

# Ullage

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The Newsletter of West Berkshire CAMRA



September/October 2010

## Favourite Beer Festivals

The Great British Beer Festival (GBBF) in August and the Reading Beer and Cider Festival in May will be high on the list of local CAMRA members' favourites. However, September seems to be the month for enjoying festivals that are closer to home - Newbury Real Ale Festival and LSB III Beer Festival - as well as one where the horses are the favourites - Ascot Racecourse Beer Festival.

Newbury Real Ale Festival returns for its 7th year from noon on 11 September at Northcroft playing fields. Newbury and Thatcham Hockey Club organise this festival which raises money for Naomi House Children's Hospice.

Arkell's Brewery beer festival at its Kingsdown Brewery, Swindon, also falls on 11 September. Tickets and brewery tours can be booked on [www.arkells.com](http://www.arkells.com) - raising money for Prospect Hospice, Wroughton.



Newbury Rugby Football Club beer festival

The Lock Stock and Barrel, Newbury, will use stillage for five casks, just beyond the bar counter, to supply up to 40 guest ales during its LSB III Beer Festival, featuring Fuller's ales and sourced local ales (13-26 September).

The White Horse of Hermitage is holding a small beer festival from 23-25 September with a

variety of Greene King beers from Suffolk, complemented by two guest ales.

The 4th Ascot Racecourse Beer Festival offers half price admission for CAMRA members to an excellent programme of racing on 24/25 September. A huge choice of 230 real ales, ciders and perries will be available. See Ascot advertisement for further details. Volunteer workers are needed here by the organisers via [www.seberkscamra.org.uk](http://www.seberkscamra.org.uk)

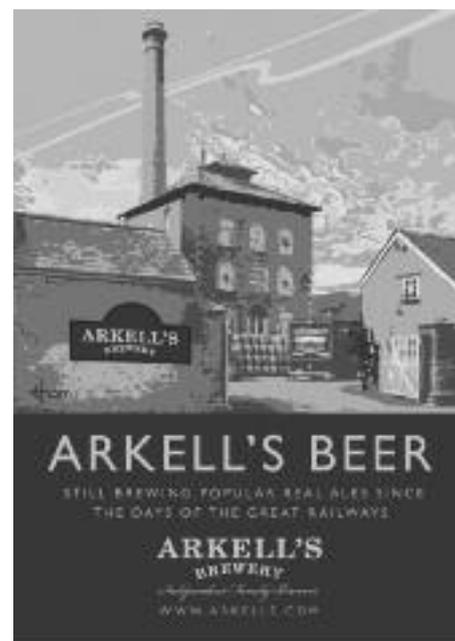
Newbury RFC, hosted their first beer and cider festival at Monks Lane on a July Saturday. Drinks were kept cool in a marquee behind the touchline and bands performed on a truck stage next to the clubhouse. The cider ran out in the afternoon and the first beer cask emptied was Ramsbury Gold.

Several West Berkshire CAMRA members visited the Great British Beer Festival (GBBF) at Earls Court and this was not only to drink beer. Jeff Evans presented a tutored tasting 'Real Ale in a bottle: The New Wave'. Adrian Bean attended a bar managers training course and was one of over a thousand volunteer workers. CAMRA members benefited from a discounted admission price, free programme and the chance to ascend the escalator to their own lounge with overhead views of the massive scale of this event. A total of 66,922 visitors attended this year, an increase of almost 5% on last year. Over 200,000 pints were sold at the

festival at a rate of over 75 pints poured per minute.

The beers from West Berkshire at the GBBF this year were Maggs' Magnificent Mild (West Berkshire) and Barbus Barbus (Butts).

The 2010 Champion Beer of Britain, announced at the GBBF, is Harvest Pale. Roger Protz said 'Castle Rock Harvest Pale stood out and was the unanimous choice of all the judges for its great blend of tangy hop and juicy malt. A wonderfully refreshing and complex beer.'



Amanda, Ryan, Steve, Chris, Tim & Frank at GBBF on Fri 6 Aug

### 2010 Champion Beer of Britain winners

**Champion:** Castle Rock, Harvest Pale (3.8% ABV, Nottingham)  
**2nd** - Timothy Taylor, Landlord (4.3% ABV, Keighley)  
**3rd** - Surrey Hills, Hammer Mild (3.8% ABV, Guildford)

#### Mild category

Gold- Surrey Hills, Hammer Mild  
Silver- Greene King, XX Mild

#### Bitter category

Gold- RCH, PG Steam  
Silver- Moor, Revival

#### Best Bitter category

Gold- Timothy Taylor, Landlord  
Silver- St Austell, Tribute

#### Golden Ale category

Gold- Castle Rock, Harvest Pale  
Silver- Marble, Manchester Bitter

#### Strong Bitter category

Gold- Thornbridge, Jaipur IPA  
Silver- Fuller's, Gales HSB

#### Speciality Beer category

Gold- Amber, Chocolate Orange Stout  
Silver- O'Hanlon's, Port Stout

#### Bottled Beer of Britain winners

(sponsored by Travelodge)  
Gold- St Austell, Admiral's Ale  
Silver- Pitfield, 1850 London Porter

## Swift Halves

■ Cheap Street, Newbury, has seen the opening of a Lloyds No. 1 bar by JD Wetherspoon and the temporary closure of a Greene King pub.

The **Diamond Tap** opened on 9 July and is proving popular with drinkers and diners. No expense has been spared on the décor which includes chandeliers, mirrors and pictures in gilded frames.



Diamond Tap manager, Matt Parish & W Berks CAMRA chairman, Adrian Bean, with the first pint on opening day.

There are marble topped bars on two floors with a wide variety of cask ales. CAMRA members can use their 50p Wetherspoon discount vouchers here.

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The nearby **King Charles Tavern** closed on 8 August and will reopen under new management.

■ Planning applications that included demolition of the **Blue Ball**, Greenham and the **Lamb**, Lambourn (currently closed) have been withdrawn after individuals and West Berkshire CAMRA lodged objections.

■ The **West Berkshire Brewery** monthly beer for September is *Downlands bitter* (4.3% ABV). The chalk downland of the Berkshire Downs is ideal for growing Maris Otter barley. Malt from this barley, together with lighter coloured malts, produce a pale brown beer. In this hop picking season, a higher hop rate is used for bittering and aroma.

The October beer is named after the second Abbot of Reading Abbey, who founded a hospital for lepers in 1134. *Aucherius* (4.3% ABV) is red-hued with full malt flavours combined with berry fruit flavours from local hops.

■ The **Rising Sun**, Stockcross, is temporarily closed, after the departure of Glen and Kelly and until new tenants are found.

In the meantime, there are plenty of places where West Berkshire Brewery beers can be found including the **Red House**, Marsh Benham; the **Bunk Inn**, Curridge; the **Castle Inn**, Cold Ash and the **Bladebone Inn**, Chapel Row.

■ Since the Brimpton village shop closed in February 2010, two nearby pubs have expanded their services to fill the gap.

The **Three Horseshoes**, Brimpton, an Arkell's pub, now has a post office counter open between 10 – 12.30 on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The **Travellers Friend**, Crookham Common, has added a community shop, open from 7 – 6 (8 – 12 Sundays) stocking essentials; newspapers; local produce; pies and pasties from Devon etc. Fuller's London Pride is available at the pub.

■ It is always good to hear about pubs that have reopened after a period of closure. Brothers, Gareth and Owen Warne, reopened the **Cottage Inn**, Upper Bucklebury, some months ago as Greene King tenants. Their guest ales are from West Berkshire Brewery. The pub is open at lunchtimes and evenings but is closed on Mondays. Tel. 01635 864544

■ The **Fox Inn**, Hermitage, is being redecorated and there has been a change to the beer range. Shepherd Neame beers have been replaced with Young's Special, Sharp's Doom Bar and West Berkshire Good Old Boy. Changing guest ales, usually from small breweries, and Tutts Clump cider are also available. www.thefoxatthermitage.co.uk

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■ The **Catherine Wheel**, Newbury and the **Three Horseshoes**, Donnington have reopened.

■ There is usually a beer from Ramsbury brewery available at the **Five Bells**, Wickham, in addition to beers from Palmer's brewery, Bridport, Dorset.

■ Congratulations to Andy & Julia at the **Ibex Inn**, Chaddleworth, regional winners of South East Best Entertainment Pub in the Great British Pub Awards, organised by the Morning Advertiser. Good luck for the National awards in London on 9 September!

## The Bell, Aldworth

The Bell, Aldworth, West Berkshire CAMRA Pub of the Year (POTY) 2010, has gone on to win the Berkshire CAMRA Area POTY contest. The next round is for Regional CAMRA POTY with The Bell competing against The Crown and Sceptre, Hemel Hempstead and The Royal Oak, Wantage.

The Bell hosted an Aunt Sally match between West Berkshire and White Horse CAMRA branches on 28 July. Due to poor conditions, it was agreed that the match would only last one game and this was won by White Horse

branch. However, a further friendly game was won by West Berkshire branch.

The Berkshire Area CAMRA POTY award was also presented to the Bell on the same evening.

Thanks go to the Bell for their excellent hospitality and to all those attending.



Adrian Bean presents Berkshire CAMRA Area POTY award to Hugh Macaulay



W Berks & White Horse CAMRA branches Aunt Sally players

The Bell photos by Claire Hodgkinson



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## The Crown And Garter Inkpen Common

For a village that was threatened a few years ago with having both of its surviving pubs turned into private houses, Inkpen is very fortunate that they were both rescued and are now thriving. Campaigning by members of West Berks CAMRA played no small part in this.

Of the two, The Crown and Garter at Inkpen Common never actually closed, but it was a near thing, with two planning applications being rejected. Following this, the pub was bought by Peter Starling and Candy Leaver who turned it around and made it a successful candidate for West Berks CAMRA Pub of the Year in 2002. In December 2002 Gill Hern, a former Thames Valley University lecturer, became the licensee, and since then The Crown and Garter has gone from strength to strength.

The pub is a 17th century former drovers' inn, standing on what was the coach road to Salisbury, and was a meeting point for sheep buyers from Oxford dealing with shepherds from Dorset. Legend has it that King James II entertained one of his mistresses here. From the pleasant garden, shaded by an enormous oak tree that must be older than the pub, there is a view of the famous Combe Gibbet, where in 1676 George Broomham and Dorothy Newman were hanged for the murder of Broomham's wife and son. The bodies were laid out to await burial in the pub's barn, which later became the stables, then the skittle alley and is now a part of the living quarters.

Gill's policy is to retain the traditional pub atmosphere with a range of real ales while serving good food and providing high quality accommodation. West Berkshire's Good Old Boy and Mr Chubb's are the regulars, with guests from such breweries as Ramsbury and Box Steam; all kept in the sort of condition that makes The Crown and Garter a regular in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide. Sadly, because of the pub's location and the drink-driving laws, cider sales are very low and there is no call for the real stuff.

The interior is now basically one room, but still gives the impression of



three separate areas supplied from a central bar. The largest is the restaurant, but the main bar has a refectory table, a settle, and a large fireplace with a wood-burning stove. Here customers can sit and drink and play such pub games as dominoes, shut-the-box and backgammon. There is a dartboard, but you will have to bring your own darts! There is a quiz once a month, on a Sunday, to raise money for local charities.

Gill's partner is chef Christopher Box, who arrived five years ago with an impressive record, having trained in a Michelin-starred restaurant and worked at both the Savoy and the Hotel Metropole, Monte Carlo. The ingredients for his extensive menu are sourced from local suppliers wherever possible; for instance, much of the meat comes from Thames Valley Meats of Ball Hill and the sausages from the Butchers Dog Sausage Company at Lambourn! There are special two-course lunches available at a low price on Wednesday to Friday. The pub is closed for food and drink on Monday and Tuesday lunchtimes, and there is no food served on Sunday evenings.

The relatively new accommodation features nine en-suite rooms around a central courtyard with a water feature, and this, together with the local ales and quality food, has drawn customers from far afield and has won many plaudits.

The Crown and Garter, Inkpen Common, Hungerford, Berkshire RG17 9QR  
Tel: 01488 668325. [www.crownandgarter.co.uk](http://www.crownandgarter.co.uk)  
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Roy Bailey

## The West Berkshire Brewery

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Look out for our beers of the month – 'Downland Bitter' in September and 'Aucherius' in October – see our website for details

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## The Fox Inn Hermitage



Set in the woodland village of Hermitage, The Fox Inn is a traditional country pub and restaurant. With around 300 years of history, it's full of character, retaining many original features and creating a warm, rustic environment for drinking and dining.

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# Berkshire Pubs Week

The inaugural Berkshire Pubs Week will start on Saturday 2nd October and run until Sunday 10th October. This is based on the CAMRA Local Pubs week campaign and will build on various events, to encourage people to make use of their local pubs.



There will be two county wide events, the first being a Berkshire pubs trail, the second an ale-related limerick competition.

The Berkshire wide pubs trail requires people to visit any two pubs from each of the four Berkshire CAMRA branch areas. A photo of participants, uniquely identifying each pub, needs to be uploaded to the *Berkshire Pubs Week 2010* facebook site as proof of a visit. A free pint will be awarded at subsequent local branch events for each participant proved to have completed the trail. A prize of a polypin of beer will be awarded, for the best photo, in the opinion of the judges.

One way to complete the trail would be to join in the group tour, on **Saturday 2 October**, which starts at 11am at the Diamond Tap, Newbury. We will also visit another Newbury pub before travelling by train to visit pubs in the three other branch areas, with the final stop at Reading train station.

The limerick competition will be judged by an esteemed Berkshire poet. Each limerick should start with the line 'There once was a drinker of ale.' The closing date for entries to be emailed to [bpw@westberks.camra.org.uk](mailto:bpw@westberks.camra.org.uk) will be Thursday 7 October (National Poetry Day). The winner will

receive a prize from a local brewery or cidemaker. Pub related events that have already been planned include:

- Tuesday 5 October:** 8pm Blue Ball, Kintbury. Nick Edwards (Ciderniks) Cider tasting & talk.
- Friday 8 October:** 6pm Bird in Hand, Knowl Hill. Brewdog brewer visit. [www.birdinhand.co.uk](http://www.birdinhand.co.uk)

Keep an eye on the *Berkshire Pubs Week 2010* Facebook site <http://preview.tinyurl.com/3aj5w7q> and West Berkshire CAMRA website for details of other events. [www.westberks.camra.org.uk](http://www.westberks.camra.org.uk)



# Ale Trails

Edinburgh Pub Walks, by CAMRA author Bob Steel, is a lovingly illustrated, practical pocket-sized guide to the most iconic pubs in Edinburgh and the surrounding area, taking in 25 town, country and coastal walks. Dividing the guide into two manageable sections - 'Edinburgh Old and New' and 'Beyond the Fringe' - Steel's trails perfectly capture Scottish heritage, allowing the reader to experience the city using short, simple routes which take in the historic hilltop views and superb architecture of the capital. There are descriptions of Edinburgh's renowned heritage pubs including: Athletic Arms (Diggers), Leslie's Bar and Oxford Bar.



Real Heritage Pubs of Wales – Pub Interiors of Special Historic Interest – is a new CAMRA book edited by Michael Slaughter and Mike Dunn. The book leads you to 100 Welsh pubs that retain their historic interiors with informative descriptions and over 200 photographs.

The CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2011 is published on 16 September. Copies will be available for sale, at a discount price, at the local launch event on 28 September. The venue for this will be published in the diary dates section of [www.westberks.camra.org.uk](http://www.westberks.camra.org.uk)



Paul Francois began appreciating real ale and running pubs in London after arriving from New Zealand eleven years ago. He is now manager at the Royal Oak, Ecchinswell, which is open again and

being refurbished. Two West Berkshire Brewery beers and a third guest ale will usually be available.

Tony Lambon, landlord of the Falcon, Theale, covers a few miles on his Lambretta scooters and was spotted at a couple of recent West Berkshire CAMRA events held at the Craven Arms, Enborne and the Bell, Aldworth. Adrian Bean discovered that Tony is an active member of the Reading Rabble scooter club. Tony's main scooter is a 1973 Lambretta, on which he did a major refit in 1983, with further modifications since then. It is a unique scooter which can occasionally be seen at the pub. Sharp's Doom Bar, Shepherd Neame Spitfire and Courage Best are available at the Falcon.



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## La Sidra Natural

In June of this year, Tim and I flew to Asturias, Northern Spain for a short break. Enjoying Asturian cider (*La Sidra*) was a highlight of the trip. *Las Siderías* (cider bars) enjoy the same level of popularity as pubs do here. This is supported by the fact that the consumption of cider in Asturias of 54 litres per person/year is probably the highest in any European region. The Asturian climate is ideal for apple growing, with its wet summers and mild winters. The region accounts for 80% of the cider production of Spain.

Cider ranges in strength from 3% to 8% and is drunk all over the world. The variety drunk in Asturias, is natural as opposed to *espumosa* or fizzy variety found in many parts of the world. The taste depends on the quality of the local apple from year to year. It is fresh, with both sharpness and acidity. The Greek geographer Strabo, referred to Asturian cider in the year 60 BC. Cider production in Spain became significant in the 17th century when apple trees from the New World were introduced.

However, following Franco's victory in the Civil War of the 1930's, prohibition was introduced and apple orchards were abandoned. Happily, production boomed again during the regeneration of the 1980's.

Since 2002, Asturian *Sidra* has had to be locally sourced, thanks to the creation of the *Denominación de Origen Protegida* (DOP) by the Spanish government.

At the end of summer, the apples are harvested and scatted (ground down) then transferred to the cider press. The cider is ready to drink after a five month fermentation period. This slow process reduces the loss of delicate aromas. Traditionally the vats were made of wood and were stored in underground warehouses, to keep the cider fresh until summer. Nowadays, large refrigerated steel vats are used.

*La Sidra* has always been linked to social occasions. To enjoy cider to its full, it has to be poured in a certain way. Asturians are very particular about this.

Indeed, one sunny evening, in the popular Bar Mercante, Gijón, I asked the waiter for a bottle of *Frutos* and two glasses, and he was appalled! He explained that only one glass was needed because it is customary take it in turns to have a small quantity or *culín*. He then demonstrated the *escancia* or pour. A small quantity of cider is poured from a height of about three feet (the length between the extended arms) into a wide brimmed glass, which is held at an angle, allowing the cider to 'break' on the edge. This technique, *escanciar un culín*, allows air bubbles into the drink, thus giving it a sparkling taste that lasts a very short time and produces the gas Spaniards call *estrella* (star). The



Harbour view from Bar Mercante, Gijón

*escancia* is either performed by the waiter at the bar, or in less formal bars by the drinker. The whole 750 ml bottle should be drunk at one sitting as cider oxidizes quickly.

For anyone interested in a similar trip, why not visit the annual *Sidra* festival in late August? Each year an attempt is made to break the world record for simultaneous cider pouring which was set at more than 5,000 in 2008.

Finally, don't forget that cider has a relatively high concentration of antioxidants which may be helpful for preventing heart disease, cancer, and other ailments. But, moderation in all things please!

Meg Thomas

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LocAle is a CAMRA initiative to promote the sale of beers produced at breweries local to each pub. In the case of West Berkshire CAMRA, the distance is a maximum of 25 road miles. All beers you see with pump stickers depicting the LocAle logo have therefore travelled less distance, used up less fuel and by drinking them you are actively supporting the local economy.

Pubs currently accredited for LocAle in the West Berkshire area are:

■ The Swan	Inkpen
■ The Dowgate	Hungerford
■ The Rising Sun	Stockcross
■ The Lord Lyon	Stockcross
■ The Crown & Garter	Inkpen Common
■ The Bowler's Arms	Wash Common
■ The Winterbourne Arms	Winterbourne
■ The Old Boot Inn	Stanford Dingley
■ The Castle Inn	Cold Ash

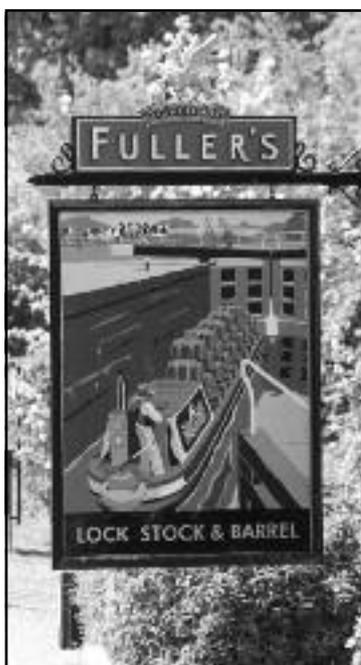
## Watercress Wander

**Congratulations to Tim Wale, of Tutts Clump Cider, for winning the Royal Wulst Racecourse Cider of 2010 award.**

On **Saturday 30 October 2010**, Tim will drive a group to Mr Whitehead's Cider in Selborne, on the 3rd annual cider trip. The Hawley Inn is the lunchtime pub. Next stop is a visit to the award-winning Triple fff brewery, followed by a visit to their pub in Alton, the Railway Arms. We will stop at the Tichborne Arms on the route home. Each Hampshire pub has real cider and a large range of real ales and is featured in the 2010 Good Beer Guide.

There are watercress beds in this part of Hampshire so this year's cider trip is called the Watercress Wander.

Provisional plans are to pick up in Newbury around 10am, returning by 8pm, in a small coach. The cost of this trip had not been fixed before publication. Final details will be posted on our website. Complete a booking form using the link at [www.westberks.camra.org.uk](http://www.westberks.camra.org.uk) or contact [treasurer@westberks.camra.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@westberks.camra.org.uk) to book your place asap.  
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[www.thesixbells.co.uk](http://www.thesixbells.co.uk)

# THE 4<sup>TH</sup> ASCOT RACECOURSE BEER FESTIVAL

Friday 24<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2010



"IT'S YOUR JOCKEY, ARE YOU HERE OR NOT?"

- Exclusive HALF PRICE admission for CAMRA members – prices from £5.50 on Friday and £10 on Saturday.
- Excellent programme of racing.
- Over 200 real ales, ciders and perries to sample supplied predominantly from local craft brewers, all at £1.40 per half pint and £2.80 per pint. Free tasting notes provided.
- Gates and Bars open at 11am. Last orders 5.20pm.
- Hot and cold food available all day.
- Live music on both days.
- Free parking or a 7 minute walk from Ascot Railway Station.

To book, call 0870 727 1234 or visit [ascot.co.uk](http://ascot.co.uk), quoting CAMRA10



## 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.

24-25 September **4th Ascot Racecourse Beer Festival**  
Details: See advertisement above  
[www.ascot.co.uk](http://www.ascot.co.uk)

1-3 October **Hampshire OctoberFest**  
Milestones Museum, Leisure Park, Basingstoke. RG22 6PG  
[www3.hants.gov.uk/octoberfest.htm](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/octoberfest.htm)

14-16 October **Oxford Beer Festival**  
Oxford Town Hall, St Aldates, Oxford  
Details: [www.oxfordcamra.org.uk](http://www.oxfordcamra.org.uk)

22-23 October **Basingstoke Beer Festival**  
Moose Centre, Churchill Way, Basingstoke. RG21 7QU  
[www.camrahantsnorth.org.uk](http://www.camrahantsnorth.org.uk)

4-6 November **24th Swindon Beer Festival**  
Steam Museum, Kemble Drive, Swindon. SN2 2TA  
[www.swindoncamra.org.uk](http://www.swindoncamra.org.uk)

## Diary Dates 2010

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 14 Sep - Branch Meeting**  
Three Horseshoes, Donnington

**Tue 28 Sep - GBG 2011 launch event**  
Check our website for venue

**Sat 2 Oct - Sun 10 Oct Berkshire Pubs Week** - see page 4

**Tue 12 Oct - Branch Meeting**  
Plough, Thatcham

**Sat 30 Oct - Watercress Wander (Cider Trip)** - see page 5

**Wed 3 Nov - Branch Meeting**  
White Hart, Hampstead Norreys

**Thu 18 Nov - Newbury Ale Trail**  
Check our website for details

**Tue 30 Nov - Branch Meeting**  
Five Bells, Wickham

**All meetings start at 8pm unless otherwise stated.**

**Please check the local CAMRA website for further details of events:**  
[www.westberkscamra.org.uk](http://www.westberkscamra.org.uk)



### The Campaign for Real Ale West Berkshire

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

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Come and see the famous Wadworth Shire Horses - the stables are open 1.30 - 3.30pm Monday to Thursday.  
(group of over 10 people should pre book please)

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For further information, please contact the Visitor Centre on 01380 732277 or email: [visitorcentre@wadworth.co.uk](mailto:visitorcentre@wadworth.co.uk)

<p><b>Winter Opening:</b> Monday to Friday 10am - 4pm Saturdays 10am - 3pm</p>	<p><b>Summer Opening:</b> Monday to Friday 10am - 5pm Saturdays 10am - 4pm Sunday (from Easter) 10am - 3pm</p>
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[www.wadworth.co.uk](http://www.wadworth.co.uk)