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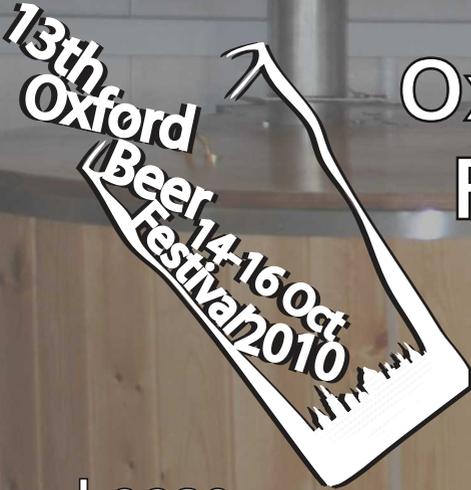
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ISSUE 64

October - November 2010



the Oxford Drinker



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

6000 copies are distributed free of charge to pubs across the branch area; including Oxford, Abingdon, Witney, Faringdon, Eynsham, Kidlington, Bampton and Wantage.

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Valuable contributions to this edition have been made by Neil Hoggarth, Richard Queralt, Ray Borrett, Dave Cogdell and others.

The next publication will be issued in December 2010.

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

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

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Editorial

Welcome to the October/November issue of The Oxford Drinker. This is bigger than ever with 36 pages and an increased print run of 6000 copies.

This is a busy time for the Oxford CAMRA branch. The Oxford Beer Festival is very close at the time of writing. City Pub of the Year and Town/Country Pub of the Year are being selected. We recently had our AGM at which several new committee members were elected, and we have a report from Neil Hoggarth, the new chairman.

Three local breweries have recently started brewing, and we also have several recent beer festival reports.

The Good Beer Guide 2011 has just been published, showing that 80 new breweries started in the last year, indicating the success of real ale since CAMRA was founded in 1971.

Oxford Beer Festival 2010



The 2010 Oxford Beer Festival is taking place from Thursday 14th October to Saturday 16th October, at Oxford Town Hall, celebrating our thirteenth annual event at that venue.

Featuring 140 Real Ales (and 40 duplicate casks of the most popular beers for Saturday); Real Cider and Perry

We are proud to have Brakspear sponsoring our staff t-shirts and providing Beer Festival t-shirts for sale at the Festival. There will only be 100 available to buy, so if you want one, be quick off the mark.

The Pasty-Man is back at our Festival serving food throughout the festival opening times. He

has new recipes that include real ale pasties and cider pasties.

This year we are showcasing local breweries, where a tasting panel will choose the Local Beer of the Festival. It will happen at a blind tasting session where local breweries within a 30 mile radius of Oxford Town Hall have been asked to enter one of their beers into the competition, although there may be more than one of their beers at the Festival itself.



Festival Opening Times

Thursday 14th October: 5pm-11pm
 Friday 15th October: 11am-11pm
 Saturday 16th October: 11am-8pm

The Gloucester Arms

Oxfords NO.1 Rock Pub

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Oxford City Pub News



The Kite, a Victorian corner pub near Oxford Station, is now being run by Paul Wakefield. Paul who has been persuaded out of retirement to manage the pub, at one time ran **The Red Lion** in Witney and **The Cock** at Coombe. **The Kite** was redecorated after the former occupants left and is going to be kept as a traditional town pub. The pub is now open all day, does lunchtime and evening food and has three changing cask ales supplied by Greene King.

The Crown, Cornmarket Street is being refurbished and getting a change of manager. The new manager will be Dave Crook who for the last 4 years has run **The Carpenters Arms** in Windsor. During this time the pub has won the branch Pub Of The Year award twice. Dave is keen to build up the real ale trade for the Crown and is very CAMRA friendly. He even helped serve at the Windsor LocAle festival this year.

The Prince of Wales, Iffley. While still being a traditional pub with Darts, Aunt Sally and Crib teams, this pub is also specially known for the art exhibitions they put on all year round. Currently Elena Samson, a professional Belarusian artist, is exhibiting her work. Future plans include local artists being allocated a wall each in the pub to showcase their art. Being a Wadworth pub they do have some beers not frequently seen in Oxford pubs. During October guest beers will include Bees Knees 4.5% ABV from The Great Western Brewing Company, McMullen Cask 3.8% ABV. and award winning Harvest Pale Ale 3.8% ABV from The Castle Rock Brewery in addition to Wadworth's own Malt and Hops 4.5 % ABV and Swordfish 5% ABV and other beers from the Brewery. During November Hemlock Bitter 4% ABV from Castle Rock and Ruby Porter 5.2% ABV, Great Western will be guest beers. Food is available lunch and evening times using only locally sourced produce and the pub was given 5 stars in the Scores in the Doors in March 2010.

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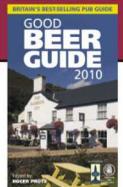
Open 11am-midnight every day.

Food served until 9pm every day.

Always the first with mulled wine in Oxford!

Proud to be CAMRA members & nominated 'Pub of the Year 2009'

Jacqueline & Des Paphitis Fellow MBII
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email: whitehorseox1@bopenworld.com
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Abingdon Brewery and Pub News



Loose Cannon Brewery

In August, the Loose Cannon Brewery sited in South Abingdon brewed two trial brews of "Abingdon Bridge", the first beer to be commercially produced in Abingdon since the demise of Morlands. The beers were served at The Brewery Tap to allow customers to pass comments. Both beers were made with the same combination of malts, but with different hops. The first using Fuggles and Amarillo hops had a bitter fruity flavour, whilst the second which used Challenger and Saviski hops tasted more malty.

Abingdon Bridge could also be tried in other local pubs including **The Stocks Bar**, **Royal British Legion** in

Abingdon, **The North Star** in Steventon, **Prince of Wales** in Shippon, **Eight Bells** in Eaton, Frilford Heath Golf Club, **Red Lion** in Brightwell-cum-Sotwell and Wallingford Sports Club.



Pictured here is Will Laithwaite, the brewer and owner of the Loose Cannon Brewery being served a pint of Abingdon Bridge by JD, the landlady at the Brewery Tap

The brewery shop attached to the Brewery in Suffolk Way sells t-shirts, polo shirts and fleeces, Loose Cannon pint glasses, as well as a small range of quality wine. The beer can be bought in various sizes from 1 litre to 72 pints, served straight from the conditioning tank and ready to drink.

From December, evening Brewery tours will start on the first Tuesday of the month.

A Christmas beer is being planned, although no name has been chosen yet.



LOOSE CANNON
BREWERY

Shop & Brewery

Unit 6, Suffolk Way, off Drayton Road roundabout

 1L £3.00

 2L £6.00

 3L £9.00

 5L £16.25

 18pt £30

 36pt £55

 72pt £96

Our shop beer is sold bright and ready to drink

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01235 531141

The Brewery's first months sales were well above what was initially expected. They hope this will continue with Loose Cannon's addition to the SIBA Direct Delivery Scheme, enabling them to sell into significantly more pubs. Since starting production they have been overwhelmed by the positive response from local pubs and people coming and visiting the brewery shop.

Discounts

The Brewery Tap, Abingdon, now offers CAMRA members 15p discount on real ales. Dusty, Landlord of **The Broad Face**, has introduced a 40p discount on real ale and 20% off main course meals for card carrying CAMRA members. **The Stocks Bar** is also continuing its discount of 20p off a pint of real ale and 20% off food.

The Kings Head and Bell

The Kings Head and Bell's 1st beer festival went well and Steve Hipgrave will be planning more beer festivals at the pub.

The Cross Keys

The Cross Keys, Abingdon, has been giving away a free pint to customers who purchased 12 pints during all premier league matches this season, a token was received for each purchased, this equates to a 25p discount on each pint purchased to footy fans.

Spread Eagle

Following on from the article about **The Broad Face** in Abingdon in issue 63 of the Oxford Drinker, we have been made aware, that the team behind the Spread Eagle in Abingdon, Nic and Tina Crawford stepped in at just one day's notice to save the Broad Face from closure in December 2008. They spent five months and a lot of money and effort to keep it going. Due to Greene King demands of full tie and high rents, the team felt they had to pull out, but kept the pub going until the people from Fitzharris Arms took over. Nic and Tina should be commended for their effort and dedication to the staff and the pub, which was competing with their own pub. We are happy to set the record straight on this score.

First Impressions...

- ✓ Warm welcome; friendly staff.
- ✓ Guest & Local real ales.
- ✓ Victorian, wood & brick interior.
- ✓ No video games or loud music - great!
- ✓ Cosy/atmospheric rooms.
- ✓ Nice beer garden.
- ✓ Marvellous food.
- ✓ Wood fire.

oh... and nice etched windows.

Great Sunday roast!

... a super & traditional pub!

ABINGDON BREWERY TAP

New Menu for Lunchtime

News From The Wild West



Ray Borrett

A regular round up of news from pubs in the West Oxfordshire area... including **Witney** and **Carterton**.

There were rumours around Witney that **The Angel** was now a Marston's pub. This is untrue - it is still the same freehold landlord that serves good food and also excellent ales. The only difference is the new pub sign! It is worth having a good look at the new Angel - it should be in a gallery, and bucks the trend of recent pub signs with their lack of character, most just bearing a name and no picture. Apparently the Wychwood Brewery sponsors some pub signs as a thank-you for ordering though the immense Marston's portfolio.



The Osprey, which appeared for a few years has also been closed for some time, but was recently demolished and the site completely cleared in one day. It has been mooted that with the expansion of RAF Brize Norton in the next few years as RAF Lyneham is moving in, there will be some need for one or more pubs. Already, personnel - military and non military, are using the good old pub **The Masons Arms** at Brize Norton village.

A place that has been in doldrums for a long while has been brought back to life. The 17th Century **Royal Sun** at Begbroke (north of Kidlington) is now reinvigorated by two of Oxfordshire's very experienced pub landlords - Debbie and Andy Jones.



Andy is from a family of publicans and he has been looking after beer for 30 years. They were at **The Black Horse** in Standlake until they took a sabbatical. They have been negotiating with Punch Taverns since January and have been at **The Royal Sun** since the end of August. Although there are only two hand pumps at the moment they are well kept - recently London Pride and Hooky Bitter, but it will vary. There is a big emphasis on food and a recent lunchtime visit proved successful turnaround. There is no music and no TV - they were the first items to be removed! Very importantly there is a big



At the other end of town, **The Elm Tree** has also got a new piece of artwork hanging outside and a repainted exterior. The Wychwood logo features inconspicuously on those signs.

Unfortunately a short distance away **The House of Windsor** is apparently no longer a pub but a private house. It has featured in many Good Beer Guides and was a popular drinking place. How many dwellings are likely to be built in the garden? A notable loss to Witney.



St Mary's Church, Witney now has a licence for selling alcohol. There are folk music sessions on a Thursday and although there is no cask ale, they have "real ale in a bottle", perhaps Bishop's Finger but not Satan's Sister (from Best Mates).

In the 1960's, Carterton had a population of 1,100 and had two pubs - **The Beehive** and **The Golden Eagle**. It now has a population of 16,000 and still only two pubs (**The Eagle** is now **The Old Aviator**) with only one cask ale.



welcome from Debbie (Andy is usually in the kitchen) and a often a big supply of roast peanuts on the bar.

Wychwood Brewery's Brewers



We have a local brewery in Witney, the **Wychwood Brewery**, and we are lucky to have them providing the local CAMRA group with sponsorship of the Oxford Beer Festival, and also supporting the local community.

Jeff Drewe, the head brewer, who also devotes some time to the Ringwood Brewery, and John Tilson, who started under the original brewers (Paddy Glenny and the late Chris Moss) have a wealth of brewing experience. But they now also have additional support from Dave Carter.

Dave is a local character from Witney who started work at the brewery seven years ago labouring on the cask racking

line; then onto supervising it; and then on to brewing assistant. However, he has now passed all the exams and is a fully qualified



Dave Carter, now a fully qualified brewer

brewer, having gained the International Brewing and Distilling Qualifications (if you go to university you can get a bit higher, but Dave is not an armchair brewer).

He is particularly proud to be brewing Brakspear Bitter, for it was originally produced at the site of **The Cross Keys** in Witney by Richard Brakspear before moving in with his uncle in Henley. Dave has a wealth of information on local pubs and points out some of their failures in a constructive way so that cask ale can be enjoyed to the fullest.

Dan & Carole welcome you to the

White Hart

5 Real Ales

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12 St Andrews Road, Old Headington
01865 761737

Brewery News



Johanne Green

White Horse Brewery.

We like their catchphrase: "We brew to drink and the rest we sell."

A new 20 barrel plant has now been ordered and made and is waiting to go in, probably after Christmas.

We welcome their new sales person Giles Minkley, who used to work for Timothy Taylor, and will cover the areas of Reading, Marlow and London. Having a sales person is part of the brewery's expansion. In line with that, they are looking for pubs to take over to add to their very successful pub in the centre of Oxford, **The Royal Blenheim**. Considering the fact that The Royal Blenheim went straight into the Good Beer Guide 2010, it might be a good idea to team up with the White Horse Brewery.

They have been invited to the university fresher's fair to promote real ale for the new students.

Beer of the month for October, November and December is Volunds Hammer 4.0% ABV. A beer deep red in colour, with a spicy overtone from the Fuggles and Kent Goldings hops.

Vale Brewery

The Vale Brewery has been rather busy. New larger brewing equipment has been installed and is working well, so the output can be increased, whilst maintaining the high standards of brewing.

The monthly special beers are continuing. This months special beer is SCRUFF Chestnut, a 4.1% ABV brew with a rich full flavour. More details are at www.valebrewery.co.uk

West Berkshire Brewery

October's 'Beer of the Month' will be Aucherius (4.3% ABV) which refers to the early history of Reading Abbey. Helen Maggs has designed and painted all of the images used on the pump clips for the monthly beers since 2005. Have a look on www.wbbrew.com to see her lovely artwork.

Cotswold Brewing Company

The Cotswold Brewing Company which specialises in craft brewed lagers and is also where Oxford's Compass Brewery brews its beer, has moved a few miles down the road to Bourton on the Water in Gloucestershire, which takes it just outside of our branch area, but still within LocAle distance.

Wychwood Brewery

The Brakspear Ale Trail returns to Oxford during October, November, & December. There are eighteen pubs in the city participating. A free Brakspear 'On Tour' t-shirt and free brewery tour vouchers are available to collect for all participants. Look out for the maps and posters throughout Oxford.

Look out for the third edition of the Oxford Tube Map which will be available soon throughout Oxford. The Brakspear branded tube map lists all of the pubs in Oxford City.

Wychwood will be holding a family Halloween event at the brewery (Sunday 31st October). There will be lots of family entertainment and of course – free Hobgoblin! More details at www.wychwood.co.uk.

The Hobgoblin in Fastcask continues to flourish. The beer, which can settle in approximately 60 seconds (as opposed to 2-3 days) is proving very popular at parties, celebrations, beer festivals, and in pubs that have limited cellar space.

Wychwood can now offer a full outside bar function with the famous Hobgoblin Showman's Wagon. The vehicle and bar has recently been out and about at Oxford Pride, Henley Rewind, and the Commotion Festival.

October Beer of the month is Hobgoblin (5% abv) and for November is Dog's Bollocks (5.2% abv)



Hook Norton Brewery.

Congratulations in winning two World Beer Awards! Two Hook Norton beers – Hook Norton Double Stout and Hook Norton Hooky Bitter have been crowned among the World's Best Beers by an international and highly respected judging panel. In the World's Best Stout & Porter (Dry Stout) category Hook Norton Double Stout won the top honours. It was also judged to be first in the European class of the Best Stout & Porter (Dry Stout) category. Hook Norton's Hooky Bitter picked up gold in Europe's Best English Bitter category.

Beer of the month for October is Hook Norton Flagship, 5.3% ABV. The beer was originally brewed in 2005 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar and is the perfect drink to toast the architect of the victory at Trafalgar, Lord Horatio Nelson who died on 21 October, in 1805. It is brewed with Admiral hops, which contribute to a full fruity mouth feel, and a sweet fruity aroma. November's beer is Jackpot 3.8% ABV, a golden bitter, easy drinking beer with 3 hop varieties and Maris Otter maltiness.

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20% off all food



Oxford City Pub of the Year Competition



This year, as in recent years, the Oxford branch will be running two Pub-of-the-Year competitions: one for the pubs in Oxford City itself, and one for the pubs in the wider branch area which we call "Town and Village Pub of the Year". The Town and Village Pub-of-the-Year voting process ran in August and September, and the voting details for the City Pub of the Year are included in this issue.

The following shortlist of five pubs were nominated at the August branch meeting (listed in alphabetical order).

Far From the Madding Crowd

10-12 Friars Entry, Oxford, OX1 2BY.
Phone: 01865 240900.

Open: Mon-Wed 11.30am-11pm; Thur-Sat 11.30am-midnight; Sun noon-10.30pm

Harcourt Arms

Cranham Terrace, Jericho, Oxford, OX2 6DG.

Phone: 01865 310630

Open: Mon-Sat noon-2pm, 5.30pm-11pm;
Sun noon-2pm, 7pm-11pm

Lamb & Flag

12 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3JU.

Phone: 01865 515787

Open: Mon-Sat noon-11pm; Sun noon-10.30pm

Mason's Arms

2 Quarry School Place, Headington Quarry, Oxford, OX3 8LH.

Phone: 01865 764579

Open: Mon 7pm-11pm; Tue-Fri 5pm-11pm;
Sat noon-11pm; Sun noon-4.30pm,
7-10.30pm

Royal Blenheim

13 St Ebbes Street, Oxford, OX1 1PT.

Phone: 01865 242355

Open: 11am-11pm

All CAMRA members are entitled to vote, and you can collect a voting form by picking one up at any of the shortlisted pubs. To vote you must visit all five nominated pubs, get your form stamped in each to show that you have been there, and then rank the pubs in your order of preference. Don't forget to add your name and CAMRA membership number at the bottom of the form. Forms should be posted to the address given on the form, to arrive by 1st December, or they can be brought along in person to the December branch meeting.

Judging Guidelines

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

Quality of Beer:

Obviously CAMRA are only going to give an award to a pub which consistently serves excellent real ale. Please note that the pub doesn't need to sell a wide range of beers to score highly. A pub selling a couple of ales in top-top condition is infinitely preferable to one selling seven or eight of variable quality. Also, the fact that a pub is a tied-house should not be held against it.

Atmosphere, Style and Decor:

This is partly about the "feel" of the pub - is it a nice place to be? Are you going to want to come back on a regular basis? It is also about the extent to which the most has been made of the actual building. Is the decor appropriate to the type of pub that it is? Does the style show respect for the building? Factors like imagination, taste and restraint all come into play. Pubs don't have to be picture-postcard,

unspoilt rural gems to score highly here. Estate pubs, modern city centre bars, back street boozers - all can be excellent in their own terms.

Service and Welcome:

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

Clientele Mix:

A good pub is one where anyone can go in and feel comfortable, whoever they are. If a pub intentionally or unintentionally operates in such a way as to exclude some sectors of the community then that counts against it for this competition. A CAMRA Pub of the Year needs to be inclusive, not exclusive. Look out for whether the pub attracts a good cross section of people and age groups. Is there anything about the pub which might cause discomfort to certain groups?

Sympathy With CAMRA Aims:

Does the pub espouse and promote our values? Is cask beer given a positive push here? Is information offered about the ales sold? Does the pub try to stimulate interest in the sorts of issues that we are concerned about?

Good Value:

This is about value for money, but in the widest sense of the term (ie. not just how cheap the ales is). Having made the effort to travel to the pub and spend your money, how good a pub experience have you had? This is a bit of a catch-all category and acknowledges the fact that it isn't always easy to pin down exactly why a pub seems so good, but somehow everything comes together and the whole thing works.

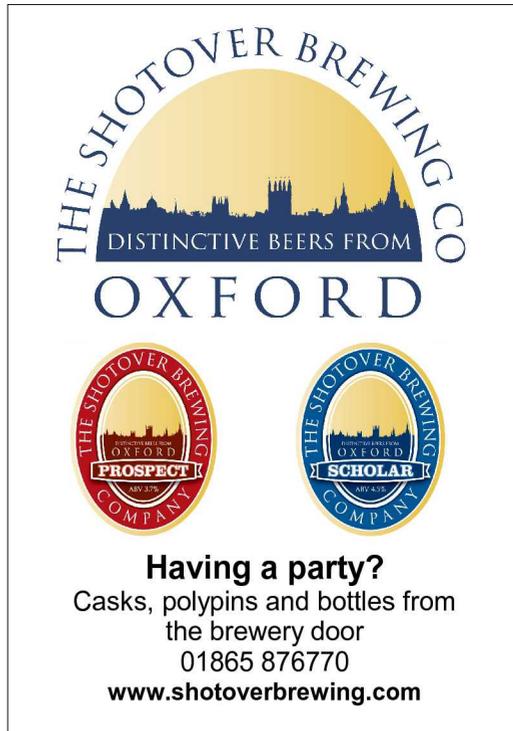
We hope that as many members as possible will join in the judging. Pub-judging can be great fun, especially when you find yourself in a belting pub that you haven't visited before.



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LocAle Awards



Chester Arms

19 Chester Street
Oxford
OX1 1SN



Matt Rhodes was presented with CAMRA LocAle accreditation for The Chester Arms on 6th August.

Mason's Arms

2 Quarry School PLace
Headington Quarry
OX3 8LH



Chris Meeson being presented with his LocAle certificate during the Headington Beer Festival on 4th September.

The LocAle award is presented to pubs that endeavour to serve local ales brewed within 30 miles.

If you think your local pub should join the scheme then please get in touch by sending an email to locale@oxfordcamra.org.uk or call Sam French on 07905 212318,

Headington Beer Festival



JoHanne Green

The Mason's Arms in Headington held their 9th Headington beer festival over the first weekend in September. These beer festivals are very well run and always interesting in the range of beers.

This year there were 47 beers in all, 18 of them local ales, 4 of which were from their own Old Bog Brewery. Chris Meeson, landlord, had also chosen 9 ciders and 2 perries to complement the beers. Chris also made sure he had 6 CAMRA award winning beers in the range - all in all a very impressive beer list. On the Friday evening there was a BBQ and on the Saturday a hog roast and a live band.

The Headington Beer Festival is also the venue of the annual Aunt Sally match between ourselves and neighbouring CAMRA branches.

It can be quite hilarious to watch, as many of the participants only ever play Aunt Sally on this day. The game is played in a good friendly spirit, welcoming newcomers to the game and nobody takes it too seriously. The atmosphere is one of relaxed but interested competition. The beer leg though is fiercely fought for; that is a round where the losers of that leg buys the winners a beer.

Chris Meeson and his helpers run a fantastic beer festival, the quality and range of beers are great and the atmosphere is just right. The Mason's Arms beer festival is definitely a great asset to our branch and a good example of how a pub can enhance it's reputation.

Oxtoberfest 28th-31st October

5 pubs in the West End of Oxford have come up with an idea to increase footfall to their end of town.

The pubs involved are **The Honey Pot, The Duke's Cut, The White House, The Jam Factory** and **The Oxford Retreat**. They are going to co-host an October Beer Festival, The Oxtoberfest, a Munich style German beer and Local crafts festival. This outdoor festival will include beer and food from Germany and UK and local arts and crafts. Dressing up in a costume or simply in a hat or wig is recommended.

Between them the pubs will have up to 50 beers for people to try. The way to participate is to buy a wrist band that will allow you to visit the pubs and only pay £2.50 a pint. The wrist band will be £5 and can be purchased through www.wegotickets/oxtoberfest

On Saturday 30 October **The Jam Factory** will host a live brewing session with the Cotswold Brewing Company, so go along to see real lager being brewed.

More information at www.oxtoberfest.co.uk

The Cricketer's Arms Littleworth (Wheatley)

Good Beer Guide
2011 Listed



The first local Ale pub in Oxford

Shotover, Hook Norton
& Local Guest Ales

Huge Selection
of Local
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& Home Made Food

Close to Shotover and Oxford, just off the M40, ideal as a meeting place, ideal for walkers, we're "The little pub with the BIG welcome"

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OLD BOG
Brewery

Harviestoun Bitter & Twisted 3.8%
Brains Rev James 4.5%
West Berkshire Good Old Boy 4.0%
Ever Changing Guest Ales
Our Own OLD BOG Ales
Over 14 Bottled & Draught Ciders

Chairman's Report / Branch AGM



Neil Hoggarth

The branch held its AGM on 1st September and, as the newly elected branch chairman, I thought this would be a good opportunity to introduce myself, and to update readers on how the branch is getting on.

CAMRA is an entirely voluntary organisation (apart from a small group of paid employees at national HQ in St Albans). Our ability to campaign and operate at a local level is entirely dependent on members coming forward and being willing to become involved in branch activities. In the past we have often struggled to fill committee positions and had to (metaphorically) twist arms in an effort to get overworked local activists to volunteer, or agree to stay in a post. I am pleased to report that our attempts over the last few years to activate and engage with the membership seem to be paying dividends - we had an excellent turn-out for the AGM, with around 40 members in attendance. The meeting was opened by Matt Bullock, as acting chairman, gave a brief review of the past year, highlighting in particular another successful Oxford Beer festival, and the very positive reactions that the full-colour and expanded Oxford Drinker magazine has garnered. Grahame Allen, the treasurer, gave a presentation on the audited 2009/10 branch accounts, and took questions.

Not only did we manage to fill all the core committee posts, but we had multiple candidates to vote on for several of the roles - an almost unprecedented situation! I was elected chairman, Dave Cogdell joins the committee as treasurer, we are pleased to welcome back Helene Augar as membership secretary, and Steven Green has volunteered to double-up as social secretary as well as retaining his existing role in the production of the Oxford Drinker. Other committee posts remain the same as last year. I would like to thank everyone who volunteered to serve this year, and add a particular personal note of thanks and appreciation to Grahame Allen, our outgoing treasurer.

While the increase in participation by members shown in recent times is encouraging, it is clear to me that we still have work to do in improving branch communications with CAMRA members in the area.

In conversation with some of the people who came along to the AGM for the first time it was apparent that some people were unaware that appointment of a new committee was to be the main item of business. To be clear: all branch officers serve a one year term, from branch AGM to branch AGM, and all posts are up for re-election each time - any branch member who is willing to serve may seek nomination to any of the posts. When formal notification of the AGM is given next year I will ensure that we communicate the process to the membership more clearly than we have done in the past.

In the question and answer session that preceded the election for chairman, it was suggested that some saw the branch activists as "little more than a drinking club". I will acknowledge, up-front, that there is a strong social component to a lot of the branch's activities: after all, drinking in pubs is (or should be!) a social activity; and given that we are all volunteers choosing to spend our spare time on CAMRA, active participation in the branch needs to be enjoyable - otherwise people wouldn't do it! Having said that, local branch members pour a lot of effort into genuine campaigning activity: organising a major beer festival every year; promoting local independent breweries with the LocAle scheme; fighting pub closures; promoting local pubs with our Pub-of-the-Year awards and initiatives such as the Local Pubs Week scheme; and running the surveying and selection process for the branch's entries to Good Beer Guide every year. I think we often play up the social angle of the branch's activities when presenting ourselves in Oxford Drinker (with write-ups of beer festival outings and pub crawls, etc) because we want to encourage participation, but if we are giving the mistaken impression that this is all that is going on then we need to communicate our serious campaigning message better. I hope that we can improve on this, and also take on board any constructive criticism that people have about our local campaigning efforts. But always remember: CAMRA is a grass-roots, democratic, volunteer organisation - things only happen, and policies only change, when people who care about issues come along, get involved, fight their corner, and do the work.

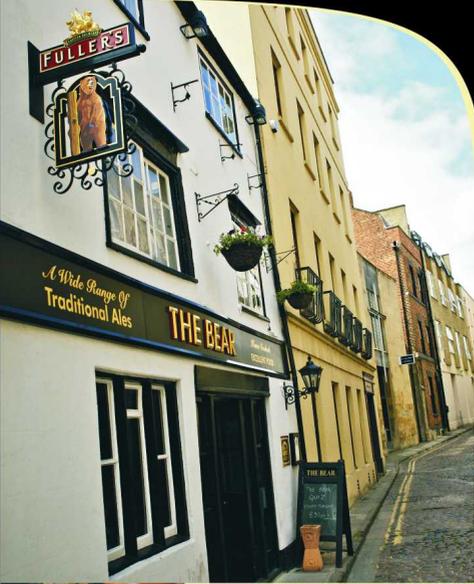
THE BEAR INN

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

Oxford Branch Diary



Thursday 7th October: 7.30pm
Regional Pub Of The Year Presentation
 The Bell Inn at Aldworth, Berkshire, RG8 9SE

Friday 8th October: 7pm
Beer Festival Publicity Crawl
 Meet at Lamb & Flag for a pub crawl of central Oxford to promote the Oxford Beer Festival

Wednesday 13th October - Sunday 17th October
Oxford Beer Festival Setup on 13th, Take down on 17th.
 Volunteers needed to help.
 Please download staffing form from
<http://oxfordcamra.org.uk/2010-staffing-form.pdf>

Tuesday 2nd November: 7.30pm
Branch Meeting.
 Location to be announced.

Wednesday 1st December: 7.30pm
Branch Meeting.
 Location to be announced.

All CAMRA members (whether local or not) and any prospective members are very welcome to attend all events.

For more details about social events please check the web site at <http://oxfordcamra.org.uk/diary> or contact Steven Green on 01235 200756, social@oxfordcamra.org.uk

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

Beer Scoring System



One of the tools Oxford CAMRA branch use to choose pubs for the Good Beer Guide and Pub of the Year is the National Beer Scoring System (NBSS) - beers are scored on a 0 to 5 scale:

The scores are compiled into a "league table" showing the quality of the beer in our area. We encourage all CAMRA members who drink in the branch area to submit their scores.

You may choose to score per beer or per pub, averaging your score for each pub visit.

Submitting scores is now easier than ever before: go online to

 www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/members and login with the same details that you use on the national CAMRA website. Once logged in you can submit your scores.

 Alternatively you can enter scores in the National Beer Scoring System at <http://www.beerscoring.org.uk/>

0 UNDRINKABLE

No cask ale available or so poor you have to take it back.

1 POOR

Beer that is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment.

2 AVERAGE

Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to the next pub, but you drink the beer without really noticing.

3 GOOD

Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again.

4 VERY GOOD

Excellent beer in excellent condition.

5 PERFECT

Probably the best beer you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.

Beer Festival Diary



Friday 1 - Saturday 2 October 12th Solihull & District Beer Festival

 Campaign for Real Ale
Solihull Royal British Legion,
Union Street, Solihull
35+ beers, 2 ciders & a perry
www.solihullcamra.org.uk

Friday 1 - Sunday 3 October Red Lion Beer Festival

Godstow Road, Wolvercote
01865 552722

Thursday 7 - Saturday 9 October Turf Tavern Beer Festival

Turf Tavern, Bath Place, Oxford
01865 243235
www.theturftavern.co.uk

Friday 8 - Sunday 10 October Gardeners Arms Beer Festival

Plantation Road, Jericho, Oxford
9 beers plus cider
01865 559814
www.thegarden-oxford.co.uk

Thursday 14 - Saturday 16 October

13th Oxford Beer Festival

 Campaign for Real Ale
Town Hall,
St Aldates,
Oxford

140 beers, plus 30
ciders & perries

www.oxfordcamra.org.uk

Thursday 14th October: 5pm-11pm

Friday 15th October: 11am-11pm

Saturday 16th October: 11am-8pm



Thursday 14 - Sunday 17 October

Hop Pole Inn Beer Festival
Bicester Road, Aylesbury
01296 482129
www.hop-pole.co.uk

Friday 15 - Saturday 16 October

 Campaign for Real Ale
33rd Bath Beer Festival
The Pavilion, North Parade
Road, Bath
60+ beers, plus ciders & perries
www.bathandborderscamra.org.uk

Wednesday 27 - Saturday 30 October

 Campaign for Real Ale
Concrete Pint Beer Festival
The Pitz Theatre, Woughton
Centre, Rainbow Drive,
Leadenhall, Milton Keynes
50+ beers, ciders & perries
www.mkcamra.org.uk

Thursday 28 - Saturday 30 October

 Campaign for Real Ale
Birmingham Beer Festival
Second City Suite, Sherlock
Street, Birmingham
200 beers, plus ciders & perries
www.birminghambeerfestival.org.uk

Thursday 28 - Sunday 31 October

West Oxford Beer Festival, Octoberfest
Five West Oxford pubs are collaborating to promote a weekend beer festival - Duke's Cut (Park End St); Honey Pot; Jam Factory (both Hollybush Row); Oxford Retreat (Hythe Bridge St); and the White House (Botley Rd). Fundraising for Sobell House Hospice.
www.octoberfest.co.uk

Friday 29 - Saturday 30 October

 Campaign for Real Ale
Aylesbury Beer Festival
Eskdale Road Community
Centre, Stoke Mandeville
www.swansupping.org.uk

Thursday 4 - Saturday 6 November

 Campaign for Real Ale
24th Swindon Festival
Steam Museum, Kemble
Drive, Swindon
100 beers plus ciders & perries
www.swindoncamra.org.uk

Friday 19 - Saturday 20 November

 Campaign for Real Ale
Wantage Beer Festival
Comrades Club, Newbury
Street, Wantage
(note new venue)
28 beers, plus cider & perry
www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk

Thursday 25 - Saturday 27 November

Dudley Winter Ales Fayre '10
 Campaign for Real Ale
Dudley Concert Hall, St
James's Road, Dudley
75+ beers, plus ciders &
perries
www.dudleycamra.org.uk

Tuesday 30 November - Saturday 4 December

 Campaign for Real Ale
Pig's Ear Beer & Cider Festival
Round Chapel, Powerscroft
Road, Hackney, London
100+ beers, plus ciders & perries
www.pigsear.org.uk

Saturday 11 December

Haddenham Winterfest
Banks Park, Haddenham
(note new venue)
www.haddenham-beer-festival.co.uk

Tuesday 14 - Saturday 18 December

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



Up-to-date information about beer festivals can be found on the Oxford CAMRA web site at:

<http://oxfordcamra.org.uk/festivals>

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

Halfpenny Brewery Beer and Music Festival, Lechlade.



Ray Borrett

The Brewery was opened up and fitted with a 3 tier stillage and all the beers were cask cooled using the breweries refrigeration. Appropriately payment was by tokens that just happened to be real half-pennies (where did they get so many of them?)

The tasting notes were well presented, most interesting and comprehensive and there was space to write your own notes. Obviously the Halfpenny and Old Forge Brewery were present along with nationally available brews, such as Hobgoblin, Old Thumper, Showman's Tipple and Lakeland Stunner from the Marston range. Other beers included those from the Ramsbury Brewery in Marlborough, Vale Brewery at Brill, and nearby brewers the White Horse Brewery, and The Old Bog brewery in Headington.

This was very much a festival with and for the local community, with either a BBQ or a pig roast on each night and music groups or soloists in the bar.

There was tremendous discussions on the beers and how real ale seemed to be "converting" lager drinkers to a new experience. There was popular liking for Sea



King (Coastal Brewery) 5.5% ABV, a citrus but still hoppy beer with a slight sweetness and also Amarillo (Milk Street Brewery) 4.5% ABW with American hops providing spicy and floral notes and a hint of orange.

The strongest offering was Firebox RHC Brewery) 6% ABV, a deep red-brown brew, very drinkable and full of body with distinct morello cherry flavours. This was popular despite the high ABV.

A few ciders and perrys also featured in the drinkers likes - Cheddar Vally Cider 6%, which they call it "sellafield apple juice" because of it's fluorescent yellow-orange colour. Whilst apple and pear 5%, a blend of traditional scrumpy and fresh pear juice, was a pleasant inclusion. A blueberry infused cider 7.5% was surprisingly good. My only gripe was that there was no availability for 1/3 pint measure. My drinking was limited (my chauffeur was not on duty this weekend - away at her father's) but everybody seemed to be on the "try my glass" friendliness. Graham Gerrard, head brewer at Halfpenny was there and also Alan Watkins, owner. They certainly got a lot of feedback on the drinking likes and dislikes of the patronage.

The Woodman Inn Festival, North Leigh

Yet another good range of beers by John Birch with about 16 to choose from, along with a range of cider. Two members of Oxford CAMRA had decided to walk there from Woodstock. (On Sunday the bus from Oxford only goes as far as Woodstock). The afternoon was not conducive to leaving home due to torrential cloud bursts and also a motor grand prix. Eventually things changed and later on people appeared in greater number.

Wolf Brewery (Norfolk) Straw Dog 4.5% ABV was a palatable but clear wheat beer with

softer German hops. Quarts Brewery (Staffordshire) Crystal 4.2% ABV, a fresh pale amber ale with a distinct treacle flavour; Box Steam (Colerne, Wilts) Golden Bolt 3.8% ABV was a light straw-coloured bitter with typical hop aftertaste. Rudgate Ruby Mild 4.4% ABV (CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain 2009) was available: a nutty and soft palate ruby ale with good body - and so it could go on, but two of our group succumbed to the walk and the beer and I had to drive them to Witney for a bus back to Oxford.



We sell polypins and bottles direct from the brewery, Mon-Fri.
For any enquiries please call:
01367 718700
or email
fiona@whitehorsebrewery.com

WHITE HORSE BREWERY

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



www.whitehorsebrewery.com

ROYAL BLENHEIM

13 Ebbes St. Oxford



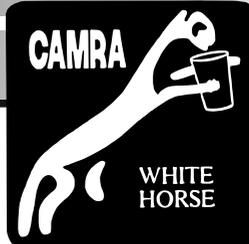
- 10 hand pumps.
- We are in the 2010 & 2011 Good Beer Guides.
- 1/3 pints available all the time.
- Homemade food using fresh & local produce. Vegetarian, vegan & coeliac friendly.
- Quiz Night Wednesday 9pm.



Only pub in Oxford run by an Oxford brewery.
10% off food & drink for CAMRA members.

www.royalblenheim.co.uk

White Horse Branch



The White Horse Branch of Camra includes, as well as numerous villages, the market towns of Faringdon and Wantage, the latter being the birthplace of King Alfred the Great in 849. Formed originally as a sub-branch of the Oxford branch in the early 1990s, it fills a rural area not covered by the City branch or other neighbouring branches in Oxfordshire, Wiltshire and Berkshire.

Social Events

As well as organising the beer festival, the branch has an active social programme. This includes visits to beer festivals (including Ascot and Swindon), breweries (recent trips include Vale and Wye Valley Breweries) hop farms, maltings and of course public houses; often two or three of these elements are included on the same day.

Our Website

Visit our website, www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk for a wealth of information about breweries, pubs, events and news in our area.



If you have any news or other material that you feel should be included on the website, please contact webmaster@whitehorsecamra.org.uk.

Diary Of Events

Tuesday 5th October

Beer festival publicity crawl Faringdon

To advertise Wantage Beer Festival . Meet anywhere on route to publicise Beer Festival:

- 19.00, The Folly..... 54 London Street
- 19.30, The Bell Hotel..... Market Place
- 20.00, Portwell Cellar Bar..... 26 Market Place
- 20.30, Old Crown Coaching Inn..... 25 Market Place
- 20.45, Red Lion..... 3 Cornmarket
- 21.00, Volunteer..... 2 Gloucester Street
- 21.30, The Swan..... 1 Park Road

Thursday 14th 19.00

Support ! Oxford beer festival- Social

Oxford CAMRA Beer Festival. Oxford Town Hall.

Thursday 14th October - Saturday 16th October 5-11pm Thur, 11am-11pm Fri, 11am-8pm Sat. Featuring around 140 different real ales and around 30 real ciders/perrys

Tuesday 19th October

Branch Meeting 19.45

Plough Inn .Eaton Road Appleton OX13 5JR

19th - 20th November

Wantage Beer Festival

Comrades Club, Newbury Street, Wantage, OX12 8DJ

New Friendly Team, Manager Micky & Head Chef Danny
WELCOME YOU To Restored Heritage Pub at **LONGCOT**,
with 5 Real-Ale Pumps, New Chef's Menus, Beer & BBQ Terrace

With View of Oldest White Horse

01793 784 348

Table Bookings & Enquiries

info@kingandqueenlongcot.co.uk

Shrivenham/ Fernham Rd B4508
 4 miles south of Faringdon
SN7 7TL OXON



**King
&
Queen
Longcot**

**Games and
Function Room
Darts, Pool Table
47-inch TV**

Smokers' Pavilion

**Children Welcome &
Well Behaved Dogs**

Freshly Prepared Food

- **Sunday Lunch from £ 9.50**
- **SPECIALS BOARD & Fine Wines**
- **Weekday Lunch Specials
2 Courses £10.50**

kingandqueenlongcot.co.uk

**New Garden Terrace
& BBQ Area**

**Summer Music
Events & Fests**

**We Cater also for
Private Function**



Visitor Centre & Shop

Free Admission...Free Parking for Visitors...Fully Accessible

Come and see the famous **Wadworth Shire Horses**
 - the stables are open **1.30 - 3.00pm Monday to Friday**
Please ask at the Visitor Centre.

Brewery Tours now available *(Advance booking recommended)*

**For further information, please contact the Visitor Centre
 on 01380 732277 or email: visitorcentre@wadworth.co.uk**

For opening hours during Bank Holidays and over the Christmas period please contact the Visitor Centre

Winter Opening:

Monday to Friday 10am - 4.30pm
 Saturdays 11am - 4pm

Summer: Opening:

Monday to Friday 10am - 5.30pm
 Saturdays 10am - 4pm

Open Sundays peak season

Wadworth & Co Ltd, Northgate Brewery, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 1JW.
www.wadworth.co.uk

Wantage Beer Festival Makes a Move



This year's Wantage Beer Festival is moving to a new venue. After two successful – but occasionally crowded – years at the Masonic Hall, White Horse Branch has decided to move to the Comrades Club, Newbury Street, five minutes from the town centre.

The event will be held on Friday 19th and Saturday 20th November, from 11am to 11pm both days. See www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk for details of admission, glass hire and beer list.

Neil Crook, chairman of White Horse Branch, said: 'This year we are focusing

on locales, with 28 beers (plus cider and perry) from the local area. Breweries represented will include Appleford and Arkell's to White Horse and Zero Degrees, not forgetting our own Pitstop, and many will be brewing specials for the occasion.'

Peter Fowler's The Hop, now recognised by the Guinness Book of Records as the bitterest beer in the world, will be making a guest appearance. There will also be beers from new local breweries the Swan at Faringdon, the Old Forge at Coleshill and the Halfpenny Brewery from Lechlade.

Stop Press – Pub opens in Faringdon...

A party of local Camra members visited The Swan in Park Road Faringdon on its opening night and gave the newly refurbished pub their seal of approval for its range and quality of real ales. The pub, which had been empty for several months, opened its doors for trade at the beginning of September. It now offers seven real ales and a micro-brewery located in an adjoining building will be coming into production shortly.

The new manager is Caroline Henson, who comes to The Swan with much experience in the pub trade in the Midlands, and is enjoying the experience of running Faringdon's newest pub. The pub is part of the Oak Taverns group who run the Cross Keys in Thame, which has proved to be a success story.

Neil Crook, chairman of White Horse Camra Branch, who was at the opening along with 13 other members, said: "I was extremely pleased and excited with the range and styles of the seven real ales available from all over the country. They included a mild, bitter, best bitter and blonde on offer and apart from the local White Horse Bitter, I have not seen any of them in Faringdon or the surrounding area before. I believe the discerning drinker will have a most enjoyable experience trying



the beers available in The Swan."

Faringdon's Mayor Cllr Margaret Barker pulled a ceremonial first pint and wished the pub well in front of a crowd of invited guests including people who had worked on the fitting out of the pub and near neighbours.

Photo and report by Al Cane,
Editor, Faringdon Folly.



WANTAGE BEER FESTIVAL



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

NEW VENUE for 2010 **Comrades Club**

Newbury Street, Wantage OX12 8DJ
(5 minute walk from Town Centre)

Fri 19th & Sat 20th NOVEMBER 2010

Opening times: 11am – 11pm

28 Real Ales

'Including Festival Commissioned Ales'

Cider & Perry

Glass hire £2

Festival glasses available

Admission prices:

Friday 11am-6pm: CAMRA members Free, Concessions £1.00, Others £2.00

Friday 6pm-11pm: CAMRA members £1.00, Others £3.00

Saturday 11am-11pm: CAMRA members £1.00, Others £2.00
(Under 21s need ID)

Limited Parking at Venue

Further details: <http://www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk>

Enquiries: beerfestival10@whitehorsecamra.org.uk

Source to Sauce

A 200 mile pub crawl by Dick Bosley, Tim Cairns et al



Back in 2002, having already walked The Ridgeway, we decided to walk the Thames Footpath. We chose this path for two reasons: the Ridgeway has very few pubs and The Thames has very few hills.

The start at Thames Head was, frankly, a disappointment. No sign of water so we all ceremonially peed on the appropriate spot and set off. After 45 minutes of walking water was spotted! To be fair there was then some rather spectacular countryside to keep us going until, after 13 miles, we made our first important sighting – a pub.

Hot and thirsty as we were, and with 8 ales, **The Red Lion** at Cricklade seemed the answer to our prayers. The absence of a menu was solved by the landlord allowing us to eat pies from the nearby butcher in the pub garden and so 5 pints later our band of happy hikers set off again. Finding another pub on the outskirts of Cricklade led to another pint and the formation of rule 1 – No walking past an open pub. The afternoon passed hazily enough until we reached our overnight stop at Lechlade. We had a bite to eat and a few pints and an early night.

Rule 1
No walking past an open pub

Next day we eagerly set off for more lovely views, an occasional boat, and witty repartee regarding blisters and hangovers, before reaching **The Trout** at Tadpole Bridge for lunch. After the best roast beef I've ever had we resumed less eagerly until **The Maybush** and **The Rose Revived** revived our spirits. We then continued to **The Ferryman** at Bablock Hythe, our next B&B. Some described the pub as uninspiring but I think that is too polite. Fair play the breakfast was good enough to keep us going the next day until we reached **The Perch** at Binsey and then on to **The Bookbinders** in Oxford. After a few pints and a lot of plan making we went our separate ways.

In 2003 Tim and I set off alone from Henley and a good morning's walk saw us arrive at Reading at exactly the same time as the beer

festival opened! After several, perhaps numerous, samples we reluctantly set off for our B&B at Goring to meet our co-walkers. It seemed only sensible to take the train back to Reading and the beer fest. We set off the next morning with Tim making an unnecessary and unflattering comparison between a boat engine and my snoring to reach Wallingford at opening time. Straight into **The Boathouse** (see rule 1) and out again due to the lack of real ale; we had a pint in **The Town Arms** before carrying on to **The Crown** at Benson for lunch. A seemingly never ending afternoon (with only one more pub) and an overnight stop at **The Railway** in Culham saw us arrive bright eyed and bushy tailed in Oxford for beer in **The Head of the River** and the **St Aldates** and a bus home. This stretch did lead us to formulate rule 2 – No walking past an open pub unless it is Greene King.

Rule 2
No walking past an open pub unless it is Greene King

We resumed next in 2006 starting at Henley and we saw the unusual sight of a Red Kite being mobbed by Parakeets. A split in John's trousers meant we saw more of him than we wanted and so we made an emergency stop in Marlow for replacements and a pint. Amongst other stops was **The Bounty**, a lovely pub only accessed from the river or the towpath. We reached Maidenhead for a few uninspiring pubs and the train home after only a day's walking.

In 2009 we set off from Maidenhead, this year joined by Jane, who had cycled there, and due



to either bad planning or our supreme fitness levels we reached Windsor before the pubs opened. We carried on for lunch at Wetherspoons in Staines, and then several more stops saw us reach Shepperton for the

evening. Our B&B was a fair distance from the river but only 3 doors from **The Barley Mow**, a fantastic pub.

Next day we reached **The Bishop out of Residence** at Kingston swiftly followed by **The Boaters** - much to Jane's confusion

as she didn't know about rule 1. A couple more stops and we reached Twickenham for a late lunch and the train home.



2010 and on to the final frontier – well Thames Barrier. Leaving Twickenham at a good pace we reached the **White Horse** in Parsons Green for lunch. Heavy rain forced us to prolong our break but we restarted and only saw one pub along the way (which we ignored as there was no real ale) so no more stops until **The Doggett's Coat & Badge** and the **Founders Arms** either side of Blackfriars Bridge. Despite a combined age of over 200 we stayed at a

Youth Hostel which was also a pub – the **St Christopher Inn**.

The next morning we went to **The Market Porter** at 7am but contrary to Good Beer Guide advice it wasn't open.

Because of this, ridiculous Sunday licensing laws and another pub with no ale we reached our destination dry inside and out. We thought about marking the

end as we had the start but bottled it and instead took the bus to **The Spanish Galleon** in Greenwich before making our way home.



Cask Marque approved real ales
Strong in the Arm, 6X, I.P.A. and
Bishops Tipple

Play Pool, Darts and Korom
Skittle Parties £8-50

Medieval Banquets £22-50

December 'Christmas Ales' Mini Beer Festival

6 Ensuite Bedrooms (2 nights £90 b&b)

Large Functions Room and Restaurant

The Ferryman Inn, Bablock Hythe, Northmoor, Oxon

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Old Forge Brewery Opening



Ray Borrett

Colehill, between Lechlade and High-worth, has been noted for the National Trust's Colehill Manor (destroyed by fire some years ago). It was also the home of a mega-secret training unit for a commando-like group to act as a last ditch defence should there have been occupation by Germany during the last world war.



In 1949 the village blacksmiths was converted into a drinking house and evolved towards the present establishment, now called the Radnor Arms. Alan Watkins (of the Crown Inn, Lechlade) bought it during March 2010 and it has become another alluring feature of the village. The

main high-beamed room is adorned with most of the original forge tools and two smaller rooms by the bar are more conducive to drinking. The brews are delivered in 1/3, 1/2 or 1 pint glasses, straight or handled and either gravity or hand pump.

On 15 August, the Old Forge Brewery was officially launched. It is a full wall glazed refurbishment of an outbuilding by the entrance of the Radnor Arms - everything adds up to a "must try" the local real ale. The eventual full-time brewer "Gordy" Moreign lives above the pub.



On my arrival for a Sunday lunch I was immediately ushered on by Alan to start drinking in the 4 barrel

plant. Two beers were available - Anvil 3.8% ABV, a robust amber ale with a malt/fruit finish and Blacksmith's Gold 4% ABV, a lighter brew with a delightful floral aroma. (Later in the week Hammer and Tongs at 4.2%ABV, a darker chestnut colour with a

fresh hoppy nose was available). The Gold disturbed me on immediate presentation for it's cloudiness, but it was caused by very fine bubbles of natural carbonation that rose after a minute or two to yield a surprising brightness. Gemma, the pub manageress, rescued us for lunch. I ended up, after eating and imbibing, by helping to service the glass supply between brewery and bar. Several hundred people must have been surprised to be offered free beer! The garden was well used and a solo guitar was well appreciated rather than the present vogue of ear-blaster music.

The Old Forge Brewery is a remarkable addition to our brewing heritage and is a shining example of what can be achieved with due care and attention.



THE DUKE'S CUT

1 Park End Street, Oxford, OX1 1HH
Tel: 01865 204060 – E: info@thedukescut.com

• SKY HD • Snug Bar • Log Fire • Live Music • Comedy
Cask Marque & LocAle Accredited Ales • Riverside Terrace



The Duke's Cut is part of Oxtoberfest 2010 Beer Festival
28th – 31st October

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Home cooked traditional fresh food served daily • Children's menu • Log Fires
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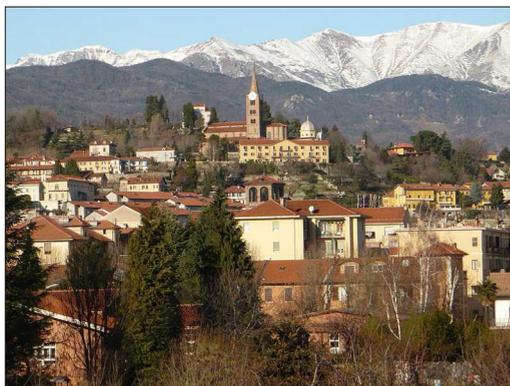
 Christmas and New Year bookings now being taken at both pubs 

Eataly Pinerolo Beer Festival



Ian Roberts

Idling away a Sunday evening over a bottle of Moretti in the Italian village where I am currently resident, my ladyfriend drew my attention to a full-page advertisement in "La Stampa" for a real ale festival to be held from 18th till 20th June under the auspices of Eataly, a chain of top-quality foodstores-cum-restaurants, at its branch in Pinerolo, a town of some 35,000 inhabitants, some 35 km. south-west of Turin.



One does not readily associate Italy with real ale - birra artigianale in Italian - but it exists – indeed, the Italian equivalent of the Real Ale Guide runs to some 300 pages, although, unlike its British counterpart, it is based on breweries rather than pubs as real ale seems unobtainable in Italian bars. It is, however, obtainable in good supermarkets; indeed, the Carrefour chain produces its own. Until my visit to the beer festival I had only tried "La Bière du Moulin" which, despite its French name, is brewed in the town of Fossano, near Turin. The "chiara" version (5%) tasted like good homebrew, whereas the "ambrata" (6.5%) was very passable. Like all Italian beers, birra artigianale is somewhat stronger than its British counterpart.

We set off on Saturday afternoon but shortly after we arrived the heavens opened and as the festival was to be held in the open, complete with big screen to watch the football and three bands, we were met by employees

frantically dismantling everything and moving it indoors. Enquiries revealed that proceedings would recommence at 7 o'clock. After three hours spent traipsing round the supermarket, but mostly in the bar, where I finally sampled draught Italian real ale in the commendable form of Baladin Reale, we approached one of the organisers shortly before 7 o'clock. He was most apologetic for what had happened and offered to serve me if I was prepared to brave the elements as not all the beers had been moved from outside. As with British beer festivals, a coupon system was in operation and for €10 one could try four beers in 33 ml glasses. The beers available were:

- Köstritzer – dark beer brewed by Köstritzer, Germany - 4.8%
- Edelshof – export lager brewed by Agustiner, Germany – 5.65%
- Brooklyn Lager – lager from the U.S.A. - 5.2%
- Reale Extra - brewed by Birra del Borgo, Italy -9%
- Super – brewed by Baladin, Italy – 8%
- Witte – brewed by La Trappe, Holland – 5.5%
- Tripel – brewed by St. Bernardus, Belgium – 8%
- Estivale – brewed by Rulles, Belgium – 5.5%; I think I've drunk beer from this brewery before in the Swan and Castle in Oxford.

For my four beers, I chose the Köstritzer, Brooklyn Lager, Reale Extra and La Trappe. I found them all pretty palatable and rather hoppy in some cases, but my favourite was the Reale served in the bar

As can be seen, no English beers were to be had, although Eataly has an extensive stock thereof in its beer section, including the following:

- Marston's Old Empire and Oyster Stout;
- Orkney Dark Island and Skullsplitter;
- Brewdog 5.a.m. Saint, Trashy Blonde, 77 Lager, Paradox, Nanny State, Hard Core PA, Punk IPA, Zeitgeist, Bashah;
- Ridgway Ivanhoe and Old Tom

All these come in bottled form but for €34 you can buy a 8½ keg of Summer Lightning, also available bottled. In addition, apart from an extensive range of Italian birra artigianale, there are also beers from Belgium, Germany and the United States.



While I sat drinking my 4 ales I was introduced to an Italian, also a festival organiser. His face lit up when I showed him my CAMRA membership card and he proudly revealed that he had done a stint at the Great British Beer Festival.

We remained downstairs in the bar, receiving personal service from one of the organisers while he continued transferring the festival upstairs. We decided not to stay for the three bands, but before returning home I decided out of politeness to take my leave of the organisers upstairs. It certainly did not have the atmosphere of a British beer festival but the place was heaving with many festival-goers sitting down to a meal. The fact that it was a real ale festival seemed incidental to most of them. Our GBBF friend was in the throes of a crisis as he frantically attempted to serve an endless number of customers but all the while getting more froth than beer from the taps. All manner of receptacles were being filled with beer to meet demand.

So engrossed in the beer had we become that we had failed to notice that it had also grown crowded in the shop itself and so we had to change our plan of eating at Eataly and go for a Chinese meal in Pinerolo, with which I drank Yang Jin lager for the first time.

The beer festival at Pinerolo was certainly an experience if only for the curiosity value of it being held somewhere not readily associated with real ale. Apart from the two organisers and myself, there seemed to be no genuine beer lovers and thus no earnest conversations about the comparative merits of the beers available. As can be seen, there was a very limited number of beers available by British standards and I feel that not all of them would meet the criterion for real ale in the U.K. Furthermore, it was held under the auspices of a supermarket as opposed to a bar or pub or CAMRA, as is usually the case in the U.K. Nevertheless, I have nothing but praise for the two organisers who, in the midst of transferring the festival inside, still had time to provide us with personal service denied other people present

Unless there is another festival in between and/or I am attending the Oxford Beer Festival, the next beer festival I hope to attend in these parts is the annual festival held in in the town of Susa, near the French frontier in October-November.

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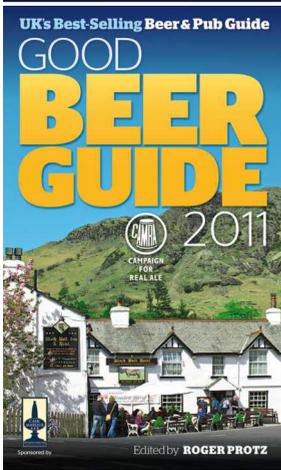
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The Good Beer Guide 2011



The CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2011 was published on 16 September 2010.

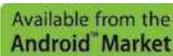
The Good Beer Guide 2011 now lists a staggering 767 breweries operating in Britain, which is four times the number than when the Campaign for Real Ale was founded in 1971. It reports that 78 new

breweries have opened in the past year. Allowing for closures, that's a net increase of 56.

The Central South area of England which includes the Oxford branch area now boasts 45 real ale breweries of which 10 new breweries started business in the last 12 months: Oxfordshire: Loose Canon (Abingdon), Old Forge (Coleshill), Shotover (Horspath), Thame (Thame). The Compass Brewery in Oxford also started, but uses another brewery's facilities to make its beer. Berkshire: Two Bridges (Caversham), Windsor & Eton (Windsor) Hampshire: Botley (Botley), Flack Manor (Romsey), Henston (Owslebury), Upham (Upham)



The Good Beer Guide is available as a mobile phone app for iPhone, Android and many other popular handsets. The service costs £4.99 per edition and allows you to search for pubs by location, view them on a map and read all information about pubs and breweries from the book.



Visit m.camra.org.uk for more information.

There are 83 new Good Beer Guide pub entries from the Central South of England, 5 of which come from the Oxford branch area:

The Bear Inn, Oxford: this is the first appearance since 2003.

Turf Tavern, Oxford: guide regular, back after a rather artificial absence last year (management change in progress when the 2010 guide was being selected).

The Queen's Head, Eynsham: often appears in the guide, but is back after just missing out on selection the last couple of years.

The Cricketer's Arms, Littleworth: this is the first appearance in the Guide, well deserved.

The New Inn, Witney: another pub that often appears in the guide, but missed out on selection last year.

It has to be said, that the 17 pubs our branch is allocated will not in any way cover all the deserving pubs there are; and that we would like to be able to put in. So while we can heartily recommend the beer in the pubs that *are* listed in the book, the *non-appearance* of a pub in any given year certainly doesn't mean that the beer quality is bad, or that it has deteriorated. We don't "drop" pubs from edition to edition of the guide - we start with a clean sheet of paper each year, and do our level best to pick the top 17 pubs in the branch area. Anyone can see this is very difficult (as one old-time member puts it in the choosing process: "there will be tears"). The beer scores are an invaluable tool, that helps us to create a short list (see page 18 for how the scoring system works). Next it is up to members voting at a branch meeting.

The Retail Price of the Good Beer Guide 2011 is £15.99, available from many good book shops.

It can be purchased directly from CAMRA at a special price of £10 for CAMRA members or £12.99 for non-members. Visit shop.camra.org.uk for more information.

Also available to buy at The Oxford Beer Festival.

Old Anchor Inn Beer Festival



Graham Hilsdon

As mid July rolled around the Anchor held its 5th (6th ?, I forget the exact number, the beer is always good but unlike Inspector Morse, it doesn't stimulate my grey cells).



It was a memorable occasion as ever, which saw Paul the landlord getting involved by checking the amounts of each beer, left to sell. Given Paul's recent difficulties, this is a major step forward, anyway on to a description of events.

All the ale came from an approximate radius of 30 miles from Abingdon. It was an ideal

opportunity to show the quality of beer brewed within the county, or just over the boundary line. Breweries represented included The Old Bog from Headington, Pitstop from Grove, Hook Norton, Adkins from Wantage, Shotover from Horspath, Vale from Brill, West Berkshire, Appleford and White Horse.

The first to expire was the Abingdon Ale from West Berkshire Brewery, on Saturday afternoon. It's pump clip showed an artists view of East St Helens Street, complete with Morris Men, so close to home. I lost count of the number of people who were disappointed not to be able to sample it in the evening. The other beers sold steadily and there was little left by Sunday evening. One mention for the Pitstop Sump at 7%, it was very drinkable and well received by all brave enough to try it, it was described as "black as night, the beer your mother warned you about". The only negative note was that the Loose Cannon Brewery didn't have Abingdon Bridge available until the end of July, so we missed out on the debut of a beer which has now been well received.

And finally a thank you, to Lesley and Paul for yet another feast of ales. Thanks also to all bar and cellar staff, you haven't got a festival with an empty glass.

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