

Issue 24

Free *Mad Cow*

Newsletter of the
Berkshire South-East branch of CAMRA



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE



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August / October 2011

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Distribution

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Ascot: Belvedere; Jagz; Stag; Swinley; Thatched Tavern; **Barkham:** Bull; **Binfield:** Jack O'Newbury; Roebuck; Stag & Hounds; Victoria Arms; **Bracknell:** Bull; Cannie Man; Downshire Arms; Golden Farmer; Golden Retriever, Goose; Green Man; Old Manor; Peacock Farm; Red Lion; Royal Foresters; Royal Oak; South Hill Park; Silver Birch; **Crowthorne:** Prince; **Eversley:** Frog & Wicket; Tally Ho; **Farnborough North:** Prince of Wales; **Finchampstead:** Queens Oak; **Godalming:** Star; **Jealotts Hill:** New Leathern Bottle; **Knowl Hill:** Bird in Hand; **Little Sandhurst:** Fox & Hounds; **Reading:** Hobgoblin; Nag's Head; Retreat; **Sandhurst:** Dukes Head; Rose and Crown; Village Inn; Wellington Arms; **Sindlesham:** Walter Arms; **Sunningdale:** Nags Head; Royal Oak; Sunningdale Lounge; **Waltham St. Lawrence:** Bell; **Warfield:** Cricketers Arms; Plough & Harrow; Shepherd's House; Three-legged Cross; Yorkshire Rose; **Winkfield:** Cottage Inn; Old Hatchet; Squirrel's Bar; The Winkfield; White Hart; **Winnersh:** Pheasant; Wheelwright's Arms; **Wokingham:** Broad Street Tavern; Crispin; Crooked Billet; Dog & Duck; Dukes Head; Emmbrook Inn; Gig House; Hope & Anchor; Lord Raglan; Metropolitan; Olde Leathern Bottel; Loch Fyne; Queens Head; Redan; Rifle Volunteer; Ship; Three Brewers; Two Poplars; Victoria Arms; Warren; White Horse; **Woodside:** Duke of Edinburgh; Rose and Crown; **Yateley:** Highwayman.

If your pub is not listed and you would like to stock the Mad Cow, please let us know.

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Welcome to the twenty fourth edition of the Mad Cow, a quarterly publication by the Berkshire South-East branch of the Campaign for Real Ale. We've continued the new look from the last edition, and have another guest editor. Thanks go to Mike Smith, who edited the last issue, so I hope I can maintain the standards he has set.

Please continue to send in your pub news and beer festival information, but above all, tell us what you like or dislike about real ale, the breweries or the pubs that sell it.

If you have a passion for real ale, some computer skills and would like to get involved with this publication we would be pleased to hear from you. We desperately need a full-time editor, otherwise this publication may have to fold, which would be a great shame.

Cheers!

Nick Boley
Guest Editor

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The views expressed within the Mad Cow are those of individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of CAMRA.

Cover photo is of our Pub of the Year, the Jack o'Newbury, Binfield. *[Photo courtesy of Raymond Whitehead]*

Pub News

Rose and Crown, Woodside, SL4 2DP

The Rose & Crown has another new licensee, Andrew Fielder, who took over in May. The pub is still Greene King tied. They have engaged a French chef but the promotion of real ales appears lukewarm at present. Hopefully that will change in the near future, and a guest beer may appear to supplement the standard GK range!

Dukes Head, Wokingham, RG40 2BQ

The Dukes Head reopened on 9 July. The new landlady is Angela Crane, who will run the pub with licensee Daren Dowman. She said she was confident they could turn the business around and make it a success.

The couple are moving to Wokingham following the closure of their previous pub, the Anchor Inn in Godalming, Surrey, which was run by Punch until it sold the business.

The Dukes Head is a Brakspear tied house and has had 5 landlords since 2007.

Crispin, Wokingham, RG40 2AY

The presentation of the branch POTY runner-up was made at the Crispin on 16 June. Licensee Mick Musson ensured that all his staff were there for the award, which was a very nice touch. The Crispin has once again become a leading real ale venue in the area,



Landlord Mick Musson receives his award

providing a warm welcome to locals and visitors alike, and supporting local breweries and the aims of CAMRA. Mick is aiming for the top spot next year and who can say he won't make it!

The Square Bar, Wokingham, RG40 1AL

One of the few remaining pubs in Wokingham town centre previously not serving real ale, the Square Bar is now selling good beer, and local beers at that. From late July, Bingham's Twyford Tipple and Rebellion Mutiny have been available, with guest beers as well. They also organised a car show on 10 July in aid of the Help for Heroes charity. Good luck to the Square Bar, and let's hope this move really pays off for them.

Golden Retriever, Bracknell, RG40 3DR

The Golden Retriever is holding a Summer Cask Ale Selection. A series of selected guest ales will be put on one at a time during the Summer. Amongst these will be offerings from Vale, Harviestoun, St Peter's and Copper Dragon. More information on their website.

<http://www.vintageinn.co.uk/thegoldenretrieverbracknell/>

Royal Oak, Bracknell, RG12 2NN

Landlord Neil Tomlinson has moved on from the Royal Oak in Bracknell to a pub in Bisley. The new guy's name is Gareth, who is very friendly and says that he is committed to selling real ale. Hopefully another pub which may become LocAle accredited in the future.

Bull, Barkham, RG41 4TG

A new landlady has taken up residence at the Bull. Samantha started at the beginning of July with a launch party on the 8th. Let's hope she can return the Bull to the good days under Adrian and Susie – but in her own way, of course!

New Leathern Bottle, Jealott's Hill, RG42 6ET

The NLB are currently selling 2 permanent beers – Vale Black Swan Mild and Young's Bitter, plus an ever-changing guest. This makes it one of the few local pubs to sell a mild all the time! Two real ciders add to the range here. They also run themed events – a 1940s day including a beer festival on 13 August and a family fun day with beer festival on 10 September. And, of course, the well-known steam day will be on 8 October this year.

Ad2 Jack o'Newbury

Cider Talk

By Alex Agar

Since taking over as Cider Contact at the last AGM, I have started to prepare a spreadsheet about which of our pubs sell cider, and what types.

So far I have got 15 pubs on the list (about 10%) and here is my analysis of the spreadsheet

All pubs checked sell some sort of draught cider, mostly Strongbow from keg pumps.

2 pubs (Jack O' Newbury and New Leathern Bottle) have cider on hand pumps, and The Bull in Bracknell and the New Leathern Bottle serve cider on gravity.

Other brands of draught cider are Bulmer's, Aspall Suffolk, Thatcher's and Weston's.

All of the pubs checked except the Bull in Bracknell sell bottles of cider, and the brands sold are Brothers, Bulmer's Gaymers, Jacques, Kopparberg, Magners, Old Rascal and Katy (both Thatcher's), and St Helier.

Some of the bottled ciders are pear cider, which is not considered to be true cider, but I am not going to argue with the manufacturers at this time.

I would like to thank branch members (3) who have responded to my earlier request for info on cider in pubs, and to the rest of you, quote our chairman's least favourite celebrity chef (at least during the football season) "Where are you? Lets be 'avin you"

If anybody has information about cider in pubs in our area, please let me know on cider@seberkscamra.org.uk thanks.

Alex.

Remember, there is no such drink as pear cider - ask for perry!

5th Ascot Racecourse Beer Festival 30th September to 1st October 2011 - Update

By Nick Boley

Beer Festival beer buyer

Yes, I know it's a rotten job, but somebody has to do it!

The brief: Order over 260 casks of beer, at least 200 different types, try and get as many local beers as you can, and attempt to feature newer breweries.

The result: the beer list for the 5th Ascot Racecourse Beer Festival.

I have scoured the country looking for the best of British beer for the thirsty punters at Ascot on 30 September and 1 October. Well, I have scoured the internet anyway, but I have still come up with what I believe is a comprehensive and interesting list of beers.

Every year the same thing happens at Ascot. The beers that run out first can be grouped into 2 distinct categories: very pale and very dark. So I always try to get a good many pale, golden ales as well as darker, stronger stouts and porters. This is easier said than done, as many brewers only brew stouts and porters in the late Autumn and Winter, so often I have to grovel to get hold of them. However, I am pretty sure I have succeeded, and those drinkers who savour the darker brews should be in for a treat! Golden ales tend to be available more in the Summer, so again I have to grovel to make sure they keep some back for me.

This doesn't mean we neglect other beer styles. Traditional milds, bitters and best bitters will always be part of our beer scene, and are very much our beer heritage. But these days many brewers are experimenting with new styles and new ingredients and are really starting to push the envelope in terms of beer styles and flavours. American-style IPAs, black IPAs, beers brewed with New Zealand hops, the list is ever-growing.

Hopefully we have something for everyone. Our regional bar this year features beers from Yorkshire. Yorkshire has a burgeoning microbrewery scene. Pale golden beers are very much a staple there, but I have managed to find many different styles from Sheffield and

and Barnsley in the south, through Leeds, Barnsley in the south through to Huddersfield and York to Whitby in the north.

Look out for Kelham Island Pale Rider, Champion Beer of Britain in 2003, Buckden Pike, a cask lager from the Yorkshire Dales brewery, and the wonderfully-named Tabitha the Knackered, a Belgian-style style ale from Anglo-Dutch brewery of Dewsbury!

What we won't have is any beer from that iconic Yorkshire brewery, Tetley. When I joined CAMRA, Tetley was synonymous with Yorkshire real ale but, sadly, the brewery is being closed and the beer is already being brewed in that well-known Yorkshire brewing centre of...Wolverhampton.

New breweries which we are featuring for the first time include Sherfield Village, launched in May, Bingham's, Franklin's, Loose Cannon, Hopping Mad, Irving's, Plain Ales, Red Squirrel and Shotover. We also welcome back Peter Fowler, whose Pitstop beers have won the last two Beer of the Festival awards, with his new brewery, Betjeman. I will not pass comment on the name of one of his beers, Slough Bomb! Hopefully the beer will be friendlier than the poet's bombs!

Away from the beer, on Saturday 1 October, music will be provided by Adrian Edmondson and the Bad Shepherds, playing punk songs on folk instruments. The band believes the songs by the Sex Pistols, the Clash, the Stranglers, the Jam, Sham 69, the Undertones, the Buzzcocks, the Ramones, the Specials, Talking Heads, Squeeze and others bands of a similar genre are better than people remember.



Adrian Edmondson and the Bad Shepherds

Adrian Edmondson of the Bad Shepherds stated, 'The Bad Shepherds are all in training for our appearance at Ascot Racecourse - I am good for two furlongs as long as the ground is not too firm. Unfortunately, Troy Donockley is not much good over jumps but Andy Dinan goes quite quickly if you dangle free beer tokens in front of his face...'



Of course, there is more than just beer to drink at the festival. We will have a wide range of ciders and perries available too!

These come from a wide range of producers across the south of England and include local producers Salt Hill (Slough), Ciderniks (Kintbury), Tutts Clump (Newbury) and Mr Whitehead's (Hampshire). We also have the award-winning Black Dragon cider from Gwynt y Ddraig of Pontypridd, Wales.

We have a wider range of perries than previous years with 7 different perries available. And, remember folks, there is no such thing as pear cider, so please ask for perry!

We look forward to welcoming you at the 5th Ascot Racecourse Beer Festival, and hope you have an enjoyable visit. Of course, if you want to get in for nothing, you can always volunteer to work. Check out the website at:

<http://ascotbeerfest.seberkscamra.org.uk>

Ad3 Cannie Man

Landlord's Musings

By Barry Fenton

This time we welcome Jean and Phill from the White Hart in Winkfield



Q. How long have you been in the Pub Business and at the White Hart?

A. *This is our first pub and we have been here for seven years. We lived nearby and were looking for a local pub when the White Hart came on the market.*

Q. What do you most like about the Pub Trade?

A. *It's a sociable business where we are part of the community. We meet many different customers. We couldn't work behind a desk.*

Q. And the least?

A. *We run the pub ourselves, which makes the days long. Too much red tape. We hate to see our smoking customers sent outside. Indoor smoking areas could be provided.*

Q. What Real Ales are you selling today?

A. *Greene King IPA and Abbott. Also Ascot Brewery's Posh Pooch.*

Q. And how will these change over the coming weeks and months?

A. *We offer a Summer Ale. Last year it was Hammerpot's Martlet. This year we haven't yet decided. Maybe a surprise!*

Q. How important are Real Ales to your Pub?

A. *Very: Real Ales account for about 50% of our draught beers. We pride ourselves in keeping a good cellar for which we have had accreditation.*

Q. What are your impressions of CAMRA in the area?

A. *Doing a good job. We have members who we value as regulars.*

Q. What plans have you got for your Pub in the next year?

A. *More of the same really, as it is proving successful. We will restart Sunday lunchtime Jazz in the winter.*

Q. What would you like to get over to our Readers to encourage them to come to your Pub?

A. *Good, all home produced and reasonably priced food, available in the restaurant & the bar. Specials for children & vegetarians. Good wine with wine sold by the glass. Huge, child friendly, garden. Quiz night. Restaurant available for functions. Friendly ghost.*

Q. What wrong would you most like to put right in the pub trade?

A. *The unfair competition coming from supermarkets.*

Q. Which celebrity would you most like to work behind your bar and why?

A. *Pippa Middleton for obvious reasons and Robbie Williams for his cheekiness.*

Thanks for that. I will see you soon for a pint of Posh Pooch with Pippa.

Ad4 Ascot Beer Festival

Brewery News

Ascot Ales

Camberley

ascot-ales.co.uk

August's Single Hop brew will be Sorachi Ace. An American hop originally grown for the Japanese market. It imparts a lemony aroma & taste to the beer.

Red is the new black.....a new Red IPA will be available in August. It will be the most heavily hopped of any of the beers from Ascot Ales.

Sherfield Village Brewery, Sherfield on Loddon

sherfieldvillagebrewery.co.uk

This brewery was set up by CAMRA member Peter Cook and commenced brewing in May. The first beer is Hindsight, a copper-coloured 4.2% bitter. Further beers including Foursight (4.5%), Threesome (3.0%) and Pioneer Stout (5.5%) have also been brewed.



The beers are available in the Hobgoblin and the Nag's Head (both

Reading) and the Frog & Wicket (Eversley) and will be featured at the Ascot Racecourse Beer Festival.

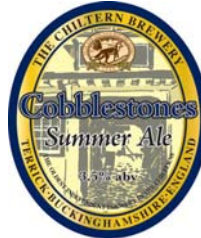
Chiltern Brewery, Terrick nr Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire

www.chilternbrewery.co.uk

To celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Brewery in 2010, George and Tom created a number of special bottled and draught ales throughout the year. These proved so popular and the brewing process so inspiring that, rather than resting on their laurels, the brothers have decided to keep developing new and exciting beers for 2011.

There are two limited edition seasonal draught ales waiting in the wings for 2011, Chiltern Gold for the summer and Winter's Ale ... well, for the winter! Chiltern Gold is made with a specialist hop which has only recently been produced in the UK and was originally grown only in the USA. It is an

Exciting innovation with exceptional taste. Chiltern Gold will be available from 1st August and Winter's Ale from the beginning of December from selected stockists and on-line through to the end of July. Chiltern Gold is a golden, light and fruity beer, which refreshes the palate with a hint of bitterness, is ideal to quench the biggest of summer thirsts!



The Brewery's superb summer seasonal draught, Cobblestones, is available now from the delightful old brewery shop in Terrick, which

is well worth a visit and The Farmers' Bar (the Brewery tap at The King's Head Inn in the heart of nearby Aylesbury).

Binghams Brewery

Ruscombe, near Twyford

binghams.co.uk

Bingham's continues to thrive, and has recently been brewing a number of new beers including a Ginger Stout.

Hammerpot Brewery

Arundel, West Sussex

hammerpot-brewery.co.uk

May and June have been very busy. The new beer the Shooting Star is selling better than any other beer they have produced to date. HPA is also being accepted well as the replacement to our White Wing. Hammerpot are going to produce a couple of batches of the award winning Bottle Wreck Porter which has been taken off their hands as soon as they thought about it and it hasn't even been brewed yet!

The Vinery Mild, made annually to support 'Mild for May', was the best they have ever produced and received excellent feedback from everyone. Martlet, named after the legless bird, is the summer beer and is available until September when they will bring on the Bottle Wreck Porter for the winter.

Two Bridges, Caversham

www.twobridgesbrewery.co.uk

Two Bridges took over their first pub last month, The Fox and Hounds in Caversham. This former free house previously sold two beers,

but is now selling four from Two Bridges as well as guest ales. It is hoped the beer range will expand further in the future.

Itchen Valley, Alresford, Hants
www.itchenvalley.com

Pure Gold won second place in the premium beer category at the Reading Beer and Cider Festival in April.

Loddon, Dunsden Green, Oxfordshire
www.loddonbrewery.com

Loddon had some very special visitors in June when part of an episode of the popular TV drama *Midsomer Murders* was filmed there. This programme is filmed in the Thames Valley, and we must look forward to this particular episode. Let's hope nobody killed off the head brewer! Apparently lead actor Neil Dudgeon (who plays DCI Barnaby) liked the beer so much he bought 18 pints to take away. Obviously a man of impeccable taste!

Windsor & Eton, Windsor, Berks
www.webrew.co.uk



Windsor and Eton have just started production of a new beer, Republika. Republika is a lager at 4.8% abv, brewed in the traditional Czech Pilsner style with help from Tomas, who owns his own brewery in Prague! This beer is meant for bottling, but if we can get a cask for Ascot, we will try!
If not, let us know what you think of it if you get the chance to try some.



The Retreat

*8 St John's St
Reading
RG1 4EH*

www.retreatpub.co.uk

*Visit our site to find which
excellent ales
we have on at the moment!*

Ad5 Plough & Harrow

Branch Diary

AUGUST

Thursday, 11th August 8pm

Queens Head, Wokingham RG40 1BP (in the garden)

Business Meeting, all members welcome

Saturday, 13th August 12 noon

Pub Crawl of Reading. Meet at the Blagrove Arms near the station.

See website for further details

Saturday, 20th August

Egham Beer Festival

See website for details

SEPTEMBER

Thursday 1st September 8pm

Crispin, Wokingham RG40 2AY

"Meet the Team" induction evening for members interested in working at the 5th Ascot Racecourse Beer Festival. If you fancy working behind the bar at Ascot, please come along.

Wednesday, 14^h September 8pm

Old Manor, Bracknell

Open Evening – come and find out more about the branch. Members and non-members welcome. Membership forms will be available!

Thursday, 22nd September 8pm

Hope & Anchor, Wokingham, RG40 2AD

Good Beer Guide 2012 Launch Party, open to all. Good Beer Guides will be available for sale to CAMRA members at a discounted price.

Friday, 30th Sept to Saturday, 1st October

5th Ascot Racecourse Beer Festival Volunteers still needed, or just come along for the racing and excellent beer.

Sat 1st October: Adrian Edmondson and the Bad Shepherds supply the music.

OCTOBER

Sat 1st October to Sun 9th October

National Cask Ale Week/Berkshire Pubs Week

Check the branch website and www.nationalcaskaleweek.co.uk for listings of local events.

Saturday 8th October, 6pm

New Leathern Bottle, Jealott's Hill

Steam rally with beer

Thursday 13th October

Venue tbc

Business Meeting, all members welcome.

Thursday 27th October

Venue tbc, Social evening, all members welcome

NOVEMBER

Thursday 24th November

Venue tbc

Ascot Beer Festival Wash up meeting – all members welcome

Any great ideas for future meetings or social events? – we would love to hear from you.

Note: The POTY presentation to the Jack o'Newbury, which had to be postponed in May, will be rescheduled – details will appear on the website when available.

[see web site for diary updates]

Branch visit to Windsor & Eton Brewery

Branch members visited Windsor & Eton Brewery in May, just over a year after the brewery started production.

Head Brewer Paddy Johnson and his team made everyone really welcome, starting the evening with the history and philosophy of the brewery (with goodly amounts of Knight of the Garter made available!), and then the party split into 2 groups. Both groups had a tour of



The gleaming fermenters

the brewing plant, with a detailed technical explanation of the brewing process and the engineering aspects of brewing, which gave a different angle on how things are done at W&E.

This was followed by a tutored tasting, where we were invited to drink their 4 beers: Knight of the Garter, Windsor Knot, Guardsman and Conqueror.

Paddy explained why each beer tasted how it did, and asked everyone to vote for their favourite beer. The results were an even split amongst the four beers, but it was hard to pick one as all four beers are wonderful. We were then invited to drink as much as we wanted of our favourite. A few hardy souls made straight for the Conqueror (a 5.0% abv Black IPA), which may have made for a few sore heads in the morning.

Thanks to Paddy and all his team at the brewery for a fantastic evening. He even waived the visit fee for us, but invited us to donate it to the Help for Heroes charity. Not one member declined this.

Picture courtesy of Nicci Evelegh



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www.the-beerwarehouse.co.uk

The Beer Festival Goer's Guide

By Simon Grist

The Summer and early Autumn are traditionally popular times to hold beer festivals. Here are some ideas of where to go locally:



August 13th: Fleet "North & South" Beer Festival

fleetlions.org.uk/beerfest

Located a few miles south of our area, this festival is organised by the Fleet Lions in aid of charity. The festival is named "North and South" signifying a taste of the North in the South of England. They advertise 28 real ales plus ciders and wines. There is a lunchtime session and an early evening session. Buying tickets in advance is recommended to avoid disappointment.



August 18th – 21th and November 3rd - 6th: Egham

eghambeerfestival.co.uk

Run by Egham United Services Club this festival offers reduced price entry for CAMRA members. It is easily accessible on direct trains from our area, and is usually distinctive for having a high proportion of those special beers that we all try to seek out. Expect around 50 real ales plus some real ciders.



September 30th – October 1st: 5th Ascot Racecourse Beer Festival

ascotbeerfest.seberkscamra.org.uk

This festival is run by your local branch of CAMRA, in collaboration with Ascot Racecourse. It features over 200 real ales, predominantly from LocAle brewers, plus a large selection of ciders and perries. A race meeting runs in parallel with the festival, with the entrance ticket covering both (discounted entry for CAMRA members).



August 13th AND September 10th: New Leathern Bottle, Jealott's Hill

newleathernbottle.co.uk

This country pub just outside Warfield will be holding two small one-day beer festivals in aid of charity. Each will feature around 15 ales and ciders, and will also include entertainment for all the family. The August event is billed as a "World War II Day", whilst the September event as "Beer, Food and Fun".



August 26th – 28th: Wokingham Festival of Food & Drink

wokinghamfestival.co.uk

For the first time, a beer festival is to run as part of the popular Wokingham Food & Drink Festival. The Wokingham Lions are organising the beer side of things in aid of charity. Information is minimal at the time of going to press, but we anticipate around 30 real ales mainly from local brewers, plus some ciders and perries.

The Beer Festival Goers Guide

... Continued



**THE WORLD'S BIGGEST
REAL ALE & CIDER FESTIVAL**



TICKETS ON SALE 22/8/11
Eighteenth
Woking
BEER
FESTIVAL

Woking Leisure Centre
Friday 11 November 6pm-11pm
Saturday 12 November
11am - 3.30pm and 6pm - 11pm

Over 70 real ales plus ciders and imported beers,
live music and Wurlitzer Organ (all sessions), food.
Each session limited admission by ticket only. Price £8 in advance.
Includes commemorative pint glass and programme.
Special group rates available. Free pint for CAMRA members.
Please note: Over 18s only.

Tickets available in advance from Woking Leisure Centre, Woking Park
or phone the credit card hotline on 01483 771122 (Mon - 7pm) seven days a week.
Please note: There is a £2 per booking surcharge for credit card / postal bookings.
Postal applications to: Woking Leisure Centre, Woking Park, Kingfield Road,
Woking, Surrey GU24 0BA.

DAE (please, cheques made payable to Woking Borough Council)
For information please telephone
01483 771122
www.wokingbeerfestival.co.uk
www.woking.gov.uk/beerfestival

Late Additions

There will undoubtedly be a number of late additions to this list that are not known to us at the time of going to press. For the latest info keep an eye on our website at seberkscamra.org.uk/localfestivals.shtml

September 10th: Newbury Real Ale Festival

newburyrealale.co.uk

A short train ride from Reading gets you to this beer festival offering over 150 ales, ciders and perries. There will also be live music and a simultaneous cricket match to watch.

October 5th – 23rd: JD Wetherspoon's

jdwrealale.co.uk

Not a conventional beer festival, but all branches of JD Wetherspoon and Lloyds No. 1 will be offering a selection of guest ales off a list of about 50 during this period.

October 27th – 29th: Twickenham Beer & Cider Festival

rcamra.org.uk/festivalnews.html

Richmond and Hounslow CAMRA are attempting to resurrect this popular festival after a 2 year absence. It closed down due to lack of volunteers to organise it, and will only go ahead if sufficient volunteers come forward – Could that be you? The location is a short train ride from our area. Details will be announced once the go-ahead is confirmed.

October 27th – 29th: Oxford Beer Festival

oxfordcamra.org.uk

A fine CAMRA beer festival held in a beautiful city with many great pubs, so why not make the trip? Expect around 140 ales plus ciders and perries. Reduced entry for CAMRA members.

November 11th – 12th: Woking Beer Festival

wokingbeerfestival.co.uk

The first thing to say is that entrance to this festival is advance booking only, and usually sells out not long after going on sale (on August 22nd this year). It is held at a sports centre about a mile from Woking station, so not particularly easy to get to either. There should be over 70 ales plus ciders and foreign beers. As this is a CAMRA festival, members can obtain a free pint. There is also the chance to check out the musical talents of Len Rawle on his Wurlitzer organ in the lower hall.

Ad 7 Broad Street Tavern

Is Your Pub Serving Your Ale As It Should Be?

Please score the pints of Real Ale that you try in our Branch Area according to the scale opposite (you may use half scores, like 3.5).

Send your scores regularly to David Goater remembering to add the date of your visit, your name and membership number.

Email

beerscores@seberkscamra.org.uk
or text to **07963 149 380**

Remember, **you** are judging the quality, so how well it is kept and served, not whether you liked that particular brew. The scores are used to help us choose our Good Beer Guide entries and local Pub of the Year.

The Current Top Five High Scoring Pubs:

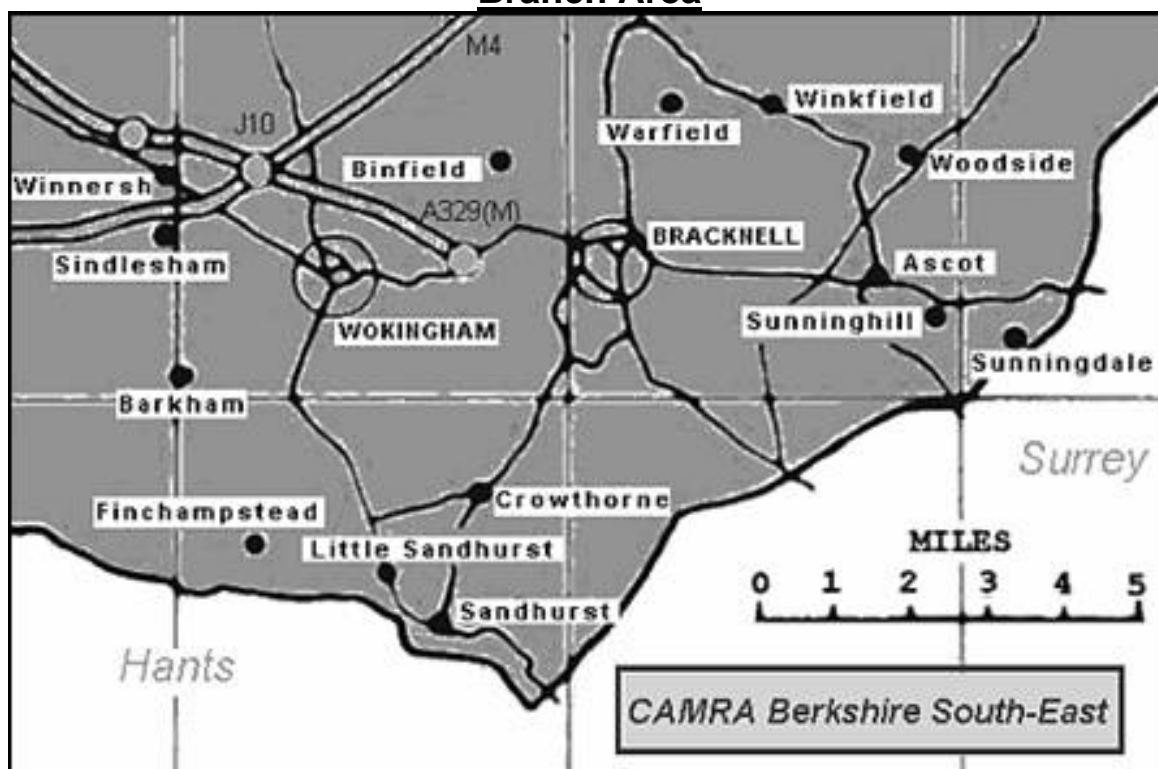
1. **Olde Leathern Bottel, Wokingham**
2. **Crispin, Wokingham**
3. **Jack o'Newbury, Binfield**
4. **Rose and Crown, Sandhurst**
5. **Duke of Edinburgh, Woodside**

0	Undrinkable No cask ale available or so poor you have to take it back or can't finish it.
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 another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.
3	Good Good beer in good form. You cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and seek out the beer again.
4	Very Good Excellent beer in excellent condition.
5	Perfect Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.

Half marks can also be awarded.

A PLEA: We need more members to send in their beer scores when they visit local pubs so that we can ensure that the pubs **CONSISTENTLY** selling the best beer can be put forward for consideration for future editions of the Good Beer Guide.

Branch Area



Ad 8 White Hart



LocAle Update

By Nick Boley

We were quite disappointed to find that the Duke's Head in Sandhurst is no longer selling a LocAle beer. They were awarded accreditation on the strength of selling a local guest beer, but on recent visits only Greene King beers are available. We do realise that it is difficult for licensees tied to a brewer such as Greene King or Fuller's to sell a local beer as a guest, but perhaps the brewers themselves should wake up to the opportunities afforded by allowing licensees to stock a local beer as a guest.

Also, disappointingly, the Three-Legged Cross in Warfield is no longer selling LocAle beer, and so our plans to accredit it have been shelved. It had been selling at least one beer from Ascot Ales, but this has not been available since the beginning of April, with more widely-available beers such as Adnam's and St Austell being sold now. Nothing wrong with those two excellent breweries but they are NOT LOCAL.

However, Squirrel's Bar, North Street, Winkfield is selling a Windsor and Eton beer permanently now. Windsor Knot and Guardsman have both been on at different times and reports have been encouraging. I tried the Windsor Knot recently and it was in fine form. We will monitor the situation there and we may have another LocAle -accredited pub soon!

The Square Bar in Wokingham has just indicated it will start to sell local beers soon, but no reports to date.

Having recently spent a few days in Gloucestershire, where so many pubs stocked local beers and had LocAle accreditation, it is so disappointing that the situation in South East Berkshire is so poor, particularly given the quality of locally-brewed beers.

Please ask the licensee at YOUR local to stock a LocAle beer if he or she doesn't do so already – and the chances are that they don't.

LocAle Brewers

Andwells – North Wanborough

Ascot Ales – Camberley

Binghams Brewery – Ruscombe

Butts – Great Shefford

Cron dall – Cron dall

Farnham Brewery – Farnham

Hog's Back – Tongham

Lod don – Dunsden Green

Rebellion – Marlow

Sherfield Village Brewery –

Sherfield-on-Lod don

Surrey Hills – Shere

Triple fff – Alton

Twickenham – Twickenham

Two Bridges – Caversham

West Berkshire – Yattendon

Windsor & Eton – Windsor

Zero Degrees – Reading

(Brew pub/restaurant)

LocAle Pubs

Ascot - Jagz

Binfield - Jack o'Newbury

Bracknell - Old Manor

Winkfield - White Hart

Winkfield - Cottage Inn

Wokingham - Crispin

Ad 9 Nags Head

From the Chair

By Nick Boley

It was very pleasing to see that our Annual General Meeting, held in June, that we succeeded in filling two important positions, Campaigns Officer and Pub Preservation Officer. Step forward Clive Doran and Barry Garber, respectively.

These are key positions. It is important that we in CAMRA continue to campaign effectively. There are a small number of key campaigns which run during the year, including Pubs Week (Berkshire Pubs Week in our area), National Cask Ale Week and Mild Month (May). Co-ordinating events for these campaigns to show CAMRA in its best light, and to interest drinkers in what we do is a vital activity and I am sure Clive will be able to do this admirably.

We are perhaps a little fortunate in this area that the number of pub closures is way below the national average. Indeed, only one pub has closed in the branch area in the last 12 months: the Duke's Head in Wokingham (and that has now re-opened). However, that is no reason for complacency. With Barry now in post, we can be more pro-active when we are aware of the possibility of a pub closing and we can do more to try and prevent closures and preserve our pubs. After all they are one of the things for which our country is rightly famous (and of which we should be proud).

We could not, however, find anyone willing to take on the role of Public Affairs Officer. Hopefully we will find someone so we can do more to persuade our elected representatives of the value of the community pub and the harm that the incessant level of tax in beer is doing.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Nick,

I completely agree with your reflections on CAMRA's 40th birthday, regarding the need for a more inclusive approach in promoting and campaigning for pubs and real ale. It really has been a campaign of two halves: in the first CAMRA succeeded in saving and popularising real ale; but the second saw CAMRA turn inwards on itself and fail to get to grips with the biggest threat to pubs which could well lead to their demise – beer tax in the on trade.

It's become increasingly obvious that well reasoned arguments from CAMRA's leaders have no influence with politicians on beer tax; the pub drinker is a cash cow to fund general taxation. Politicians will however listen to public opinion if sufficient numbers make their voices heard; as shown recently in the U-turn over forestry privatisation. CAMRA blew a huge opportunity, possibly once in a lifetime, a few years ago following Alistair Darling's inflation linked duty escalator (inflation plus 1.5% I think). The Morning Advertiser started a pub petitions campaign and CAMRA refused to back it, or to start its own.

It is only this sort of campaigning i.e. reaching out to the millions of everyday pubgoers, that can generate sufficient numbers to convince politicians. Online petitions like Axe the Tax have tried and failed (they got about half CAMRA's membership!). Consider the numbers: 650 UK constituencies, average election turnout 20,000 in each. CAMRA's membership of 120,000 works out at less than 200 per constituency i.e. 1% of the vote at most (this is why politicians ignore us). If CAMRA petitioned just 20 of the best local community pubs in each constituency, it could generate 2000 signatures – ten times the local CAMRA membership. It is these sorts of numbers, 10% of the vote, that can swing election results. This is something that local CAMRA branches could build into their normal campaigning – after all, they regularly visit these pubs anyway.

There are other big issues of concern, e.g. the alliance with Wetherspoon's which has eroded CAMRA's independence and credibility. But my overriding concern is that CAMRA appears paralysed, looking inwards and stuck in a time warp of increasingly irrelevant beer guides, beer festivals (good beer is widely available now), and esoteric arguments on what real ale is. Regarding looking forward to the 50th birthday, there may well not be any pubs to celebrate in unless CAMRA starts looking out to the general public, rather than in. I'm afraid the buck stops with the CAMRA leaders who are showing no leadership or direction at present; I understand these guys are paid – they should be paid on results.

Adrian Evans

Ad 10 Ascot Ales

Letters to the Editor (continued)

Dear Mad Cow Editor.

As a resident of Crowthorne, I was inspired by the excellent landlord interviews in the Mad Cow to speculate how things could be in Crowthorne. This resulted in an interview with a fictional landlord from a fictional pub.

We welcome Bert and Mavis from the "Welcome Inn."

Q. How long have you been in the Pub Business and at the Welcome Inn?

A. We are new here but have been in the trade for 15 years.

Q. What do you most like about the pub trade?

A. Making my customers happy and coming back for more. (And making money from my success.)

Q. And the least?

A. Having to close and turning people away.

Q. What Real Ales are you selling today?

A. Windsor & Eton's Knight of the Garter, Twyford Tipple and Thornbridge's Jaipur.

Q. How will this change?

A. We will regularly change, bringing in new beers, mostly local. We will talk to our customers to understand what they want.

Q. How important are Real Ales to you?

A. Ales and food are what will make or break me.

Q. What are your impressions of CAMRA.

A. Don't these guys have homes to go to?

Q. What plans have you for the future?

A. Regular Guest Ales. Develop traditional food menu sourced locally.

Q. How would you encourage our readers to visit your Pub?

A. Come and try our Beers, our Pork Pies & Scotch Eggs. We say "hello" to everybody who enters the pub, and try to remember our customers' "usual" drink. All our staff are trained to smile. No machines or juke box.

Q. What wrong would you like to put right in the pub trade?

A. Prohibit pub owners from stipulating what products their licensees should sell.

Q. Which celebrity would you like to employ in your pub?

A. President Mugabe, Fred Goodwin and Princess Beatrice.

Not too much to ask, surely! Compare this with the reality.

(Name & Address supplied)

Dear Editor,

I went to one of our well respected real-ale pubs recently, taking my wife out to lunch locally on a weekday. We'd not been there before. Outside was a notice "Home Cooked Food".

We found no customers but joy - 7 well known bitters. (Let's leave aside the question of whether a pub with seemingly few customers should be encouraged to sell 7 bitters. Perhaps it is full in the evenings and thus there is a good turnover of barrels.)

The bar-person looked up from the newspaper and smiled. I said "Do you do food at lunchtimes?" Answer "Well I'm on my own but I might be able to get you a light snack". I said we were looking for something more substantial but we had some beer instead. The beer was good.

The hand-drier was broken in the loo (which was dirty) and there were no paper towels. We were not offered the newspaper to read. I put our empty beer glasses back onto the bar (for which I was NOT thanked) and we moved on to somewhere more welcoming.

My point is that in our grading of pubs for the national Good Beer Guide, should CAMRA be thinking of more than just beer?

David Young

Editor's comment: Good Beer Guide selection is done by shortlisting pubs on beer quality, then members vote for those using criteria other than beer. However, we are the Campaign for Real Ale, so beer quality does take some precedence.

Ad 11 Duke of Edinburgh

Sheffield Ramblings

By Nick Boley

I try to get along to CAMRA's National AGM and Members' Weekend when I can, but I have missed a few lately. However, I did manage to get along this year, the reason being that it was held in Sheffield. Whilst it's good to catch up with old friends and acquaintances, and to find out what's going in CAMRA see policy being developed, the attraction of Sheffield was the clinching factor!

Sheffield claims to be the country's premier real ale city, and after 48 hours discovering its beery charms, I certainly cannot disagree. My only complaint is that there wasn't enough time to do justice to all the fine pubs and breweries in the city.

After arriving in Sheffield, I just had time to pop into the centre before going up to the AGM venue (the Octagon building at Sheffield University). Alas, I only had time for one pub visit (bad planning) so opted for the Devonshire Cat on Wellington Street.



The Devonshire Cat

This is a light and airy pub with an excellent selection of beers as well as many quality bottled foreign beers. I chose the house beer, Devonshire Cat Pale Ale from the local Brew Company. Very refreshing and ideal on an empty stomach! But with beers from many other top quality local breweries available, this is an essential stop on any Sheffield crawl.

After catching up with many people in the Members bar at the Octagon, I set off with an old friend who arrived somewhat late, for a whistle-stop tour of the Industrial Quarter. This involved catching one of the excellent Supertrams for a couple of stops to Shalesmoor then wandering down a side street in search of our goal.

The first stop was the Kelham Island tavern on Russell Street, winner of CAMRA's national

Continued

Pub of the Year two years running (2007 and 2008). A plethora of excellent ales was available, but my Abbeydale Absolution, a pale beer at 5.3% really hit the spot. Unsurprisingly this small pub was packed, so a quick trek round the corner to the Fat Cat, the tap for the Kelham Island Brewery, in Alma Street was called for. This slightly larger pub was marginally less busy, but the beers were excellent. Kelham Island Pale Rider and a Stout from the Barlow Brewery (North Derbyshire) were my choice, and very good they were too. Sadly it was getting late and the last tram beckoned.

After a reasonable night's sleep followed by the excruciating climb from my hotel to the conference venue (why is everywhere uphill in Sheffield), the morning was spent listening to presentations and debates and deciding who to vote (and not vote) for in the National Executive elections. But as soon as class was dismissed for lunch, I set off to the bus stop to take in a couple of pubs on the western edge of the city.

The first was the Rising Sun on Fulwood Road. This is what I would call a proper pub, and it's owned by the local Abbeydale microbrewery. An excellent pint of Deception (pale, 4.2%) was sampled along with some lunch and a bit of banter with some guys who clearly had the same idea as I did in visiting.



Rising Sun, Sheffield

At this point I worked out that I really liked Abbeydale beers, but time was marching on so a brief walk (about 2 bus stops worth) back towards Sheffield took me to the Ranmore, which sells Bradfield beers. The Farmer's Blonde (3.9%) was very tasty, and slightly atypical of a blonde beer.

A quick bus hop back for some more debate

Ad12 Victoria Wokingham

Sheffield Ramblings

.... Continued

and counter-debate before popping back for a wash and brush up and meeting up with my mate for our evening destination.

By getting on the phone as soon as the lines opened to book trips, I managed to get us on the trip to Thornbridge Brewery in Bakewell in the Peak District.

The trip took us across the hills and down to Ashford-in-the-Water and Thornbridge Hall where the brewery used to be located – it is still there in an outbuilding but used for research now. We had a pleasant guided walk around the grounds of the Hall, but the beginnings of impatience for some beer were making themselves apparent. A quick 5 minute drive took us into Bakewell and to the industrial estate where the new, modern and thoroughly impressive brewery stands. Considering that Thornbridge didn't exist 10 years ago, they have come a long way, and done it by brewing top quality beer.



The ultra-modern plant at Thornbridge's Riverside Brewery

A splendid buffet was accompanied by some beer. Now, Thornbridge do brew many different beers, but there were three available to us: Lord Marples (a darker bitter, 4% abv, not hoppy by Thornbridge standards, but well-hopped by most others' standards), Hopton, a stronger pale ale (4.8%), which was very pleasant and, of course, Jaipur IPA, at 5.9% and probably the best beer ever in my opinion. It was absolutely divine. After a look round the brewery and a few more Jaipurs we were on our way to our next stop, the Greystones pub on the outskirts of Sheffield.

This was a failing local until Thornbridge

bought it and turned it into a successful community pub offering a wide range of excellent real ales, rock music and a place for all members of the local community to go and be welcomed. Shows what can be done!

With a wide range of beers available, I opted for Thornbridge's Kipling, a pale ale at 5.2% brewed with new Zealand Nelson Sauvignon hops giving it a distinct grapefruit-like flavour with a tropical fruit aftertaste. It took a bit of getting used to (about half a pint) before becoming thoroughly enjoyable and moreish. However, with time ticking away, I had to have another Jaipur – purely in the interests of research, of course.



The Greystones

And what did my research tell me? It was just the same as in the brewery – absolutely top notch.

On our return a quick couple of pints were had in the University Arms, just down the hill from the conference centre, including another Thornbridge beer, Branta, which was also a high quality beer.

More debates and presentations followed on the Sunday morning, and after a swift half in the Members' bar, it was time to head for home. However, one of the best pubs in Sheffield is on the railway station, so what better way to pass the time waiting for a train?

At the Sheffield Tap, some Thornbridge Wild Swan (at 3.5%, a very pale beer) was ideal for a slightly sore head on a Sunday lunchtime, but there were many more available mainly from the Sheffield area. This pub knocks all the station bars you've ever seen into a cocked hat. Every major station should have one like it – can you imagine a real ale emporium on Bracknell station? – we can always dream I suppose!

Ad 17 Hatchet

Printers ad

Trivia Quiz

This edition's quiz is a bit different. The answers to all the questions are the names of breweries or beers.

1. Where was the UK's first lawnmower built?
2. What was the surname of the man who built this lawnmower?
3. Which poet wrote about Metroland?
4. What was the family name of the only Englishman to become Pope?
5. What is the name of the statue complex on a rockery and water cascade at York House, Twickenham?
6. This luxury car company was founded in Staines, Middlesex by a former opera singer from the USA, but of Scottish ancestry.
7. What was the surname of the writer of "Barrack-Room Ballads", published in 1892?
8. What was the name of the house where the writer in Question 7 lived from 1902 until his death?

Email your answers to madcow@seberkscamra.org.uk by 15 October.

2 correct answers were received to Issue 23's quiz. The answers were:

- 1) Loose Cannon
- 2) Old Cannon
- 3) Chiltern
- 4) Andwells
- 5) Loddon
- 6) Enville

The link word is LOCALE

Congratulations to Derek Jennings who wins a t-shirt.

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