



Issue 39
Winter 2009

FREE
Please
take one



SHAKESBEER

Newsletter of Shakespeare branch of CAMRA - Real ale in Shakespeare country & The Vale

Branch celebrates new Brewery

Norman Knight launches Patriot Missile

No we haven't declared war on anyone. Shakespeare CAMRA branch are simply celebrating the opening of the new Patriot Brewery at The Norman Knight, Whichford in the heart of the Warwickshire Cotswolds and the launch of their first brew, *Missile* on 15th October.

Patriot's Brewery Liaison Officer, branch member Ian Merivale, gratefully accepted an invitation to sample the first brew for sale which he describes as a smooth, golden, very drinkable bitter, with a modest a.b.v. of 3.6%, certainly light enough to lead to a second pint. Brewer Tim Young explained that he first learned to brew, using full mash techniques, on a small scale in Somerset, where he also made



contact with Blackdown Brewery in Devon. Subsequently, he and fellow Round Tabler Matt Findlay, from

Knowle near Solihull, attended a BrewLab course at the University of Sunderland. They planned to set up a micro brewery between them in Spain catering for the 'ex-pats', hence the name. For various (currency related) reasons, the timing

of the operation was not good and plans to move to Spain were



Tim and Matt in the new brewery

abandoned. This setback happily coincided with Mike Garner's planned movement of Wizard Ales to the West Country, the premises in Whichford became available and the UK Patriot Brewery was born.

Despite an additional 45 places, a new bar extension at **The Norman Knight** is still barely sufficient to cope with the pub's growing customer base.

Future planned beers include "Bulldog" at 4.5% a.b.v. and "Heart of Oak" at 4.0% a.b.v. so watch this space!

Beer Festival rides again at Stratford Racecourse

Concerns about the Shakespeare CAMRA Stratford Beer Festival 2010 have been finally laid to rest when the branch successfully booked the racecourse venue for the weekend **16th and 17th June 2010**. The Festival viability had been questioned when the branch were informed that there would be a race day on the dates used for the past three years. The search for an alternative date or venue was settled at a festival planning meeting at The Fleece, Brettforton in October, (see page 7). Festival organisers promise the same high quality and variety of over forty ales and ciders as well as food and entertainment throughout, plus camping available, hopefully in summer sunshine.

Look out for the next issue of Shakesbeer for full details and keep your eye on our website at www.stratfordbeerfestival.org.uk

See our website www.shakespearecamra.org.uk

SIBA Brewing Business Awards 2009

Overall Winner



Wye Valley Brewery

Herefordshire

www.wyevalleybrewery.co.uk

Pub News...

Alcester

Change again at **The Cross Keys**. Our latest enquiries reveal that it has been bought, lock stock and barrels by Mandy and John Downes. Licensee Mandy is Alcester born and bred and although this is the first pub the couple have owned, has worked most of her life in the licensing trade including a spell as chef in the pub next door, **The Royal Oak**. Mandy outlined her plans to keep the locals happy by providing home cooked food, (with a full menu soon after Christmas), live music with acoustic and folk nights and excitingly, plans to buy a piano and have good old fashioned singalong nights. The couple took over the pub on 1st October with John looking after the

Mandy with my beer



cellar, as well as working the bar. Currently a very fine pint of Mad Goose is on offer but they've plans for a second ale if all goes well. Mandy confessed to me that she 'wasn't that keen on beer', but ever the campaigner, I pressed her to have a taste of their own (my) Mad Goose and was delighted to hear her surprised, "...oh, it's quite nice actually". There's hope for her yet. A big welcome from the branch and good luck to them both.

Alcester

Well done Dave Lloyd in the news again from **The White Lion**. Not only was a fun and interesting time had by all who attended the 'Pink Casino' night in October, but over £500 was raised in aid of Breast Cancer. The charity night had all who took part wearing

or carrying something pink as part of the fun. According to our Alcester source there were very tasty 'pig-baps' on offer too. *Wychwood*, *Hobgoblin* replaced the normal offering of *London Pride* for the scary season - another good reason for being there.

Norton

Whilst enjoying an excellent pint of *Marstons Ploughmans* at **The Norton Grange**, our roving informant Jim Sargeant learnt that the pub would respond to customer demand and order from a selection of beers on request. The beers on offer are listed in a free booklet published by Marstons and as a result some beers are continually changing. Now that's what we call service. Also available at the time of reporting were Marston's Pedigree, Banks' Bitter and Hobgoblin.

Alderminster

The Bell were delighted to be awarded 'Highly commended' from the Great British Pub Awards held in association with The Morning Advertiser to earn a place in the Top 500 Club. They were also shortlisted in the final 8 for Best Dining Pub of the Year 2009 by Coventry and Warwickshire Food and Drink Awards 2009.

Evesham

October saw the branch bid a very sudden and sad farewell to Joel Moniz, Manager of **The Olde Swanne**. Congratulations and good luck to him, he's gone on to bigger and better things at Bank House, in Cheltenham, a brand new Wetherspoons.

A big welcome then, to our new Manager Dave Waddell who has worked for Wetherspoons for nine years, including a spell managing the **Penny Black** at Kidderminster. A glutton for punishment Dave has a fifty mile daily commute to Sutton Coldfield despite which he is very happy to be in Evesham. Although not yet a big beer drinker, (working on that), Dave has a growing interest in real ales and at our meeting said that he wants to encourage more ale drinkers to the pub. Certainly, when we met, the beers

I tried were in first class condition, a fact which he generously attributes to the hard work and expertise of bar and cellar manager Susie Riley.

Dave Waddell



Binton

In October, whilst most pubs had half an eye on the upcoming Christmas celebrations, the **Blue Boar** embraced the multicultural nature of the UK and celebrated 'Divali', the Indian festival of lights, with an all day feast of authentic Indian food. Enterprising stuff for a traditional English pub serving fine ales since the early 1600s.

Iron Cross

Octobers new manager at **The Queens Head** unfortunately didn't stay long. The pub is however still operating under the watchful eye of relief manager Alistair Dempster until leaseholder/licensee Colin Royall can find a replacement. You will still find a decent pint of TT Landlord and Bombadier there and Alistair hopes to add Doombar to the offering in the near future.

Shipston-on-Stour

Landlord Baggy Saunders was in the news again when the courtyard garden of **The Horseshoe** was a winner of Shipston in Bloom award 2009.

The Horseshoe bills itself as being 'animal friendly' and was featured by the BBC in the spring for giving its beer slops to local racing camels. There is a short video on the pub website, (www.horseshoeshipston.com).

Better than that though the pub serves excellent beer with Doombar and Bass more or less permanently on offer and a changing guest beer.



More Pub News

Alcester

Hearty congratulations to Teej at **The Holly Bush** who celebrated her ten year anniversary at the pub on 21st November. Invited guests enjoyed the normal generous selection of ales whilst celebrating with her.

The residents of Alcester and beer loving visitors certainly have no complaints as a loyal contingent of ale lovers ensure that standards don't fall.



Too rare a sight - Teej enjoys one of her own beers

Welford

As well as being one of our latest additions to the *Good Beer Guide*, **The Bell Inn** has been voted the Warwickshire Dining Pub of the Year 2009 by readers of *The Good Pub Guide*. Offering five real ales as well as first class food, this has to be a great place to visit.

Shipston

Early showers did nothing to spoil a 6th November Fireworks and Bonfire celebration at **Shipston Sports Club**. Our correspondent Jim Sargeant reported



Club Stewardess Val Saunders

a good few hundred people at this very well organised event but says, "...the piece de resistance for me was upstairs in the bar where Val was dispensing an excellent pint of Wizard Ales *Old Coombe*. ...It just goes to show that cask beer goes down well at the club. It is a pity that real ale is not available there on a regular basis." You heard it here first!!

Broadway

We all like to support a good cause and it's nice to enjoy a pint. You could do both at once at **The Swan Hotel**

in November as Licensee John Strange donated 10p to The British Legion from every pint of *Thwait's Liberation Ale* sold. This amber beer with toffee flavours and a dry bitter finish, is made in partnership with The British Legion and John's efforts join those of the brewery and their customers, to total over £65,000 to date. John, who's a bit of a history buff, also prepared a factsheet detailing key events of WW1 and highlighting significance of Armistice Day for beer drinkers to enjoy with their pint.



Alcester

The Three Tuns is entering the spirit of St Nicholas Night, December 6th. All proceeds from the sale of a firkin of Hobsons *Boy Bishop*, donated by the brewery will go to the St Nicholas Night Charity. The night festival was founded six years ago by The Rev. Canon David Capron, founder member of Shakespeare CAMRA and he generally has the honour of pulling, (and supping), the first pint.

Loxley, Stratford

Great news for music lovers at **The Fox**. Starting on 6th December they are staging traditional music sessions on the first Sunday of every month. A trial run in November



attracted over twenty instruments including bagpipes and great fun was had by all. The sessions have no set routine and start about 8.00 pm. The pub are keen for anyone to bring along their instrument and join in to enjoy an evening of fun and entertainment or simply come along and listen.

Hampton Lucy

Here's something a bit different by way

of entertainment. **The Boars Head** are staging a 'Magic Night' on Friday 15th January. Listed on their website, (www.theboarsheadhamptonlucy4food.co.uk) as 'an evening of enchantment and wonder', the entertainment is accompanied by a three course meal at £20 and the normal first class selection of ales.

Shipston

It's nice to see the **White Bear** open again after a short closure. New hosts are business partners Stacie Morris and Dave Hayto who each have much experience of pubs and hotels. Stacie was most recently at Hartland Hotel on the IOW and Dave closer by at the Cross Hands which became Moretons and is now the Greedy Goose, between Moreton and Chipping Norton.



Cask beers at the Bear are to rotate on a regular basis with *Bass*, *Skinners Ginger Tosser* and *Hop Back Crop Circle* first to appear. The pub is open all day every day and will soon be serving food.

Watch this space...

As we go to press we're aware that **The Bull, Bidford, The Fish and Anchor, Offenham and The Trumpet, Evesham** are in the process of changing hands. More details and a welcome to the incoming licensees in the next issue I hope.



The Richford Bunch breathe new life into Alcester's Swan Hotel

To the delight of CAMRA members and local residents **The Swan Hotel** in Swan Street, Alcester opened its doors on Friday 2nd October following a sixteen month closure. This Enterprise owned establishment has been tastefully refurbished by new licensee Amy Richford and her family and it really is a family affair. Amy's mum Eve will be



running the restaurant, (although the food on offer is prepared by Jurgen the Austrian Chef), dad Steve will manage the hotel administration, brother Jason is in charge of entertainment and certainly not least, Woody the English Springer Spaniel Cross will be welcoming old and new customers alike.

No stranger to the hospitality trade, Amy, Alcester born and bred, has over 10 years experience including spells at The Holly Bush and more recently as hotel and banqueting manager at Broadway's Dormy House Hotel.

The Swan Hotel itself offers eleven en-suite rooms and can easily cater for weddings and other functions. Reasonably priced bar meals or more



Amy, Jason, Steve,
Eve and Woody

formal restaurant dining is available. Live music with a state of the art sound and lighting system on Friday nights, Karaoke on Sundays and a Wednesday quiz night as well as themed celebrations for occasions like Halloween and Christmas add to the hotel's attractions. Not least though, four very well kept ales are on offer, on our visit, Bass, Black Sheep and two Purity beers were all in first class condition .



The Swan Hotel
Alcester

1 Swan Street
Alcester
Warwickshire B49 5DP
Tel: 01789 763056

Opening times
Mon- Thurs 10am-11pm
Friday 10am-1am
Saturday 9am-1am
Sunday 9am-11pm



Quintessential English market town hotel set in the heart of Shakespeare country

Bars

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- * Perfectly conditioned cask ales, including guest ales every week
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- * Delicious bar meals available—all meals under £5!
- * Live music every weekend, Quiz Night on Wednesdays & Karaoke on Sundays

Restaurant

- * Delicious menu featuring our delicious Purity beer battered cod
- * Finish the occasion with a scrumptious indulgent dessert
- * All food is cooked to order by chef Jurgen and his team

Hotel

- * Perfect blend of character, comfort and relaxation
- * 11 fully en-suite rooms. Breakfast and evening meals available

Function Facilities

- * Party, corporate & training facility packages available
- * Free wireless broadband access and conference facilities
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THE CROWN AND TRUMPET INN

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Serving **Lunch** and **Dinner** all through the week using locally produced ingredients to make seasonally cooked homemade dishes. **Sunday Roast** with Cotswold beef and Tewksbury mustard.

Shakespeare's CAMRA Worcestershire pub of the year 2008-09

During December and January come along to our Christmas and Winter mini beer festival, with our two featured beers shown below, as well as other welcome guest ales.

Please call for Christmas Party menus.



Stroud Brewery

Ding Dong - 4.5%

A dark, warming porter with rich liquorice, a hint of Christmas spice and easy enough to drink several pints!

<http://www.stroudbrewery.co.uk>



Stanway Brewery

Lords - a - Leaping - 4.5%

A dark full bodied beer with a strong crystal malt character. Name derived from Stanway House and the traditional Christmas song.

<http://www.stanwaybrewery.co.uk>

01386 853202 - info@cotswoldholidays.co.uk - <http://www.cotswoldholidays.co.uk>



Open
Mon - Thurs
12.00 noon - 2.30pm
and 5.50pm till 11.00pm

Open ALL DAY
Saturday and Sunday

Sunday Lunch
12 noon till 8.00pm

For sample menus go
to www.thepeacockoxhill.co.uk

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The Peacock is nestled in the sleepy village of Oxhill, midway between Stratford and Banbury. It has been tastefully modernised but still maintains its old world charm, with oak beams, flagstone floors and roaring log fire.

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Telephone: 01295 688060



Christmas Menu

available from December 1st

Open Christmas Day for
drinks & nibbles from
11.00am

Boxing Day, Christmas
Sunday and Monday food
from 12 noon - 8.00pm

New Years Eve 2 course
Buffet and Disco £20

Pam and Yvonne wish all their customers a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year



Closing date for copy for the next issue of **SHAKESPEARE** will be 14th February 2010

Shakespeare County Beer Festival

The Shakespeare County Beer Festival, organised by branch member Dale Povey and partner Alex Doncses took place over Friday 9th and Saturday 10th October

It was a bold attempt to raise money for 3 local charities, The George Povey Gardening Project which supports children with physical and communication disabilities, First Response, a voluntary team of paramedics that provides a service to the community by responding to emergency 999 calls for the ambulance service and The Liver Transplant Trust. Stratford Armouries who hosted the festival is a museum and visitor centre specialising in

historical English, European and middle-eastern arms and armour. The centre also hosts a new creative indoor play barn where parents can let their children burn off their unused fuel, high amongst aeroplanes, whilst they enjoy a cup of freshly brewed coffee and home made food. The Armouries, sponsored by DEFRA, is located 2 miles from Stratford-Upon-Avon town centre and is well worth a visit even without the beer festival. The forty beers at the festival, all

from Warwickshire brewers, were in excellent condition and coupled with first class entertainment ensured that all who attended had a great time. The festival also gave Shakespeare CAMRA an ideal campaigning opportunity and a chance to sign up seven new members and talk about our aims and activities to many others.



First new member of the day signed up by Membership Secretary Katie Williams and Branch Secretary Liz Kirby

Early fireworks at The Tuns!!

You would have witnessed a rare bowing of the head and an uncomfortable shuffling of feet as your editor faced the wrath of Mrs Pauline Burdett of The Three Tuns, Alcester, following production of the last Shakebeer.

Pauline wouldn't allow further pictures of her or promotion of the pub until we sorted the below matter:

In the caption of a picture of Pauline, featured in a description of the 'Tuns Picnic' in the last issue I described her as a 'serving wench'. In fairness I didn't consider it a derogatory term and it seemed to fit the tongue in cheek 'pirate theme' of the piece. Pauline however considers the term offensive as she has every right to do and having since researched it I find that a lot of other people do too.

As it's not actually accurate and I'm at liberty to call her licensee, publican, proprietor, landlady, innkeeper, or even by name I am more than happy to say **SORRY PAULINE.**



Generous festival goes at Stratford Beer and Cider Festival 2009 raised a total of £837 for the local Shakespeare Hospice.

A cheque for the last £500 Raised was presented to Hospice volunteer Deborah Jones at The Fleece, Bretforton on 21 October.

Deborah informed the meeting, who had gathered to discuss next years festival that, since 2007 over £2,200 had been raised at the Stratford beer festivals and that the Hospice was very grateful to CAMRA for their continued support.



THE WHITE LION @ TREDINGTON

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MUSIC KNIGHTS

Is anybody interested in performing at The George, either open mike, folk session or Americana.
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Closing date for copy for the next issue of ~~SHAKESPEARE~~ will be 14th February 2010

Mummers the word

Festival goes at the ever popular Holly Bush, Alcester, beer festival last June along with many others throughout the year were hugely entertained by the Shakespeare Mummers (part of the Shakespeare Morris Men from Stratford-upon-Avon), who stage regular performance in pubs throughout the area. On this occasion they performed a play with a dragon with two heads!

Originally, the mummers were poor farm workers and any food & money they were given would help tide their families over the winter period when many were out of work.

Mummers' plays are said to stem from old fertility rites once performed in mid-winter to bring life back to the world. They always have a cycle of death (of the old year), followed by its resurrection by magical means. After an introduction by the presenter, generally Father Christmas, there is usually a fight between the hero (most commonly Saint or King George) and the villain (who can be any one of a number of characters,

including Bold Slasher, Turkish Knight & the Scary Dragon). The fight results in one (or both) being killed. The corpse is then magically brought to life again by the Doctor, helped (or hindered!) by a side-kick quack called Jack Finney. There then follows some 'business' by characters, such as Beelzebub, Alexander & Happy Jack, a song is sung and finally the serious job of extracting

money from the audience.

Originally, the mummers were poor farm workers and any food & money they were given would help tide their families over the winter period when many were out of work. Any ale they were given would of course be drunk, (no change there then!), but nowadays the collection goes mainly to local charities.

The plays were passed down orally and some became garbled over the years,

as each player would only know his (never her) own part and not necessarily those of the other players. This has led to some strange lines and names: for example in one play the villain's name has changed from the Turkish Knight into a 'Turkey Snipe'.

Shakespeare Mummers perform a great variety of local plays in local villages and no two are ever quite the same. In fact the only thing that appears to be consistent is the fun had by the players.

The table below lists venues where you might catch a performance over the next month or so. Although correct at the time of writing some have yet to be confirmed so, to be sure visit the website at www.shakespearemorris.org.uk.

Our thanks to Captain of the Shakespeare Mummers, Alan Whitbread (Father Christmas) for his assistance in compiling this article.

Date	Time	Event
Fri 4 Dec	20.30	Snowhill Arms, Snowhill, Gloucs.
	21.15	Crown & Trumpet, Broadway, Worcs. GBG
Sun 6 Dec	19.30	Three Tuns, Alcester, Warks. (St Nicholas Day) GBG
	20.30	Holly Bush, Alcester, Warks. (St Nicholas Day) GBG
Tue 8 Dec	20.30	Wheatsheaf, Badsey, Worcs
	21.30	King's Arms, Cleeve Prior, Worcs
	22.15	Cottage of Content, Barton, Warks. (Music Club)
Fri 11 Dec	20.30	Norman Knight, Whichford, Warks
	21.15	Fox & Hounds, Great Wolford, Warks
	22.15	Plough, Stretton-on-Fosse, Warks GBG
Wed 16 Dec	20.30	Snitterfield Arms, Snitterfield, Warks
	21.15	New Inn, Norton Lindsey, Warks
	22.15	Cock Horse, Rowington, Warks (Folk Club)
Fri 18 Dec	20.30	George, Brailes, Warks
	21.15	Royal Oak, Whatcote, Warks
	22.15	White Hart, Newbold-on-Stour, Warks.
Sat 26 Dec	13.30	Fleece, Bretforton, Worcs GBG
Tue 29 Dec	20.30	Mason's Arms, Pebworth, Worcs.
	21.15	Mason's Arms, Long Marston, Warks.
	22.15	Salmon Tail, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warks
Fri 1 Jan	13.30	Blue Boar, Temple Grafton, Warks (SMM Party)
Wed 6 Jan	20.30	Broom Tavern, Broom, Warks
	21.15	Frog, Bidford-on-Avon, Warks
	22.15	Golden Cross, Ardens Grafton, Warks,



Good beer at the sign of The Black Horse



Quite a crowd turned out to **The Black Horse** at Morton Morrell to congratulate landlord Brian Quinney when he received Shakespeare CAMRA's Pub of the Season award for Autumn 2009. A well deserved accolade for this timeless, tucked away pub, in the heart of the village since at least 1886 when the census survey lists Charles Wincott there as grocer and publican. You might be forgiven for thinking that Brian had always been there too, since as both he and the pub have an unchanging, almost timeless quality; in fact he has only been there for the past twenty seven years, now sharing the place with his 2 (ish) year old rescue dog, Ben.

You won't find fancy food here,

nor loud music or a range of alcopops, but plenty of banter and conversation. Brian has kept the pub going despite the current trend of closures, primarily by keeping first class beers and offering a friendly service. The crowd, which included visitors, regulars and CAMRA members from two branches, gathered in the cosy front bar to show their appreciation and later enjoyed a selection of snacks and sandwiches provided by Brian in the rear bar.

Beers on offer were Hooky Bitter, a local favourite and always available, and Kelham Island's Pale Rider, one of a series of stronger, ever changing guest beers selected by Brian and needless to say, both were excellent.



Brian accepts the award watched over by long serving regular Derek Edge



Fleece Follies

Local Landlord Nigel Smith gives us a look at life from the other side of the bar

Life continues with much joy here at The Fleece Inn, this summer and autumn have seen much in the way of jollity including, by way of sneaky sidestep, the return of The Fleece Inn Beer Festival.

Some of you will remember, in days of yore, what a phenomenon the festival grew to be. I decided to take a more softly softly approach with 20 ales and 20 traditional ciders being our first attempt since about 1999 (There's a song there somewhere). The Festival is covered elsewhere in this issue so I won't go on about it. However, it does bring us back to the cider making tradition of the Vale and of the Fleece in particular. It seems Lola Taplin's (last landlady in line etc), brother used to press apples for cider just outside the barn doors and I assume, allow it to do its thing in the barn itself. There is still evidence of this in the shape of a milling stone now acting as an ornament in the Fleece garden.

We pressed 2000 litres this year and intend to do more next. We also will be pressing apples for the present owner of

the Manor House - who said the feudal system was dead?

Speaking of the barn, in Lola's time this was 'the cellar', it was here that the barrels of Brew XI would be stored prior to being racked behind the bar on the now, long gone, stone stillages. Lola was no fool, and would attain the services of one of her younger locals (possibly not quite the right side of 18) to roll the barrel across and put it on the stillage and tap it. The reward for this? A pint from the newly tapped barrel - might have been slightly murky!

Lola had an interesting approach to product quality and customer complaints. If a hapless customer should happen to consider his pint not quite up to the mark and thus take it back to the bar he may well have been greeted with the following from Miss T;

*Gets up from the stool behind the bar
Takes the full glass of beer from the customer
Pours the contents of said glass down the sink
Sits back down on the stool*

All done with a degree of friendly contempt and authority, guaranteed to make the customer feel he had been mistaken in the first place!

A typical Fleece moment one afternoon when of our regulars, who doesn't believe his truck keys should be awoken from their slumber in the ignition, returned to his vehicle only to find a 'helpful' soul removed them and left a note 'keys at No 56 Main Street for safe keeping'. He duly set off to collect but was puzzled to discover there was no number 56; a 60, yes, a 32, yes, but in between it's a field! He came back to the pub, told his story to two other regulars who went to search for the elusive No. 56 and duly returned unable to find said house. The remainder of the afternoon was spent with our man retelling his story to any new potential recipient. Very funny?

I guess you had to be there!



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Should be
Hallmarked



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www.hooky.co.uk

Brewery News



Wye Valley marketing team had plenty to celebrate in October when they won a coveted SIBA award for their commitment to the proactive marketing of their beers. Contributing to their success were past glories such as the launch in November last year of 'Fallen Hero', commemorating the 90th anniversary of the end of the Great War and

the recent launch of 'Morgan Centenary Ale' a limited edition beer celebrating Morgan Motor Company's centenary, for which the brewery came away with an individual 'Best Launch' award.

We look forward in 2010 to celebrating the brewery's 25th year of brewing and the launch of a celebration ale made entirely from Herefordshire ingredients.

The brewery have more than SIBA awards and marketing to thank for a rise of 24% in like

for like sales so far this year. Managing Director Vernon Amor says, "It's all about quality and provenance. People nowadays are interested in where their food and drink is made, what goes in to it and how far it has to travel before it reaches them".

Producing in excess of 4.3 million pints of beer annually, we guess he knows what he's talking about.

Less than a year ago, in November 2008, Wye Valley Brewery installed its own bot-

tling line on site in Stoke Lacy. the brewery has now changed all bottled beer products over to lightweight bottles resulting in significant energy savings and significantly lightening the load for delivery vehicles. Another advantage of the lightweight bottle; the line is running faster than ever, at up to 3000 bottles per hour.

Two of Wye Valley's bottled beer brands are available in Tesco regionally, Butty Bach and Dorothy Goodbody's Golden Ale

Increasing sales of North Cotswold beers saw the appointment of a Sales and Marketing manager in November. The beers are making inroads into Oxfordshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire as well as new local outlets.

New seasonal beer, 5% 'Howl A Ween' which embraced

NORTH COTSWOLD BREWERY

the scary season through the addition of fresh pumpkin in the mash, heads the North Cotswold beers to watch for in the coming months. Others include 'Winter Solstice', 4.5% abv, available through

until the end of January and 'Blitzen', 6.0% abv, Jon's Christmas offering. The tradition of brewing the 10% 'Monarch IPA' on Christmas Day will continue this year but it won't appear over the

bars until August. Jon is hoping that his award winning 'Hung drawn 'n Portered' will soon be available on a regular basis at **The Golden Bee** Stratford upon Avon following a 'meet the brewer' evening there on 10th November when lucky punters actually received free tasters of 'Winter Solstice'



For those of you with a technical bent, the brewplant features a 4bbl mash tun, 3x 5bbl fermenters and a very impressive electrical control panel. Three conditioning tanks are available for the green beer and the pipework and vessels are serviced by a comprehensive "Cleaning In Place" (CIP) system. Hops are supplied by Charles Fareham of Malvern and the malt comes from Tuckers of Newton Abbott. Matt and Tim have taken steps to safeguard their own yeast characteristics by lodging a sample of their strain in the yeast bank at BrewLab. That's it for now; we just look forward to the brewery's planned beers **Bulldog** at 4.5% a.b.v. and **Heart of Oak** at 4.0% a.b.v.

Following on from Purity's successful partnership with Mitchells and Butler in the Midlands, the brewery is continuing to significantly raise its profile in other parts of the UK.

A partnership deal with Suffolk coastal brewer Adnams will see Purity's Mad

Goose, Pure Gold and Pure UBU brands being sold in pubs in the south east, including London, and the east of England. A second deal involves Adnams' dedicated off-trade sales team promoting Purity's beers

to its national and regional off-trade clients alongside its own range of ales.

The three Purity beers have very different flavours, aromas and ABV to Adnams key brands - Southwold Bitter, Explorer and Broadside, but both Purity MD Paul Halsey and Adnams' sales director Rob Flanagan believe they marry up extremely well and complement each other.

Rob Flanagan said, "The benefit of this partnership is that pubs will be able to stock our very different types of beers next to each other. This makes a win-win situation for both Adnams and Purity, as well as pubs and the public, who will be able to enjoy quality beers".



Purity has also celebrated the release of its 2008/09 financial results. Turnover increased 83% and now stands at £1.37 million, 24% above the target figure. Purity sold almost 1.4 million pints of beer last year, doubled its outlets

from 200 to 400 and increased brewery staff numbers 100% from six to 12. Paul said: "We've had a phenomenal year but the company will not be resting on its laurels. In fact, we are beginning our 2009/10 financial year on a high as a result of new contracts that are now coming into effect."



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Cannon Royall Brewery reintroduced a one off brewing of a seasonal stout from many years ago. *Trafalgar Stout* was originally brewed for Trafalgar Day and was a much requested drink when local market research

was undertaken. It has an ABV 4.7% and a deep, rich smooth taste enhanced by added rum. This will become an annual one off brew but if you missed it this year there are limited

stocks of this year's bottled beer available from the brewery. A new introduction to the brewing portfolio is an *IPA* of 4.6% ABV which has been well received and looks like becoming a regular brew.



September saw Highgate Brewery go into administration with debts to the taxman and others in excess of £1 million. Fears that this foretold the end of a 110 year brewing history were soon laid to rest however when it was bought

by property developers Simon Toon and David Lindol who declared themselves 'brewery friendly' and stated their intention to



continue brewing on the site at Sandymount Road, Walsall, producing the same volume and range of beer with the same workforce. The brewery

is still in business under the new name of 'Highgate & Davenport's Brewery Ltd' and will still brew, amongst others, its wonderful Highgate Mild and Davenport *IPA* for years to come.



Hook Norton MD James Clarke was delighted with the brewery's achievements in The International Beer Awards 2009. Sited as the world's premiere annual competition for 'packaged' beer, the competition attracts a wide variety of entrants from brewers and shippers through wholesale

and retail suppliers from across the globe. Following a blind tasting of over three hundred finalists Hook Norton received Gold Medal awards for four beers, *Double Stout*, *Old Hooky*, *Twelve Days* and *Haymaker* and Bronzes for *Hooky Bitter* and *Hooky Gold*. A more local accolade from 'The Pub Landlord', Al Murray, who launched his latest book

in Oxford last September. As an alternative to the usual offering of wine, customers at the launch were offered Hooky Bitter and they loved it. Of course we're coming to that wonderful time of year when, to my mind Hook Norton shines brightest. Its Christmas offering of *Twelve Days* 5.5% ABV, (strong, dark and offering a dominantly malty palate with nutty overtones, giving way to

a lyrical sweetness) is followed in January and February by my own favourite *Double Stout* 4.8% ABV. In their own words, 'a blend of malts gives *Double Stout* a character all of its own. black malt enriches the colour and teases the palate with an unmistakable 'toast' flavour and brown malt gives it the dryness'. All I can say is it hits the spot.



Ale and Apple Weekend at The Fleece

In early October, The Fleece at Bretforton held an Apple and Ale weekend. Featuring cider making demonstrations, over 20 ciders and 20 real ales, great music and Morris dancers, it was a wonderful event.

Star of the show was the lovingly renovated 19th century steam driven apple scratter. A scratter is a machine that crushes apples ready for them to be pressed to extract their juice. Originally built in 1866 by Day of Somerset, this scratter has been beautifully renovated by Ray Smith, (landlord Nigels' dad). All weekend it remorselessly ate apples, chewed them up and spat them out into a waiting trough.

The apple remains were then shovelled into a cider press which was made from a huge beam of green oak brought from the National Trust Bromyard estate at Brockhampton. The apple pulp was wrapped up in mesh to form parcels called cheeses. These cheeses were stacked on top of each other then the press was screwed

tightly so that the juice flowed, ready for its transformation into cider. The press, made by Bretforton man Roger Huttleston and mounted on a large trailer was certainly fit for purpose and produced over 500 litres over the two days, that's about 880 pints.

There is a lot of satisfaction to be had in standing in the warm autumnal sunshine, listening to the rhythmic chug of a steam engine and watching the genesis of some cider whilst drinking a glass of last year's production. This is cider as it should be, not filled with extra gas, pasteurised and served so cold it can't be tasted. This is cider that actually tastes of apples.

Adding to the general air of geniality that prevailed, Pebworth Morris danced up a storm and the wonderful

Barroom Buccaneers entertained the appreciative crowds with rousing unaccompanied group singing. All in all, it was an extremely enjoyable experience and I now have a far greater appreciation of what effort it takes to produce real cider and a very real interest in tasting the results of the weekend.

The real workers load the cheese



The cider press with its maker Ray Huttleston



Nigel and Ray Smith with the Scratter



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Shakespeare CAMRA head for Sheffield

One doesn't normally associate Sheffield with images of grass but it certainly seemed greener there for the sixteen CAMRA members who headed off to this metropolitan city in South Yorkshire.

We were off to celebrate the Beer of the Festival from Stratford 2009 and say thank you to **Abbeydale Brewery**, producers of our favourite 'Dr Morton's Mule Cooler'. The best laid plans etc. resulted in the brewer actually passing us on the way and heading for a theatre date at Stratford so we never actually got to say thanks in person. We did however express our gratitude by leaving the BotF certificate with Rob Nicholls landlord of Abbeydale Brewery



Tap, **The Rising Sun** and drinking copious amounts of Abbeydale and other beers from the twelve on offer. Our thanks to the brewery who bought the first round and to Rob's wife, Julia, who laid on a fine lunch for us.

A single pub however does not greener grass make. Our next calls, to the **Ranmoor Inn**, (another Abbeydale outlet), **The Kelham Island Tavern**, CAMRA National Pub of the Year and certainly not least **The Fat Cat**, all close by, had us thinking we'd died and gone to beer lovers heaven. With nearly forty handpumps, plus ciders between the four pubs and not a bad word to say about any beer there, our agreed departure time approached, passed and became a distant memory before we eventually climbed back onto the bus to head for home.

We broke out journey home at The

Church End Brewery Tap Room in Nuneaton. The top quality of the beers we enjoyed in Sheffield were matched by eight of the best from Church End served up in very 'unpublike' surroundings, a very bright, almost clinical bar with big viewing windows looking into the brewery itself. This did nothing of course to detract from the excellent quality of the beers and a few of our less sleepy members actually managed a quick visit to the brewery. Eventually, around midnight, tired (and emotional!), but happy and three hours late we started dropping people off around the branch area. A huge vote of thanks to Stuart of R.A.T.S.

(Responsive Accessible Transport Ltd), who drove the whole day, drank only tea and never complained, and to all those who came with us for making the day just about as good as it gets.



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15

We're fortunate in this day and age to have such organisations as Weights and Measures, the Office of Fair Trading and even the Police and Local Authorities to fight for our rights and protect us from unscrupulous people, out to make a fast buck by selling inferior goods.

Some 700 years ago in medieval times these functions were carried out on behalf of the local baron by ordinary citizens, appointed or elected to oversee and inspect the various happenings of everyday life. By the Middle ages these appointments were controlled by The Lord of the Manor some of whom, (the more trusted), by way of Royal Charter, could also be granted a degree of criminal jurisdiction and it's this which this led to the formation of the Courts Leet.

The modern Courts Leet, of which there are now only 32 in the country exist primarily for ceremonial purposes, their main function being fundraising for local charities. Some traditional offices, such

are serving a good standard of beer in the correct measures. Those public houses found fit are issued with a certificate and a



sprig of evergreen to hang over the door. Both are assurances that the ale is good and the measures fair. In some quarters

believe that if, after some minutes, they stuck to the bench then the Ale was sufficiently strong, others that if they stuck, there was too much sugar and the ale was impure. Another version of the tale brings the test a couple of hundred years closer to the present. It says, correctly, that after the first tax on beer was introduced in Britain in 1643, there were two different rates, depending on the strength of the brew, and the 'gauger' (excise man) had only his palate to tell him what was strong beer and what was weak. This was supplemented 'at one time', the story claims, by an 'official test' which involved the gauger sitting in his leather breeches in a pool of beer for 30 minutes. If he stuck, the beer was 'strong' and the higher duty rate was paid, if not it was 'small beer' and liable for the lower rate. I firmly believe that if you want to know how good a particular ale is, you have to take a few swallows, not sit in it and I'm pleased to report that this is the method used by Alcesters Ale Tasters).

Ale Tasting with the Alcester Court Leet and Friends

as Town Crier are relatively well known but others, most importantly that of Ale Taster are less common. Shakespeare CAMRA is fortunate indeed to have within its boundaries The Alcester Court Leet and more importantly an ongoing tradition of Ale Tasting.

The onerous duty of the Ale Taster is to visit the inns and taverns of the town annually to ensure that the establishments

it's believed that it was the visits of the ale tasters which led to the tradition of all inns and taverns having to display a sign above their doors in order to let the ale tasters know that ale was served on the premises. *(It's widely suggested that medieval ale Connors or Tasters wore leather breeches and tested ale by pouring some on a wooden bench and then sitting in it and seeing if they stuck to the bench. Some*



On a very pleasant September evening, joined by a few other groupies and distinguished officers from the Courts Leet of Bromsgrove, Warwick and Southwark in the City of London, I accompanied the Alcester Court Leet around a few hostleries within the manor and witnessed the ale tasting ceremony for myself. With great pomp and ceremony and with appropriate costumes for the court officers, the party were announced at each premises and many a pint was sunk. The distinguished visitors from other Courts Leet were brought to the fore and asked their opinion and many a grateful landlord received their sprig of evergreen and certificate. The words, "The dealings of this Inn are fair and honest and that the Ale has been tasted and found wholesome and fit for Human Consumption", repeatedly rang out often with a few "excellents" thrown in for good measure, (excuse the pun).

Editors note: Since this article was written the Alcester Court Leet elections have taken place. Nick Dearing is now Low Baliff and the new Ale Tasters are Pete Neale and our own irrepressible Alan Whitbread. Congratulations all round!



Too many to name them all, Alcester High Baliff, Andy Mill, Ale Taster Nick Dearing and Constable Nick Clarke are joined by local and visiting Court Leet Officers



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See our website www.shakespearecamra.org.uk



Barley and Me

Liz Kirby takes a further look at what makes her favourite tipple...

Real ale is primarily made of water, malt, hops and yeast. In *Shakespeare Issue 37* of we had a look at hops and now we examine the vital but often overlooked role of malt.

Malt is an easily crushed material which brewers use to give their beers body, strength and flavour. It is predominantly made from barley, although wheat or other grains are sometimes used. The best-known brewer's malt is made from the Maris Otter strain of barley. Rich in starch, the barley is malted before brewing to start the process of releasing sugars, which ferment during brewing to produce alcohol. Brewing malt production in Britain is a highly specialised technical industry with barley grown on dedicated land and malts prepared in bulk in large, purpose-built maltings and distributed to brewers around the country. About 96% of worldwide malt production goes to the brewing industry. In the malting process the barley grains are soaked in water so that they begin to germinate. At this point the natural enzymes within the barley convert the grain starches into fermentable sugars. The germination process is then halted by

drying the grains in kilns. Dependent upon how long for and at what temperature it has been dried, different colours of malt are produced. Darker malts will produce darker beers. In most cases, two or more



Picture courtesy of Peter Robinson. www.creativewinemaking.co.uk

types of malt are combined when making modern beers. Across the Hook Norton range of beers, for example, ten different coloured malts are used. From the many different malts available,

some of the more commonly used are:

Crystal malt: The most widely used coloured malt in the UK, it produces sweet toffee-like flavours. Crystal malts are available in a range of colours, with darker-coloured crystal malts, producing stronger, more caramel-like flavours. It also said to contribute to head retention and help improve shelf life.

Pale malt: This forms the basis of many pale ales and bitters. It is light in colour and can be used as a base malt, that is, as the malt constituting the majority of the grist in many styles of beer. An example of a beer using pale malt is Hobsons Town Crier.

Mild malt: Often used as the base malt for mild, is similar in colour to pale malt. Mild malt provides a round flavour generally described as "nutty".

Chocolate malt: Despite the name, this malt doesn't taste of chocolate, but produces complex undertones of vanilla and caramel and is used to impart a moderately roasted flavour, generally in porters and sweet stouts as well as dark mild ales.

Pilsener malt: This is the basis of Pilsner lager but is also sometimes used in golden beers. It is the lightest-coloured generally-available malt, and has a strong, sweet malt flavour.

So next time you're enjoying a pint of your favourite real ale, give a thought to the unsung heroes in the malting trade who have played such an important part in producing the ales we love.

Why aren't I in The Good Beer Guide?

Every time a new issue of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide, comes out, this, and I'm sure many other branches, are asked by local publicans, "Why aren't I in it?" **Good!** I'm pleased to see that pubs value a place in the guide and that they are hopefully willing to compete for the limited space within. **The Good Beer Guide is the CAMRA bible, but how do pubs get included and why do some drop out?** Entry into the Guide is based on beer quality and the branch attempts to monitor pubs on an ongoing basis throughout the year to establish consistency. Every time a CAMRA member visits a pub they are

asked to mark the quality of each beer tasted based on a 1-5 scoring system. The marks garnered this way form the basis for the selection. It is all done democratically and is driven by unpaid volunteers, the members themselves.

Having identified the pubs gaining the best scores, we encounter a problem. In this branch we have over 200 pubs, but only 12 available entries in the Guide. Now we all know that there are more than 12 pubs serving excellent beer in this area, but we have to try to identify the best. This is done at branch meetings when a shortlist, established by the scoring system is

discussed and arrangements made to revisit if necessary.

Pubs are changing all the time, landlords change and beer choice changes, both for the good and bad. That a pub is selected to be in the top 12 one year is no guarantee that it will stay there. It may continue to serve excellent beer in perfect condition and receive great marks from the members who survey it, but there may be other pubs now serving real ale vying for that coveted place.

In this way, standards are continually being driven upwards. Just because a pub doesn't make the Guide it doesn't necessarily mean that it doesn't serve quality beer, it may just have been unlucky 13.

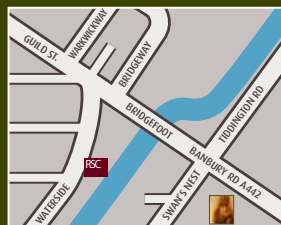




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Our Christmas Minstrel Entertains



Alan Whitbread
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As the festive season is nearly upon us I thought it would be a good idea to give the background history to a festive song.

The 'Boar's Head' is often used as a pub name but the 'Boar's Head Carol' is the oldest song in my repertoire, dating back to the 'Christmasse Carolles' published by Wynkin de Worde in 1512 and discovered in the library of Queen's College, Oxford. In his 1868 study, William Henry Husk produces the following analysis of the customs at boar's head feasts (at which copious amounts of ale would have been drunk!):-

"The head of a wild boar formed, at a very early period in our history, the principal and choicest dish at all great feasts, and especially at Christmas. Why it should have been so highly esteemed we cannot now tell; but possibly the danger encountered in attacking so ferocious an animal as the wild boar, and the consequent importance attaching to it when slain, as a trophy of victory may have had an influence in raising it to the position it enjoyed."

"The boar's head was brought to table with great ceremony; trumpeters preceded the bearer, sounding, and various other persons attended and formed a procession. Holinshed, in his Chronicle, acquaints us how King Henry II [who reigned from 1154 to 1189] on the occasion of the coronation of his son Henry, as heir apparent on the 14 June 1170, himself



brought up the boar's head, with trumpets before it."

"At Queen's College, Oxford, founded in 1340, the custom of bringing in a boar's head on Christmas Day with music and a carol has been preserved to our own times. At King Henry's VI's [1422 to 1461] coronation boar's heads were placed on the table in 'castellys of golde and enamel'.

Margaret, daughter of King Henry VII [1485 to 1509], and wife to James IV of Scotland, 'at the furst course' of her wedding dinner, 'was served of a wylde borres hed gylt, within a fayr platter'. "In the household accounts of King Henry VIII [1509 to 1547] we find an entry of 24 November 1529 of a payment to a servant of the Lord Chamberlain of 40 shillings 'in rewarde for bringing a wylde bore unto the king'. A servant of 'Maister Tresorer'

received 4s 8d on 18 December 1531 'for bringing a wyld bore's head to the king'.

"The custom continued throughout the reign of Elizabeth I [1558 to 1603], during which on Christmas Day in the Inner Temple 'a fair and large boar's head' was served "upon a silver platter with minstrelsy."

Now there's history for you!

Nowadays, I don't think that the song is often sung at the Boar's Head at Hampton Lucy, our Branch Pub of the Year, (although on a recent visit we were offered a casserole of grey squirrel in pink champagne! Ed.). It is often sung however at folk banquets including at the annual Wareham Wail in Dorset, where all the guests dress up in medieval costumes, a pig roast is served and the boar's head is carried into the feast with all the assembly singing the song. Closer to home, the ceremony was repeated and the song sung at this year's St George's Banquet and Barn Dance in Ilminster Village Hall.

If you want to hear (and join in with!) such traditional songs being sung try the following places:-

- **2nd Tuesday at The Cottage of Content at Barton (over the river from Bidford), B50 4NP**
- **Last Tuesday at The Shakespeare Inn at Welford-on-Avon, CV37 8PX; and**
- **Every Thursdays at The Fleece Inn at Bretforton, WR11 7JE.**

The Boars Head Carol

The boar's head in hand bear I
Bedecked with bay and rosemary
So I pray you my master be merry
Quot estis in convivio [Those at the feast]

Caput apri defero [I bring the boar's head]
Reddens laudes Domino [Praising God]

The boar's head as I understand
Is the rarest dish in all the land
Which thus bedecked with a gay garland
Let us seivre cantico [Serve with a song]

Our steward hath provided this
In honour of the King of Bliss
Which on this day to be served is
In Regensis atrio [In the Queen's Hall]

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Check out the website for forthcoming events

Shakespeare CAMRA Worcestershire Pub of the Year 2009



Shakespeare Branch Diary & Beer Festival Round up

Meetings and Branch Events

December 2009

2nd Beer Festival meeting The Fleece

8th 8.00 pm The Crown & Trumpet Sausage and Ale Fair. Joint venture with North Cotswold Branch Price £5.00

9th 8.00pm Branch Christmas Dinner, The Fox Loxley, contact laura.bennett@hotmail.co.uk

16th Alcester festive pub crawl, meet 8.30pm The Holly Bush

January 2010

13th Branch meeting 8.30pm The Stag, Redhill, on to Blue Boar Temple Grafton and Golden Cross Ardens Grafton

February 2010

10th 8.30pm Good Beer Guide Selection meeting, Holly Bush, Alcester

16th Pub of the Season Presentation (to be arranged)

March 2010

10th Branch meeting Ettington, meet 8.30pm Chequers Country, then on to the The Hounds Hill and White Horse

Local Festivals

December 2009

19th 12.00-11.00pm Brackley Town Beer Festival 24 ales plus 6 ciders admission (£2) free to card-carrying CAMRA members

January 2010

20-23rd National Winter Ales Festival. Manchester. www.alefestival.org.uk

22-23rd Redditch Winter Ales Festival 36 ales plus cider and perry, Bridley Moor & Batchley Social Club, Bridley Moor Road, Redditch, B97 6HS www.redditchwaf.org.uk

February 2010

5-6th Tewkesbury Winter Ales Festival George Watson Hall, Barton Street, Tewkesbury Admission: Friday lunchtime free; all other sessions £2. All sessions £1 for card-carrying CAMRA members. www.tewkesburycamra.org.uk

March 2010

13th Harbury Winter Ales Festival Harbury Village Hall. 30 real ales based on the LocAle theme

Keep an eye on the branch website for updates to the diary and what's on at www.shakespearecamra.org.uk

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If you are a CAMRA member in the Shakespeare branch, you should receive a copy of Shakesbeer through the post, (one per household). If you prefer, a PDF copy can be sent to you by email - just let the Chairman know.

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CAMRA Branch contacts

- **Chair - Bob Kirby**
chair@shakespearecamra.org.uk
- **Vice chair - Julian Stobinski**
vicechair@shakespearecamra.org.uk
- **Secretary - Liz Kirby**
secretary@shakespearecamra.org.uk
- **Treasurer - Bob Mansfield**
treasurer@shakespearecamra.org.uk
- **Membership - Katie Williams**
katieawilliams@live.co.uk
- **Campaigns Officer - Laura Bennett**
laura.bennett@hotmail.co.uk
- **Young members Coordinator - Simon Williams**
BYMC@shakespearecamra.org.uk

The Editor reserves the right to amend or shorten contributions for publication.

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£27

☐

For Young Member and concessionary rates please visit www.camra.org.uk or call 01727 867201.

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

I enclose a cheque for

Signed Date

Applications will be processed within 21 days

0709



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

Please fill in the form and send to: Campaign for Real Ale Ltd, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To the Manager Bank or Building Society

Address

Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder (s)

Bank or Building Society Account Number

Branch Sort Code

Reference Number

Originator's Identification Number

9 2 6 1 2 9

FOR CAMRA OFFICIAL USE ONLY

This is not part of the instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Membership Number

Name

Postcode

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay CAMRA Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with CAMRA and, if so will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)

Date



This Guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

- This Guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the Scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society.
- If the amounts to be paid or the payment dates change CAMRA will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed.
- If an error is made by CAMRA or your Bank or Building Society you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us.

detached and retained by the payer

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

