West Berkshire Taproom & Kitchen Open

The West Berkshire Brewery Taproom opened on 1 November. The Old Dairy at Frilsham Home Farm, Yattendon, now houses the taproom, shop, new brewery and packaging line.

Only the framework of the 38,000 sq ft building has been retained. A new glass wall separates the brewery side from the 200 capacity visitor centre which also has views of the surrounding countryside. The Taproom is smartly furnished using reclaimed wood from the dairy.

Within the North Wessex Downs Area of Natural Beauty, this is a good area for country walks and well behaved dogs are welcome in the Taproom.

The Kitchen menu includes pizzas and charcoal grilled burgers. See advertisement on back page for daily opening hours.

On Saturday 11 November, Tim Wale drove a group of 40 from the Catherine Wheel to the West Berkshire Brewery in his 1956 AEC Regent 111 double decker bus.

Revitalised Pubs

Pubs are closing around the country at an alarming rate so it is good news when closed pubs are given a new lease of life.

Dom Robinson has reopened the Blackbird, Bagnor, after a colourful refurbishment with a new focus on restaurant quality food.

At Donnington, John Swan is the manager at The Castle, open daily at 7.30am for breakfast.

Closed since June 2016, Ben Briazelle has reopened the Old Bell, Wash Common and introduced a simple baguette menu.

See page 2 for more details of these pubs.
The Campaign for Real Ale
West Berkshire

Swift Halves

The Castle, Donnington – Neil Reeves

- The Castle, Donnington, reopened on 25 October, and is now open from 7.30am daily.
- Regular ales are Good Old Boy and Mr Chubb’s Lunchtime Bitter with Fuller’s London Pride as a guest ale and scope for a fourth ale providing sufficient demand develops.
- www.thecastlenewbury.com

-roll image

The Blackbird Restaurant and Public House, Bagnor, reopened on 22 September. Open five days a week from noon, closed on Mondays & Tuesdays.
- The decor includes dark furniture and some brightly painted feature walls. The real fire is especially welcome in winter. Good Old Boy and Maggs’ Magnificent Mild are regular beers with a guest ale on the third handpump. www.theblackbird.co.uk

-roll image

West Berkshire CAMRA invites supporters to our Christmas Party at the Diamond Tap, Newbury (upstairs) on Thursday 7 December (7.30 pm).
- There will be a light buffet and a raffle with plenty of prizes to be won.
- The highlight of the evening will be a fun, general knowledge quiz hosted by Jeff Evans. The main quiz is free to enter with additional spot prize rounds (£1) for bottled beer prizes.
- Please help us cater appropriately by registering in advance for 1 or 2 free tickets:
  dt17.eventbrite.co.uk

West Berkshire CAMRA thanks contributors, distributors, advertisers, publicans and readers for their support of Ullage during 2017 and wishes all -

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

- The Diamond Tap, Newbury, opened by JD Wetherspoon in July 2010, is now owned by Stonegate Pub Company which also operates Yates and Slug & Lettuce pub formats. CAMRA membership Wetherspoon discount vouchers are still accepted at the nearby Hatchet Inn.

- Closed since June 2016, the Old Bell, Wash Common, reopened on 6 October after refurbishment. Features now include a pool table and jukebox. Landlord Ben has local pub experience from running the Three Horseshoes, Donnington and the Blackbird, Bagnor.
- Fresh baguettes are served from a basket on the bar. Good Old Boy and Loose Cannon Abingdon Bridge are the initial draught beers with bottles of Renegade West Coast Pale Ale available from the fridge. Tel 01635 41510

-roll image

Richard Scullion and Andy Pinkard, past and present Branch Chairmen, were among CAMRA members boarding Tim Wale’s bus bound for the West Berkshire Brewery Taproom on Saturday 11 November.

11/11/2017 Catherine Wheel, Newbury

- Thanks to Warwick Heskins for organising Catherine Wheel on Tour and giving CAMRA members priority booking. A bus tour to another local brewery and pubs en route is planned for spring 2018.

-roll image

11/11/2017 heading back towards Newbury!

About us
Since 2006 we’ve been lovingly crafting award-winning, bottle conditioned cider in West Berkshire. We make it the old fashioned way – by hand.
That’s why we call it – ‘Proper Cider’
Available in Waitrose

Get in touch
Tel. 0118 976 4649
Tweet. @tuttsclumpcider
facebook.com/tuttsclumpcider
www.tuttsclumpcider.co.uk

-roll image
Brewing has now moved to the fourth site for West Berkshire Brewery since it was originally founded in a small building behind the Pot Kiln pub, Frilsham, in 1995. On 18 October, Renegade Brewery West Coast Pale Ale was the first beer to be canned at the new site.

Brewery tours, starting hourly between 11am and 3pm, can be booked for Saturday 8 Dec, 20 Jan, 10 Feb & 10 Mar via www.wbbrew.com

A virtual This is how we brew it badge is awarded to visitors who use the Untappd app to check in their beers at the new Taproom & Kitchen.

There are two seasonal beers to look out from West Berkshire Brewery this winter. Yule Fuel (4.3% ABV on draught) is deep red in colour having caramel sweetness with raisin and liquorice overtones.

Tom Broadbanks’s signature is on the pumpclip of Bounty Hunter (4.8% ABV) a full-flavoured milk stout with a rich mouthfeel and smooth finish. Its name is derived from the cocoa nibs and toasted coconut flakes which add bitter chocolate and coconut flavours.

New additions to the brewery itself include a glycol chiller, a 15 barrel mash tun and fermenter number 8. A new canning line is on order from Canada. In recent months, Wild Weather ales have been exported for the first time – to Singapore, U.S.A., Germany, Belgium and Ireland. www.wildweatherales.com

Hoppy Christmas, 4.4% ABV, a well-hopped golden ale, joins Christmas Cracker, 4.1% and Rum Truffle, 5.6%, in the range of seasonal beers from Ramsbury Brewery. Ramsbury’s MM2000, a 4.8% golden ale, came third in the Beer of the Festival competition at the 31st CAMRA Swindon beer festival, attended by 2,000 visitors, in late October.

Winter limited edition ales from Loddon Brewery are Hocus Pocus Old Ale, a 4.6% ABV dark ruby red winter warmer and Razzle Dazzle, a 4.3% well hopped golden Christmas beer that features Fergus the brewery dog and the brewery offices on the pumpclip.

Newbury’s micropub, the Cow & Cask celebrated its third anniversary on Saturday 18 November. Visitors enjoyed a free buffet on the day.

The brewers at Wild Weather Ales are frequently involved in collaborations with other breweries. These often include unusual additions! Bananas were added for Tornado Top Hat, a Hefeweizen collaboration with Liverpool’s Mad Hatter Brewing.

Marine additions were used to brew Shellfish Basterd cockle and seaweed stout in collaboration with Peterborough’s Bexar County Brewing and Reading’s Smelly Alley Fish Company.

The next Meet the Brewer events are Newbury’s micropub, the Cow & Cask. A monthly quiz is held at 8pm on the third Wednesday of each month, including 20 December (Christmas quiz). Entry is £1 per person with maximum 4 per team.

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Newbury’s micropub, the Cow & Cask, is named after Head Brewer Alex Arkell’s great grandfather who was born on Christmas Day. Alex Arkell explains the ten stages of Arkell’s brewing process, from grain intake to cask racking, in minute-long videos filmed inside the Victorian steam brewery that provide a fascinating virtual brewery tour: www.arkells.com/tour.html

A shop and visitor centre has been built on the site at Kingsdown, Swindon, which will be officially opening after Christmas.

A virtual badge is awarded to visitors who use the Untappd app to check in their beers at the new Taproom & Kitchen.

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The new phone number for West Berkshire Brewery is 01635 767090.

The Swan, Inkpen, will close for a winter break on Friday 22 December, reopening on Saturday 3 February, 2018. www.theswaninn-organics.co.uk

Sir Noël, a 5% ABV seasonal Pale Ale from Arkell’s Brewery, is named after Head Brewer Alex Arkell’s great grandfather who was born on Christmas Day. Alex Arkell explains the ten stages of Arkell’s brewing process, from grain intake to cask racking, in minute-long videos filmed inside the Victorian steam brewery that provide a fascinating virtual brewery tour: www.arkells.com/tour.html

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• After a damp start, the weather improved for Newbury Real Ale festival, attended by over 4,500 people. Thirty CAMRA members, including four who joined at the CAMRA stand, entered a free raffle to win the 2018 Good Beer Guide. The winner, Frank Jessett, gave it to his son Daniel. Next year’s festival, organised by Newbury & Thatcham Hockey Club, is on 8 September, 2018.

• The Save the White Hart Inn campaign organised a Pint in the Paddock, under an alternative pub sign, for supporters of the closed pub in Hamstead Marshall in their continued efforts to find a new operator for the pub which the campaign’s research has shown to be viable. Nearby Two Cocks Brewery provided the beer which was much appreciated on a warm August Bank Holiday Monday.

Since then, the pub’s owner has submitted a further appeal against West Berkshire Council’s second refusal to approve planning permission for change of use. A date for the hearing is awaited. www.savethewhitehart.org

Volunteering opportunities
What CAMRA volunteers say …
“Fantastic friendships and CAMRA camaraderie”
“Acquiring new skills and becoming more knowledgeable about beer”

Ways you can get more involved with CAMRA …
• Edit magazines + Manage advertising
• Brewery liaison + Survey pubs
• Campaigning & Lobbying
• Taste & score beer
• Festival bar work
• Social media & many more …
camra.org.uk/volunteer

WHATPUB
National Beer Scoring System

www.whatpub.com – CAMRA’s WhatPub website is maintained by volunteers to store details of all pubs in the UK. Regrettably, some pubs in West Berkshire now only show up when filtered by ‘Closed Pubs Only’.

Closed pubs include: Plough, Thatcham (sold at auction); Winning Hand, Beenham (change of use to Care Home); Winterbourne Arms, Winterbourne (Freehold for sale), Lord Lyon, Stockcross (Residential development) and the Rising Sun, Stockcross (after a decision by landlords Dave & Chrissy Payne to close on 31 October).

CAMRA members can enhance the annual Good Beer Guide selection process by using WhatPub to log and score beer quality at pubs, as described on page 10.

42 LocAle pubs in our branch serving beer from breweries within a 25 mile radius.

See also the LocAle page on our website: www.westberkscamra.org.uk

LocAle Pubs - EAST of A34

The Bell Inn Aldworth
The Bladebone Inn Chapel Row
The Bull Inn Stanford Dingley
The Castle Inn Cold Ash
The Castle Donnington
The Catherine Wheel Newbury
The Coopers Arms Newbury
The Cow & Cask Newbury
The Cottage Inn Upper Bucklebury
The Fox Inn Hermitage
The Hatchet Inn Newbury
The King Charles Tavern Newbury
The Monument Newbury
The Newbury Newbury
The Old Bell Wash Common
The Old Boot Inn Stanford Dingley
The Old London Apprentice Newbury
The Old Waggon & Horses Newbury
The Pot Kiln Frilsham
The Red House Newbury
The Rowbarge Woolhampton
The Royal Oak Yattendon
The Six Bells Beenham
The Three Horseshoes Brimpton
The Woodpecker Wash Water

We are in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2018 (10th year running)

Meals served evenings and lunch times (except Mondays) Closed Sunday evenings (except Bank Holiday weekends)
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www.john-o-gaunt-hungerford.co.uk

Locally Brewed Real Ale

The Campaign for Real Ale West Berkshire
Chairman’s Notes

I joined CAMRA as result of reading the same magazine that you are now. As I settled down for a drink, I would read Ullage to catch up on the world of ale and pubs.

In my personal view, CAMRA means simply that, a Campaign for (quality) Real Ale, and just because it campaigns for something, it doesn’t mean it’s against everything else, as some would have you believe.

You may have heard about CAMRA’s Revitalisation Project that started some two years ago and is due to reach fruition at next year’s AGM. I still remember a spokesperson on TV saying that the battle for real ale had been won, and that now it was time for CAMRA to reinvent itself. However, I believe nothing is further from the truth. Yes, we have a fantastic spectrum of beers and ciders available now compared to 40 years ago, but quality real ale still remains under threat.

Real ale, with its cask conditioning, presents all sorts of challenges to the supply chain from the brewer to the glass in front of you. I have yet to meet a brewer who isn’t passionate about brewing to produce delicious beers and lagers. However, they can only control so much of the supply chain. Once it leaves their cooled warehouse it may be in the hands of a distributor, and then the Publican, with many handling and environmental factors to consider.

Clearly that final stage of the supply chain has an enormous influence on the quality of your pint. You may have tried the same beer in different pubs and noticed significant taste differences. If you were new to real ale and experienced a poor tasting pint, would that encourage you to continue?

That’s as frustrating to brewers as it is to me and may explain the rise of keg beers and lagers and just because it campaigns for something, it’s not against everything else.

To those of you fortunate enough to travel abroad, you will appreciate what a special and unique product real ale is. It seems ironic that in the UK a swathe of American style IPAs, usually kegged, has developed, while in the USA, leading small breweries are embracing cask, for the increased flavour palette it offers them.

It’s great to have the variety of beers and lagers, but please sing the praises of cask conditioned real ale. A true artisan product, unique product real ale is. It seems ironic that abroad, you will appreciate what a special and unique product real ale is. It seems ironic that in the UK a swathe of American style IPAs, usually kegged, has developed, while in the USA, leading small breweries are embracing cask, for the increased flavour palette it offers them.

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Want to know more about real ale and cider? Why not join CAMRA and participate in one of our social get-togethers with others who have an understanding of this changing scene? Cheers!

Andy Pinkard
Greenham Fallout Cider

Greenham Fallout Cider is a local small producer of oak aged cider set up by Chris Moore and Steve Cooper in their Cider Barn, situated near the perimeter fence of the former RAF/USAF Greenham Common.

Greenham Fallout was born in 2013 when apples from trees surrounding the barn were collected and used to create 50 litres of cider. In June 2014, Chris and Steve sourced and personally collected a vintage cider press and scratter from Normandy. These had been used for generations to make French cider which in turn helps infuse many different notes in the finished cider.

Flavour imparting qualities are also gained from the 220 litre French wine barrels which for many years had matured red wine. For those interested, the barrels are made from mature oak, from trees at least 150 years old, in state-owned high forests just outside St Emilion.

The poor weather conditions in the Spring of 2015 meant that the six apple trees struggled to produce a worthy crop and no cider was made that year. 2016 saw production back into full swing with about 500 litres being pressed and laid down to ferment over the winter months.

Greenham Fallout was available to the public for the first time this year in the cider marquee at September’s Newbury Real Ale Festival and at Newbury’s Catherine Wheel cider celebration on 18 October.

Plans for 2018 production are already in hand along with some exciting ideas gained from The Woodland Trust.

A by-product of the cider making process has allowed Chris’s wife Julia to make some delicious breads, biscuits and condiments using either the cider itself or the yeast produced by the cider making process - Fallout Cider & Chilli Jam is a personal favourite.

To keep up to date with Greenham Fallout, please follow their Twitter account @Falloutcider

If you have surplus apples to donate or would like to help out with a few hours of cider making in the autumn of 2018, contact them via Twitter or email: falloutcider@icloud.com

Rod Holmes

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The Catherine Wheel

‘It’s always beer o’clock at The Catherine Wheel’

WEST BERKSHIRE CAMRA CIDER PUB OF THE YEAR
2015 / 2017

6 cask ales with at least 4 local
18 boxed ciders
120+ gins in our ‘Gin Yard’ bar
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Local bottled ciders
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35 Cheap Street, Newbury. RG14 5DB 01635 569897
www.thecatherinewheel.com
The Hungerford Arms, at 113 High Street, was originally a property owned by the Dean & Canons of Windsor and has a history of being an inn from 1685* and was originally known as The Plume of Feathers. Two years ago the pub was transformed by the new owners from the Plume of Feathers into the Hungerford Arms. The pub is owned by the horse racing syndicate of 28 horses, which explains why they decided on a strong racing theme for the pub. The pub is split into drinking on one side and eating on the other. Outside there is a courtyard and large garden, ideal for summer drinks.

The pub is Cask Marque accredited and offers three regular beers: Old Speckled Hen, Timothy Taylor’s Landlord (strictly speaking it is a guest ale, however it is so popular it has become a permanent fixture) and a 3.9% ABV beer badged for the pub, Plume House (harking back to the pub’s previous name). As you enter the pub you’re immediately struck by the age of the building, with its beams and great character. There is an island bar, with the pub being split into drinking on one side and eating on the other. As you go through the pub to the bar area, there are four TV screens showing racing and other sports. The pub has a racing theme, including race festival previews, quiz nights and live music events. Many different events are held at the Hungerford Arms such as the Hennessy Gold Cup party.

Mark and Hugh offer a traditional pub menu, plus a specials board that changes every 2-3 days, giving the chef the opportunity to be creative! Bar snacks are well matched for watching sports and drinking a beer. These snacks are served all day and include scotch eggs, half a pint of sausages, plus a platter offering for groups. There are four TV screens showing racing and other sports in the bar area.

Whilst the pub has a racing theme, everyone is welcome, including children and dogs! Many different events are held at the Hungerford Arms. The pub has a racing theme, including race festival previews, quiz nights and live music events. Many different events are held at the Hungerford Arms such as the Hennessy Gold Cup party.

The owners also have a sister pub known for horse racing, the Sydney Arms in London, which is one of Chelsea’s last independently owned freehouses.

Open: Monday - Thursday: Noon - 11pm
Friday - Saturday: Noon - 11.45pm
Sunday: Noon - 10pm
Food served every day: Noon - 3pm & 6pm - 9pm

The Hungerford Arms, 113 High Street, Hungerford RG17 0NB
Website: www.hungerfordarmspub.co.uk
Tel: 01488 682 154
* Reference: www.hungerfordvirtualmuseum.co.uk

Karen Bowen
In October, Tim Thomas spent six days in New England visiting art galleries, bars, taprooms including Portland’s Bissell Brothers and breweries including Boston Brewery (Samuel Adams).

Portland, Maine, has 17 breweries and more breweries per head than ‘Beervana’ (Portland, Oregon).

After a tour of Portland’s Shipyard brewery, Tim enjoyed a glass of Old Thumper ESB brewed on the premises. The 5.6% ABV copper coloured beer was created by British brewer, Peter Austin, founder of Ringwood Brewery and mentor of Shipyard’s co-founder Alan Pugsley.

On Portland’s outskirts, Allagash Brewing Co, founded by Rob Tod in 1995, also offers free tours. Allagash White, a 5.1% ABV Belgian-style wheat beer, is the brewery’s flagship beer.

In Boston, Tim visited three places serving cask ale: Maverick Marketplace Cafe; Stoddard’s Fine Food & Ale and Aeronaut Brewing Company’s taproom (Somerville).

After a ‘Forrest presents’ Stace Brandt gig at Aeronaut, Tim met brewer Lia Olsborg (page 1 photo) who is also involved with the biannual New England Real Ale eXhibition (NERAX).

In the spring, NERAX is held at the South Boston Lithuanian Club (11-14 April 2018) and in the fall, the Knights of Columbus Hall, Salem, hosts NERAX North (16-18 November 2017) with real ales and ciders from Britain and the U.S.A..

The NERAX festivals are organised by the Cask-conditioned Ale Support Campaign (CASC) formed in 1997. www.nerax.org

Read more about New England bars, taprooms and breweries in Tim’s blog posts which are listed against the map above.

www.beernorthamerica.blogspot.co.uk

In September, Georgia brewery laws were relaxed allowing brewery taprooms to open longer and serve pints or flights at the bar.

In October, Meg Thomas enjoyed a personal tour of the Gate City Brewing Company, Roswell, Georgia, 25 miles north of Atlanta.

Originally from Ohio, Michael Palko, Gate City’s Taproom Manager, hosted the tour and posed for a photo with Ullage.

Gate City’s name is taken from an historical nickname for Atlanta which was an important railway hub. The brewery and 3,000 sq ft taproom, stand on the site of two former garages. Up to eighteen house-brewed draft beers are served including 1864 IPA and Terminus Porter. Each weekend sees tastings, live music, comedy and community-based events such as yoga and art workshops.

Variant Brewing opened in November 2017, close to Gate City. Michael welcomes this friendly competition, making Roswell, GA, a new beer destination. ($2.50 fare from Atlanta to Roswell using public transport.)

A host of other breweries are based in and around Atlanta, including SweetWater Brewery, established 1997, located between Atlanta and Roswell.

You can read more about these breweries and Meg’s Roswell experience in her blog post: goo.gl/Y3AdE2
On a dry and overcast Saturday afternoon in September, three colleagues/friends and I set out on a meandering 18-mile country hike from Hungerford to Newbury to revisit some favourite cask ale pubs.

However, one pub was new for the hike team - Kintbury’s Blue Ball, located a quarter mile up the high street from the railway station and Kennet and Avon Canal.

On our early afternoon visit, the main bar area was quiet yet occupied with a good number of locals who were hospitable and inquisitive of our country hike. Beyond the bar and past the front door are two semi-segregated areas that are better suited for diners. There is a spacious garden for those who prefer to eat and drink in the open air when the weather is dry.

Most importantly, four cask ales were on sale: West Berkshire’s ‘Good Old Boy’, Otter’s ‘Amber’, Banks’s ‘Mild’ and Sharp’s ‘Doom Bar’. Bottles of real cider from the village’s Ciderniks are usually available. Brewed in Wolverhampton, Banks’s 3.5% ‘Mild’ is deep brown in appearance and its light, sweet, malty flavour suggests raisins.

It was served on good form and it was the choice brew of the team whilst enjoying our stay at the Blue Ball, a homely traditional village pub that’s just being itself.

Prior to the Blue Ball, the hike route crossed Hungerford Common and Templeton to reach Inkpen’s The Swan, where Indigenous Brewery’s black, velvety, thirst-quenching 3.4% mild ‘Baldrick’ was served on top form.

We reached Wickham’s Five Bells by mid-afternoon. Here we savoured the rich, sumptuous 5.0% ‘INN Deep’ stout, brewed on the premises by INNformal Brewing.

A short trek through woods and rolling fields brought us to Boxford from where we joined the way-marked Lambourn Valley Way, which led us to Newbury. Ramsbury’s 4.7% ‘Purple Pig’ plum stout at Newbury’s Cow & Cask divided the team. It’s a novel, speciality ale that hits you with a lush, fruity flavour burst followed by a lingering dryness. I certainly recommend it.

Worth emphasising is that all four Berkshire pubs visited on this day were serving at least four cask ales, with at least one brewed locally and one being a dark ale type. A sign of diversity is a sign of health. And given the team’s partiality to the maltier or darker ales, two milds and two stouts were just what we needed!

CAMRA member Chris Reynolds is also Membership Secretary of West Berks Ramblers and will be leading the following walks:

**Tue 12 Dec 10am:** Meet at the recreation ground in Chapel Lane in Ashford Hill for a 6 mile walk. Lunch after the walk at the nearby Ship Inn.

**Sun 18 Feb 9.30am:** Meet at Child’s Court Farm (by Party Pieces) for a 10 mile walk. Lunch en route will be at The Bull in Stanford Dingley.

Contact Chris on 01635 226826 or 07979 804637 about a trial ramble.

There are now 19 Brakspear Pub Trails, created in partnership with the Trust for Oxfordshire’s Environment (TOE2).

Pubs with walking trails include: Reformation, Gallowstree Common; Fox & Hounds, Christmas Common; John Barleycorn, Goring and Catherine Wheel, Goring.

All the pub trails can now be accessed using the ViewRanger app. From the app’s search tab, select People (instead of Places default) and enter ‘Brakspear’ to find them.

In addition to the app, all the pub trails can be downloaded from www.pub-trails.co.uk
CAMRA relies on its 190,000+ members to submit beer scores, using WhatPub, so that the pubs consistently serving beer in the best condition can be selected for CAMRA’s Good Beer Guide.

Visit the National Beer Scoring System (NBSS) webpage at www.camra.org.uk/nbss for a full explanation of the scoring system. This webpage describes WhatPub Member Login and includes links to two helpful videos: Why you should score your beer and How to submit beer scores.

West Berkshire CAMRA’s beer scoring system was withdrawn in 2017, leaving WhatPub as the only online method for submitting beer scores for local and national pubs.

Andy Pinkard, the new branch Chairman, has mentioned the importance of maintaining the quality of the Good Beer Guide (GBG). He says ‘This is something I think we do well as a branch, our entry choice is via an open process, led by the beer scores that members near and far provide throughout the year’.

He encouraged members to chat about beer quality at branch social activities and to attend the January and February selection meetings for the 2019 GBG (published in September 2018).

Join up, join in, join the campaign

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Out of the Rut

It’s easy to end up drinking the same beers, and going to the same pubs and bars, and feeling miserable about it. But there are ways to break free.

1. Walk down a new street or visit a new town and go into the first pub you walk past after a certain hour. (Don’t cheat.)
2. Or go to every single pub in a neighbourhood, town or village, however weird or unpromising.
3. Buy an old guide book and visit the pubs it recommends (eg Martin Green & Tony Whitës 1968 Guide to London Pubs) or take on a famous historic crawl (eg ‘that epic pub crawl from Ludgate Circus to Trafalgar Square’ described in Maurice Gorham’s Back to the Local (1949)).
4. Drink your way through a list of beers from a book or listicle.
5. Get someone else to choose beers for you.
6. Drink every beer you can find in a particular style, from a particular region, or that meet some other criteria – ABV, colour, Christmas themed…
7. Critically revisit beers you know you don’t like but haven’t tried in years. After all, they change, and you change too.
8. Spend a month drinking things other than beer, but with beer in mind.

There are lots of other ways to go about this kind of thing. The point is, like writing poetry using restrictive rules, or cycling from Lands End to John O’Groats, it should be sort of pointless… But not really.

You might hate all the new pubs you go in and beers you taste, or you might find new favourites you kick yourself for having missed out on for so long. Even the duds will teach you something.

[Editor’s note: The first three suggestions in the above blog post (7 August 2017) reflect sentences from the Epilogue of Jessica Boak and Ray Bailey’s latest book 20th Century Pub.]

Every now and then, make a point of going to a pub that you’ve never looked at twice, that you’d normally avoid, or perhaps even one that makes you nervous. You’ll probably find – we certainly have – that great experiences and sometimes even surprisingly good beer lurk behind unprepossessing exteriors.

We’re Boak and Bailey

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

www.boakandbailey.com

What is Real Ale?

As defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, real ale is ‘draught beer that has been brewed by traditional methods, and which has undergone secondary fermentation in the barrel’. In other words, this is beer that still contains live yeast, which continues to ferment or ‘condition’ the beer in the container after it leaves the brewery.

As the container is called a cask (barrel is misleading as that refers specifically to a 36-gallon cask, which are very rarely used these days), the process is known as ‘cask conditioning’. This conditioning improves the flavour of the beer and allows the yeast to generate natural carbonation. The beer is then served via handpumps or sometimes direct from the cask, with no gas pressure added. The end result is a product that tastes fresh and has lots of subtle flavours, as well as soft, pleasant effervescence.

The bottled equivalent is called ‘bottle conditioned’ or ‘real ale in a bottle’.

Jeff Evans

Camra Discounts

Members enjoy discounts at CAMRA beer festivals, Wetherspoon pubs (* with voucher) and pubs below:

- Brompton: 
  - Three Horseshoes
- Hungerford: 
  - John O’Gaunt Inn
- Newbury: 
  - Catherine Wheel
  - Cow & Cask
  - Gun, Wash Common
  - Hatchet Inn*
  - King Charles Tavern
- Wickham: 
  - Five Bells

With Jeff Evans

West Berkshire CAMRA member Jeff Evans is the beer writer behind the Inside Beer website. Updated daily. www.insidebeer.com includes The Beer Buzz (news), Events & Festival listings and exclusive features. There are archives for Pub / Beer of the Month, including those below.

- Sep: Taphouse, Copenhagen, Denmark
  - Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild
- Oct: Mother Kelly’s, London E2
  - Robinsons Old Tom
- Nov: Rose & Crown (El’s Inn), Huish Episcopi, Somerset
  - St Austell HSD

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

**Thursday 7 December**  
Christmas Party  
Diamond Tap, Newbury (upstairs)  7.30pm  
see page 3 for details: dt17.eventbrite.co.uk

**Wednesday 10 January**  
Branch Meeting - GBG selection (members only)  
Royal British Legion, Newbury

**Thursday 18 January**  
Beer & Curry Social  
Gun, Wash Common, Newbury  7.30pm  
Register: gun18.eventbrite.co.uk

**Wednesday 7 February**  
Branch meeting - GBG selection (members only)  
Lamb, 5 Enborne Road, Newbury

**Friday 23 February**  
Pie & Pint Social + optional Ale Trail  
Sweeney & Todd, 10 Castle St, Reading  7.30pm  
Check website for details (may change)

**Saturday 3 March**  
East London Ale Trail  
Outside Whitechapel tube. Depart: 11.30am  
More Info / Register: ELAT18.eventbrite.com

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East London Ale Trail  
Outside Whitechapel tube. Depart: 11.30am  
More Info / Register: ELAT18.eventbrite.com

All meetings start at 8pm unless otherwise stated.

Check our website for further details: www.westberkscamra.org.uk

**Beer Festival Diary**

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

- **5 - 9 December**  
  34th Pig’s Ear Beer & Cider Festival  
  Round Chapel, Id Glenarm Road, Hackney, London E5 0PU  
  www.pigsear.org.uk

- **26 - 27 January**  
  Salisbury Winterfest XXI  
  Royal British Legion Club, 9-11 Endless Street, Salisbury SP1 1DL  
  www.salisburycamra.org.uk

- **14 - 16 March**  
  London Drinker Beer & Cider Festival  
  Camden Centre, Bldborough Street, London WC1H 9AU  
  www.northlondon.camra.org.uk

- **20 - 24 February**  
  Great British Beer Festival (Winter) 2018  
  The Halls, St Andrews Plain, Norwich NR3 1AU  
  winter.gbbf.org.uk

**Local Trading Standards office:** Tel 01635 519930  
**Facebook:** West Berkshire Campaign for Real Ale  
www.westberkscamra.org.uk