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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 and other locations across the branch area; including Oxford, Abingdon, Witney, Faringdon, Eynsham, Kidlington, Bampton and Wantage.

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## Welcome to the December 2011 edition of The Oxford Drinker.

Breweries have taken the focus in this edition due to the Oxford Beer Festival LocAle Competition. There is a tremendous growth in the number of breweries, with people who want to make a difference in brewing. It is an exciting time to be a beer drinker, but we should remember that the best place to drink beer is in the pub! If more pubs could choose their beers freely, greater variety could be the result for customers, and probably also greater satisfaction for the landlord in serving interesting beer.

In November an all party parliamentary group called for "Time to Free up the British Pub" urging the Government to implement the Business, Innovation and Skills Committee (BISC) report.

The report, which was published in September, concluded that industry self regulation had failed and there should be a statutory code of practice for tenanted pubcos with an independent adjudicator. These reforms are targeted at and would impact on the large pub companies which operate long commercial leases, rather than the family brewers who operate traditional tenancies. Recent research shows that tied pubs are twice as likely to close than free of tie pubs. Such reforms could only help landlords, costumers and the big breweries themselves. By complying to guest beer options and freeing landlords of tie, they can only be perceived in a more positive light. – **Steven & JoHanne**



# Pub News



**The Kings Arms in Kidlington**, a long standing CAMRA Good Beer Guide entry and branch Pub of the Year nominee, has been bought by a local businessman. Punch Taverns had the pub on the market for some time and there were fears that it would be sold for redevelopment, but Kidlington resident John Salter, managing director of boat business Salter's Steamers, stepped in to save the pub. It will be continued to be run by Gerry and Chris McGrath in the manner they have for the last 15 years and will now be a free house.

**The Turl Street Kitchen** has opened on the corner of Turl Street and Ship Street in the building that, over the years, has been the home of a number of short lived enterprises including the Livebait fish restaurant. It is a cafe bar and restaurant that has two handpumps, serving **White Horse Village Idiot** as a regular beer and often a guest ale as well.

**The Plough in Wheatley** is a Greene King house on London Road which is the road the buses take as they head towards Thame and Aylesbury. It was closed in June and now after a major refurbishment has recently reopened under new management. Completely renovated it now opens lunchtimes and evenings and all day weekends for food and drinks.

**The Mason's Arms at Headington Quarry** has a new website: [www.themasonsarmshq.co.uk](http://www.themasonsarmshq.co.uk)

## ABINGDON On Thames



New pub sign at  
The White Horse  
in Abingdon

Greene King has been refurbishing several pubs in Abingdon over the last few months. **The Magic Midget**, **The White Horse** and **The Old Anchor** have all had the benefit of redecorations and some have had kitchen and facility improvements. **The Broad Face** also had a redecoration at the landlords expense and as reported in the last issue, **The Brewery Tap** has been refurbished.

After having been up for sale for a while **The Plough in Abingdon** finally reopened on Friday 18th November with new tenants, renamed as "**The Harp**" and with a complete refurbishment. There are two hand pumps serving **Greene King** Ales and **Loose Cannon** ales served by gravity from casks on the bar.



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(Under 21s need ID)



# Oxford Beer Festival

Helene Augar – Chair of the Oxford Festival Committee



Thank you to everyone who volunteered to help out running the 14th Oxford Beer Festival in October 2011 and to all those who came to enjoy the beers and ciders!

This was our most successful yet with the highest number of beers and ciders being made available and all three large rooms at the Oxford Town Hall were used throughout all opening times. There were 200 barrels of beer made up of 160 different ales + 40 duplicates for the Saturday bar, and 40 different

ciders and perries. Initial figures suggest this produced our highest surplus to date which will all go towards campaigning activities for the Oxford branch and national CAMRA.

A beer festival wash up meeting will be held in the next couple of months where we hope all volunteers and drinkers will come along to give their feedback on how we might improve the festival even more. A beer festival helpers trip will also be arranged to be held in the new year.



Starting to fill up on Saturday



Hook Norton Shire horse drawn dray



## Red Lion, Wolvercote

The Red Lion in Wolvercote is the latest pub to be awarded CAMRA LocAle accreditation.



Sam French and other Oxford CAMRA members presented landlord James Knox with a certificate of LocAle accreditation, during the Red Lion's November beer festival.

When a landlord accepts the LocAle scheme, they agree to endeavour to always serve at least one beer from a brewery no further away than 30 miles. This ensures that local breweries will find outlets for their beer, encouraging pride in the region and promoting tourism.

If you would like your pub to be considered for LocAle accreditation, phone Sam on 07905 212318 or email her at [locale@oxfordamra.org.uk](mailto:locale@oxfordamra.org.uk).

**WINNER: Oxford Town & Village Pub of the Year 2011**

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# Brewery News



## Wychwood

Wychwood brewery opened its gates to the public on 31st October for its annual "Grand Lighting of the Pumpkins" event. The legendary Hobgoblin beer flowed from the bar and visitors were treated to a variety of ghoulish games and entertainment including Aunt Sally, Morris dancing, disco and skiffle band Thrill Collins. The fancy dress and pumpkin carving competitions didn't disappoint and with over 100 pumpkins entered choosing a winner was no easy task!



This year all proceeds from the event were donated to Macmillan Cancer Support and the brewery were pleased to raise £1093.96 for the charity.

The Wychwood seasonal beer for December is "Bah Humbug" at 4.3% abv. The rich, spicy ale is perfect for the cold winter nights and is sure to make even the most seasoned party pooper smile.

## Hook Norton

Hook Norton's Double Stout has been judged as Europe's Best Dry Stout in the World Beer Awards.



Following four rounds of judging, Hook Norton's Double Stout was chosen as one of Europe's best bottled beers.

The win means Hook Norton beers have won 13 major awards in national and international competitions so far this year.

Hook Norton Managing Director James Clarke said: "I am delighted one of our bottled beers has been honoured by this prestigious competition.

"Double Stout's recipe might be a hundred years old, but its taste and flavour is modern and fashionable."

The 4.8 percent ABV beer is a smooth, full-bodied stout with a refreshing hoppy aftertaste.

A blend of dark malts gives Double Stout a character all of its own. "Black malt enriches the colour and teases the palate with an unmistakable toast flavour," said James Clarke. Brown malt gives the beer its satisfying dryness.

Double Stout is available on draught and in bottles all year round.



A full list of the World Beer Awards winners can be found at [www.worldbeerawards.com](http://www.worldbeerawards.com)

In October, Hooky Gold won the company's 12th award of the year by putting in an Olympic performance at the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) Midlands Region Beer Competition 2011. The beer won gold in the Bottled Gold Beer category and then went on to scoop silver in the overall Bottled Beer class.

Other awards won during the year include:

British Bottlers' Institute Awards 2011:

- Hooky Bitter won gold in Class A – Ales up to 3.9% ABV.
- Hook Norton Flagship won a Diploma In the Packaging Class.

Brewing Industry International Awards 2011:

- Hooky Bitter won gold in International Smallpack Ale Competition - Class 1 for ale 2.9-3.7% ABV.
- Hook Norton Double Stout won silver in the International Dark Beer Competition - Class 3 for Dark Beer 4.8-5.7% ABV
- Hooky Dark won bronze in the International Cask Ale Competition - Class 1 for Cask Ale 2.9-3.8% ABV

International Beer Challenge 2011:

- Hooky Bitter - Silver
- Twelve Days - Silver
- Copper Ale - Bronze
- Flagship - Bronze
- Old Hooky - Bronze

## Loose Cannon

Loose Cannon's new winter ale is Dark Horse, 4.3% ABV. It can be found in several local pubs or bought direct from the brewery shop. The brewery has installed a new 15 barrel fermenter bringing capacity up to 35 barrels a week.

## West Berkshire

Dave & Helen Magg were presented with their certificate for LocAle beer of the Oxford Beer Festival 2010 for Magg's Mild rather belatedly on 8th September. This gave us an opportunity to visit their new brewery at Home Farm including the reed bed; an ecologically friendly way to process waste liquids and creation of a wetland bird sanctuary.

The new 70 barrel brewery had taken longer to complete than expected due to technical problems with the boiler design. Production has begun at the new brewery, and the old brewery in Yattendon Bakehouse has been removed, although the brewery shop remains in Yattendon.



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,  
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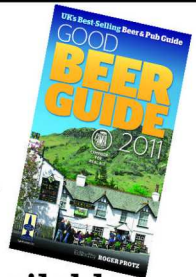
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[www.royalblenheim.co.uk](http://www.royalblenheim.co.uk)



# XT Brewing Co.



One of the newest breweries in our region to start brewing is the XT Brewery at Notley farm outside Long Crendon, near Thame.



The brewery has been set up by Russ Taylor and Gareth Xifaras with a custom built 15 barrel gas fired brew plant manufactured in Burton to their own design and installed over the summer. The brewery has two 15 barrel fermenters so that two different beers can be made each week. The brewery building has plenty of space for expansion when needed and will also serve as a brewery shop.

Russ is no novice when it comes to brewing, as he has been an amateur craft brewer for many years, and worked at the Windsor & Eton brewery before setting up XT.



XT brewer Russ Taylor and mash tun.

The beers have been named using a new and novel approach - instead of trying to find new names for each brew, they have opted to number the styles of beer from 1 to 9. As they say "We want everyone to enjoy good quality British beers so we designed our beer branding to be as friendly and easy to understand as possible. The labels and pump clips simply show the style, taste and colour of the beer and that's it; no fuss, no confusing blurb, only what you want to know to choose the right beer."

The idea is in fact very good, when you know what the numbers mean. They have set out to cover nine styles of beer with XT 1 being a blonde beer and XT 9 being a complex dark beer. XT 2, XT 4 and XT 8 will be regular beers, whilst the others will be seasonal.

In October, pilot brews of the recipes were made on

a 10 gallon pilot plant borrowed from Rob The Malt Miller in Didcot ([www.themaltmiller.co.uk](http://www.themaltmiller.co.uk)) resulting in firkins for beer festivals. Oxford Beer Festival proudly served pilot brew "XXXX" that was very well received and was one of the first to sell out. The Egham beer festival had two more and the Aylesbury Beer Festival had another that they liked so much they awarded it Beer of the Festival. It is really fantastic to get an award with a pilot brew!

The first full brews on the new equipment were made in November, with each of the three regular beers being brewed: XT 2, 4.2% ABV is a refreshing golden ale made with English Pale and Munich Malts, combined with Czech hops to give a real international flavour. XT 4, 3.8% ABV is an amber beer with a special Belgian malt and a fruity mix of American and European hops. XT 8, 4.5% ABV is a smooth rich dark beer brewed with a careful blend of four malts along with a cocktail of hops to give a complex taste.

The beers are already getting into local pubs. The clear simple pump clip should appeal to people who may not normally drink real ales as well as beer enthusiasts looking for interesting beers to try.

More information can be found on their website at [www.xtbrewing.com](http://www.xtbrewing.com) and facebook page [facebook.com/XTbrewing](https://www.facebook.com/XTbrewing).

<p>XT</p> <p><b>1</b></p> <p>CRISP BLONDE 4.2% abv</p> <p><small>XT Brewing Company</small></p>	<p>XT</p> <p><b>2</b></p> <p>FRUITY GOLD 4.2% abv</p> <p><small>XT Brewing Company</small></p>	<p>XT</p> <p><b>3</b></p> <p>INDIAN PALE 3.9% abv</p> <p><small>XT Brewing Company</small></p>
<p>XT</p> <p><b>4</b></p> <p>MELLOW AMBER 3.8% abv</p> <p><small>XT Brewing Company</small></p>	<p>XT</p> <p><b>5</b></p> <p>AMERICAN AMBER 4.6% abv</p> <p><small>XT Brewing Company</small></p>	<p>XT</p> <p><b>6</b></p> <p>RICH RUBY 6.3% abv</p> <p><small>XT Brewing Company</small></p>
<p>XT</p> <p><b>7</b></p> <p>BELGIAN TAWNY 6.2% abv</p>	<p>XT</p> <p><b>8</b></p> <p>MALTY CHOCOLATE 4.5% abv</p>	<p>XT</p> <p><b>9</b></p> <p>SMOKEY VELVET 6.4% abv</p>

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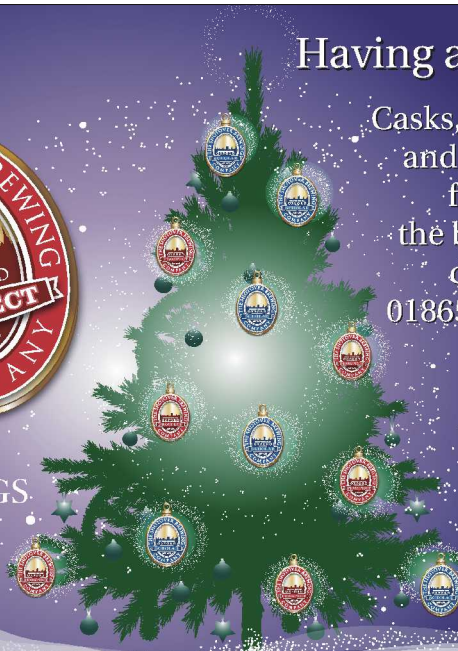
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# Brewing back in Aylesbury



The Aylesbury Brewhouse opened to the public on the 2nd Dec 2011, bringing brewing back to the Market town of Aylesbury after a gap of just under 75 years.

Situated behind the Hop Pole on the Bicester Road, the Aylesbury Brewhouse Co (ABC) is run by Hop Pole owners, Mark and Phil Stevens of the Vale Brewery in Brill.

As partner Phil Stevens explains, "Where better to place a new brewery than behind an award winning real ale pub? After months of effort and much heartache, brewing commenced in Aylesbury on the 16th November."

Mr Stevens continued "We will be giving free reign to the creativity of our brewers to devise beers to delight our customers with these Limited Edition beers"

The first brew is called **Alpha**. It is 3.8%, pale & hoppy with a twist, their first use of the Tettneng hop. The second brew is **Red Right Hand** at 4.2%. Amber and chocolate malt gives a light chestnut colour with a crisp edge derived from Green Bullet and Northdown hops. Others will follow soon, but each will be different. Hence the Limited Edition title they will be using.

The original Aylesbury Brewery Company stopped brewing in 1937, although the offices and ABC brand with the Aylesbury Duck logo continued for many years. First under the ownership of Ind Coope & Allsopp and then later Allied Breweries, until the offices were closed in 1989.



The new Aylesbury Brewhouse was officially opened on Friday the 2nd Dec 2011, by famous beer expert, writer and real ale champion Roger Protz. The first of the new ABC beers were available for tasting for the first time. In addition a beer festival with a range of over 30 different beers was held over the same weekend. A fantastic range of acclaimed beers with different strengths styles and colours were selected to ensure there was something for all tastes.

Between the Hop Pole and the Aylesbury Brewhouse will be the Brewery Shop, which is predicted to become a mecca for Real Ale enthusiasts. It will be open Wednesday to Saturday with draught beers from Vale and ABC available in take home containers (or bring your own!). A fantastic range of bottled beers from across the UK and the world will also be on sale.

Linking all this together is the Beer Club. Launched on the 2nd December the Beer club is a Vale Brewery and Aylesbury Brewhouse Co initiative offering customers a great deal on their wide range of drinks. Members receive a free T-Shirt, a free members etched pint glass and a personal membership card with £5 worth of points pre loaded. Every purchase will gain more points.

Additional benefits include two free brewery tours per year with the pint on the brewery for each member and two friends. Additionally members only evenings and other special events are planned.

Phil Stevens commented "This is a very exciting time for us at The Hop Pole and represents a big commitment to local beer lovers and the opportunity for them to taste Aylesbury beer for the first time in nearly 75 years!!"



# 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!



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# Oxford LocAle Beer Winners



Johanne Green

For the second year running Oxford CAMRA held a blind tasting competition at the Oxford Beer Festival to find the LocAle Champions of the Festival. Every brewery within a 30 mile radius of the Town Hall were invited to enter a beer into the competition. A tasting panel consisting of local publicans, brewers, members of CAMRA and the Oxford Brewers Group tasted each of the beers without knowing which beers they were trying, and in 3 elimination rounds, ended up with the four top local beers.

All styles of beer were pitted against each other; in first place Bingham Brewery's Vanilla Stout, in second Loddon Forbury Lion, in third Old Forge Sledge Hammer and fourth Vale Gunpowder. These choices show that the stronger beers with heaps of flavour were favourite amongst the judges. The Vanilla Stout almost ran out before the tasting session, so members of the public backed the judges up in their choice of the first placed LocAle.

## 1st Place



Bingham's  
Vanilla Stout  
5% ABV

This stout is infused with vanilla pods which complement the dark malts to create a smooth drinking, deliciously dark stout.

When asked to comment on the win, Chris Bingham said, "All of us at Bingham's Brewery are thrilled that the Vanilla Stout came first in the blind tasting at Oxford Beer Festival". It also scooped silver in the Speciality Beer section at the SIBA South East Awards earlier in the year and 144 pints of it were served in 55 minutes at the Volunteers Arms at this year's Great British Beer Festival, so it is getting a bit of a following!

Chris continued to say "We pride ourselves in producing quality real ales with character and our wide range of stouts are proving popular with dark beer lovers". Bingham's have just launched their bottle conditioned beer range, which features Doodle Stout, Ginger Doodle Stout and Vanilla Stout in the lineup. Chris said, "We were delighted that the Vanilla Stout proved so popular that it sold out early on, but if anyone missed out on it, then please call us at the brewery and ask about sending you a case of Vanilla Stout by courier!". Look at their website: [www.bingham.co.uk](http://www.bingham.co.uk)

## 2nd Place



Loddon Brewery  
Forbury Lion  
5.5% ABV

An IPA as an IPA should be: packed with a full malty flavour and a strong complex hop finish imparted by Styrian Goldings and Fuggles.

## 3rd Place



The Old Forge  
Sledgehammer  
5% ABV

Deep Red, full bodied premium ale with hints of chocolate and caramel

## 4th Place



Vale Brewery Co.  
Gunpowder  
5.2% ABV

Mahogany Coloured Premium Ale. Limited Release "Dry-Hopped" Winter Warmer. An explosive brew from Vale to set your taste buds off with a bang!

Bingham's beers are not often seen in the Oxford area, but it is hoped that this first prize will tempt landlords to seek out their beers in future.

Indeed all four Breweries are excellent and hopefully through this competition we will see more

of their beer in pubs and festivals in our area more often.

A date for presenting the awards to the four breweries will be decided at the next branch meeting.



# Brewery Tap Autumn Festival



Dave Cogdell & Matthew Heritage

"Was it the best festival held here???" ...On this occasion it was combined with a reunion for former customers of the **Mr Warrick's Arms Inn** which was sited opposite the Tap and closed its doors twenty years ago.

It would seem to be correct, judging from the positive responses received from CAMRA members and Joe public alike, plus the official sales figures:- 1750 pints of cask ale sold, 870 pints of cider and well over 400 hundred variously spiced sausages consumed. On the Saturday four hundred people attended for the fest and a live band; they still found room and managed to have a good time. The venue consisted of not only the pub square footage but also a marque within the pub courtyard and a double sized marque spanning the majority of the pub car park to provide space (just enough) for all.

Including the six taps on main bar, the considerable range of cask ales on offer totalled 29, plus 23 craft ciders, of which a large amount of both were new to almost everyone. **The East London Brewing Co**, founded by Stu Lascelles (from an Abingdonian family) made it's first appearance outside of London with it's **Foundation Bitter** (4.2% malty, best bitter) and **Pale Ale** (4.0% crisp, hoppy and slightly sweet) both receiving good reception. **Boozy Floozy** by

**Loddon** (4.5% golden and vibrant) seemed to hit the spot, although I can't help but wonder if it's all about the great names that Loddon come up with. **Oracle** by **Salopian** (4.0% crisp and sparkling), **Jarl** by **Fyne Ales** of Argyll (4.0% Light with citrus) and **Worcester Sorcerer** by **Sadlers** (4.3% hoppy best bitter) all sold out quickly, as did the **Moustache Beer** by the **Warwickshire Beer Co** (4.1% golden brown with creamy malt). The first to sell out and this year's top dog was **Dark Star's American Pale Ale** (4.5% classic, dry & hoppy) which is a known quantity for some and a really tasty surprise to those who are new to it.

The race to win the cider crown was easily won by the super cool **Broad Oak Moonshine** (7.4% crisp & slightly dry) followed by **Millwhites Strawberry Cider** (4.5% scrumpy sweetened with a few strawberries) and **Fiery Fox** by **Gwynt Y Ddraig** (6.5% naturally sparkling).

Could it be that the real winner was in fact the double marque in the car park? It worked extremely well as a separate venue, with a very warming atmosphere, congenial to beer & cider tasting, not forgetting the sausage noshing. We look forward to the Tap's next festival, hopefully in the not too far distant future.



## Broad Face Beer Festival

Johanne Green

Abingdon now seems to get its fair share of beer festivals during the year, and the end of November saw the Broad Face's 2nd Beer festival.

Deshan Salwathura, the landlord, also known as Dusty, had chosen an excellent lineup of real ales. Out of a dozen barrels there were local, new, award winning, and seasonal beers. Abingdon Brewery **Loose Cannon's** new winter beer The **Dark Horse** 4.3%ABV and **XT4** from the **XT Brewery** were served for the first time in the pub, **Oscar Wilde** 3.7% from **Mighty Oak**, Champion Beer of Britain 2011 was in the lineup together with award winning **Betty Stoggs** 4.0%ABV from **Skinners**.

One very special beer was **Tring Brewery's Death or Glory** 7.5%ABV. This is a stong dark aromatic and estery barley wine, brewed in January and matured for 11 months to be sold for Christmas and New Year. The prolonged storage creates an extremely drinkable ale, but something that had to be handled with care at that strength.

A token system was in place whereby 10 halves could be bought in one go for £14, giving a 40p discount per pint.

Dusty also created a special menu for the weekend cooked with beers from the festival and there was great live blues and rock music each festival day.

More than 700 pints were drunk over the weekend, which ran out Sunday afternoon after a very well attended festival.



Pouring a pint of Oscar Wilde



Dusty chats to a happy drinker



The Kings Head & Bell  
10 East St. Helens Street, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 5EA t. 01235 525 362  
www.kingsheadandbell-abingdon.com

## Join us at our Winter beer festival

- 👑 February 24th - 26th
- 👑 Serving Oxfordshire's finest ales & organic ciders
- 👑 Homemade pie and mash specials
- 👑 Live jazz and folk music
- 👑 Live 6 nations rugby

*We look forward to seeing you there!*

**ABINGDON BRIDGE**  
4.1% ABV

**LOOSE CANNON**  
BREWERY

**DARK HORSE**  
4.3% ABV

## Abingdon Shop & Brewery

**Fresh beer for Christmas, straight from your local brewery**

<p>Christmas Opening Hours Friday 23rd 8am-7pm Saturday 24th 9am-4pm</p>	<p>Christmas Day 25th - Closed Boxing Day 26th - Closed Tuesday 27th - Closed</p>	<p>Unit 6, Suffolk Way, OX14 5JX info@lcbeers.co.uk www.lcbeers.co.uk</p>
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# Oxford CAMRA Branch Diary



**Wed 7th December, 7:30pm-9:30pm**

**Branch meeting**

*Kings Head & Bell, Abingdon*

**Tue 13th December, 7:30pm-9:30pm**

**Branch Committee meeting**

*Old Anchor, Abingdon*

**Mon 9th January, 7:30pm-9:30pm**

**Branch Meeting**

*Location: To be decided at December branch meeting*

**Fri 13th January**

**Oxford Drinker Editorial Submission Deadline**

**Sat 14th January, 12pm-9pm**

**Central Southern Regional Pub Crawl 2012 – Holborn to Euston**

Pubs to be visited are:

- Cittie Of York 22 High Holborn
- Enterprise 38 Red Lion Street, Holborn
- Lamb, 94 Lamb's Conduit Street
- Lord John Russell, 91-93 Marchmont Street
- Mabel's Tavern, 9 Mabledon Place,
- Bree Louise 69 Cobourg Street
- Euston Tap and Cider Tap, 190 Euston Road,

For full info see

<http://oxfordcamra.org.uk/regional-crawl-2012.pdf>

**Tue 7th February, 7:30pm-9:30pm**

**Branch Meeting**

*Venue to be decided*

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

For branch meeting details contact Steve Lawrence at [contact@oxfordcamra.org.uk](mailto:contact@oxfordcamra.org.uk)

# November Branch Meeting Report



Stephen Lawrence - Branch Secretary



## CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

The Oxford branch of CAMRA hold a branch meeting each month. This is usually in the first week of the month rotating between monday, tuesday and wednesday. Branch meetings are an opportunity to meet other CAMRA local members, have a pint or two in a good pub, discuss what the branch is doing and catch up on news about pubs & breweries.

The November branch meeting was held on 1st November 2011 at the Plough Inn in Wolvercote. There were 20 members present.

There was some discussion about the way the branch votes for the 2 annual Pub of the Year (PotY) awards (City, and Town and Country). The main problem was getting enough completed votes to ensure that it was representative of the members wishes. It was agreed that we couldn't make any changes to the process that was going on at present (voting for the City PotY) but this should be discussed at the next Committee meeting.

With regard to the Oxford Drinker, the editors will be preparing some guidance documents and templates for people producing articles which, it is hoped, will reduce the work of the editors.

There was a brief discussion about the 2011 beer festival, which had just finished. We agreed to have a 'wash-up' meeting soon and all helpers would be invited to give feedback.

The October Committee meeting had come up with 3 suggestions for branch objectives for 2011-12. These were:

1. Establish a Pubs Campaigning Group to be active in fighting pub closures;
2. Carry out a review of branch IT with a view to improving the web site and developing better communication;
3. Explore ways of getting more members involved in branch activities.

It was also suggested at the meeting that we should repeat one of last year's objectives which was to visit every pub in the pubs database during the year.

These objectives were endorsed.

The wonderful Oxford Pub Guide is now available from CAMRA as well as some local outlets and Matt is planning to promote it around the area.

A number of trips and socials were confirmed or arranged. See the branch diary above or the web site at [www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/diary](http://www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/diary). All CAMRA members are welcome to events and meetings, and we look forward to seeing some new faces.



# Beer Festival Diary



## Tuesday 6 – Sat 10 December

### 28th Pig's Ear Beer & Cider Festival

Round Chapel, Powerscroft Road, Hackney, London  
200+ beers, ciders & perries  
[www.pigsear.org.uk](http://www.pigsear.org.uk)

## Saturday 10 December Haddenham Winterfest

Village Hall Complex,  
Banks Road, Haddenham  
12 noon-5pm  
25+ beers plus cider & perry  
[haddenham-beer-festival.co.uk](http://haddenham-beer-festival.co.uk)



## Tuesday 13 - Sat 17 December Winter Beer Festival

Far from the Madding Crowd,  
Friars Entry, Oxford  
01865 240900  
[www.maddingcrowd.co.uk](http://www.maddingcrowd.co.uk)

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.



Latest information about beer festivals can be found on the Oxford CAMRA web site at  
[www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/festivals](http://www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/festivals)

## Wednesday 18 - Sat 21 January

### CAMRA National Winter Ales Festival

The Venue, Sheridan Suite,  
Oldham Road, Manchester  
Over 300 beers,  
bottled real ales,  
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](http://www.alefestival.org.uk/winterales)



## Friday 27 - Saturday 28 January

### Salisbury Winterfest XV

Castle Street Social Club,  
Scots Lane, Salisbury  
22 beers plus ciders  
01722 330445  
[www.salisburycamra.org.uk](http://www.salisburycamra.org.uk)

## Tue 31 Jan - Thu 2nd February Lamb and Flag Beer Festival

12 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3JS  
12 beers, 8 hand pumps, 6 ciders  
01865 515787

## Thursday 2 - Sat 4 February

### 17th Tewkesbury Winter Ales Festival

George Watson Memorial Hall, Barton Street, Tewkesbury  
70+ beers plus ciders & perries  
[www.tewkesburycamra.org.uk](http://www.tewkesburycamra.org.uk)

## Friday 3 – Saturday 4 February Redditch Winter Ale Festival

Rocklands Social Club,  
Birchfield Road, Redditch  
33 beers plus cider & perry  
[www.redditchwaf.org.uk](http://www.redditchwaf.org.uk)

## Wednesday 8 – Fri 10 February

### 22nd Battersea Beer Festival

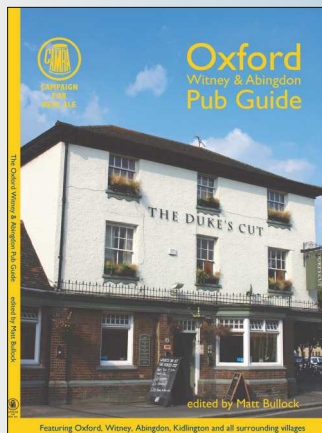
BAC Grand Hall, Lavender Hill, Battersea, London  
150 beers plus cider & perry  
[www.swlcamra.org.uk](http://www.swlcamra.org.uk)

## Friday 17 - Sunday 19 February Littleworth Original Beer & Sausage Festival

Cricketers Arms, Littleworth  
01865 872738  
[www.cricketers-arms.co.uk](http://www.cricketers-arms.co.uk)

## Friday 24th - Sun 26th February Kings Head and Bell Winter Beer Festival

10 East St Helens Street,  
Abingdon, OX14 5EA  
Ales and organic ciders  
01235 525362  
[www.kingsheadandbell-abingdon.org](http://www.kingsheadandbell-abingdon.org)



## Oxford, Witney & Abingdon Pub Guide

The definitive guide to the pubs, bars and hotels bars in Oxford, Witney, Abingdon and all the surrounding villages.

Comprehensively researched by volunteer members of the Oxford branch of CAMRA to give an independent review of all the region's pubs.

Available from local book shops and pubs or buy it online from the CAMRA bookshop at [shop.camra.org.uk](http://shop.camra.org.uk)

Price: £5.99

ISBN: 978-1-85249-301-1

# White Horse Branch of CAMRA

[www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk](http://www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk)



The 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 the Oxford Branch.

The 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.

## White Horse Branch Social Diary

### Tuesday 13 December, 7:45pm

**Branch Meeting**  
Eight Bells, Eaton

### Saturday 7th January

**Social Five Pub run around Wantage (Jog/Skip/Walk/Hop/Crawl/Slither)**

After all that festive food and cheer. Come along for a work out. Join us anywhere on route.

- 15.00–16.00: Bear Hotel..... Market Place
- 16.05–17.05: King Alfred's Head.....31 Market Place
- 17.15–18.00: The Swan.....28 Market Place
- 18.15–20.30: Shoulder of Mutton.38 Wallingford Street
- 20.30–Close: Royal Oak..... Newbury Street

### Saturday 14th January 2012, Start 12.00

**Central Southern Regional Pub Crawl Holborn to Euston.**

Start Cittie of York. 22 High Holborn WC1 6BN  
(more details on page 16)

### Tuesday 17th January

**Branch Meeting, 7:45pm**  
The Hatchet, Main Street Childrey

## Branch Contacts

For more information please contact:

- Neil Crook: Chairman  
[contact@whitehorsecamra.org.uk](mailto:contact@whitehorsecamra.org.uk)
- Peter Fowler: Membership Secretary  
[membership@whitehorsecamra.org.uk](mailto:membership@whitehorsecamra.org.uk)
- Ian Winfield: Social Secretary  
[social@whitehorsecamra.org.uk](mailto: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](http://www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk)



## Beer Festival Equipment

Hire of Barrel stillage, cooling, taps, bars etc.

- Barrel (9gl) – Stillages/ Racking, traditional wooden – 2 x 9gl, 12 x 9gl
- Barrel – taps, chiller saddles, insulation jackets
- Chillers remote, Bar units – 2 metre long and flooring
- Hand pumps

There are some photos and a very competitive price list on the web site

[www.beerfestivalequipment.co.uk](http://www.beerfestivalequipment.co.uk)

Email: [john@beerfestivalequipment.co.uk](mailto:john@beerfestivalequipment.co.uk)  
Tel: 07770 938300

# Walk & Ale along the K & A

... by Dick Bosley



With Pewsey being the halfway point of the Kennet & Avon canal and easily accessible by train it was the obvious start point for a weekend walk. Tim, Jane & I were to head east to Reading leaving the stretch to Bath for next year.

Walking from the station down to the canal we found the **Waterfront Inn** was showing the Rugby World Cup quarter finals so we decided to watch the last 20 minutes of England's abject defeat to France, with a pint of **Devonshire**. This delayed our start until 10.30 giving us a walk through nine miles of lovely Wiltshire countryside, past the Victorian splendour of Crofton Pumping Station, to reach Great Bedwyn at mid-day. **The Three Tuns** offered three **Ramsbury Ales – Gold, Tackle Down Under & 3 Tuns** – all in excellent condition. The food looked very good but, due to our late start, we didn't have time to eat here. We left feeling fairly depressed having read the notices that this fantastic pub was to close after Christmas. Why? WHY??



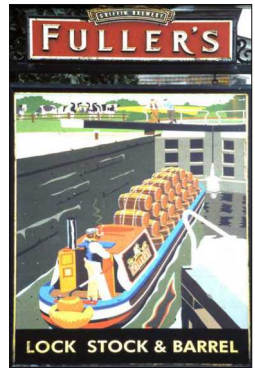
The Three Tuns, Great Bedwyn

We pushed on to Hungerford and found that the only pub doing food all day was the **Downgate** and so walked up the hill for lunch. Neither Tim or I are great fans of **Arkells** beers but the **Moonlight** was acceptable enough to warrant a second pint and made us reconsider our view of the brewery. Sadly an afternoon migraine forced Jane to bale out at Kintbury leaving Tim and I to console ourselves with a, frankly, uninspiring pint of **Caledonian Red** at the **Prince of Wales** before realising that we would have to do the last 6 miles to Newbury at a good pace if we were to reach our B&B in daylight.



The Downgate, Hungerford

Reaching our target merited a reviving pint at the **Lock, Stock & Barrel**, which offered a full range of **Fullers** Ales even if they were served a little cold. Rashly we decided to eat elsewhere and although the food was good the beer was of such quality that it was not worthy of finishing and so we returned to the L, S & B for a final pint of the day.



An early start gave us time to solve all of the country's problems – we really should invite David Cameron to join us next year – as well as complain about anglers blocking the towpath and discuss the history of the naval rum ration amongst many other things before reaching Theale. A half mile detour took us to the **Fox & Hounds** at Sheffield Bottom. Our two pints of **Wadworths Horizon** were good but again served too cold but saw us on our way to the **Cunning Man** at Burghfield. This is a large food driven pub that had **Hook Norton Flagship**, good but cold – why do pubs do this?

Declining to eat we carried on to Reading, pushing the shopping crowds to have a reviving (but cold) **Fuller's Bengal Lancer** at the **Fishermans Cottage** before finishing with a couple of pints,



The Jolly Angler, Reading

served at the correct temperature, and a very late lunch at the **Jolly Anglers** at the end of the canal.

Just before the soporific effects of too much walking, beer and food took effect we realised that we still had to walk the last mile back to the station for the train home. Rarely has a taxi looked so inviting but we resisted. Basically we are too mean!

So best foot forward for next year and all pints west.

The Kennet & Avon canal runs between Thames and Bristol Avon. Volunteers helped reopen it in 1990 and in 2010 the canal celebrated its bicentenary. With an excellently maintained tow path, it's ideal for exploration by bike or on foot, as well as by boat.



# Wantage Beer Festival



Report from 4th Wantage Beer Festival held at Wantage Civic Hall, 11/12th November

A big thank-you to everyone for their hard work at The Wantage Beer Festival. We had our busiest festival yet, and the feedback forms were extremely positive (save for an excellent "Mr Angry" that we shall preserve for posterity).

We were left with less than 7 gallons, so effectively we sold out of beer for the first time.

We (or should I say John) signed up a record 39 new members and it looks very likely that we made a surplus for HQ.



Runaway beer of the festival was **Conundrum** from the new micrisimo **Dark 'Orse brewery** in Lambourn; sorry for those who didn't make it until Saturday as it was our fastest seller ever. Runner up was **Giants Stairs** from **White Horse**, and third place was for **Durham's Bede's Chalice**. We raised well over £150 for the Poppy Appeal.

There will be a helpers' trip sometime in the new year, with St. Albans and one of its local breweries the likely destination.

## Dark 'Orse Brewery

Brewer of **Conundrum**, Beer of the Wantage Beer Festival



Voted best beer of the Wantage Beer Festival was Dark 'Orse Brewery's Conundrum, brewed by Chris Trueman, a keen home brewer, who has a 10

gallon brewery plant; built to his own specification two years ago.



In response to winning beer of the festival, Chris said "I was very surprised at the result and very proud. I'm extremely pleased that so many of the festival goers who managed to try the beer enjoyed it enough to vote for it, I'd like to say thank you."

Chris Trueman has been brewing on and off since 1975, but in the last 6 years with resources available via the web, he has been concentrating on constructing, refining and upgrading his brewery equipment until the investment two years ago in his 10 gallon plant.

The beer was submitted to the Wantage Beer Festival on the request from Peter Fowler, owner of the Shoulder of Mutton pub, who knows what a keen home brewer Chris is. Conundrum is the first low gravity beer Chris has ever brewed, which he did on the suggestion he try and brew a beer to stand comparison with Redemption Trinity, which of course it could be gauged against at the festival.

Even with the reception of Conundrum, Chris has no plans to go commercial; though the occasional barrel might be seen, and more importantly tasted, at other beer festivals in the future.

# Prince of Wales, Shippon Beer Festival

JoHanne Green



The Prince of Wales in Shippon, held their first beer festival on the weekend of 30th September to 2nd October.

Morris Dancers, a DJ, bands and a hog roast supplemented a huge line up of 22 casks of beer and 7 ciders. Quite a few of the beers were from the Marstons range, including Jennings, Ringwood, Wychwood and Brakspear beers. There were also local beers from Loose Cannon, Shotover and Butts. Box Steam Brewery was well represented with 3 casks; perhaps they had been ordered on request from a fan of the brewery?

Phil, Karen and staff were rushed off their feet in the last glorious summer weather that helped to make the

weekend a huge success. People flocked to the pub to soak up some sun and enjoy the well served beer and food. The atmosphere was great and they even had specially made glasses for the occasion. We hope this is not the last beer festival Phil and Linda will put on, as the pub location, huge garden and friendliness lends itself to a fantastic event.



## Royal Oak –Regional Cider Pub of the Year

The Royal Oak in Wantage, long renowned for its cask beers, has added another feather to its cap by being named both 2011 Central Southern CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year, and one of the top four in the National competition. The Southern Region competition is open to all pubs in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, and awarded on the basis of the range and

quality of draught cider and perry on sale. As visitors to the Royal Oak will know, there are commonly eight to twelve examples on offer from throughout the UK.

As far as we are aware, the Royal Oak is the first pub in the UK ever to make the top four in both the beer and cider/perry competitions. The Royal Oak truly is unique!

**WADWORTH**  
NORTHGATE  
TRADE MARK  
DEVIZES

*Wadworth: 125 years of brewing excellence*

Wadworth & Company have a widespread and well founded reputation for brewing exceptional beers, a reputation which began in 1885, with the opening of the Old Northgate Brewery by Henry Wadworth. The original brewery is still home to all of Wadworth's brewing production, and traditional techniques are maintained throughout the process. We have a wide and varied selection of year round and seasonal ales available throughout the year.

**Where is Wadworthshire?**

The Wadworth estate extends from Devizes, Wiltshire, with over 250 characterful pubs and hotels from the Cotswolds to the South-West offering a warm welcome, great ambience and the finest beers.

[www.wadworth.co.uk](http://www.wadworth.co.uk)

Available in cask and keg.

6X  
HENRY'S  
STRONG PERRY  
HORIZON  
OLD Limer  
MILD AS HOPS  
SWORDFISH  
FARMERS GLORY  
BISHOP'S TIPPLE  
St George's  
Lily  
Pink



# BAINTON **Beer Lover Rides** BIKES **Inner City Cycling**

Kevin Moreland, [www.baintonbikes.com](http://www.baintonbikes.com)

78 Walton Street, Oxford, OX2 6EA, t:01865 311610

As the weather turns sour and the nights become longer the allure of the pub garden fades, and only tempts out smokers to huddle together for warmth in whatever shelters are offered. At this time of year a beer by the fire seems very inviting, as does staying dry.

With that in mind we grabbed our coats and set off on our route inside the Oxford city ring road hoping to be greeted by pubs offering warmth to weary riders.

Essential Equipment to take includes; Plastic bag (to cover your saddle during stops), gloves, puncture repair kit, spare inner tubes, pump, water, Allen key and spanner set, a decent lock, a phone and bright lights.

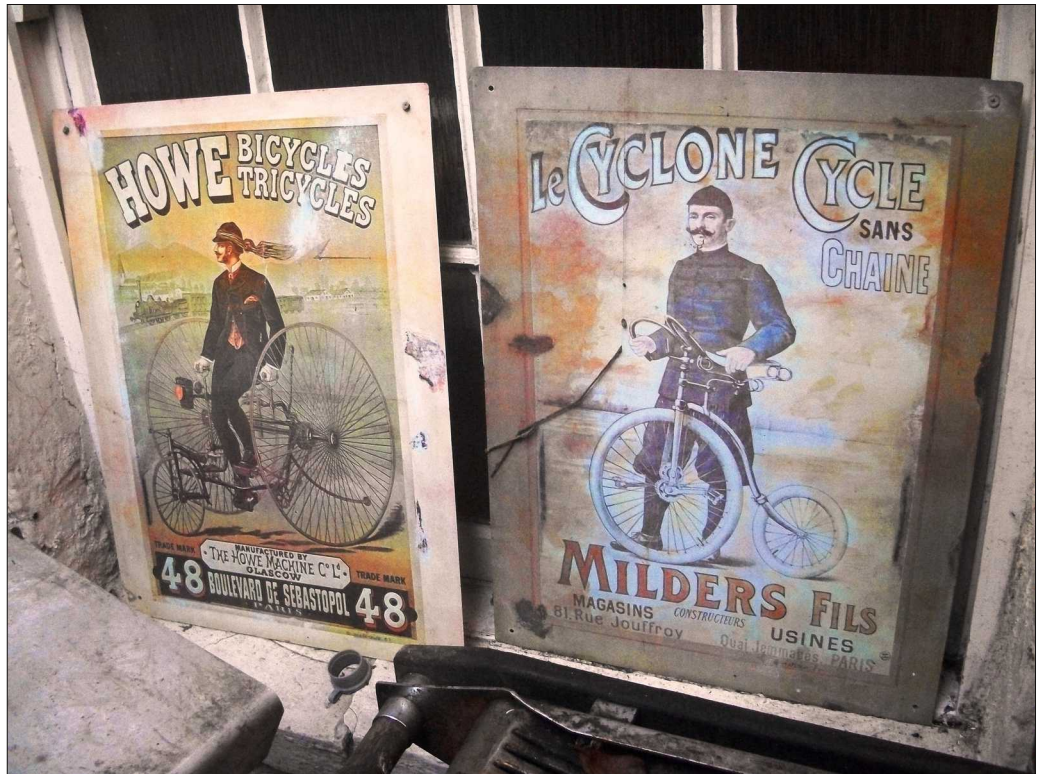
The route is on cycle tracks and roads, but any bike with mudguards and good lights will suffice.

This is a short route covering just 8 miles.

We start our day in Jericho, where despite the ground being wet and only the occasional break in

the clouds, the cycle paths and footpaths are sprinkled with the colourful autumn leaves. We ride the short distance to the **Book Binders Arms**, but due to a general lack of good planning we find it shut. With a swift about turn we ride an almighty 2 minutes longer and stop at **The Victoria**, in Jericho. They have 2 beers on and we choose a pint of **'Hobgoblin'**. The Victoria does offer a fire, and has friendly staff and a good selection of pies to choose from. After swiftly sinking the first refreshing pint of the day we zip up our jackets and head out and onwards.

We ride for just less than half a mile to **The Rose & Crown** on North Parade where we choose a pint of **'Pig on the wall'** from the choice of 4 and get a pickled egg and a packet of crisps. This is by far my



Old Bikes at the Rose & Crown, North Parade



favourite pub in Oxford; if you have never been I strongly recommend you visit this charming traditional pub, where you will always receive a warm welcome from the charismatic landlord, lady or friendly bar staff. Apart from the friendly atmosphere this fantastic pub also boasts a great pint, a discount for CAMRA members, carry-out service, a swear jar, a covered courtyard, great pub grub, a fireplace, a ban on mobile phones and friendly interesting locals.

Alas after a pint it is time to go, and as we leave Andrew (landlord) as always takes the time to stand up, shake your hand and offer a warm goodbye.

Moving on we ride another half mile to **The Royal Oak** on Woodstock Road, where we are reminded by the nice bar staff that the Brakspear Oxford Ale Trail is running. After picking up a route map we get a pint of '**Oxford Gold**' from the choice of 4 beers and the first stamp on the way to a prize T Shirt. With the thought of a side challenge we navigate our way through the labyrinth of rooms to a comfy seat by the fireplace.

Moving on we ride another huge distance of less than half a mile to **The Kings Arms**, Holywell Street. Here we're greeted with the choice of 7 beers; we pick a pint of '**Rucking Mole**' and a huge homemade scotch egg. Although we're not able to sit by the fire we choose a good spot and enjoy the views. We're



The Royal Oak, Woodstock Road

meeting someone at this pub and predictably they're late, so we happily get a pint of '**Tribute**' and another packet of crisps with pickled egg.

Kit arrives shortly after settling back down, so we sink our drinks and choose to walk the short distance to **The White Horse**, on Broad Street. Here we get a pint of '**Doom Bar**' from the 4 on offer, accepting the lack of a fire and trying to find a seat amongst the locals and visiting tourists. After an enjoyable pint we decide

*Continued on Page 24*

# The Gloucester Arms

## Oxfords NO.1 Rock Pub

HAPPY HOUR MON-FRI 3PM-7PM MOST PINTS £2  
 ROCK KARAOKE MONDAY NIGHTS  
 ALL DAY SUNDAY ALL DRINKS £2  
 PUB QUIZ SUNDAY NIGHTS  
 1 REAL CIDER PUMP  
 5 ALE PUMPS



21 FRIARS ENTRY  
 OXFORD  
 01865  
 727107



*Bainton Bike Ride continued*

to move on and head out of town.

We ride about a mile heading towards Iffley Road, but en route the heavens open and we decide to take shelter in **The Cape of Good Hope**, where we receive an especially miserable welcome from the moaning barmaid who serves us a nearly full pint of **'Brakspear'** from the 2 beers on offer. We swiftly sink our beers and decide to brave the elements.

We ride a further mile to **The Chester Arms**, Chester Road (just off the Iffley Road). I've heard mixed reviews about this pub but I quite liked it. We were greeted by the bar staff and served a decent pint of **'Brakspear'**. Whilst waiting at the bar we watch the aquatic toads and are informed the pool table is free, which we take full advantage of and enjoy a couple

of games whilst listening to the faint noise of the band jamming. After a couple of games and as night consumes the day we decide to continue searching for pubs with fireplaces, and ride on a further half mile to **The Rusty Bicycle** on Hurst Street.

We get a pint of **'Moonlight'** from the 3 beers on offer and find a seat as close to the fire as possible. After what seems like no time at all we leave the warm atmosphere of the pub, wipe down our wet saddles, fire up our lights and brave the ride onwards.

We're heading back into the city centre but decide to break up the long journey back by stopping after another half mile at the **'Hobgoblin'** on Cowley Road. We choose the only ale on offer, **'Hobgoblin'**, or at least a vile pint that impersonated Hob. Despite the disgusting pint the apologetic bar staff inform us that the pub has recently been purchased and they are in the process of changing beers. With no fire we find a seat between the pinball machine and shooting arcade machines, and slowly drink our beer waiting for the rain to pass. Before long we are back in the saddle and riding down the congested Cowley Road towards the city centre.

Upon reaching town we venture into **The Chequers**, off the High Street. I haven't been to this pub for a good few years and I'm pleasantly surprised to find it different from what I remember. We select a pint of **'Hook Norton Flagship'** from the 9 on offer and despite the lack of fireplace we gladly settle down to enjoy one of the last drinks of the day. Despite the pub being busy the bar staff wave us goodbye and we decide to try and get a final pint at **The Crown**, off Cornmarket. At this nice pub we get a final pint of **'Oxford Gold'** from the choice of 5 and a stamp on our ale trail maps.

So a few days later we're back in the **Rose & Crown** reflecting on our recent ride. Not all of the pubs we visited offered fireplaces, but during our route we visited pubs which we haven't been to recently or for ages. It was refreshing to find most of the revisited pubs have changed for the better, and yes – we are all wearing our Brakspear Oxford Ale Trail T Shirts.



The Rusty Bicycle

### Summary of Cycle Parking Facilities

- **The Victoria** – Cycle Racks on Walton Street, or adjacent lampposts
- **The Rose & Crown** – Cycle Racks either end of North Parade
- **The Royal Oak** – No specific parking or nearby racks, so locked against pub wall
- **The Kings Arms** – Cycle racks directly out the front (if you can find a spot in the carriage)
- **The White Horse** – Cycle racks dotted around Broad Street
- **Cape of Good Hope** – Cycle racks nearby around The Plain
- **The Chester Arms** – No specific parking or nearby racks, leant against wall
- **The Rusty Bicycle** – Pub has installed its own cycle racks
- **Hobgoblin** – Cycle racks and lampposts around Cowley Road
- **The Chequers** – We locked our bikes close to the bar entrance
- **The Crown** – Cycle parking around the Cornmarket area

To view more photos of this ride please visit our website – [www.baintonbikes.com](http://www.baintonbikes.com)

These are regular rides we run and if you are interested in joining then please contact me on [kevin@baintonbikes.com](mailto:kevin@baintonbikes.com) or call me on 01865 311610

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# Weymouth Octoberfest 2011



By Alan & Marie Oliver

On a clear dry Friday morning we headed to the Pavilion situated on the harbour side.

Our first reaction to the new venue was light, airy and plenty of room. The Ocean Room was laid out with cider at the entrance then numbered casks from 1 to 69, with the ale name and description attached.

Entry was by advanced ticket which was exchanged for a glass and tasting note list for both ale and cider. Half pint tickets were sold in strips of four (£2.80 a pint). We were greeted by an old friend Dave Harris who is both Chairman and festival organiser, who made us feel at home straight away.

Dave had organised a Beer of the Festival so we recorded scores of 69 ales from different breweries.

By the end of the Saturday session we had sampled 37 ales and 6 ciders all kept in very

good condition and had decided on our 1, 2 and 3 for the festival.

We met up with Dave Harris at the end, who advised us that they had this venue for the next two years and the dates for next year are 12th – 13th October 2012.

Our favourites were **Jersey Liberation, Liberation Ale** 4.4 and **Yeovil, Posh IPA** 5.4.

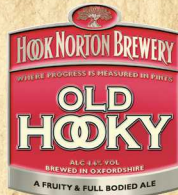
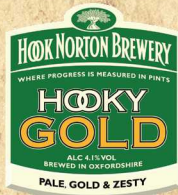
The Beer of the Festival turned out to be **Sixpenny IPA** 5.2 (Posh IPA was second).

This is always a wonderful weekend and would make for an excellent branch social as well as creating ties with West Dorset, one of the friendliest branches.

For more information about the West Dorset branch of CAMRA, visit [camrawdorset.org.uk](http://camrawdorset.org.uk)



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# Community Pubs Month: April 2012

## Celebrating the Great British Pub



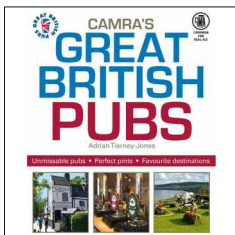
**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**



In April 2012, CAMRA is to launch a new national pub campaign in a bid to get more people than ever involved in championing the importance of the community pub.

Community Pubs Month is a new initiative similar to past CAMRA national pub campaigns in recent years such as Local Pubs Week. The main aims of the Month are to increase footfall in pubs, to encourage more publicans to organise and promote events to attract further trade, and spread awareness of community pubs throughout the media.

It is hoped the decision to extend celebrations to a month of activity – moving on from Local Pubs



CAMRA, has released a new publication which has taken on the ambitious task of celebrating everything great about the British pub!

CAMRA's Great British Pubs (published Nov 1st

2011, RRP £14.99, Paperback) is a collection of the must visit pubs that can be found from the tip of Cornwall to the Scottish Islands. Compiled by internationally-acclaimed beer writer Adrian Tierney-Jones (1001 Beers You Must Try Before You Die) the book's categorised reviews detail over 200 public houses of all shapes and sizes that represent the best of this British institution.

Recent research shows 76% of adults in the UK think that the pub makes an important contribution to British life and when asked about why he wanted to write a book on the subject Tierney-Jones explained:

'The British Pub is a unique institution and despite many efforts to replicate it throughout the world its heart is in these islands — and the other unique aspect of the pub is that it's also the only place

Week - will allow CAMRA branches greater flexibility to organise their own events, but at the same time have a set period in which to co-ordinate activity.

Kicking off proceedings on Monday April 2nd with Community Pubs Day – the day after CAMRA's Members' Weekend & AGM in Torquay – activity will commence with regional and national press stories circulated by CAMRA to highlight the aims of the campaign and relay the major issues facing pubs.

It is hoped around a half of all CAMRA branches will be organising a wide range of events to promote their local pubs during the Month, and will be working in the lead-up to April to ensure this first year for the campaign is a big success.

As well as CAMRA branches ordering promotional material to maximise the exposure for this new campaign in pubs across Britain, pub licensees can also order packs direct from CAMRA. Available from early 2012, Community Pubs Month packs will include campaigning posters, beer mats, leaflets and pump clip crowners. Pubs interested in acquiring material for Community Pubs Month can find out more by visiting [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk).

where you can drink cask beer; you cannot do it at home unless of course you live in a pub. I'm a writer, I like pubs and beer. It's a no-brainer.

'All these pubs have something to offer beyond the promise of good beer, great food and plenty of cheer. They also offer a chance to step into another world for a while.

'I visited the majority of the pubs, while the others were recommended to me by friends, colleagues and CAMRA members. Some will agree, some will disagree, but that's the beauty of the British pub, it stirs the emotions, and makes people care.'

Every kind of pub is represented in the 23 categories that make up CAMRA's Great British Pubs, with listings and full-colour photography illustrating a host of excellent pubs from the seaside to the city and from the historic to the ultra-modern.

To further inform the reader, articles on brewing, cider making, classic pub food recipes and traditional pub games are included to emphasise the diversity of the Great British pub, and its many quirks. The publication also acts as a travel guide for all beer and pub lovers, with pubs presented as a stopover from which you can explore the beauty of both urban and rural landscapes, from Scotland to the Lake District to London.

# Diary of a Beer Festival Volunteer



By Dave Richardson

I had never even pulled a pint before, but with about 1,000 thirsty customers expected each night it really was all hands to the pumps at Oxford Town Hall, or rather taps. Pouring the beer direct from barrels was easy, and so was the payment system of crossing off strips of 10p vouchers with a marker pen – what a great idea! Not so easy was coping with the ceaseless flow of customers.

I had reported to the stage to collect my own badge, glass, and free drinks and food vouchers from Matt, who looked really pleased with how Thursday (the first night) was shaping up.

The festival was very well manned (and womanned!) when I arrived about 7pm, but I was told to pitch in wherever there was a gap and I edged in around letters A to F, all breweries being presented in alphabetical order. First of all I poured myself half a pint, but soon found I was odd man out among the volunteers. Personally I always like to see a landlord or bar staff sipping something (and I don't mean a water or a coffee), as it shows they believe in their product. But none of the other volunteers seemed to be drinking, and I soon found out why. There was hardly a moment to take a sip, quite apart from the steely eyed stares of some of the customers who clearly resented you having a drink while they were waiting. But fortunately, most of them were a patient and good humoured bunch.

I soon mastered the art of pouring up to the pint, half pint or third of a pint mark on the glasses, although some of the taps seemed to turn off more easily than others. And I think I had a pretty good record giving customers a full measure, even erring on the side of generosity a couple of times with the half and third of a pint marks.

What surprised me most was the sheer variety of the customers, with all ages from 18 to 80 and in all shapes, sizes and, ahem, sexes. Oxford's student population probably provided a fair proportion of the women, and there is absolutely no truth in the rumour that at times I favoured a pretty face over a wizened older gent at the front of the queue. The universities were well represented all night, including a few foreign students getting to grips with Britain's beer culture, and quite a few freshers.

Inevitably there were one or two awkward customers, out of the 70 or 80 I must have served. One accused me of marking off one 10p voucher too many, while another gleefully pointed out an unmarked 10p voucher I had overlooked. Did these people have no pity? Couldn't they see I was rushed off my feet? Another ran out of vouchers and tried to offer cash, which of course was not allowed. His glass was put aside awaiting his return with more vouchers. Another accused me of chipping his glass, so I sent him away to get a replacement with a chip on his shoulder.

And then there were the customers asking for advice, which is fair enough, you might think. But I hadn't had time to read through the list before starting work so recommendations of a hoppy beer, for example, fell on deaf ears. Recommending a lager was rather simple, as there were so few of them.

I did manage to snaffle the odd third of a pint between duties, and I could certainly tell which of the beers within easy reach were the best sellers. **Brecon's Bright Beacons**, **Butts' Barbus Barbus**, **Compass's King's Shipment**, **East London's Pale Ale** and **Fyne's West Highland Black IPA** were "flying off the shelves", but most popular of all seemed to be **Dark Star's Espresso**, made with "freshly ground Arabica coffee beans". Funny folk, these students. Who would want a hangover and insomnia at the same time??

I probably did manage two pints during the evening, but I gave the cider bar a miss with nothing on offer under 6% ABV. And I was able to redeem my free food voucher at Proper Cornish Pasties. In fact, I enjoyed my stint so much I went back for more on the Friday night, and I'm already looking forward to next year's festival. Don't think twice about volunteering as it's great fun, but next time I'll try to mug up on the beers in advance. But not all 200!



# A Campaign of Two Halves

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### Your Details

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I enclose a cheque for \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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12/10

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# Oxford Companion to Beer



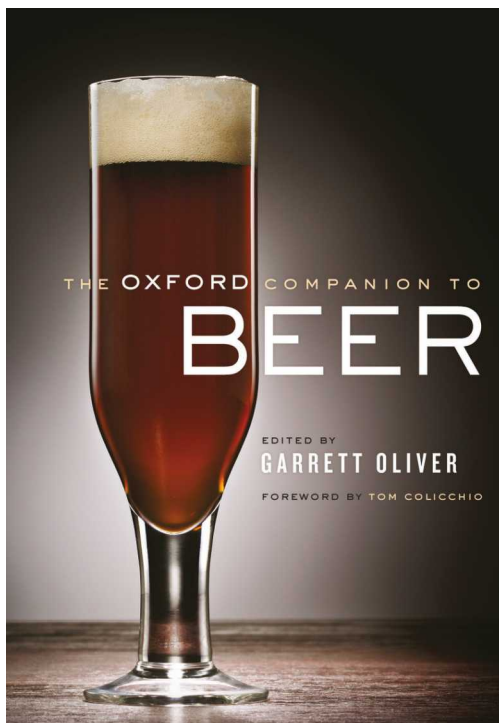
This weighty 920 page encyclopedia took 4 years to collate and contains over 1100 entries related to beer, covering all aspects of beer around the world, including history, technical brewing information, chemistry, breweries, ingredients, industry, taxation, social aspects, weights & measures and brewing & beer terminology.

The entries are comprehensive and well researched, with contributions from 166 experts in their field, including authors such as CAMRA's Roger Protz, beer historian Ron Pattinson, author Pete Brown, Oxford beer writer Tim Hampson (entry on Hook Norton Brewery). The book as a whole was edited by Garrett Oliver, brewmaster of The Brooklyn Brewery.

The book is of very high quality, with a similar style and appearance to other books in the Oxford Companion series including The Oxford Companion to Wine and The Oxford Companion to Food. This will help beer to be treated more seriously, and dispel the myth that beer is a simple drink for working class people. As Garrett Oliver said when he recently visited Oxford to launch the book, there are many more styles of beer than there are of wine, and the range of flavours from the many varieties of hops, malts and yeast strains make it far more suitable and interesting as a match for food than wine. More on this can be found in the extensive entry on food pairing.

For example the entry about CAMRA written by George Philliskirk covers one and a half pages including the history of how it was formed, the organisational structure, how the Champion Beer of Britain is chosen, campaigning issues, Good Beer Guide and other CAMRA books, and touches on the controversial subject of craft beers and cask breathers within CAMRA. From there you could follow the reference to cask breather to find out more, also taking in the sections on casks, cask conditioning and Cask Marque on the way.

Once you start browsing it is difficult to put down as entries cross reference each other, or you spot something interesting as you flick through the pages. Within a few pages in the letter 'N' section you can find out about Ninkasi the Sumerian beer goddess, Nitrogen and Nitrogenated Beer (introduced by Guinness in 1959, coinciding with the switch from wooden to metal kegs), Noble Hops (such as Hallertauer and Saaz), Northern Brewer Hops and Nugget Hops, Non-Alcoholic Beer (did you know it makes up 8% of beer sales in Spain?) and the history of beer in Norway (where in 17th/18th century land owners could be heavily fined for failing to brew before Christmas!)



The Oxford Companion to Beer  
 Edited by Garrett Oliver  
 Published by Oxford University Press  
 ISBN: 978-0195367133  
 RRP £35 hardback.

For anybody interested in beer, whether it is to find out about the characteristics of a type of hop or barley, learning about brewing processes, or finding information about the history of a beer style (The entry on Indian Pale Ale (IPA) by Pete Brown is over three pages long). This is a quality reference book that you will treasure and refer to frequently. I recommend you put it on your Christmas list.

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