



CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

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ISSUE 65
December 2010



the Oxford Drinker

Town & Village Pub of the Year Announced

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Hook Norton Dray Horses with 'Taffy' and Roger Hughes visit the Oxford Beer Festival 2010

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

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

The next publication will be issued in February 2011.

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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Oxford Drinker, 13 Cheyney Walk, Abingdon, OX14 1HN

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Welcome to The Oxford Drinker's last issue in 2010.

The Oxford CAMRA Branch recently ran the Oxford Beer Festival. It is a huge undertaking that is run and staffed by volunteers, who put in their own time and effort to make the Festival happen. All the work that branch officers and active members do, is out of interest and a passion for our traditional drink... Real Ale.

CAMRA is a national organisation, but local branches are run entirely by volunteers giving up their own time and effort. Even this magazine only gets printed due to people's contributions and because the editors spend a lot of time putting it together.

We sometimes hear that the Oxford Drinker doesn't cover all the deserving pubs - the only way to do this, is to urge publicans, brewers and drinkers to write about their local. The editors would love to receive articles such as "a day in the life of a landlord" or just general news from where you live, keeping us up to date with the many wonderful pubs in our branch. It does not need to be a finished article, it can just as well be a few lines. Please send contributions to editor@oxfordcamra.org.uk

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Pub News



Mick Gillen took over **The Black Swan**, Crown Street, Oxford, at the beginning of October and had an official opening on 30th October. Much of the Irish feel is retained, the place has had a cosmetic face lift, and is very much a "harmony in brown".

The Ferryman Inn, Bablock Hythe, has a Christmas Beer Festival throughout December and into the New Year, with 6 Christmas beers on at any time, with changing varieties as the month goes by.

The Brewery Tap, Abingdon, will have a selection of local beer and some from further afield during December: Good Cheer Beer (GCB) from Rosters, Trashy Blonde from Brew Dog, Old Hooky from Hook Norton, Jekyll's Gold from Hydes, and Abbot Ale Reserve from Greene King.

The Boundary House, Abingdon, has reopened with a Surf and Turf menu and was serving Abbot Ale when we visited.



The Crown Inn, Cornmarket Street owned by Nicholson's pubs has been refurbished to a high standard.

Manager Dave Crook who has taken over, is passionate about his beer and there are 7 hand pumps with beers both local and from further afield. The beer menu changes 4 times per year with the seasons. Not all the beers from the menu are on at any one time (that would be impossible, as there are 20 beers on it), but it allows you to look forward to beers coming to the pub.

The food is traditional English pub food, served beautifully and not too expensive. There are 5 different kinds of pie and other pub food favourites. Food is served from 10am to 10pm. Even though the food is good and there is space for dining, you can equally well just sit down with a pint and have a chat.

Wednesday 20th October saw the launch party of the Crown Inn with samples from the food menu and tasters of the beer.

The outside area will come into its own in the summer, promising a great space for drinking in the middle of town. Dave is planning on having two Ale & Cider festivals every year, as he did at his previous pub, **The Carpenters Arms** in Windsor. First of all we must let him find his feet; it has been a very busy start for the pub and hopefully it will remain so.

Pub Closures

The Cavalier in Northway, Oxford is boarded up and appears to have permanently closed and not too far away **The Three Horseshoes** in Marston also seems closed. That area of Oxford has lost a number of pubs in recent years with **The Friar** going in 2007, **The White Hart**, the pub that stood right next to the Three Horseshoes, closing in 2003 and **The Somerset** now a restaurant and cocktail lounge with no real ale. It does still, however, have two thriving community pubs in **The Red Lion** on Oxford Road and **The Jack Russell** on Salford Road.

Also, very sadly, now closed is **The Brewery Gate**, once adjoining Morrell's Lion Brewery which was closed in 1998 and later converted into upmarket flats. The pub, without the brewery, was not really in a good location but over the last few years had a new lease of life with a mainly gay clientele, however, it closed in September after the departure of the landlady.

The Turl Bar in Oxford is closing; owned by Lincoln College, it is to be changed into teaching and college social space.



The Crown

Selection of 7 local and seasonal guest ales

Food served 10am ~10pm

*Book now for Christmas. Parties of 6 or more will receive a
complimentary bottle of Prosecco!*

59a Cornmarket St. Oxford OX1 3AB

01865 256047 Thecrownoxford@hotmail.co.uk

Town & Village Pub of The Year



JoHanne Green

The Oxford CAMRA branch Town & Village Pub of The Year competition ran during August and September, with five pubs being nominated.

Being nominated for this competition is a great achievement in itself, so let us remind ourselves of the five pubs: **The Brewery tap**, Abingdon; **Cricketer's Arms**, Littleworth; **The Eagle Tavern**, Witney; **The Morris Clown**, Bampton; and **The Queens Head**, Eynsham.

CAMRA members were encouraged to visit all the pubs, get a form stamped to show you had been there, and then rank the pubs in order of preference, sending the form to the chairman Neil Hoggarth to be counted.

"**The Eagle Tavern**" in Witney was announced as the winner at the October branch meeting. This is the second year running they have won this award and we congratulate them.

The Eagle Tavern has appeared in CAMRA'S Good Beer Guide for the last three years and are also the current holders of Hook Norton's Best Kept Cellar award 2009 and were previously winners in 2007.



On Sunday 7th November, Eagle Tavern licensees Ian Payne and Annette Hegerty celebrated receiving the award in the pub having invited the Mayor of Witney, friends and CAMRA member to a private party. They were both really proud of receiving the award from Neil Hoggarth, our chairman. Speeches were made, a band played and a fantastic evening was enjoyed.

Ian and Annette, who have been running the pub for six years, said: "We are very humbled by the recognition from CAMRA and its members and are very proud to share this accolade with our staff, customers and the Hook Norton Brewery."

Hook Norton's managing director James Clarke said: "We encourage all the people

who run our pubs to set high standards and Ian and Annette at the Eagle are soaring to new heights. They are to be congratulated for winning this prestigious award from Oxford CAMRA for the second time."



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Brewery News



Ray Borrett and JoHanne Green

The **West Berkshire Brewery** in Yattendon celebrate their 15th anniversary with production of a limited edition beer called "Quindecimcenciale", a traditional best bitter boasting a tawny bitter flavour, with plenty of hop notes. David Maggs, brewery owner, said, "We were keen to celebrate our birthday in style and what better way than to mark the occasion with its own brew?" In addition to the ale, the brewery has also produced anniversary glasses, tankards, pottery mugs and jugs to commemorate the special event. Quindecimcenciale is a limited edition ale with only 5,000 bottles being produced, which are available in their brewery shop and in selected outlets in Berkshire. See www.wbbrew.com for more information. December's ale is King Alfred's Draught 4.5% ABV

The, now traditional, Halloween night at the **Wychwood Brewery**, Witney, was a tremendous success. It was amazing how their team pulled it all together. There were over 500 visitors for the evening featuring a magnificent display of carved pumpkins. There was a pig roast, sausages and beefburgers, storytelling for the youngsters, birds of prey (eagle and hawks) but no night-flying, face painting, brewery tours, music and a hobgoblin as master of ceremonies. We must not forget the free beer in pristine condition.

Wychwood Brewery has been named Cask Ale Supplier of the Year by trade paper The Morning Advertiser's Supplier Awards 2010. The award follows a ballot by pub landlords across the region. Head brewer Jeff Drew said staff were delighted, adding: "This means a lot to us as it's voted for by the people who really matter, our customers."

Wychwood has a new website, with news and competitions at www.wychwood.co.uk

Oxford based brewer **Compass** has launched an online shop where you can buy mini-kegs and bottles of their beer, with free delivery in Oxford: <http://shop.compassbrewery.com>

The SIBA Midlands beer competition was held on Thursday 14th October

The Vale Brewery won Silver award for Best Bitter for Vale Pale Ale (VPA).

Hook Norton won a Bronze Award for Hooky Dark and

Loddons won a Gold Award for best bottled bitter with Hullabaloo.

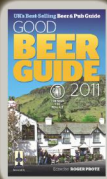
Peter Fowler has moved his **Pitstop Brewery** to the **Shoulder of Mutton** pub in Wantage.

The **White Horse Brewery** has a new website at www.breweryoxfordshire.co.uk. Along with Voluns Hammer 4%ABV, December will also see Rudolf the Red Nosed White Horse for Christmas cheer.

There are two good breweries west of the Oxford CAMRA branch area:

The **Radnor Arms**, at Coleshill, is not only in the 2011 Good Beer Guide, but its on-site **Old Forge Brewery** has received an accolade from the National Trust. Each year the Trust gives awards that encompass its vast number of properties. The Brewery was recently awarded "Best Farm Produce" of the year. Graham Gerrard, head brewer from Lechlade, was summoned to London's Soho to accept the award. It was a bit of a posh do, and although various wines were served, it was the Anvil Ale which hit a higher note. It all went! Along with a chef produced meat and Anvil Ale pie it was a cheering evening for real ale and an encouraging first year for a "LocAle".

Halfpenny Brewery at The Crown, Lechlade will be having its traditional Office Party during December. This is a innovative evening for those of us who are retired, self-employed or between jobs and would not normally have a works party. Sound a good excuse for a "biss up in a prewery" There will be those who want to stay late and those who want to leave early - unfortunately they're usually married to each other!



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OctoberFest 2010

West Oxford Beer Festival and presentation of LocAle Award

(The Dukes Cut, The Honey Pot, Jam Factory, The White House, The Oxford Retreat)



Helene Augar - Membership Secretary, Oxford CAMRA

The first ever west Oxford multi-pub beer festival went off with a hoot this Halloween!

The event ran from Thursday 28th to Sunday 31st October 2010 and along with the planned social on the Saturday to present the LocAle Award to **The Honey Pot**, a few of us started out on the Friday night to make sure we visited all 5 pubs. Our incentive was for those of us who had bought the festival wrist bands (£5 each), we could then buy any pint of beer for £2.50 in the participating pubs and also

enjoy additional discounts and offers over the four days. Two beers had been specially brewed for the festival, one a lager by the Cotswold Brewing Company and the other, an ale from Greene King and we were grateful to the two breweries for their efforts.

A few of us met up in **The Dukes Cut** on Friday night and enjoyed the great selection of mostly locally brewed beers including Wychwood, Hobgoblin and Maggs Mild from West Berkshire, with six ales on gravity. The pub was fairly busy with a jovial atmosphere for the festival and Andrew and a friend from the Jam Factory popped in, suitably dressed in Lederhosen with

updated beer lists, demonstrating the great collaboration between the five pubs. Many of the bar staff in the pubs we visited were dressed up for Halloween and the beer festival and the pubs had suitably decorated their establishments for the occasion.



James Knox of the Dukes Cut

We decided to move on to try **The Honey Pot** and although it was absolutely heaving with people inside, we battled our way to the bar and enjoyed some well served Wychwood ales. We found our way outside to the garden which was roughly the same small square footage as in the pub, with just as many people crammed in with more beers on gravity, but it had a great atmosphere. However, as we were only able to survive one pint in the crowd, we simply crossed the road to the Jam Factory. It was quieter, although most of the tables and chairs were occupied and it too enjoyed a good feel with some live music.

The Jam Factory usually only serves Cotswold lagers on draft, however they had brought in two barrels of ale including a wonderful Monstrous Mild from the local Old Bog Brewery. While we were in there, Andrew

had a chat with us and announced he would be regularly serving ales in the Jam Factory in the near future, so watch this space! We were treated to a taste of the Compass Brewery's The King's Shipment, a deceptively strong (6%) but exceptional IPA from the brewer, Mattias Sjöberg. However, as I was drinking the Monstrous



Mattias Sjöberg offering Baltic Night cake

Mild, I was even more impressed with the taste of the Baltic Night Chocolate Courgette Cake, a wonderfully rich moist chocolate cake made with the Compass Brewery's delicious Baltic Night stout (the recipe is on their website at <http://www.compassbrewery.com/>), and was well recommended by everyone who tried it.

The following day the two girls who had been out on the Friday night and managed to make the Saturday afternoon trip again, were joined by some friends and CAMRA members from Abingdon. After a beer to whet the whistle at **The Swan & Castle**, we started at **The Honey Pot** and presented the LocAle Award to the landlord, Thomas Rush, for signing up to always sell a locally brewed beer. He had around ten beers on between the bar and garden, with a selection of local and unusual beers. We enjoyed a taste of a few of these and before we became too comfortable in the quiet, cosy pub, we crossed to **The Jam Factory**. It was a bit disappointing that as the two ales were running low, only those who had purchased wrist bands would be served ale, while the others could chose from the different styles of Cotswold lagers. The ales and lagers were both enjoyed though, plus with some more cake and music we were



"The two Girls"

entertained and recharged! So, we headed up to **The White House** where we had a few ales to choose from and although pub was quite busy, it did lack a little in atmosphere. The group then split up so the girls could briefly visit **The Oxford Retreat**, which only had the one ale which was not bad, before meeting the men at **The Dukes Cut** where the girls celebrated winning their Oxtoberfest t-shirts by visiting all five pubs, but were not too impressed by the flash of a true beer belly from one of the men, who should have known better! We finished off with a good pint in **The Gloucester Arms** to get into the true spirit of Halloween, before going our separate ways for food and rest!

A good night and day out was had by all with a great festival where we were encouraged to visit all the pubs, some of which we might not always consider, thanks to all the landlords involved. We hope there are more west Oxford pub events in the future.

The Gloucester Arms

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Oxford Beer Festival 2010

Matt Bullock

The Oxford Beer Festival was very well attended with more than 3000 people consuming 11310 pints of beer and 25 boxes of cider over the 3 days.

The atmosphere was great and as usual both Thursday and Friday nights were very busy with a happy crowd. We had more room this year, with the Old Library being open all the time.

31 new members joined CAMRA and we welcome them into the branch.

The first beer to sell out was the CAMRA Beer of Britain Castle Rock Harvest Pale. This was shortly followed by Skinners Ginger Tosser and Milestone Raspberry Wheat. By 6pm on the Saturday all the beers were finished, and we could start packing up.

A huge thank you goes to all the volunteers who supported the Beer Festival; without their hard work the Festival would not be possible. If you are interested in helping next year, please contact staffing@oxfordcamra.org.uk with your name and contact details.

Oxford LocAle Champion Beer of the Festival

This year's beer festival featured a competition to choose our local champion beer from amongst our twenty local breweries.

In previous years we have run a Beer of the Festival Competition to allow customers to vote for their favourite beer. With the number of beers available, and the speed at which some sell out, we considered this to be a little unrepresentative..

Each of the twenty LocAle breweries that fall within a 30 mile radius of the city was asked to nominate one of their beers to be entered into the competition, which was held on the Friday morning of the Beer Festival.

The judging panel comprised two commercial brewers, publicans from two of Oxford's premier real ale pubs, two members of the Oxford Brewing Group, and CAMRA members from Oxford and surrounding branches. With the assembled panel in place, the tasting began.

There were three rounds of judging, during which none of the judges knew which beer was which (unless they were very familiar with a particular beer and happened to recognise it). At each stage some beers were eliminated and others progressed to the next round. After an hour we had just four beers left in the competition. The judging panel was whittled

down to four people to judge the final, and they set to work.

It's always difficult to judge beers of different styles against one another, and so it proved to be on this occasion. After much deliberation, two beers emerged as the favourites, though the judges could not choose between them despite several recounts of the votes, so joint winners were declared; Vale Gravitas and West Berks Maggs' Magnificent Mild. The other finalists were Shotover Prospect and Thame Hoppiness.



The Judges choose the final beers

Both of the winners are superb (but very different) beers from well-established breweries. Vale Gravitas (4.8%) has won awards from CAMRA in the Champion Beer of

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SEASON'S GREETINGS
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Britain competition, and from SIBA. It is a strong pale ale packed with hop and citrus flavours, rounded off by a dry malty biscuit finish. Maggs' Magnificent Mild (3.8%) is a multi-award winning traditional dark mild, but has more hops than would usually be used in this style of beer.

Special mention should also be made of our runners-up; both Thame and Shotover are very new breweries and should be commended for the quality of their beers which shone through against some illustrious competition.

The Oxford CAMRA branch will be visiting all four winners during the coming months to present each brewer with a certificate, and our congratulations go to all four for their success.

LocAle breweries

Adkin, Appleford, Best Mates, Brakspear, Butts, Compass, Halfpenny, Hook Norton, Jolly Angler, Loose Cannon, Old Bog, Old Forge, Oxfordshire Ales, Patriot, Pitstop, Shotover, Thame, Vale, West Berks, White Horse

Oxford LocAle Champion Beer



Joint Winners

Vale Gravitas

West Berks Maggs' Magnificent Mild



Runners-up

Shotover Prospect

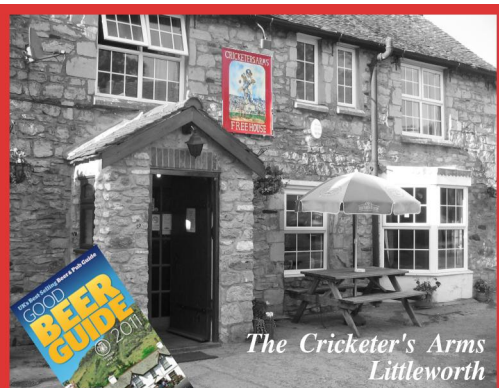
Thame Hoppiness



Cricketer's Arms Beer & Sausage Festival

September 24 - 26th saw The Cricketer's Arms at Littleworth holding their second Beer & Sausage Festival of the year. Despite stiff competition from other beer festivals in the area, turn out was good and the beer and sausage menu complimented by several musicians playing all manner of instruments throughout the weekend.

Beers on offer were Isis Pale Ale, Baltic Night Stout and The King's Shipment IPA from Oxford's Compass Brewery, Patriot Missile and Longbow, Shotover Prospect and Scholar, Thame Mr Splodge's Mild and Crazy Maisey, Two Bridges Stormy Weather IPA, West Berkshire Downlands Bitter and Loose Cannon Abingdon Bridge, which managed to pick up the title of "Beer of the Festival". Stuart Bull, landlord of The Cricketer's said, "All of the ales from the newer breweries proved to be very popular, with all three of The Compass brews and Patriot Longbow making the festival top five, but Loose Cannon's Abingdon Bridge took the title with no-one giving it less than a six



*The Cricketer's Arms
Littleworth*



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(out of ten)." The Cricketer's are now looking forward to stocking a good range of seasonal winter warming ales to compliment their home made food menu and planning their original Beer and Sausage Festival which will be on 18-20th February 2011 - an event that in previous years has attracted people from all over the country.

LocAle Pubs



The Honey Pot

8 Hollybush Row
Oxford
OX1 1JH



Thomas Rush being presented with his LocAle certificate during Oxtoberfest on 30th October

The Gardeners Arms

39 Plantation Road
Oxford
OX2 6JE



Paul Silcock was presented with CAMRA LocAle certificate during their beer festival on 9th Oct.



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fiona@whitehorsebrewery.com

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www.whitehorsebrewery.com

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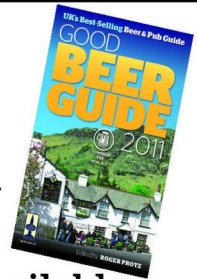
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Oxford CAMRA Branch Diary



Wednesday 1st December, 7:30pm

Branch Meeting.

Red Lion, 130 Godstow Rd, Wolvercote.

The agenda will include:

- Announcing the result of the Oxford City Pub of the Year award
- Generating a long list of pubs to consider for entry into the Good Beer Guide 2012.

All CAMRA members or prospective members are welcome to attend.

Saturday 4th December

Vale Brewery and Thame trip

Coach Trip to the Vale Brewery and Thame to present certificates for winners of Oxford Beer Festival Local Beer of the Festival.

The coach will depart as follows:

- Abingdon dep 1015 (exact pick up point tbc)
- Oxford Railway Station dep 1045
- Arrive Vale Brewery 1130
- Leave Vale 1400
- Arrive Thame 1430
- Leave Thame 1630
- Arrive Oxford Rail Station approx 1730
- Arrive Abingdon approx 1800

The cost will be £10 per person.

To book a place, contact Matthew Bullock:
theoxfordrinker@yahoo.co.uk

Thursday 16th December, 7pm

Christmas Social

Location to be announced

Christmas social and presentation of the Oxford City Pub of The Year Award at the winner's pub.

The winner will be announced at the December branch meeting on 1st December.

Please check <http://oxfordcamra.org.uk/diary> or the mailing list for further details when they become available.



For more details about social events including public transport information please check the web site at www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/diary, email social@oxfordcamra.org.uk or join our mailing list at www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/mailling-lists

Monday 10th January, 7:30pm

Branch Meeting

Vine Inn, Cumnor

The agenda will include:

- Generating a short list of pubs for potential entry into The Good Beer Guide 2012. This will be done using the long list generated at the December meeting, which members should have made an effort to visit and enter beer scores.

All CAMRA members and potential members are welcome to attend.

Saturday 15th January, 1pm

Oxford Pub Survey

Kings Arms, 40 Holywell Street, Oxford.

Survey of Oxford City pubs to collect information for the Oxford Branch Pub Guide, starting at 1pm in the Kings Arms.

Tuesday 1st February, 7:30pm

Branch Meeting

Gladiator Club, 263 Iffley Road, Oxford, OX4 1SJ

Branch Meeting.

Agenda to include:

- Selection of entries for The Good Beer Guide 2012. Members should have visited as many of the pubs in the shortlist chosen at the January meeting as possible and entered beer scores.

<http://www.thegladiatorclub.co.uk/>

All CAMRA members and potential members welcome.

Saturday 26th February

Beer Festival Helper's Trip

At this stage, this date is provisional and may have to change if it is not convenient for a significant number of our volunteers.

We have yet to decide a destination for the trip. Please check the web site, mailing list or the next issue of The Oxford Drinker for more details.

Anyone who helped at the festival travels for free. Others for a nominal cost of £5 if seats are available.

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

Beer Festival Diary



Tue 30th Nov - Sat 4th December

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


Saturday 11th December

Haddenham Winterfest
Village Hall & Scout Hut, Banks Park, Haddenham
(note new venue and opening times - 12 noon-5pm)
www.haddenham-beer-festival.co.uk

Tue 14th - Sat 18th December **Winter Beer Festival**

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

Wed 19th - Sat 22nd January

 **CAMRA National Winter Ales Festival**
The Venue, Sheridan Suite, Oldham Road, Manchester
Over 200 British & foreign beers, bottled real ales plus ciders & perries

The competition to choose the Champion Winter Beer of Britain takes place on Wednesday - the Wednesday afternoon session is trade only. Open to all-comers from 5pm
www.alefestival.org.uk/winterales


Fri 28th - Sun 30th January

Rose & Crown Beer Festival
Rose & Crown, Market Street, Charlbury
01608 810103
www.roseandcrown.charlbury.com

Fri 28th - Sat 29th January

 **Salisbury Winterfest XIV**
Castle Street Social Club, Scots Lane, Salisbury
21 beers plus a cider
01722 330445
www.salisburycamra.org.uk

Thu 3rd - Sat 5th February

 **Tewkesbury Winter Ales Festival**
George Watson Memorial Hall, Barton Street, Tewkesbury
72 beers plus ciders & perries
www.tewkesburycamra.org.uk

Thu 3rd - Sun 6th February **1st Winter Beer Festival**

Kings Head & Bell, E. St. Helen's Street, Abingdon
Selection of Oxfordshire's finest winter ales, stouts and milds. Live bands, and more.

Fri 4th - Sat 5th February

Merton Beer Festival
Merton Village Hall, Islip Road, Merton, Nr Bicester
www.mertonbeerfestival.co.uk

Fri 4th - Sat 5th February

 **Redditch Winter Ale Festival**
Rocklands Social Club
Birchfield Road, Redditch
30 beers plus cider & perry
www.redditchwaf.org.uk

Wed 9th - Fri 11th February

 **21st Battersea Beer Festival**
BAC Grand Hall, Lavender Hill, Battersea, London
www.swlcamra.org.uk


Fri 18th - Sun 20th February


Beer and Sausage Festival
Cricketers Arms, Littleworth
01865 872738
www.cricketers-arms.co.uktt

Beer Scoring

Beer scores are an invaluable tool, that helps Oxford CAMRA Branch to create a short list for Good Beer Guide entries. CAMRA members are encouraged to put in scores when they visit pubs.

Beers can be scored on a 0 to 5 scale in half point increments. It is possible to score per beer or per pub, averaging the beer score for each pub visit.

 Submitting scores is now easier than ever before: go online to **oxfordcamra.org.uk/members** and login with the same details that you use for the national CAMRA website. Once logged in you can submit your scores.

 Alternatively you can enter scores in the National Beer Scoring System at **www.beerscoring.org.uk**

If you do not have internet access, then you can complete paper based scoring cards which you can obtain at branch meetings or by sending an SAE to the address below, or simply write down the pub name, score, CAMRA membership number and your name/address on a piece of paper and give them to a branch officer or post to Oxford CAMRA, c/o 104a Hurst Street, Oxford OX4 1HG



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.

Pub Walk 4 - Oxford to Islip



Neil Hoggarth

Our fourth pub walk started at the University Parks in Oxford and followed the River Cherwell, finishing up at the two pubs in Islip.

This walk had a relatively lengthy genesis: the original idea for the route occurred to us during discussions over the map when we were doing the Stanton Harcourt pub walk in April, and I did the reconnaissance for the walk in May. The route that I initially worked out and surveyed had one problem that slightly concerned me, and seriously worried most people that I talked to; it involved crossing the A40 dual-carriageway (the main Oxford northern by-pass) on foot, at road level. By the time we came to actually do the walk I had come up with a variation on the route, going via the footbridge at Cutteslowe rather than taking our chances with the traffic. This would lead to some "interesting" developments.

It was a slightly overcast late September day, but the rain stayed away until after we had finished walking, and it was a pleasant and warm day out for the time of year. Nine

members of the branch turned out. Starting from Keble Gate we walked through the Parks to the Rainbow Bridge, crossed the river and started walking north along the path by the river bank. This is a very pleasant section of the walk, passing through a variety of meadows, woods, a nature reserve, and along an agricultural field boundary. There are good views of the river, Wolfson College and the Cherwell Boathouse, and the path is generally pretty good (though it can be a bit squelchy in places in the wet).

Crossing the Marston Ferry Road and another short section of woodland path brought us to our first pub, **The Victoria Arms**. This is a Wadworth pub and featured a good range of Waddies beers including their current seasonal beer "Malt and Hops". We collected our pints, many of us ordered a light lunch, and headed

out onto the patio overlooking the extensive grassy garden and the river.

Once we had demolished our first pints and eaten we set out on the longer section of the walk, leaving the pub garden via the gate at the north end, and heading off over the pastures towards the A40. This section is relatively uneventful, apart from a detour around a fallen tree and a clamber over a wooden fence that looks like it should feature a stile but doesn't.

On reaching the main road we paused. The "non-hazardous" version of the route turns left at this point, and proceeds about 600 metres (one-third of a mile) up the cycleway that runs alongside the by-pass. By way of acting as tour-guide, because people might be interested, I

pointed out the gap in the central barrier and the footpath on the far side of the dual-carriageway that the original route would have used. There then followed a serious conversation about whether we should actually cross the road and use the original route, rather than the detour via Cutteslowe.

One or two members of the party were clearly reluctant to cross the road. We therefore took a considered group decision to go by the Cutteslowe route. I turned and started to walk along the cycleway, a few seconds later looked over my shoulder to check on the group, and was astonished to see that half the party had seen a gap in the traffic and just "gone for it" - they were already on the grass of the central reservation and waiting for the rest of us! So the rest of us followed.

A fit and sensible adult who exercises suitable caution can cross this road safely, and in some ways I was rather pleased that we got to use the original route after all - I think it is the slightly more attractive and interesting of the two versions of the walk, and it keeps closer to the course of the river. Fortunately, we made it to the stile on the other side without any fatalities!



The footpath took us uphill through some well-kept gardens and next to someone's private

tennis court, and then over another couple of stiles to come out into a sloping field with a strand of the river running along the bottom of the valley to the left. The route then detours away from the river a bit and works its way around some farm-land by way of a series of tracks, little brooks, footbridges and field paths. Once the path



rejoins the river it follows the grassy edge of a number of arable fields. The river is often hidden behind bushy vegetation, but you do get glimpses of the river from time to time. I really enjoyed this part of the walk on a fine day during my May reconnaissance, but I must confess it turned into a bit of a slog this time out - the grass at the field edges had grown considerably over the summer, and forging a path through it rather took it out of us. During this section I was also apparently persistently bothered by some sort of unseasonal large insect that kept fluttering around the back of my head, and which I was unable to shoo away. It was only much later that someone confessed to me that she had been keeping the rest of the party amused by constantly tickling the back of my head with a stalk of grass.

A final path cut across the fields brought us to the village of Islip, with an attractive stone bridge taking us across our second river of the day (the Ray) and bringing us to our second pub -

The Swan Inn. The beers on offer that day were Greene King IPA and Morland Old Speckled Hen, though there are three hand-pumps and I know from previous visits that a guest beer is often also available. Those who hadn't lunched at the Victoria took the opportunity to buy some tapas, and were suitably impressed. The rest of us took our beers out into the garden at the back and enjoyed quenching our thirst after the walk.

From the Swan it is just a short stroll around the corner to **The Red Lion**, which seemed to have a busy, community and family friendly feel to it. Just the one beer on offer on this occasion - Hook Norton Bitter - though when I visited in

May they also had Brakspear. We again made the most of the remaining dry weather and sat out at the back of the pub. On leaving the Red Lion a few people headed back to Kidlington on foot. I and another adventurous member briefly toyed with the idea of walking back to Oxford, but it was starting to drizzle with rain and so we all decided to take the train back into Oxford and do a few more pubs.

My thanks to everyone who came along, and I look forward to walking with you again when the weather improves!



If you want to follow in our footsteps then the branch web site has a full route description, GPS tracklog, and maps for both variants of the walk (both with and without the A40 road crossing)

<http://oxfordcamra.org.uk/pub-walk-04>

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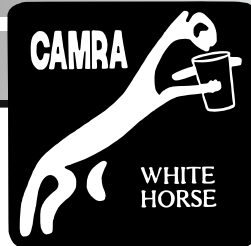
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White Horse Branch



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.

The Eight Bells at Eaton

Andy Perks

Just off the Cumnor to Appleton road, in the quiet hamlet of Eaton is something of a local treasure in the form of a fine traditional local run by Tommy O'Sullivan, who previously ran the Butchers Arms in Fringford, and the Butchers Arms in Headington. He re-opened the Eight Bells two years ago, after it had suffered a nine month closure.



pub to a priest hole in a near by house. There's no evidence in the cellar apparently – only casks.

Many of the beers on sale are from these local breweries such as White Horse Bitter and Abingdon Bridge Ale from the Loose Cannon Brewery in Abingdon, both of which are available almost constantly. As such, this pub should easily qualify for LocAle status.

It's very much as it always was and is, to steal a phrase, 'unspoilt by progress', with a warm, convivial atmosphere, where the focus is on conversation and fine ales. There are usually five cask ales on offer, together with up to five real ciders, both evenings and lunchtimes. Specialities include Curry and a Pint on Wednesdays, T-Bone Steaks on Thursdays and Fish and Chips on a Friday

Other beers on tap have included Manx Bitter, West Berkshire Good Old Boy and Butts – visit and see the pump clip collection.

During the Christmas period Rudolf the Red Nosed White Horse and Rosey Nosey will be available.

Not surprisingly, the pub is popular with many, including staff from local breweries, several of whom I have had very illuminating conversations with in respect of the various qualities of the many beers available at the Eight Bells. The locals speak of a tunnel from the



There are regular beer festivals and other events, such as Irish Night on 19th November and St Patrick's Day on 17th March next year. The pub also opens at lunchtime on Christmas Day. In summertime, there are regular Aunt Sally matches.

All in all, a pub well worth visiting – but not on Mondays – when Tommy has a well deserved rest.

Diary Of Events

Saturday 27th November, 2pm White Horse Branch Social

Hosted by The Star, Sparsholt, your opportunity to meet the brewer from Braydon Ales, one of the newest microbreweries in the area, with 4 of their Wiltshire ales to sample and food laid on by The Star. www.braydonales.co.uk

Tuesday 14th December, 7:45pm Branch Meeting at The Swan, Faringdon

Friday 17th December, 5pm start

White Horse Branch Christmas Party at The Shoulder of Mutton, Wantage

Tuesday 18th January, 7:45pm

Branch Meeting at The Prince of Wales, Shippon

Social Events

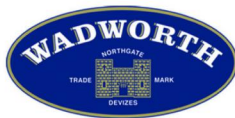
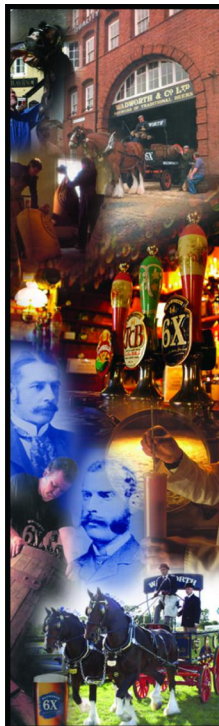
As well as organising the beer festival, the branch has an active social programme. This includes visits to beer festivals (including Ascot and Swindon), breweries (recent trips include Vale and Wye Valley Breweries) hop farms, maltings and of course public houses; often two or three of these elements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



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Open Sundays peak season

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

Ascot Racecourse Beer Festival



Roger Plater

Anyone who has recently read "What's Brewing" or a local branch magazine will surely have seen the advertisements for the 4th Ascot Racecourse Beer Festival, run by South East Berks Camra. A day out at the races with my family, combined with some decent local beers, seemed like an opportunity too good to miss, especially as Camra members (and nine guests) were entitled to a 50% discount on the £20 Saturday entrance.

The train journey down to Ascot was relatively pleasant in the warm sunshine, and our late arrival at the course allowed us to miss the crowds and collect our tickets and pre-ordered beer tokens without delay.

The beer festival was set up on the main concourse of the cavernous grandstand. The constant movement of people between the viewing terraces, the parade ring, the bookmakers and the bars, and then back to the terraces for the next race, meant that this was a beer festival like few others. We did manage to grab a few halves between races, all locally produced and excellent quality, but carrying beer in plastic beakers through the thronging crowds was a risky business.

It was at the same race meeting 14 years ago that Frankie Dettori won all seven races on the card. What were the chances that he would win all four of the races we saw? Incredibly, he did, and more incredibly still we backed him for three of those. A nice bonus to round off a thoroughly enjoyable family day out.

Fireside Coffee

Helene Augar

The Fireside Coffee shop and café is situated on St Clements Street, Oxford where the previous fire place shop was located, near to the Black Horse and Angel & Greyhound pubs. It sells a variety of Fairtrade and organic products including a selection of bottled real ales and all the real ales are either Fairtrade certified or organic, so they stock beers you might not find elsewhere locally.

They are now able to sell alcohol for consumption on premises, so you can either enjoy a beer in the comfortable café or take some bottles home – or both! They have recently increased their range of beers so it is worth a visit to find something a bit unusual, but also ethical.

More information at www.firesidecoffee.co.uk

Kings Head & Bell 1st Anniversary

JoHanne Green

The King's Head and Bell in Abingdon had its first anniversary on 28th October with samples of their new winter menu. The pub has been very popular since its reopening a year ago and seems to have been able to attract people from all walks of life. It is not unusual to see mothers with babies, business people at lunch meetings and people just out for a beer. The very beautiful restoration and extension of the building and the decor lends itself to a relaxing and positive pub visit.

Steve Hipgrave, the manager, is very keen on his beers and menu and held his first Beer



Steve Hipgrave at the beer festival

Festival during the August Bank Holiday. The event was well attended and Steve is planning to have a Winter Beer Festival from 3rd-6th February. If the first Beer Festival was anything to go by, it should be a really good event.



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Plot 16: The Fermenting Room



JoHanne Green

Modern Art Oxford is having an art launch with a difference on Friday 17th December.

A green hopped beer has been brewed as part of an art project and it is only available from the Modern Art Oxford while stock lasts.



We all know that brewing beer is an art form, but now it is also being shown as art. Tiffany Black and Leora Brook, an artistic partnership, have come up with the concept for this project in response to a two year commission from Modern Art Oxford to use an allotment in Rose Hill, Plot 16, and somehow tie it back to the Gallery. Plot 16, on the land of Lenthall Road Allotment Association, is part of Art in Rose Hill (supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation).

The two artists have come up with a beautiful and far reaching concept. The building, that Modern Art Oxford is housed in, was one of the first and biggest commercial breweries in Oxford, City Brewery. By growing hops on plot 16 the artists have tied the plot back to the Gallery and it's history. Brook and Black have been tapping into local expertise and experience and bringing people together to make the project work. Mr Tim Blanchard from Kingston Bagpuize kindly helped with advise with the hop growing and Ed Murray, head brewer of the local Shotover Brewery, brewed the beer.

The hop harvest was so abundant that brook and black decided to have some beer brewed even though they were not meant to brew until next year as a finale` of the commission. The tragic fire at the hop farm in Southmoor, where the grown hops from the project had been sent to dry was a set back for them.

Ed Murray suggested green hopping the beer with the few remaining hops, that had been overlooked at the communal picking day and so Plot 16: The Fermenting Room, 3.7ABV was brewed.

Tiffany Black showed me two pictures of the fermenting room that is now the main gallery, and explained "It is so clear that the building's structure is still the same, and I can imagine how the beer was bubbling away, creating something new, just as artistic creativity is bubbling today, creating new ideas and visual art." The fermenting room really was where the magic of brewing came together and as with beer, the project is a living process, where the conceptual artists, brook and black, react to the emerging circumstances around the project and work with them.

Ed Murray's first contact with the project was to give advice about brewing, and in August he was asked if he wanted to collaborate with the artists to create a beer from the project. Craft brewing is experimental in its nature, and Ed was interested in what they could come up with together. The first plan was to dry hop a base beer (Prospect) to enrich the beer with the hops from Plot 16. Unfortunately the hops went up in flames and everyone thought that it was the end of brewing beer this year. Now, not all the hops had been picked and Ed suggested on the morning after the fire, that the remaining hops should be picked, kept in the freezer overnight and brought to the brewery the following day. 400 litres of Prospect in the conditioning tank was then infused with the 3kg of Fuggles hops from Plot 16 for two weeks, after which it was bottled.



Amongst brewers, green hopping is rather controversial; one school of thought says that it can create very interesting, experimental beers; another that it is the worst thing you can do to your beer, that the hops (or rather what might be living on the hops) can infect the beer and produce truly awful results.



Ed Murray adds hops to the conditioning tank

Everyone who has tried Prospect will know that it is a fairly hoppy beer; infusing it with green hops should logically result in a very bitter beer. The wonderful mystery of beer making has again made its magic felt. Plot 16 is a hoppy beer, no doubt about it, but it is not much more

bitter than the normal Prospect. What has happened is that the aroma is massive. As Ed said: "smelling the beer after it has been carefully poured into a beer glass, is like putting your head into a hop bag". The taste spreads out on your palate and seems to grow, making it a very memorable beer. I don't think anyone could drink pints of it (only 1200 bottles were produced), but the experiment has definitely paid off. Ed said that he had never before achieved that level of aroma in his career as a craft brewer and that he had learnt a lot from collaborating with brook and black in producing Plot 16.



Tiffany Black (right) presenting the first bottle of Plot 16 to Modern Art Oxford

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England: My Final Say



Ilan Klages-Mundt - <http://bikeforbeer.org>

As a beer drinker, brewer, and beer lover from the United States, I've been living in a unique position when it comes to the culmination of beer styles and brewing traditions. The United States is a melting pot filled with beers imported from around the world as well as domestically brewed. My passion for beer began abruptly and worked its way into a desire to discover first hand where these beers and traditions originated from. I put together a year of travel and apprenticeships, where I would work with the world's finest breweries and meet the people directly responsible for each important brewing process, all the way from the farm to the pint glass.

My first destination was England, where I bicycled around the country for a month until I began a two-month apprenticeship at Fuller's Brewery in London. Throughout my time in England, I travelled to many breweries and beers festivals, spoke with numerous brewers and organizations, and picked hops for a week at the largest hop farm remaining in England, located in West Kent. Through all of my experiences, I gained a unique and vast perspective of English brewing and drinking culture. As England is seen as one of the brewing capitals of the world, I was more than ready to soak in everything I could.

Beer is much more integrated into English society compared to that in the United States. It's not uncommon to see people sitting outside



Investigating the range of beers

at a pub in the mid-morning or during their lunch break. Where beer is mostly treated as a taboo by the general public in the United States, English people are much more relaxed and sensible when it comes to drinking a pint. For instance, most jobs do not allow drinking while on the clock, however if a person decides to enjoy a beer or a glass of wine during lunch, there is not a problem in doing so.

That being said, the palate of the general cask beer drinker in England is much different than that of the rest of European and American drinker's. While Americans love their beer selection, ranging from weizens, IPAs, stouts, and barleywines, the cask beer drinker has a much more narrow spectrum. The average cask beer hits a target alcohol percentage between 3.5% and 4.5%, with beer styles including goldens, bitters, milds, and sometimes porters. It's not rare to find beers ranging up to 6% in England, but finding beers much higher than that starts to become more of a task. Cask beers are mainly based on a delicate balance between hop bitterness and the sweet malt, usually not dominated by either side of the spectrum. Though I am speaking in general terms, most cask beers abide by this guideline.

When I asked people why they drank beers so low in alcohol, they equated that they were able to drink more volume and stay out longer with friends. When it came to higher alcohol beers of 6% or more, most people, including



Chatting with members of the Oxford Brewing Group at the Lamb & Flag

many brewers simply thought they were too flavorful, which was something that I didn't expect to hear. The English like their pints (20 oz. pints at that), and drinking anything less than a full pint at a time is not something most are interested in. For this reason, I suppose drinking lower alcohol beer may be the safe way to imbibe.

While cask beer plays a major role in the drinking culture of England, there is a new movement of craft beer that mimics the brewing styles from the United States. There is a big difference between these craft beers and the cask beers, one being alcoholic content, but the other being a broader range of styles. The craft beer movement in England is moving a bit slower than it is in the United States, but it is moving forward nonetheless. People are slowly coming on to the idea of highly flavorful beers that may sometimes even push the limits of many people's imaginations.

Now, England wasn't always in a position where low ABV beers were the norm. Before WWII, most people drank beer that had higher alcoholic contents, but because of food

rationing during the war, brewers were ordered to reformulate their recipes so more barley could be used as sustenance instead of beer. I suspect the same thing happened to the English as what happened to Americans during prohibition. In the United States, many people had not consumed beer for thirteen years, and when the first light lagers hit the shelves after prohibition's repeal, that's what most people considered beer, forgetting about all the rest of the styles. England was a bit luckier than the US in this sense, as they were still able to drink beer during the war, though their palates became attuned to the lighter beers.

Overall, the drinking culture in England is very sociable and relaxed. Pubs litter the street corners almost everywhere you look, most being full with older men conversing about their day over a pint of brew while others pubs are energetic with spontaneous music. The best part, though, is how beer is not seen as the drink of the working class, but that of every class. It doesn't matter your background, where you come from or where you work, because with beer, everyone can enjoy a pint and be happy.

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0709



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



Please fill in the form and send to: Campaign for Real Ale Ltd, 230 Hatfield Road, St. Albans, Herts AL1 4LW

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

Originators Identification Number

To the Manager Bank or Building Society

9 2 6 1 2 9

Address

FOR CAMRA OFFICIAL USE ONLY

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

Postcode

Membership Number

Name

Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder (s)

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society

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

Bank or Building Society Account Number

Branch Sort Code

Reference Number

Signature(s)

Date



This Guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

- This Guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the Scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society.
- If the amounts to be paid or the payment dates change CAMRA will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed.
- If an error is made by CAMRA or your Bank or Building Society you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us.

detached and retained this section

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

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



Help For Heroes



David Lewis - Oxfordshire Coordinator for Help for Heroes-Volunteer

My name is Chief Technician David Lewis and I am currently based at RAF Lyneham in Wiltshire, although I live in Carterton in Oxfordshire. I am a Ground Engineer, operating as part of the crew on Hercules aircraft when we travel from base. Apart from Iraq and Afghanistan, we also operate in many other parts of the world.

During operations, we have been responsible for securing the stretchers and coffins of our troops in the back of the aircraft and flying alongside them around the country. Due to an injury suffered carrying out this role; I have spent time on courses at Headley Court. This was a very humbling experience, being rehabilitated alongside the same badly injured troops that we had flown out of the more remote areas. This spurred me on to 'do my bit' and raise money for Help for Heroes.

As part of my rehab, I was advised to take up walking and chose to explore the beautiful Malvern Hills. I then thought it would be a good idea to see if I could walk the complete hills in one go and this soon developed into inviting others and raising money for the charity. So, last year I managed to encourage 100 walkers, including the Mayor of Wootton Bassett to join me on the walk. It was a very successful day, raising £7000 and I was encouraged to repeat the event this year and have so far raised £19,000, with 220 walkers competing.

During planning for the event, it transpired that the position of Help for Heroes Coordinator for Oxfordshire was vacant, so I took on the position. It is a position that I thoroughly enjoy and attend as many cheque presentations, events and speak at as many meetings as I can manage. I am also building up a team of volunteers to assist me at these events and to deputise for me when I am away. (Please contact me if you would like to become a volunteer for the charity in Oxfordshire).

Although the charity has raised over £76 million, the sheer amount of badly injured soldiers, many of whom are amputees, means that they will need to be supported for the rest of their lives. More money will be required to support them. Go to www.helpforheroes.org for more information.

Many charity events are held in pubs or have the cheque presentation at a pub after the event. Along with Help for Heroes, I also love a nice walk followed by a top pub serving a decent pint of real ale. That is why I joined CAMRA. I would like to encourage members to contact me if they are involved in an event raising money for this charity in Oxfordshire. I can then either offer advice and represent the charity either at the event or accepting the cheque on behalf of Help for Heroes.

Contact me on 07793 058457 (mobile), 01993 046120 (home), dave.lewis@h4hcounty.org.uk

Want to know all the latest news and events?

Share information about what's happening in your area?

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

facebook

Join our Facebook group by searching for Oxford CAMRA

twitter

Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/oxforddrinker

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