

THE RISING TUN



Winter 2010/11 Issue No: 96

The Old English word 'Tun' means a cask or barrel of beer

Essential reading for beer lovers everywhere

The joint newsletter from the Swindon & North Wiltshire, North West Wiltshire and Devizes branches of CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale)

Steam to the bar.....scenes from the 24th Swindon Beer Festival at The STEAM Museum
Supporting the 175th anniversary celebrations of the Great Western Railway



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

**SWINDON BEER FESTIVAL REVIEW, PUB PROFILE, PUB BOOKS PREVIEWS
NATIONAL CAMRA NEWS, DIARY DATES, BEER FESTIVALS & PUB NEWS**



'**THE RISING TUN**' is the newsletter of Swindon & North Wiltshire, North West Wiltshire and Devizes branches of CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale).

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Valuable contributions have been received for this issue from:

Don Jones, Chris James, Dave Maloney, Richard James, Abigail Newton, Ben Staite and others.

Back issues, along with all Swindon & North Wiltshire and North West Wiltshire CAMRA branches Real Ale news, can be found on our websites:

www.swindoncamra.org.uk
www.nwwiltscamra.org.uk

Please do share with fellow beer lovers this issue of '**The Rising Tun**' and then dispose of it carefully.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the branch or © CAMRA Ltd.

www.camra.org.uk

CAMPAIGNING FOR REAL ALE, PUBS AND DRINKERS' RIGHTS SINCE 1971

Branch Diaries:

All meetings and social events are relaxed and friendly. Please feel free to come along and join in.

All CAMRA members and non-members are welcome to attend. Please do check our websites (see links opposite) before setting off, for any of the below entries, in case of change to timings/venue.

SWINDON & NORTH WILTSHIRE BRANCH:

JANUARY 2011

12th January (8pm Start)

Branch meeting (Good Beer Guide pre-selection meeting), Venue TBC - Please see branch website for an update.

26th January (8pm Start)

Branch social, New Calley Arms, 2 Ham Road, Wanborough, Swindon, SN4 0DF

FEBRUARY 2011

9th February (8pm Start)

Branch meeting, Dockle Farmhouse, 2 Bridge End Road, Stratton St Margaret, Swindon, SN3 4PD

23rd February (8pm Start)

Branch social, Rose & Crown, 19 The Green, Highworth, Swindon, SN6 7DB

MARCH 2011

2nd March (8pm Start)

Branch meeting that will include **DECIDING THE BRANCH'S FINAL CHOICES FOR THE GOOD BEER GUIDE 2012 AT THE KINGS ARMS, 20 WOOD STREET, SWINDON, SN1 4AB. ALL CAMRA MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO JOIN THE VOTING.**

16th March (8pm Start)

Branch social, Blunsdon Arms, Thamesdown Drive, Swindon, SN25 2NA

APRIL 2011

11th April (8pm Start)

Branch AGM, Duke of Wellington, Eastcott Hill, Swindon, SN1 3JD

NORTH WEST WILTSHIRE BRANCH:

Please email social@nwwiltscamra.org.uk to find out future social outings and refer to the branch website for updates on branch meetings.

BEER BOOKS!

Good Beer Guide 2011 (38th edition) Breweries in Britain *A prosperous picture for 2011*

A Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) tradition has continued this year, with the publication of the 2011 Good Beer Guide that marks the 38th edition of CAMRA's best-selling guide to Britain's 4,500 best real ale pubs.



The fact finding for this publication supports the growth trends of this sector (that has been highlighted in recent editions of the Rising Tun) and an age of prosperity looks set to continue into the next 12 months. CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2011, reveals there are now a staggering 767 breweries operating in Britain - that's four times the number than when CAMRA was founded in 1971. The Good Beer Guide reports that 78 new breweries have opened in the past year. Allowing for closures, that's a net increase of 56. Good Beer Guide editor Roger Protz says *"The real ale revolution goes on in spite of all the problems facing the brewing industry such as the often anti-competitive behaviour of the large pub companies, the heavy and continuing rise in tax on beer, grossly unfair competition from supermarkets, and the smoking ban in pubs. Yet, against all the odds, craft breweries continue to sprout like mushrooms at dawn."*

"The main reason is a simple one: craft brewers are responding to

genuine consumer demand. Beer in pubs may be expensive compared to cheap supermarkets but drinkers are prepared to pay a bit extra for beer with taste and quality. Real ale hits the spot in every way: it has flavour and is made from pure, natural ingredients that are grown mainly here in Britain. More and more people want to think local and drink local and real ale meets that demand."

CAMRA GOOD BEER GUIDE 2011
Edited by Roger Protz
Available to buy now
£10.00* (online members price)
£12.99* (online non-members price)
<http://www.camra.org.uk/home.aspx>
RRP £15.99

NOW FOR 2012 - CALLING ALL SWINDON AND NORTH WILTSHIRE CAMRA MEMBERS

Over the next few months Swindon & North Wiltshire CAMRA branch will survey many pubs in the branch in order to finally put forward 17 entries for the 2012 GBG. There are almost 200 pubs that serve real ale in the branch's territory. Please visit our pub database to get a picture of the task involved to select pubs to be considered for the Good Beer Guide. Many have not had a survey done for some time. We invite all CAMRA members and anyone else interested in promoting pubs and real ale to suggest pubs for consideration. If possible please you could submit a detailed survey – see <http://www.swindoncamra.org.uk/index.htm> for further details. As advertised in the Diary Dates feature (Page 2) on

2 March (20:00 8PM Start) the branch will be **DECIDING IT'S FINAL CHOICES FOR THE GOOD BEER GUIDE 2012 AT THE KINGS ARMS, 20 WOOD STREET, SWINDON, SN1 4AB.**

Hans Hoffbauer
Swindon and North Wiltshire CAMRA

THE INNS OF WILTSHIRE

For anyone with an interest in the history of pubs from across the county, a new title has just come onto the book shelves; Inns of Wiltshire in old photographs by Andrew Swift and Kirsten Elliott. To know Wiltshire's inns is to know Wiltshire. Their history has been inextricably linked to the livelihoods of our communities for generations. As highlighted in past editions of the Rising Tun, pubs are closing faster than ever before, this collection of pictures and stories from the past is a reminder of the rich diversity of this local heritage - and how important it is to preserve what is left of this uniquely British icon. It is an informative and worthy read and covers all corners of Wiltshire.



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Ben Staite
Swindon and North Wiltshire
CAMRA Branch

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ACROSS THE BORDER...NEWS FROM WANTAGE

Swindon and North Wiltshire CAMRA had the pleasure of a return visit to Peter Fowler's **Pitstop Brewery**, in glorious early September sunshine - as the evidence testifies!. The branch first made an outing to this brewery in September 2009 and a review can be found in the Spring 2010 edition of the Rising Tun. Since then there have been a number of developments to report. Firstly, Peter has achieved a global feat by producing the world's bitterest beer, 'The Hop' (ABV 8%). 'The Hop' recorded 323 International Bittering Units (IBUs). The recipe used hop varieties Centennial, Chinook and Simcoe together with hop extract Isolone. Secondly production at the Pitstop brewery is currently suspended as it's on the move from its Grove base. Peter is taking over the Shoulder of Mutton (Wallingford Street, Wantage, OX12 8AX, Tel 07870 577742). The pub is undergoing refurbishment and a quick chat with Peter at the Wantage Beer Festival revealed all was on track for an early December opening. Pitstop brewery will be downsized with the plant being installed in an out-building at the back of the pub's garden. Pitstop beers will be available both at the Shoulder and at the Royal Oak (at the crossroads of Newbury Street and Portway), another Wantage landmark. The branch is bound to make a third visit within the next 12 months to check out this latest change.



The outing concluded with a pub stop at the Royal Oak which is highly acclaimed, particularly in CAMRA circles. For the third year in a row, this pub has been voted Oxfordshire CAMRA's pub of the year by the county's CAMRA branches. Wantage is accessible from Swindon by a direct bus route on Saturdays only via the X47 'Ridgeway Explorer' service operated by RH Transport. This service departs from Swindon Bus Station and costs £4.60 for a return fare. For timetable information, please refer to <http://www.swindonbus.info/timetables.asp>.

To end, a comment or two on the Wantage Beer Festival (19-20 November 2010) which was a very well organised and a relaxed occasion. It was certainly a local affair with an emphasis on breweries from across Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Wiltshire. From the beer list, of the 29 choices, 25 were classified as LocalAle – produced with 30 miles of the festival venue. A new name was Faringdon brewery, a one-barrel plant installed at Swan (unsurprisingly in Faringdon!) with Folly Pride (4.1% ABV). A trip to next year's event is highly recommended.

Ben Staite
Swindon and North Wiltshire CAMRA Branch

PUB PROFILE

A flying Pig on the Hill



The Old Town drinking scene has become an evolving picture over the last 12 months and this has enhanced the choice of real ale. The Pig on the Hill (8 Devizes Road, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN1 4BH, Tel: 01793 979226, <http://www.thepigonthehill.com/index.asp>) is a reflection of this trend since it opened in June 2010, in time for the start of the World Cup. A chat with pub manager Craig Lach revealed, there are further changes planned for 2011 and this includes expanding its real ale choices.

PUB PROFILE

The Pig on the Hill has become an established outlet for Box Steam Brewery, such as Piston Broke (5% ABV) and also stocks its own beer brand, Pig of the Hill, brewed by Hancock's HP. This pub appeal to drinkers of all ages and plans are afoot to go from strength to strength come 2011, with further refurbishment of the pub building by opening up the 1st floor for functions and parties. There are also plans to utilise its outdoor space by hosting a beer festival next Summer. Keep an eye out in future editions of the Rising Tun for updates. The Pig on the Hill is also set to open up from 09:00, to capture a greater share of the breakfast market. Home-made meals are a critical element of the business plan and this extended to supporting the British Sausage Week (1-7 November 2010). The pub's resident chef made an appearance on stage at the Swindon Designer Outlet Village Food Event (9 October 2010), highlighting the growing acclaim for the pub's meal choices.

The Pig on the Hill is a family-owned pub, where all members are happy to get involved in the business. The interior setting of the pub has been transformed, providing a relaxed environment and taken a proactive approach to being a good neighbour by minimising noise from its outside areas after 23:00 each evening. This watering-hole marks the new generation of pubs today, enjoying a thriving trade, its real ale offering, an acclaimed menu and covering live sport. The Pig on the Hill regularly engages in Facebook (and its website), as a means of promoting its latest ale choices and special events and is also establishing a profile within the local community. The pub held its first Golf Society outing last month, with a regular football team or two due to up and running in the near future.

Ben Stait
Swindon and North Wiltshire
CAMRA Branch



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A brewery building set to be re-born?

As you may be aware the former Archers brewery (on Penzance Drive, Swindon) has recently featured in the local media. The coverage followed a planning application to convert the building into a restaurant and a micro-brewery, thereby maintaining the site's brewing heritage. This business concept reflects the CAMRA cause and the local branch provided support for the proposal. Here is the Swindon and North Wiltshire CAMRA statement that was submitted to Swindon Borough Council.

"As Chairman of the Swindon & North Wiltshire Branch of CAMRA (CAMpaign for Real Ale) I would like to lend the branch's support for this planning application. The details of the application were discussed in detail at our committee meeting on Tuesday 12th October, as well as by e-mail with any committee members who could not attend, and all the observations and comments made were positive.

As the former home of Archer's brewery the use of the building as a micro brewery is very welcome news as it will add to the choice and variety of real ales brewed and available in Swindon and go some way to replacing the loss of the very popular Archers beers. From previous contact with Mark Wallington who set up the Archer's brewery originally we know that it was always his intention to create a pub on Penzance Drive to serve the new housing developments there, so again the application is furthering the original Archer's vision. In addition the restaurant component it will support the commercial viability. Regarding the building itself it is a Swindon landmark and leaving it empty and unmaintained will lead to its gradual decay.

The site is easily accessible by bus as it is located on a main bus corridor for the Town Centre and West Swindon and handily placed for routes to North Swindon and Liden and Eldene, so the additional amenity provided will be available to a large number of Swindon residents. In summary CAMRA believe that this is a sensible use of a heritage building on a major gateway into Swindon, visible from the mainline railway and a main traffic route".

To update, planning permission has been granted to turn the former Archers Brewery into a pub/restaurant with micro brewery. Any further developments will be covered in the Rising Tun.

**Richard James, Chairman
Swindon & North Wiltshire CAMRA Branch**

Swindon Beer Festival 2010

The 24th Swindon Beer Festival was held at the STEAM Museum, Kemble Drive from Thursday 4th November to Saturday 6th November 2010,



which has been our venue since 2006. This year's festival was a great success featuring a record number of beers. On Saturday there was still choice of over 100 beers available, so a visit on the final day is well worthwhile. The attendance over the three days was 2213 - up on last year. Ramsbury Brewery were present with their own bar for most of the festival. The Saturday afternoon music by Bob Bowles went down very well too! Chris James, the Rising Tun's Pub Correspondent raised £51.47 for the British Retinitis Pigmentosa Society (Fighting Blindness) on Thursday evening by holding a collection at the exit. In other words, this has been our best and biggest beer festival to date as Gill White, Festival Organiser confirmed. "I am pleased that we still had a wide choice of beers for festival goers turning up on the Saturday and each session was well attended. Look forward to seeing everyone there again next year and hopefully some new faces". Here are the winning beers from the 24th Swindon Beer festival.

	Brewer	Beer	ABV
1st	Box Steam	Derail Ale	5.2%
2nd	Old Bear	Sun Bear	4.2%
3rd =	Castle Rock	Pale Ale	3.8%
	Harvest		
3rd =	Fyne Ales	Avalanche	4.5%
3rd =	Pit Stop	Sump	7.0%

**Hans Hoffbauer
Swindon and North Wiltshire CAMRA**

Beer Festivals

The following local and national beer festivals were known at the time of press in late-November. For updates please refer to the following links:

<http://www.camra.org.uk/page.aspx?o=events>

<http://www.swindoncamra.org.uk/index.htm>

CHRISTMAS BEER FESTIVALS

17 th - 20 th Dec	(Fri-Mon)	WINTER SOLSTICE BEER THE CROWN, 60 WILCOT ROAD, PEWSEY, SN9 5EL
17 th - 20 th Dec	(Fri-Mon)	THE CARTER'S REST, ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BEER FESTIVAL, HIGH STREET WROUGHTON, SN4 9JU

JANUARY 2011

14 th - 15 th Jan	(Fri-Sat)	2 nd Elysian Beer Festival
14 th - 15 th Jan	(Fri-Sat)	22 nd Exeter Festival of Winter Ales
19 th - 22 nd Jan	(Wed-Sat)	National Winter Ales Festival 2011 Sheridan Suite, Oldham Road, Manchester, M40 8EA.
		The Biggest Winter Ales Festival yet!
20 th - 22 nd Jan	(Thu-Sat)	4 th Colchester Winter Ale Festival
20 th - 22 nd Jan	(Thu-Sat)	15 th Cambridge Winter Ales Festival
27 th - 29 th Jan	(Thu-Sat)	22 nd Bent & Bongs Beer Bash (Atherton Beer & Winter Ales Festival)
28 th - 29 th Jan	(Fri-Sat)	Salisbury Winterfest XIV
28 th - 29 th Jan	(Fri-Sat)	3 rd Newark Winter Beer Festival

FEBRUARY 2011

3 rd - 5 th Feb	(Thu-Sat)	16 th Tewkesbury Winter Ales Festival
3 rd - 5 th Feb	(Thu-Sat)	7 th Pendle Beer Festival
4 th - 5 th Feb	(Fri-Sat)	Redditch Winter Ale Festival
4 th - 5 th Feb	(Fri-Sat)	The Peaks & Lakes Beer Festival
4 th - 5 th Feb	(Fri-Sat)	23 rd Dorchester Beerex
4 th - 5 th Feb	(Fri-Sat)	18 th White Cliffs Festival of Winter Ales
9 th - 11 th Feb	(Wed-Fri)	21 st Battersea Beer Festival
24 th - 26 th Feb	(Thu-Sat)	Bradford Beer Festival
24 th - 26 th Feb	(Thu-Sat)	10 th Derby Winter Beer Festival
24 th - 26 th Feb	(Thu-Sat)	Ale & Arty, Stockton Beer Festival
24 th - 26 th Feb	(Thu-Sat)	Liverpool Beer Festival
25 th - 26 th Feb	(Fri-Sat)	Winterfest XIX - Gosport's Winter Beer Festival
25 th - 26 th Feb	(Fri-Sat)	2 nd Chappel Winter Beer Festival

MARCH 2011

As advertised in the Diary Dates feature on 2 March (20:00 8PM Start) the Swindon and North Wiltshire CAMRA branch will be **DECIDING THE FINAL CHOICES FOR THE GOOD BEER GUIDE 2012 AT THE KINGS ARMS, 20 WOOD STREET, SWINDON, SN1 4AB. ALL CAMRA MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO JOIN THE VOTING.**

APRIL 2011

15th - 17th Apr **Members' Weekend and AGM, University of Sheffield**
It will be a return to the British mainland for the 2011 CAMRA Members' Weekend and AGM, when Sheffield will be hosts for this national event. The venue for the proceedings is the Octagon Centre at the University of Sheffield.

The 2010 CAMRA Members' Weekend and AGM was held at the Villa Marina, Douglas on the Isle of Man (16-18 April 2010), coinciding with the closure of much of the European airspace due to the volcanic ash cloud. The event successfully provided members with the opportunity to discuss our future policy and direction. The event also included guest speaker Dr Mike Cowbourn of Okells Brewery, who gave a potted history of the brewery, as well as detailing the history of brewing on the Island.

REAL RAMBLING...Bits & Pieces

Facebook friends....Wiltshire breweries

Facebook is now well and truly established in British society and the business community as it becomes an increasingly popular marketing tool. In a new feature, the Rising Tun has kept a close eye of the walls of local breweries over the last month or so. We like the comments, however no poking or tagging....keeping up the Facebook terminology.... was conducted in this research!

Facebook feed from Plain Ales....

Plain Ales Brewery We would like to welcome two new members of staff to Plain Ales Towers...Lance has joined as head drayman and is not looking forward to Christmas because it's going to be madness! Come January, Lance will have muscles like steel from lifting all those casks! We also welcome Holly who has joined primarily on the sales ...

Another entry, **Box Steam Brewery** confirmed its beer of the festival honour at Swindon on Facebook....Box Steam Brewery Derail Ale Wins Swindon Beerex 2010!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
17 November at 13.04 Like - Comment

Real Ale Rambles....in Bristol

The Wiltshire Wanderers, the local young members' group of the Ramblers Association, combined two interests on a Saturday in mid-October; some good walking and enjoying a fine range of ales and ciders on route. An 8-mile hike taking in some of the urban delights of central Bristol, such as Clifton Village, the Avon Gorge and the Suspension Bridge concluded with a pub crawl around a number of city centre pubs. Regular breaks were taken at a number of character-rich back-street pubs, with a fine diverse drinks selection and relaxed atmosphere. Some had attracted national acclaim such as the Orchard,(12 Hanover Place, Bristol, Bristol, BS1 6XT) and a lunch stop was taken at Portcullis in Clifton (Wellington Terrace, Sion Hill, BS8 4LE), the Bristol and District Pub of the Year runner-up for 2010.

In the city centre, other fine recommendations include Seven Stars (Thomas Lane, Redcliffe, Bristol, BS1 6JG), the Bristol and District CAMRA



branch's Pub of the Year for 2010 and the Cornubia, (142, Temple Street, Bristol, Bristol, BS1 6EN) a partially listed Georgian freehouse, offering discounts for card-carrying CAMRA members. More walking-pub crawl combinations are planned for 2011!



Here's a quote that was observed on our outing in the ground floor of the Portcullis, Clifton.

"Real ale is a wonderful elixir for a stagnant palate, and can rejuvenate tastebuds which were once blighted. Its beautifully simple appearance hides a plethora of style, taste and creativity. It is a shining star, illuminating an otherwise barren and desolate wasteland. Real ale can range from the beautifully simple to the most surprising flavours, and as a result, the experience can be more complex than calculating π . The perfect pint is elegant and pure. A monolith towering over fields of pre-mixed drinks and chemical lagers. A testament to all things lustrous and tinctorial, real ale has our complete support, dedication and love". The Portcullis was offering 8 cask ales on our visit, including two from the Dawkins range.

When travelling on the local rail network, do not forget to take advantage of the First Great Western GroupSave discount, offering a third off for 3 individuals travelling together whilst a group of four travel at half-price.

Ben Staite

Swindon and North Wiltshire CAMRA Branch

Abbey's Apple Day 2010

As part of the Apple Day celebrations on 17 October, volunteers from the North West Wiltshire branch of CAMRA manned a cider bar at the National Trust's Lacock Abbey, near Chippenham. The event took place in the historic walled garden of the Abbey. As well as a fantastic range of cider, the 1 800 visitors were able to visit the orchards, sample a range of apples, enjoy live music and a hog roast. About 600 glasses of cider and perry were sold, including "No Nonsense"- a cider made from apples grown in the abbey orchard.

Mike

North West Wiltshire CAMRA

PUB NEWS

Swindon and North Wiltshire Branch

Licensee Changes:

These pubs have had new licensees in recent months: *The Royal Oak, Old Town, Swindon; The Red Lion, Baydon; The Bakers Arms, Railway Village, Swindon; The Fat Dog, Shrivenham; The Plough, Chiseldon and The Check Inn, North Wroughton.*

Closures:

The Fox, Highworth, The Falcon, Westcott Place in Swindon and The British Legion Club, Penhill, Swindon have recently closed.

Other Pub News:

Planning permission has been granted to turn the former Archers Brewery into a Pub/Restaurant with Micro Brewery.

Ramsbury Brewery have purchased *The Bell* in Ramsbury.

Ales are now being brewed at *The Blunsdon Arms* on a small scale.

New licensee's are being sought for *The Tap and Barrel* in Manchester Road, Swindon and *The Goddard Arms*, in Clyff Pypard.

The Angel in Wootton Bassett has re-opened after a major refurbishment into a Hotel/Restaurant.

The Barge, Honey Street is now being run by the locals after they purchased the pub with a 'Big Lottery Fund' grant.

A new Harvester Pub has opened recently in North Swindon.

A new French bar has opened alongside Las Gatos in Wood

Street, Old Town, Swindon.

Faringdon Brewery has recently opened at *The Swan* in the town.

Vaughan at *The Crown* in Pewsey has started brewing Crammer Gold and featured it on BBC Wiltshire's 'Breakfast show'.

Chris James, pub correspondent, Swindon and North Wiltshire Branch

Devizes Branch

The Black Horse on Bath Road remains shut after a serious fire in August. The pub will need a lot of work before it re-opens and we don't expect this to be before the Spring. Terry and Glynis Hillier have said they are keen to return.

The Wiltshire Yeoman in Chirton has new licensees - Rob Coombes and Jutta Hahn. They've returned to England after running a hotel in the Harz Mountains in northern Germany.

Rose & Crown, Worton, is on the market. *The Artichoke* on Bath Road is under offer.

The licensees of *The Bridge* at Horton, Adrian and Nikki Softley, have applied for permission to convert part of an outbuilding into a shop selling basics to both villagers and boaters. They plan to open the shop in the new year.

Ian & Sarah Wixon are taking over *The Southgate* at the end of November. We wish all the best to Charlie Moss who worked hard to keep the pub going after the previous tenant did a Lord Lucan.

Bar Billiards fans can now play at *The Moonrakers*. We can't think of another table in the

county so if they have a team who wants a challenge, they might have to go to Andover.

The Bell by the Green hosts regular top quality stand-up comedy shows which are run by the Moonraker Comedy Club. We hope founder and frequent compere Martin Brown remembers us when he's famous!

The Castle Hotel is on the market but is currently being run by Ian & Christine Johnson. They also have the *Fox & Hounds* on Nursteed Road.

**Don Jones
Devizes Branch**

North West Wiltshire Branch

Rose and Crown, Chippenham - A new team has just started there. They hope to increase the range of ales once they are fully settled in.

We wish Jon and Bernadette all the best in their new venture at *the Bungalow Inn*, Redhill near Bristol Airport after their short stint at *the Bear* in Chippenham.

The George at Sandy Lane, has new licensees.

The Bell at Lacock had a 10/10 challenge setting a target of collecting of £10K for RUH cancer unit but total collected is in excess of £30K (so far).

The company that owns *The Pear Tree* in Whitley has gone into administration this week. It is continuing to trade and we've heard "The prospects for selling the group remain strong and a number of parties have already come forward".

**Abigail Newton
North West Wiltshire branch**

News From The North West Wiltshire & Devizes Branches Of CAMRA

Rose & Crown re-regional hosts

Some 30 CAMRA members from branches across the South West of England met at the Rose and Crown in Chippenham on 6 November 2010 for our regular regional meeting. These meetings are one up from branch meetings and a plethora of subjects were discussed with information being fed back to the National Executive.

Baz and Paul looked after us well and we had the opportunity to try three new ales brewed just for the Three Crowns; Olde Rosie Ruby Ale, Pooles Gold and Olde Rosies luxury gentlemen velvet stout. The stout was particularly good and will be on sale in the Rose and Crown, along with the Pooles Gold, very soon. This large pub in the market place in Chippenham and has 4 real ales on at £2.20 a pint, Timothy Taylor is available at £2.50. Food is served Mon-Sat 10-4. A Sunday Carvery was introduced from the 14 November 2010.

Dave Maloney
North West Wiltshire CAMRA

Days out with Devizes

"Wadworth's will sell the brewery for flats as soon as the right offer comes along". This is something I've heard more than once over the past few years. And each time, I give what is basically the same reply – 'balderdash' (well, it starts with the same letter but this is a family publication). What makes me so sure? Just looking round the brewery and talking to a few people who are in the know, as a group of CAMRA members did in late September.

There were about 15 of us on the trip and we started in the bar at the Visitor Centre where there were 5 beers on offer: 6X, IPA, Horizon, Bishop's Tipple and Malt & Hops. Then it was off round the brewery with head brewer Brian Yorston as our guide. We saw kit dating from the opening of the brewery in 1886 to the ultramodern (and doubtless very costly) new computer-controlled brewhouse. You just have to look at this equipment and the investment to realise that Wadworth aren't going to up sticks and leave. They're where they belong – in Devizes – for the long haul.

In a tour that wasn't quite the same as the normal one, Brian's enthusiasm for the brewery just shone through. We were treated to numerous historical gems and curiosities and Brian even showed us the brewer's recipe book from 1900. Heritage and permanence was a big feature of this tour. Once we'd finished, it was back to the Visitor Centre for some more beer and the chance to chat with some very experienced, enthusiastic and knowledgeable brewers; as well as Brian there was Colin Oke, Andy Weaver and Adrian Wood. Brian's predecessor, Trevor Holmes, was also with us. We spent a cracking couple of hours with them just chewing the fat and sampling some excellent ales. We also had a sneak preview of Waddies new beer, Pixley Black Stout. If you get a chance to try some, make sure you do. It's got beautiful chocolate overtones and is full of body but it's the shot of blackcurrant that really hits the spot. The base recipe was created decades ago for a double-chocolate stout but cringing together of the ancient and the modern worked a treat.

At Brian's suggestion, we used the evening as a bit of a low-key fundraiser. We were pleased to be able to donate £100 to Canon's House, a respite care home in Devizes that provides short-term residential breaks for young people with a severe learning disability. With the £550 raised at Devizes Beer Festival for the Crown Centre and the bar at Picnic in the Park that earned nearly £350 for Carnival, CAMRA locally has helped raise nearly £1 000 for local good causes.

We have trips like this a few times a year, as do most (if not all) CAMRA branches. We are due to make a visit to Small Paul's brewery in Gillingham. Whereas Wadworth produces thousands of barrels each year from an old Victorian brewery, Paul produces only a few a year from his garage... but he still does it commercially. So, if you want to join us on trips such as these, join CAMRA! You can protect the beers and the pubs that we love and have a bit of a laugh too. The Swindon and North Wiltshire CAMRA branch will be taking a tour of the Wadworth's brewery in December – we can compare notes in the next issue of the Rising Tun!

Don Jones
Devizes CAMRA Branch

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BREWERY NEWS

Arkell's Festival and Tribute

Arkell's 2010 beer festival (11 September) was described as its best yet by Sales Director Nick Arkell. More than 800 people attended the event at its Kingsdown brewery site. Over 2 500 pints were consumed from the selection of 40 barrels of real ales donated from Arkell's and fellow family brewers across the country by the visitors. The festival was being held in aid of Prospect Hospice, which cares for more than 1 600 patients each year and receives just 26% of income from statutory organisations. Each year it must raise more than £4.5 million to continue providing care the community relies on. Following the 2007 Beer Festival, Arkell's was able to donate over £2 000 to Prospect.

The 2010 festival was particularly poignant for the family and brewery staff after the sad death of its former chairman, Peter Arkell, in late August. Peter's son and current chairman, James Arkell, said: "I can think of no better way to pay tribute to my father than by encouraging friends and visitors, old and new, to come together and raise a glass to his life and achievements."

Real Ales produce a fine farm award

The Old Forge Brewery (<http://www.oldforgebrewery.co.uk/default.html>), based at The Radnor Arms in the National Trust village of Coleshill, Oxfordshire - just across the eastern boundary of the Rising Tun's territory - has won the prestigious 2010 fine farm food award from the National Trust for its real ales.

Originally a blacksmiths, the building was converted to a pub in 1949 and is now owned by the Trust. The four-barrel micro-brewery was started in June this year in an old out-building by Alan Watkins, who also runs the Halfpenny micro-brewery in Lechlade, just across the Gloucestershire border. Judges gave an award to a special three-pack of Old Forge Beer, made up of Anvil Ale, Blacksmith's Gold and Hammer and Tongs. The three beers are very distinctive, crafted from local barley and a variety of different hops - including Challenger, Fuggles and Progress - to old, traditional English recipes, explained Alan. "We only use natural products and no artificial ingredients and we don't carbonate or pasteurise our beers either," he added. The Anvil Ale was described as "refreshing, with long-lasting metallic bitterness" and the Blacksmith's Gold as having "complex fresh flavours with strong wheat overtones". But Hammer and Tongs was his favourite: "This is a good, satisfying beer, chestnut coloured with a subtle hoppy nose and smooth, slightly malty finish."

The beers are currently on sale from The Old Forge and other local pubs and shops. Alan, who is aiming to produce around 5,000 bottles a year, said: "It's excellent to win this award - having a quality mark from the National Trust will definitely drive interest in our beers."

Gold praise!

Braydon Ales was taken aback by the level of positive public response it received to its Summer special, Galley-Bagger Gold. As a result of this customer feedback, Braydon Ales planned to keep brewing it at least through the Autumn and it may join the core range. Galley-Bagger, meaning "scarecrow" in Old Wiltshire dialect, is a straw coloured, full bodied, and well hopped ale, bitter in the mouth with a balanced aftertaste - golden liquor with a thirst quenching bite!

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Wadworth's very own brewery tap! A selection of up to five ales brewed at the Northgate Brewery, from age old recipes using local malt, and delivered traditionally by Shire Horse and Dray. Fresh home-cooked food. Fully air conditioned and only a short walk from the Kennet & Avon Canal.



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