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ISSUE 67
April-May 2011



the Oxford Drinker

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3rd April - Alvin Roy

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29th - Nevada

MAY
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APRIL
3rd (Arts Festival) - Alvin Roy
10th - Gypsy Fire
17th - Oxford Jazz Composers Collective
24th - Sue Greenwood with the Oxford Jazz Quartet



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

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

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

Valuable contributions to this edition have been made by Matt Bullock, Neil Hoggarth, Richard Queralt, Dave Cogdell, Lawrence Harman, David Hill, Tim Thomas and others.

The next publication will be issued in **June 2011**.

Deadline for the next issue is **13th May 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 April/May 2011 issue

We are leaving the gloomy winter months and our branch can now look forward to a spring and summer full of beer festivals and social activities.

The Oxford branch of CAMRA has decided to produce a comprehensive pub guide of our area; that is 303 pubs we have to visit! The guide will be a full colour, A5 size publication and is planned to be launched in mid-October in time for the Oxford Beer Festival. Now, as much as we enjoy going to pubs a little help would be appreciated, so if any members would like to volunteer to survey some pubs, we will be grateful. A survey form will be provided.

That is of course if there are any pubs left to visit! With the budget, beer tax increased a whopping 7.2% on top of the 2.5% VAT hike in January. Pubs seem to be seen by the government as the golden goose, to be squeezed dry. Beer tax has increased 35.4% since March 2008! Other countries realise that pubs and bars contribute to society and give them a helping hand. We pay 12.4 times more beer tax than they do in Germany, and 7.9 times more than France. The pub is a place where responsible drinking can take place - let us keep our pubs!

Contents

Pub News.....	4
Red Lion, Gloucester Green.....	6
Brewery News.....	8
LocAle.....	10
Old Bog Award.....	11
Littleworth Beer Festival.....	11
Young Members Trip to Reading.....	12
Mid-Week Drinking in Witney.....	14
Beer Festival Diary.....	16
Oxford CAMRA Branch Diary.....	16
Pub Walk 5.....	18
Beer & Cheese at The Cricketer's Arms.....	20
White Horse Branch Diary.....	22
White Horse Branch.....	22
White Horse Branch Pub of The Year.....	23
Abingdon Brewery & Pub Trip.....	24
Bainton Bikes Beer Lover Rides.....	26
40 Years of CAMRA Campaign.....	28
Beer Brewed for CAMRA's 40th.....	28
Join CAMRA today.....	29
Festival Helper's Trip to Derby.....	30



Ducklington

The Strickland Arms in Ducklington has been under the management of Amanda Hailes since Nov, '10, it is a Wadsworths pub which has a policy of 3 real ales at any time (generally 4 in the summer months). I received a warm welcome, the beer was kept well and Amanda aims to have a number of regular events which can be viewed at www.thestricklandarmswitney.co.uk and include monthly music events, Aunt Sally and Darts. The change of direction and new management has been instigated by Alex Fallon, Landlady of the Fox at Stanton Harcourt. Alex took over and turned around the Fox in May 2008, she is widely regarded by the locals as having turned the pub around and stopping it from closure. Alex remains running the Fox on a day to day basis.

Littleworth

In January 2011, The Cricketer's Arms stopped selling keg Guinness and now permanently stocks either a cask stout, porter or mild, as well as a selection of these varieties in bottles. Landlord Stuart Bull said "We found we weren't selling Guinness at all, but dark beers have proved extremely popular here with locals - even converting Guinness drinkers to the joys of proper cask conditioned ale, so it was very appropriate that such a resurgence in these styles should return a stout as the most popular ale of the festival."

Oxford

The Far From The Madding Crowd is keeping pace with modern technology and can now be followed on twitter as FFTMCPub. Watch this space for updates on the ever-changing guest ales, festivals and other exciting events at the pub. The Far From The Madding Crowd has also launched revamped day-time and evening food menus. As well as many of the old favourites, new highlights include warm ciabatta sandwiches, lamb meatballs in mint gravy, and hunter's chicken, all just right to be washed down with by a good pint of real ale.

George Street

Matt Bullock

George Street in Oxford has always had a reputation, but never one as a place to go to drink real ale. Since the demise of the **Cock and Camel** and its Young's beers, now converted to Jamie's Italian Restaurant, the **Grapes** and the **Eurobar** had become the only small oases in this real ale desert. But things have changed. The arrival of Wetherspoon's **Four Candles** in the former Yates' Wine Lodge a couple of years ago has not only brought real ale drinkers into George Street, it kick-started something of a real ale revival.

The Grapes has for a long time been the only "real pub" on George Street, and retains its traditional Victorian interior, its theatre memorabilia and its congenial atmosphere, a place to get away from the noisier and exuberant George Street crowd. For a while now it has supplemented its Greene King products with a range of guest beers and the ever-growing collection of pump clips will give you some clues as to the variety on offer. Next door at **Copa**, two real ales have appeared amongst the numerous continental beers - **Greene King IPA** and **St Edmunds** are now sold from handpumps fitted with curiously extravagant swan-neck taps. The St Edmunds I tried was very good.

Even Irish theme pub O'Neill's has got in on the act, selling **Brakspear Bitter**, Hook Norton **Old Hooky** and Wells **Bombardier**. So with the range of ales available at the aforementioned Four Candles (what a missed opportunity that pub sign is - should it have been Fork Handles on the other side?), and the Eurobar allegedly retaining its cask **Hobgoblin** (it was unavailable when I visited), all the pubs on George Street now sell real ale. When was the last time you could say that?



The White Hart 3rd Annual Beer Festival

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Red Lion, Gloucester Green



JoHanne Green



The editors visited the newly refurbished Red Lion, Gloucester Green to sample some of the food and beer and to take in the atmosphere. It is M&B's first city centre 'Premium Country Dining' pub. Staff from its "sister pub", The Trout in Wolvercote, have been employed to run The Red Lion and a similar style and atmosphere prevails here now.

The refurbishment has achieved a significant change to the feel of the pub; seeming more like a restaurant with tasteful furnishing and art, an extensive menu, and waiter service. We were told that drinkers are welcome and that only a small area is allocated just for dining, keeping the main areas to use as needed; catering for drinkers and diners alike.

When we arrived they had Brakspear Bitter, Doom Bar and Oxford Gold on. The Doom Bar was served it's own glass, which is not

something we see in Oxford often. The beers will be changing regularly, but they plan to have Brakspear Bitter all the time. The beer was well served, although one had to be taken back due to cloudiness, but was exchanged with a smile. The food we had was of good quality and well presented.

This pub has been through several changes over the years; it's current name was reinstated in 2008, before then it was called The Goose, before that The Fuggle and Firkin, The Brewhouse & Bakery, and originally The Red Lion.



Red Lion
(2008-2011)



The Goose
(2000-2008)



Fuggle & Firkin
(1995-2000)

The Cross Keys, Abingdon



Dave Cogdell

The Cross Keys landlord and landlady, Roland & Chris, arrived in Abingdon in August 2007 for "a better quality of life " following their previous employ in London.

Green King agreed to put in hand pumps at their insistence, but refused to put in dedicated beer lines. They experimented with the various ales that they could purchase from the limited GK range on offer and the beer was soon of excellent quality but because it travelled with the lager lines it was a tad too cold and did not meet CAMRA's exacting standards.

Then, out of the blue, one day in September they were informed that GK were going to install beer lines – free of charge!!! Also they are now allowed to serve some ale that are not brewed by GK, but are still from the GK stable.

The pub remains a sporting venue and hosts live music and discos. It has a mixed clientele of all ages & everyone is made welcome. The pub has several letting rooms and serves bar food on weekday evenings along with weekend daytimes. This in conjunction with the well kept beer makes the pub well worth visiting.



The Crown

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Brewery News



Vale Brewery

To help you celebrate in April, Vale Brewery has created three special beers.

The first is another of the monthly special beers, **P & Q**. Named after the old saying "Mind Your P's and Q's", this is reputed to have derived from a cry heard by many a landlord in a rowdy tavern. "Mind your Pints and Quarts". This 4.2% beer is Golden in colour with First Gold and Brewers Gold hops combining to create a subtle citrus hop aroma.

April's special is **St George's V-Ale**. Those with good memories will recall this was first brewed last year. It is 4.6% and a traditional English bitter to celebrate our national day on the 23rd April. The beer is a deep reddish brown in colour.

The Royal Wedding on the 29th April has caused a dilemma at Vale Brewery, since this is in fact a special day - or more precisely David Renton, the brewer's, special day: his birthday. So for general consumption there is **Royal Union**, a golden beer brewed with Fuggles, Brewers Gold and Galena hops. This will create a beer with a fruity taste and subtle blackcurrant aroma. However as a one off, The Hop Pole in Aylesbury will have a dry hopped version of this called "**Not the Royal Wedding Ale** – It's David the Brewer's Birthday Ale"

Follow the Vale Brewery on Facebook for news, developments and special brews.

Hook Norton

At the prestigious brewing industry international awards **Hooky Bitter** won gold for bottled ales, **Double Stout** won silver for dark ales and **Hooky Dark** won Bronze in the cask ale category.

Hook Norton's Brewers Selection beer for April is **303AD**, named to commemorate St George and the year of the martyr's death. Dry and crisp with a hint of citrus and banana; Excellent with most foods it works well with many non meat dishes and is a superb compliment to English lamb and beef. 303AD is brewed with a small proportion of amber malt, and the innovative and environmentally friendly dwarf hop variety First Gold.



Shotover Brewery

Sales of their brewery bottled bottle-conditioned ale sales are increasing with it now available in all three Oxford branches of Oddbins as well as in The Oxford Wine Company, SH Jones and several independent off-licences. Both cask ales, **Prospect** and **Scholar**, are now a regular feature "down south" in the **Shoulder of Mutton** in Wantage.

Wychwood Brewery

Wychwood has received a Quality Assured Visitor Attraction award from Visit England. The award will enable the brewery to display the Red Rose symbol of quality both at the site and on all communications relating to the tour.

The brewery is sponsoring the Witney Music Festival from 24th April to 2nd May. The festival encourages people into pubs to listen to great music and drink great beer.

Bellinger Brewing Company

Mike Bellinger has taken over the Pitstop Brewery from Peter Fowler who left to run the Shoulder of Mutton in Wantage. The Brewery is going to be called Bellinger's Brewing Company (BBC). Mike is planning to bottle condition most of the beer he will produce, so that he can sell it alongside all the other bottled beers at Bellinger's Garage, where he sells a vast range of bottle conditioned beer. He will put his beers in cask if asked to do so. The plant itself is a 4 barrel-plant and he intends to follow the tradition of Pitstop's flavoursome beer, without them being quite so strong, so will keep them under the 5% mark.

The first chance to try his beer will be at the **Abingdon Spring Head** on Sunday 10th April. This is an annual rowing event, that Abingdon Rowing Club is organising, taking place on Rye Farm Meadow past the sadly closed Nags Head pub. Rowing will start 9am and the last race will start at 4pm. There will be a catering tent, BBQ, and the new Abingdon Head beer brewed by Bellinger. You might not think that rowing and beer go well together, but it is said in the rowing club that rowing was probably invented by the people who lived on the opposite side of the river from the brewery.





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Pubs in our area that always serve real ale from local breweries:

- ▶ Cricketer's Arms, Littleworth
- ▶ Stock's Bar, Abingdon
- ▶ White Horse, Broad Street, Oxford
- ▶ Gloucester Arms, Oxford
- ▶ Duke's Cut, Oxford
- ▶ Brewery Tap, Abingdon
- ▶ The Queen's Head, Horspath
- ▶ Far from the Madding Crowd, Oxford
- ▶ Chester Arms, Oxford
- ▶ Masons Arms, Headington
- ▶ The Gardener's Arms, Jericho
- ▶ The Honey Pot, Oxford
- ▶ The Horseshoes, Witney
- ▶ The Plough Inn, Witney
- ▶ The New Inn, Witney
- ▶ The Royal Blenheim, Oxford

The CAMRA Local Ale award is presented to pubs that endeavour to always serve local ales brewed within 30 miles. If you think your pub should join the scheme then please get in touch by calling Sam French on 07905 212318 or email locale@oxfordcamra.org.uk

The Royal Blenheim

13 St. Ebbes, Oxford, OX1 1PT



Ian Little being presented with his LocAle certificate on March 5th 2011. The Royal Blenheim is the White Horse Brewery Tap and always has several real ales from The White Horse Brewery as well as an ever changing range of guest ales.



Blues & Beer Festival

Fri 10 & Sat 11 June 2011

Regal Centre • Wallingford • Oxon OX10 0AL

Friday evening - 7pm to midnight

Dave Berry with the Norman Beaker Band - **plus support**

Saturday afternoon - Family session (accompanied under 14's free)

2pm to 6.30pm - Stomp'n' Dave - **plus support**

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The Guv'nors - **plus support**

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Home of the Headington Beer Festival



Wantage Beer Festival Award

Monstrous Mild brewed at **The Old Bog** Brewery in Headington was declared "Best Beer of Wantage Beer Festival" in November.

Members from White Horse Branch invited our branch to join them at the **Masons Arms** on 5th March, where White Horse branch chairman, Neil Crook (right) presented the award to brewer Andy Meeson (left).

We also had a tour of the brewery, which is Oxford's smallest commercial brewery located in an outhouse at the back of the pub.



Littleworth Beer Festival

The weekend of 19-21 February saw the return of **The Cricketer's Arms**, Littleworth's "Original Beer & Sausage Festival". The event was well attended as ever and the 17 ales at this year's festival included CAMRA Supreme Champion Beer of Britain - Castle Rock Brewery's "*Harvest Pale*", Runner-up at the CAMRA Oxford beer festival - Thame "*Hoppiness*",

Winner at the Wantage beer festival - Old Bog "*Monstrous Mild*" and The Cricketer's previous festival champion - Loose Cannon Brewery's "*Abingdon Bridge*". Given the strong competition, the title of "Original Beer & Sausage Festival Champion ale of 2011" went to "*Baltic Night*" from Oxford's Compass Brewery, with Thame "*Hoppiness*" runner-up.

Young Members trip to Reading

19th February 2011



Following a visit to Oxford in November 2010 from a contingent of the young members of Reading CAMRA, we arranged a return trip. I'm pleased to say the pubs of Reading did not disappoint. Despite train cancellations, we eventually made it to Reading to meet up with Katrina, the Reading Branch Young Member Contact.

Our first stop was the **Oakford Social Club**, opposite the Train Station, where we were joined by other Reading branch members. Despite the name it is not a working men's club but a modern welcoming pub. A good range of food was available. An Art Market is held every Sunday and there is regular live music.

Our next stop was the **Allied Arms** (57 St Mary's Butts), an excellent old fashioned pub near the heart of the city. A small pub, it was especially busy as it was Saturday afternoon before a Reading home game, so we sat in the covered courtyard outside. At this point we realized that both branches were stretching the official CAMRA definition of young members (18 – 30). But the aim of the exercise wasn't to exclude people but to encourage young members and socialise. And we definitely proved that not all real ale drinkers are bearded old men. As a side note, when I joined CAMRA my friends joked that I would receive a stick on beard with my membership pack a la Life of Brian. I was faintly disappointed not to.

Back to the matter at hand and somewhere that did not disappoint, part-bar part-restaurant, **Zero Degrees** (9 Bridge Street) is a Brewpub focusing on continental style beers. The Reading branch arranged for us to meet the brewer and enjoy a brief tour. The brewing equipment is a feature of the specially designed building, positioned behind and above the bar, which makes fascinating viewing even if just there for a casual drink. We didn't get a chance to try the food (which smelled delicious) but we did get to sample all the beers that were on that day, including a dark lager,

wheat beer and a mango beer (which wasn't to everyone's taste).

One of the highlights of the trip was the **Nags Head**, a short walk from the city centre on Russell Street. With 12 handpumps this was an impressive pub, obviously much beloved by the locals. Although still quite busy we timed it so that the football crowd were at the game, so we were able to get a table and enjoy the atmosphere. And the beer obviously, which was in excellent condition.

We then meandered our way to the ever popular **Hobgoblin** (2 Broad Street). In the spirit of full disclosure, Katrina is the landlady so we may have had some preferential treatment. Proud of the ever changing guest ale line up, for me this is the ideal place for a cheeky pint when shopping. However, the down side is that everyone else thinks so too, so there is sometimes a wait to get served. On our visit one of the guest ales was a Chocolate mud beer – best described as being rather reminiscent of Nesquik but very drinkable.

A short bus ride took us to the **Abbot Cook** (153 London Road) which was recently converted from an 'It's a Scream' to a stylish modern pub with a great seasonal menu. This seems to be a good example of how to turn a pub around and strike a good balance between drinking and dining.

In terms of décor, our last stop, **The Retreat** (8 St John's Street), was a complete contrast. Nestled in a row of terraces, this is one of Reading's legendary pubs. The beer quality is excellent, as one would expect from a GBG regular, but the charm of the pub is not immediately obvious to all. The interior hasn't been updated in many moons so could most kindly be described as 'well-loved'. A less kind description probably couldn't be printed in a classy publication such as the Drinker!

Special thanks go to Katrina and all those in Reading for showing us round and making us feel welcome. We look forward to seeing you all soon!

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

Mid-week drinking in Witney



Martyn Sanders & Tony Goulding

In an attempt to 'break-away' from normal drinking routines a trip was planned to visit Witney to see what this market town offers the drinker – quite a lot actually! We weren't about to attempt blanket(!) coverage, just a selected view with a return match planned – perhaps!

A driver for the night (thanks Tony!) volunteered his services and we decided to start our evening in the **Eagle Tavern** in Corn Street. This pub was acquired about 5 years ago by local brewer Hook Norton. Here we met up with Brother Nick (no religious connection, purely family!) who had escaped from Carterton for the evening.

The description in the 2011 Good Beer Guide for the Eagle Tavern begins; 'expect to find excellent beer and friendly staff and locals here' – pretty much spot on we think! Previous to Hook Norton's acquisition, the ambiance was likened to an old comrades club run by a retired professional couple; how things have changed! The current landlord has 20 years experience in Corn Street pubs and it shows! We all opted for the Hook Norton '**Double Stout**' (OG1048 ABV4.8%) and excellent it was. Described on the Hook Norton website as 'a blend of malts gives Double Stout a character all of its own. Black malt enriches the colour and teases the palate with an unmistakable 'toast' flavour. Brown malt gives it the dryness'. Not much wrong with that description and certainly nothing wrong with our beers! Being a Hook Norton pub their range of beers was available plus, unusually, a locally brewed offering from Wychwood. The pub was busy and with the juke box playing a mix of 70's & 80's music we felt obliged to have another round of 'Double Stouts'. Now, I know the idea is for us all to sample the other beers on offer, but to be honest it was so good we'll have to leave the rest to another visit! For those of a different persuasion the landlord also offers a comprehensive range of malt whiskeys as well as, more unusually, over 20 different gins. The Eagle is the 2009/10 West Oxfordshire 'Pub of the Year'.

We left the Eagle, fired up the Rover and headed for our second call of the night, The **Elm Tree** in West End on the Hailey Road. This is a deceptively large pub extending from the original pub bar at the front through a central drinking area and on into a pool/games room at the rear. Again, a friendly welcome awaited with several locals congregating at the bar and others drinking throughout the pub. The beer choice was **Jennings Cumberland** (OG1039 ABV4%), **Ringwood Best Bitter** (OG1038 ABV3.8%) and **Brakspear Bitter** (OG1035 ABV3.4). The Jennings Cumberland was selected by all and although not with the depth of taste experienced with Double Stout it was a refreshing drink and ideal as a session beer. Witney has recently lost one of its pubs, 'The House of Windsor' which was sited just along from the Elm Tree; let's hope the same fate does not befall The Elm Tree.



The Three Pigeons
(Thanks to Mr Dan for the photo)

A short drive up to Wood Green brings us to The **Three Pigeons**. Avoiding the Cottagers Bar we headed for the lounge and were faced with **Sharps Doom Bar**, **Courage Best** and **Brakspear Bitter** on the bar. Doom Bars

all round and a comfortable seat by the large open fireplace was found. Taking in the atmosphere we all decided this was a cracking local. There was a good mix of clientele, including an old bird in the corner (actually a caged parrot), well I am assuming it was a parrot, apologies to the bird if I've got that wrong! By now hunger was taking hold so a selection of nibbles obtained – be warned when the barmaid tells you the Jalapeno crisps are 'a bit spicy' - she is right! My lips were still tingling the next morning and poor brother Nick broke out in a sweat!

We called it a night but decided a return match is definitely 'on' and we look forward to visiting more of Witney's pubs if this small sample is anything to go by.



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



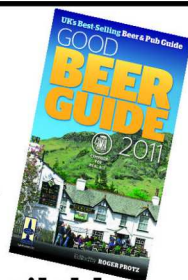
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www.royalblenheim.co.uk

Oxford CAMRA Branch Diary



Mon 4th April, 7:30pm-9pm

Branch Meeting

Cape of Good Hope, The Plain, Oxford, OX4 1EA

Sat 9th April, 2pm-8pm

Cowley Road Pub Survey

Cape of Good Hope, The Plain, Oxford OX1 1EA
Pub Survey Crawl of Cowley Road

Tue 12th April, 7:30pm-9:30pm

Oxford beer festival planning meeting

Royal Blenheim, Oxford

Fri 15th April to Sun 17th April

CAMRA Members Weekend and AGM 2011

Octagon Centre, University of Sheffield
<http://www.camra.org.uk/agm>

Wed 27th April, 7:30pm-9:30pm

Oxford beer festival planning meeting

Royal Blenheim, Oxford

Fri 29th April, 3pm-10pm

Branch Social - Abingdon

Kings Head and Bell, Abingdon
Live Jazz and a mini beer festival. Famous Abingdon royal bun throwing at 6pm.

Tue 3rd May, 7:30pm-9pm

Branch Meeting

Three Pigeons, 31 Woodgreen, Witney, OX28 1DG

Mon 9th May, 7:30pm-9:30pm

Oxford beer festival planning meeting

Royal Blenheim, Oxford

Fri 13th May

Oxford Drinker Editorial Deadline

Tue 17th May, 7:30pm-9:30pm

CAMRA Committee Meeting

Oxford, TBA

Sat 21st May, 1pm-4pm

Regional CAMRA meeting

The Barn, Central Milton Keynes

Tue 24th May, 7:30pm-9:30pm

Oxford beer festival planning meeting

Royal Blenheim, Oxford

Wed 1st June, 7:30pm-9:30pm

Oxford CAMRA Branch Meeting

TBA

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



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

Beer Festival Diary



Thursday 7 – Sunday 10 April

Red Lion Spring Beer Festival

The Red Lion, Wolvercote
Selection of local & national ales, plus cider and perries. Live entertainment + meet the brewer
Tel: 01865 552722

Thursday 7 - Saturday 9 April

Turf Tavern Spring Ale Festival

England vs Wales beers
Tel: 01865 243235

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


Friday 8 – Saturday 9 April

Coventry Beer Festival

 Coventry Rugby Football Club, Butts Park Arena, Butts Road, Coventry
95+ beers plus ciders, perries & country wines
www.covnwcamra.org.uk

Sat 9th April to Tue 12th April

Far From the Madding Crowd Cider Festival

 Friars Entry, Oxford
Selection of real ciders & perries.
01865 240900
www.maddingcrowd.co.uk

Thursday 14 – Sunday 17 April

Oxford West End SPRING BEER FESTIVAL

4 days – 5 venues – 1 wristband
www.westendbeerfestival.co.uk


Thursday 14 – Saturday 16 April

30th Walsall Beer Festival

 Walsall College, Wisemore Campus, Littleton Street West, Walsall (note new venue)
150+ beers, ciders & foreign bottled beers
www.walsallcamra.co.uk


Thu 21 April – Monday 2 May

Woodman Beer Festival

 New Yatt Road, North Leigh, nr Witney
01993 881790

Friday 22 – Sunday 24 April

2nd Big Bournemouth Beer Festival

 BIC Purbeck Hall, Bournemouth International Centre, Exeter Road, Bournemouth
200 beers, ciders & perries
www.bic.co.uk



Beer Festival Diary Continued

Wed 27 April - Sunday 1 May

17th Reading Beer and Cider Festival
King's Meadow, Napier Road, Reading

500+ beers, 200+ ciders & perries plus foreign beers & English wines
www.readingbeerfestival.org.uk

Friday 29 April – Monday 2 May

Long Itchington Beer Festival
"1 Village, 6 Pubs, 4 Days"
Long Itchington, Warwickshire (on the A423 north of Banbury)
www.longitchingtonbeerfestival.co.uk

Sat 30 April - Monday 2 May

White Hart Beer Festival
Main Road, Fyfield, nr Abingdon
13 beers
01865 390585
www.whitehart-fyfield.com

Thu 5th May to Sat 7th May

Banbury Beer Festival
Territorial Army Centre, Oxford Road, Banbury OX16 9AN
90 beers plus 20 ciders & perries
www.northoxfordshirecamra.org.uk

Friday 13 - Saturday 14 May

Chippenham 20th Beer and Cider Festival
Olympiad Leisure Centre, Monkton Park, Chippenham
90+ beers, ciders & perries
Evening sessions by advance tickets only – see website
www.nwwiltscamra.org.uk

Friday 13th - 16th May

Cherry Tree Beer Festival
33 High Street, Steventon
20+ Beers & Ciders and a visit from Wadsworth Shire horses on Saturday.
01235 831 222

Friday 20 - Sunday 22

White Hart 3rd Annual Beer Festival
12 St Andrews Rd, Headington
30+ Beers And Ciders
Pig Roast/BBQ
Live Music Saturday Night
01865 761737

Saturday 21 - Sunday 22 May

North Cotswold 3rd Ale & Steam Weekend
Winchcombe Station, off Becketts Lane, Greet, nr Cheltenham
24 beers plus ciders
www.northcotswoldcamra.org.uk

Thursday 26 - Saturday 28 May

Northamptonshire Beer Festival
Delapre Abbey, London Road, Northampton
300+ beers plus cider, perry & country wines
www.northantscamra.org.uk

Thursday 2 - Saturday 4 June

Southampton Beer Festival
Guildhall, West Marlands Road, Southampton
90 beers plus cider, perry & foreign beers
Advance ticket purchase advised – see website
www.shantscamra.org.uk

Thursday 2 - Saturday 4 June

Wolverhampton Beer Festival
Wulfrun Hall, Mitre Fold, Wolverhampton
75+ beers plus ciders, perries & foreign bottled beers
www.wolverhamptoncamra.org.uk

Saturday 4 June

8th Great Chadlington Beer Festival
Memorial Hall, Spelsbury Road, Chadlington
www.chadlingtonbeerfestival.com

Friday 10 – Saturday 11 June

Wallingford Blues and Beer Festival
Regal Centre, off St Martin's Street, Wallingford
14 beers plus cider
www.bluesandbeer.co.uk

Saturday 11 June

Candleford Beer Festival
Cricket Green, Main Street, Fringford, nr Bicester
30 beers plus cider & perry
www.fringford.info

Tuesday 14 - Saturday 18 June

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

Friday 17 – Saturday 18 June

Salisbury Beerex XXXI
Salisbury Arts Centre, Bedwin Street, Salisbury
60+ beers & ciders
Entry by ticket only – phone or see website
01722 321744
www.salisburyartscentre.co.uk

Friday 24 – Saturday 25 June

5th Stratford-upon-Avon Beer & Cider Festival
Stratford-upon-Avon Racecourse, Luddington Road, Stratford-upon-Avon
50+ beers plus 12 ciders & perries
www.stratfordbeerfestival.org.uk

Sat 9th July, 11am-10pm

14th Charlbury Beer Festival
Charlbury Cricket Club



CAMRA Great British Beer Festival 2011

Tue 2nd - Sat 6th August

Earls Court, London

Britain's biggest beer festival, once again brings together a wide range of real ales, ciders, perries and international beers.

There's plenty to occupy you at the festival, you can play on some traditional pub games, enjoy live music, sample some food, including good traditional pub snacks, and also attend tutored beer tastings.

Tickets for this year's festival are now available to purchase online or by calling 08444 124640.

gbbf.camra.org.uk/home



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

Pub Walk 5: Kidlington, Hampton Poyle and Thrupp



Our fifth walk started with a rendezvous at a pub, rather than with strenuous exercise. We gathered in the public bar of the **King's Arms**, on the north-east side of Kidlington. Long a local favourite of the branch, the pub is usually quite quiet that early on a Saturday afternoon - I think the few regulars who popped in for lunch were surprised at how many of us there were visiting!

The beers on sale were the two regulars, Charles Wells Bombardier and Greene King IPA, and one guest - a Cottage Brewery beer brewed to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Jaguar E-type sports car. All the CAMRA members went for the guest, which was in good form, though several admitted that Cottage brews are not their favourite. Shortly before we set off for our walk the E-type ran out and was replaced by a Wentworth Pale Amber, and we decided that we had to each have a quick half before leaving - the new beer was a bit on the hazy side, but was well received all round on the taste front.



It would be easy to while away a lazy afternoon in the King's Arms, but the weather was nice and bright so we stiffened our resolve and set out towards Hampton Poyle, walking past the very attractive St Mary's church and joining the route of the Oxford Green Belt Way, as it wends its way through some attractive little woodlands and ends up at a foot-bridge over the Cherwell. Several of the young-at-heart members of the branch who were familiar with the route had armed themselves with sticks in advance of reaching the bridge, and competed at a game of Pooh Sticks - an esteemed former chairman made a serious tactical error in picking a large, light-weight twig that was deflected by the wind as it was dropped, but the sticks

belonging to the other two competitors were carried rapidly under the bridge by the current. It was a close run thing, but your humble correspondent reckons that his stick narrowly beat Katja's!

Passing through a field with horses, we were grateful for the fact that there had been a two week dry spell running up to the walk. The ground around the stiles was very churned up, but the much feared mud was practically non-existent (our encounter with the Oxford Green Belt Way in the early months of 2010 has given me a bit of a phobia about dragging the group through mud-baths). Then there was a brief walk up the lane to **The Bell**.

It is many years since I have last visited the Bell, and it has changed markedly - it was closed for refurbishment for a prolonged period a few years ago, and re-opened as much more of a restaurant than a local pub. However it is good to see that they still serve two real ales, Hook Norton Bitter and London Pride, and are not unwelcoming to passing drinkers. I went for the Hooky, and thought it good. We collected our beers and went to sit outside the pub in the sunshine.

On finishing at the Bell we set off on the longest cross-country part of the walk - a pleasant excursion which featured ponies, field paths (again fortunately not very muddy!), newborn lambs, the ruined manor at Hampton Gay, another encounter with the River Cherwell, and the railway line. The manor house has stood in ruins since 1877 when it was burnt in a fire. This was reputedly as the result of a curse or divine retribution after the inhabitants of the house failed to render assistance to the injured from a major rail crash which occurred nearby in 1874. After crossing back over the river we joined the tow-path of the Oxford Canal at Shipton-on-Cherwell, heading south back

towards Kidlington, by way of the two pubs in Thrupp.

The first pub that we came to in Thrupp is **The Boat**, an ex-Morrells pub which is now owned by Greene King. The beers on offer were Greene King IPA and Greene King Abbot. I had the IPA and found it okay but nothing striking. The pub has a nice walled garden to the rear, and we again sat out in the fresh air with our pints.

Moving on along the canal we in short order reached the second pub in Thrupp, the **Jolly Boatman**. This is an ex-Morland pub which is now owned by Greene King. The beer of choice here was Morland Original, which was again in perfectly acceptable form but nothing to get excited about. The previously fine day was starting to cool off now, so we sat inside for a change.

Another short stroll along the canal brought us to the A4260 and the northern outskirts of Kidlington, where we left the canal to join the road, and then tramped into the recently re-named **Highwayman** (previously known as the **Wise Alderman**). Hook Norton and Brakspear were the beers. The pub has a spacious garden in pleasant situation next to the canal, which is an excellent place to spend a summer afternoon watching the boats pass, but on this occasion we settled indoors as a couple of members of the party caught the end of a televised Six Nations Rugby match.

The advertised four mile walk officially finishes at this point. I had suggested, however, that people who wanted a longer walk might like to join me in a further walk along the canal and return to Oxford via the pubs in Wolvercote. Then it transpired that Matt (who has an ambitious programme to personally visit all 300 pubs in the branch area, as part of our preparations for a new branch pub guide) wanted to take in the **Royal Sun** at Begbroke. So a number of us walked the canal to Roundham Lock and then headed off along Begbroke Lane. The Royal Sun is a road-side pub on the A44, and all the available tables were reserved for diners when we arrived. It was still very early on Saturday evening though, and we were kindly allowed to sit at one of the tables even though the only thing we were eating along with our pints of Pedigree were the complementary

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www.shotoverbrewing.com

peanuts that we'd grabbed off the bar.

A discussion then ensued about what route the four of us intending to press on to Oxford by foot should take. It would have been relatively simple to retrace our steps back to the canal and walk south along the tow-path, so that's not what we did. A few of the remaining members of the party have recently acquired a taste for night-time orienteering, so I suggested a cross-country route, following a section of the long-distance trail "Shakespeare's Way" which I had previously explored (in daylight!), about a year ago. This would take us to Wolvercote (as originally planned), but do so via a more interesting set of paths and also allow us to take in another pub not on the original itinerary. So it was that we set off into rapidly darkening twilight, along farm tracks and green lanes to walk another mile or so to the Red Lion at Yarnton.

The Red Lion was busy with locals by the time we arrived in the early evening, but we managed to find a table to rest our weary legs. The pub is another Greene King outlet, but this thirsty bunch of walkers was delighted to find that the guest beer was

Continued on next page

an entirely appropriate Thwaites Wainwright Ale (named in memory of Alfred Wainwright, the fell-walker famous for his guides to walking in the Lake District and devising the coast-to-coast walking route). As you might expect, the Wainwright is an ideal beer for refreshing the thirsty walker - not too strong, but with a clean, hoppy, citrus taste - and it was in very good condition.

We set out from the Red Lion into full darkness, walking by torchlight, and regained the path without any problems. Unfortunately over-confidence (and no doubt the numerous pints that I'd consumed during the day) overcame me and I strode along the path thinking that I could remember the route, failing to paying sufficient attention to the map and the waymarks. Inevitably I missed a turn and we ended up wandering off the route. By the time we realised the mistake we were some distance from our inten-

ded path, and heading east rather than south. We briefly wandered around the fields trying to regain our original route, but rapidly came to the conclusion that our best bet was to continue eastwards and re-join the canal further up than originally intended. From there it was easy to navigate our way to **The Plough** at Wolvercote, where we again found the Wainwright Ale as the guest beer!

On leaving the Plough we headed up to the Woodstock Road, where the branch secretary was able to get a bus into town. The three remaining members of the party called in at a couple of Oxford pubs on the way home: the **Dewdrop** in Summertown, which featured a nice pint of Timothy Taylor Landlord, and the **Victoria Arms** in Old Marston, where we had an opportunity to sample the Wadworth 125th Anniversary Stout.

Beer and Cheese Tasting at the Cricketer's Arms



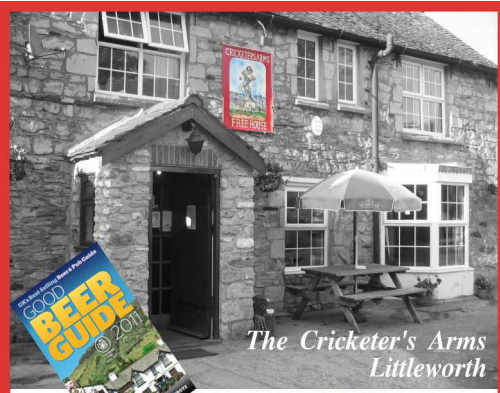
I have always enjoyed a nice piece of cheese, and on special occasions I can even be persuaded to try a pint of beer, but I had never thought of putting the two together so the Christmas Beer and Cheese Tasting at the Cricketer's Arms in Littleworth seemed like the ideal opportunity to give it a try.

Stuart (landlord at the Cricketer's) had obviously put some thought into the matching process, and spent a few minutes explaining to us how he had tried to find cheeses that would both complement and contrast with the beers on the bar. We were given strict instructions on how to proceed (cheese to be followed by beer, and each beer/cheese combination to be taken in the listed order) and then armed with a piece of paper for making notes, we were let loose in the back room where a table had been piled with cheese and biscuits.

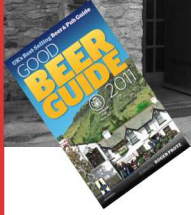
First on the list was **Loddon Razzle Dazzle** matched with greek feta cheese. Razzle Dazzle is a blonde beer with plenty of citrus hops and Feta is a sheeps milk cheese with a distinct sharpness to it, so this immediately picked up the citrus notes in the beer. After a couple of mouthfuls, though, the effect became slightly overpowering and the other thing about feta is that it is very salty, and this, for me, made it the least successful as a match for any of the beers.

Next up was an old favourite - **Hook Norton Bitter** - but matched, unexpectedly, with a French brie. The brie was just as I like it (creamy without being runny) and the Hooky was on top form, so I suppose there wasn't much to go wrong but the surprise was just how well the flavours went together, the well-roundedness of the Hooky somehow working together with the smoothness of the Brie and adding up to more than the sum of the parts.

The third option was good old English cheddar with **Shotover Prospect**. The cheddar was what you might call an 'ordinary' cheese from Stuart and Angie's usual supplier but despite the 'ordinariness' it was a big hit. Proper cheese, like real ale, is a living product and the maturation process means that no two batches will ever be exactly the same. As Angie's cheese-grater-in-chief, Stuart admitted that he's come to know this particular cheddar better than he might like, but said that he thought it was a particularly fine batch. It was creamy, with a real depth of flavour but without being



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sharp or overpowering and as a cheese on its right was my favourite of the evening. With the Prospect, it seemed to enhance both the malt and the hop flavours, but with a slight taming effect on the bitterness.

Last, but not least, we had a Stilton matched with **Hook Norton Twelve Days**. Both of these are favourites of mine so I was expecting a bit of a treat and I wasn't disappointed. The surprise here was that after the cheese, the beer came through with a strong smokiness which I have never particularly noticed before. Interestingly, though, on second and third attempts the smokiness faded into the background and more subtle and recognisable flavours started to come through.

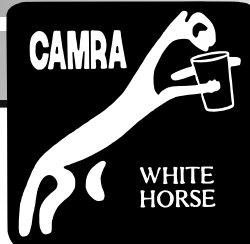
Having been once through the list, I decided to throw caution to the winds and try some of my own combinations. The Prospect was probably the most interesting to do this with - as anyone who has tried it will know, it is a very flavourful beer and each cheese seemed to bring out different aspects of it. The Twelve Days turned out not to follow the cheddar particularly well, but in a happy accident I found that following

the Twelve days with the cheddar added to the finish of the beer and brought out even more flavour from the cheese. This resulted in several contented minutes (and almost half a pint) chasing the Twelve Days with the cheddar, followed by the stilton and back to the Twelve Days again.

Finally, with plenty of cheese still on the table, myself and my companion had to tear ourselves away before we became too full to move, and we rounded the evening off with a last half. We agreed that the Prospect had probably been the most interesting to experiment with and that the cheddar was the cheese of the evening but the outstanding recommendation has to be the Hooky Bitter with brie - definitely something I will be trying again.

All-in-all it was a very pleasant way to spend an evening. The relaxed but busy atmosphere at the Cricketer's was probably the ideal setting for something like this (I have always avoided similar tasting exercises in the past because of the formality) and at the introductory price of £3 for the cheese, it was extremely good value. Roll on the next one.

White Horse Branch



White Horse Branch was established in December 2007 with a small committee who did not want to see the old Vale of White Horse Branch disappear and merge back into Oxford Branch. Our branch membership at that time was 131 but since then membership has grown steadily and now stands at 241. Although we are still the smallest branch in the Central Southern Region we have reduced the gap considerably in the past 3 years.

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

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

I hope to see you at one of the events planned in the near future.

Regards
Neil Crook
Chairman – White Horse CAMRA Branch

For more information please contact:

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

Our Website



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

www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk

Diary Of Events

Saturday 9th April Social

Blaydon Ales Brewery trip, joint social with West Berks Branch

Tuesday April 19th

Meeting: The Volunteer, Grove 7.45pm

Friday 29th April

Social: Meet at the LocAle Bar at Reading Beer Festival at 12 noon.

Tuesday 17th May

Meeting: The Black Horse, East Hanney, 7.45pm.

Saturday 18th June

Wantage Beer Festival Helpers Outing: Salisbury

Friday 8th July

Social: Aunt Sally Match v West Berks Branch, The Radnor Arms, Coleshill.

The Radnor Arms, Coleshill White Horse Branch Pub of the Year 2011



The Radnor Arms, Coleshill has been voted White Horse CAMRA's 2011 pub of the year. Landlady Gemma Court was over the moon when told about her success. As readers will know, this cosy Good Beer Guide listed National Trust-owned free-house installed its own on-site 4 barrel 'Old Forge' micro-brewery last year. At least two and often four of the Old Forge beers are available, dispensed by gravity and handpump. Their "Hammer and Tongs" was the 2nd most popular beer at the Wantage Beer festival in November.

Joint runners-up for 2011 POTY are last year's winner, the **Royal Oak** in Wantage, and the **North Star** in Steventon.

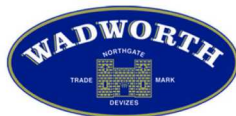
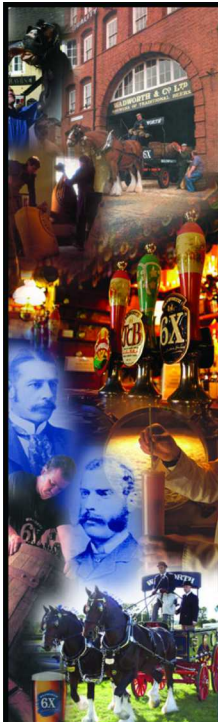
Many congratulations to all three pubs, spanning as they do the whole of the White Horse region.

Details of the presentations to all three pubs will be listed on the White Horse Branch website www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk when arrangements have been finalised.

Cherry Tree Beer Festival, Steventon

The Cherry Tree in Steventon, will be holding its next beer festival between May 13th-16th. They will have the a selection of 20 or more beers and ciders, as well as a visit from the

Wadworth Shire Horses on the Saturday. There is an open mike night on the Friday, live blues on Saturday night and plans are being made for a performance from local Morris Men.



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Abingdon Brewery and Pub Trip

Ian Winfield



Saturday 12th February 2011, Abingdon.

Several branch members from White Horse meet up with a large group from Oxford branch to undertake a tour of the new Loose Cannon brewery in Abingdon followed by a sortie into "Greene King land" and a visit to several interesting Greene King pubs.

For the first time in more than ten years Abingdon now has a brewery. **Loose Cannon** are now brewing twice a week, on a ten barrel plant. The Loose Cannon brewery opened in August 2010, and is already going 'great guns'.



Will Laithwaite (Center) with visiting CAMRA members.

Will Laithwaite, Brewer and a Director at Loose Cannon, conducted the tour, and talked to us about their plans for the development of the business going forwards over the next five years. As we toured the brewery, Loose Cannon Pale Ale "Trial 1" and "Trial 2" were in the fermenting tanks, and would be ready for the onsite shop, and to go out during the next week or so to the local area. Will told us how important feedback has been, and will be going forwards, for Loose Cannon, as feedback informed their decision on their first beer, and would guide the decision to be made on which of the trials Pale Ale's to go with. During the tour and talk we all were kept well supplied with Abingdon Bridge 4.1% and very good it was too. A Christmas beer "Christmas Cannon" was produced and sold over the festive period,

and had been enjoyed by some of the group. It was suggested that a 'Mild' for May would be an option to consider, and Will said he would look at this possibility, if demand was forthcoming.

Setting off on our tour of Greene King Pubs, the first call was **The White Horse** on Ock Street - the Batemans Hooker was very good. Also on offer was a bottled beer from Brooklyn New York. Next stop, one of the locals from Oxford said we must call in the **Cross Keys**, and as it was on the road that we were walking, we decided to give it a go. The Cross keys from the outside does not look like your

average good real ale outlet. Posters displaying what football matches adorned the windows and walls. Once through the door, things did not improve. Our faces must have said it all "why have we come here"? as we took in the spectacle of the tattooed gang and the England football supporters shouting at the several television sets. But, once at the bar the eye was quickly drawn to the two guest hand pulls... York Terrier and Coach House Dick Turpin, both of which were agreed to be in good condition. Whilst we were there, the York beer ran dry and the Landlord quickly replaced this with Kelham Island Pale Rider. So, well done to him and his team, The Cross

Keys proved to be well worth the visit. Onwards to **The Brewery Tap**, no longer connected to a brewery as Morland's was purchased and closed by Greene King some ten years ago. They always have some interesting guest beers. (CAMRA members note discount if you show your card) .

On offer was Brew Dog "Alpha dog". The tap is true community pub, sponsors the local rugby union side and holds several beer festivals during the year.

The group split up at this time, with the group from White Horse heading for the **Stocks Bar** at the Crown and Thistle hotel. Seven hand pumps, offering mainly beers from the Marston's range. We ended the day with Banks, "Lions Roar" before setting off home.

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Spring is in the air, which makes good riding around the Oxfordshire countryside.

This ride is suitable for mountain and hybrid Bike Types; there will be some off road riding and hills so some gears would help. The route is approximately a 21 mile round trip

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

Our ride starts from **Jude the Obscure** in Jericho where we start the day with a Yorkshire Terrier, from the Jude we ride to Port Meadow and follow the Thames Path which is part track and part field. We ride for about 4 miles to Sandford Lock, then team up to catch Kim and get her lead on; which attaches to the bike on a sprung hitch (Kim is a dog not our gimp).

At Sandford lock we stop at **The Kings Arms** and enjoy a (nearly full guest) Doom Bar.

We continue along the Thames Path until heading through the Broccoli Field to Lower Radley, and ride into Radley stopping at **The Bowyers Arms** for a pint of Olde Trip and a bag of pork scratchings.

Leaving Radley we get on the Sustrans Route 5 and ride the beautiful scenic route into Abbey Meadows where we venture into **The Stocks**, which is about 3 miles. The Stocks is a cracking pub and has a fantastic selection of ale on offer. To celebrate it being St. Patrick's day we try Wychwoods Paddy Tout. Be warned; Jim (our workshop manager) drinks here, check before entering.

From Abingdon we follow the road to Sunningwell and stop off at the charming pub; **The Flowing Well**, which is about 3 miles where we stop for a Morlands Original.

From Sunningwell we climb Bayworth hill and gently head to Boars Hill and after 1.5 miles we stop at **The Fox** for a bite to eat, which we

wash down with a well earned (guest) Spitfire.

From the Fox we follow the road towards Oxford and get on the fast moving A4183. At the roundabout we cross over and head into South Hinksey village, heading past the **General Elliott** (now closed) we follow the path until reaching an off-road track, this peaceful off-road track takes us to Osney Mead. We ride along Botley Road and stop at **The Kite** for a game of pool and a Kimberley Bitter. This part of the ride is about 5 miles.

After letting my other half beat me at pool we head back along the Botley Road and ride the short distance of a mile to our final destination; **The Gloucester Arms**.

The Gloc is a fantastic pub with a good selection of ale and the best juke box in Oxford, after getting a pint of

Old hooky we choose our music, get comfortable, enjoy the never ending music and end the ride.

For a longer more personal account of the ride please visit our website at www.baintonbikes.com.

These are regular rides we run and if you are interested in joining, or if you find a pair glasses I lost on the way home then please contact me on info@baintonbikes.com.



Radley Lakes

Summary of cycle parking facilities:

- **Jude the Obscure:** There are railings
- **The Kings Arms:** Plenty of space along the fence.
- **Bowyers Arms:** There are some railings you can use.
- **The Stocks:** There is a 3 wheel rack hidden in a corner of the garden.
- **The Flowing Well:** Garden benches available
- **The Fox:** Nothing to really lock your bike to
- **The Kite:** Fence railings available
- **The Gloucester Arms:** There are racks close by

The Gloucester Arms

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-  Bank Holiday Monday - Charity Poker Tournament
-  Wednesday 27th - Launch of our new seasonal menu - pop in for some free samples
-  Thursday 28th - Join us for our Big Prize Charity Quiz night
-  Friday 29th - Watch the Royal Wedding live at our traditional garden party, with Live Jazz, BBQ & mini beer festival

plus more music, more games, more prizes

Hope you can join us!

40 Years of Campaigning



CAMRA is celebrating 40 years since it was founded. The Campaign for Real Ale was formed on 16 March 1971 by four founding members - Michael Hardman, Graham Lees, Jim Makin and Bill Mellor whilst visiting a pub on holiday in Ireland. They had become deeply disillusioned with the domination of the UK licensed trade by a handful of national brewing companies, determined to push standardised keg beer brands into pubs to replace traditional ales from local breweries.

40 years of campaigning later CAMRA has 120,000 members and cask beer from local and regional breweries is available in many pubs.

While the UK beer and pub industry may have changed much over the last 40 years, CAMRA today lifts its glass with no intention of hanging it up, particularly at a time of marked change in the industry.

While there are now over 770 real ale breweries brewing more than 3,000 different ales - more than at any time since the 1940's, CAMRA still has work to do in pushing for reform of the beer tie, lobbying to end beer tax hikes, to end irresponsible retailing of alcohol by supermarkets, and ensuring Government policies are put into place to recognise the vital role pubs play in community life.

Beer Brewed for CAMRA's 40th

The Berkshire branches of CAMRA asked Dave and Helen Maggs at The West Berkshire Brewery to brew a special 4.0% ABV strength beer to tie in with the 4.0 decade anniversary of CAMRA's founding.

The beer is a ruby colour and has a malty, but not sweet, character with a robust bitterness and fruity notes from Berkshire Hops grown in Kingston Bagpuize. Dave Maggs was quoted to say, "The **WB-40** is pretty well sold out! – 100 firkins – and if not for the impending Royal Wedding we would have thought about doing some more.... For WB-40 we used – Pale, Crystal, Wheat, Roast Barley Malt and Fuggles, Bramling Cross Hops."

Richard Lock designed the eye-catching pump-clip with the slogan 'Lubricates the parts that other beers cannot reach!' The WD-40 Company were contacted in case they had any objections to the use of the shared blue and yellow colour scheme and the similar name on the pump clip. However, they were happy to lend their support to this CAMRA 40th birthday brew.

On 16th March 40 years to the day West Berkshire CAMRA Branch celebrated the anniversary in **The Gun**, Wash Common, Newbury, (run by Alan and Tracey Murray, many thanks to them for hosting). The event was a 'beer and cheese' evening.

West Berkshire CAMRA provided a quantity of Cheddar, Stilton, Manchego & Jarlsberg

cheese. This was available for people to help themselves and discover which cheese made the best match for the beer. The best match for WB-40 it seems, was the Jarlsberg (Norwegian) with a slightly sweet and nutty flavour. WB-40 went on sale at 5pm on Wednesday and had run dry by 10pm.

At about 8.30pm, Roy Bailey, who was one of the earliest members of the original Newbury branch of CAMRA (formed in 1974) made a speech and then a toast to CAMRA's 40th anniversary.



Celebrations at The Gun
(Photo by Richard Lock)

A Campaign of Two Halves

Fair deal on beer tax

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Complete the Direct Debit form and you will receive 15 months membership for the price of 12 and a fantastic discount on your membership subscription.

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I enclose a cheque for _____

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Applications will be processed within 21 days

12/10

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Beer Festival Helper's Trip to Derby and Birmingham



The Oxford Branch always organize a day trip as a thank you for the volunteers who helped at the Oxford Beer Festival. This year on the 26th of February we visited Derby with an hours stop in Birmingham on the way home. Usually a brewery visit is also included, but this year it was agreed not to book anything for the whole group and just to have the day to visit pubs in the area. Matthew Bullock, festival staffing officer, organized the trip for us. He had put together an impressive little guide of the best pubs in Derby and Birmingham with maps and descriptions from the Good Beer Guide. That made it a breeze to choose where to go and to plan the day.

We would all like to thank Matt for a very successful day.

Brunswick Brewing Company



Robert Mitchell organized a brewery tour at Brunswick Brewery which a small group attended.

The brewery is located inside the Brunswick Inn in Derby and so should really be classed as a brew pub. We visited during the recent Oxford Beer Festival Helpers Trip. As I am more interested in breweries than pubs I had arranged a tour prior to arriving there, of which 5 people joined me.

The Brunswick Inn is a really nice old building with lots of character. There is a main bar with rooms off of it.

At our allotted time of 2PM our tour started and we were taken round by Graham who is the brewer but not head brewer. The tour included

looking at how the beer was made from the ingredients, tasting yeast which apparently is very good for you, through to being shown where a barrel is rolled over the line. The part about the use of finings was quite interesting. During the process we had to climb up steep and narrow windy curved staircases! The well in the bottom part of the brewery was also pointed out to us and avoided by all of us!

Then it was back to tasting the beer. There was Railway Porter, Triple B and my favourite Father Mike at 5.8%ABV. There were probably other beers to try but due to time were not. I really recommend if you have time in Derby to go and visit. Their best beer in my opinion, Black Sabbath at 6% ABV, was not on but it is definitely worth a try for anyone who has not .

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Useful Contacts

Oxford Branch

Stephen Lawrence
contact@oxfordcamra.org.uk

White Horse Branch

Neil Crook
contact@whitehorsecamra.org.uk

Oxford Drinker Editors

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