



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**



ISSUE 73
April/May 2012

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read it and pass it on)

the Oxford Drinker

**The Grapes
Reopens**
Page 6

Sheffield Trip
Page 10

**White Horse
Pub of the Year
Announced**
Page 18

**Abingdon-On-
Thames Beer
Festivals**
Page 8



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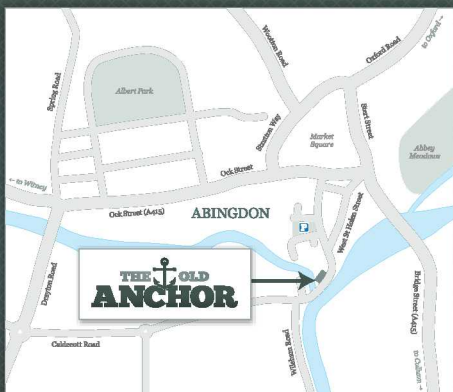
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Valuable contributions to this edition have been made by Matt Bullock, Neil Hoggarth, Richard Queralt, Lawrence Harman, Dave Richardson, Dave Cogdell, Helene Augar and others.

The next issue will be published in **June 2012**.

Deadline for the next issue is **14th May 2012**.

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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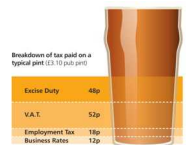
Contents

Oxford and Kidlington News.....	4
Pick of the Bunch... Grapes Reopened.....	6
Witney Pub News.....	7
Abingdon On Thames News.....	8
Festival Helper's Trip to Sheffield.....	10
Cricketer's Arms Beer Festival Review.....	11
Brewery News.....	12
Beer Scoring System.....	15
Beer Festival Logo Competition.....	15
Oxford CAMRA Branch Diary.....	16
Minibus Survey Trips.....	16
Highlights of March Branch Meeting.....	16
Beer Festival Diary.....	17
White Horse Branch Information.....	18
White Horse Branch Diary.....	18
White Horse Pub of the Year.....	18
On the 12th Day of Christmas.....	19
White Horse Brewery News.....	20
Bainton Bikes Beer Lover Rides.....	22
Hand-Pumped.co.uk Brewing Website.....	26
Pilgrimage to the Black Country.....	27
National Campaigning.....	28
Join CAMRA today.....	29
18th Reading Beer & Cider Festival.....	30
Banbury Beer Festival 2012.....	30

Welcome to the April-May 2012 issue of the Oxford Drinker.

The spring is in full swing and now is the time to shake the winter months off and go out. Meet with friends at the pub, try a new beer at one of the numerous beer festivals in our region or just go to your local to see what they offer. The British Pub needs people to show their support both by going out more and by letting our politicians know that squeezing small businesses is not the way forward.

An e-petition has been set up asking the Government to suspend the beer duty escalator to help reduce pub closures, create 5,000 additional jobs and make it more affordable for customers.



This is supported by CAMRA and the brewing and pub industries. If more than 100,000 people sign it then it will get debated in the House of Commons. Go to www.camra.org.uk/saveyourpint to sign the petition and help stop 16 pubs a week from closing!

You can also show your support for pubs by booking a place on one of our Saturday minibus trips which are always enjoyable. For only £5 you can go on a trip round some of the more inaccessible pubs in our region. If you have bought the Oxford Pub Guide you can even compare notes with Matt.

— Steven & JoHanne

Oxford and Kidlington Pub News



The Jolly Postboys at Florence Park has a new licensee, Chris Howells who has been there since November. Sadly cask ale is no longer sold but Chris said he would review the situation later in the year. This is one of the last remaining estate pubs in Oxford and has seen a plethora of tenants and interim managers within the last four years. We wish Chris every success and hope that real ale will soon be restored to the Postboys.

[Brett Mackie]

The Crown and Thistle in Headington was closed by Greene King on New Year's eve as they no longer saw it as a viable pub, as it was not appealing to a big enough section of the community. There is much speculation regarding whether it will re-open and a petition has been started to try and get it reopened.

Other pubs in New Headington, Quarry and the other side of Wood Farm means no-one in the estate or in what is called the Rock Edge area will have to go too far for a drink, but the Crown and Thistle was the only pub truly in Wood Farm and it has had a really impressive history.

The pub changed its name to Crown and Thistle in 1892, having previously been called Titup Hall. It was a coaching inn gaining importance as a stop on the route to London from Oxford.

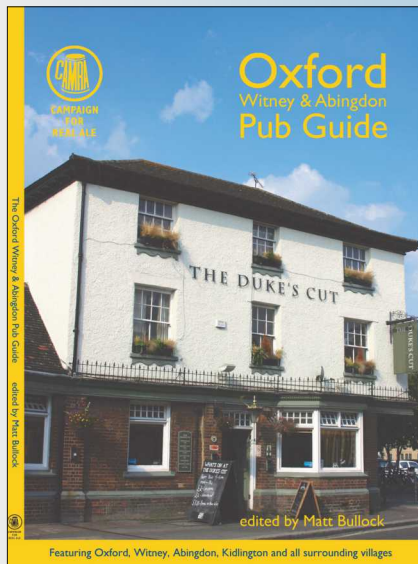
In the early 80s it was a destination pub and its downfall is rather sad.

[Roger Jenking]

Villagers in South Hinksey are calling for The Vale Brewery to reopen the only local pub, **The General Elliot**, which has been closed for two years. They say they have proved that the village needs a pub by taking turns to host a pub-evening, which has been too successful, attracting up to 60 people at the time and now they just want their pub back.

After the pub closed, due to the landlord moving away without warning, the parish council opposed the original plans to expand the pub, objecting to the size and density of the development. The plans included bed and breakfast rooms and camping facilities. Since then Vale Brewery submitted plans to change the pub into a dwelling but were refused permission. The pub is not on the market to be sold. Vale Brewery commented on the situation saying they are willing to listen to the villagers and hear any propositions they might have.

The Squire Bassett in Kidlington now has half its floor space dedicated to the Gurkha Village Nepalese restaurant. It has been taken over by people who are connected to the Everest, a similar restaurant, within the Donnington Arms in east Oxford and the Yeti Nepalese restaurant on Cowley Road. They presently serve Wychwood Hobgoblin and the landlord, Binod, is a real ale drinker and it is well kept. They are tied to Punch Taverns but Binod hopes to get permission to serve beer from local microbreweries. He is likely to put on a second beer as the Hobgoblin sells well.



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Pick of the Bunch...

The Grapes Reopened



David Richardson

Described in CAMRA's own local pub guide as "the only proper pub left on George Street", the Grapes is back in business with a new owner and a strong commitment to real ale. The lease has been acquired by Bath Ales, previously known in this area only for guest beers, and on the evidence of opening night on 14 March it is set to become a "must" for the CAMRA fraternity.

Bath Ales' brews available on hand pump include **Gem** (4.1% ABV), **Golden Hare** (4.4%) and the darker **Barnsey** (4.5%), a premium beer named after former England and Bath fly-half Stuart Barnes, whose nickname appropriately was Barrel and is now a Rugby commentator for Sky. Also available at the Grapes are Bath Ales' own **Dark Side stout** (4% ABV) and, for lovers of the apple brew, its own **Bounders cider**. Another drink of note is **Brugse Zot** from Belgium, which at 6% ABV may justify the translation as "Bruges Fool".

There's more than enough here to justify a visit, and you can also sample yet more bottled ales from this small brewer, and take home a five-litre micro-cask of Gem, Barnsey or SPA. But mainly the pub will continue to appeal to theatre goers (the New Theatre is opposite) and general passing trade on one of Oxford's busiest streets. A limited but appetising menu is served between 12.00 and 9.30, including Beef and Dark Side Ale Pie (£8.50).



Inside The Grapes

The Grapes – formerly a Greene King house – has had a refresh without losing its essential character, but it now has a warmer, brighter feel. Gone are the theatre posters and the awning over the bar, but it feels more like a contemporary tavern and may well appeal to a wider range of customers. Restoration has revealed some original tiles in the entrance, warning that children are not allowed. Many of us will drink to that.....

This is only the eighth pub in the Bath Ales portfolio, all the others being in the Bath/Bristol area. Despite the name, its brewery is in Warmley in south Gloucestershire, close to Bristol. It was set up in 1995 and brewery tours operate here subject to advance booking.

Managing director Roger Jones says: "Our philosophy is 'small is beautiful', and that was the antithesis of the big breweries back in 1995. We had been negotiating the lease with Oxford City Council for more than a year, and wanted to open here because the pub scene is so vibrant. We brew old-fashioned beer and would describe ourselves as a large micro-brewery. The Grapes is a traditional pub that needed a modern twist, and it's important to keep a traditional pub on George Street."

Landlord James Dixon – who worked at Bath Ales' Wellington pub in Bristol – lives "over the shop" and is looking forward to discovering Oxford. All the staff are also new so pay them a visit and try something new – you could be pleasantly surprised.



Landlord James Dixon Pulling a Pint

Witney Pub News

Witney Correspondents:
Caroline Wingate and Ian Roberts.



The Company of Weavers, the new Wetherspoons in Witney opened on Tuesday 21st February, on the site of the old Palace nightclub, near the Buttercross in the town centre.

I was there the first Friday it was open and went again on Wednesday. The place was busy for a midweek evening, attracting a wide ranging clientèle from pensioners to young families out for a meal, and plenty in between, with some groups coming for drinks after work, and others for a ladies / lads night out. It has been very well refurbished. In terms of decor, they have really gone all out on the weaving theme, with yarn, looms and sheep being the key inspirations! As the space is quite large, they have done their best to separate out different sections. However it is essentially one giant room, so it can get a bit noisy. There was no music or television on when I was there but it definitely would not be the place for an intimate or quiet chat!

There are 10 hand pumps (though there were two duplicates, Abbot and Ruddles). The beer seemed to be served in a very good condition; several people over the first weeks mentioned this.

Food was of the quality and value you would expect from Wetherspoons, with a good selection of pub

food at a reasonable price.

The down side of the venue is that there is no rear garden or outside space, so smokers are forced to stand directly outside the entrance and everyone has to make their way past them to get in and out. However, there is no way around this.

Following the opening of the Company of Weavers, local opinion from **The Angel**, **Red Lion**, **Eagle Tavern** and **Blue Boar**, was to not try and compete but to do their own thing and wait for things to settle down. Martin, landlord of the **New Inn**, said that the opening had increased his trade, bringing more people out in the town and to other pubs. Anything that will get people out for an evening is a positive addition to the local pub scene.

The Three Horseshoes, 78 Corn Street now has real ale Thursdays charging £2.50 per pint and half price for wine and prosecco between 5pm-10pm.

The Red Lion, 1-3 Corn Street will shortly be taken over by a new landlord.

Further to the report in the previous issue, we are glad to hear that Ian Payne, the landlord of the Eagle Tavern in Corn Street, Witney, is now out of hospital, back home and on the mend.

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Quite friendly generally.

The New Inn, 111 Corn Street, Witney, Oxfordshire
OX28 6AU 01993 703807
Facebook: New Inn Witney

Abingdon has become the town in our branch area with the most beer festivals taking place over the year. There are now seven pubs holding at least one beer festival per year, with many having two or more.

In February we saw the **King's Head and Bell** 2nd Winter Beer Festival, which also included a Folk Music afternoon. The beers were mainly dark and sourced from local breweries as well as further afield. The festival was well attended and everybody seemed to have a good time.

The Cross Keys beer and music festival took place in March, with a nice selection of beer. This is the 2nd beer festival Roland has put on, this time with 15 ales and ciders. Another festival is being planned for September.

The following weekend **The Brewery Tap** held their biggest Spring Beer Festival to date. Matt, the landlord, sums the weekend up like this:

"A big thank you from Charlie [who had the monumental task of sourcing all the beers and preparing the tasting notes] to everyone who attended. A great turnout and a complete sell out. That's 50 different cask ales and craft ciders plus 400 pies all consumed by close on the Sunday. Three new launches (**Loose Cannon's Blonde Bombshell**, **XT's No 6 & Rebellion's Ship Wrecked**) and plenty of 'one offs' (**ABC's Runout Groove** being notable). Of the 21 sold in the marquee, the new Loose Cannon sold out first followed by **Kelham Island's 45RPM** and **Beavertown's Neck Oil**. This event has grown each year we've held it (now in it's 6th year) and you can expect next year's to be larger still."

In the coming months 4 beer festivals are planned in and around Abingdon: April will see **The Broad Face** Easter Beer and Music Festival 6th-8th April.



Matt at the Brewery Tap pours the first pint of Loose Cannon Blonde Bombshell

This is their 3rd beer festival, and features a good line up of free live jazz and blues music.

In May there will be two festivals just outside Abingdon, but still near enough to reach on foot or bike; **The Prince of Wales, Shippon** will have 20 local ales, 10 ciders, a BBQ and music over the weekend from 4th-6th May and **The Waggon and Horses in Culham** will host their first beer festival 4th-7th May with live music over the weekend.

The Old Anchor Inn will celebrate the Queen's Jubilee between 2nd-5th June with a beer, BBQ and music festival. This is the first beer festival since the change of management last year. This pub is now hosting many live music events including an eclectic open acoustic music session every Monday evening.



Live music events of many different styles also take place regularly in many other Abingdon pubs including **The White Horse** and **Stocks Bar** in addition to those already mentioned.

All in all Abingdon On Thames is becoming a really nice place for beer festivals, real ale and music events.

Abingdon Spring Head Rowing Event will take place on 15th April, hosted by the local Rowing Club at Rye Meadow - alongside the Thames. Abingdon Traditional Morris Dancers will lend a traditional feel to the event On the day hot and cold refreshments with an organic BBQ and homemade cakes will be available washed down with **Loose Cannon** Beers (if the morris men have not drunk it all!). For more information see www.abingdonrc.org.uk

There is hope for **The Nags Head** on the Bridge. Recently there has been talk of the pub reopening. A Spirit Pub Company spokesperson told us: "We can confirm that we have decided to sublet the Nags Head and have agreed terms with a local operator. We expect the arrangement to be finalised over the coming months and following a substantial investment we would hope to see the pub opened later in the year."

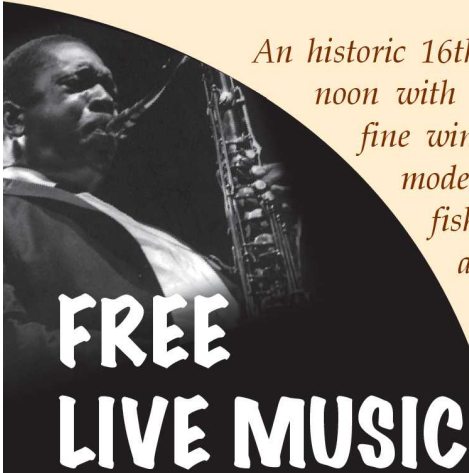
The Punch Bowl, which has suffered from disruption during the renovation of the County Hall, will be getting some updated signage and redecoration soon. This pub has a unique historic two bar layout with a small quiet panelled snug bar where locals can meet for a quiet chat, and a busy more active front bar with juke box.



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Beer Festival Helper's Trip to Sheffield

Photographs by Michael Sibbald

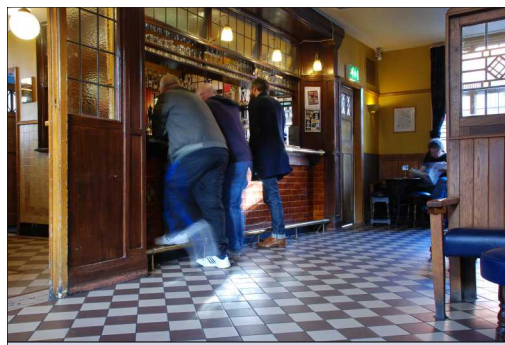


Each year a trip is organised as a thank you to the many hard working volunteers at the Oxford Beer Festival. This year the trip was to Sheffield, with a stop off in Rugby on the way home. With 16 recommended pubs in Sheffield, it was not possible to visit them all.

The Harlequin had a good range of mainly local beers. The legendary Kelham Island Tavern was the first pub ever to be awarded CAMRA national pub of the year in successive year. The Red Deer was found in a quiet side street, but still offered plenty of beer. Another pub of note was The Bath Hotel with its historic 1930's interior featured in CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors.



The Kelham Island Tavern, part of CAMRA folklore



Historic 1930's interior at The Bath Hotel



A beer for everyone in The Shakespeare Hotel

It was interesting to to see the former Whitbread Exchange brewery which closed in 1993. Unfortunately we passed The Hare & Hounds pub which was boarded up, another casualty of the 16 pubs that are closing each week in this country.

On the way home, the coach stopped in Rugby for an hour, which included the Merchants Inn, which was a good place to wind down in, and could easily

be mistaken for a working museum with an assortment of pub signs, old beer bottles and a Watneys Red Barrel, thanks to CAMRA, now a thing of the past!

These annual trips are free to Beer Festival Volunteers, and is an incentive to give up some time to help out at the next Oxford beer festival in October.



Mainly Local Beers in The Harlequin



Winding down in The Merchants Inn, Rugby

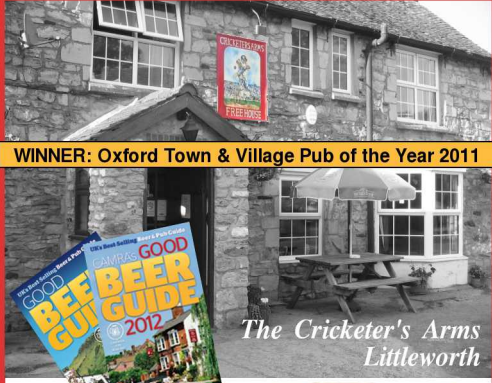
Cricketers Arms Festival Review

The Cricketers Arms in Littleworth is Oxford CAMRA Town & Village 2011 pub of the Year, and was the first pub in our area to be awarded LocAle accreditation. Stuart Bull, the landlord excels at finding brand new beers from local breweries. The recent Beer & Sausage festival on the weekend of February 17th-19th was no exception...

We were treated to ales supplied by brand new breweries **Two Cocks** (Newbury), **Aylesbury Brewhouse, XT** (Long Crendon), with return visits from **Bellingers** (Grove), **The Complete Pig** (Britwell Salome) and **Sherfield** (Sherfield on Loddon), plus old favourites **Patriot** (Whichford), **Compass** (Oxford) and **Loddon** (Dunsden Green).



There were also local Ciders from **Tutts Clump** and a 7.5% dry cider from **Long Crendon Manor**; ten Varieties of Sausage from Cricks of Wheatley, Lincolnshire, The Crazy Bear Stadhampton and The Complete Pig, plus their Pork Pies.

The Beer of The Festival went to XT FOUR, with Loddon Forbury Lion, XT NINE, Aylesbury Brewhouse Twisted Bine and Loddon Hocus Pocus all being highly commended. The first sausages to sell out were Pork & Apple from Cricks and The Crazy Bear Oxford Sausages. The Pork Pies were all gone by Saturday afternoon.



WINNER: Oxford Town & Village Pub of the Year 2011

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The CAMRA Oxford, Witney & Abingdon Pub Guide

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The Headington Beer Festival*



Oxford CAMRA pub of the year
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Brewery News



Loose Cannon sells a quarter of a million pints of beer

Abingdon has a long history of brewing beer, from the 800's when monks at Abingdon Abbey brewed gruit ale, and the numerous breweries that existed during the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries reduced to the Morland brewery, which Greene King closed in 1999 leaving Abingdon devoid of commercial brewing until Loose Cannon started in 2010.

Loose Cannon's beers are enjoyed by local people who are proud to drink quality beer made locally in Abingdon; and visitors or tourists who want to try something local to where they are visiting and not be presented with the same national beer brands they'd get at home.

In the current financial climate it is an amazing achievement for Loose Cannon to have sold a quarter of a million pints of beer in the short time since they started, and we look forward to helping

them drink the next quarter million pints.

On Wednesday 7th March from 7pm-9:30pm Loose Cannon held their first tour of the brewery. The event was fully booked and everyone had a great evening. The tour costs £15 which includes food, beer samples and a talk about the brewing process. Food is provided by Throwing Buns and included a Dark Horse chocolate cake, which was well received. The tours are on the 1st Tuesday of every month. Booking a place is recommended.

On the day the new membership scheme was launched: you can buy a years membership for £50 which includes 1 pint glass, 1 t-shirt, 10% off all beer purchases, and 3 tours for 3 people per year.

Loose Cannon will be the Official beer seller at Abingdons Jubilee Parties and they will also be sponsoring the wristbands.

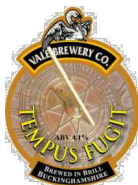
Vale Brewery Monthly Specials

The Vale monthly special brews are unique brews with David Renton and Simon Smith experimenting with different hop and malt combinations.

In April they have **Longitude**, a 4% straw coloured bitter with hops from three different time zones. A fruity and floral aroma is followed by a clean fresh taste and finishes with a slightly sweet malty flavour.

April 23rd is St George's day and will see the return of 4.6% special brew **St George's V' Ale**.

May swiftly follows with **Tempus Fugit** a 4.1% tawny coloured bitter, and looking ahead are several national events that will be celebrated with a special brew.



In late May they will have available **Diamond Reign** ready for the early June Jubilee celebrations, the Euro 2012 football is marked with **Two Halves** and then Team GB are supported in the Olympics by **Decathlon** a beer brewed with 10 different UK hops.

Spring Gold has gained a national listing for April and May with Punch Taverns. This 4.6% Golden ale will be the first Vale beer to appear with this pub group, so look out for this and treat yourself to a local brew.

May is CAMRA Mild month and **Black Swan Mild** will be available on draught. This favourite has been selected for several beer tastings, often in bottle-conditioned form.



XT Brewery

The brewery shop is now open every Saturday from 9:30am until 12pm at the brewery at Notley farm, Long Crendon near Thame. An open day will be held on Saturday 19th May, to which they would be delighted to see local CAMRA members and other real ale enthusiasts.

The Oxford Brewers Group have been invited to design the XT Jubilee special beer. The group (www.oxfordbrewers.com) are craft brewers in the Oxford area who brew their own beer at home. With the quality and range of ingredients available to craft



brewers thanks to people like Rob the Malt Miller in Didcot (www.themaltmiller.co.uk), and the lack of commercial pressure, the quality can exceed that of large breweries and allow them to experiment and create beers in styles that are often not found commercially or to recreate historic beer styles. XT have set some guidelines, as 4000 pints of this beer are going to be made and sold in pubs, beer festivals and garden fetes, it must not be too unusual for people's palettes. It looks like it will be a pale summery beer, but expect an interesting twist.

XT are also doing a collaborative brew with Thame Brewery, to make a strong dark porter for the Banbury beer festival.

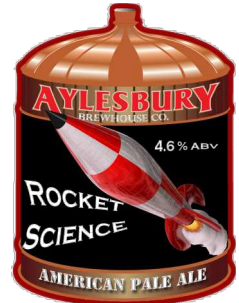
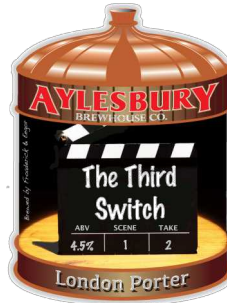
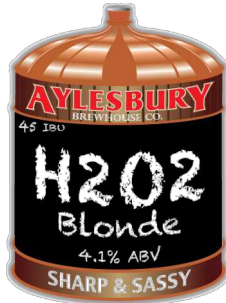
Aylesbury Brewhouse

7.30 am, late February at the Hop Pole in Aylesbury, saw Roger Protz head for the Brewhouse Mash Tun rather than his laptop. Having opened the Aylesbury Brewhouse in December 2011 Roger was back, this time to brew a beer to a style of his choice.

So a traditional 19th century India Pale Ale was his choice, at about 7% ABV. This was a combined effort by Roger, David Renton and Simon Smith. To match the IPA journey to India this will be matured for three months before bottling or being available on cask. Something to look forward to with anticipation.

Messrs Smith and Renton continue to challenge with the Aylesbury Brewhouse beers and also the names.

Coming up they have a Blonde 4.1% beer named **H2O2**, sharp and sassy. **Rocket Science** an American Pale Ale at 4.6% and a London Porter brewed by the brewers under the guise of Froaderick and Eegor **The Third Switch** at 4.5%.



At Easter **the Hop Pole** and Aylesbury Brewhouse host their ever popular beer festival. The official opening dates are Thursday 5th to Sunday 8th April with an exclusive preview evening for Beer Club members on Wednesday 4th April

There will be 30 Real Ales over the weekend and 8 scrumpy ciders. Along with some Vale and new Aylesbury Brewhouse beers will be beers that have not been seen often in this area from Silhill Brewery, Hardknott, Kirby Lonsdale, Little Valley, Kissingate and Kent Brewery. Full details can be found at www.yourround.co.uk

Food is available all weekend including sausages from a family butcher in Royal Wootton Bassett. There will be live music on Friday and Saturday from 9pm.

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Abingdon

Shop & Brewery

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£6.10

£9.15

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Our shop beer is sold bright and ready to drink

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www.lcbeers.co.uk
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The Kings Head & Bell



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The Queen's Diamond Jubilee

2nd - 5th of June

Garden party, BBQ, Mini beer festival
Live music on the patio.

The Olympics

27th July - 12th August

All Olympic events shown on multiple screens
throughout the pub. BBQs every weekend

Euro 2012

8th June - 1st July

Live games shown on the patio,
BBQs on all England matches.

The Summer Beer Festival

24th- 27th August

28 local ales, 10 ciders & British wine.
BBQ's & live music

Wimbledon

25th June - 8th July

All matches live from the patio,
BBQs on key matches.

We hope to see you soon!



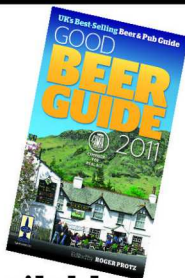
10 East St. Helens Street, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 5EA, 01235 525 362, www.kingsheadandbell-abingdon.com

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- 10 hand pumps.
- We are in the 2011 Good Beer Guide.
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- Quiz Night Wednesday 9pm.



Only pub in Oxford run by an Oxford brewery.
Nominated for CAMRA Oxford Pub of the Year 2010.
10% off food/drink for CAMRA members 3pm-7pm.

www.royalblenheim.co.uk

Oxford Beer Festival Logo Design Competition



The 15th Oxford Beer Festival is planned to take place from Thursday 11th to Saturday 13th October, subject to budget approval by CAMRA HQ.

We are looking for submissions for this year's festival LOGO. The design should be in three colours for glass printing, but also suitable to be printed in black on white or white on black for t-shirts.

Previous year's logos can be seen on www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/festival2011 for inspiration and around this article.



BRAKSPEAR
the oxfordshire beer



Please send entries by email to editor@oxfordcamra.org.uk before the closing date on 31st May.




National Beer Scoring System




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

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

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

 Submitting scores online at www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/members Login with the same details that you use on the national CAMRA website (membership number and password). Once logged in you can submit your scores.

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

You can also pick up scoring cards at branch meetings or in some pubs (check the back of the holder where you picked up this copy of the drinker), which you can hand in at a branch meeting.

0 UNDRINKABLE

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

1 POOR

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

2 AVERAGE

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

3 GOOD

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

4 VERY GOOD

Excellent beer in excellent condition.

5 PERFECT

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

Oxford CAMRA Branch Diary



Sat 21st April, 10am-6pm

Rural Minibus Trip

Lechlade and villages. See minibus panel below.

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

CAMRA Committee Meeting

Old Anchor, Abingdon

For Oxford branch committee members only.

Tue 1st May, 7:30pm-9:30pm

Oxford CAMRA Branch Meeting

Kings Arms, Kidlington

For all CAMRA members.

Sat 19th May, 11am-7pm

Rural Minibus Trip

Culham area. See minibus panel below.

Thu 24th May to Sun 27th May

Trip to Antwerp

To sample the delights that this fine city can offer, especially on the beer front. The plan is to depart on Thursday 24 May and return on Sunday 27 May, travelling by Eurostar and staying in a central location at the Internationaal Zeemanshuis Antwerpen.

Please contact Matt Bullock for more information by emailing theoxfordrinker@yahoo.co.uk

Sat 26th May, 12:15pm-6pm

Pub Walk - Newbridge, Northmoor and Standlake

Location: Rose Revived, Newbridge, OX28 7QD

5 mile walk with up to 5 pubs.

Meet at the Rose Revived, Newbridge, at 12.15.

Bus from Oxford is the 11.13 S1 from stop A3 in George Street (changing in Witney). Bus from Witney is the 12-noon X15 from Market Square stop A. People travelling from Abingdon can get the 10.51 X15 from Stratton Way stop A1, direct to the pub, but will have 50 minutes to kill in the pub waiting for the Oxford/Witney contingent to arrive.

Wed 6th June, 7:30pm-9:30pm

Oxford CAMRA Branch Meeting

Location: TBC

Branch Meeting, Venue to be decided at April branch meeting. Check online diary or May What's Brewing for location.

Sat 23rd June, 11am-7pm

Rural Minibus Trip

Location: TBC, See minibus panel below

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

Rural Minibus Pub Survey Trips

To enable the branch to monitor the Wild West and other country parts of our area a programme of mini-bus trips on Saturdays will be run aiming to visit 7-8 pubs per trip. The cost per trip is £5.

The first trip will be on Saturday April 21st departing Abingdon 10am and The Lamb & Flag 10:30am. It will travel to The Crown Inn (home of Halfpenny micro brewery) at Lechlade then via Kelmscote, Filkins, Langford, Alverscot, Clanfield, Brize Norton [Plane spotting] and time allowing North Leigh

The Second trip on May 19th will follow the Thames from Abingdon to Culham, Clifton Hampden, Burcot, The Baldons, Cuddesdon and Wheatley, departing Lamb & Flag 11am and Abingdon 11.30am

Further dates will be: June 23rd, July 21st, August 18th, September 15th, November 17th and December 15th (to include Town & Village Pub of the Year Presentation).

Note that starting times from May will be 11am and 11:30am. The May 19th trip will be organised by Chris Hunter

For details of seats (the first 15 will travel) contact Tony G at anthony4177@btinternet.com and 01865461196 . Mob 07588181313 .

Highlights of March Branch Meeting

20 members attended at the New Inn, Witney.

The Pub Campaigning Group had decided that they will object to any proposal to close a pub. People are in place to monitor planning applications but need to know what is happening from all sources as early as possible. The group now has its own email address pubsgroup@oxfordcamra.org.uk and if you hear anything let them know.

The committee was two officers short. Christopher Chris-Moore volunteered for the position of Membership Secretary and Caroline Wingate offered to take on Branch Younger Members contact again. These two were duly co-opted onto the committee, with thanks.

CAMRA is promoting Mild month in May. Search out any milds in the area, encourage your friends to try, and ask your local landlord to put on a barrel. There is a list of available Milds on the CAMRA website.

We heard about the Grapes in George Street reopening under Bath Ales, the Boat at Thrupp had somewhat surprisingly reopened under a temporary manager, the Swan at Islip had been sold and looks like it may become an Italian restaurant, the Red Lion at Aston had closed, and the Jolly Postboys no longer had real ale.

Steve Lawrence, Secretary Oxford Branch CAMRA



Beer Festival Diary

Thursday 5 - Sunday 8 April

Hop Pole Beer Festival

The Hop Pole Inn, Bicester Road, Aylesbury
30 beers plus 8 ciders
01296 482129
www.hoppole.co.uk

Thursday 5 - Tuesday 10 April

Woodman Easter Beer Festival

New Yatt Road, North Leigh, nr Witney
18 beers plus 6 ciders & perries
01993 881790

Friday 6 - Sunday 8 April

Big Bournemouth Beer Festival III

BIC Purbeck Hall, Bournemouth International Centre, Exeter Road, Bournemouth
www.bic.co.uk

Friday 6 - Monday 9 April

Broad Face Easter Beer Festival

Bridge Street, Abingdon
01235 524516
www.thebroadface.co.uk

Saturday 7 – Tuesday 10 April

Spring Cider Festival

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

Thursday 12 - Mon 15 April

The Kings Arms, Kidlington Beer Festival

4 The Moors, Kidlington, Oxfordshire, OX5 2A
Starts 6pm Thursday
Pig roast on Saturday
01865 373 004

Friday 13 – Saturday 14 April

Coventry Beer Festival

Coventry Rugby Football Club, Butts Park Arena, Butts Road, Spon End, Coventry
90+ beers plus ciders, perries & country wines
www.covnwca.org.uk

Thursday 19 - Saturday 21 April

Turf Tavern Beer Festival

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

Friday 27 - Saturday 28 April

21st Chippenham Beer and Cider Festival

Olympiad Leisure Centre, Monkton Park, Chippenham

Advance ticket purchase advised

– see website

www.nwwiltscamra.org.uk

Thursday 4 - Sunday 6 May

Prince of Wales Beer Festival

60 Barrow Rd, Shippon, Abingdon, OX13 6JQ
01235538546
20 local real ales, 10 ciders, BBQ and Music

Friday 4 - Saturday 5 May

34th Bath Beer Festival

Widcombe Social Club, Widcombe Hill, Bath (note new venue)
48 beers plus cider & perry
“Book early to avoid disappointment” – see website
www.bathandbordercamra.org.uk

Wednesday 2 - Sunday 6 May

18th Reading Beer & Cider Festival

King's Meadow, Napier Road, Reading
500 beers, 200 ciders & perries
500 foreign beers & English wines
www.readingbeerfestival.org.uk

Thursday 3 - Monday 7 May

Wolvercote Beer & Sausage Festival

The Red Lion, Godstow Rd, Wolvercote, Oxford
01865 552722
www.theredlionoxford.com

Friday 4 - Monday 7 May

Long Itchington Beer Festival

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

Friday 4 - Monday 7 May

May Bank Holiday Beer Festival

Waggon & Horses, Abingdon Road, Culham, nr Abingdon
01235 525012

Friday 11 May - Sat 12 May

West Hendred Beer Festival

Village Hall, West Hendred, OX12 8RP
www.westhendred.net

Thursday 10 - Saturday 12 May

Banbury Beer Festival

TA Centre, Oxford Road, Banbury
100+ beers plus cider & perry
www.northoxfordshirecamra.org.uk

Friday 18 - Sunday 20 May

White Hart Beer Festival

The White Hart, St Andrew's Road, Headington, Oxford
35 beers and ciders
01865 761737

Friday 18 - Monday 21 May

Cherry Tree Beer & Cider Festival

Cherry Tree Inn, High Street, Steventon, nr Abingdon
20 beers plus 3 ciders
01235 831222
www.cherrytreesteventon.co.uk

Saturday 19 May

Newbury Racecourse Beer Festival

01635 40015
www.newbury-racecourse.co.uk

Saturday 19 - Sunday 20 May

North Cotswold 4th Ale & Steam Weekend

Winchcombe Station, off Becketts Lane, Greet, nr Cheltenham
Bar open 11 - 7:30 Saturday, 11.5.30 Sunday
24 beers plus ciders
www.northcotswoldcamra.org.uk

Thursday 24 - Saturday 26 May

Northamptonshire Beer Festival

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

Thursday 31 May - Sat 2 June

16th Southampton Beer Festival

The Guildhall, West Marlands Road, Southampton
90+ beers plus ciders, perries & foreign beers
Advance ticket purchase advised
www.southamptonbeerfestival.org.uk

Friday 1 – Saturday 2 June

Wallingford Blues and Beer Festival

Regal Centre, off St Martin's Street, Wallingford
www.bluesandbeer.co.uk

Monday 4 - Tuesday 5 June

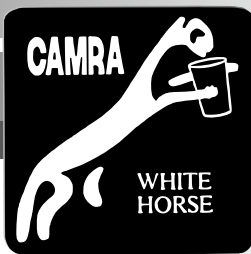
Old Anchor Beer Festival

Old Anchor Inn, St Helen's Wharf, Abingdon
01235 533862

www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/festivals

White Horse Branch of CAMRA

www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk



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

White Horse Branch Social Diary

Wednesday 11th April, 19.30

Presentation of Pub of the Year combined with New Members Evening and Beer of the Festival for Wantage 2011.

The Shoulder of Mutton, 38 Wallingford Street, Wantage. The winning Beer was from Dark Orse Brewery in Lambourn and a beer from Dark Orse will be available for all to sample.

Tuesday 17th April, 19.45

Branch Meeting

The White Hart – Fyfield

Saturday 28th April

Wantage Beer festival 2011 Staff trip to Chippenham Beer Festival

All 25 places for festival tickets taken.

Sunday 6th May

Reading Beer Festival Social.

Meet at the Locale bar at 13.00.

For more information about breweries, pubs, events and news in our area, Visit our website:
www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk

White Horse CAMRA Pub of the Year

Liz Boden reports



The Shoulder of Mutton in Wantage is this year's White Horse CAMRA Pub of The Year.

Landlord Peter Fowler heard the news at the The White Horse CAMRA's AGM at The North Star in Steventon on 20th March.

"I went into that meeting thinking I might be a contender but was overwhelmed when it was announced I'd actually won," he tells The Oxford Drinker. "It was very emotional to realise that so many people had found this a home from home."

Peter took on The Shoulder of Mutton in October 2010: "I knew it had potential. It would take a lot of work and a lot of money but I thought I could turn it round. And it's proved worth the gamble."

Less than 17 months later he has extended the real ales from three hand pumps to ten. Most of the beers are from local breweries and the turnaround is fast, so punters have an ever-evolving range to choose from.

Vegetarian and vegan food is also a feature and no meat is sold at The Mutton. Peter says: "There's a synergy between real ale, vegetarian food and folk music. And a lot of our customers are women who are equally happy coming in for coffee, a pint or whatever."

Andy Crawford, a regular, says: "It's excellent beer – the best in Wantage. And there's a good mix of people. There aren't many pubs where you get belly-dancing, folk music and a barber's shop quintet all washed down by a

pint of Butts Barbus barbus."

Peter, who brews his own Betjeman beers, started home-brewing in 1974 and has honed the craft over the years. He says: "Because I'm a brewer I understand beer and how it should be served."

Ultimately, he says, he may build a brewery on the premises but for now he "cuckoo brews" his own beers at Loddon Brewery in Dunsden.

"It's very late in life to take on so much. And I'd really like to establish this as quickly as possible," says Peter. "But I'm very happy I've got so far along the way in such a short time towards reaching my goal."



Peter Fowler with Branch Chairman Neil Crooke (left) and Committee Member John Rees

On the 12th Day of Christmas...

Dick Bosley



With friends like these...

Regular readers of the Oxford Drinker will be aware that my friends and I tend towards walks over many miles that involve numerous pubs. Well here is a tale that only involves one pub.

The setup

"Dick – I'm doing a 15 mile sponsored walk. Can we do some practice strolls?" said my friend Andrew. Well; 7 miles each way to the Royal Oak in Wantage seemed an excellent route and so off we went. Foolishly after a couple of pints of Barbus Barbus we also decided that the advertised 10 mile Rotary Club sponsored walk could be a sensible part of his training regime. Stopping on the way home for a pint at the North Star (OK - I lied about the only one pub) a plan was confirmed. On the bright side our plan included numerous trips to the Royal Oak to try to get more information from the infamously lackadaisical landlord, Paul Hexter, (and for more pints of the excellent Barbus).

The team

When push came to shove the only fools prepared to do the walk were John (the navigator) Clark, sagacious Andrew Kerr, myself (village idiot) Dick and the ever willing borderline collie - Dill the dog,

On the day

My initial idea of walking to Wantage was scuppered by looking out of the window to see that the rain was persisting down and so Jo kindly gave us a lift to the start point - Wantage Cricket Club. Signed in, numbered, mapped and, with what could not in any way be described as keenness, we set off.

Stupid comment No 1

We had to climb several hills before we reached the Ridgeway where, stooping to throw the ball for Dill, I noted – and said – that the rain had nearly stopped. We then proceeded for several miles through what is best described as an icy monsoon . Luckily John didn't comment on this for 960 yards – yes he was counting his steps while we were counting our blessings that he was quiet.

Stupid comment No 2

A welcome downhill stretch, with the wind behind us, led us to a check point at 'Lands End' where a kind rotarian offered a can of Bass. After what seemed like interminable debate of almost 7 seconds we accepted. Whilst drinking this John noted that at such a remote location you wouldn't want to be caught here in snow. We set off again, with the rain becoming snow and so we climbed back to the Ridgeway path into the teeth of a blizzard.

Stupid comment No 3

'I think the snow is easing off' said Andrew as we approached Betterton... well you don't need me to tell

you what happened next.

By now I had realised that my waterproofs were failing in one important aspect and that my boots were leaking. I had also found the capacity of my waterproof socks – not I hasten to add in an incontinent way, but because I was sloshing around an extra half pint with every step. Even the blooming dog was shivering!

Stupid comment No 4

"See you next year" the bedraggled trio chorused leaving the cricket club. "Woof" said the newly sensible Dill. During the short stop at the club the cold had really set in and the side effects of a cold can of beer were beginning to be felt. Reaching the Royal Oak I doubted my frozen fingers could undo the necessary buttons but none of customers I asked were willing to help – they couldn't see the point. To be honest I was so cold neither could !! I can't find the words to say how welcome Lesley was with a picnic, dry clothes and the offer of a lift home... after a couple more pints I hasten to add.

The encore

After a nice long soak in a hot bath for me bloody Dill was ready and waiting for another walk.

Encore un fois

I refer you to stupid comment No 4.



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*Web: www.beerfestivalequipment.co.uk
Email: john@beerfestivalequipment.co.uk*

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New seasonal beers and new pub in Banbury



The White Horse Brewery have a new seasonal 4 beer range for 2012 to supplement their 4 all year and 3 occasional beers.

The full range for 2012 is:

Year Round Beers:

- White Horse Brewery Bitter 3.7%
- Wayland Smithy 4.4%
- Village Idiot 4.1% ABV
- Guv'nor 6.5%

Seasonal Beers:

- White Horse Champion the Wonder Horse 4.5% ABV – January to March
- White Horse “Hi Ho Silver” 4.3% ABV – April to June
- White Horse “Horse Rustler” 5.4% ABV – July to September
- White Horse War Horse 4.9% ABV – October to September

Occasional Beers:

- Black Beauty (Mild) 3.9% - May
- Black Horse Porter 5.0% - November
- Rudolph the Red Nosed White Horse 4.8% - December

In addition to Good Beer Guide listed and shortlisted for Oxford CAMRA Pub of the Year, **The Royal Blenheim** in Oxford they have now taken over the lease of the **Buck and Bell** in Banbury from Everards. Opened in March after refurbishment, the pub has been renamed '**The White Horse at Banbury Cross**'.

Another notable change at the brewery is the opening of a brewery shop Mon to Sat selling White Horse products and beers from other brewers.



We sell polypins and bottles direct from the brewery, Mon-Fri.

For any enquiries please call:

01367 718700

or email

fiona@whitehorsebrewery.com

WHITE HORSE BREWERY

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



www.whitehorsebrewery.com

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BAINTON Beer Lover Rides BIKES It's all about the Pub Bike

Kevin Moreland, www.baintonbikes.com

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

It's fair to say that I enjoy drinking beer, riding and tinkering with bikes and whilst I like all aspects of these pastimes I do have my favourites, which normally depends on my mood and circumstance. I'm lucky enough to own a variety of bikes, and for obvious reasons one of my favourite bikes is my Pub Bike.

These are the glorious understated, simplistic bikes that everyone should own.

Now a pub bike takes many forms but it is fundamentally a bike dedicated to taking you to and from the pub, it should be a simple no fuss bike, requiring the minimum amount of maintenance and be of a low value; you shouldn't be too worried about misplacing it.

Back in October, whilst at work I stumbled across an abandoned rusty Dutch bike frame, built in traditional methods using lugs. This soon became my project pub bike.

Using Nitromors I stripped the paint from the lugs and carefully painted the main frame tubes with a can of hammered effect Hammerite paint.

Wanting as low maintenance bike as possible I built my pub bike into a single speed, with a coaster brake (pedal back), no brake or gear cables and hub powered dynamo light. For extra convenience I also installed a rear stay mounted lock with a chain.

The end result is a Pub Bike I can jump on anytime and have everything with me I need to ride pub to pub anytime of the day or night.

The bikes been serving me really well and there have been many, many days and nights we've been riding around town, its perfect, but there has been a question hanging over us; just how far can a Pub Bike take you?



My Pub Bike

Having plotted a route I sent out invites and arranged to meet.

We arrange to meet and start the day from Walton Street Cycles, and whilst we all wait for Dave to turn up take the opportunity to get to know each other. When Dave finally arrives we all head off following Marston Ferry Road to escape the city, it isn't too long before we escape the hustle and bustle of the city and start to enjoy the quieter roads heading towards Islip.

We stop after 11.6 km at **The Swan Inn**, Islip and lock our bikes up to one of the benches outside, when entering we realise it has shut down, unlocking the bikes we ride around the corner to **The Red Lion**, where from the two options we select a pint of **Brakspear, Oxford Gold** for the first well earned pint.



The Red Lion, Islip

Essential Equipment to take includes; Map, gloves, puncture repair kit, spare inner tubes, pump, water, tools, a decent lock, a phone and bright lights.

The route is on minor roads and is 45 km (28 miles) long.

Any type of bike is suitable but try it on your Pub Bike.



The Black Head Inn, Bletchington



My Pub Bike has so far been good, the hills have been tricky but the rusty rider is holding its own; a couple more gears wouldn't go a miss though....

Jumping back into the saddle we ride for another 4.5 km into Woodstock, where we lock our bikes up at the town Hall and stroll into **The Star Inn** and settle for a nice pint of **Wells, Bombardier**.

Leaving Woodstock behind us we head onwards and upwards and after a short ride of another 2 km we stop for a few packs of crisps and a pint of Greene King, **Old Speckled Hen** at **The White House**, Bladon, selected from the two beers on offer.

Continued on Page 24

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

Available in cask and keg.

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STRONG IN FERRY
HORIZON
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MILD AS HOPS
SWORDFISH
FARMER'S GLORY
BISHOP'S TIPPLE
St George's
Lily

Bainton Bike Ride continued

During the ride the weather has remained bleak throughout, but the company and the beer has been good, it becomes clear that the clouds aren't going to lift and we start to think of various ways home. The Thames path might not be such a good idea on my Pub Bike, admitting a slight flaw with my design we head on and stop at **The Red Lion**, Cassington; this turns out to be a great little village pub, with a welcoming atmosphere. We get a pint of **Wells, Bombardier** from the two on offer and settle down next to the log fire.

We have now ridden for 31.8 km and it's time to re-fuel again, after some nuts we bid farewell to Iain and crack on. We ride for another 3 km before stopping at the charismatic **Queens Head**, Eynsham where the landlord is having a Cornish themed weekend; serving Cornish ales and Cornish pasty dinners – great!

Selecting a pint of **Skinners, Betty Stogs** we relax and enjoy the atmosphere, when Simon drops a bombshell, he has never tried a pickled egg and crisps together. Happily rectifying the situation we enjoy the snack and decide it is time to head back into the city.

We leave the pub in the dark, and my Pub Bikes dynamo light kicks into effect. It is starting to get nippy as well, so obviously we decide the best way to keep warm for the ride back is to sneak a quick Whisky at **The Talbot Inn**, (still in Eynsham). Feeling warm we ride on into Oxford and after 10km we pull into **The Punter**, where we fill up on a pint of Greene King, **Golden Speckled Hen**.

The night is now well upon us and we head onwards into the city centre and meet up with some friends at **The Kings Arms**, and get a nice pint of **St Austell, Tribute**. We settle down in the pub and stay until closing. Luckily I have my Pub Bike and can easily leave it in town, which would be the sensible thing to do...



The Red Lion, Cassington

Summary of Cycle Parking Facilities

- The Red Lion, Islip – Garden space
- The Blacks Head Inn, Blechington – Garden Space
- The Rock of Gibraltar, Enslow – Garden Space a plenty
- The Star Inn, Woodstock – No cycle parking
- The White House, Bladon – Side and front car park space
- The Red Lion, Cassington – Leant bikes against front of pub
- The Queens Head, Eynsham – Garden space
- The Talbot Inn, Eynsham – Garden space
- The Punter, Botley – Cycle parking, canalside
- The Kings Arms, Oxford – Cycle parking on the corner

So, despite the lack of gears and the hill climbs, I'm glad to say the Pub Bike can be pushed, but it isn't an all terrain machine. Perhaps an off-road pub bike is the next project.



The Punter, Oxford

To view more photos of this ride please visit our website – www.baintonbikes.com

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

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Oxford bicycle hire specialists

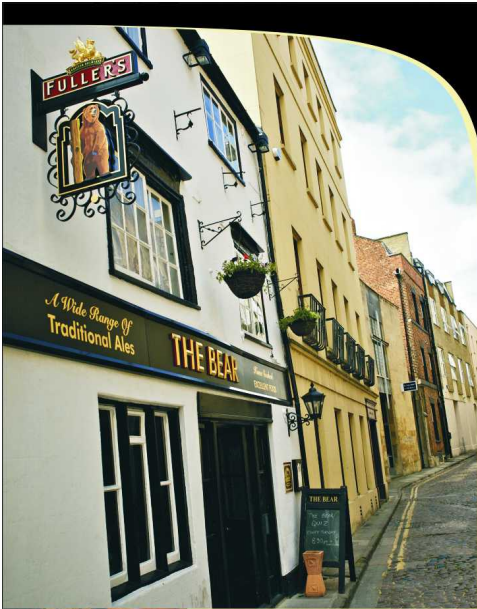
THE BEAR INN

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

New Brewing Website



Brewers' news and views are flowing freely – thanks to a new, dedicated brewing industry website which launched recently at the Rotherham Beer Festival.

Hand-Pumped, at www.hand-pumped.co.uk is Britain's first commercial site aimed at serving real ale brewing and its ancillary industries. The site brings together brewers and their customers – together with the real ale lovers and the pubs that they supply – in a single, unified web space.

Everything is catered for – from news and features, to private forums where brewers can chat to each other about their successes and problems, to public forums where drinkers and beer tickers can feedback their likes and dislikes. A user-friendly, clickable gazetteer map leads to a comprehensive database of Britain's real ale brewers and micro brewers.

Its pages offer brewers an annual subscription service to get their beers broadcast across Britain and the world! This includes one of the cheapest possible commercial web presences, for new brewers facing the sharp start-up costs of beginning their career.

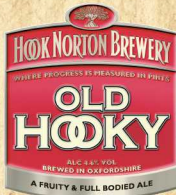
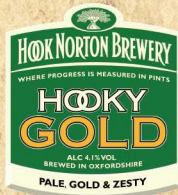
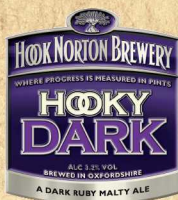
From the malt, hops and yeast, to the fermenting vessels, to the glasses, pump-clips and beer mats, Hand-Pumped aims to run the gamut of the entire industry.

The Hand-Pumped team is based in South Yorkshire, and so chose the renowned, annual Rotherham Real Ale and Music Festival to make its entry into the industry.

The site's editor is Jim Oldfield, a CAMRA member and award-winning former national newspaper journalist and editor. Jim said: "As a real ale lover all my adult life, I am delighted that we are seeing off the scourge of mass-produced beer. I want to lend whatever support I can to promoting real ale, which at last is enjoying a long-overdue renaissance".

Of Hand-Pumped, he added: "Our ongoing mission is to be the industry-standard website for the real ale industry in Britain and to serve real ale breweries and micro-breweries by being the umbrella site for this now-flourishing industry. We are a small, dedicated team but we are all professional journalists, with nearly 100 years of combined experience of delivering top-quality content – and we all care passionately about real ale."

Great real ales at your local!



Available
July - August 2012

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or visit **www.hooky.co.uk**

Pilgrimage to the Black Country



Matthew Bullock

Our annual pilgrimage to the Black Country took place in early February. Bad weather had threatened the trip, but the chosen day was bright and sunny and a full minibus load of thirsty drinkers set off from Oxford with Tony Goulding at the helm.

Once again, however, our trusty steed failed us, and after crawling for over a mile along the hard shoulder of the M42, we abandoned our broken bus on a grass verge near Wythall in Worcestershire, to continue our journey by other means. A hastily arranged taxi took us to Kings Heath, a bus then conveyed us to Birmingham and a train to Wolverhampton, where we descended thirstily upon the **Great Western**, our first scheduled stop just over one hour late. Here we enjoyed our first beers of the day, mostly **Holden's**, but sadly we had to cut short our visit in order to catch a bus to our next port of call, the **Beacon at Sedgley**, to meet our replacement minibus and also to get a couple of pints of **Sarah Hughes' Dark Ruby Mild** before the pub closed for the afternoon.

After an enjoyable hour in this Victorian gem, we set off to try to get back on schedule. We missed out Upper Gornal and headed for the **Olde Swan in Netherton**, home of the **Olde Swan Brewery**, where once again we were able to marvel at the architecture, the price of the beer and the hospitality of the locals. From Netherton, we visited the **Waterfall in Old Hill**; it's a few years since we've been here on one of these trips, but the pub is excellent, with a great choice of beer, a lively atmosphere and a very welcoming landlord, who bought us all a drink to mark the occasion of our visit!



The Waterfall's beer list

We made a detour from Old Hill to call in at the **Bull & Bladder in Brierley Hill**, as several of our group had never been there. It's **Batham's brewery** tap, and although it wrecked our schedule even further, it's always worth it for the beer and the bargain take-away rolls! Suitably fed and watered, we headed for new territory towards Stourbridge, stopping initially at **Graham's Place**, a newly re-opened pub in Wollaston that served a good range of guest beers. From here we took in more Batham's at the **Royal Exchange**, just down the street on the edge of Stourbridge, and then to a pub

which turned out to be one of the highlights of the day, the **Duke William in Stourbridge** town centre. The Duke is a smart Edwardian street corner pub, and it's been home to **Craddock's brewery** since it started brewing just under a year ago. Several of their house brews were available, most being of the pale, hoppy variety that I so like, so a very happy half-hour or so was spent here.

Our final destination was another old favourite of mine, the **Wagon and Horses in Halesowen**, and with a choice of sixteen beers, you could really spend all day here! We, however, had to leave to get home, which I'm glad to report we did without incident or further breakdown, and with the morning's shenanigans now forgotten, the consensus on the bus was that it had been a very good day.



The Great Western, Wolverhampton



Some of the pilgrims enjoy a beer



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

National Campaigning

CAMRA welcomes minimum alcohol pricing as a curb on irresponsible supermarket booze deals

- ▶ In 10 years, the price of a pub pint of beer has increased by 43%
- ▶ During the same period, the price of a pint of beer bought in the off trade has increased by a lowly 1%

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, supports the Government's calls to introduce a minimum price per alcohol unit in England and Wales. The consumer group has stated such measures will help close the gap between on and off trade alcohol pricing, and give pubs a chance to compete in the current climate at a time when 16 pubs close their doors forever across Britain every week.

CAMRA has found that in 10 years the price of a pint of beer in the off trade has increased by only 1%, whereas in the on-trade, a pub pint has soared by 43%.

Mike Benner, CAMRA Chief Executive, said:

"CAMRA is pleased that the Prime Minister is seeking to support community pubs with plans to introduce a minimum unit price for alcohol to end pubs being undercut by below cost supermarket

alcohol price promotions. In the last 10 years, the cost of a pint has increased by an incredible 43% in pubs but just 1% in the off trade – contributing to a culture where people are more likely to drink at home or on the streets.

"CAMRA would support a minimum price of between 40 and 45 pence a unit as this would prevent alcohol being sold at below cost and so help redress the growing price gap between alcohol sold in pubs and alcohol sold by the off trade. This move to end irresponsible alcohol loss leaders by the large supermarkets will encourage a cultural shift towards drinking beer socially and responsibly in well-run community pubs."

The proposal would have no impact on hard working community pubs, with the average unit price of real ale in pubs already being £1.26 and lager being £1.37.

Beer drinkers rocked by tax man swallowing a third of every pint

- ▶ Consumers fight back as CAMRA urges its members to back e-petition to scrap beer tax escalator
- ▶ Sign e-petition today at www.camra.org.uk/saveyourpint
- ▶ New increases to push up price of a pub pint by 5-10p

Following the budget on March 21st, CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, lambasted the Government for its careless approach to one of Britain's most valued institutions, the pub, as a further inflation plus 2% increase on beer will bring about yet more price rises at the bar, and further job losses in the sector.

With around £1 on every pint going to the Treasury in beer duty and VAT, CAMRA has reacted to the budget by urging its 136,000 members and all pub goers to sign an industry backed e-petition to remove the beer duty escalator. The e-petition is backed by CAMRA, the British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA), and the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA).

With the beer and pub industry supporting almost 1 million jobs and contributing £21 billion to UK GDP, CAMRA has condemned the Government for imposing punitive successive tax increases, which

will impact both breweries at production level, and drinkers at the bar.

Mike Benner, CAMRA Chief Executive, said:

"The fact Britons are forced to pay over 40% of the EU beer tax bill, but consume only 13% of the beer sold in Europe, is remarkable. British beer in a pub is so heavily hit with duty and VAT, the tax man's whirlwind hikes translate to him guzzling a third of every pint served, a shadow cast over the beer drinker depriving people of an affordable night down their local.

"Such high taxes on beer are totally unsustainable, and therefore CAMRA is launching a consumer fight back in a bid to make the Government see sense. We today urge all beer drinkers to get behind this new industry-backed e-petition to help safeguard the future of the beer and pub industry."

www.camra.org.uk/saveyourpint

A Campaign of Two Halves

Fair deal on beer tax

Save Britain's Pubs!



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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.

Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit www.camra.org.uk/joinus or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to Membership Department, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

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 (UK & EU)

Joint Membership £25 £27
 (Partner at the same address)

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I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association

I enclose a cheque for _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Applications will be processed within 21 days

12/10

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title _____ Surname _____
 Forename(s) _____
 Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

Campaigning for Pub Goers & Beer Drinkers

Enjoying Real Ale & Pubs

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

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- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
 - If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when The Campaign For Real Ale Ltd asks you to
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

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

Banbury Beer Festival 2012



Yes, it's that time of year when our thoughts turn to the next Banbury Beer Festival. This May will see the 12th one, and we're looking forward to enticing you along with the 100+ real ales, ciders and perry.

Our feature beers will come from the London area, in line with this year's Olympics. Steve Lympary (bar manager) has already sourced some beers from some of the latest and greatest breweries, with limited edition offerings from the likes of Fuller Smith & Turner and delights from some of the newer brewers. We'll also be offering our normal quota of local unusual brews.

This year the festival runs from Thursday 10th May, opening from 5pm till 11pm, then noon till midnight on Friday 11th and finally 11 till 9 on Saturday 12th.

Beers

With 90 real ales available from all round the country there should be plenty of new tastes for you to try. About a third will be from the London area, plus many brews from our local area. Beer styles range from golden ales to dark stouts and porters, and don't forget that this festival is held in May, which is Mild month – look out for our Mild Trail leaflet for more information

Cider & Perry

With the ever growing popularity of cider and perry we'll again have 20+ different varieties for you to sample, ranging from very sweet to really tart, so there should be something to suit every palate.

Location

The festival is at the central Banbury location of the TA Centre, Oxford Road OX16 9AN, just up the hill from Banbury Cross. With plenty of seating inside plus an outdoor marquee for extra covered accommodation, there should be loads of room to chill out.

Entertainment

On Thursday evening we're delighted to welcome the lovely Jasmine Faulkner with guitarist James Foley – if you were at the Hooky Beer Festival last year, then you'll know that they are not to be missed. There is no entertainment on Friday – we need to leave you enough room to drink – but Saturday afternoon sees Crude Measure performing in the marquee, and the well known Pete Watkins joins us on Saturday evening to round up the weekend.

Children

While we do not specifically cater for children, they are welcome to attend with their parents, but please keep them under your control at all times. Soft drinks are available from the food vendor.

Food

This year the food will be provided by the popular Pit Stop catering van, with its good variety of hot dishes, plus tea, coffee and soft drinks for children and nominated drivers.

Entrance Charge

Entrance is free to CAMRA members for all sessions on production of a valid membership card, and we will refund your entrance charge if you join CAMRA while you are there.



18TH READING CAMRA

Beer and Cider Festival

Kings Meadow Recreation Ground
Napier Road, Reading, RG1 8BN
(10 mins from Reading Station)



Wednesday 2 May
6 pm – 11 pm £7.00
Thursday 3 May
11 am – 11 pm £8.00
Friday 4 May
11 am – 11 pm £9.00
Saturday 5 May
11 am – 11 pm £9.00
Sunday 6 May
12 pm – 7 pm £5.00

Admission £3 Wed-Sat/£2 Sun
for card-carrying members of
CAMRA, EBCU or RURACS

Glass hire £3 (refundable)

- Around 500 real ales, 200 ciders and perries, large selection of foreign beers and English wines within 30 miles of the festival
- LocAle bar, showcasing beer from breweries
- Hosting CAMRA National Cider and Perry Awards on Friday and Saturday
- Food available at all times; plenty of seating
- Music on Friday and Saturday
- Family day Sunday with children's entertainment
- Under 18s free entry until 8 pm if accompanied by an adult
- Staff required at all times; to enrol, please visit our website at www.readingbeerfestival.org.uk or email staffing@readingbeerfestival.org.uk
- More information at www.readingbeerfestival.org.uk



Keeping In Touch

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