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SPRING 2020



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The Bell - CAMRA National Pub of the Year - again!



The Bell Inn, Aldworth

Mike Wilkinson (CAMRA), Heather & Hugh Macaulay, Nik Antona (CAMRA)

12 February 2020

On 12 February 2020, the CAMRA National Pub of the Year award plaque for the Bell was presented by the Campaign's Chairman Nik Antona to Heather Macaulay and son Hugh.

The Bell Inn is now one of only four pubs to win the prestigious award twice. Roy Bailey's photo of the previous presentation of the National award for the Bell, to Heather and Ian 'Jack' Macaulay in August 1991, appears on page 2.

On this recent fine day, CAMRA Chief Executive Tom Stainer and Pub Campaigns Director Mike Wilkinson were also in Aldworth for the occasion which was covered by several TV camera crews. Standing in front of the porchway entrance to the pub with a pint, Mike said that CAMRA members are concerned about threats to the future of Britain's community pubs and want to defend the centuries-old tradition of pubgoing. He emphasised the positive impact on people's

mental health of being part of a community that has a local pub with social networks and encouraged people to use and celebrate all types of remaining pubs.

Mike also said that the CAMRA judges described the Bell as: a community centre as much as a pub; somewhere that walking in as a stranger you were treated straightaway as if you were a regular; a pub with the warmest of welcomes, friendly and knowledgeable staff, excellent food and even better beer; a pub that's been in the same family for 250 years; a pub with enormous heritage that's very much part of today.

Glasses were raised and there were cheers from the large gathering when Nik Antona presented the plaque. Receiving the award, Hugh responded 'Thank you everybody, Thank you, Cheers!'. Earlier he said 'It's a wonderful thing to be driving quality year after year. Not much has



changed because we have kept our interior unspoilt all this time, and intend to keep it that way for years to come.'

Watching the presentation were the Bell's local suppliers including Tim Wale (Tutts Clump Cider) and local brewers: Will Twomey (West Berkshire); Alex Arkell (Arkell's); Pete Cook (Sherfield Valley); Kevin Brady (Indigenous) and Tom Broadbank (Delphic).

Also present were people who keep returning to the Bell like Pat Kyle, from Kintbury, a regular visitor for around forty years, who said 'It hasn't changed at all in that time and I wouldn't change a thing'. Pat also appreciates the free house's 'excellently kept local beers and ciders and its simple menu of filled crusty rolls'.

Alan Haselden and hiking friends like to include the Bell on their routes. After a cross-country hike from Cholsey station in February, they shared pitchers of Indigenous Brewery's 'nutty, malty brown ale' Nutcracker and enjoyed playing the traditional Shut the Box table-top game while waiting for their lunch of rolls, followed by sticky toffee puddings with custard.

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Berkshire Mulled Cider Champion: Pang Valley Cider

10/12/2019

Rick Wyatt, Gary Wickens, Rod Holmes

Please help West Berkshire CAMRA to select a previously unrecognised pub management team to win the 2020 award:

Community Pub of the Year

Nominate by 30 June - See page 10

The Bell (continued)



Standing between them, Carl Griffin, CAMRA Central Southern Regional Director, presented the 2019 regional Pub of the Year award to Maryjane and Hugh Macaulay, after they were back inside the pub.

Hugh is President of Aldworth Cricket Club and there is an annual friendly fixture against an Arkell's XI, played at the cricket ground beside the Bell's large garden. This year's match is at 6pm on 4 June.



James Macaulay
(October 2019)

Their rugby playing son, James Macaulay, who works as a brewer at West Berkshire Brewery, was also busy behind the bar serving customers on this special day for the pub.

On 8 August 1991, CAMRA Chairman John Cryne, presented the 1990 National Pub of the Year award to Heather and Ian 'Jack' Macaulay.



John Cryne, Heather & Ian Macaulay

In a 1991 Bell Inn feature for *Ullage*, then edited by Roy Bailey, he wrote 'The pub has two wonderful oak-beamed rooms, one of which is served from a small central area with a bank of four handpumps dispensing Arkell's Kingsdown and BBB, Badger Best and Morrell's new Dark Mild.'

After the latest award, Roy said 'For more than 40 years I have visited and drunk at The Bell as often as possible. I still consider it to be the finest pub in the known universe.'

Jeff Evans, then editor of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide, remembers the 1991 presentation evening and said 'The hospitality that evening was wonderful, as it always is, and goes some way to explaining why so many people find their way to the Bell, despite its location miles from main roads and railway connections'.

Swift Halves

■ At the Bell, on 12 February, Carl Griffin also presented Kevin Brady with a certificate for **Indigenous Brewery's** Double Warp – Finalist, Stout category, Champion Winter Beer of Britain (CWBoB) 2020, judged in Birmingham at CAMRA's Winter Great British Beer Festival.

Kevin says it is 'an absolute pleasure' to supply the Bell where he has enjoyed very interesting chats with Heather Macaulay when delivering casks of ale from Chaddleworth.



■ The Overall CWBoB 2020 Gold was **Fixed Wheel Brewery** Blackheath Stout, full-bodied, fruity and named after the Black Country brewery's location.

■ **Loddon Brewery** won CWBoB 2020 Gold in the Old Ale and Strong Mild category for Hocus Pocus Old Ale.



The Loddon seasonal ales for the spring are Begorrah, a 5% ABV oat stout named for St Patrick's Day (17 March) and Rakau Quad, a 4.4% ABV session IPA, single hopped over four stages of the brewing process (with Rakau from New Zealand) to give passionfruit and pine flavours. The Loddon Brewery Taproom, in Dunsden Green, is open from Thursday to Saturday.

■ **Arkell's Brewery** BBB / 3B has been served at the Bell, Aldworth for 43 years.

First introduced in 2019, Arkell's Spring Hopper returns for two months from March. Head Brewer Alex Arkell describes the pale ale as 'a powerful, fruity, hoppy beer'. The single-hop seasonal from May is Motu, named after the Motueka hop from New Zealand.



■ The **Cow & Cask**, a previous community pub award winner, is hosting a West Berks Repair Cafe popup on Sunday 15 March from 11am to 2pm. (Facebook: @repaircafewb)

The Newbury micropub raised £218.10 for Thames Valley Air Ambulance from a Christmas raffle with Sue Reay winning the hamper.

There will be a James Bond Quiz on Saturday 14 March and a 'Learn to play Crib' session on Tuesday 28 April at 8pm.



■ Founded in 1995 with an attitude that combined a passion for beer, a respect for the local community and a disregard for convention, **West Berkshire Brewery** celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2020, with a party, on 29 August.

Three new beers have been added to the core WBB portfolio: Detour Pale Ale, Stoney Lane Pilsner and Solo Pale Ale, the brewery's first under 0.5% ABV beer.



Full Circle, a 4.5% abv Golden Ale blended with a smooth sweetness, subtle fruitiness and a delicate English hop aroma, returns in cask and bottle until June. Dance Hall, a 4.1% ABV elderflower pale ale, is available in keg and can from April until July.

Brewery tours, on the first Saturday of the month (7 March, 4 April, 2 May) can be booked online. In addition, tours will be offered on Friday 8 May (VE Day), when a 'street party' will be held at the Taproom with servings of Tommy Atkins, a 3.9% ABV Best Bitter, last brewed in 2014.

Tickets for the Taproom's popular monthly quiz, hosted by Ed Dyer, on the last Wednesday of the month (25 March, 29 April, 27 May) can be booked online. Arrival by 7pm for 7.30pm start is suggested. wbbrew.com

■ The **Hartley Arms** Public House (Free House), Donnington, formerly the Three Horseshoes, was advertised by Donnington Hospital Trust as available to rent from 1 April.

■ The **Hare & Hounds** Hotel & The Barn in Speen changes hands on 5 March 2020.

In a statement for *Ullage*, signed: Jonathan & Jean, Innkeepers 2005-2020, the outgoing Nelseys write: 'What a wonderful 14 years we have had at our beloved Inn! Having bought the hotel in a state of disrepair with developers circling, Jean and I are so proud to have been part of returning The Hare and Hounds back to where it belongs as one of Newbury's finest hostelries. It was my dream to build The Barn and it is gratifying to see how popular it has become in a relatively short space of time.'

They thanked the people of Speen, their customers and 'all the amazing staff who joined us on our journey' adding 'Without you all this historic inn may have disappeared and it is credit to us all that we pass her along to the next chapter in such fine fettle!'

■ The newburypubwalks.org.uk website, updated in November 2019, has details of about 50 circular pub walks in West Berkshire and North Hampshire.

■ Philip and Lauren Davison of the **Fox in Peasmore** featured in the Good Pub Guide's 2020 Top Ten Licensees of the Year.

■ The Good Pub Guide's Berkshire Dining Pub of the Year 2020 is the **Royal Oak**, Yattendon.

■ Look out for two new beers, brewed by Tom Broadbank at Thatcham's **Delphic Brewing Co**, in free houses like the **Wheatsheaf Inn**, Thatcham and the **John O'Gaunt Inn**, Hungerford, that support local brewers. Kurupt is a 4% ABV Black IPA heavily hopped with Centennial. Railroad Crossing, a 4.2% ABV American Best Bitter, is based on Delphic's core Level Crossing but using American Cascade hops and yeast.



■ NUTS – Newbury Uke Town Strummers – meet at the **Bowler's Arms**, Wash Common, at 7.30pm every two weeks for a 'Jam and a Jar' on a Thursday evening, eg 5 March. newburyukuleweebly.com

■ The Easter beer and cider festival at the **Catherine Wheel**, Newbury, 9-13 April, features live music #BehindTheGate in the Gin Yard. See also Gig Guide page 10.

The *Untappd* app shows details of over 200 draught, bottled and canned beers and ciders at the Catherine Wheel using the verified venue's untappd.com menus.



Andy Parker, Steve Kelly

■ Steve Kelly visited **Elusive Brewing** at Hogwood Industrial Estate, Finchampstead, on Saturday 1 February to present brewer Andy Parker with a Royal Mail video game stamps set, to match the 8-bit label designs and the Tap Room's retro gaming console theme. The stamps set will be displayed alongside the awards for beers like Morrisman Double Chocolate Stout. www.elusivebrewing.com

■ Becky and Brad are the new publicans at the **Bacon Arms**, Newbury. See Gig Guide on page 10 for details of live music there.

■ Based in Devizes, but considering a move from their traditional central site, **Wadworth Brewery** introduces Jug 'O' Malt in March. The 4.2% ABV Mild seasonal ale has coffee, toffee and caramel tones. The next seasonal ale will be Amarillo Gold.



■ **West Berkshire Quizzes** Facebook group has details of local pub and music quizzes.

■ Our Pubs Officer, Paul Worsley, has taken on the additional role of **Social Secretary** which has been vacant for a while. Paul is looking to expand our events including brewery tours and joint meet-ups with other branches, he would like to hear suggestions for social events and from anyone happy to organise / lead an event. social@westberkscamra.org.uk

■ On **Saturday 2 May**, Tim Thomas leads a trip to **Pewsey**, visiting the Crown Inn (World's End Ales), after the 1.15pm train from Newbury arrives at 1.33pm. The group will also visit The Shed Alehouse after it opens at 2pm.

■ On **Saturday 16 May**, Alison Chetwynd leads a group to **Compton** to sample two Mild ales brewed by Richard Goss (West Berkshire Homebrew Club) in his brewing shed / bar. Meet Newbury Wharf bus station 10.25am for 10.30am Kennections bus (#6). Contact Alison - treasurer@westberkscamra.org.uk - to make reservations and enquiries.

■ CAMRA's 'Mild May' initiative celebrates the once popular, but now threatened, Mild beer style and encourages pubs to serve at least one Mild ale in May.



■ The **Castle at Cold Ash** menu has changed with two new chefs based in the completely refurbished kitchen featuring a pizza oven. Teams should book tables in advance for the popular Monday quiz night. See advertisement below.

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*Nathan, Kirsty, Francesca and Florence
look forward to seeing you soon.*

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■ In February, over a year after the **Old Bell** in Wash Common last closed and could not be relet, the freehold has been offered for sale.

The **White Hart**, Hamstead Marshall 'Closed for the winter' in December after an experiment with opening weekly on Friday evenings only.

The appeal, against West Berkshire Council's refusal of a planning application for converting the **Winterbourne Arms** to housing, was rejected by the Planning Inspectorate in January after a hearing in December. The pub remains closed.

■ **The Lion** in Newbury serves Wadworth beers and guest ales with a discount for CAMRA members. Buy or swap records and listen to DJs play vinyl soul music here on every third Sunday of the month (1-6pm) at *The Mint*.

Games, including Shut the Box, can be played at the Lion.



■ Brewery showcase events at **The Weather Station**, Wild Weather's Reading pub, include: Staggeringly Good & Beatnikz Republic (19 March); Naparbier (16 April) and Ominipollo (23 April). A range of ciders will be served in the garden of the Eldon Terrace pub during the Reading Village Easter Festival (10-13 April).

■ The **Wild Weather Ales** brewery shop, 15 Benyon Road, Easter Park, RG7 2PQ, is just north of Tadley, off the Reading Road. Opening hours below.



Cider mulling in the Catherine Wheel's Gin Yard

■ Cider makers from Greenham Fallout (Chris Moore), Ciderniks (Nick Edwards), Pang Valley (Rick Wyatt and Gary Wickens), Polecat (Jon Fitch), Tilehurst (Andrew Williams) and Green Shed (Dave Bailey) competed for the inaugural Berkshire Mulled Cider Champion cup organised by Rod Holmes (ciderpup.co.uk) on 10 December. Judges Roy Bailey, Warwick Heskins and Tim Thomas independently gave the same ranking: 1st Pang Valley Cider; 2nd Andrew Williams; 3rd Greenham Fallout. Award photo on page 1.

■ Tim Wale advises that **Tutts Clump Cider** has been a supplier to the Bell Inn, Aldworth, 'our best customer', since he began marketing it in 2008 and the Bell has Traditional Farmhouse (6% ABV) and Berkshire Diamond (4.5% ABV) on draught by bag in box.

The last of this season's apples were pressed in January, yielding 71,000 litres in total for 2019. This production was 60% locally sourced with a further 23% from Kent and 17% from Oldbury on Severn.

■ The **Queen's Arms**, East Garston, is served by the regular Kennections bus service between Newbury and Lambourn (#4). The Lambourn Valley Way from Newbury to Whitehorse Hill passes nearby. The Newbury Weekly News (30/1/2020) reported that Freddie and Sue Tulloch, who took over the pub in 2015 adding further bedrooms and opening up the garden, are now ready for a change and looking for a buyer to build on their success.

www.queensarmseastgarston.co.uk



CAMRA Christmas quiz social at the Old London Apprentice 12/12/2019

■ The fundraising efforts of the **Old London Apprentice**, Newbury, have resulted in the naming of Ola, now with her puppy walker before she becomes a guide dog. Photos and details of Ola are on the 9 January post to the pub's Facebook page. See also advertisement on page 9.

■ Announced in February 2020, **Cheltenham Motor Club** is the CAMRA National Club of the Year 2019, a previous winner in 2017 and 2013.

■ The 2020 **CAMRA Members' Weekend**, AGM & Conference, with a real ale and cider bar, at the University of York, 3-5 April, is free to attend. agm.camra.org.uk

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Beer & Cider Festivals

■ Visiting a beer festival with a CAMRA group has social and practical advantages.

For more details of the following events, visit our website or contact Paul Worsley: social@westberkscamra.org.uk:

Friday 13 March - Wantage Beer & Cider Festival trip (The Beacon) - 10.30am train from Newbury to Didcot Parkway via Reading. Arrive Wantage 12.10 on local bus (#33). Free entry for CAMRA members. 28 real ales together with 4 ciders and 2 perrys on 13/14 March. www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk

Friday 17 April - Newbury Racecourse Beer & Cider Festival social at a table near the festival bar. Live music all afternoon with over 50 beers and ciders from local producers including West Berkshire Brewery, Andwell Brewing Co and Tutts Clump Cider. CAMRA members should book on 01635 40015, **before 9 April**, for the '£10 Grandstand ticket & pint' offer on 17/18 April quoting CAMRA20.

Thursday 7 May - Reading Beer & Cider Festival trip (Christchurch Meadows, Caversham) - meet Tim Thomas &/or Andy Pinkard, near the CAMRA bookstall at 7pm, on the opening evening.

■ Tickets for **Reading Beer & Cider Festival** (7-10 May), with over 450 real ales, can be purchased in advance (guaranteed entry plus tokens) or on the door (if not full): Thurs £5 (16.30-23.00), Fri £11 (11-23.00), Sat £10 (11-16.30 or 18-23.00 sessions), Sun £5 (12-17.30). All tickets include a glass and programme. Tickets include a programme and glass. More details, including benefits for **volunteering** at readingbeerfestival.org.uk

Adrian Bean - bar@westberkscamra.org.uk - can arrange **cellaring training** for quality beer handling and dispense at festivals etc.

■ Launched on 8 February, by Reading and Mid-Berks CAMRA, leading up to the Reading Beer and Cider Festival, the **Reading Ale Trail** involves visiting participating pubs for a drink and getting a sticker, to place in the booklet of participating pubs, as proof.

A walk via the Ridgeway to the **Bell Inn**, Aldworth, a 'guest' Ale Trail pub in our Branch, has been arranged from the Catherine Wheel, Goring at 10.35am on Sunday 29 March.

Visiting 16 pubs on the trail is rewarded with three free half-pint vouchers at Reading Beer & Cider Festival. Anyone visiting all 24 pubs can claim a commemorative t-shirt and a half-pint voucher. The closing date for completed ale trail booklets is 8 April 2020.

Every completed booklet also earns an entry in the Prize Draw with prizes from Bingham's Brewery, Hogs Back Brewery, Tutts Clump Cider and West Berkshire Brewery. A total of 700 booklets were put on sale, for a £1 refundable deposit, at the Alehouse and the Nag's Head in Reading and the Fox & Hounds in Caversham.

Any group wanting to complete the trail can take advantage of the Reading Buses *simplyNetwork* group day ticket (Up to four people travel for £10 off-peak).

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Full details, with FAQs, can be found at readingcamra.org.uk/aletrail with the latest information on Facebook: Reading Ale Trail.

■ Pixie Pee is the extra pale and refreshing IPA from **Swamp Bog Brewery**, now based at Two Cocks Brewery, Enborne.

Taryn and Paul Medlin, who also organise the Edge Cropredy, have arranged beer and cider festivals to showcase Swamp Bog and Two Cocks breweries as well as other local beer and cider producers at: **The Five Bells**, Wickham (8/9 May); **the Old Boot Inn**, Stanford Dingley (5/6 June) and **The Great Shefford** (3/4 July). These will be Friday evening and all-day Saturday events with live music.



■ The **Craven Arms**, Enborne, is holding an outdoor music and cider festival with a hog roast and BBQ on Saturday 9 May from 12 noon.

■ The **Welsh Perry and Cider Society's Festival**, 22-25 May, is held in the grounds of Caldicot Castle and Country Park near the Second Severn Crossing. Camping is available on site and there will be live music. Real ale will also be available in partnership with CAMRA. Volunteer applications via info@welshcider.co.uk and more details at welshcider.co.uk/festival

■ The **Fox & Hounds**, Donnington, hosts May Fest 2020 on Sunday 24 May with the outside cash bar opening at 1pm, serving a range of guest ciders and ales. There will also be a hog roast and live music. www.foxandhoundsnewbury.co.uk

■ **Thatcham Town Football Club Beer Festival** is set for Saturday 13 June.

Tryanuary Bus Tour

On Friday 31 January, three West Berkshire CAMRA members embarked on a Tryanuary bus tour from Newbury. Pubs lose trade in January when some people abstain from alcohol but many CAMRA members adopt the Tryanuary approach of trying new beers and visiting new pubs in January.

Chris Reynolds boarded the Kennections 4 bus service at Newbury railway station and was joined by Tim Thomas and Ian Herdman at Newbury Wharf bus station at 2.30pm.



Half an hour later, after passing the boarded-up Rising Sun in Stockcross, the Bell at Boxford and snowdrops at Welford, the group left the bus at the stop near The Great Shefford which is referred to in the timetable as The Swan, after its former name.

Since Joshua Khan opened the refurbished Great Shefford in September, with Georgiana Caras as General Manager, six cask ales have been available. The group tasted several beers from a range brewed by Ramsbury, Dark Star, Butcombe, St Austell, Saltaire and Timothy Taylor. After the group was seated, near the fire, in the Racing Lounge, Joshua greeted them and mentioned a beer festival at the pub on on 3/4 July.

At 4.41pm, the CAMRA group was picked up by the same driver with a bus almost full of school students returning to Lambourn. The bus passed the Queens Arms, East Garston and the Plough at Eastbury before reaching the Market Square stop at 4.55pm. After changing the destination to Newbury and the service number to 4a, the bus set off again, passing the George, Lambourn and the Pheasant Inn, Shefford Woodlands before reaching Wickham crossroads at 5.14pm.

The group walked about 200 yards back to



reach the Five Bells and entered through the new main doorway. Interior changes at the pub, since it reopened in November, include repainting, lighting with decorative filament bulbs and a screen to display the beer range. There is still a real fire in the fireplace and a wide range of cask ales - with six beers available when we visited. The locally brewed range included beers from Two Cocks, Swamp Bog and Ramsbury breweries.



Josh, Mark, Duncan and Emily – The Five Bells

Duncan Jones introduced us to his friendly staff who kindly agreed to pose for a photo behind the bar.

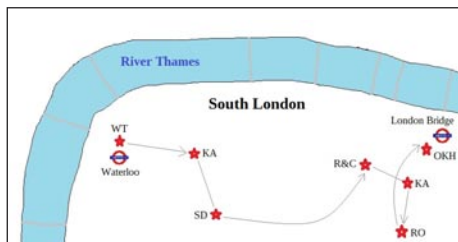
Finally, Chris, Tim and Ian set off in darkness to catch the 4c bus at 7.04pm, again driven by the same driver. This last bus of the day arrived back in Newbury at 7.21pm and marked the end of an enjoyable Tryanuary tour!

The cost of a Connect day bus fare is £6. The useful Kennections App allows users to track Kennections buses. For more details, visit: www.reading-buses.co.uk/kennections

Details of West Berkshire CAMRA meetings and trips are on www.westberks.camra.org.uk and on Facebook and Twitter (@WBCAMRA).

South London Trail

John McLaughlin produced an itinerary for a South London ale trail from Waterloo to Borough and London Bridge for CAMRA branches in the Central Southern region on Saturday 25 January.



West Berkshire CAMRA members, including Chairman Andy Pinkard, followed the Tryanuary trail from the Waterloo Tap (WT) to the Stage Door (SD) before diverting to visit the Rose & Crown (R&C), one of seven London PubLove

'beer, burgers & beds' pubs with hostel accommodation above. Other pubs visited on John's original trail were the Kings Arms (KA) in Roupell Street and again in Newcomen Street, the Old Kings Head (OKH) and the Harvey's Brewery pub – the Royal Oak (RO).



Allan, Andy, Mike, Richard, Tony, Frank – Royal Oak

An illustrated account of the trail by Tim Thomas with more details of the route and beers tasted is posted on www.beereurope.blogspot.com

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Photo: Tim Thomas

The Borough Arms Hungerford

Hungerford is a historic town surrounded by the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is famous for its antique shops and waterways and offers a variety of walking and cycling trails. Whatever the reason for your visit, please do find time to call in at the Borough Arms, a friendly neighbourhood pub with a welcoming atmosphere, located towards the top end of the High Street. It is well served by public transport, being within easy walking distance from the railway station and bus stops.



Sylvi Giuliani

The Borough Arms started life retailing beer in the early 1800s. The earliest record of this is in the Kelly Directory of 1847, when William Hobbs was recorded as proprietor. A framed photo, taken circa 1920, hangs in the front bar and shows that the pub was then owned by Simonds Brewery of Reading. In 1984 the pub was renamed 'The Tuttiman' but reverted to its current name in 1995. In more recent years the pub has been owned by Wadworth Brewery of Devizes. A more detailed history of the pub can be found on the Hungerford Virtual Museum website.

The current landlady, Sylvi Giuliani, is originally from South Africa but has made Hungerford her home since 2006. Previously working in Digital marketing and technology development, Sylvi had no experience of running a pub before she took over the Borough Arms in 2017. When asked what she wanted

to bring to this pub, she replied that she is passionate about creating a warm, welcoming, comfortable place for customers to spend their precious downtime. She is committed to serving good quality beer and is looking to attain Cask Marque accreditation. Four cask ales from Wadworth are available on handpump: 6X, Henry's IPA, Horizon (Chilled) and a changing seasonal guest ale from the Wadworth portfolio. Additionally there is a range of keg beers and ciders, wines and spirits. Tea and coffee are also available.

The pub does not offer a daily food service but does cater for large booked events such as birthdays, retirement parties, staff parties or wedding receptions. The pub has a spacious interior, with comfortable seating, as well as a large outdoor area, so do give the pub a call if you wish to arrange a function here.

A major refurbishment was undertaken when Sylvi took on the pub in November 2017. The cellar, beer lines and taps were renewed. A new interior design and décor, including interesting artwork that adorns the pub walls has given it a facelift, whilst maintaining its traditional character.

Warmth during the colder months is provided by two wood burners. Sylvi tells me that although the refurbishment has been well received by her customers it did not go down too well with the pub's resident friendly ghosts!



Photo: Borough Arms

The large outdoor seating and drinking area at the rear consists of a patio that leads to an attractive sloping lawned garden. It is both family and dog friendly and offers a welcoming atmosphere, making the Borough Arms a relaxing and pleasant place to spend your leisure time.

Facilities include free wifi and a number of screens for watching your favourite sports events from BT, Sky Sports



and terrestrial channels. Pool and darts are played in an area to the right of the pub as you enter through the front door. The Borough Arms has two pool league teams and a darts league team. Cards and dominoes are available and it is



Photo: Borough Arms

planned to offer a variety of board games. The pub hosts regular quiz evenings, live music, open mic nights and karaoke. Details of upcoming events are given on the pub's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

In January 2020, Sylvi took on the community-owned Tally Ho! pub in Hungerford Newtown, but says that she has no plans to give up the Borough as she loves the place and it's 'her baby'.

Situated at the top of the High Street, the Borough Arms is the first pub as you head down into the town from the south and the last as you walk up the street from the centre. Whichever way you're headed, do take time to visit this friendly and highly recommended neighbourhood hostelry.

Mike Avery

The Borough Arms,
77 High Street, Hungerford. RG17 0NA
Tel: 01488 683233
Email: info@borougharms.co.uk
Website: borougharms.co.uk
Facebook: @BoroughArms
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Opening Hours
Mon - Thu: 3 - 11pm
Fri & Sat: 12 - midnight
Sunday: 12 - 11pm



Quinno in Norway 'this wonderful country'



Photo: Tanya Kynaston

Quinno at Øx Tap Room in Trondheim

In January 2020, Quinten Taylor spent a week in Norway visiting Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim. In February, his guide for future Nordic beer travellers was posted online in www.beereurope.blogspot.com subtitled 'Dr Strangebrew or: How I learned to stop worrying and love £15 a pint Norwegian craft beers'.

Quinno's guide, illustrated with 10 photos, features 10 Tips, 11 Bars and 5 Breweries.

Tip 10 - Know what Norwegians are best at brewing is extracted below:

Great beer in Norway costs good money. You want to get the best, so why pay three times the price for beer that tastes the same as it does back in UK? You need to hit the rich seams. There are two solid options:

Dark beers, namely porters and stouts; the quality of these styles go way above the average of what I'm used to back in the UK. There were at least three beers I tried which I would hail as world class in this category, with a further half dozen or so eliciting long and sustained appreciation. Norwegians know what they're doing with this genre, so take advantage.



Nøgne Ø Porter
Photo: Quinten Taylor

Kveik beers. There exists a farmhouse brewing culture in western Norway which has passed down yeasts referred to as kveik for generations. This practice has resulted in ale yeasts which are typically highly flocculant and phenolic. Sounds off-putting? Well, the Norwegians know how to use this yeast to their advantage and there is an emergent trend of adding these yeasts not just to traditional farmhouse beers but also to modern brews in order to bring out a taste similar to funk, orange peel and clove, a taste which I really began to appreciate. Read more at: milkthefunk.com/wiki/Kveik

The description for a bar in Trondheim is:



Photo: Quinten Taylor

Den Gode Nabo (Øvre Baklandet 66)

Housed in a centuries old wooden building on the iconic riverfront in the old town, this is a feast for those who love history and quirky hostelries. The beer list ain't bad either!

Details of a brewery featured in the Guide are shown below:

Nøgne Ø

One of the few Norwegian brewers to get their products over to the UK in decent quantity, you can't go wrong with any of their beers in any style. Their Gale Force Imperial Stout and Porter are world class dark beers.

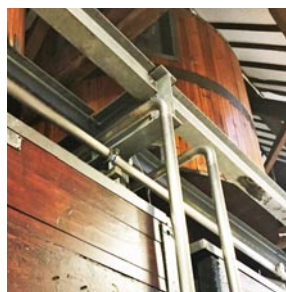
Wychwood and Brakspear Beers Tour



Quinten Taylor organised a Reading & Mid Berks CAMRA minibus trip from the Clifton Arms, Caversham, to Witney for a Brakspear / Wychwood brewery tour on 23 November.



Open to the public, the busy cellar taproom served Brakspear Brewery Gravity (the new name for Brakspear Bitter) and Wychwood Brewery Hobgoblin beers.



The square lower tanks and the round vessels above them, used in the traditional Brakspear double drop fermentation process, are distinct from the Wychwood fermentation vessels.

Finally, Chris hosted a tasting session with a range of bottled Brakspear and Wychwood beers.

For more details see the Brakspear post in: www.beereurope.blogspot.com (Dec. 2019). www.wychwood.co.uk

We are in the
CAMRA Good Beer Guide
2020 (12th year running)

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Black Country break

In late November, to coincide with the Dudley Winter Ales Fayre, Mark Geeson (Surrey Hants Borders (SHB) CAMRA) organised a break, based in Stourbridge, for a group of CAMRA members. Mark named the group 'The Farnham Trubblers' although many arrived from other parts of the country, like Tim Thomas who travelled there from Newbury, by train, via Worcester.



Farnham Trubblers arrive at the Vine Inn 26/11/2019

After checking in at the Talbot Hotel and visits to nearby Barbridge and Craddock's brewery tap, the Duke William, the group caught a local bus to Delph for a visit to the Vine, known locally as the Bull & Bladder, the Batham's brewery tap.

A pre-arranged tour of the Vine's cellar, where ales are supplied from hogshead (54 gallons) and barrel (36 gallons) sized casks, was a highlight of the evening. (The largest casks used by most West Berkshire pubs are (9 gallon) firkins.)

The next day, Tony Lea (SHB CAMRA) led the group on a tour of pubs with notable interiors in Walsall including the Victoria, the Fountain Inn (Backyard Brewhouse tap), the New Inn (better known as the Pretty Bricks) and finally the Turf Tavern, also known as Tinky's, an unspoilt terraced pub in Bloxwich, where no photography is allowed.



Tim's last day allowed an evening visit to the Dudley Winter Ales Fayre where Mark and Tony had volunteered for bar duties.

Earlier, Mark led us on local buses to the Beacon Hotel, the Sarah Hughes brewery tap in Sedgley and the Britannia Inn, Upper Gornal, where a pint of pale Batham's Bitter and a cheese and onion cob (roll) cost only £4.55.



The Britannia Inn 28/11/2019

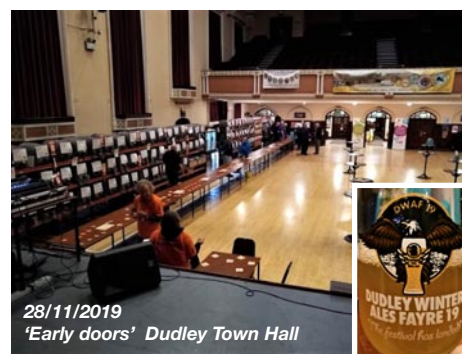
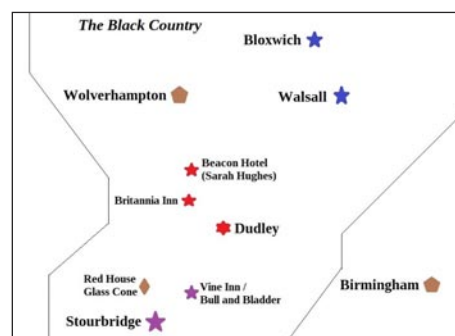


Photo: Mark Geeson

Read Tim's five posts (dated January 2020) on www.beereurope.blogspot.com for more photos and details to assist with planning a Black Country break - that should appeal especially to beer drinkers who like milds and sweeter bitters as supplied by Holden's Brewery and the local breweries mentioned previously.

clear brew

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www.oldlondonapprentice.co.uk

GIG GUIDE

Ace Space, St. Nicolas Road, Newbury. Tickets: Hogan Music, Newbury. www.acespace.org.uk



14 Mar - Emily Barker, Lukas Drinkwater
20 Mar - Phil Beer
17 Apr - Miranda Sykes
23 May - Hannah Scott + People Versus
Unplugged Open Mic - 1st Friday of month

The Lamb, Newbury
FB @NewburyJazzPlatform
Jazz music, featuring Gavin Wilkinson's house band. Entry £2
3rd Wednesday of month 7.30pm:
18 Mar, 15 Apr, 20 May



The Angel, Woolhampton
www.jazzangel.co.uk 8pm Saturdays
28 Mar - Baron Mara
25 Apr - Lea Lyle Quartet
30 May - to be advised

Bacon Arms, Newbury
20 Mar - Beatle Juice
22 Mar, 26 Apr,
24 May (all 4pm) - Total Madness
12 Apr (4pm) - Mash

Lock Stock & Barrel, Newbury
7 Mar - Jon Walsh
15 Mar - Alex Gale
28 Mar - Sion Whaley
9 May - DV8

The Monument, Newbury -
Fridays & Saturdays
14 Mar - Straw Dogs
11 Apr - Bottle Kids
25 Apr - Beatle Juice
16 May - Thickcut
30 May - JJ & the Jukes
Open Mic night with Oli Hill on Thursdays

@DollhouseArts (FB) presents
live music in local pubs:
at **The Globe**, Newbury
4 Mar - Mike Edwards
18 Mar - Colorado River
at **The Catherine Wheel**, Newbury
7 Mar - Johnny Marvel's Blues Groove
10 Apr - LongDayLateNight
11 Apr - Third Lung



Lion, Newbury
Last Friday of the month
27 Mar - Funk Soul Rebels
24 Apr - Leech

The Newbury, Newbury
Weekly on Thursdays - Sion Whaley
presents Open Mic night

Old London Apprentice, Newbury
2nd Friday of each month is Folk Night
25 Apr - Soultones

The White Hart, Thatcham - Saturdays
7 Mar - No Way Out
14 Mar - Uproar
4 Apr - Bombay Casanovas
11 Apr - Fubar
25 Apr - JJ & the Jukes
2 May - Monkey Dolls
9 May - Mash
16 May - Blue Hayz

More pubs with live music:

Hungerford area: Borough Arms, Plume, Railway Tavern, Wheatsheaf (Chilton Foliat)
Newbury: Document House, Nags Head
Thatcham and other areas: Kings Head, Taste of England, Castle Inn (Cold Ash), Fox Inn (Hermitage), Rowbarge (Woolhampton)

2020 West Berkshire CAMRA Outstanding Community Pub

In 2019, Thatcham's Kings Head won the Community Pub of the Year award. For 2020, the Branch is looking for a previously unrecognised pub management team to gain this award.

Factors influencing the award include team games, charity support, noticeboards, group meetings and activities like beer festivals, trips, quizzes and music events.

Anyone, including the publican, can nominate one or more pubs. Please send details, by 30 June, to Mike Avery secretary@westberks.camra.org.uk or by using the online form at www.westberks.camra.org.uk/nominate



There are now 40 LocAle pubs in our branch serving beer from breweries within 25 miles. pubsofficer@westberks.camra.org.uk

See also the LocAle Pubs page on www.westberks.camra.org.uk

LocAle Pubs - WEST of A34

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| The Bell at Boxford | Boxford |
| The Blackbird | Bagnor |
| The Downgate | Hungerford |
| The Eastbury Plough | Eastbury |
| The Five Bells | Wickham |
| The Fox at Peasemore | Peasemore |
| The Great Shefford | Great Shefford |
| The John O'Gaunt Inn | Hungerford |
| The Red House | Marsh Benham |
| The Tally Ho! | Hungerford Newtown |
| The Three Swans Hotel | Hungerford |

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Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit www.camra.org.uk/joinup, or call 01727 798440.* All forms should be addressed to Membership Department, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

Your details:

Title Surname
Forename(s)
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| Under 26 Membership | £18 <input type="checkbox"/> | £20 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Joint Membership | £31.50 <input type="checkbox"/> | £33.50 <input type="checkbox"/> |
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By Email ☐ By Post ☐ By Email ☐ By Post ☐

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Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

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

Signed
Date
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To the Manager: Bank or Building Society: Address: Postcode: Name(s) of Account Holder: Bank or Building Society Account Number: Branch Sort Code: Reference:

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This Guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer.

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- If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd asks you to
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

Mild is dead, long live the new mild

A couple of weeks ago, Roger Protz quoted a Black Country brewer foretelling the eventual death of mild along with the passing of those who regularly drink it. But what if it's just mutated?

We once wrote about a resurgence in the popularity of mild not as a mainstream beer style but as a niche oddity, like milk stout or Berliner Weisse.

We still think that's about right – that what is dead, or dying, is the standard three-point-something ABV dark mild that too often tastes like watered down stout or, worse, watered down mild.

What hadn't quite occurred to us, though, until we listened to our own middle-aged grumbling, was that mild might have faked its own death before sneaking back into the room with a different hat on.

Forget beer styles, forget beer history, and think about utility: what do English drinkers seem to want?

A beer they can drink four pints of without too much damage.

A beer that doesn't demand lots of attention while being drunk – that goes down easily and addresses thirst.

That isn't bitter, or dry and, indeed, might even be called sweet.

For much of the 20th century, that was mild.

Then, for about 40 years, it was so-called cooking lager – the kind of stuff that appalled Rheinheitsgebotists but which British drinkers took to overwhelmingly from the 1970s onward.

But now... Could it be soft, hazy session IPA?

Circa 4%. Not bitter, perhaps even sugary. And undemanding, unless you're hung up on haze, with fruit juice and soft drink citrus flavours rather than the brittle hop spikiness.

One data point does not prove the case but it's certainly fascinating to see the degree to which Ray's dad, previously a keen mild drinker, has taken to beers like Moor Nor'Hop.

We're Boak and Bailey

We're geeks in general, but especially about beer and pubs. We write under the names Jessica Boak and Ray Bailey. We live in Bristol in the UK. We've been blogging about beer since 2007.

www.boakandbailey.com

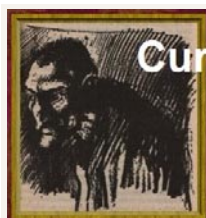


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**Social
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Campaign for Real Ale:
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Curmudgeon

Drying Out

There's a limit to how far pubs can go in appealing to non-drinkers.

A major problem for the pub trade is the growing proportion of young people who have chosen not to drink alcohol at all. In response to this, a recent report has said that 70% of 'Generation Z' believe that pubs need to become 'more inviting' to those who do not drink. This has to be taken with a pinch of salt given that it was sponsored by a coffee company, but it does make an important point.

Clearly it makes sense for pubs to widen their appeal so that they can be more inclusive of non-drinkers. Customers are increasingly likely to consist of mixed groups of drinkers and abstainers. This can be achieved by providing higher-quality tea and coffee and soft drinks, offering food and putting on events like quizzes and live music. And, to be honest, they have been doing these things to a greater or lesser extent throughout my drinking career. It's nothing new or exactly a startling revelation.

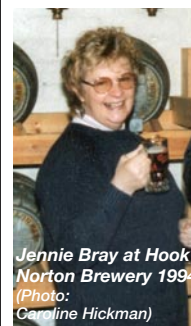
However, there's an important caveat here. The core purpose of pubs is, and always has been, socialising centred around the consumption of alcoholic drinks. Yes, over the decades they have needed to evolve and change in various ways, but that fundamental fact remains unchanged. If nobody drank alcohol, there would be no pubs. Non-drinkers may enjoy various activities and services provided by pubs, but they wouldn't exist in the first place without drinkers. It's rather like non-alcoholic beer – it's only there to mirror to some extent the taste and experience of drinking alcoholic beer.

If they go too far down the road of changing their offer, pubs may well find themselves evolving into something entirely different – a restaurant, a music venue or a community centre. It also has to be questioned to what extent all this diversification is actually going to bring new customers into pubs. It may make non-drinkers happier when they are there, but will it encourage them to visit more often?

The reason that the pub trade has declined so much over recent years is essentially because, due to a combination of social and legislative changes, the demand for their core product has fallen. There's a limit to how far they can go in catering for other needs. Realistically, the fortunes of the pub trade are closely linked to the proportion of people in society who enjoy drinking alcohol in a social setting.

The Curmudgeon column appears in *Opening Times*, Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA's bimonthly magazine. Comments on his articles can be left on the website curmudgeoncolumns.blogspot.com

Jennie Bray, one of the earliest members of the former Newbury branch, died at the Great Western Hospital, Swindon, on 31 January 2020 at the age of 81.



Jennie Bray at Hook Norton Brewery 1994
(Photo: Caroline Hickman)

Jennie was born and brought up in Derby, and was introduced to beer drinking by her father.

After moving to West Berkshire, she and her second husband Jonathan joined CAMRA in 1974. She quickly became a member of the branch committee, and served as Social Secretary and later Vice-Chairman. She was also appointed Area Organiser for Berkshire.

Jennie was a highly convivial person and enjoyed the good things in life - good ale, good wine, good food, good company - and her attractive looks and personality made her very popular.

She is survived by her partner Bob Graves, her daughters Sarah and Emma, and four granddaughters.

Roy Bailey

More at westberkscamra.org.uk/notices

CAMRA Discounts

Members enjoy discounts at CAMRA beer festivals and local pubs below:

Hind's Head, Aldermaston
Kings Head, Thatcham
Rowbarg, Woolhampton
Three Horseshoes, Brimpton

Newbury:

Catherine Wheel
Cow & Cask
Gun, Wash Common
Hatchet Inn (with CAMRA voucher)
King Charles Tavern
Lion
Old London Apprentice





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Beer Festival Diary

CAMRA run or supported 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.

13-14 March

10th Wantage Beer & Cider Festival

The Beacon, Portway, Wantage OX12 9BY
www.whitehorsecamra.org.uk

13-14 March

Winchester Beer & Cider Festival

Guildhall, Broadway, Winchester SO23 9GH
www.winchesterbeerfestival.org.uk

17-18 April

10th Newbury Racecourse Beer Festival

newburyracecourse.co.uk

7-10 May

25th Reading Beer & Cider Festival

Christchurch Meadows, Caversham RG4 8DH
www.readingbeerfestival.org.uk

24 May

10th Bracknell Ale & Cider Festival

Bracknell RFC, Lily Hill Park RG12 2UG
festival.bracknalevents.co.uk

Diary Dates 2020

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!

Friday 13 March

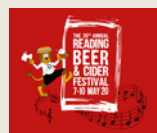
Wantage Beer and Cider Festival
social

Details: page 5 12 noon

Tuesday 14 April

Easter lunch social

The Hatchet Inn, Newbury
12 noon



Wednesday 8 April

Branch meeting

The Great Shefford 8pm

Saturday 2 May

Pewsey ale trail

Details: page 3 1.30pm

Thursday 7 May

Reading Beer & Cider Festival
social

Details: page 5 7pm

Friday 17 April

Newbury Racecourse

Beer & Cider Festival social

Details: page 5 1pm

Late additions, amendments & further details on our website:
www.westberkscamra.org.uk

Sat 16 May

Mild tasting social in Compton

Details: page 3 11:15am

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