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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

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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

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Welcome

...to a long, hot summer?

HOPEFULLY the weather is still as warm when you read this as when I wrote it, and you are giving pubs with the best gardens or patios (the Nag's Head in Abingdon, the Victoria Arms in Marston or the Flowing Well in Sunningwell, for example) the custom they deserve.

And what a summer it's been. First we saw UKIP leader Nigel Farage on TV brandishing a very prominently branded mug of Greene King IPA (is *all* advertising good advertising?), and then, days after we went to press with the last edition, news that the Government is at long last pressing ahead with pub reform. It should be on the statute book before the May 2015 General Election, but some already fear that proposals to set up a pubs watchdog and give landlords a better deal will be watered down after lobbying by big breweries and the (generally) detested pubcos. Reform can't come soon enough, as more hard pressed landlords turn to forums such as the Facebook page Licensees Supporting Licensees.

In this issue we look at a more

positive trend – the rise of micro-pubs – which offer an economic way into the licensing trade or an alternative way of staying in. Despite continuing closures new pubs are popping up everywhere – sometimes quite literally, with a Witney company creating temporary pubs out of shipping containers (www.pop-up-pubs.com).

Also new in this issue is the first of a series of reports on real ale pubs serving good food, starting with the Bell Inn at Langford. Not all CAMRA members approve, but the fact is that food keeps many pubs afloat. I wish however that more pubs would offer a simple and economic sandwich, rather than charge around £7 for a so-called sandwich with trimmings that a lot don't want. Oxford's Royal Blenheim and Gardener's Arms, North Parade Avenue are examples of pubs getting their sandwiches right, but there are far too few.

News of pubs, breweries and beer festivals is always welcome, as are ideas for longer articles, using the contact details provided on page 3. Deadline for the October/November edition is 15

September, but before you read on, three things:

A proposal to rename the *Oxford Drinker* as *Beer InSpires*, to reflect Oxford's heritage and the 21st century, will be put to the branch AGM on 3 September. Whatever you think, please let me know using the contact details provided.

'Pubwatch' - could this be you? I'm looking for a publican or ex-publican, who knows the local real ale and brewery scene well, to write a regular column starting with the next issue. He/she could be the owner or manager of a free house happy to use their own name, or the tenant of a brewery or one of the pubcos who would rather write anonymously. The column could be fun and controversial – again, please let me know.

And finally..... my Pint of the Month. It has to be Liquid Mistress (5.8%), described by brewer Siren Craft as "our femme fatale, mysterious, seductive and disarming". After one pint of this at the King's Head and Bell in Abingdon, I was smitten!

DAVE RICHARDSON

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Little pubs... BIG potential

Dave Richardson reports on the growing number of micro-pubs, including one that's already a CAMRA Pub of the Year

EVERYONE has heard of micro-breweries but the rapid growth in micro-pubs may have passed you by as, to the best of my knowledge, there isn't one in our branch area as yet. But it's only a matter of time, as there are already 55 dotted around the country with nine openings so far this year and over 30 openings in 2013. The nearest at present is the Stratford Alehouse in Stratford-upon-Avon, and there is a major concentration in Kent where the micro-pub revolution started in 2005.

So what exactly is a micro-pub? To quote the Micro-pub Association website, it is "a small free house which listens to its customers, mainly serves cask ales, promotes conversation, shuns all forms of electronic entertainment and dabbles in traditional pub snacks. Each pub offers its own unique twist but they all stay true to the winning micro-pub formula -- small, a conversion of existing premises, primarily real ale, no lager whatsoever, lively banter and chat with no music."

Most were previously small shops, with the Stratford Alehouse being a former health food retailer (there's got to be a

lesson here) and others including a former chemist, tattoo parlour, café, fisherman's workshop and railway waiting room. The first micro-pub, the Butcher's Arms in Heme, Kent, is of course a former butchers. Martyn Hillier is the man who started it, and he now also runs the association's website and a vintage-style van spreading the word.

"Since the 2003 Licensing Act, meaning that existing pubs or pub owners could no longer object to new openings, the market has opened up," he told me. "At first micro-pubs were mainly opened by people new to the licensed trade, but now more former publicans are coming into it. They are asking themselves why work for a big company when you can open your own micro-pub? It could cost you half a million pounds to buy a free house, but with a micro-pub all you need do is rent a shop, and get a licence and change of use permission. I was running my shop as an off-licence and florist, when a licensing officer suggested it could become a pub. It's been a real success."

Start-up costs will vary according to the premises, but

are a fraction of taking over an existing pub. A traditional cellar isn't needed if you have an air-conditioning unit, and you need toilets, a sink, tables and chairs. Martyn says it's important to stay below the VAT threshold, currently £81,000 per annum, and with so many traditional pubs closing there's plenty of spare equipment on Ebay and other outlets. As for expertise, there are plenty of ideas on the association's forum which you can join for just £10 per year.

Martyn gave a presentation to CAMRA's AGM in 2009, when he reckons micro-pubs' annual turnover was only £60,000. He now puts it at £6 million as a conservative estimate. A mock-up of his own micro-pub is at the Great British Beer Festival in August, as the bandwagon rolls on. Only one micro-pub has failed so far, and this was run by someone who murdered his wife! In some ways you could say that pubs are returning to how they started hundreds of years ago, from very small premises or even front rooms.

So who will be the first to open one around Oxford, where there are plenty of empty shops? Dear reader, it might be you....



LEFT: Patrick Moore behind the bar at the Liverpool Pigeon

ABOVE: Martyn Hillier outside the Butchers Arms, Herne

The Pigeon has lift-off!

I HAD to visit this micro-pub for two reasons – because it's in the part of Liverpool where I grew up (then of course a real ale desert) and because it is Liverpool CAMRA's Pub of the Year 2014, awarded when it had only been open for a few months. It's in the suburb of Crosby (now famous for the Another Place "Iron Men" sculptures along the beach), which already has several real ale pubs including the 2013 Pub of the Year, Stamps Too. The Liverpool Pigeon occupies a former clothes shop that had been empty for two years, and is run by Patrick Moore who threw in his job as a teacher. With seating for 35 and standing room for up to 60, it has a stylish, contemporary atmosphere – and great ales.

It has five hand pumps, three of which usually dispense local ales including Liverpool Organic Brewery beers from nearby Bootle. Peerless Pale from Birkenhead, Marble Brewery from Manchester, Hawkshead from Cumbria and Oakham Brewery were also on, all costing £2.80 a pint, plus a

couple of real ciders and range of bottled Belgian beer. The only concession to food was pork pies from local supplier Satterthwaites.

"The first few months have gone better than expected," said Patrick. "The whole idea of micro-pubs is to attract people within walking distance, but CAMRA members come from further afield. We aimed to spend £20,000 in set-up costs, but it ended up being more due to problems with the drains. Change of use permission was granted with no objections, and although my licence allows me to open from 11 to 11, the planning authority said we must close at 9pm (5pm on Sundays) as this is a residential area. But there are no great barriers to doing it since the 2003 Licensing Act."

And the name? There's certainly no shortage of pigeons in these parts, but the Liverpool Pigeon is in fact an extinct species from Tahiti, the only example of which resides in the World Museum Liverpool.

DAVE RICHARDSON

Martyn's website advises that the model for a micro-pub is:

Small size

Low costs and maximum use of space.

No music

A friendly atmosphere with conversation, and no costs for music licences.

No food

Less work and no additional costs and interference by environmental health officials, plus less space needed.

No keg beers/lagers

No complicated equipment and need for bar space.

Beers from micro-breweries

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<http://micropubassociation.co.uk/>



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The Wonder of Witney

Tony Goulding reports on a branch pub crawl

ON SATURDAY 12 July, a very warm day with the Witney Carnival in full swing, up to a dozen local members gathered to start a social in The Company of Weavers, the town's Wetherspoon pub. Three good ciders were sampled along with two Wychwood and three guest beers, which our party found very tasty. A few yards across the green is the very popular Angel, a free house run by the same couple for 30 years who source their beer from Marston's. Brakspear Oxford Gold, Marston's Pedigree and Ringwood Fortyniner were all in good condition. Appealing to ages 18 to 88, with well served good pub food and a sun trap garden, do not pass this pub by.

Another "must", a few yards along Corn Street, is the ever popular Eagle Tavern run by the same couple for several years, who previously worked in other Corn Street pubs. It is well supported by owners Hook Norton with up to four of their beers plus Wychwood Hobgoblin always in good form. The Eagle is the town centre "serious and sensible drinkers" pub, with good simple pub food served Friday and Saturday lunchtimes and a garden to the rear.

A few yards along the road is The Hollybush Inn, a former Courage then Morland and now Greene King house. It's very

well known for top quality food and the surprises here were Black Sheep Velo (a special for the Tour de France) and Castle Rock Harvest Pale. Both were good with the prospect of a third hand pump soon. This is a well looked after pub with a super rear patio garden.

A good five-minute walk brought us to The Chequers, recently refurbished by Enterprise Inns after a short period of closure and some years without real ale. Now known as the Chequers Smokehouse, the food has an American Deep South theme. Beers are from Wychwood including Brakspear Bitter, Hobgoblin and a badged beer, Smokehouse, at 4%. The Brakspear was sampled and was fine.

Crossing over to the Three Horseshoes, another Greene

King house, we found it very busy with good quality food. Two Wychwood beers were spotted and on a quieter day will be sampled. Further down Corn Street, former Enterprise Inns pub The Butcher's Arms still looks very much a pub but is now a Nepalese restaurant. Across the road is another top boozer, this time with no food. The New Inn is a Punch Taverns house with up to seven beers available, and like the Eagle is a regular in the Good Beer Guide. Martin Cornish, the landlord, had unfortunately just been ill and was recovering upstairs. On hearing that I was downstairs he did the right thing and called an ambulance..... seriously, though, he did come to meet us, had his photo taken (below) and allowed us to wish him well. This was a fine end to our Corn Street stagger.

TONY GOULDING



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Pub and Restaurant Review: The Bell at Langford

In the first of an occasional series, **Dave Richardson** looks at the food as well as the beers in a real ale pub



THE BELL at Langford, close to Lechlade and the Gloucestershire border, came under new ownership in summer last year with some very welcome changes. It has continued its reputation for good food, but opened a new bar area where people can simply have a drink. The existing bar was very small and is in what's mainly the restaurant, and as a result villagers are meeting who hardly knew each other before.

Making any kind of change for the better is quite an achievement in a listed 17th century building, and of course the original features have been retained including stone flagged floors, a huge working fireplace and quaint "staircase to nowhere". Modern toilets are a welcome addition.

Four real ales are served in this free house and some of these are worth the trip on their own, with other choices including Robinson's Flagon Cider and Premium Cotswold Lager. Available tonight were Gloucestershire Brewery's Gloucester Gold (3.9%), Wickwar Brewery's Bankers Draft (4%), Prescott's Chequered Flag (all from the same county), and Sharp's Atlantic. As the Chequered Flag was just going off I tried the Gloucester Gold which had a very pleasant, light, hoppy, musty flavour, before moving on to the Atlantic which was still

good but dull by comparison. So I stayed on the Gloucester Gold as we moved in to dinner.

The menu was extensive if rather disappointing at first sight, although prices were reasonable for dining of this standard with five starters costing £5.95 to £7.95 and 14 main courses from £9.95 (Kilmscott Gammon and Egg) to £21.95 (ribeye steak). Desserts cost £5.50 with sandwiches and side dishes also available.

The main menu is fairly standard with fish and chips, catch of the day, curry or pasta of the day and so on, but things looked up a lot when we studied the specials board with four main courses, six fish dishes and six more starters, the mains costing from £6.95 to £13.95 and fish from £11.50 to £15.95 including crab and the most exotic dish, Moroccan Sea Bass. We decided to share a starter of asparagus with hollandaise sauce and just as well, as the main courses were enormous. My wife Victoria had tuna with a side salad, which was juicy and not at all dry, while I had steak and ale pie in delicious short-crust pastry which was filled to the brim, with absolutely no fat. Both came with choice of potatoes plus crisp vegetables. There was (just!) room for a shared chocolate torte to follow, the whole meal costing only about

£40 which is very good value.

The atmosphere was relaxed and informal with candles flickering away, but we never felt we were in a restaurant rather than a pub. A folk duo was playing and pub dog Bella, a miniature Jack Russell, was parading her pups. This is a true community pub with noticeboard for local businesses and prints by a local artist. Unusually, it offers a 20% discount on food and drinks to members of the Armed Forces (Mondays to Wednesdays) and also supports the Help for Heroes charity.

Romanian chef Lory Branisteanu is clearly a talented fellow who has already run French, Italian and Spanish gourmet nights – see website for more special events – and may try a Romanian night next winter. It's hard to find anything not to like about the Bell at Langford, except for it being 24 miles from Oxford down some rather narrow lanes. But that's part of its charm, and I wish it was my local.

**The Bell Inn
Langford, GL7 3LF
01367 860249.
www.bellatlangford.co.uk**

The editor would welcome approaches from real ale pubs with a better than average menu to feature in this column. Anywhere in Oxfordshire would be considered.



Tony's travels

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

Hampton Poyle

A recent tour around the outer fringe of our branch area found The Bell, which was facing closure four years ago but became a free house with a £1 million rebuild and refurbishment. Food has always been important here but the change is now astonishing, with a high-class and pricey menu making for busy times in a very comfortable and sprawling gastro-pub. Until the change Charles Wells Bitter was a regular choice along with Bombardier at weekends, and to keep the "locals" feel there was a small bar and pool table. Locals still pop in for drinks and on the night Wye Valley Butty Bach was in good form, and Doom Bar will be on in future.

Islip

The Red Lion is still displaying the Halls Brewery wall tiles sign and is still very much a locals' pub with two bars and a large garden, the latter being used for well patronised beer festivals.

Following a couple of recent changes of landlords, never a good sign, the new gang at this Punch Taverns pub are trying to get back to times of old. Up to four beers are served including Brakspear Bitter, Fullers London Pride, Hook Norton Bitter and the inevitable Doom Bar. Food and live music feature in Islip's traditional local.

A five-minute walk down to the River Ray leads to a former Morrells and comfortable "locals' local", The Swan. For some time a limited range of very good food was served, but in this mainly drinking pub mugs were always used to serve the beers. Following Morrells' closure Greene King ran the pub until it did not fit into its plans, and The Swan was sold to be a Chinese restaurant. Beer plays only a small part here now with occasional local ales on sale.

One hundred years ago both these pubs were busy coaching

inns on the London to Worcester route. A couple of miles down the road in the village of Stanton St John is The Talkhouse, a very pleasant up-market Fullers house serving fine food along with London Pride, HSB and at least 10 of its quality bottled beers. There is room at the bar for drinkers, which is just as well with the nearby Star having been closed for the last few months. This worrying scene followed many years of success for the Star including 20 appearances in various Good Beer Guides in the 1970, 1980s and 1990s, such was the popularity of this Wadworth's house for the beer and simple good value food.

Bletchinghamdon

The super job of delivering the Oxford Drinker meant I could sample two new beers from Fisher Brewery of Noke, which are very hard to find, at The Rock of Gibraltar. These were Columbia Haze, a 4.4% cloudy wheat beer, along with the



ABOVE: The Swan, Islip

RIGHT: Namit Julka, manager of the Tree Hotel, Iffley

unusual tasting Lithia, a low gravity 3.2% beer.

Marston

The only surviving pub in Marston village, The Red Lion, is a former Morland house which is very well run with three beers from the Greene King range always served in good form. On the day Kite Brewery's How Green Is Our Valley (4%) guest ale was sampled. Saved from doom by the present popular couple with help from local customers in the form of a loan, their hard work has quickly been paid back. Greene King has done its bit by refurbishing the sprawling garden to a high standard. Very good pub food is served daily except Mondays.

The other Marston (as opposed to Marston's!) pub, The Victoria, is a popular Wadworth's house a mile from the village down by the river, with a large garden. It's a hard life visiting such good pubs as this!



Beer Festival Report: Tree Hotel, Iffley

THE second beer festival at this boutique hotel in Iffley village, Oxford proved to be a great success, with 300 attending on the Friday (18 July) and 190 pitching up by 5pm on the Saturday with the whole of that evening and Sunday still to come. Advertising the event in the *Oxford Drinker* proved to be a wise move with a steady stream of customers clutching a copy of the June-July issue to claim their free pint.

Twelve real ales and three real ciders were served up at the garden stillage, all costing £3.70 a pint or three for £10. The ales ranged in strength from St Austell Liquid Sunshine (3.8%) to Titanic's White Star (4.8%), and included rarities such as Yellow Jersey from AllGates Brewery in Wigan.

You don't have to wait for next year's beer festival to visit the Tree Hotel, as three real ales

are usually available in the bar including Fuller's London Pride, Sharp's Doom Bar and an ever-changing guest, which was Jennings' Cocky Blonde on this occasion. It's also a great place to eat with renowned Indian and European food, and with Wadworth's Prince of Wales pub just down the road, it makes an excursion to Iffley village well worthwhile.

DAVE RICHARDSON



Vale of Beers

Dave Richardson, with his trusty driver **Tony Goulding**, spends two summer evenings exploring some of the real ale pubs of the Vale of White Horse

Flowing Well, Sunningwell

Less than six miles from central Oxford and even closer to Abingdon, this pub is perfect for a summer's day with a large garden and patio. The village isn't bad either, with a nice old church and duck-less duck pond. The building is owned by Greene King but it is run by a small pub company whose interests also include the Star Inn at Woodstock.

The company previously running the pub pulled out in December when the Flowing Well closed, but not for long. A large sum has been spent on a major make-over to create separate large restaurant (where an inventive menu is served) and bar areas, where the GK beers on offer were Abbot, Morland Original and Ruddles Best. No surprises here but the Morland tasted good, and I also tried a half of the Yardbird Pale Ale on keg. Several other craft ales were

available in bottles.

David Fletcher runs the pub on behalf of his father Matthew, and appears to have a winner. I've already been back.

Plough, Appleton

This is now the only pub in Appleton village close to the A420, the Thatched Tavern having been shut about six years and the Three Horseshoes for much longer. It is one of the Greene King pubs recently taken over by Hawthorn Leisure, but landlord Peter Beland (ex-Red Lion at Northmoor) was hoping to keep at least one guest ale as Hawthorn has a three-year deal with GK. On my visit it had both Loose Cannon Gunners Gold and Bellinger's Summer Ale (brewed by the renowned Peter Fowler in Wantage), plus Morland Original. Let's hope he gets his way – the Summer Ale was delicious!

Eight Bells, Eaton

The real "find" of the evening for me, this is a wonderful free house tucked away in a little village near Cumnor. Once a Morland house, it was serving up World Cup special IPAnema and Mr Chubb's Lunchtime Bitter from West Berkshire Brewery; Box Steam Brewery's Chuffin' Ale and Loose Cannon's Oct Street Ale.

This was my first visit and I'll certainly be back, as it's a lovely, old-fashioned, two-roomed local with excellent hosts in Tony and Karen O'Sullivan. When looking up from my Lunchtime Bitter (although it was evening) I enjoyed the horse brasses, old stove, piano and brass. Aunt Sally and folk music help make this a traditional village pub, with beers from local suppliers Vale Brewery, XT, Cotswold and Butts also being regulars. Take that turn off the A420 – you won't be disappointed!



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Phil Radbourne and Karen Middleton are leaving the Prince of Wales; The Black Horse at East Hanney; the Flowing Well, Sunningwell

Prince of Wales, Shippon

On then to one of CAMRA's favourite pubs and free houses, where landlord Phil Radbourne and Karen Middleton have recently called time on their long career "behind bars", although Phil will still be around helping with various projects. The pub is now run by Kevan Sandall and Cheryl Barnes who are committed to keeping up its reputation for great beer and cider.

Beers on tonight were Shotover Prospect, Loose Cannon Abingdon Bridge, Timothy Taylor Landlord, Skinner's Betty Stogs and the new "nationwide" real ale, Sharp's Doom Bar. The four ciders included Oldbury Dry, Tutts Clump's Rum Cask, and Royal Berkshire's Medium or Sweet, but there can be up to 10 ciders available.

The pub has blossomed in its four years as a free house, owned by a local business

person, and was previously run by Punch Taverns and Greene King. It's a large two-roomed local with thriving darts and crib teams, and we'll be back soon to see how well it's keeping up the good work.

Black Horse, East Hanney

The news here is not so good as real ale sales are in decline, and the landlord is moving on and out of the pubs business in October. Punch Taverns is advertising it to prospective landlords at an "incoming" cost of £21,556 plus £28,026 in rent. Any takers?

Last year's beer festival had 30 real ales, but two of the four hand pumps were disused and the others were serving the ubiquitous Doom Bar and my choice, Shepherd Neame's Spitfire. At least I had a decent pint, but you have to wonder what direction the Black Horse will go in. It's a large one-roomed pub with rambling

garden, and again, the only pub in the village.

Hatchet Inn, Childrey

All kinds of organisations have done hatchet jobs on our pubs, but this one is in safe hands and its name derives from when it was surrounded by forest and was used to sharpen axes. Another great "find", this free house in a village on the western side of Wantage is a former Morland pub run by Ian and Jane Shaw for 21 years – what an achievement, and congratulations!

Its six hand pumps serve brews brimming with character, and I started with Tomcat from Red Cat Brewing in Winchester, a business started only last November which proclaims, "We don't do boring!" This was followed by an equally tasty Barbus Barbus from Butts, a brew I recall from our own beer

continued overleaf....



LEFT: Angus Tucker at the Blowing Stone

ABOVE: Magic Sponge at the Horse and Jockey

festival. Ramsbury's Belapur IPA, Okell's Summer Storm and Morland Original (keeper of the tradition) completed an impressive roster.

Ian explained that ales change often, and sometimes a customer will go on holiday with an empty barrel and bring back what he finds. It's a busy pub with music, pool table and video games, and some food. Perhaps it's cracked the riddle of what a successful village pub should be.

Blowing Stone, Kingston Lisle

In a village just off the B4507 near White Horse Hill, this is a completely different type of business being a large, 1930s-vintage building with a strong emphasis on food. It also has a focus on real ale – not always the case in a dining pub – being a free house run for the last five years by Angus and Stephanie Tucker, formerly of Arkells

house the White Horse in nearby Woolstone.

It was no surprise to hear from Angus that Doom Bar is a top seller, or to see GK's Morlands Original and Old Golden Hen among the regular ales. Dark Star's Hophead was on its way but I had only a half of Hooky Bitter, while contemplating a return visit to sample the food (varied, but pizzas on Sunday evenings). Originally called the Plough, it was renamed the Blowing Stone over 10 years ago, after a local landmark which, according to Wikipedia, produces "a booming sound" when you blow into it. My beer does the same when I've had a few....

Horse and Jockey, Stanton-in-the-Vale

This pub has literally come back from the dead, as a disastrous fire in July 2013 could have resulted in permanent closure. But insurance came to its

rescue and Greene King has shown faith, with the refurbished pub (with original features such as the low beams and flagstone floors) re-opening in March of this year.

It may be (you guessed it) the only pub in the village, but with a social club and football club also selling drinks, it does have competition. Three of the four hand pumps were in operation with GK "own brand" brew Horse and Jockey Ale being the top seller, plus Old Golden Hen. Landlord Charles Gaunt chooses guest ales from Greene King's list and serves superior pub food, including stone baked pizzas.

By this time I'd soaked up quite enough ale and contented myself with a half pint of the guest ale, Thwaites' Magic Sponge, with a real sponge for the pump clip. By that time of night, I'm a sucker for anything gimmicky.

DAVE RICHARDSON

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Alus in Wonderland

Matt Bullock reports on the branch weekend in Lithuania



OUR annual branch beer trip this year took us to the historic city of Vilnius, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the capital of Lithuania. After an early evening arrival at our hotel, the ten of us set out almost immediately in search of beer. Our pre-preparation for the trip – essential if you're going to seek out beer with minimum of fuss – had highlighted a number of bars, so we picked one that sounded interesting and would allow us to walk through the old town to reach it.

Anynas turned out to be a modern shop unit converted to a bar, but it boasts at least a dozen Lithianian beers (alus) on tap, so we set to work! Our plan of buying a random selection of ten beers backfired in that we were unable to identify those beers we particularly liked, so we ordered more carefully second time around to ensure we could put a name to a beer. To a British palate that's used to hoppy, bitter beers, we found that many of the beers were sweet, though I found a favourite in Humulupu IPA (6.0%), brewed by Širvėnos Bravoras of Panevėžys in a true

American IPA style. The Senoliu Senovinis Wheat Beer was also well-received.

We adjourned to find food, which we did at another excellent pub, called The Meat Pub which gave a clue as to its menu choices; it also offered a couple of interesting local beers. By the time we had eaten, it was close on midnight, though to us it felt a lot earlier due to the two hour time difference. We sought further beer at Alinė Leičiai, a restaurant and bar just off the main street. The bar has several British-style handpumps, and dispenses a number of interesting beers, including an excellent porter and again the Humulupu IPA. We only had time to drink one beer as the bar was closing, but we pledged to return to try more.

Those who did not retire to bed found sanctuary at the Mikalojaus Winery, where owner and barman Linas was happy to serve us German wheat beer (and some dubious wines) until the early hours.

For our first full day in the country, we had arranged a trip with a local member of the Lithuanian Beer Brotherhood – the local equivalent of CAMRA – to visit some traditional breweries. Our guide, Vidmantas Laurinavičius, runs a business offering such tours to beer lovers, and we'd signed up to a day trip that would take us over 200km north of Vilnius to within 25km of the Latvian border.

Linas' generosity and the friendliness of his customers the previous night meant that some were a little bleary-eyed when Vidmantas and his fellow Brotherhood member Vytautas came that morning to fetch us, and many used the minibus journey north to catch up on a bit of sleep.

After a couple of hours of travelling through the flat agricultural countryside, we turned off the main road to the 'city' of Joniškėlis (to us it appeared to be a small town, but we were assured otherwise!), where our first destination was the Joalda brewery. Founded in 1994, this



LEFT: Joalda's Algimontas Rimkevičius in his brewery

ABOVE: Donning white coats at Jovaru

RIGHT: Kristina Grigonienė explains and Vidmantas translates

is a very neat set up adjacent to the owner's house, and the owner himself, Algimontas Rimkevičius, was on hand to welcome us. Despite the language barrier, his enthusiasm was plain for all to see, and we were immediately served beer, a sweetish golden brew called Joniškėlio Respublika 1919 (5.2%), which was instantly topped up as soon as your glass ran dry! With our two guides providing the translation, we had a tour of the brewery, and a taste of a darker brew straight from the fermenter, before retiring to a rustic timber covered seating area in the garden, where we were able to try another beer, Lokio Peda ('The Bear's Paw', 7.5%) which was served in an equally generous manner. By now it was midday - even though our body clocks were trying to convince us it was only 10am - and we stayed for around an hour enjoying the beer and the company as Algimontas played the perfect and generous host.

After a few photographs and many handshakes (and a few take-away bottles for the bus)

we said goodbye to Algimontas and made the short journey to the village of Jovarai for our next visit. Jovaru brewery was started in 1995 by one of Lithuania's few female brewers, Aldona Udrienė, using recipes and a process that has been passed down through the generations. The brewing process here doesn't involve boiling in the manner we are used to; the water is boiled using a wood stove and is poured onto the malt, where it sits without any further heating for three hours to make the mash. Only two beers are produced, an unfiltered brown beer Jovaru Kamiškas Alus (5.6%), and a sweeter alternative with added honey, both of which we were able to enjoy in the garden with a selection of traditional Lithuanian bar snacks; the garlic fried bread became an instant favourite.

Our next brewery was in the town of Pakruojis, where another female brewer, Kristina Grigonienė, was our guide around her brewery, A. Grigonio, founded in 1999. Once again, we were treated to

a brewery tour, with Vidmantas and Vytautas providing the translation, before we were able to try the beers, and some more snacks, in the brewery garden. The dark beer, whose name roughly translates as "Evening" was the drink of choice here. They also brew a non-alcoholic malt drink which our driver was able to enjoy, if enjoy is the right word for it, as none of us seemed to like it.

The theme of supping beer in brewery gardens continued after a pleasant lunch when we called in at Rosalimo Alus, based in the small village of Rozalimas. The brewer was not at home, but we were able to sample his two beers, a light and a dark both at 5.5%. We had another stop at Paliūniškis, where the local brewer has a roadside tap room where beer can be bought to take away, so we tried a number of his wares here too.

Our final stop of our marathon tour was in Panėvėžys, at a log-cabin pub Seklyčia prie Uosio, which is the home of Piniavos Alutis brewery. The brewer here, Vidmantas Perevičius,



LEFT: Vidmantas Perevičius with some of the group outside the bar in Panėvėžys

ABOVE: "Mr Šnekutis" himself in familiar pose



specialises in flavouring his beers with unusual ingredients. We were able to try three (all at 5.5%), one with Red Clover (Raudonųjų Dobilų), another with Raspberry Cane (Laukinių Aviečių) and a new beer with Cherry Leaves, all of which had a pleasant and subtle flavour. We also tried the Seklyčios, a more traditional 5% pale ale.

Refreshment on the journey home was provided by the bottles given to us at Joniškėlis. We were dropped in the centre of Vilnius, where we headed for Alinė Leičiai (again), where several pints of Humulupu IPA were barely sufficient to numb the pain of England's World Cup defeat to Uruguay. Those brave souls who hadn't had enough already paid another visit to Linas' wine bar, but most sensibly headed for bed.

On the Friday we spent a showery morning seeing the sights of the old town, including the castle and the cathedral bell tower. We had a traditional Lithuanian lunch at Forto Dvarus, on the main street; Lithuanian cuisine is a lot of meat and potatoes, the potato

pancakes being popular, as are the 'zeppelins', a dish of meat encased in suet, served with a variety of sauces. The beer here were a dull lager and a slightly less dull dark beer by Švyturys, the second oldest Lithuanian brewery based in Klaipėda, which was founded in 1784 and is now part of the Carlsberg Group.

We had an afternoon appointment with Vidmantas, our guide from the previous day, who was going to show us some of his favourite bars. Our first was Alaus Namai, a bar that he himself had founded a few years ago, though he had long since sold his share. The bar retains its commitment to local beers: there's an impressive menu here, with 16 draught beers and a number of bottled offerings. We had a tasting of a number of the draught beers, including a beer made with bread, which itself is made from the spent grain of a previous brew (Ramūno Čižo Kaimiškas, 5.2%), an excellent wheat beer, the oldest of this style in Lithuania (Gubernijos Kvietinis, 4.3%) and a rich, dark beer, Tamsusis Elis, from

Gubernija brewery (5.9%). After this, we visited Busi Trečias, a small brew pub started in 1994, which brews three beers, Sviesus, a lager, Juodas, a 6.5% dark lager and Brandusis, a Baltic Porter, though sadly the porter was not available when we called by.

Our ultimate destination was one of three Šnekutis pubs in town, this one on Šv. Mikalojaus in the old Jewish district of the city. The Šnekutis bars were started by Aurimas Vaškevičiaus, a larger-than-life character with a huge moustache who seems to be the face of Lithuanian beer, appearing on a number of adverts and promotions. He was responsible for bringing the traditional beers from the countryside to a wider audience in the capital city, and the bar we went to was his latest, opened only in March this year. For somebody whose face appears all over Lithuania, he was an unexpectedly quiet and shy man, but was a welcoming host nevertheless. Here we met up with a number of members of the Beer Brotherhood, and we spent an excellent evening



LEFT: Vidmantas and Vytautas survey the endless supply of beer at Jovaru

ABOVE: Oxford CAMRA with Aurimas Vaškevičius and human and canine members of the Beer Brotherhood at Šnekutis.

trying all of the available beers. Particular favourites were the light Daujotų (5.8%) and the dark Varniukų (5.6%), both from Davra brewery, and an unusual find here was an oatmeal stout, the first ever brewed in the region, Dundulis Gutstoutas (5.2%), brewed by Širvėnos Bravoras of Panevėžys, who also brew the IPA we'd enjoyed here and elsewhere. The members of the Brotherhood – who are not all male, despite the name – made us very welcome, so we extend our thanks to Vidmantas and Vytautas and their friends for an excellent night out. So good, in fact, that when we left, we all felt the need to go straight home!

We spent the Saturday travelling to Trakai, a small town on a lake around 25km from Vilnius. The unpredictability of the train service led us to the local bus, and we were duly taken there for a small fee on an ancient coach. We walked into the town and around the lake, visiting the castle (most of which seems to have been rebuilt over the past 20 years), before finding a quiet lunch spot

away from the touristy bars on the lakeside. Here we tried the local delicacy, which turned out to be a Cornish pasty under a different name, and introduced by the Karaite people who came here from Crimea several centuries ago. Before our journey back to Vilnius (on an even more decrepit coach), we tried the local brewery bar, where we were able to try a number of beers, though none stood out as being especially memorable.

On our return to Vilnius, we met up at Portobello, which turned out to be an English theme pub (!), before trying a basement bar, Bambalyne, which was strange in that you chose your beer from a fridge, paid at the till as you would in a supermarket, chose a glass from the shelf and sat down to drink it. For a bar with such a range of beers, the fact that there was no beer menu was disappointing, so many of our choices were pot luck, or not, as the case may be. In search of sustenance, we crossed the street to our old favourite, Alinė Leičiai, for some excellent food and fine beer to while away the remainder of our

final evening in Vilnius.

The weather had changed by Sunday, our final day. We spent the morning on an organised walking tour of the Old Town, dodging heavy showers as we went. For lunch we visited another of the Šnekutis bars, this one on Šv. Stepono. This is much smaller than its newer cousin, and offers a similar range of beers alongside an identical food menu. Over a few beers and some more pancakes and zeppelins we reflected on what had been an excellent trip. It's quite a cheap place too: beers generally cost around 5Lt (£1.40) for a half litre, though the country drops Litas in favour of the Euro in January 2015, so this may change.

Our experiences of Lithuania had been very positive: the people, the beer, the bars, and, until the final day, the weather. A beer destination we can highly recommend.

MATT BULLOCK

Vidmantas Laurinavičius runs the beer tours – see his website www.beertourism.lt

Pub News

Abingdon

CROSS KEYS: CAMRA has officially objected to an application to turn this Ock Street pub into flats, made on behalf of Hawthorn Leisure which recently took over 275 pubs all over the UK from Greene King. In the meantime the pub continues to trade. Branch secretary Steve Lawrence's submission to Vale of White Horse District Council notes that there were six pubs along this thoroughfare until recently, and if the Cross Keys closes there will only be two. He comments: "Ock Street has lost most of its character with mainly ugly flats and modern buildings on the southern side all the way from Drayton Road down to Knights, whilst the northern side is a depressing reminder of how vibrant the street may have been in the past before all the pubs were closed and converted into housing. Without the Keys, this will leave only the Brewery Tap and White Horse pubs. One at each end." He quotes Hawthorn's stated intention to support its new acquisitions and adds: "Converting the pub into flats is the exact opposite of supporting and investing in its tenants! This is one of the few remaining historic buildings left in Ock Street and its closure would be a further blow to the community spirit that is left."

GRAPES: A surprise re-entry on the real ale scene is this High Street pub, previously a mainly late-night venue open only on certain days. It now has normal opening times and is being presented as a sports bar with predominantly younger customers. The two ales available on a recent visit were Sharp's Doom Bar and Skinner's Betty Stogs.

OLD ABBEY HOUSE: One of four bidders for Abingdon Town Council's former offices, near the Guildhall, is an un-named pub chain, rumoured to be Greene King's Hungry Horse. Redevelopment of the Guildhall to include a cinema would give the area a boost.

Aston

RED LION: The only pub in this West Oxfordshire village, near Bampton, has re-opened, with the tenancy being advertised by Enterprise Inns for an in-going cost of £7,750 plus £9,000 in rent for the first year.

Oxford

HARCOURT ARMS: A new licensee at this Fullers pub in Jericho, Ali Bum, took over in May and hopes to have a kitchen operational by September. He is the former general manager of the Old Parsonage Hotel in Oxford and the Crazy Bear Hotel in Stadhampton, but wanted to have a go at running a pub. The beer range remains unchanged with London Pride, ESB and Seafarer available on a recent visit, and in addition to creating a kitchen, he has improved the garden. He plans a "sharing type of food" and does not aim to





compete with Jericho food pubs the Rickety Press and Bookbinders Arms.

PRINCE OF WALES: The previous landlord of this Iffley pub left suddenly in June, and the distinctive "hammer head" pumps are no longer there. The Wadworth pub, pictured above, has had to change its phone number, which is now 01865 401415. But better times are coming with new landlords Steve and Sue Price having run the Coventry Arms in Upton Snodsbury, Worcestershire before running the ski resort at Courchevel in France. It is planned to extend the pub into the car park in January, but it will remain open while work takes place. A full range of Wadworth ales is usually available including Henry's IPA, 6X, Bishop's Tipple and a seasonal offering.

Shippon

PRINCE OF WALES: Popular licensee couple Phil Radbourne and Karen Middleton left at the end of June although Phil now plans to do promotional work for local breweries. The free house is now run along the same lines by Kevan Sandall and Cheryl Barnes – see also our Vale of Beers article in this issue.

Wheatley

PLOUGH: Fitz and Claire Davis are about to celebrate their third anniversary at this pub, which they took over following its renovation having moved from the Old Red Lion in Tetworth. This is a free house where food is prominent, prepared under the expert supervision of accomplished chef Fitz, but drinkers are warmly welcomed and there is a strong contingent of regulars from local residents and businesses, including A. W. Mobbs, the Wheatley coal merchants and owner of the pub. The dark green signage is chosen to match Mobbs' livery, not the giant pubco that it might be mistaken for when passing in a hurry! There are three ales on the bar, rotated regularly but always from local breweries, and on a recent visit these were Chiltern John Hampden's Ale (which was sampled and found to be in fine order) together with one each from Rebellion and XT. Fitz and Claire are committed to continual investment with a "soft refurb" completed in January, and further development of the large garden and play area planned. Events such as weddings are regularly hosted in a marquee and a B&B next door has recently been added to the business.

Oxford Branch Diary

Saturday 23 August

Social

Abingdon Pub Crawl – meet at the Narrows, High Street, from 2pm.

Wednesday 3 September

Annual General Meeting

St Aldate's Tavern, Oxford
From 7pm upstairs in the Blue Room. Come along, see how the branch is run and maybe get involved.

Saturday 6 September

Social

Masons Arms Beer Festival, Headington Quarry
Including the Regional Aunt Sally challenge.

Monday 6 October

Branch Meeting

Kite Inn, Mill Street, Oxford
18.30 Duke's Cut
19.00 Honeypot, Hollybush Row
19.30 Kite Inn, Mill Street
Regular monthly meeting. All welcome.

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Secretary

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Treasurer

Grahame Allen
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Vice-Chair and Chairman of the Pubs Group

Dennis Brown
vice-chair@oxfordcamra.org.uk

Brewery News

Arkells

The Wiltshire brewer is going Hopping Mad again, launching four beers each using an individual hop from around the world. The first of the its International Hop Collection uses the New Zealand hop Waimea, and from August and over the following four months, Arkell's brewing team will be producing the 3.6% beers using hops from New Zealand, Slovenia, the US and Poland.

Head Brewer Alex Arkell explained: "These countries are four of the best hop-growing countries in the world. They have much of the right soil and environment for the hops to grow better. In fact, there are only around a dozen countries in the world that grow hops at all. Much like grapes, hops from different regions grow with different characteristics."

Arkell's pubs in this area include the Rickety Press, Rusty Bicycle and Original Swan in Oxford, and the Talbot Inn at Eynsham.

West Berkshire

After a plea to the local community requesting pictures and stories about relatives who fought during World War One, West Berkshire Brewery has been overwhelmed by the stories received and wants to say a huge thank you. The brewery, renowned for using faces to take pride of place on its bottles, has now unveiled four local heroes who will feature on Tommy Atkins Traditional Ale commemorative bottles. Each label features a local tommy's war story along with their picture; all from the Royal Berkshire Regiment.

Brewed to mark 100 years since the start of WW1, the beer will be launched at the Heroes at Highclere event in August. Tommy Atkins Traditional Ale is brewed to an old recipe to emulate a style of beer available during WW1, nut brown in colour with a gentle malt flavour. Four different hop varieties have been added at three stages to give plenty of bitterness. It was named "Tommy Atkins" after the popular term for a soldier in the British Army.

Stanley "Blanco" White volunteered, aged 19, in 1914 and joined the war after a month of training. After receiving a "Blighty one" to the leg he returned home in 1917 and his family now live in Goring-on-Thames. George Bosley volunteered aged just 17, being injured and taken prisoner for the duration of the war. His family now live in Pangbourne. George Cox and his brother, William, were both from Frilsham. Both brothers were killed in action and feature on the war memorial in Yattendon Church, just yards away from brewery. George's family now live in Newbury. George Rolls volunteered in 1914 and saw action in many battles, being one of only 16 survivors from his original battalion. George's grandson is now the landlord at the Allied Arms in Reading.

Wychwood

Monthly special for August is Wychwood Hayburner (4.2%), letting you savour the burnt notes of roasted barley – a deep golden ale brewed with the US Warrior hop releasing a resinous and piny aroma. The two specials for September are Wychwood Bountiful (4%), an ale of

tremendous complexity delivering a rich fruity taste and a stack of chestnut colour; and Brakspear Pride of the River (4%). This uses English hops and barley mixed with a few robust American fellows to produce a hoppy, aromatic, classic ale to slake the thirst of the mighty oarsmen that do battle on the Thames.

Wychwood Brewery Tours continue at the Witney brewery with public tours now extended to include Friday afternoons. The brewery shop is open Monday to Saturday, 10am to 5pm and all CAMRA card-holders can enjoy a 10% discount off all merchandise and beers in-store.

XT

XT Saison 14 has been a very popular summer choice, having now been brewed several times to keep up with the demand. Interestingly the natural haze of the Saison yeast hasn't put drinkers off, showing how tastes have changed over recent years.

The newest Animal beer is Squeek! – a 4.6% Amber Ale brewed with an aromatic malt from Bamberg and Waimea hops from New Zealand. XT has also made a collaboration beer with the Elephant School Brewery, a wheat beer made with orange and elderflower. At 4.2% it's a great summer BBQ beer, with a natural haze from the wheat malt. This will be available in July and August while stocks last. XT has made some unique fruit beer specials, brewed up in small batches for the Haddenham, Ealing, Watford and Cricklade festivals. It will be at the Great British Beer Festival from 12-16 August at Kensington Olympia in London.



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As a reward to the volunteers who staffed the successful Wantage Beer Festival last November, White Horse Branch organised a trip to Southampton. Most people went first to the Southampton Beer Festival for an enjoyable couple of hours, although a few went straight off to local pubs. Volunteers are seen enjoying the sunshine and ale outside the Rockstone, Southampton.

New Boots and Pantiles

Dick Bosley recounts the next stage of the Cotswold Way

IN RETURN for free rein of Cheltenham's shops my wife, Jo, gave John, Tim and me a lift to restart our walk of the Cotswold Way at Dowdeswell reservoir. Poor weather leading up to our walk meant that I had invested in new footwear which was tested straightaway as we started immediately going uphill. Overcast conditions meant that our views of Cheltenham and then Gloucester were a bit restricted but we heard cuckoo calls aplenty as we walked the 10.3 miles to Birdlip Hill, where our guide book advised there was a pub.

We were not overjoyed to find that the Air Balloon was a Greene King pub but the OS map showed another pub a little further on in Birdlip village. A steep downhill and a steeper uphill walk found us at the Royal George Hotel and – yes, you guessed it – it was also owned by GK. The Abbot Ale wasn't bad and, with food, refuelled us sufficiently to tackle the next section – a further 8.6 miles to Painswick.

We started through woods full of mud, birdsong, wild garlic and more mud before reaching Cooper's Hill where the annual cheese rolling takes place. This hill is almost vertical and I cannot imagine that anyone sober would consider taking part in the race. Equally, I cannot imagine anyone not completely sober staying on their feet for more than two steps. Climbing the hill was bad enough but from here, once we

had got our breath back, it was a relatively flat approach to Painswick past Iron Age forts and open grassland.

The Royal Oak is an absolute gem of a pub and between us we tried Wickwar's Gold and Cotswold Way as well as Exmoor Ale, all three being in excellent condition. John and I had the cunning plan of staying here to enjoy the ale, the company and to watch the rugby on TV before getting a taxi to the station but Tim, being an officer and a gentleman, out-voted us. This was on the promise of another pub, the Edgemoor Inn being only a mile out of town... it was closed.

To make up for this we diverted to the Vine Tree Inn at Randwick which turned out to be another fine pub, with fantastic views across the Stroud valley from its back garden. Hereford Pale Ale and Butty Bach, both from Wye Valley Brewery and both very good, were the beers on offer, but by now time was pressing and so we reluctantly moved on.

A brisk walk across fields and through valleys got us to Stonehouse in time for the train home. In fact we were so brisk we had time to visit the Woolpack and have a couple of pints. This is a lovely pub, so friendly in fact that as well as questioning our sanity they suggested we have another drink before walking back to Didcot.

DICK BOSLEY

Five go adventuring again

Andrew Loutit reports on a tour of the lost pubs of Wantage

NOT Enid Blyton, but the Stevenon sub-section of the White Horse branch joined our host, Brian Stovold of the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust and other locals, in a step back in time around the "Lost Pubs of Wantage". On a casual summer evening's stroll we gained an insight into the social and economic history of Wantage, in exchange for a small donation to the Trust.

We started at the old canal basin where the wharves, coal yards and sack hire premises once were. We learned about the brief heyday of the canal from 1790 to 1840 before its very existence was trumped by Brunel and the Great Western Railway, and also about the seedier side of life in this period when the town was known as "Black Wantage". Most of the less salubrious activities centred around the pubs, cock fighting being one such, particularly at The Camel, and presumably this all ceased before the nuns moved into the convent opposite! The permanent population was about 2,000 but there were many travellers, labourers, carriers and other itinerants on the crossroads of the Reading to Gloucester coaching road and the Oxford to Salisbury turnpike, in addition to canal-related activities.

In all, we visited the sites of some 40 pubs. Some were still standing, converted to other uses, and others redeveloped. Brian was able to give us brief details of name changes, landlords' names and secondary activities (bricklayer, farmer, upholsterer, blacksmith), and specialities such as William Connolly's hot faggots at the Jolly Waterman. We visited three ex-breweries, these being Bennett's in Grove Street, near the tannery; Wantage Brewery at the Woolpack; and Rockwell Brewery – now a school – opposite the Shoulder of Mutton.

We paused at the Bay Street



café in Newbury Street, formerly the White Hart, site of the gruesome murder of landlady Anne Pullen in the bar in 1833. Reputedly, her head was severed from her body with a single blow from a bean hook by labourer George King, who was convicted and executed the following year.

It was a very interesting and informative evening which, fortunately, ended in a live pub. Brian alternates between the Shoulder of Mutton and the Royal Oak, and as it was the turn of the latter we enjoyed an excellent pint or two of Worcester Gold (4%) here. There were no heads rolling in the pub, although it was a near thing with the animated exchanges from the dartboard.

Brian's research is ongoing. Many pub names appear in records, but pinpointing their location is still a matter of guesswork. Where, for instance, were the Cow's Heel, the Elephant, the Black Lion, the Golden Lion, the Talbot, the Brandy Butt, or the Black Boy? He may be contacted at brian.stovold072@btinternet.com and he intends to resume the walks in late summer/early autumn.

ANDREW LOUITT

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on beer
now!

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A Campaign



of Two Halves

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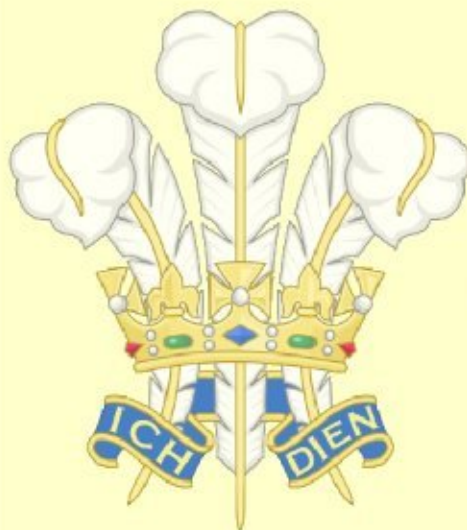
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The 13th Headington Beer Festival





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LAVATORY CONDITIONS



Beer Festival Diary

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

Tuesday 12 - Saturday 16
August

Great British Beer Festival
Olympia, London
900 beers, ciders & perries
www.gbbf.org.uk

Friday 15 - Sunday 17
August

Old Anchor Beer & Cider Festival
St Helens Wharf, Abingdon
12 beers & ciders
www.theoldanchor.com

Friday 22 - Monday 25
August

Trigger Pond Beer & Music Festival
The Trigger Pond, Bucknell
30 beers plus 20 ciders
01869 252817
www.thetriggerpond.com

Saturday 23 August
Chinnor Beer Festival
White's Field, Mill Lane, Chinnor,
www.chinnorbeerfest.org.uk

Saturday 23 - Sunday 24
August

Brill Festival
Brill Sports & Social Club, Church Street, Brill,
32 beers plus 16 ciders & perries
www.brillbeerfestival.co.uk

Friday 22 - Monday 25
August

Summer Beer Festival
Kings Head & Bell, Abingdon
01235 525362
www.kingsheadandbell-abingdon.com

Friday 22 - Monday 25
August

Woodman Inn Beer Festival
12 beers plus 4 ciders
New Yatt Road, North Leigh

Friday 5 - Sunday 7
September

Headington Beer Festival
Masons Arms, Quarry School Place, Headington, Oxford
01865 764579
www.themasonsarmshq.co.uk

Saturday 13 September

The Finstock Ale
Beer & folk festival
Finstock Playing Field
22 beers plus ciders

Tuesday 16 - Saturday 20
September

Autumn Ale Festival
Far from the Madding Crowd Friars Entry, Oxford
01865 240900
www.maddingcrowd.co.uk

Friday 19 - Sunday 21
September

Littleworth Annual Autumn Beer & Sausage Festival
Cricketers Arms, Littleworth,
01865 872738
www.cricketers-arms.co.uk

Friday 26 - Sunday 28
September

Bletchington Beer Festival
Bletchington Sports and Social Club, Oxford Road, Bletchington
01869 351866
bletchingtonsportsandsocialclub.com

Saturday 27 September
Stonesfield Septemberfest

Stonesfield Village Hall, Field Close, Stonesfield,
22 beers plus cider
www.stonesfield.info

Friday 3 - Sunday 5
October

Autumn Octoberfest
Brewery Tap, Abingdon
www.thebrewerytap.net

**OXFORD
BEER & CIDER
FESTIVAL 2014
THURSDAY 16TH
TO
SATURDAY 18TH
OCTOBER**

THE DATES for the 17th Oxford Beer Festival have been announced. The three day event will open its doors at 5pm on Thursday 16th October at its usual venue, the Town Hall on St Aldate's.

Once again, we have made few changes to our tried-and-tested formula, so you'll find it very similar to last year's record-breaking event. We will have 180 real ales to choose from, including forty kept over to be served on Saturday morning. Given the popularity of the cider and perry last year, our order will be increased this time around to give even more choice.

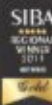
As with all CAMRA festivals, our event is staffed by volunteers: if you wish to volunteer to help this year, please contact Steve Lawrence on 01235 525436 or staffing@oxfordcamra.org.uk.

Please remember, our numbers are limited in the Town Hall, so we advise you to get there early to gain swift entry; at busy times we have to operate a "one in, one out" door policy which can lead to large queues, especially on Friday night.

Put the dates in your diary, and we look forward to seeing you at the Town Hall in October.

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★★★★★
BEST BITTERS



★★★
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