blend of five dark and roasted malts.
- Weigh Anchor 4.4% A US steam beer also referred to as American Common.



Loose Cannon Brewery to Launch Members Club.

Regular brewery tours will be held monthly beginning in March. A brewery members club will be launched at the first tour. Members will get brewery tours, discounts on beer purchases, glass and a t-shirt. Membership number 00001 will be auctioned for charity.

The Brewery shop will be adding 18 pint carbonated mini-kegs to their range. Whilst not 'cask conditioned' this will enable customers at home to drink beer that will last several weeks without going flat or sour as would happen with polypins or casks which should be drunk in a few days. Bottles, polypins and casks of various sizes are still all available from the brewery shop.

Dark Horse has proven so popular that it will now join Abingdon Bridge as a regular beer and a new blonde seasonal beer is being developed.



LOOSE CANNON

BREWERY

Abingdon

Shop & Brewery

Unit 6, Suffolk Way, off Drayton Road roundabout


 1L £3.05


 2L £6.10


 3L £9.15


 5L £16.60


 18pt £30.65


 36pt £56.20


 72pt £98.05

Our shop beer is sold bright and ready to drink

Open

8am-6pm weekdays

9am-5pm Saturday

Closed bank holidays

Unit 6, Suffolk Way, OX14 5JX

info@lcbeers.co.uk

www.lcbeers.co.uk

01235 531141

Rural Campaigning



Dave Cogdell & Chris Hunter

Our January campaigning trip to venues outside the Oxford City ring road found us visiting pubs on the 2013 beer guide short list.

We started at the **Black Horse at Standlake**, a traditional village pub that has lasted the test of time. The pub has ingle nook fireplaces, low beamed ceilings and many horse brasses decorating the woodwork. At the time of our visit they were serving **Brakspear Gold** and **Hooky bitter**, both as expected in excellent condition. The home cooking here is well known and they specialise for its fish brought up regularly from the fish markets at Brixham, a grand start to the day. Talking to the Landlady it transpires her parents were hosts at one of the old pubs in Abingdon, the Air Balloon which sadly has long since closed down.



The Black Horse, Standlake

On to Witney where we visited the **New Inn** which offered 7 handpumps serving **St. Austell Tribute**, **Tring Side Pocket for a Toad**, **Sharpes Doombar**, **Black Sheep Bitter**, **Theakstons Old Peculiar** (rarely seen in our branch area outside the Lamb & Flag), **Cottage Western Champion** & finally **Piddle in the Cold**; a fine set of ales and a pub that Witney beer drinkers can be proud of. We then travelled a stones throw up the road to the **Eagle Tavern** where we were met with the questions "straight or a handle?" rare and "sparkler on or off?" almost unheard of. Our compliments to the team here that include this in their welcome to visitors, another nice town pub with a full range of Hook Norton beers.



The New Inn, Witney

Returning towards Oxford we popped into the **Queens Head in Eynsham**, sited just off the town centre on a quiet back street. This pub has bags of character and retains a multi room layout. They were serving **Exmoor Gold** and **Doombar** when we visited, both in excellent condition. Unusually for a town pub they have a large garden, ideal for the good weather months.

Oxford and onto the **Victoria Arms in Marston**, a pub with an enviable picturesque setting on the banks of the Cherwell with views towards Oxford's dreaming spires. Renowned for its food and quality ales, on offer were **Wadworths 6X**, **Swordfish**, **Bishops Tipple** and **Henry**, all in good condition.

Off again to the last venue the **Queens Head in Horspath** well not quite actually, our minibus died on the Northern bypass and a walk to the nearest bus stop ended our day as far as the rural campaigning trip was concerned. Some of us managed to end up in the **Chequers** High Street on route home to sample an excellent pint of **Cairngorms Black Gold**. All in all a nice day out with some excellent ales sampled and a good time had by us all.

Skirting round the North of Oxford and onto country lanes we came to the **Nut Tree at Murcot**, well renowned as a Michelin starred restaurant but also for its real ales. On offer were **Pride of Oxford**, **Vale's Best** & **6X** all superb. For cigar connoisseurs a very nice selection was available. Returning to



The Queens Head, Eynsham



The Nut Tree, Murcot



The Kings Head & Bell
10 East St. Helens Street, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 5EA t. 01235 525 362
www.kingsheadandbell-abingdon.com

Join us at our Winter beer festival

- 👑 February 24th - 26th
- 👑 Serving Oxfordshire's finest ales & organic ciders
- 👑 Homemade pie and mash specials
- 👑 Live jazz and folk music
- 👑 Live 6 nations rugby

We look forward to seeing you there!



The Cross Keys

148 Ock Street, Abingdon, OX14 5DT
01235 521738 – www.crosskeysabingdon.co.uk

Spring Beer Festival

March 16th, 17th & 18th

15 ales & ciders from the cask and on hand pull
Open 12 noon to midnight every day

Live music Friday & Saturday evenings

Hot roast pork, apple sauce & stuffing rolls available all weekend

On Tour in Jericho



When I first moved to Oxford 30 years ago to a flat just off Walton Street, I used to fall asleep at night dreaming happily of over 20 pubs which were within a 10-minute walk. The number has reduced, of course, but there are still enough hostelryes in the Jericho area for a night out to remember. Indeed, it probably has more character pubs than any area outside Oxford city centre.

First stop, on Walton Street itself, was Greene King house **Jude the Obscure** which has tables at the front if you want to watch the world go by (it's close to the Phoenix Picturehouse cinema and also trendy restaurants such as Loch Fyne). Once known as the Prince of Wales and now (like *Far From the Madding Crowd*) named after a novel by Thomas Hardy, it makes the most of its prominent position. It's a pleasant enough pub with a lively atmosphere and plenty of film posters, with a large island-shaped bar serving a wider choice of real ales than you come to expect in a GK house. Apart from **Morland Original** and **IPA**, the range included **Olde Trip** (named after Nottingham pub Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem, claimed to be Britain's oldest pub), **6X** and **Belhaven St Andrew's Ale**. The Olde Trip was excellent, with my companion describing his St Andrew's (from north of the border) as decent but average. Both were well kept.

Almost next door is the **Jericho Tavern**, best known as one of Oxford's prime live music venues with many bands making their names on the top floor. Those wanting a peaceful pint tend to avoid it for that reason, but on this occasion there was no show on and the spacious M&B pub was very quiet. I wouldn't expect the Jericho Tavern to be first stop for CAMRA members touring Jericho, but it was good to see three real ales available – more than you might expect in a pub mainly serving younger people. The Cornish ale **Doom Bar** has certainly spread since Sharp's Brewery was taken over by Molson Coors last year, but I'm pleased to report that it travels well. **Brakspear's Oxford Gold** kept up a local connection, but more of a surprise was **Sambrook's Wandle Ale** from one of the newest and smallest independent brewers in London.



It was now time to dive into Jericho proper, that maze of narrow streets to the west of Walton Street stretching as far as the Oxford Canal. There are still three pubs left open in an area that used to support many more, and on a dark and misty night it's easy to imagine the atmosphere of long ago when this was a real working class area. The houses may still be mainly two-up, two-downs, but now of course it is gentrified.

The Harcourt Arms is one of my favourite pubs in Oxford being directly behind the Phoenix cinema, and it was good to see two log fires roaring away merrily on either side of this small, character pub. It's a Fullers house and the ale is therefore predictable. Expensive too -- £3.50 for the middle-of-the-range **London Pride** and nearer £4 for the stronger **ESB. Chiswick Ale** and **London Porter** were also available, and if the beer is predictable, at least it's well kept and I've never had a poor pint in here. What makes a visit worthwhile is the atmosphere, with no gaming or other machines but board games, books and plenty of locals sat in chairs, pews or couches. It serves snacks rather than full meals and is very much a traditional pub, but one with style. Don't miss this one and be sure to pop in if you're visiting the cinema.

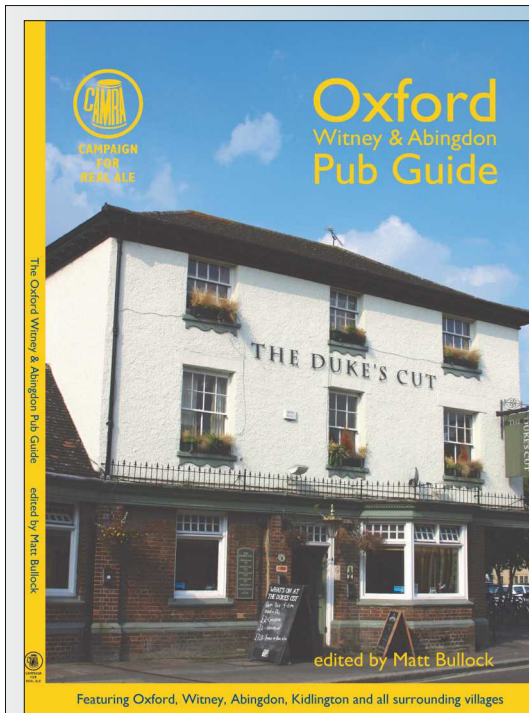
Delving into deepest Jericho and within sight of the canal, the **Old Bookbinders** is a pub which resonates with many CAMRA members and has connections with Inspector Morse, whose first TV adaptation was *The Dead of Jericho* 25 years ago. Once CAMRA's pub of the year but later facing a period of closure and changing hands, the Bookbinders is now very much back in the real ale business although no longer dispensing from barrels behind the bar. You'd hardly know it was a Greene King house although **Abbot, St Edmunds** and **Hardy's & Hanson's Kimberley bitter** were represented. The range also included **Black Dog**, from East Anglia brewery Elgood's; and **Thwaites' Lancaster Bomber** from Lancashire, with some hand pumps idle. It's a pub for people who like curiosities and clutter, with beer mats and signs covering the walls and ceiling, a back room with a piano decorated with old 78 records, board games, and free peanuts in their shells dispensed from a barrel. My Lancaster Bomber was excellent, enjoyed with a mainly young crowd although the pub attracts all ages.

Now for a new experience, as I hadn't been in the **Rickety Press** (the former Radcliffe Arms or "Raddy") since it re-opened last year after take-over by Arkell's of Swindon. It looks very inviting from outside with clear glass windows and shelves full of books, and on this Saturday night it was extremely busy mainly with diners tucking into a pricey gourmet menu (even potted shrimps cost £5.50!). Clientele were mainly young urban professionals and it has more the atmosphere of a city centre pub than somewhere in Jericho. **Arkell's 3B, Wiltshire Gold** and **Moonlight** were on offer, and my Moonlight was decent, if pricey. It was an interesting visit, but the Rickety Press (whose name celebrates the area's links with publishing) seemed to me more of a diners' than a drinkers' venue.

Back to Walton Street and the **Victoria**, a large pub on three levels which also has a beer garden. **Ringwood Best Bitter** and **Jennings' Cumberland Ale** were on offer in this Marston's house, but I found the Cumberland a little insipid. The pub was absolutely heaving on a Saturday night, so we went up to the balcony in a vain attempt to find a seat. It was worth the climb if only to admire the ceiling painting of two classical figures and the inscription "Unspoilt by Progress", a reminder that this was once a Banks's pub. The pub was dark with lots of candles, but somehow I felt it lacked atmosphere and was, again, more like a city centre pub.

Last stop was at the **Gardeners Arms** on Plantation Road – not strictly in Jericho, but only a couple of minutes from Walton Street and not to be confused with the Gardeners Arms on North Parade Avenue which is only five minutes away, on the other side of Woodstock Road. The Gardeners on Plantation Road is a real character pub retaining the atmosphere of two small rooms although it has now been opened out, and has a garden with heaters. LP covers adorn the walls so your eyes can take a real trip down Memory Lane with the likes of Nirvana, Nick Cave, George Harrison and The Pogues. Another curiosity is the vegetarian-only cuisine, but what about the beer? **Wai-iti** was a big surprise being all the way from New Zealand, with mandarin, lemon and lime zest. That kept my companion quiet and he really enjoyed it, while I tried **Ringwood's Fortyniner** which tasted as good as any seventh pint might do. **Jennings' Lakeland Ale** and **Brakspear's Oxford Gold** completed the real ale line-up at this Marston's pub, but just as well we didn't ask for advice as the barmaid said she didn't like beer.....

My verdict? The Harcourt Arms, Old Bookbinders and Gardeners Arms are the pubs I'd choose to visit again, and often. But in Jericho there's something for everyone, and always some surprises.



Oxford, Witney & Abingdon Pub Guide

The definitive guide to the pubs, bars and hotels bars in Oxford, Witney, Abingdon and all the surrounding villages.

Comprehensively researched by volunteer members of the Oxford branch of CAMRA to give an independent review of all the region's pubs.

Available from local book shops and pubs or buy it online from the CAMRA bookshop at shop.camra.org.uk

Price: £5.99

ISBN: 978-1-85249-301-1

Oxford CAMRA Branch Diary



Tue 7th February, 7:30pm-9:30pm

Branch Meeting

Gladiator Club, 263 Iffley Rd, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX4 1SJ

Final list of the Good Beer Guide 2013 will be chosen.

Thu 9th February, 7pm-8:30pm

Pub of the Year presentation

Far From the Madding Crowd

Presentation of the winner of Oxford CAMRA City Pub of the Year: Far From the Madding Crowd

Wed 7th March, 7:30pm-9:30pm

Branch meeting

New Inn, Witney

Sat 10th March, 10am-11pm

Oxford Beer Festival Helpers Trip

Bus to Sheffield

Details to follow

Fri 16th March

Oxford Drinkers Deadline

Sat 31st March, 2pm-5pm

Oxford Beer Festival LocAle Winners Presentation

Far From The Madding Crowd

The four winners of the Oxford Beer Festival LocAle Competition will be presented with their certificates and the winning beers will be available to try. People are invited from 2pm and the award presentation will start at 3pm.

The 4 winning beers will be on tap for everybody to try on the day. Vale Brewery won 4th place with Gunpowder which is a seasonal beer, so we have asked for Gravititas to be sent to us to replace it.

For branch meeting details contact Steve Lawrence at contact@oxfordcamra.org.uk

January Branch Meeting Report



Stephen Lawrence - Branch Secretary



CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

A 'long list' of pubs to be considered for entry in the Good Beer Guide 2013 was passed round. After considerable discussion this was reduced to a 'short list' of 35 and arrangements made to visit as many of these as possible before the final choice is made at the February meeting. Survey forms were allocated to volunteers. These form the basis of the entries in the GBG.

We discussed some minor changes to delivery arrangements for the Oxford Drinker.

We were told that the Boat at Thrupp had closed but only temporarily and the Swan at Islip was open under a holding manager but still on the market.

On the diary were a survey trip by minibus on January 21, a beer festival 'wash-up' meeting on 24 Jan and presentation of the City pub-of-the-year award to Far from the Madding Crowd on the evening of Thursday 9 Feb. Bookings were started

The Oxford branch of CAMRA hold a branch meeting each month. This is usually in the first week of the month rotating between Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Branch meetings are an opportunity to meet other CAMRA local members, have a pint or two in a good pub, discuss what the branch is doing and catch up on news about pubs & breweries.

The January branch meeting was held at the Red Lion, Old Marston on 9th January 2011

There were 17 members present.

for a Black Country trip February 11. There will be a Beer Festival helpers trip March 10 probably to Sheffield. We discussed an evening event in March to make the LocAle awards chosen at the beer festival, probably at Far from the Madding Crowd. Keep an eye on the website diary. We provisionally chose 10 to 14 October for the 2012 Oxford Beer Festival and will check availability of the Town Hall

A meeting to set up a Campaigns group within the branch will have happened by the time you read this. Watch out for further developments.

The next Branch meeting is February 7 at the Gladiators' Club in Iffley Road and the one after that 7 March at the New Inn, Witney. See you there.

For more details about social events please check the web site at

www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/diary, email social@oxfordcamra.org.uk or join our mailing list at

www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/mailling-lists



Find us on **facebook**
facebook.com/OxfordCAMRA

Beer Festival Diary



Thursday 2 - Sat 4 February



17th Tewkesbury Winter Ales Festival

George Watson Memorial Hall, Barton Street, Tewkesbury
70+ beers plus ciders & perries
www.tewkesburycamra.org.uk

Friday 3 – Saturday 4 February **Redditch Winter Ale Festival**



Rocklands Social Club,
Birchfield Road, Redditch
33 beers plus cider & perry
www.redditchwaf.org.uk

Wednesday 8 – Fri 10 February **22nd Battersea Beer Festival**



BAC Grand Hall, Lavender Hill, Battersea, London
150 beers plus cider & perry
www.batterseabeerfestival.org.uk

Friday 17 - Sat 18 February

Merton Winter Beer Festival

Merton Village Hall, Islip Road, Merton, Nr Bicester
(Friday from 6pm, Saturday from 11am)
www.mertonbeerfestival.co.uk

Friday 17 - Sunday 19 February

Littleworth Original Beer & Sausage Festival

Cricketers Arms, Littleworth
01865 872738
www.cricketers-arms.co.uk

Friday 24 - Sunday 26 February **Winter Beer Festival**

Kings Head & Bell,
East St Helens Street, Abingdon
01235 525362
www.kingsheadandbell-abingdon.com

Thursday 1 - Saturday 3 March

Royal Blenheim Beer Festival

St Ebbes, Oxford
01865 242355
www.royalblenheim.co.uk

This page lists local beer festivals which we are aware of in the coming months. The branch is always happy to help publicise events which promote real ales and/or real ciders; note that these festivals are not run or officially endorsed by CAMRA, unless stated in the description.

Wednesday 7 - Friday 9 March



28th London Drinker Beer & Cider Festival

Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, London (opposite St. Pancras Station)
70+ beers, plus ciders, perries & imported beers
www.camranorthlondon.org.uk

Wed 14th March to Sun 1st April

Wetherspoon Beer Festival

All Wetherspoon pubs
50 beers from 45 different breweries
01923 477777
www.jdwetherspoon.co.uk

Thursday 15 - Sat 17 March

Bristol Beer Festival



Brunel Passenger Shed,
Temple Meads Station,
Bristol
130 beers plus ciders & perries
Entry by ticket only - see website
www.camrabristol.org.uk

Friday 16 - Saturday 17 March



Winslow Beer Festival

Winslow Public Hall,
Elmfields, Winslow, Bucks
www.winslowlions.org.uk

Friday 16 - Saturday 17 March



Winchester Real Ale & Cider Festival

Winchester Guildhall, High Street, Winchester
65+ real ales, ciders, perries and foreign bottled beers
For tickets see web site
www.winchesterbeerfestival.org.uk

Friday 16 - Sunday 18 March

The Cross Keys Spring Beer Festival

148 Ock St. Abingdon, OX14 5DT
15 ales and ciders
01235 521738
www.crosskeysabingdon.co.uk

Tuesday 20 - Saturday 24 March

Spring Beer Festival

Far From the Madding Crowd,
Friars Entry, Oxford
01865 240900
www.maddingcrowd.co.uk

Friday 25 - Sunday 25 March

The Brewery Tap Spring Beer Festival

40-42 Ock Street, Abingdon,
OX14 5BZ
50 beers+ Ciders
01235 521655
www.thebrewerytap.net

Thursday 5 - Tuesday 10 April **(Easter bank holiday weekend)**

Woodman Easter Beer Festival

New Yatt Road, North Leigh, Nr Witney
18 beers plus 6 ciders/perries
01993 881790

Friday 6 - Monday 9 April

(Easter bank holiday weekend)

Broad Face Beer Festival

Broad Face, Bridge Street,
Abingdon
01235 524516
www.thebroadface.co.uk

Saturday 7 – Tuesday 10 April **(Easter bank holiday weekend)**

Spring Cider Festival

Far From the Madding Crowd,
Friars Entry, Oxford
01865 240900
www.maddingcrowd.co.uk

Friday 27 - Sat 28 April



21st Chippenham Beer Festival

Olympiad Leisure Centre,
Monkton Park, Chippenham
90+ real ales, ciders & perries
Evening sessions ticket only.
www.nwwiltscamra.org.uk

Wednesday 2 - Sunday 6 May **(bank holiday weekend)**



18th Reading Beer & Cider Festival

King's Meadow, Napier Road, Reading
www.readingbeerfestival.org.uk

Thursday 10 - Saturday 12 May



Banbury Beer Festival

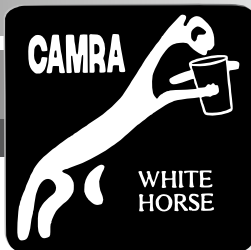
TA Centre, Oxford Road,
Banbury
www.northoxfordshirecamra.org.uk



Latest information about beer festivals can be found on the Oxford CAMRA web site at
www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/festivals

White Horse Branch of CAMRA

www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk



The White Horse Branch was established in December 2007 with a small committee who did not want to see the old Vale of White Horse Branch disappear and merge back into the Oxford Branch.

The White Horse Branch covers an area of Oxfordshire countryside stretching from Coleshill, Shrivenham and Ashbury in the West, along the south bank of the Thames to Shippon, Stevenon and East Hendred in the East. Taking in the larger towns of Faringdon and Wantage and Grove, the area is predominantly rural and dotted with numerous villages and hamlets. The rural nature of our branch provides us with a wealth of picturesque village inns and quaint "gems" to enjoy but also presents us with a problem in our attempts to galvanise efforts in campaigning issues. Many of our remote village pubs are those most at risk from closure or assimilation by a Pub

Co, who may be less than sensitive to the wishes of locals or CAMRA aims in promoting real ales.

We hold our regular branch meetings at a different pub each month but there are still plenty left to visit. If your cherished local would welcome a branch visit, pop along to one of our meetings and let us know about it.

Our Website

For a wealth of information about breweries, pubs, events and news in our area, Visit our website:

www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk

Branch Contacts

For more information please contact:

- Neil Crook: Chairman
contact@whitehorsecamra.org.uk
- Peter Fowler: Membership Secretary
membership@whitehorsecamra.org.uk
- Ian Winfield: Social Secretary
social@whitehorsecamra.org.uk

White Horse Branch Social Diary

Saturday 11th February

Old Forge Brewery Open Day, Coleshill

12.00 onwards - meet at the Radnor Arms. All welcome

Tuesday 21st February

Branch Meeting, 19.45

The Swan, Faringdon

Meet the Brewers - Bellingers

Al Fisher reports on a tasting session of a new micro-brewery's' beers.



The Plough Inn at West Hanney hosted a special evening to meet the brewers from **Bellingers Brewery** on 22nd November. Members of the White Horse Branch of CAMRA were among the people who came along to chat to Matt Rosum and Olly Dimbylow about their brewery, situated at Bellingers Garage, Grove.

In spite of the fact that it was a cold dark rainy Tuesday, the pub was packed. The Plough is known for its home-cooked food and cosy atmosphere. A hot meal was laid on specially for those of us who came to hear about Bellingers' beers. Landlord Trevor Cooper had four Bellingers beers on tap: Summer Ale (3.7%), Original (4.1%), Best (4.9%) and Moonlight (5.7%) which were all in excellent condition. Bellingers regularly supply beer to the Plough, as well as selling bottle-conditioned beers in the shop on the garage forecourt.

The former Pitstop Brewery was taken over by Mike Bellinger, son Tom, son-in-law Ollie and nephew Matt in early 2011. Mike sadly passed away during September 2011, but the 4-barrel plant continues to be run as a 3-way partnership.

Bellingers Summer Ale received a 'Highly Commended' award in the beer festival at the Cricketers Arms beer festival in Littleworth during September. A variation, Indian Summer, proved to be very popular at the recent Wantage beer festival.

Our thanks go to Trevor and Ann Cooper and the staff of the Plough; and to the Matt and Olly for an enjoyable evening.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.ploughwesthanney.co.uk/>
<http://www.bellingersbrewery.co.uk/>



Desert Island Pubs

Dick Bosley dreams of supping ale in sunnier climes...



When you get stranded on a desert island what 8 pubs would you want to find there? Here, in no particular order, is my choice.

1. **The North Star, Steventon.** A traditional village local with a listed interior. Usually three ales, including at least one locally sourced, an open fire in the winter and a lovely garden in the summer. Traditional pub games can be played but the conversation is normally far better.
2. **The Bear, North Moreton.** Another village pub, this one also does good food. I must admit this selection may be influenced by the wonderful beer and cricket festival held every year.
3. **The Black Boy, Winchester.** Despite an interior that would make Lawrence Llewelyn Bowen blanch this is a great pub. Local ales, good food and friendly staff help to make this an ideal location for my Hampshire office.
4. **The Bell, Aldworth.** This pub has been run by the same family for 250 years and so you would think they would have got it right by now – they have. It offers great beer and food and also retains a gents toilet where you can star gaze while ‘performing’.
5. **The Bridge, Topsham.** Believed to be the only pub the Queen has officially visited and so I suppose it is technically her local – a very good choice. When the pub is busy a select few may be invited to sit in the owner’s dining room I was also lucky enough to see the pub’s excellent firework display. Only a couple of miles off the M5 and infinitely better than a service station it is well worth the detour.
6. **The Seven Stars, Falmouth.** The front bar can feel crowded with only a couple of people in it but well worth the squeeze. This pub is run by one of the only two living people to feature in the Beano – there is one for the pub quiz!
7. **The Red Lion, Poultney.** As you may have gathered I have a penchant for traditional pubs and this is one of the most traditional of them all. The octogenarian owner told me he opens “Friday and Monday evenings, Saturday evening and Sunday at 12 for a while. But, as I like a pint I quite often open Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday nights as well.” I only wish I could type with a Gloucestershire accent.
8. **The Black Lion, Nantwich.** A friendly town pub with good local beer but I wouldn’t recommend betting on the pub’s greyhounds – they seem to be trained on a diet of cheese & onion crisps – but only if they can get at them before the pub cat!

As a luxury I had better have my uncle’s pint tankard and for books – assuming I have the current Good Beer Guide and the complete works of Roger Protz – I suppose I had better have ‘A brief history of time gentlemen please!’

By ...myself!



Beer Festival Equipment

Hire of Barrel stillage, cooling, taps, bars etc

Barrel (9gl) Stillages/ Racking, traditional wooden 2 x 9gl, 12 x 9gl

Taps, Chiller Saddles & Insulation Jackets

Chillers Remote

Bar units - 2 metre long and flooring

Hand pumps

Photos and a very competitive price list are available on the website

Web: www.beerfestivalequipment.co.uk

Email: john@beerfestivalequipment.co.uk

Tel 07770 938300

Based near Bicester

BAINTON BIKES Beer Lover Rides Winter Warmer

Kevin Moreland, www.baintonbikes.com

78 Walton Street, Oxford, OX2 6EA, t:01865 311610

The season of stuffing, mulled wine, stupid jumpers and socks in wrapping under the tree is over, leaving behind a mass of cardboard, pine needles and my stretched trousers.

Now is the season for (mostly ridiculous) resolutions where everyone silently tortures themselves until they can take no more and happily drift back into happy familiar habits. Oh yes, the dreaded 'Janopause' has started, where it becomes common place for folk to try and forget the warmth and comfort of the local boozer.

Personally over the festive season I have over indulged, and it was bloody great! My only regret is not getting in the saddle as much as I would have liked and whilst I vocally blame the weather deep down I know I just couldn't be arsed. But now I'm refreshed and eager to dust off the cobwebs, it is time to hit some hills, and I have plans to look down smugly on the county; we're heading up to the top of White Horse Hill.

Essential Equipment to take includes; Map, gloves, puncture repair kit, spare inner tubes, pump, water, allen key and spanner set, a decent lock, a phone and bright lights.

The route is on minor roads, most suited to road bikes, but any bikes with good lights will do. With the time of year mudguards may also be a good idea.

This route is 89 kilometres (55 miles)

I start the day in Oxford and head out along Botley Road where I meet the first hill of the day; I attack the hill whilst humming the theme tune for the Great Escape in my head. As I reach the top I start to regret the extra helpings of pigs in blankets, but the sun has just broken through the clouds and with a sense of satisfaction I look on towards the hills in on the horizon.



The Blue Boar, Longworth



The White Hart, Fyfield

From Cumnor hill we cross the bridge over the A420 into Cumnor village and follow the roads towards Appleton and Fyfield.

We make our first stop after 16.16km at **The White Hart, Fyfield**. We wheel our bikes into the large tranquil rear garden, past the Hart statue and park up next to a wood chopping area (complete with an axe stuck in a tree trunk). Upon entering the bar we are greeted by friendly bar staff. We choose a pint of **Abingdon Bridge** from the 3 options and settle by the fire and briefly catch the headlines from the various papers whilst listening to the traditional Jazz playing through the stereo. As with many village pubs this one is also geared up more for food, but the place has retained a lot of character. A great start to the day.

We bid farewell and ride on towards Hinton Waldrist, which turns out not to have the pub I was planning to stop at, after a quick chat with a local resident we are following a dirt track back towards Longworth, where we come out by the Manor and ride past (oddly) a field of Lemers.

Clocking up another 8km we soon arrive at **The Blue Boar, Longworth** which boasts as being 'Free at Last'. At the bar we select a pint of **Doom Bar** from the 3 options and settle down on a converted barrel style chair, it is early Sunday and the pub is already busy with a mixture of diners and regulars, the food smells great but we have booked at table for Sunday roast elsewhere so we grab a bag of nuts and peer at the numerous old fashioned skis hanging from the ceiling.

As we leave and head back towards Hinton Waldrist the hills on the horizon start to look bigger and bigger. We continue on and cross the A420 heading past Shellingford and towards Fernham before turning towards Uffington. When we arrive in Uffington the group decides to split up, some are going up to the top of White Horse Hill and others are going to wait in the pub. Pussies!

Fuelled by beer and dry roasted nuts and blind ambition up the hill we go and as my lungs start to escape through my throat realisation dawns on me that the group has split into those with and without



View from White Horse Hill



common sense. Miraculously and with only a minor heart attack we reach the top of the road and carry our bikes up the muddy parts to sit on the White Horse.

The views of the county are spectacular up here, the suns shining and I can breathe again, if only there was a bar nearby...

After soaking up the sun for a while it is time for the best bit about going uphill, going back down as fast as possible (although I think a couple of teeth shook out as I hit the cattle grid).

Continued on Page 22



We sell polypins and bottles direct from the brewery, Mon-Fri.

For any enquiries please call:

01367 718700

or email

fiona@whitehorsebrewery.com

WHITE HORSE BREWERY

3 Ware Road, White Horse Business Park,
Stanford in the Vale, Oxfordshire, SN7 8NY



www.whitehorsebrewery.com

Bainton Bike Ride continued



View from White Horse Hill

We roll back into Uffington and meet back up at **The Fox & Hounds**. It has been 23.67km since the last pub so we quickly choose a pint of (appropriate) **White Horse** from the 2 options and sup greedily on a well earned pint. Again, we are in a nice friendly village pub and decide to stop for another before heading onwards.

Back on the saddles we ride along the long open country roads through Goosey, through Charney Basset, Lyford and Garford before rejoining civilization with a bump, joining the A338 we're met by heavy fast traffic. Moving swiftly along we turn right on Faringdon Road and stopping at **The Dog House, Frilford Heath**. We have a table booked for Sunday dinner and we graciously late after riding for 25.47km gasping. Sadly there is only 1 beer available, so begrudgingly we have a pint of **Old Speckled Hen** and demolish a well earned



The Fox & Hounds, Uffington

Sunday roast. The beer is pretty shite so after dinner we pack up and ride the short distance to **The Greyhound, Besseleigh** where they have five pumps to choose from. After a couple of samples I decide to start on a pint of **Heel Stone** which hits the spot perfectly.

This is another pub which I guess only survives through their menu, but as with most of the other pubs from today's ride still offers good beer and welcoming staff.

After a couple of pints we reluctantly remount the saddle and ride the short distance back down Cumnor Hill and into Oxford.

With the cobwebs not only blown away but annihilated I think I'll be staying local for a few weeks.



The Dog House, Frilford Heath

Summary of Cycle Parking Facilities

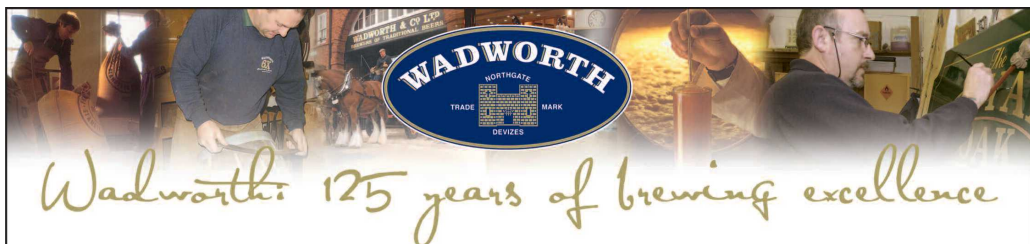
- **The White Hart, Fyfield** – Large garden with plenty of structures to lock up against
- **The Blue Boar, Longworth** – Front garden with benches available
- **The Fox & Hounds, Uffington** – Front garden with benches available
- **The Doghouse, Frilford Heath** – Front garden with benches available
- **The Greyhound, Besseleigh** – Front & Side garden with benches available

To view more photos of this ride please visit our website – www.baintonbikes.com

These are regular rides we run and if you are interested in joining then please contact me on kevin@baintonbikes.com or call me on 01865 311610

BAINTON BIKES

Oxford bicycle hire specialists



Wadworth & Company have a widespread and well founded reputation for brewing exceptional beers, a reputation which began in 1885, with the opening of the Old Northgate Brewery by Henry Wadworth. The original brewery is still home to all of Wadworth's brewing production, and traditional techniques are maintained throughout the process. We have a wide and varied selection of year round and seasonal ales available throughout the year.

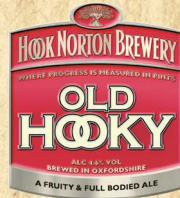
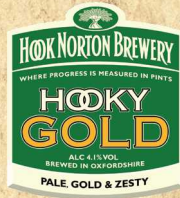
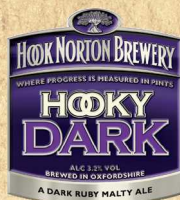
Where is Wadworthshire?

The Wadworth estate extends from Devizes, Wiltshire, with over 250 characterful pubs and hotels from the Cotswolds to the South-West offering a warm welcome, great ambience and the finest beers.

www.wadworth.co.uk



Great real ales at your local!



Now available
all year round

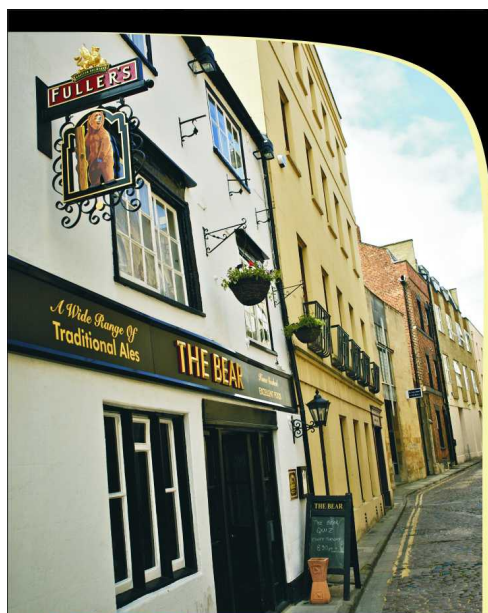
Available
March – May 2012

Why not book a **Hook Norton Brewery tour**, where you'll witness our brewer's craft and get the chance to sample some of our finest beer.



Hand-crafted in the Cotswold Hills

For more information call 01608 730384
or visit www.hooky.co.uk



THE BEAR INN

The Bear Inn is the oldest pub in Oxford and is a hidden gem, just off the hustle and bustle of the busy High Street.

The pub is popular with students, locals and tourists alike, who enjoy a warm welcome, a range of real ales and bottled conditioned beers and traditional, home-cooked food by the fire.

The pub is most famous for its collection of ties - dating back to the early 1900's and representing clubs in the Oxford area and, more recently, around the globe.

A great place to unwind, take off your own tie, and enjoy looking at everyone else's!



6 Alfred Street, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX1 4EH
Telephone: 01865 728164
Email: bearinn@fullers.co.uk

A Day's Brewing at Slater's



It all started on Thursday 28 July last year. I was at the 4th Stafford beer festival and decided to have a go on the silent auction being run to boost CAMRA funds; **Slater's Brewery** of Stafford very kindly putting up the prize of a day's brewing with them for the winner of the event.

If you are not familiar with a silent auction, instead of an auctioneer calling out the latest bid for an item so that potential buyers can know how much will be paid, in a silent auction people write down in secret what they are prepared to pay for an item and the highest bid at a set closing time wins. I put in my bid and with just a few minutes to go before the closing time, realised that I was in the winning position. A few more nervous minutes before the auction closed and then it was announced that I had won! I went onto the stage and was presented with an envelope with all the details of my prize inside; that I was to contact Andrew Slater (MD of the brewery), that breakfast and lunch were to be provided, along with a few samples of course, and that with a little bit of hard work, a wonderful day out was in prospect.

Personal events meant that I had to delay my brewing day but eventually on 8 December 2011, I made my way to the north Midlands ready to brew the following day. Although it was not part of my prize, I was very generously accommodated on that evening in Slater's own brewery tap, **The George Hotel** in the lovely little town of Eccleshall, behind which the brewery had its origins as the Eccleshall Brewery in 1995, started by Andrew's mother and father, Moyra and Ged. The hotel is an old coaching inn and has now been turned into a very comfortable establishment with a good traditional olde-worlde feel.

After settling in, I went down to the bar to be welcomed by Andrew and his wife Fay and we started to sample the range of excellent Slater's ales on offer, courtesy of Andrew's sister Vicki, including **Why Knot**, **Original**, **Top Totty** and **Premium**, finishing off with a taste of their intriguing seasonal brew, the excellent **Mad Jaffa**, a true Christmas brew at 7%, infused with orange peel and nutmeg.

As a further bonus for me, I had been contacted earlier in the day by Mike Harker, the Branch Contact of the Heart of Staffordshire branch of CAMRA and, as luck and co-incidence would have it, that evening the local branch was having their Christmas social and the presentation of their Pub of The Year award. Mike had kindly invited me along to join them for a Christmas pie-and-pint at the **Pie and Ale House**, the winning pub in the centre of Stafford.

Leaving the George somewhat late we ventured into the modern style cafe-bar where I was made welcome by the Staffs. members and a very good

evening was had by all; but being very aware of the traditional brewers early morning start, not too much of their excellent ale was imbibed personally.

Early next morning I was taken from the George to the relatively new (2006) state-of-the-art brewery that is now Slater's on the north side of Stafford. Andrew had already been there for some time when I arrived around 7.30 a.m. and the liquor for that days mash (or hot water if you like!) was already on the go.

It wasn't long before we were underway, starting to brew that days beer – the excellent 5.2% "**Haka**". This is one of Slater's more complex brews described as "*a recent award winning New Zealand Pale Ale that is dry hopped in the conditioning tank for 3 weeks - as a result the sweetness of the strength is balanced by a strong aromatic finish*". The main task of loading just under 1 tonne of the various malts used had already been done the day before, saving a lot of early morning shifting and lifting, so it was straight into the mash tun with the malt, along with the liquor, and my day as a brewer had just begun.

Whilst this first process was going on I got a quick lesson from Andrew about the different properties of the various types of hops used, alpha content being a critical factor with regard to flavour and aroma, and I was left to prepare the hops being used in the day's brew. During this time, Mike Harker turned up to take some photos – no jokes about Harker's Haka please ! This was followed by the preparation for the following day's brew – another gyle (batch) of Haka for which the same amount of malt was needed.

Continued on Page 26



Pitching the flavour hops

Brewing at Slater's continued I thought it was too good to be true not having to load that weight of malt early in the morning – I just got to do it a bit later on in the day, that's all.

I expect many people will have been round a brewery on a social trip, taking a relatively short time, when the brewing process has been explained. Believe me, this is totally different to actually working there for a day. Slater's have a reputation for the consistency of their products and this is achieved by timing every part of the whole brewing process down to the last minute, and recording every step of the process and the result of every test in detail so that each brew of an individual beer will taste the same as the last. The whole process was virtually non-stop (just having time for the promised breakfast and lunch provided) from early morning through to when we had pitched the yeast into our 5,000 litre gyle of Haka and finally "put it to bed" at around 5 p.m., by which time I was tired but very happy. Tired? Try having to dig out all that weight of damp malt from the mash tun and the hops from the copper, as well as continually checking times, gravities of wort, flow of liquids between vessels and many other processes. Somehow, a Boots homebrew kit will never be the same again.

So, after a very tiring day at a brewery, with about an hour or so to kill before your train back home, what do you do??? Yep, it was sampling time again!



Digging out the mash tun



Pitching the yeast

Andrew talked me through the significance of leaving beers to mature in the various storage vessels at the brewery, including in the cask, and I was allowed to sample some beers that were the same brew, e.g. Premium, but were at differing stages of maturity. Yes, you could tell they were the same beer, brewed to the same recipe and standard, but the difference in taste and body achieved just by leaving them to mature over time was obvious. (Just as a personal aside comment, perhaps that's why a lot of beers these days can be considered to be a bit "bland" on flavour – more time needed maybe?). Of course this process had to be tested more than once, again culminating in a generous slug or two of Mad Jaffa and so it was a very happy brewer-for-a-day that eventually was given a lift by Vicki to Stafford station after a wonderful day out, my luggage bag being stuffed full of bottles of ales at the last minute to see me on my way. It is at this point that I must thank many people that were connected with this truly fabulous day out; one that ordinarily money can't buy, but in a different way, eventually did. My thanks go to all concerned from the Heart of Staffordshire branch, and all at Slater's brewery, especially Andrew, for a day I'll never forget.

And what of the final product? Andrew has a contract to supply Wetherspoons (as well as some other outlets) with Haka during the January to March period, so it should be on sale pretty well nationwide about now. The post Christmas and New Year period is usually a quiet one on the pub scene, but if you can drag yourself out to your local JD's and manage to sample a pint of this excellent brew, you can impress your friends by telling them you know who brewed that beer. As for me, I may be there, but I may also be sitting at home with my own private supply, as a new-style 5 litre mini-pin of my brew arrived just before New Year, courtesy of the brewery, and I may just be enjoying the fruits of my labours with my feet up at home.

CHEERS EVERYONE !

Over The Limit? Be Safe - Call A Taxi

001 TAXIS
(01865)

24 00 00

www.001taxis.com

OWNER DRIVERS WANTED

24
hours



4 to 8 seaters • CRB checked



Telephone & on-line booking



Supporting



001 Taxis, New Inn Yard,
108 St. Aldates, Oxford OX1 1BU

**Now covering; Abingdon, Wheatley, Horspath,
Littleworth, Denton, Cuddesdon, Holton and Garsington.**

We are currently seeking OWNER DRIVERS with a valid Hackney Carriage Licence issued by South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, Cherwell District Council or Oxford City Council.

Please contact 001 Taxis, New Inn Yard, 108 St. Aldates, Oxford

National Campaigning



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

Community Life in Britain's Suburbs Under Threat!

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, has called for urgent Government action to save Britain's historic pub culture in light of new research showing how 16 pubs now close across the country on a weekly basis. CAMRA has expressed particular concern that Government policy is failing communities on the peripheries of Britain's towns and cities, with half of these closures (8 a week) taking place in the nation's suburbs.

In just 2 years, 1,078 pubs have been lost in suburban areas, with many community locals battered by whirlwind beer tax hikes and deep alcohol discounting from nearby supermarket chains, bringing about a general decline in pub going by consumers. Meanwhile, high street pubs are closing at a quarter of the rate – 2 per week – of suburban locals.

Mike Benner, CAMRA Chief Executive, said:

'While high street city centre venues are showing a degree of resistance in the current climate, both suburban and rural areas are under threat as wholesale pub closures deprive more local people of a community centre. Pubs are vital for social cohesion and cultural integration, and therefore the Government must act swiftly to repair the damage inflicted upon local communities by offering genuine support for enterprising and hard working licensees.

'This research also further underlines the major problems caused by many hard-working pub lessees being unable to buy their beer on the open market, restricted by punitive measures imposed by greedy pub companies. The number of tied pubs has fallen by over 3,500 in just 3 years, with free of tie pubs remaining better placed to weather these difficult economic times by having the ability to offer greater beer choice and lower prices to the consumer.'

Today's figures coincide with a groundbreaking new report by the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) into the social value of community pubs. The report reinforces CAMRA's figures by highlighting

the need for a radical change in Government policy that recognises the important community function many pubs perform.

Recommended measures to provide vital support include business rate relief for pubs acting as 'centres of a community', reform of planning laws which prevent pubs from being demolished without the need for planning permission, and improving relations between large pub companies and their lessees to offer a guest beer option and an option to become 'free of tie' accompanied by an open market rent review.

IPPR Associate Director, Rick Muir, said:

'Government must stop using a one size fits all approach to licensed premises which is killing off our community pubs. Instead responsible well-run community pubs should be encouraged and supported.

'Our research shows community pubs aren't just places to drink but also places where people meet their neighbours; where local clubs hold meetings and events; and which support many important local services such as village post offices and general stores.'

8 suburban pubs close every week, compared to 6 rural, and 2 high street

Over 1000 pubs lost in Britain's suburbs in just 2 years

10 tied pubs are closing every week compared to 7 free of tie, with the number of managed pubs actually increasing by 1 opening per week.

IPPR's new report assesses the social value of community pubs and is published alongside CAMRA's new pub closure research. IPPR's report was launched on January 24th and will be available to download from www.ippr.org

Since 2008, beer tax has increased by 35%, meaning British beer drinkers incur the second highest rate of beer excise duty in Europe.

House of Commons to commission Independent Review of Pub Ties

On the 12th January following a lively debate on the floor of the House of Commons, during which the Government was heavily criticised for rejecting proposals by the Business Select Committee, MPs have unanimously passed a motion criticising Government's lack of action on pub companies as falling short of their own commitments and requiring the Government to commission an independent review of self regulation in the pub sector.

The decision by Parliament follows over 5,000 CAMRA members individually contacting their local MPs asking them to support this motion and extensive campaigning by organisations including Federation of Small Businesses, Forum for Private Business, licensee groups and the Parliamentary Save the Pub Group.

A Campaign of Two Halves

Fair deal
on beer
tax

Save
Britain's
Pubs!



Join CAMRA Today

Complete the Direct Debit form and you will receive 15 months membership for the price of 12 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/joinus or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to Membership Department, 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) _____

Direct Debit Non DD

Single Membership £20 ☐ £22 ☐
(UK & EU)

Joint Membership £25 ☐ £27 ☐
(Partner at the same address)

For Young Member and concessionary rates please visit 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

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title _____ Surname _____

Forename(s) _____

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

12/10

**Campaigning for Pub Goers
& Beer Drinkers**

**Enjoying Real Ale
& Pubs**

Join CAMRA today – www.camra.org.uk/joinus



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

Please fill in the whole form using a ball point pen 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 Service User Number

To the Manager Bank or Building Society

Address

Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder

Branch Sort Code

Bank or Building Society Account Number

Reference

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 Campaign For Real Ale Limited Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Campaign For Real Ale Limited and, if so will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)

Date

**This Guarantee should be detached
and retained by the payer.**

The Direct Debit Guarantee

- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay by Direct Debits.
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
 - If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when The Campaign For Real Ale Ltd asks you to.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

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

18th Reading Beer and Cider Festival

2nd – 6th May 2012

Back by popular demand, the 18th festival builds on the success of previous years and is once again open for 5 days. Starting at 6pm on Wednesday 2nd May, this is your chance to experience one of the largest festivals in the UK, on your doorstep.

Visit Kings Meadow (Napier Road, Reading, RG1 8BN - 10 minutes from Reading Station) to find around 550 real ales, 200 ciders and perries, a large selection of foreign beers and English wines. Locally brewed beers are highlighted on the LocAle bar, and the festival also hosts the finals of the National Cider and Perry Awards.

Family Day on Sunday, music on Friday and Saturday, good food and beer at all times. Open on Wednesday 2nd May from 6pm to 11pm, then 11am-11pm Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Open Sunday from 12pm-7pm. CAMRA members get in for just £3 (£2 on Sunday)

Join the volunteer team by
e-mailing staffing@readingbeerfestival.org.uk
www.readingbeerfestival.org.uk

I Love Oxford Pub Tours...

Saturday night pub tours of central Oxford aimed at both visitors and locals will again become a regular feature this summer, and operate at other times of year subject to at least five people booking by the previous evening. The tours are organised by I Love Oxford, which offers general walking tours and organises social events. Up to 14 people have taken part in the tours, which are led by Alasdair de Voil.

*"The tour is a mixture of the more eccentric stories related to Oxford town and gown history and the more colourful characters, plus an insight into crime and punishment long ago," he says. "There are many stories to tell and last year, I had many people come back several times for a good night out and to meet people, which is as much the purpose of the tour as anything else. The pubs we go to vary weekly but often include the oldest or most popular ones like the **Kings Arms** and **Turf Tavern**. We usually get to three pubs and finish usually by 11pm, but it varies."*

Tours depart from outside the Saxon tower of St Michael's Church on Cornmarket (opposite KFC) at 8pm on Saturdays, and cost £7 which includes one free drink at the first pub visited (beer, small wine or soft drink). Pre-booking is essential using the details below.

Tel. 07955 482637
www.iloveoxford.com

I♥Oxford.com



18TH READING CAMRA

Beer and Cider Festival



Kings Meadow Recreation Ground
Napier Road, Reading, RG1 8BN
(10 mins from Reading Station)

Wednesday 2 May
6 pm – 11 pm £7.00
Thursday 3 May
11 am – 11 pm £8.00
Friday 4 May
11 am – 11 pm £9.00
Saturday 5 May
11 am – 11 pm £9.00
Sunday 6 May
12 pm – 7 pm £5.00

Admission £3 Wed-Sat/£2 Sun
for card-carrying members of
CAMRA, EBCU or RURACS

Glass hire £3 (refundable)

- Around 500 real ales, 200 ciders and perries, large selection of foreign beers and English wines
- LocAle bar, showcasing beer from breweries within 30 miles of the festival
- Hosting CAMRA National Cider and Perry Awards on Friday and Saturday
- Food available at all times; plenty of seating
- Music on Friday and Saturday
- Family day Sunday with children's entertainment
- Under 18s free entry until 8 pm if accompanied by an adult
- Staff required at all times; to enrol, please visit our website at www.readingbeerfestival.org.uk or email staffing@readingbeerfestival.org.uk
- More information at www.readingbeerfestival.org.uk

Reading Post



Reading
Borough Council

Keeping In Touch

Get all the latest news and events and share information about what's happening in your area.

Sign up to our email list at
www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/mailling-lists



Find us on facebook
facebook.com/OxfordCAMRA



Follow us on Twitter
[@oxforddrinker](https://twitter.com/oxforddrinker)

Prince of Wales

'Great Ales, Great Food, Great Atmosphere'



A traditional pub with traditional food prepared with flair from locally sourced ingredients.

6 ever-changing real ales, 5 ciders and 14 types of wine by the glass.

Charity quiz every Wednesday at 9pm.

Pete Fryer Band - 2nd Thursday of the month.

Live Music - Last Thursday of every month.

Food served all day on Saturdays and Sundays.



T: 01865 778554 E: myfavouritepub@yahoo.com

Church Way Iffley Oxfordshire OX4 4EF

WYCHWOOD BREWERY

Store & Tours



*Our Brewery Store is open
10am - 5pm
Monday to Saturday*

The Hobgoblin orders you to come and browse his selection of gifts and merchandise with exclusive in-store offers and promotions on bottled and cask beers.

Brewery tours operate every Saturday and Sunday offering a two hour experience for those interested in seeing mischief in the making.

Come and see us if you dare but be warned...most things bite!

*Book online at www.wychwood.co.uk
or call: 01993 890 800**

*(*pre booking essential)*

Wychwood Brewery, Eagle Maltings, The Crofts, Witney, Oxon OX28 4DP