

ULLAGE



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Free Newsletter

The Campaign for Real Ale West Berkshire

September/October 2008

Beer Festivals Flourish

The Great British Beer Festival at Earls Court ended on 9 August. Alton's Pride brewed by Triple fff Brewery in Hampshire was named Champion Beer of Britain 2008 (see box for award winners).



Alton's Pride, which has an ABV of 3.8%, is described in the 2008 edition of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide as, "Clean-tasting, golden brown beer, full-bodied for its strength with an aroma of floral hops. An initial malty flavour fades as citrus notes and hoppiness take over, leading to a hoppy, bitter finish". Amongst the volunteers, tutored tasting group leaders, authors signing their new books and those simply 'there for the beer' at the festival, were four West Berks CAMRA committee members (see photo).

September is the month when local beer festivals flourish, allowing you to sample a variety of real ales at reasonable price levels. Here is a selection of easily accessible festivals, in date order.

■ **White Hart, Hamstead Marshall (5-7 Sept).** At least ten beers of different styles featuring smaller breweries.

■ **7th Headington Beer Festival, Masons Arms, Oxford (5-7 Sept).** Home of the 'Old Bog' brewery. 35 beers and 8 ciders. www.masonsquarry.co.uk

■ **5th Newbury Real Ale festival (13 Sept)** will be based in an L shaped marquee at Newbury Cricket Club, Northcroft Lane. Over 50 beers from local and distant breweries plus 15 ciders and perries. Live music. The £5 admission charge provides a sampling glass and 2 half pint drinks vouchers. www.newburyrealale.co.uk.

■ **Lock, Stock & Barrel, Newbury (15-29 Sept).** Forty or more beers from all over Britain, including local beers from Butts & West Berkshire breweries, will be offered together with Fullers beers such as 1845 and Vintage ale. 120 festival glasses have been ordered with a specially designed LSB logo and will be on sale (while stocks last). During the festival and at no charge, there will be live music on the Friday and Saturday nights as well as live jazz on Sunday lunchtimes.



■ **Angel, Hungerford (19-21 Sept).** Robin and Susan will be serving 10 beers, including two milds, brewed in the Four Shires (Yorks/Lancs/Lincs/Notts), from sheltered racks in the back garden.

■ **2nd Ascot Racecourse Beer Festival (26/27 Sept)** Half price admission for CAMRA members which includes racing and live music. There will be over 130 real ales, ciders and perries. Breweries featured include Ascot Ales, Hop Back, Loddon and Surrey Hills. Gates and bars

open at 11am. Last orders 4.15pm (Fri), 5.45pm (Sat). www.ascot.co.uk

■ **1st Choko Beer Festival (27 Sept)** at Laurence's Hall, Cholsey (near Wallingford). In a marquee with around 15 real ales as well as cider. Live music and activities for children. The £5 ticket (£4.50 advance) includes a commemorative pint glass. www.chokobeerfestival.org.uk

■ **Rising Sun, Stockcross (13-19 Oct).** For a week, Keith and Joan will be serving about a dozen beers not previously seen at this pub. These are likely to be mainly local beers, served from handpumps. www.therisingsun-stockcross.co.uk

■ **11th Oxford CAMRA Beer Festival (16-18 Oct)** at Oxford Town Hall, St Aldate's www.oxfordcamra.org.uk/festivals.php

■ **Basingstoke Beer Festival (24/25 Oct)** at the Moose centre, Churchill Way. Organised by volunteers from Moose International with North Hampshire CAMRA. Starts on Friday at 7pm. Advance tickets recommended. www.basingstokebeerfestival.org.uk

■ **Royal Oak, Yattendon (26 Oct).** Ten beers will be served from a heated marquee. First pint and glass etc included in admission charge.

GBBF Award Winners

2008 Champion Beer of Britain:
TRIPLE FFF, ALTON'S PRIDE

Second:
Beckstones, Black Dog Freddy

Third:
Wickwar, Station Porter

Mild Category
Gold - Beckstones, Black Dog Freddy
Silver - Rudgate, Ruby Mild
Bronze - Rhymney, Dark

Bitter Category
Gold - Triple fff, Alton's Pride
Silver - Lees, Bitter
Joint Bronze - Jarrow, Rivet Catcher and Surrey Hills, Ranmore Ale

Best Bitter Category
Gold - Skinner's, Betty Stogs
Silver - Highland, Scapa Special
Joint Bronze - Cairngorm, Nessies Monster Mash and Timothy Taylor, Landlord

Strong Bitter Category
Gold - Thornbridge, Jaipur IPA
Silver - Fuller's, ESB
Bronze - Highland, Orkney Blast

Golden Ale Category
Gold - Otley, O1
Silver - Loddon, Ferryman's Gold
Bronze - Skinner's, Cornish Knocker Ale

Speciality Beer Category
Gold - Otley, O Garden
Silver - Wentworth, Bumble Beer
Bronze - Nethergate, Umbel Magna

CAMRA Bottled-Conditioned Beers
Gold - Wye Valley, Dorothy Goodbody's Wholesome Stout
Silver - Fullers, 1845
Bronze - Wells and Young's, Special London Ale

THE 2ND ASCOT
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Friday 26th and Saturday 27th
September 2008

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- Excellent programme of racing.
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- Hot and cold food available all day.
- Gates and Bars open at 11am.
- Live music on both days.

To book tickets, call **0870 727 1234** or visit ascot.co.uk quoting CAMRA08.



Ascot
The World's Most Famous Racecourse

Inside: All the latest pub and brewery news from West Berkshire, and much more!

Real Cider

Real cider is a long-established traditional drink which is produced naturally from apples and is neither carbonated nor pasteurised. However, the number of outlets for real cider is diminishing, even in the West Country. The situation with real perry (which is made from pears) is even worse, as it is rarely available except directly from the producer. Unfortunately many well known ciders in the UK are fizzy keg products which have not been produced naturally. To help you track down some real ciders and perries and discover how deliciously mellow and aromatic these flavours can be, West Berkshire CAMRA have organised a trip in October when the fruit is ripe and the producers are active.

Way Out - West!

On Saturday 25 October, four days after the annual 'Apple Day', West Berkshire CAMRA member and proprietor of the Lambourn Valley Cider Company, Roy Bailey will be in the driving seat for a memorable, full day trip. The tour will include visits to two craft cider makers and three pubs including The Old Spot at Dursley, Gloucestershire, CAMRA pub of the year 2007. Whether you are able to join him or not this edited description of the tour will surely tempt you and give you information and ideas for visiting independently. Roy Bailey writes:

"We are aiming to leave the Newbury area around 10 am, picking up at points to be agreed and arriving at The Old Spot at 12 noon. There are always 5 or 6 real ales, including at least one from the local Uley Brewery, and excellent home-cooked food.

Our first port of call after lunch will be at Minchew's Real Cyder & Perry at Aston Cross, just outside Tewkesbury. Kevin Minchew is one of the country's leading makers of perry, and has won numerous awards for his products. He seeks out old orchards and individual trees, discovering varieties that were thought to be extinct, and makes special ciders and perries from them.

From here we cross to the other side of Tewkesbury to Hartland's Cider and Perry at Tirley, where I shall feel very much at home. I started bringing my apples to be pressed by the late Ray Hartland some 20 years ago, and continued on a commercial basis with him and his son Dereck from 1995, making four or five journeys with a trailer load of fruit each autumn. Hartland's is definitely a farm cider maker, with 18 acres of land and about 30 head of cattle and sheep, but Dereck has also won many awards for his cider and perry.



No visit to this area would be complete without calling at The Boat, Ashleworth, one of Britain's finest little pubs and Gloucestershire's equivalent to The Bell, Aldworth. Right alongside the River Severn (and therefore regularly flooded, especially last year), it was originally an alehouse run by the ferryman. It is still in the same family, and landlord Ron Nicholls has agreed to provide some of his excellent filled rolls for our supper. The beer, of which there are always four from local breweries, comes straight from the barrel. Depending on the time we finally leave The Boat, we may call into The Five Mile House, at Duntisbourne Abbots, high on the Cotswolds between Birdlip and Cirencester. This was another little old alehouse run by an elderly lady, but when she died in 1995 the new owners sensitively renovated it, retaining the beautiful old settles and the bar.

The full tour description, with itinerary, photos, costs and booking form can be found using the link in the Hot News section of the www.westberkscamra.org.uk Home page. The Treasurer is the contact for confirming reservations. As seats are limited, get your booking in now. Links: www.oldsportinn.co.uk, www.minchews.co.uk, www.lambournvalleycider.co.uk/hartlnd.htm, www.boat-inn.co.uk, www.fivemilehouse.co.uk

Swift Halves

■ The **Crown and Garter**, Inkpen Common is issuing 'brown shield' stamps with pints of beer and cider on Friday and Saturday evenings from 8pm-11pm. For every 11 stamps collected the next pint is free. Gillian Hern launched this scheme to keep the pub as an attractive destination for beer drinkers. They are as important to her as satisfied restaurant customers and create a vital part of the village inn's atmosphere. West Berkshire brewery Good Old Boy and Mr. Chubb's lunchtime bitter together with Timothy Taylor Landlord and a guest ale are usually available. www.crownandgarter.co.uk

■ Newbury racecourse now has a **Fuller's Real Ale Bar** behind the new grandstand. Draught and chilled, bottled beers are available from the Chiswick based brewery. The Fuller's dray pulled by two shire horses can sometimes be spotted at race meetings. It is next due there on 25 October.



■ Boules players can take advantage of the newly built, sand filled, boules pit in the car park of the **White Hart**, Hampstead Norreys. Abbott ale and Morlands Original are the regular ales here and a guest ale is usually available.

■ Just into Hampshire along the A343, The **Red House** at Highclere is no longer an Indian restaurant. However, good food is still served there together with Good Old Boy and Mr Chubb's Lunchtime Bitter from West Berkshire brewery and a guest beer from further afield.

■ Another **Red House**, this time at Marsh Benham and near the Kennet and Avon canal, is adding to its reputation as a restaurant by offering a choice of two local beers on handpump that will normally be from the ranges of Butts brewery and West Berkshire brewery. www.redhousemarshbenham.co.uk

■ South of Newbury town centre and just beyond the half timbered houses of Argyle road, a third **Red House** can be found in Hampton Road. The pub opens at 6pm on weekdays with longer hours at weekends. The regular beer is currently Mr Chubb's lunchtime bitter from West Berkshire brewery. A mere hundred yards away, Otter ale from Devon is available at the **Wellington Arms**, Andover Road. Walk across Derby road from here to find 'the local' Off Licence, stocking locally brewed bottled beers including Butts Blackguard Porter, Ramsbury Gold and Loddon Ferryman's Gold.

■ The **Hare and Hounds**, on the A4 at Speen, now boasts a new pub sign that reverses the traditional roles and depicts two hounds as waiters serving a dining hare couple. Three guest ales are normally available inside the hotel's bar.



■ The **Pig and Paper**, Northbrook Street, Newbury has expanded its range of bottled ales to six, including Old Speckled Hen, Bombardier, Bishops Finger and Fuller's ESB. The choice of ales may be expanded further to include a draught organic ale, if there is sufficient demand.

■ Peter & Julie have taken over at the (yellow painted) **Rising Sun** on the A4, near Woolhampton and are not planning any major changes. Previously, they spent nine years in Spain where they ran a restaurant in Mojacar, Almeria. The previous tenants, Clive & Margaret, have taken over at the **Woodpecker**, Wash Water. They have described it as their 'final challenge' after moving from Yorkshire and successfully running several pubs in the West Berkshire area. With improved kitchen facilities they will be able to offer separate menus for adults and children as well as daily specials on the blackboard. Three handpumps mean Arkells 2B and 3B will usually be available and Kingsdown may alternate with Moonlight to gauge local preferences for a stronger beer.

■ The next **West Berkshire Brewery** monthly beers, named after traditional English rural crafts, will be: September - Mazer - 4.3% - a pale golden brown beer with a strong hoppy and citrus flavour; October - Leg Cleek - 4.3% - a russet brown beer giving a good mix of warm malt flavours and a fruit finish. The brewery shop in Yattendon may still have bottles of Dr Hexter's Healer available after a special bottling run to celebrate The **Royal Oak** Inn, Wantage winning the CAMRA Oxfordshire Pub of the Year 2008 award. At the Royal Oak itself, beers from West Berkshire brewery and Wadworths are always available. These are supplemented by beers from small brewers, cider from Upton Cider, near Didcot and both cider and perry from Mr Whitehead's Cider Company, Alton.

■ The **Queens Arms** in East Garston, Lambourn Valley is due to reopen in September. As part of the Miller's collection there will be a link with the Peat Spade Inn, Longstock, Test Valley. Ringwood ales and a guest beer will be served.

Cheers!

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The Monument Newbury

The Monument is one of those rare pubs in Newbury that has been run by the same landlord, Simon Owens for what seems like decades. Simon is originally from New Zealand, but has been in Newbury for about twenty years. Simon is a bit of history buff and has done some research on the origins of the pub and this is only a small snippet of his stories about the pub. To find out more, visit the pub and see if you can coax Simon to spin you a yarn or two!



the monument. There is another sign on the wall of the pub's back garden which is an older sign and this also depicts the fire and the monument. I suggest you go and look at it, if you can find it!

The pub is one of the main outlets for Butts beers with Traditional and Barbus Barbus as regulars. Sometimes you will find other Butts beers on, it all depends on what the brewer has available. The pub does hot food through the day, keeps a variety of traditional

The Monument is situated at 57 Northbrook Street, north of Newbury town centre and near the Clock Tower. It is within walking distance of the train and bus stations. The clientele of the Monument is a very mixed bunch of people as this is one of the few live music venues in Newbury.

There has been a pub on the site since 1606 and the original layout is still very much in evidence. The pub got its current name after the monument that was donated by the people of London, in thanks for the money raised by the townsfolk of Newbury, after the Great Fire of London, 1666. The pub sign depicts the fire and



pub games and a bit of a rarity these days, a pinball machine. To complement this, the pub has a number of regular events in the evenings. Monday is games night with free pinball and Tuesday is acoustic night. This is centred at the piano where anyone who can sing or play an acoustic instrument is welcome to join in. There are also open mike and live music nights. All in all this is a truly unique treasure that should be enjoyed.

Adrian Bean



Beer Miles

■ Chris Marriage and Roy Bailey, senior members of West Berks CAMRA, made a **240 mile pilgrimage to Burton upon Trent** and back on 1st July to visit the Coors Visitor Centre (previously the Bass Museum) which was due to close later that day.

This cost-saving exercise by Coors Brewers Limited (the UK arm of multinational brewer Molson Coors) means the internationally renowned museum will remain closed until sufficient backing has been arranged to reopen it independently.

While there, Chris and Roy sampled some of the excellent beers brewed by the on-site Museum Brewery (which will continue), met Head Brewer Steve Wellington, joined a group of CAMRA members to lay a wreath by a statue of a cooper, and found time to lunch at the Burton Bridge Inn, home of another first-class brewery.

The energy of our two grey beer quaffers, and that of other campaigners, has not been in vain as

government minister Gerry Sutcliffe is now involved in plans to save the museum.

■ Supermarkets may stock Belgian beers from the multinational brewers. However, to find a selection of 150 different Belgian beers from brewers large and small, you need to visit **Westholme Store in Goring-on-Thames** where 'Jack' has recently expanded his range. Beers from around the world are stocked here together with many from these shores such as Oxfordshire based Ridgeway's 'High and Mighty' - a bottle conditioned beer 'of uncertain parentage...conceived in Massachussets out of a German recipe and lovingly overhopped in the time honoured American way!'

Under construction is www.beersnale.co.uk, Jack's comprehensive new beer website with clickable bottle images and brewery links.

Beer Writing and Tasting



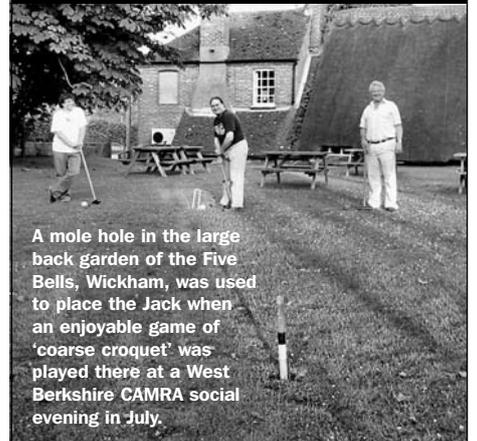
JEFF EVANS is the West Berkshire CAMRA member who led a tutored beer tasting session and launched his latest CAMRA book 'A beer a day' at the Great British Beer Festival in August.

Jeff Evans was editor of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide from 1991-98. His essential 'Good Bottled Beer Guide' was first published in 1998 and is now in its sixth edition. Jeff was honoured as 'Beer Writer of the Year' in 2001. He is Chairman of Judges for the 2008 International Beer Challenge.

CAMRA members will be able to read Jeff's regular feature about real ales with a regional theme in their quarterly magazine 'Beer'. However, readers of *Ullage* will be losing Jeff's writing skills after his decision to step down as (unpaid) editor after a generous, eight year, stint. West Berkshire CAMRA would like to express their gratitude to Jeff for all his efforts and wish him continuing success as a leading national beer writer and taster.

Tim Thomas is the new editor of *Ullage*. He welcomes your letters, news and any ideas for developing the newsletter (see back page for contact details).

Jack in the mole hole



A mole hole in the large back garden of the Five Bells, Wickham, was used to place the Jack when an enjoyable game of 'coarse croquet' was played there at a West Berkshire CAMRA social evening in July.

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Beer Festival Diary

CAMRA-run beer festivals provide excellent opportunities for sampling a wide range of real ales, from all over the UK and overseas. Here are some of the major and most accessible festivals for West Berkshire drinkers.

26-27 September
Ascot Racecourse Beer Festival
 (includes horse racing)
 Details: www.ascot.co.uk

16-18 October
Oxford Beer Festival
 Oxford Town Hall, St Aldate's
 Details: www.oxfordcamra.org.uk

24-25 October
Basingstoke Beer Festival
 Moose centre, Churchill Way
 Details: www.basingstokebeerfestival.org.uk

21-23 November
Whitchurch Beer Festival
 Whitchurch Sports and Social Club
 Details: www.whitchurchbeerfestival.org.uk

Diary Dates 2008

The following is a list of all forthcoming meetings of the West Berkshire branch of CAMRA. Some are 'social' meetings, lively and friendly occasions where we enjoy a few beers; others are 'branch' meetings, which are slightly more formal and where we discuss beer and pubs issues. Unless stated, our meetings are open to all-comers – and new members are particularly welcome!

Tue 9 September Branch Meeting
 Blue Ball, Greenham, Newbury

Thu 25 September "Meet The Brewer" Evening
 Chris Butt of Butts Brewery - The Swan, Inkpen

Tue 7 October Branch Meeting
 Travellers Friend, Crookham Common

Sat 25 October Social Event
 Cidermakers Visit (see page 2)

Tue 28 October Good Beer Guide 2009 Launch
 Venue TBC

Tue 25 November "Meet The Brewer" Evening
 Adnams - Venue TBC

All meetings start at 8pm unless otherwise stated.
 Please check the local CAMRA website for further details of events: www.westberkscamra.org.uk

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