



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

FREE

take me
read me
share me

the Oxford Drinker



The free newsletter of the **Oxford and White Horse** Branches of CAMRA
www.oxfordcamra.org.uk www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk

001 TAXIS
(01865)
24 00 00
www.001taxis.com



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-
Amusementworld
Amusement arcade next to
001 Taxis city centre waiting room

night safe
OXFORD



24 Hours

Rates Reduced



BEERS OF EXCEPTIONAL CHARACTER

6 of the BEST



Beer :: Brewery Tours :: Club Membership :: Available Online or at our Brewery Shop

West Berkshire Brewery and Shop OPENING HOURS Monday - Saturday 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
The Flour Barn, Frlsham Home Farm, Yattendon, Berkshire RG18 0XT t 01635 202968 e info@wbbrew.com

wbbrew.com



Contents

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

5000 copies are distributed free of charge to pubs across the two branches' area, including Oxford, Abingdon, Witney, Faringdon, Eynsham, Kidlington, Bampton, Wheatley and Wantage and most of the villages in between.

This newsletter is also available to download in pdf format from our website oxfordcamra.org.uk/drinker

Editorial team:

Editor: Dave Richardson
editor@oxfordcamra.org.uk

Advertising: Tony Goulding or Matt Bullock
advertising@oxfordcamra.org.uk
Tony: 07588 181313
Matt: 07977 517514

Layout/Design: Matt Bullock

Valuable contributions have been received for this issue from Richard Queralt, Michael Sibbald, Tony Goulding, Everards Brewery, and all those who have provided pub and brewery news.

Please send contributions to the editor at the above email address.

Pub news can be sent to
pub-news@oxfordcamra.org.uk

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

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

© Copyright Oxford CAMRA 2014

5 Welcome

CAMRA urges the Government to take on the pubcos.

6 Tony's Travels

Our Chairman documents his beer (and cider) travels in the past month

8 Train Times

Join us for the Beer Festival Helpers' Trip on the Severn Valley Railway

8 Top Pub!

The White Hart in Headington is the City Pub of the Year

10 On Tour

Read about the latest branch minibus trip to rural pubs

12 Crafty business

The American craft beer market has taken off here on the East Coast

14 Pub News

Read all the news about pubs in Oxford and the surrounding towns

16 Siren Award

Oxford's Beer of the Festival and the rest of the brewery news.



White Hart is Oxford' top pub!
Page 8

18 Sainly Tour

A visit to the pubs of Southampton reveals some gems

22 Competition

Win a prize in our "guess the pub" competition, sponsored by West Berks

26 A Beer Diary

Michael Sibbald's review of his year of drinking ale

30 White Horse

News from White Horse branch of CAMRA.

Over The Limit? Be Safe - Call A Taxi

001 TAXIS

(01865)

24 00 00

www.001taxi.com

24 hours

4-8 Seaters



• CRB checked • Licensed by Oxford City Council

City centre waiting room
Hot drinks available

FREE

iPhone and Android Booking App.
please visit your app store to download



- Booking quotes
- Save your favourite addresses



- Book on Account or Cash
- Airport Bookings



- Automatic saving of recent addresses for quick bookings



- Find your location with GPS
- See the location of your taxi

Once your taxi is booked, you will receive a text SMS message confirming your booking

Supporting



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



Welcome

...it's time to get serious with the pubcos

BACK IN JULY last year, a Government committee published a report calling for new legislation to protect an estimated 30,000 pub landlords from the power of the big pub owning companies or "pubcos", including a watchdog to monitor their behaviour and a guarantee that landlords can buy their beer from the pubco at prices no higher than on the open market.

This led to a Parliamentary debate in January, with a Labour motion calling for action to be speeded up to prevent further closures as landlords struggle to make ends meet. The end result is often that the pubcos, laden with debt after borrowing huge sums to buy pubs when breweries were forced to reduce their estates, sell off to developers and communities lose out.

Unfortunately the Labour motion to introduce legislation by July this year was lost, meaning there is a real chance that nothing will happen this side of a General Election in May 2015. In that time many more pubs will go to the wall, a scenario none of us wants to see.

CAMRA has been pushing this issue hard, raising a petition signed by 30,000 people in only seven days leading up to the debate. But it seems the Government isn't listening, or will we be proved wrong?

Shadow Pubs Minister Toby Perkins MP, who led the debate, said: "Too many pubs across Britain are closing their doors and we urgently need action, but Ministers are dragging their feet. A wide range of bodies from the Federation of Small Businesses, CAMRA and trade unions to the All Party Save the Pub Group have recognised



that the relationship between the big pub companies and local landlords is an unfair one which needs to be fixed. They have backed plans for a proper statutory code with teeth."

Fortunately there have been few recent closures in our branch, and although the underlying trend is worrying, there are also hopeful signs. We have gained a second community-owned pub, the White Hart in Wolvercote, and other pubs are re-opening after refurbishment determined to make a go of it. One thing for sure is that pubs will always be diverse – from the first pub at a motorway services, the Wetherspoons on the M40 at Beaconsfield; to micro-pubs such as the new Stratford Alehouse, in the heart of Shakespeare's home town.

News of pubs, breweries and beer festivals is always welcome here at the Oxford Drinker, as are ideas for longer articles. Use the contact details provided, with the deadline for the April/May edition being 21 March.

DAVE RICHARDSON



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

Keeping in touch with Oxford Branch:

Get all the latest news and events, and share information about what's happening in your area. Sign up to our e-mail list at: www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/mailling-lists

To receive copies of the *Oxford Drinker* by post, please send A5 sized, self addressed envelopes with postage to cover 100g letter to: **Oxford Drinker, 25 Chamberlain Place, Kidlington OX5 1SG** and we will send you as many issues as you send envelopes.



Tony's travels

Branch Chairman **Tony Goulding** gets out and about

Kidlington

The pubs scene is more settled than ever with the Boat at Thrupp, a former Morrells canal-side pub now run by Greene King, serving up to four from the wide range of guest beers and good tasty food, and with a multi-room layout and a large garden, families are to the fore. A stroll down the canal will find another former Morrells, now Greene King pub, The Jolly Boatman – again food and families. Further down the canal is Punch Taverns' Highwayman, but why the totally unnecessary name change from The Wise Alderman is beyond almost everyone. It offers pretty ordinary food, accommodation and sometimes up to two beers from the GK range.

Three pubs appear on the main road in the centre of Kidlington, with the Black Horse, a former Morland now Greene King house, being popular with all ages. This sprawling, food oriented pub serves up to three beers. Next door is Gerry McGrath's Black Bull, another Punch Taverns pub, serving one beer and some food. This is a drinkers' pub with "Bob the Builder" types to the fore. A few steps down the road is the Red Lion, a mainly youngsters' pub, which can be noisy at weekends. It serves up to two beers and specialises in pizzas.

Down at the bottom of Kidlington at The Moors, and

still my favourite, is The King's Arms, a former Halls then Punch Taverns pub that is now a free house. With three good beers including Brakspear bitter plus two guests, along with very good pub grub at under £6, this is a comfortable, old-fashioned pub to enjoy conversation. A short stroll along Mill Street will find the vibrant Six Bells, another Punch Taverns and former Halls pub. It offers good value beer including local Oxfordshire Ales and two others, and food is served.

On the main road to Oxford in the "garden city" area of Kidlington is the "The Dog" – formerly the Dogwood and the Squire Bassett. Following life as a basic boozier, all sorts of food styles came along and it is now the popular Gurkha Village Nepalese restaurant. I always think of my brave father's fondness for the Gurkhas, and of those ever loyal lads in our Armed Services. It's better to have a food-led pub serving one real beer than be closed and run by a supermarket!

Garsington

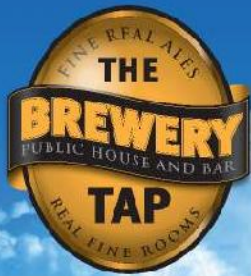
A visit to The Three Horseshoes, a former Morrells house, found the usual Greene King beers in tasty condition. Doubled in size over the past years to cater for foodies, the pub still boasts an almost original and very comfortable public bar, but not with the atmosphere of 20 years ago

when up to four Morrells beers would present themselves to you. The other two pubs in the village have closed in recent years. The Red Lion, a former Courage house, is now a Chinese outlet while The Plough, another former Courage house and former GBG entry, is now a private house. Most of this sprawling commuter village is too busy to use the pub.

The Baldons

In the village of Toot Baldon is The Mole Inn, a gourmet dining house that still manages to serve Hook Norton Bitter plus occasional guest beers in plush surroundings.

In the neighbouring village of Marsh Baldon is a former Morland house and one of the stars of the show, The Seven Stars. After being run down and sold by Greene King to a local businessman, the local community refused to accept the loss of their only pub and raised money to buy it as a community pub. Go along and see for yourself what can be done as it serves super beer, malt whisky and food. This is the dream of how village and some city pubs should be run, and then we could dump the large pub companies and their failed policies. On offer during a recent visit were Gun Dog Ales' Jack's Spaniels from Northamptonshire, Siren Craft's Under Current, Shotover Prospect, and London Pride.



The Brewery Tap, Abingdon

as featured in the Good Beer Guide 2014

and WINNER of the CAMRA Town and Country Pub of the Year for SE Oxfordshire 2012



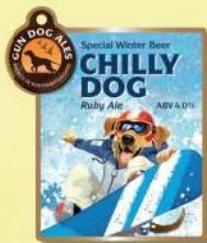
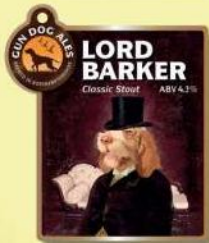
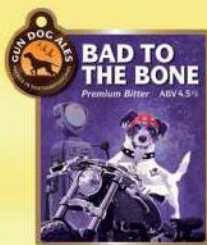
Spring Beer Festival 40+ cask ales, perries & craft ciders in our festival marquee

Fri 21st - Sun 23rd March

Plus authentic house prepared BBQ fare including beef brisket, pulled pork, smoked chicken and smoked sausages

Live Music on Sunday afternoon with the exceptional Swingtime big band

WHO LET THE DOGS OUT?

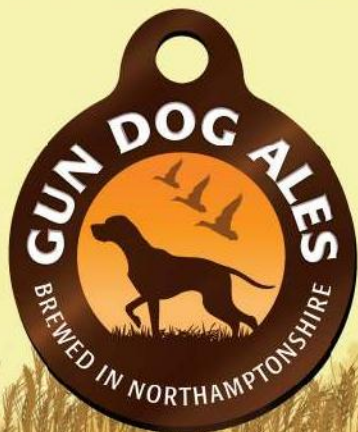


We did and we're delighted they're making friends with real ale fans everywhere.

Call us: 01327 264095

www.gundogales.co.uk

Available as Cask, Bottle and Polypin from the brewery shop





Join us for the Beer Festival Helpers' Trip

THIS year's free coach trip for helpers at the Oxford Beer and Cider Festival is scheduled for Saturday 15 March and will visit the historic Shropshire town of Bridgnorth and nearby riverside town of Bewdley in Worcestershire.

People can opt at their own expense to take a steam train ride between the two towns on the Severn Valley Railway (pictured below). Bridgnorth is about 90 miles from Oxford and has six pubs in the 2014 Good Beer Guide, including the Railwayman's Arms, on the station platform, with eight hand pumps. Bewdley has four GBG pubs, and time permitting a stop may also be made at Kidderminster which has two further GBG entries. See the branch diary for more details.



8 the Oxford Drinker



White Hart is top city pub

THE WHITE HART in Headington, was named as Oxford CAMRA City Pub of the Year for 2013 in January. Branch members selected the pub as the best of the six pubs profiled in the last issue; thank you if you took time and effort to cast your vote, and I hope you enjoyed all of the six pubs you visited.

Oxford Branch Chairman Tony Goulding is pictured above presenting the award to licensees Dan and Carole Smaje, on Saturday 1st February, surrounded by friends, relatives, customers and CAMRA members (*photo courtesy of Everards*).

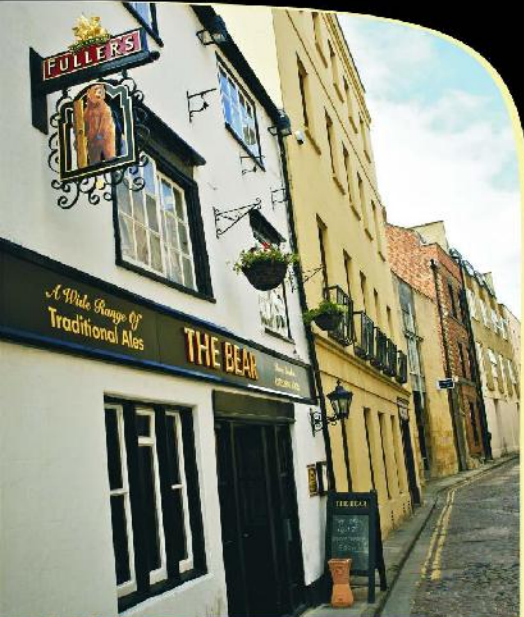
Tony praised the winners: "Good all round service, beer quality, ambiance and sympathy with CAMRA's policy all count to winning this competition. Having seen Everards commitment to the pub scene, especially their joint ventures with micro breweries, I would

like to say well done all round!"

Licensee Dan said: "We were so pleased just to be short listed in the top six for CAMRA Pub of the Year but to win it is absolutely amazing. There are many good pubs serving good beer in Oxford so there is a lot of competition. All our staff have worked really hard over the past couple of years and many of them have voluntarily done cellar training courses to learn how to serve and look after real ale properly. A big thank you to our regulars and everyone who has voted for us".

The seventeenth-century pub in the heart of Old Headington was bought and refurbished by Everards in 2003 with Dan and Carol taking over the pub in 2008.

The White Hart, 12 St Andrews Road, Headington, Oxford OX3 9DL; open 12-11 Sun-Thu, 12-12 Fri-Sat; 01865 761737



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



TAKING a brief swerve out of our branch area, we pulled up just after midday at a pub on the A4095 Witney to Bicester road where we knew we would find something special. The Rock of Gibraltar is a canalside pub at Enslow Bridge, near Bletchington, and is one of only two pubs anywhere where you'll find Fisher & Co's beers, the other being the James Street Tavern off Oxford's Cowley Road. The "Rock" effectively functions as Fisher & Co's brewery tap as this small brewery operates nearby in the village of Noke, and proprietor Jamie Fisher was there to greet us.

This is a large country pub benefiting from substantial investment, being one of three pubs leased by Jamie including the James Street Tavern and the Half Moon, in St Clements, Oxford. The Rock is free of tie, while the JST is a Greene King "Local Hero" tenancy able to

sell a wide range of real ales, and the Half Moon is a full Greene King tenancy. The brewery has been operational for two years but has developed slowly, but he hopes to double brewing capacity this year.

Five brews are made – Confessor (4.4%), Solicitor (4.2%), Satan's Sister (4.2%), Piper at the Gates of Dawn (3.9%) and Vicar's Daughter (3.7%), all being bitters. Solicitors and Vicar's Daughter were on today and the Solicitors were very tasty and a great way to start the day, with a great beer provided by Belhaven (Robert Burns Brown Ale). Jamie comes from a brewing family with close connections with Burton-on-Trent, but only entered the pubs trade when taking over the Half Moon in 2008.

The Rock is a large pub with split level bars, a separate dining room, stone flagged

floors and a pool area. It's well worth a visit, and I'll go back on a summer's day to enjoy the canalside atmosphere.

The Nut Tree is very much a gastro-pub with limited space for drinkers, but such is the appeal of real ale that three hand pumps are provided, today dispensing Sharp's Doom Bar, Wadworth Henry's IPA and my choice, Vale Brewery's Best Bitter which went down a treat. It's a picturesque thatched building in the village of Murcott, near Bicester, with its own duck pond. It's a fair way to go for a drink unless you live locally, but the cuisine is renowned. Nice to see real ale is so popular among the diners.

On now to Eynsham, and the Queen's Head, a small pub outside the town centre with a loyal following. The main bar is large and busy with a pool table and replica "Americana" jukebox, and it has a large



LEFT: Jamie Fisher of Fisher & Co Brewery
ABOVE: the Rock of Gibraltar

garden with Aunt Sally. Much nicer in my opinion was the smaller bar to the left of the entrance, which is a very traditional “talking shop” with wood-fired stove, railway memorabilia and darts board. On hand pumps today were the ubiquitous Doom Bar, White Horse Village Idiot and my own choice, Cottage Brewing’s Somerset and Dorset Ale, named after a defunct railway and brewed in Somerset. I must admit I am a sucker for anything with a railway theme, but it was disappointing and I couldn’t score it above average.

Standlake, near Eynsham, is one of those well-heeled villages where you’d expect a strong emphasis on food, and so there was at the Black Horse, with tables laid out ready for a Burns Night supper. But real ale is holding its own, with Hooky and Hobgoblin on offer from breweries in the county, plus Deuchars IPA from

Caledonian Brewery in Edinburgh which was the guest ale. It was expensive however at £3.80 a pint, but the near-£4 pint is by no means unusual in these parts. This stone-built, former Halls house with low beams, wood burning stove and comfy sofas is certainly well worth the trip, and with a large bar to the rear there is plenty of space for drinkers.

What more can I say about the Morris Clown, a “drinkers’ local”, which I profiled in a previous edition as it was one of the finalists in our Town and Country Pub of the Year? Situated in Bampton High Street and still refusing to sell food, it is traditional in every aspect – apart, perhaps, from landlord Steve Mace’s liking for tee-shirt and shorts even in January! And then there are the French murals, of course – the Morris Clown (a free house) definitely has character. Three real ales are usually on, the regulars

being West Berkshire’s Good Old Boy, and White Horse Bitter. I chose the guest beer which was totally new to me – Stoned (4.4%), from Three Castles Brewery of Pewsey, Wiltshire. It was good, but not outstanding – but I will always go for variety and experimentation, given the choice. Talk at the bar was of the evils of the pub business and closure of a pub in a nearby village, but that’s of no concern to a successful free house. Long may the success continue.

It was then on to the awesome winter ales festival at Charlbury’s most renowned pub, the Rose and Crown, which you can read about on page 7. Before succumbing to the chocolate stout I was left to ponder on another enjoyable day in good company, with 14 ales to choose from before arriving here. Look out for our next minibus trip - you won’t be disappointed!

Kegging it Stateside

Tony Goulding reports on the beer scene on the East Coast of the USA

THERE'S a lot of controversy in CAMRA circles about craft keg beers, which come mainly from North America, and whether these should be regarded as real ales. Keg beers are usually chill filtered and pasteurised with added gas, served at a lower temperature than hand pumps. But with the huge increase in quality in keg beers, which can be served using compressed air rather than gas, is it time to look again at their credentials?

These thoughts were in my mind as I headed to the US and Canada on a family holiday, where I found the craft beer scene to be absolutely thriving. We have to recognise that the craft keg beers produced today bear no resemblance to mass produced kegs such as John Smith and Tetley, and that American craft keg is generally superior to anything we have here. But there is a small craft keg movement in north London, and breweries such as Hook Norton are producing very drinkable kegs for customers such as social or sports clubs where beers need a long life span.

I headed first for New England and the Boston suburb of Wyndthrop, where former dance hall the Wyndthrop Arms Inn had a fine selection including Heavy Seas Loose Cannon IPA (7.2%) and Cisco Brewing's WhalesTale (5.6%) – both very refreshing and tasty. Then it was on to North Conway in New Hampshire, to Moat Mountain Smokehouse and Brewery, where Iron Mike Pale Ale (4.9%) was super and Bone Shaker Brown Ale (4.6%) a tasty mild. Square Tail Stout (5.1%) and Tukerman's Pale Ale (4.7%) were also super beers, and I rounded off my visit with medium sweet Woodchuck Cider (5.8%).

At Lake Placid, Vermont, the Great Adirondack Brewing Company provided Haystack Blonde Ale (4.8%), similar to British pale ale. Ausable Wulff red ale (5.3%) is a best bitter named after a fly used by fishermen, using six varieties of British malt and served on hand pump. John Brown Ale (6.6%) was a dry brew and Adirondack Abbey Ale (7.5%) is a multi-award winner using a rare Belgian yeast. White Face Stout

(6%) was outstanding with hints of chocolate and coffee.

Visiting New England in the autumn is great because of the colours of the trees during what Americans call "The Fall", and soon I would find a hint of spruce in my drink. At the Magic Hat Brewery in Burlington, Vermont I picked up a mixed box of 12 300 ml bottles for £8 – a bargain. Devilled Amber at 5.2% was a tasty malt, while HIPA (6.7%) reminded me of how Taylor's Landlord tasted 20 years ago. Otter Creek Brewery at Middlebury, Vermont provided yet more tastings including the wonderful Alta Gracia Coffee Porter (7%).

While passing through Saranac, upper New York State, we enjoyed open day at Saranac Brewery where Black Fly IPA (6.2%) was sharp and fruity and Red Skin Ale (5.4%) had a hint of ginger. Spruce Ale (5.2%) was made with spruce tips. Forest Home Black Lager, with honey and rosemary, was a complex but interesting beer.

Close to the Canadian border at Sackets Harbour – scene of a



battle in the 1812 War of Independence – we found the Sackets Harbour Brewery, in the former railway station building. War of 1812 Amber Ale (5.4%) was a tasty best bitter and Hurricane Andrew (6%) a dry hopped IPA conditioned for two weeks. Railroad Red (5.4%) is brewed using English malts. Ulysses Grant Ale (5.2%) is brewed to celebrate the Civil War general's residency in this town – apparently, he arrived teetotal but left in no such state.

Crossing into Canada and visiting its largest city, Toronto, I came across a lovely little bar called the Monk's Kettle. With superb ambience, service and knowledge of its subject, it served up Angry Orchard Cider (6%), St Ambrose Stout (6%), 1516 Pale Ale (4.5%), Mad Topa Askoka IPA (5.1%) and Boneshaker IPA (5.3%), in one of the best café bars I have ever visited.

Crossing the border back into New York State, we visited West Point Military Academy before coming to Newburgh, a run-down and unfriendly

Hudson River town, where Newburgh Brewing is in a converted warehouse. Even here there was a wide range including Brown Ale (4.2%), Peat Smoke Stout (4%), Newburgh IPA (7%), the Belgian-style Squashtober (5.6%) and Hot Drop Double IPA – a tasty 9.1%.

Final stop was in Great Barrington, Massachusetts where the Barrington Brewery provided Berkshire Blonde (4%), Hopland Pale (5.1%), Barrington Brown (5.4%), Black Bear Stout (5.2%) and Ice Glen IPA (5.7%).

All the American craft keg beers that I tasted are as flavoursome as British real ale, and I hope I have given some impression of the quality and range available, often from breweries established in the last 20 years. CAMRA will of course remain true to its real ale principles, but we should recognise that American draft keg is a quality product superior to any keg in the UK.

TONY GOULDING

Oxford Branch Diary

Wednesday 26 February
Special General Meeting
 St Aldates Tavern, from 7.30pm
 SGM to consider nominations for the committee positions of Treasurer and Membership Secretary. Open to all members.

Wednesday 5 March

Branch Meeting

Three Pigeons, Witney
 18.30 Royal Oak, High Street
 19.30 Three Pigeons, Wood Green
 Regular monthly meeting. All welcome.

Saturday 15 March

Beer Festival Helpers Trip

Bridgnorth, Bewdley and the Severn Valley Railway
 Coach trip to Bridgnorth, and then on to Bewdley and Kidderminster. Return from Kidderminster about 7pm. Free to all those who helped at the Beer Festival. Contact Steve Lawrence using the details below.

Oxford Branch Contacts:

Chairman
 Tony Goulding
 07588 181313
chair@oxfordcamra.org.uk

Secretary
 Steve Lawrence
 01235 525436
contact@oxfordcamra.org.uk

Treasurer
treasurer@oxfordcamra.org.uk

Vice-Chair and Chairman of the Pubs Group
 Dennis Brown
vice-chair@oxfordcamra.org.uk

Pub News

Abingdon

GROSS KEYS: Landlady Lisa Rowberry quit the pub in December, but a new tenant has moved into the Greene King hostelry. She told the Oxford Mail that opening of the Wetherspoons had been a major blow and that she has moved on to the King's Arms in Wantage.

GROWN & THISTLE: The old Abingdon coaching inn re-opened in late November and is determined to be a major player on the town's burgeoning real ale scene. Oakman Inns, whose other hotels include the Old Post Office in Wallingford and Blue Boar in Witney, has acquired the 18-bedroom hotel and given it a major revamp at a total cost of around £4 million, including sympathetic restoration of historic features such as wooden beams and flooring. A new area with historic features has been opened up for functions next to the bar, and this is where beer festivals will be held. Bar operations manager Rob Sanders (right) says the previous clientele gave the hotel a down-market image, but they have now moved on to cheaper venues. Marston's is the main supplier of beer, but Rob is building on strong relationships with other brewers forged when he worked at the Old Post Office. Loose Cannon is a regular supplier, including Abingdon Bridge and monthly specials such as LC 606, described as "a dark cask lager", in January. There are five hand pumps in the bar, other brews being available on a recent visit including Wychwood's Toasty Oaty and Hobgoblin, and Jennings' Cockle Warmer. Two further hand pumps are available

in the restaurant, which was dispensing Ringwood's Scuttlebut and Brakspear's Oxford Gold. Loddon Brewery is another regular with Ferryman's Gold and other brews, and Rob reckons that over 20 real ales are available each month, all retailing at £3.65-£3.95 a pint. Beer festivals are just some of many special events planned, and there is plenty of live music. Irish real ales will feature on St Patrick's Day weekend (15-16 March), and a Marston's beer festival is scheduled for the 23-26 May Bank Holiday weekend. On the 22-25 August Bank Holiday weekend, over 20 local ales are expected at the next beer festival. Rob concludes: "Real ale is our biggest seller, and people who usually go to Oxford are now staying in Abingdon to drink it. We take it very seriously and want to drive Abingdon forward."



HARP: A future as commercial or residential property awaits this former Greene King property, which has now closed. It was previously known as the Plough.

Please send your pub and brewery news to: pub-news@oxfordcamra.org.uk

Aston

RED LION: This Enterprise-owned pub was closed in January and remained so at the time of writing. It is the only pub in this village to the east of Witney, although there are several in nearby Bampton.

Oxford

CHESTER ARMS: No information on the proposed re-opening date was available at the time of writing, although February had been mooted.

FAIRVIEW: Acquired by a local businessman from Enterprise Inns in December, it continues to function as a pub with the same beer range as before.

KITE: According to Greene King's website, the new tenancy agreement for this Mill Street pub in west Oxford could be for a "Local Hero" arrangement pub with 50% of cask ale sales being free of tie. It has already been transformed into a real ale pub with seven hand pumps, and available on a recent visit were Robinson's Trooper, Lancaster Brewery's Lemon Grass, Black Sheep Bitter, Belhaven Robert Burns Ale, Greene King Double Hop Monster and Hardy and Hanson's Kimberley Bitter. "Local Hero is an innovative agreement that's all about supporting local provenance in food and drink," says the GK website. "A Local Hero pub is a traditional, welcoming, proper pub at the heart of the local community. As a passionate cask ale enthusiast, you will support your local suppliers by serving locally-

sourced food and offering the best cask ale in the area. The unique Local Hero Agreement is designed to share risk and reward. There is a simple royalty charge, based on net turnover, payable to Greene King.”

HUFFIELD ARMS: The lease on this Punch Taverns pub has been acquired by Gerry McGrath, who runs pubs in Kidlington.

WHITE HART, WOLVERCOTE: The community buy-out of this free house in the centre of the village was completed in December, making it the second community-owned pub in the branch area after the Seven Stars at Marsh Baldon. Owned by Punch Taverns until September 2012, it became a free house after local businessman Simon Ryde outbid developers to keep it running as a pub, which was leased to the managers Jon and Ann Antoni. They have moved on and the lease re-assigned to a local co-operative, which borrowed money to fund the purchase. It now intends to re-establish the White Hart as a community focus, including activities such as British Legion meetings and children’s cinema. It received advice from CAMRA, charity the Plunkett Foundation and the Oxfordshire Community Trust during the buy-out, and it will remain a free house. Wiltshire brewery Ramsbury was a main supplier before and will re-appear, and atypical range includes Loose Cannon Gunners Gold, White Horse Village Idiot, and Betty Stogs from Skinner’s in Cornwall. Real ale is described as absolutely vital to the pub’s future, and an increase from three to five hand pumps is possible. Although a limited food



ABOVE: All hands to the pumps at the White Hart, Wolvercote, from left: Directors Christopher Gowers and Andy Hutcheson; and pub manager, Ged Docherty.

service is set to return, the White Hart has no plans to emulate nearby gastro-pubs including Jacob’s Inn (formerly the Red Lion), which is right next door, and the Trout. Manager Ged Docherty, previously at the Red Lion, also worked at the Berkshire House (now the Crooked Pot) in Abingdon Road a few years ago. The White Hart is at the terminus of the number 6 bus route from central Oxford and looks forward to welcoming CAMRA members.

Witney

BUTCHERS ARMS: This Corn Street pub, owned by Enterprise Inns, closed in November 2012 and has re-opened as the Himalayan Spice Nepalese restaurant.

Yarnton

RED LION: Re-opened after refurbishment, the pub may be renamed the Yarnton Bell after the bell from naval patrol ship HMS Yarnton which hangs in the bar and is used to call time.

Grove

VOLUNTEER: This pub has been closed for many months and has not found any buyers prepared to reopen it as a pub. Instead, it is to become a ‘destination diner with a twist’ according to the Oxford Mail, bringing ‘a taste of gourmet American cuisine’, and renamed Chariots and Cherry Pie. The threatened 6-month closure of Grove Railway bridge does not augur well for its prospects, however.

Brewery News

Steventon

NORTHSTAR: This pub, featured on CAMRA's Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors, has been up for sale, and now closed on Mondays.

Sunningwell

FLOWINGWELL: is currently closed.

Wantage

SHEARS: This pub, which has been closed for some time and was subject to a recent planning application to turn it into flats, is back on the market, but presumably not as a pub.

ROYAL OAK: Was finalist in Cider Pub of the Year and was a previous national winner. It now proudly hosts some 33 real ciders from around the country. Is this a record?

Vale

February sees the start of the Six Nations Rugby tournament, so to mark that event it has decided to re-brew an old favourite, Lock, Prop and Barrel, available at 4.1%. This is a tawny coloured beer brewed to a different recipe than used before, but as Vale loved the name, it has kept that and created a new pump clip. For March it has created Spring Forward, a 3.8% bitter, copper in colour with a floral hop finish to indicate a hint of spring, and certainly something to look forward to. If you are a fan of Red Kite, its 4% Chestnut Red malty brew, then check your local Wetherspoons as is featured up to March this year, although not always available in each outlet.

Whilst a pub remains the best place to enjoy real ale, the Vale Brewery shop is taking advance orders for mini-pins (17 pints) poly-pins (36 pints) and for, the really enthusiastic, firkins of 70

pints. This beer can be bright, so ready to drink with a three- or four-day shelf life, or with the yeast sediment lasting up to seven days. Several Vale beers are also available in bottle conditioned form including Gravitas and Red Kite. This offers a great beer but without the yeast, so it is easy to pour and can be stored in the fridge.

West Berkshire

The brewery, started in 1995, is now offering shares to fund future expansion as the founding shareholders reduce their holdings to encourage wider ownership of the business. It aims to raise £2 million and minimum investment is £1,000, but up to four people can club together to raise this sum. The shares offer is due to close at 5pm on 28 February unless it is fully subscribed any earlier.



LEFT: Congratulations! Siren Craft Brewery of Finchampton, near Reading, beat off many contenders when its hoppy and pungent Soundwave IPA (5.6%) was named LocAle Beer of the Festival at the Oxford Beer and Cider Festival last October. A presentation was made during a winter beer festival held at the Grapes in George Street, and pictured are, from left: Ian Clark of Siren; Matt Bullock from Oxford CAMRA; and James Dixon of The Grapes.



The Cricketers Arms
Littleworth, Wheatley

The Littleworth Annual Original
**Beer & Sausage
Festival**

21 - 23 February 2014

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

**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

THE QUEENS HEAD
QUEEN STREET, EYNHAM

Saturday 1 March
12 noon - 12 midnight

CORNISH ALES

AND
TRADITIONAL PASTIES

SEA SHANTIES FROM 8PM
01865 881229



*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

Steering to Port

Dave Richardson joins Southampton CAMRA member Nick Gearing to sample some of the city's real ale pubs

WITH 11 pubs – and even one off-licence – listed in this year's Good Beer Guide, Southampton has to be a contender for a good day out for Oxford branch members. There's at least one direct train per hour (journey time 1h 25m) with the last train back departing at 8.15pm, and if you plan your day carefully you can enjoy a wide range of brews in pubs of rare character. As the pubs are spread throughout a fairly large city, it's best to concentrate on two areas with a good concentration of pubs. We started by taking a taxi to the Bevoir Valley area to the north-east of the city centre, having our first pint at a backstreet local called the Guide Dog where you're assured of a warm welcome. It might be best avoided when Southampton FC are playing at home, however, as it gets very packed on match days.

This is a free house which usually serves Goodens Gold, from Flowerpots Brewery near Winchester, currently the champion beer of Hampshire. That went down very well and set the bar high for the day ahead, as did this pub – which has been South Hampshire's

Pub of the Year five times in the last seven years. Up to nine hand pumps are available, and also on offer today were Titanic's Plum Porter, Buntingford's Silent Night, Cotleigh's Tawny Owl, our own White Horse Wayland Smithy, and Fullers ESB. Another regular not on today was Stonehenge Brewery's Danish Dynamite.

Landlord Paul Barden has been here for eight years, telling me the one-room pub was called the Valley Inn when owned by Wadworth but renamed as collections for the blind have long been held here. Real ale represents 85% of his business leading to an increase in the number of hand pumps, and the ambience is very traditional with pub games, football memorabilia, and, he proudly told me, "no noise except for people talking". The only food served is rolls, and I left after a half of Flowerpots' Fork Handles wondering if I should stay all day.

There are many ways of promoting a pub, but I have never before seen it done with a classic American car – in this

case, a 1974 Oldsmobile Delta Highway patrol car, which can usually be found parked somewhere near the Rockstone in Onslow Road, very close to the Guide Dog. It's a fair cop, Guv – the car being owned by the Rockstone's head chef Max Greenwood, who is well known in Southampton. The GBG-listed Rockstone describes itself as "a country pub in the centre of town" and "a public house that caters to the various tribes in Southampton's alternative scene". It has a strong accent on food, entertainment, music and – you guessed it – real ale. The clientele on this Thursday lunchtime was mainly young, and I imagine it gets younger as the day goes on. The fact that the Rockstone serves at least six real ales shows how wide the appeal of our favourite tippie now is.

Dorset brewer Sunny Republic brews Dolphin Amber, which I tried – a very tasty traditional best bitter at 4.2%. Also available from this brewer was Chocolate Porter, while Hampshire brewery Flack Manor weighed in with Double Drop. Another LocAle brew was Bowman's Nutz, while Itchen



ABOVE: Dave plays Sheriff with the Rockstone's car

RIGHT: The Richmond on Portswood Road



Valley's Russian Winter also hails from Hampshire. Completing a most impressive line-up was Hop Back's Winter Lightning, plus Double Trouble by JJ's West Country Cider.

It was now time to head up Portswood Road, in an area much influenced by students and well known for its nightlife. The main aim was to see GBG entry the Richmond Inn, but we stopped first at the Gordon Arms across the road – a rather gloomy pub with four real ales, but only one which I would class as unusual. This was Wells' A Good Stuffing (a Christmas ale), but otherwise the range was unexciting – Sharp's Doom Bar, St Austell Tribute, and Ringwood.

It's asking a lot of an Oxford CAMRA member to visit a Greene King pub in another city, as we have quite a few of our own. But the Richmond Inn, also on Portswood Road, has made it into the GBG so must be worth a look. It's very traditional in style with memorabilia about Southampton and its maritime history, and etched windows. I chose the guest beer, of course

– Batemans' XXXB from Lincolnshire, a very acceptable alternative to GK's IPA, Abbot and Old Golden Hen. Well done for getting in the GBG, when so many other pubs offer a wider range of ale.

Real ale's appeal to younger generations was evident again when we stepped into the Hobbit on Bevois Valley Road, an enormous split-level hostelry also popular with students with a very impressive five hand pumps, plus two real ciders. Garishly decorated to reflect the hobbit theme, with low lighting and red décor, you might think this is not the place to enjoy a relaxing pint. You'd probably be right later in the day, but in early evening there was time to survey a range including Dorset Brewing Company's Jurassic, Itchen Valley's Otter bitter and two ciders, Weston's Old Rosie and Country Perry. The Hobbit – formerly the Portswood Arms – is an interesting if non-essential stop.

Still within easy walking distance of where we started, we moved on to the St Denys area for two GBG-listed pubs in close proximity. First stop was

the Junction Inn, a pub with a very interesting and traditional interior with a long, curved bar, etched glass and pictures of bygone Southampton, plus a pub sign of levers in a railway signal box. This is a Greene King "Local Hero" tenancy, which has negotiated an agreement giving it access to LocAle beers as well as the alternatives that GK can provide. Apart from Abbot and IPA, it offered Jimmy's Best Bitter from Dorset brewery Piddle; Tolly Cobbold's Tolly English Ale (a low 2.8%, tempting by this stage of the day); Upham Brewery's Winter's T'Ale; Bowman's Swift One; Hardy and Hansons' Olde Trip and Kimberley Bitter. I went for the Piddle (I went *for* a piddle too), and there were also a couple of ciders. The pub was in fact rebuilt as recently as 2012 after a major fire, and what a good job they have made of it.

Just around the corner, continuing the railway theme, is the South Western Arms – a highly popular and also "young" pub boasting no fewer than 10 hand pumps, six of which were in use on the night. A large, split



LEFT: John Clark at the Junction Inn
RIGHT: The Guide Dog was a good place to start the day

-level pub belonging to Enterprise, it has bare brick walls and wooden floors, and exposed beams upstairs where there's also a pool table. Flowerpot's Goodens Gold was available here too, but I tried Heart of Gold from Hampshire brewery Oakleaf which was quite strong enough at 3.8%. Also in the frame were Purity's Mad Goose, Fry's Devon Ruby, Hop Back Summer Lightning, and Bowman's Nellie's Nob. This is clearly another highly successful pub, again with real ale at the heart of its appeal.

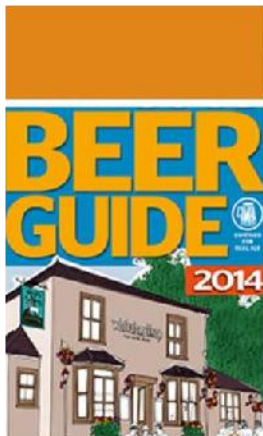
As you might gather from the names Junction Inn and South Western Arms, St Denys has a railway station from where you can back-track to Southampton Central, or head north to join the Oxford train at nearby Southampton Airport Parkway. I pondered the wisdom of calling it a day, but no – there were still two "musts" to visit. As these were in a different part of Southampton, fairly close to Central station, we opted for a £9 taxi ride. Next stop – for a meal as well as a drink – was the Waterloo Arms, which is something of a rarity being one of only nine pubs belonging to

Salisbury-based Hop Back Brewery. Most of Hop Back's renowned ales were on sale – including the popular Summer Lightning, Winter Lightning, GFB, Crop Circle and Elf & Hoppiness (OK, this was just before Christmas!) One or two guest beers are usually on, and Weston's Rosie's Pig cider completed a memorable range. I had the Crop Circle, a refreshingly blonde summery beer at 4.2%, and by this stage of the game I really was seeing things! Landlord John Clark had only been here for a few months but had already seen a steady build-up in trade, showing that people like Hop Back as well as the traditional atmosphere.

By now, I admit, I was flagging – our last stop was our ninth pub, though not my ninth pint. The Wellington Arms is something of an institution, GBG-listed and with one of the biggest ranges of real ale in Southampton. It's the kind of pub where no-one bats an eyelid if you talk beer seriously, with a real fire, a fine display of tankards, and something unique that you might well miss. All I could manage by this stage was a half of Dark Star's Chocolate

Porter, which certainly did what it says on the tin – delicious. Dartmoor's Dragon's Breath and IPA were rare brews for me – Fuller's London Pride and ESB, not so. Flack Manor's Flack's Double Drop kept up the LocAle theme, but I gave a wide berth to Oakleaf's Blakes Heaven at 7%! Ringwood Forty Niner and Young's Special completed a highly impressive line-up, plus something called Muddler which I haven't yet tracked down but may be from Andwell Brewery of Basingstoke.

And the unique feature? The "Welly" is the British consulate of the Kingdom of Redonda, an uninhabited rock in the Caribbean, being declared sovereign territory in 2007 to avoid the UK's smoking ban. The ruse didn't work, but as I wound my weary way back to Southampton Central, I reflected that the Guide Dog and the Welly – the first and last pubs on our crawl – are the ones I'd go back to again. We had visited six of Southampton's 11 GBG pubs and hadn't set foot in a Wetherspoons, so there's plenty of potential for next time.



THE MASONS ARMS



The Masons Arms
 2 Quarry School Place
 Headington
 Oxford
 01865-764679
www.themasonsarms.co.uk
 0911masonsarms@bt.com

Home of the
 OLD BOG
 Brewery



WADWORTH & CO
 since 1875

125 years of brewing excellence

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.



A TASTE OF
WADWORTHSHIRE

www.wadworth.co.uk

Free Beer!

and other stuff for winners of our competition



Membership of West Berkshire Brewery's Good Old Boys Club – worth £55 – is the prize for the two winners of our photographic competition. Here are pictures of six former pubs in Oxford or Abingdon which have found other uses as commercial or residential premises. Some are easy to identify – others less so. Tell us the names of the pubs and where they are, and the two highest scoring entries received by 30 March will win the prizes.



Email your answers with your name, address and contact details to editor@oxfordcamra.org.uk or post this page to: 42 Kennington Road, Oxford, OX1 5PB.

A _____
 B _____
 C _____
 D _____
 E _____
 F _____

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____



The Flour Barn, Frilsham Home Farm,
 Yattendon, Berkshire, RG18 0XT
 t. 01635 202968 e. info@wbbrew.com



Please note: Entry is open to all except committee members of Oxford CAMRA. You do not need to be a CAMRA member to enter. Entries received after the advertised end date will not be considered. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. The prizes are as advertised and are kindly donated by West Berkshire Brewery.

LOOSE CANNON

BREWERY • ABINGDON

SIBA
2008
REG. ONAL
WINNER
4.0 / 5

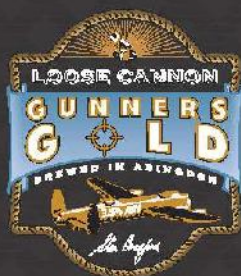
Best

SIBA
2008
REG. ONAL
WINNER
4.5 / 5

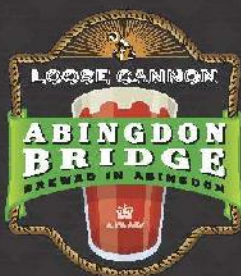
Best

SIBA
11.1
REGIONAL
WINNER
4.5 / 5

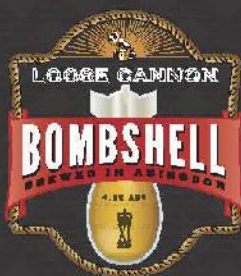
Best



STANDARD BITTERS



BEST BITTERS



BOTTLED GOLD BEERS

Visit our Brewery Shop or go online at www.lcbeers.co.uk

Text BEER 1 to 66777 for updates on new beers and offers, charged at standard network rate

Open 8am-6pm weekdays, 9am-5pm Saturdays, L rail 3, Suffolk Way, OX14 5JK, Tel: 01235 531141

shop@lcbeers.co.uk

@LooseCannonBeer

LooseCannonBrewery

HOOKY

ALC 3.5% VOL (2.0 UNITS PER PINT)

GOLDEN & WELL BALANCED
HANDCRAFTED IN THE COTSWOLD HILLS SINCE 1849



HOOK NORTON
BREWERY



LION

PRIDE OF THE COTSWOLDS
COMPLEX, BALANCED, REFRESHING

ALC 5.0% VOL (2.6 UNITS PER PINT)



HOOK NORTON
BREWERY

OLD HOOKY

ALC 4.8% VOL (2.6 UNITS PER PINT)

FRUITY & FULL BODIED
HANDCRAFTED IN THE COTSWOLD HILLS SINCE 1849



HOOK NORTON
BREWERY

Have you heard the Lion roar?

At Hook Norton we've got an exciting new addition to our range of great tasting beers. Visit our tasting bar, open Monday to Saturday 9.30am – 4.30pm, to try Lion - pride of the Cotswolds. Brewery Tours run twice a day Monday to Saturday at just £11.50 per person including a half hour tutored tasting - definitely not to be missed! For more information visit our website.

The Brewery, Hook Norton, Oxfordshire, OX15 5NY 01608 730384 e: vc@hooky.co.uk

Open Monday to Saturday 9.30am - 4.30pm all year round

HOOK NORTON BREWERY

HANDCRAFTED IN THE
COTSWOLD HILLS SINCE 1849

www.hooky.co.uk

Beer Festival Diary

Further details of festivals in the area can be found on the Oxford CAMRA website www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/festivals.php

**Wednesday 19 -
Saturday 22 February**
CAMRA National Winter
Ales Festival
The Roundhouse, Pride
Park, Derby
Includes 'Champion Winter Beer
of Britain Competition'
350+ beers, ciders & perries
www.nwaf.org.uk

**Friday 21 - Monday 24
February**
Winter Beer Festival
King's Head & Bell,
East St Helen's Street, Abingdon
01235 525362
www.kingsheadandbell-abingdon.com

**Friday 21 - Sunday 23
February**
Littleworth Annual Original
Beer & Sausage Festival
Cricketers Arms, Littleworth,
01865 872738
www.cricketers-arms.co.uk

**Friday 28 February -
Saturday 1 March**
Merton Beer Festival
Merton Village Hall, Islip Road,
Merton, nr Bicester
20+ beers, ciders & perries

Saturday 1 March
Queens Head Beer Festival
Queens Head, Eynsham. Cornish
beers and traditional pasties.
12noon - 12 midnight

**Tuesday 18 - Saturday
22 March**
Spring Ale Festival
Far From the Madding
Crowd,
Friars Entry, Oxford
01865 240900

www.maddingcrowd.co.uk

**Friday 21 - Sunday 23
March**
Brewery Tap Beer Festival
The Brewery Tap, Ock Street,
Abingdon
01235 521655
www.thebrewerytap.net

**Wednesday 26 March -
Thursday 10 April**
Wetherspoon Real Ale
Festival
Four Candles and Swan & Castle.
www.jdwetherspoon.co.uk

**Saturday 5 - Tuesday 8
April**
Spring Cider Festival
Far from the Madding
Crowd,
Friars Entry, Oxford
01865 240900
www.maddingcrowd.co.uk

**Thursday 17 - Monday
21 April**
Woodman Easter Beer
Festival
New Yatt Road, North Leigh, nr
Witney
01993 881790

**Thursday 8 - Saturday
10 May**
Banbury Beer Festival
TA Centre, Oxford Road, Banbury
www.northoxoncamra.org.uk

**Friday 23 - Sunday 25
May**
Gardeners Arms Beer
Festival
Gardeners Arms, Plantation
Road, Jericho, Oxford
01865 559814
www.thegarden-oxford.co.uk

Club America

THE UNIVERSITY Club on Mansfield Road held its second bottled beer night just before Christmas. The first event, which unfortunately I missed, featured Belgian beers; this event featured 13 beers from the other side of the Atlantic.

The format of the event was as before: you pay £11 at the bar which buys you five bottles, which are served to you in a bucket full of ice, with a glass and the necessary bottle opener.

Star of the night for me was the Widmer Pitch Black IPA (6.5%), from Portland, Oregon, and coincidentally the only brewery featured that I have actually visited. Other stand-out beers were Goose Island IPA (5.9%) from Chicago, Fordham Copperhead (5.2%) from Dover, Delaware, and Kona Fire Rock Pale Ale (5.9%) from Hawaii.

Club manager Kabi Puliyadi is keen to arrange some more beer tasting nights; sign up to our email list to be the first to hear about these events. Should you get the chance to visit in the meantime, the club always offers a good choice of real ales.

MATT BULLOCK



A year of beer

Abingdon member **Michael Sibbald** recorded his beer consumption over 12 months, with some interesting results



AS CAMRA members, how do we tell whether or not we drink responsibly or too much? Is listening to someone who thinks they know more than you a better guide than comparing what you drink with those around you? To try and answer my question I thought it would be a bit of fun to record my beer drinking for a year and so, between the 1st of April 2012 and the 31st of March 2013, my little book accompanied me whenever I went out.

To get results which would be fairly typical of my habits, the one rule was not to go out just for the sake of making an entry. After all I was recording what I do drink, not what I could, but I did include any beer I drank at home. The information recorded was the pub and date, brewery and beer, its strength and the price. In summary, I drank 274 pints in 76 different venues, comprising 68 pubs, three beer festivals (Oxford, Wantage and Charlbury), Headingley cricket ground, Nettlebed folk club, the restaurant under Folly Bridge, the Hawkwell House Hotel in Iffley, and Salter's steamers between Abingdon and Oxford. I also had two litres of Abingdon

Bridge at Christmas, bought from the brewery, and 55, mostly 500ml bottles, giving a grand total of 333 drinks (if one litre equals two drinks), which is less than one a day. However, the 274 pints were actually drunk over only 97 days of the year which meant I was averaging under three pints on each of those days.

The visits to pubs took in seven beer festivals, at the King's Head and Bell (winter and spring), Brewery Tap, the Anchor and the Broad Face in Abingdon; the Prince of Wales in Shippon; and the Lamb and Flag in Oxford; as well as CAMRA surveys of Jericho, the West Midlands and the festival helpers' trip to Nottingham. I used nine pubs in Abingdon and 21 in Oxford but the most frequented was The Railway at Culham, providing refreshment on 21 Friday lunchtimes. The most distant was the Castle Inn in Bamburgh, Northumberland.

And what of the beer itself? The most popular beer with a total of 20 pints and the Christmas two litres was, perhaps unsurprisingly, Loose Cannon's Abingdon Bridge. But the award

for the most cheery beer must go to Holden's Mild, as after four pints of this magic potion Wolverhampton Wanderers turned into an almost competent football team. Of course reality would not be far away and by 5pm on a Saturday, after the effects had worn off, all there was to look forward to was a long train journey home and more disappointment. The strongest beer was Wessex Brewery's Russian Stout Imperial Stout at 9% taken at the Anchor beer festival, and at the other end of the scale I tried the 2.7% Adnams Sole Star in the Posada in Wolverhampton.

The cost of the pub drinking was £815, and while there may have been other ways of spending the money, I challenge anyone to come up with one that would have been as enjoyable. Simple arithmetic, or a calculator, shows the average price of a pint at £2.97. Oxford drinkers are only too aware of the price of beer locally but this was offset by the West Midlands where I usually received change from £2.50 for a pint and in some pubs with Leeds, coming in at around £2.80.

My most expensive pint was Thornbridge Jaipur at £4.05, with my CAMRA discount, in the Brewery Tap. This was introduced to me by a very excited fellow drinker as a "collector's item", and I would always prefer paying a higher price for something worth drinking than a pint of cloudy dishwater for £2 over the road. The cheapest pint was St. George's bitter on special offer at the beginning of April in The Swan with Two Nicks in Worcester for £1.95 a pint, just beating Wetherspoon's Four Candles and The Moon Over The Water in Boston where it was £1.99 for Everard's Tiger and Milestone's Old English Ale respectively. As for bottled beers the prices weren't recorded, with 28 breweries supplying 45 beers, the most popular of which was Thwaites Wainwright.

In total 113 breweries from all over the country provided me with 201 beers. I still don't know what type of drinker all this makes me, if I helped save any pubs, or if scoring the beers even crossed my mind. But I had some good times and may even have made some new friends.

One thing for certain is that the more involved a CAMRA member you become, the greater the opportunity to go out and have a drink in different places. This might mean having to carry out another survey in two or three years' time. But being at an age where I can afford to spend less time at work and more time enjoying myself, I already have an idea which way it will go.

MICHAEL SIBBALD



I ALWAYS ENJOY the Rose and Crown Beer Festival in Charlbury as it's something to look forward to at the end of the dull month of January. This year was no exception, and a choice of over 20 ales offered a superb range of styles and strengths to take your mind off the weather.

My particular favourites over the weekend were the citrusy Orkney Northern Light (4%) from Quoylool in Orkney, the dry and bitter Ceit Silures (4.6%) from Caerphilly, and a new beer from an old name, Lacons of Great Yarmouth - a hoppy blonde beer called Legacy (4.4%). On both nights I

managed to finish off with one or two halves (or more) of a strong pale beer, Bladdernut (6%), brewed by Wood Street, a Sheffield brewery founded in 2012. There were a few darker beers, Wye Valley Choc n' Oat Stout probably being the best.

The festival seemed to be well attended, and how nice it was to see so many people from Oxford CAMRA there on Saturday afternoon too. Some good blues music rounded off the Saturday night to such an extent that my planned return on the Sunday had to be abandoned!

MATT BULLOCK

IAN AND SARAH LIDDLE are leaving the Royal Blenheim in St Ebbes Street, Oxford, after five years in charge. In this time, their pub has been a regular entry in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide and has been an Oxford Pub of the Year finalist on more than one occasion. The pub, run by White Horse Brewery, has become a fixture on the city real ale scene.

Ian and Sarah are moving to run a pub in Mullion in Cornwall, and the Royal Blenheim will be left in the capable hands of cellarman Chris Davies. We wish them all well behind their respective new bars.



A Campaign

of Two Halves

Fair deal
on beer
now!

Save
Britain's
Pubs!



Join CAMRA Today

Complete the Direct Debit form below 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) _____

Single Membership Direct Debit Non DD
£28 £25

(UK & EU)

Joint Membership £28 £30

(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) _____

01/06

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 Debit from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards issued 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 valid for all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay by Direct Debit.
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit, Campaign for Real Ale Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or advise you via email. If you request the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd to debit a payment, you must provide the amount and date which you wish to pay at the time of the request.
- If you receive a debit 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 in any one of the following ways:
 - contacting your bank or building society/Written confirmation may be required. Please see below.



The Campaign for Real Ale - Reading & Mid Berkshire presents:

THE 20th READING BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

Thursday 1st May to Sunday 4th May 2014

OPENING HOURS & PRICES

THURSDAY 1ST MAY

4.30pm – 11pm
(£7.50 Door, £14.30 Advance)

FRIDAY 2ND MAY

11am – 11pm
(£10 Door, £17.30 Advance)

SATURDAY 3RD MAY

11am – 4.30pm
(£10 Door, £17.30 Advance)
6pm – 11pm
(£10 Door, £17.30 Advance)

SUNDAY 4TH MAY

12pm – 8pm
(£7.00 Door, £13.80 Advance)

FEATURING:

550+ Real Ales
200+ Real Ciders
Foreign Beer
Great British
Wine

Including:



PLUS:

Pub Quiz

Thursday 1st - with prizes to be won!

Festival Games

Food available
Hot & Cold food available all day

Family Day

Sunday 4th - Entertainment & FREE entry for Children

Live Music

Friday 2nd + Saturday 3rd

ADVANCE TICKET PRICES INCLUDE:

- Guaranteed PRIORITY entry to the festival
- Festival souvenir glass & programme
- 2 pints of Beer/Cider vouchers*

(* or towards higher cost of foreign beer and wine)

Tickets can be purchased at:
readingbeerfestival.org.uk

WE ARE ONLINE



readingbeerfest



@readingbeerfest

Our Website:

readingbeerfestival.org.uk

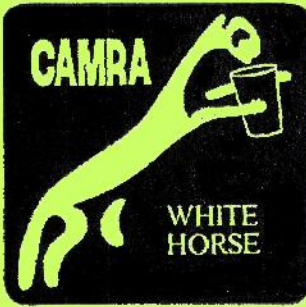


On the door prices INCLUDE: Standard Entry, Festival glass & Programme

Kings Meadow, Napier Road, Reading, RG1 8BN
Located within an 8 minute walk from Reading Station

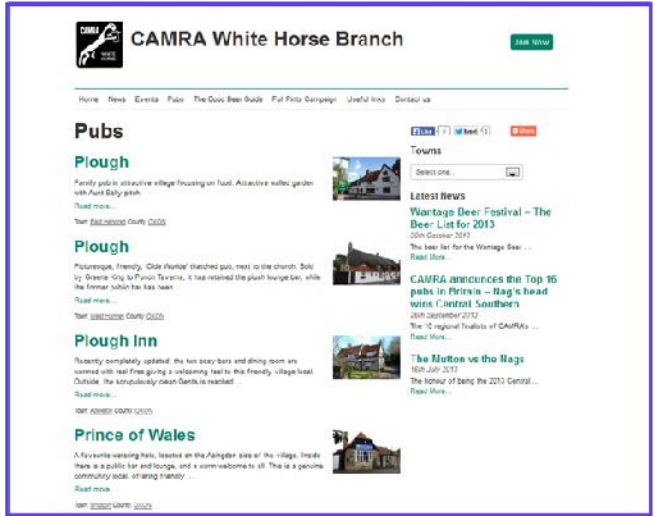
Reading Post

THE OCELOT
THE ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE FOR WILTS, OX AND BERKS



White Horse Branch Contact
 Neil Crook
 contact@whitehorsecamra.org.uk
 www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk

White Horse website scores a first



Branch Diary

Tuesday 18 February Branch meeting

The Cherry Tree, Steventon at 7.45pm.

Tuesday 11 March Branch AGM

Shoulder of Mutton, Wantage at 7.30pm

Friday 11 April Branch Social

In Wantage at the Royal Oak and the Shoulder of Mutton

Tuesday 20 May Branch meeting

Swan, Faringdon at 7.45pm

Friday 20 June Branch social

In Wantage at the Royal Oak and the Shoulder of Mutton

White Horse Branch has launched a new website featuring news from CAMRA and from the branch (www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk/), which also includes a complete list of pubs in the branch area. Webmaster John Stiles, who was responsible for designing and developing the new website, has also revamped the pubs list so that it is now fully integrated with CAMRA's national database, WhatPub.

John worked with the CAMRA team behind whatpub.com and believes White Horse is the first branch to have successfully combined its pub database with WhatPub. He developed the code to achieve this integration as a Wordpress plug-in. This means that it can easily be used by the 30 or so other branches

that have Wordpress sites for them to install and use with their own pub databases. The plug-in imports/updates and deletes pubs to keep the site in line with whatpub.com. It also automatically displays pub images and meta-data pulled from whatpub.com without any need to adjust the Wordpress theme, and the plug-in can be further developed if required. John welcomes feedback from other branches and CAMRA HQ. The site has been protected against security vulnerabilities and is running the latest version of Wordpress. The site is protected against XSS, SQL injection, brute force attacks and has the same level of security as large Wordpress production sites, all of which have passed penetration tests with flying colours.

www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk/



The Royal Blenheim

The only pub in Oxford City centre, run by an Oxfordshire brewery

10 hand-pumps
Great home-cooked food
Belgian beers



10% off everything for all CAMRA
Members between 3pm and 7pm

For more
Info, go here



White
horse
BREWERY

"We brew beer
to drink and
what we have
left we sell!"

Polypins
and bottles
can be purchased
from the brewery!



Our new range of seasonal brews

For further details please contact: Fiona on 01367 718700 or fiona@whitehorsebrewery.co.uk
or visit www.whitehorsebrewery.co.uk

White Horse Brewery | White Horse Business Park | Stanford-in-the-Vale | Oxfordshire SN7 8NY

The Nag's Head

on the Thames



Within its first year of opening, The Nag's Head became the winner of CAMRA Town and Country 'Pub of the Year' 2013 and is featured in The Good Beer Guide 2014!

CAMRA LOCAL

CASK MARQUEE



LIVE Music every week!

Fridays: Local Rock and Blues 9pm

Sundays: Afternoon Jazz 4-7pm

Tuesdays: Dusty's Jazz Jam 8pm



Valentine's Dinner

Friday 14th February &
Saturday 15th February

3 course **£29.95**

Choose from our Chef's specially created menu to tempt and seduce your loved one!

Bookings essential.



Mother's Day Lunch

Sunday 30th March

3 course **£19.95**

Celebrate with the family and have a superb meal plus free chocs for all Mums!

Bookings essential.



MONDAY

Steak Night!

Rump £12

Tuna £12

Fillet £16

Served from 6pm

WEDNESDAY

Fish 'n' Fizz!

Free bottle of Prosecco

for every two diners ordering 2 courses

Served from 6pm

SUNDAY

Roast Lunch!

Set Menu Offer

including coffee or tea

2 course £16.95

3 course £19.95

Or order from our a la carte menu

Lunches served 12-5pm

Monday-Friday

Lunch Menu

2 course £9.95

3 course £12.95

Served 12-3pm

Monday-Thursday

Early Bird Menu

2 course £12.95

3 course £15.95

Served 5-7pm

We stock four permanent real ales, four guest real ales and a superb selection of wines!